KNITTING THE VELVET GAUNTLET:

Goldwater-Nichols, the end of the Cold War, and the development of American defense diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

The United States military is more than a tool of hard power. It provides the United States with a suite of diplomatic tools and is itself an important producer of American soft power. Though the many repertoires of American defense diplomacy have been carefully studied and the overall phenomenon has been theoretically investigated, their origins have not received similar attention. This research aims to uncover the causes of American defense diplomacy through an account of the American military's institutional development. It is common for defense diplomacy to be presented either as an outgrowth of 9/11 when the United States was engaged in globe-spanning irregular warfare or as part of a drive for global hegemony after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, this research finds otherwise. A key factor in the development of contemporary defense diplomacy was the suite of institutional changes in the American national security apparatus in the 1980s. In particular, the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 reconfigured the power relationships and interests of key elements of the US military thereby overdetermining the development of defense diplomacy. With this finding, this research centers Congress as a key driver of American foreign policy and highlights the sub-state institutional dynamics within the foreign policy apparatus that produced, and reproduce, defense diplomacy as an enduring habit of American statecraft.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Using a broad array of archival documents, interviews, and other sources, this research investigated the (unintended) consequences of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Those reforms reconfigured the power relationships, incentives, and preferences of the US foreign policy apparatus which in turn yielded new habits of American statecraft. Foremost among these new habits was "defense diplomacy" which, beginning in the late 1980s, became a common, enduring, and popular American foreign policy repertoire. This dissertation focuses on Goldwater-Nichols, the emergence of defense diplomacy, and its institutionalization. This project places special emphasis on the US military's central and eastern European state-building and democratization efforts during the twilight of the Cold War and the dawn of the New World Order. This is a historical institutionalist account contributing to the literature on both the "militarization" of foreign policy as well as the "civilianization" of the military.

DEDICATION

For C who may have preferred a bird,

For I whose cards helped.

For the inspiring four who are relieved.

And, for W. Entirely.

.

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Though dissertations may indeed be a solitary effort but the most rewarding—and clarifying—moments were the collaborative ones. This project was conceived through many, long, and patient conversations with Chad Levinson who helped shape this and several other projects. For his interest, attention, and expert advice, I am forever grateful. Giselle Datz and Paul Avey were also essential to all aspects of this particular project, and they were also irreplaceable in the years leading up to it. I learned an enormous amount from these two educators and am deeply indebted to them for their patient support of this project. Gregory Winger answered an email from a stranger and was, without exaggeration, indispensable to this project. He is the dean of defense diplomacy studies and I am honored that he participated so fulsomely in this project helping me make it as thoughtful as I was able.

This project would simply not have been possible without important interviews and consultations with experts and witnesses to the history. I owe a debt of gratitude to James Locher for his patience and interest in supporting this project. His thoughtful participation and correspondence made clear to me that when defense and interagency foreign policy reforms return to the political agenda, that we have a solid foundation to draw from. Lee Alloway provided much of the string that knitted this dissertation together. His remarkable efforts as a defense diplomat were crucial to the United States' strategy to win the peace after the Cold War. Dirk Deverill allowed me to peak behind the curtain of the Joint Staff in the 1990s. He abided by the famous dictum to staff officers to, "work relentlessly, accomplish much, remain in the background, and be more than you seem." His insights, reminiscences, and anecdotes were particularly important in fleshing out the ways the reconfigured Joint Staff operated and provided much needed confidence on the overall direction of this project.

To my colleagues and peers, I am deeply appreciative of your friendship and support along the way. Rather than risking omission, I'll just note that I learned a great deal from each of you and am pleased to have been able to participate in your learning as you did mine.

To the custodians of our history at the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Presidential libraries, at the University of William and Mary, and at the Library of Congress, thank you. Outside the research community, few know how important you are to safeguarding our past and making it available to succeeding generations of investigators, like me.

Finally, I must acknowledge the great many exemplary leaders—of all ranks—that I have had the good fortune to serve with over these years. I participated in defense diplomacy with many of you and those experiences materially shaped how I perceive this institutional practice. The United States is able to wield military soft power because of your innate professionalism, kindness, and openness. For all your sacrifices and service, the nation owes a debt.

While many contributed to this project, none of them could do it for me. Had they been able to, it would have no doubt been better and shorter. Any errors, mountains, or molehills, are my own.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The means and habits of American foreign policy changed substantially in the last decade of the twentieth century. Beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, American statecraft took on new forms which have since grown in prominence. Chiefly among these is a seemingly novel set of military practices collectively described here as *defense diplomacy*. This refers to America's generally peacetime, non-coercive, and cooperative use of its military to construct and conduct foreign relations. Defense diplomacy is a category of practice that encompasses a broad array of individual means such as hosting foreign military officers to study at elite American military educational institutions, bi-/multilateral exercises,[1] exchange officer programs, conferences, security sector reform initiatives, and a variety of other military-to-military programs. These practices aim to strengthen the United States' relationship with a partner state and, crucially, to build that state in a manner that promotes both American power and values. Defense diplomacy is, therefore, a means of statecraft that privileges the military's role in foreign policy and statebuilding. It is a "Velvet Gauntlet" that is martial in form but peaceful in expression (Winger 2014).

The existence, function, and utility of defense diplomacy (or military soft power) implicates wide and diverse fields of study which extend beyond the United States.[2] However, persistent gaps remain in the scholarship. Notably, there remains a dearth of attention on the historical origins of this practice. A richer understanding of defense diplomacy requires an understanding of the institutional evolution of the US military—and broader foreign policy establishment—which gave rise to these contemporary United States foreign policy repertoires in the first place. It requires an understanding of where defense diplomacy came from. Often, contemporary studies of defense diplomacy assign paramount import to the

[1] This does not imply that every exercise is expressly a defense diplomatic initiative even if diplomacy is an important component of multi-national exercises. There are self-evident hard-power reasons to conduct multi-national exercises as well.

[2] Greg Kennedy's edited volume on Defense Engagement, for instance, is focused primarily on British defence engagement. His subject is largely on the evolving and historically contingent role of attaches over the course of the 20th century, but offers other important portraits of defense diplomacy as well (Kennedy 2020).

global war on terror (GWOT) and the "building partner capacity" programs wherein the Department of Defense was granted some independence from the Department of State in the provision of security assistance (Serafino in Adams and Murray 2014; McInnis and Lucas 2015). These analyses often describe American foreign policy as having been "militarized" and are attended by explicit and implicit critiques of the US military's (excessive) role in foreign affairs. Others focus on international system-level explanations to assert that defense diplomacy was a response to the absence of a rival power following the USSR's collapse (Itzkowitz Shifrinson 2018). Kyle Wolfley points out that defense diplomacy, especially multi-national exercises are a tool the United States uses to manage multipolarity (K. J. Wolfley 2021). Those more critical of the military's engagement role explain defense diplomacy as one example of a contemporary American "militarism" caused by the impersonal forces of bureaucratic politics and the delusions of liberal idealists and neoconservatives who hoped to bolster a global democratic peace with a more assertive American military presence abroad (Allison and Zelikow 1999; Bacevich 2013; Mearsheimer 2018; Schmidli 2022).

These explanations are important, useful, and incomplete. To truly understand why the United States donned the Velvet Gauntlet, it is essential to understand how and why it knit it in the first place. A more historically grounded account of American foreign policy evolution is required to reveal the initial and sustaining forces behind defense diplomacy. This project provides such an account through a historical institutionalist study of the development of American defense diplomacy in the contemporary era. Uniquely, this research goes beyond the conventional wisdom explanations on the causes of defense diplomacy and instead highlights the role of important structural changes to the US national security establishment in the mid to late 1980s. Namely, this research focuses on the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and highlights it as the critical juncture from which American defense diplomacy emerged. This project shines a spotlight on how the 1986 legislation shaped how the military, Congress, and the ambassadorial corps responded to the emerging post-Cold War world.

This research is about change in foreign policy. It does not conclude that defense diplomacy will come to represent *the* dominant form of American statecraft, nor does it claim that defense diplomacy is so locked-in that its appeal is unshakeable. To the contrary, this project uncovers both the forces that encourage defense diplomacy as well as those dynamics which might scuttle its overall appeal, both in the United States and among America's defense diplomacy "customers." If defense diplomacy represents important means of American soft power—as many convincingly argue—then policymakers and analysts would be wise to take seriously the foundations of such power, the sources of its strength and fragility.

The concept of defense diplomacy

The end of the Cold War upended the geostrategic landscape and presented American foreign policymakers with a host of challenges. Among the most significant was (re)defining the role of the United States' military in a post-Soviet world. Through much of the 1990s, this question centered on whether the military should remain focused on conventional, large-scale threats or instead embrace a "global policeman" role (Hillen 1997). The former was familiar and had the benefit of avoiding the negative Vietnam-era associations with nation-building. The latter captured aspirational hopes that in a world freed from Cold War security competition the United States might lead the international community in broad-based efforts to inhibit conflict, advance democracy, and improve the general human condition (Bush 1990b; Mackinnon 2000). While this debate between "Weinbergers" and "Albrights" rolled on, however, there was a significant, but somewhat subtle shift in the character of American foreign policy (C. L. Powell 1992).

This was the broadening of the US military's role in the world. Rather than simply wrestling with *when it should intervene*, the Pentagon began to address questions related to *how it should engage*. Intervention is a question of crisis response and contingency deployment. Engagement, meanwhile, reflects an institutional mindset that embraces persistent, active, peacetime cooperation as a core mission of the American military. Through the United States military's adaptations for engagement, the armed forces' core competencies broadened beyond warfighting (Sauer et al. 2015). Over the course of the post-

Cold War era, diplomacy itself became something of a military core competency of the United States military for which it was trained, socialized, and institutionalized.

There is much evidence of the steady increase in the military's peacetime engagement role from the 1990s through today. The number of American multinational military exercises is 700% higher than it was in 1991 (K. Wolfley 2018); the United States has nearly tripled the number of status of forces agreements it maintains with other countries since 1991 (Reveron 2016); the United States trained more than three times the number of foreign military officers annually by the mid-90s than it did at the end of the Cold War (DOD and DOS 2019; FAS 2003); each US regional combatant command developed its own academic study and defense diplomatic outreach center to acculturate senior defense officials from around the world (Defense Security Cooperation Agency 2022); and the number of foreign exchange officers staffing American military commands, intelligence sharing agreements, and collaborative conferences are all up sharply in terms of substance and frequency (DeVine 2019; Kicza 2019). These activities do not obviously accord with Huntington's view that the military's business is (solely) the "management of violence" (Huntington 1985, 11). Indeed, this growth in peacetime collaboration following the end of the Cold War suggests the US military may have evolved to be a multi-purpose tool of statecraft capable of managing a broader portfolio than "kill[ing] people and break[ing] things" (Refferty 2016).

The effects of this broadening role of the American military are significant and widespread. Some foreign policy observers woefully concluded that these trends represent a creeping militarization of American foreign policy which will consistently lead to a more bellicose, confrontational, and (self)destructive style of statecraft (Adams and Murray 2014). Reaching similar conclusions, but from the opposite starting point, it is not difficult to find military leaders expressing profound skepticism on the purposes of defense diplomacy while concluding that such activities "consume readiness," sap the armed forces' warfighting capabilities, and turn the military into a collection of social workers (Gentile 2013). Finally, others worry that as the military engages more diplomatically, it will increasingly focus on

development and statebuilding. By doing so, the US military's developmental/state-building role will challenge the sovereignty of recipient states by bypassing *de jure* but ineffective government actors in favor of empowering sub-national *de facto* sources of authority and coercive power (Reno 2018). In this assessment, American defense diplomacy is something of a slippery slope as it is innately tied to state-building and therefore the promotion and enforcement of order. Scholars should not lightly dismiss any of these concerns about either the effects of or dynamics related to defense diplomacy. Indeed, there is a strong indication that they are each valid, up to a point, in informing the discussion surrounding this foreign policy phenomenon.

It is important to bear in mind that defense diplomacy is not a policy *per se*, but rather a set of repertoires. For every critic of these diplomatic tools, there are also proponents. These tools are authorized by Congress and are subject to a statutory review and approval process (Serafino 2016). Many government officials and analysts from across the ideological spectrum would point to defense diplomacy as providing America's foreign policy institutions the means necessary to engage with the world in ways that are mutually beneficial, legally sound, and in-keeping with the finest traditions of American liberal values (Rapp-Hooper 2020).

These debates about the nature and consequences of defense diplomacy evoke the idea of an essentially contested concept. At its core, defense diplomacy relates to the use of military means to engage with partners and allies. Critics from across the ideological spectrum find reasons to be skeptical about these means. Some will point to the poor outcomes of the GWOT (Gentile 2013), the diminution of the civilian foreign policy agencies (Gates 2008), the bloating of the American defense budget (Adams and Murray 2014), the fears of an unaccountable foreign policy deep state (Kaplan 2013), or the United States' increasingly tense relations with Russia or China as reasons to guard against (and repel) a militarization of diplomacy (Thornton 2019).

Proponents of defense diplomacy will point to the potential to liberalize, democratize, and professionalize partner governments through military engagement (Cossaboom 1997), the strengthening

of the breadth and depth of American alliances via military-to-military contacts (Martinez Machain 2020; Rapp-Hooper 2020), and to the *bon homie* socialization made possible when uniformed officials nurture a common affinity at the individual and group levels thereby making interstate cooperation more likely and more durable (Atkinson 2015). Defense diplomacy is thus an essentially contested concept in terms of what its critics and proponents choose to emphasize about it. Focusing on any individual aspect—or instance—of defense diplomacy will yield different conclusions of its worth and place in foreign policy.

Similarly, the universe of activities that constitute defense diplomacy is also subject to interpretation. Some might define military exercises as not constitutive of defense diplomacy. They would argue that exercises are first and foremost about developing increased warfighting capability and the production of lethal potential for yourself and your allies. Others would highlight that this is sometimes true, and other times not. That some exercises are designed to produce lethality and others to produce friendships at the national, organizational, and personal levels (K. J. Wolfley 2021). Similarly, it is not always easy to distinguish when foreign military education is focused on the transfer of technical knowledge about martial affairs and when it is about state building (Savage and Caverley 2017). Isolating what is, and what is not, defense diplomacy requires going beyond the deliberately technical definitions of related terms and activities—such as security assistance, security cooperation, alliance, partnerships, shaping, and engagement—and drawing out the intent of a specific activity at a specific point in time. Defense diplomacy often lies in the eye of the beholder. It is often in the interest of its proponents to cast these activities in less diplomatic and more discrete capability-producing language lest they be accused of veering into the domain of diplomats. Conversely, it can be to the benefit of diplomats to justify using the military to advance diplomatic relations by using the language of peaceful engagement rather than that of producing increased lethality.

Given this variance in understanding and interpretation of defense diplomacy, an analytic study of the topic is certainly tricky. This study does start with an explicit definition of defense diplomacy that is broad enough to cover a wide range of activities while deliberately excluding others. Here, the focus of

defense diplomacy is on the *non-coercive, peacetime, and cooperative use of the military to conduct and construct inter-state relations.* This definition includes several modifiers that are important to the study of defense diplomacy but they do not delimit the entire universe of defense diplomacy activities. Instead, these modifiers serve to focus our attention on an ideal type of defense diplomacy that is a unique product of the post-Cold War era. It is quite possible to conduct defense diplomacy in war time, but it will not come as a surprise that in times of conflict, the military does more. This project is more interested in the military being more diplomatically active in times of peace, hence the focus on the "non-coercive, peacetime, and cooperative."

Security issues are likely to be the most important aspects of any bilateral relation during war and diplomatic initiatives like World War II's Lend-Lease or contemporary US-Ukraine security assistance could credibly be considered to be defense diplomacy, or at least adjacent to it. It is important, therefore, to consider what is gained by excluding coercive, wartime, and heavy-handed defense engagements from the study. This conceptual whittling leaves us with a focus on inter-state relations characterized by volunteerism on both/all sides. These relations are conducted through modes of engagement designed to be attractive, not punitive. They are premised on conceptions of sovereign equality and a general hope that cooperation will yield absolute gains for all parties without being necessarily threatening or hostile to other parties. While defense diplomatic means may be employed in situations that do not comport with the definition above, this study will focus on how such means originate and become institutionalized for peacetime use. After all, it is not surprising that the military figures prominently in times of war and fear. It is, however, noteworthy when it does so in times of peace and optimism.

Research question and plan of the project

The trends enumerated above are puzzling. Why has the United States undertaken such a bi-/multilateral exercise portfolio spanning every region of the world even where security issues are muted? Why does America invest so much in the education of foreign military officers when it seems it should be more concerned with the civilian governance capacity and economic development of its partners? Why

develop close and potentially intimate ties with a raft of small states whose domestic security challenges present a temptation for the United States to become entrapped in their domestic political squabbles? These and other questions all point to a larger puzzle that focuses our attention on the broader phenomenon: *why did the United States embrace defense diplomacy following the Cold War?*

This research finds an answer to this question in two historical events. The first is the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. This legislation was sweeping and historic marking the most significant adjustment to the United States' national security apparatus since the National Security Act of 1947. A principal consequence of this legislation was to alter the configurations of power within the US military and broader US national security apparatus in ways that favored the development of defense diplomacy. For this project, the relative policy merits of the legislation are not a primary concern. Instead, this research will evaluate what caused the reforms, that is, what were the motivations of the reformers. The goal here is to demonstrate that the long-tail effects of the legislation on American defense diplomatic repertoires were unintentional. Additionally, this research is interested in how the power configurations among US national security institutions changed as a result of the legislation.

The second historical process under examination here is the development of one particular defense diplomatic practice: bilateral military-to-military exchanges. Specifically, this research examines the development of US European Command's (EUCOM) Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP). Initiated as the Soviet Union was dissolving, the JCTP was an American military statebuilding effort that hoped to aid in the democratization of central and eastern Europe. Neither the efficacy nor the wisdom of this program is at stake here. Instead, this research is primarily concerned with why and how this program was developed in the first place. This project identifies the driving logic and impetus behind the program itself, the patrons who supported it, and the detractors who resisted it. The JCTP was the quintessential military-to-military exchange program of the 1990s. Though other types of defense diplomacy existed prior to the JCTP, this program was new, novel, and uniquely derivative of Goldwater-Nichols. It was

influential in the development of successor programs that exist to this day, and it served as the proof-of-concept for the military's new role in peacetime diplomacy, state-building, and soft power.

What follows is a historically grounded, theoretically driven exploration of American foreign policy institutional development. Through a narrow focus on one legislative reform effort, and one (relatively small) program, this project highlights the role of structure in influencing government behavior. It underscores how the unintentional consequences of legislative reforms become sticky and embedded. The story of defense diplomacy's development is neither tragedy nor comedy. While there may be many critics that lament the US military's diplomatic role, there are others who promote it. The point of this project is not to bolster either position. Rather, it is explanatory. The driving purpose here is to uncover the historically contingent processes which created this pattern of behavior. Defense diplomacy is common in American foreign policy. It is a part of the United States' foreign policy repertoire in the sense that it is a core part of a stock of tools the nation takes abroad. Understanding, therefore, from where it springs is of intrinsic value to analysts, policymakers, and foreign affairs professionals in general. Moreover, as legislators and senior officials consider reforms to other foreign policy agencies such as the intelligence community, the diplomatic agencies, and again to the defense department, they should pay heed to the types of consequences illuminated here. New configurations of power will cause new habits, often in unpredictable and unintended ways.

This dissertation is presented in the following manner. First, this introduction is augmented with a review of the appropriate literature to situate it within various fields and conversations relevant to the theory. The second chapter presents the full theory of American defense diplomacy development along with a brief discussion of the research methods used. Next, Chapter 3 is a substantive chapter focusing on the origins of the Goldwater-Nichols Act and broader 1980s defense reform efforts. This chapter should be read with the understanding the phenomenon in question—American defense diplomacy—did not exist in its current form during the period under examination. Chapter 3 presents the motivations of Congressional defense reorganization advocates to demonstrate that while they aimed at several purposes,

remaking the military into a diplomatic tool was not one of them. They did hope that the military would take up a larger role in national strategy production, and this had important ramifications for defense diplomacy, but fashioning the military into a soft power, public diplomacy tool was never a goal. This chapter also presents the key statutory changes within Goldwater-Nichols that led to defense diplomacy and describes important aspects of the law's implementation which influenced defense diplomacy's development.

Chapter 4 presents the ways that the structural changes to the military from Goldwater-Nichols influenced the development of defense diplomacy. This chapter emphasizes the way the end of the Cold War interacted with the organizational reconfiguration of the military to produce defense diplomacy. This chapter focuses solely on the Joint Contact Team Program to demonstrate these effects and does not address other forms of defense diplomacy. Because the JCTP was new post-Goldwater-Nichols, because it was fashioned expressly for defense diplomacy, and because it was the progenitor of enduring defense diplomacy programs active to this day, it is appropriate to focus only on this one expression of the phenomenon. Evidence presented in Chapter 4 shines a spotlight on the proponents of the JCTP as well as the detractors. Approaching the program's development from these two vantages allows for a fuller examination of the mechanisms that reproduce defense diplomacy as well as those that might undercut its appeal. Finally, the fifth chapter concludes this project while offering the reader some direction on areas in need of further research.

Literature review

This project is inherently multidisciplinary. It draws on several different academic fields and paradigms to contribute to the study of American foreign policy. To evaluate alternative explanations for the development of defense diplomacy and to draw insights into the drivers of state behavior, this project must review the relevant literature from several international relations paradigms, namely neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, liberalism, bureaucratic politics, and constructivism. The goal is not an exhaustive presentation of the state of these fields, far from it. It is instead simply to foreground this

project with key canonical insights from the existing literature. Next, and not surprisingly, this research is essentially concerned with the defense diplomacy literature itself and will therefore situate this contribution to that body of knowledge. Finally, this project draws on the fields of organizational behavior and historical institutionalism to better understand why large organizations do what they do and why they change. Multidisciplinary research is rewarding but incurs the risk of skimming. By grasping widely, it is possible to not go deeply enough into any one of the fields addressed here. There is no doubt that this project is impoverished for want of a deeper and fuller appreciation of these fields. However, the level of penetration presented here is sufficient and rich enough to anchor the project to answer the question of where defense diplomacy came from.

International relations and defense diplomacy

The genesis of this project was the intuition that contemporary American defense diplomacy could not be fully explained within the major international relations paradigms. While they each provided insights as well as partial explanations, they were not able to fully describe the role of defense diplomacy in the contemporary sense nor the development of it as part of a historical process. That is because defense diplomacy is something of a cross-cutting form of statecraft that emerges largely from within the state itself. Though the international system influences it, it is produced at and below the state-level. More concretely, American defense diplomacy does not fit within the major international relations paradigms because it is a quirk of American foreign policy. It is partially explained by several theories but requires its own particularized explanation to provide a middle-range theory of this one peculiar habit of the United States.[3] This section evaluates defense diplomacy and its place in the literature of neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, liberalism, constructivism, and bureaucratic politics.

Neorealism and defense diplomacy

[3] This is not to say that other countries do not employ defense diplomacy, they do (Allen, Saunders, and Chen 2017; Kennedy 2020). But American defense diplomacy is unique in that it was at the vanguard in fashioning this new role for general purpose forces and not just for the specialized attaché corps, special forces, attaches, or schoolhouses.

Neo- or structural realism is not particularly concerned with defense diplomacy as a phenomenon of international relations. This is because, in the main, neorealists are less interested in cooperative forms of state behavior than they are in competitive ones. More importantly, these theories are generally uninterested in sub-national actors. John Mearsheimer put this bluntly in his canonical, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, where he wrote, "[Realist theories pay] little attention to individuals or domestic political considerations such as ideology. [They tend] to treat states like black boxes or billiard balls." (Mearsheimer 2003, 10–11) As the leading offensive realist, Mearsheimer argues that all states fear destruction and have few reliable means to prevent such an outcome other than maximizing their own power. For Mearsheimer, the best defense is a good offense. In this environment, the ultimate concern of great powers is accumulating military and economic capability to cow all potential rivals into subservience and to deter them from ever entering into a competition in the first place.

There are several reasons why this theory is of limited utility to this project. First, offensive realism is primarily concerned with the behavior of "great powers," because, "these states dominate and shape international politics and they also cause the deadliest wars." (Mearsheimer 2003, 17) This focus is entirely reasonable, but not when evaluating the foreign policy choices of small, weak states, such as the central and eastern European states that are central to this study. Furthermore, offensive realism is primarily concerned with great power competition, war, or the potential for war. The period under study occurred in the shadow of the Cold War, but at a time when such concerns were further from policymakers' minds than an offensive realist might assume. Finally, this project is interested in the behavior of specific, sub-state actors and institutions. This level of analysis is simply not of concern to offensive realists.

Defensive realists share many of the same insights. They affirm the fundamental logic of anarchy as the key organizing force of the international system. Furthermore, they acknowledge that states fear destruction and that aversion to annihilation (in the extreme) essentially drives all foreign policy decisions—or at least it should. Defensive realists differ from the Mearsheimerian school, however, in

that they accept that states are not perfectly comparable. They relate to one another in different ways; they perceive some states as threats, others as non-threats, and others as potential future threats. Whereas Mearsheimer would suggest that states balance-against-power, Walt suggests they balance against threats (Walt 1990). That is, their perception of other states drives the degree to which they engage in arms racing with them, whether they attempt to form coalitions to balance against them, or whether they bandwagon along with them. So, both neorealist schools place a premium on the defense against loss (of power, territory, sovereignty, or existence) being the primary motivator for foreign policy. Mearsheimer says this drives states to maximize their power whereas Walt argues it encourages them to maximize their security. Either way, the iron logic of anarchy drives these impulses. States cannot depend on a night watchman for ultimate security and therefore must employ self-help to defend themselves (Waltz 1979).

As relates to defense diplomacy, neorealist explanations are most useful in studying alliances. In particular, Walt's explanations of bandwagoning and balancing do indeed explain some of the preferences of the former Warsaw Pact and newly independent Soviet republics (Walt 1990). As the USSR collapsed, it is easy to interpret their pursuit of close relations with the United States and NATO as a means of bandwagoning with the US hegemon to join in the benefits of the emerging Pax Americana while also balancing against the threat of potential Soviet revanchism (Wivel 2008). These states viewed the early 1990s as a brief window of opportunity to align with the West and thereby enhance their security from their long-time imperial overlord, the Soviets (Stefanowicz 1995). Given the United States' geographic distance and reputation as a "benign hegemon," former USSR satellites likely felt comfortable enlisting the United States in a long-term commitment to their security and independence. This point of view certainly explains some of the motivation on the "demand" side of defense diplomacy from Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest.

By expanding its web of relations to the central and eastern European states, the United States, according to neorealists, was securing its hegemony over the global order.[4] Faced with a declining rival, states are incentivized to, as Shifrinson puts it, "predate" upon them. That is, to accelerate their rival's demise and to make its downfall irreversible (Itzkowitz Shifrinson 2020). Neorealists would generally argue that this expansion—especially NATO enlargement—was imprudent. The US predation over the former Soviet empire and its expansion into the Soviet sphere was an overextension. It was a "capricious" power grab by the United States whereby it sought to expand its power beyond any objective need (Waltz 2000, 24). Therefore, while realists denied the prudence of the United States' expansion into the former Soviet empire, they explained it as a predictable consequence of the anarchic international system. Because the United States sought to maximize its power and because these states sought to defend themselves against a revitalized Soviet Union/Russian empire, both found appeal in growing the American sphere of influence.

Neorealist theoretical insights are less useful in explaining the behavior of state leaders on a more micro-level. For a project focused on institutional development, they offer an important systemic backdrop, but not much else. If the United States was solely interested in growing its power and influence, why was defense diplomacy such an attractive tool? True, it is both martial and peaceful at once and this adds a theoretically valid appeal to policymakers, but this explanation falls short when it assumes that American power maximization was the goal beforehand. The primary weakness of these neorealist explanations it that they assume the United States was pursuing "grand plans" to predate upon the USSR and that the United States arrived at these grand plans via an objective, rational, forthright strategic decision-making process (Silove 2018). Such assumptions are not obtained in the empirical record. The United States did not select defense diplomacy as a deliberate tool toward these ends and the practice instead arose organically via the confluence of several unique dynamics. It was not clearly driven

[4] Though Mearsheimer would argue that the United States was not acting with such intention but was instead following misguided Liberal intuitions ("delusions") to spread democracy without making concessions to the great power interests of Russia (Mearsheimer 2003).

by the White House and instead seems to have been largely the invention of foreign governments, US ambassadors, military commanders, and the CJCS. Whereas neorealists prize the role of the unitary state in determining the course of the policy, the story of defense diplomacy instead points to the role of sub-state actors. Actors that often dwell, as Winger puts it, "below the level of political elites" (Winger 2021).

Neoliberal institutionalism and defense diplomacy

Neoliberal institutionalism offers useful insights concerning the logic of defense diplomacy as a foreign policy tool, but its utility is also limited. Primarily, these limitations stem from the first principles upon which liberal institutionalism rests. By intentionally adopting the neorealist assumption that states function as "rational egoists" seeking to maximize their utility in international politics, the institutionalists import some of the weaknesses described above (Keohane 1984, 29). The institutionalists aimed to demonstrate that while neorealists were right in many ways about the drivers of state behavior, they vastly underestimated (or rather dismissed entirely (Mearsheimer 1994)) the role of institutions as mediators of anarchy. An institutionalist approach to the study of defense diplomacy, therefore, might usefully examine the gains (both relative and absolute) of this form of state interaction and provide an assessment as to the degree to which such interaction improves a state's position. However, such an approach is limited in its ability to explain the emergence of this behavior in the first place. Explaining the change—how defense diplomacy came about—is the central question for this project and while neoliberal institutionalism points to key insights as to why states might prefer it, it does not tell us how they started it or how it is sustained within government.

Another weakness of the neoliberal institutionalist literature when it comes to the study of defense diplomacy is that this subject is too small. It is not a "regime" unto itself in that it is not its own "issue area" (Keohane 1984, 61). Instead, defense diplomacy is a means of cooperation, a tool, available to policymakers for uses within multiple issue areas. Defense diplomatic tools are part of alliance building and maintenance, they are part of the international arms trade, they are part of security promotion, they part of democratization and liberalization, and they are at times purely diplomatic and transactional. And

though defense diplomatic tools have a role in each of these endeavors, they do not lash them together. Arms sales do not necessitate exercise participation or military school attendance; a bilateral visit and non-commissioned officer exchange have no direct relation to alliance membership. Defense diplomacy tools may be compartmentalized and deployed separately in different issue areas for different purposes. Therefore, specific international regimes may have their own defense diplomacy expressions that sometimes appear at cross-purposes.

Defense diplomacy does play an important role in shaping the nature of certain international regimes, but it is not—by itself—constitutive of these regimes. Unlike formal treaties for instance or widely held popular political beliefs, defense diplomacy is unlikely to forge a regime or be its primary component. Krasner defines regimes as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor's expectations converge in a given area of international relations." (Krasner 1982) By leaving regime-thinking open to implicit norms and procedures, Krasner's concept describes the ways states interact with one another as being constitutive of the international landscape. In his concept, defense diplomacy would be a form of "patterned behavior" based on "actual practice; custom, to a long-standing practice." It is a "routinized behavior" which was "originally generated purely by considerations of interest or power, [but has] a strong tendency to lead to shared expectations. Pattered behavior accompanied by shared expectations is likely to become infused with normative significance[.]" (Krasner 1982, 202) Adopting this conception of defense diplomacy allows for a more fulsome appreciation of its role in world politics and the manner in which it was developed. The types of international political-military intercourse described here—education, training, exercises, and visits—provide some of the "base material of regimes" but are not regimes themselves (Krasner 1982).

As a final word on the role of institutionalist literature in this study, it is important to acknowledge Keohane's conception of military cooperation and security institutions and how they relate to defense diplomacy. Considering NATO, Keohane wrote, "American leadership in the world political economy did not exist in isolation from NATO" and that the United States could only have "constructed a

liberal-capitalist world political economy based on…rules that the United States approved" because it did so "in the shelter of its military strength." (Keohane 1984, 136–37) For Keohane, NATO and the hard American military power that undergirded it were essential conditions to build the cooperative, multi-lateral, liberal economic order that made positive-sum cooperation possible in the first place. Writing later with Martin, Keohane went further to stipulate that, "Institutionalist theory should be highly applicable to security issues because its argument revolves around the role of institutions in providing *information.*" (Keohane and Martin 1995, 43) Information is central to institutionalists as they explain *why* states use institutions. Information is the primary product of these institutions, far more important than goodwill and friendship, which enables these states to pursue the absolute gains they seek. If international trade and finance institutions provide information, what do security institutions provide?

Keohane points out that the key institutional role in the provisioning of information is the reduction of "asymmetries" between what one partner knows compared to the other (Keohane 1984, 94). With regard to defense diplomacy, interaction between militaries reduces misapprehension and helps clarify to both parties the relative capabilities of the forces beyond what is decipherable via satellite imagery or by watching Potemkin parades (Shultz and Brimelow 2022). Furthermore, this sort of interaction is likely to transmit important information about the institutional culture of one military to another so that these individuals gain insight into how these players conceive of their political role, how they conceive of other nations, and how they conceive of military operations in general. In sum, defense diplomacy transmits information that goes far beyond tactical knowledge or technical skill. These sorts of interactions transmit knowledge and fluency about the nature of the state itself through their militaries. Unique from the information provided in formal alliances, however—such as NATO—bi-lateral military relations send a signal of comity between states but are not necessarily freighted with an implied set of security obligations. The information is less about assuring one another that they will mutually defend one another, but more focused on providing a fuller picture of the nature of the partner state and its internal dynamics.

The application of this to defense diplomacy is useful but only up to a point. First to its utility. Using Keohane's logic that states are rational egoists sharing information to achieve absolute gains, defense diplomacy becomes a deliberate stratagem undertaken by one state (the United States, in this case) to solidify its hegemonic role. Its partners (weaker states) seek to join the hegemon's broader order to benefit from the commercial and security benefits of membership. This is not unlike the bandwagoning logic of realists (Walt 1990). The Joint Contact Team Program was indeed attractive to all sides for these reasons. The United States hoped to secure its place as a leading entity in Europe, and the aspirant states of central and eastern Europe hoped for security and prosperity via hegemonic association (Bush and Goncz 1990). Leaders of these states feared that if they did not deliver the economic spoils of freedom and democracy to their population, then their democratic experiments would be short-lived, and a new generation of autocrats would rise to fill the Soviets' shoes. Here Keohane's logic is clearly applicable. The United States would certainly welcome new entrants into its economic order thereby adding markets and opportunities. The states sought such connections hoping to improve their own position. This would be a positive-sum bargain for all involved.

The weakness of this Keohanian line of thinking in explaining defense diplomacy, however, lies in the overall "source code" of liberal institutionalism. That is, because it bases its tenets on the neorealist fundamentals of an anarchic international order, of self-help, and of a rational and unitary state, liberal institutionalism fails to explain behaviors that seemed to emerge on their own accord without scheming at the executive level. The decision to engage in defense diplomacy does not appear to have been the deliberate strategy of a unitary state. Instead, as will be shown, it was the negotiated outcome whereby dedicated proponents maneuvered to launch specific initiatives to solve specific problems. One might contend that the United States created and led a "liberalization regime" in the 1990s that was inclusive of all of its foreign policies and that defense diplomacy was merely an expression of that overall policy. This, indeed, appears to have been the case. The question that remains, however, is how this new pattern of behavior emerged and how its emergence related to an institutional transformation within the United

States military. In other words, just because neoliberal institutionalism's underlying logic on *why* the United States and partner states might want a JCTP-style program at the end of the Cold War, the approach does not explain *how* this new tool of liberalization was fashioned in the first place.

Liberalism and defense diplomacy

A focus on how a state's internal politics determine its foreign policy is crucial to understanding the development of defense diplomacy. This goes beyond Waltz's "second image" view of state behavior and simple depictions of regime type to the social formation of policy preferences within states (Waltz 1959). There are three general strands of liberalist literature important to this study. The first is Moravcsik's conception of liberalism which privileges [domestic] preference formation as the primary causal variable in determining a state's foreign policy. The second is the more ideological form of liberalism championed by Ikenberry as "liberal internationalism" which focuses on the Western, liberal political tradition as a determinant of foreign policy (Ikenberry 2020). Finally, the last strand focused on democratization and state-building as highly desirable ends, worthy of pursuit (Fukuyama 2004). This is not a unified body of literature. Indeed, this catchall of liberalism implicates diverse strains of thought ranging from the neoconservative on the one hand and the humanitarian interventionist on the other (Barnett 2011; Kagan 2018). The aim of this brief sampling of this variegated literature is not a thorough review. Rather it is simply to highlight the strands of thought which have proven useful in framing and influencing this particular investigation into the development of defense diplomacy.

Andrew Moravcsik provides one of the least value-laden presentations of liberal theory. In his framework, liberal theory "explain[s] foreign policy and interstate interactions by looking to the way varied social interests and values shape the underlying 'preferences' states pursue." (Moravcsik 2010, 1)

Moravcsik's conceptions of liberalism stand out somewhat amongst related authors because his presentation of liberalism is expressly "nonideological and nonutopian" (Moravcsik 1997, 513).[5]

Though Moravcsik's theory of liberalism is nuanced and complex, only a few aspects bear mentioning here. First is the sequential order in which he argues foreign policy is developed. It is "bottom-up" beginning with the idea that the very motivation to participate in international politics stems from globalization. Globalization is an ever-present force or "universal condition" that "gives societal groups with assets or ideals an interest in the behavior of other states." These groups form "issue specific functional interdependence within transnational networks of individuals and social groups" (Moravcsik 2010, 2–3). These interdependent motivations between individuals within different states feed into the sate preferences themselves. "States," he argues, "represent some subset of domestic society, whose views about optimal management or regulation of globalization constitute state preferences." (Moravcsik 2010, 2). Finally, he contends that once these individual state preferences collide and collude with those of other states, that an "interdependent distribution of…preferences of various states dictate their behavior." (Moravcsik 2010, 4).

This concept of state preference formation does not deny the fundamentals of realism or institutionalism but simply adds far more voices to the chorus of determining the national interest. As opposed to this being the obvious product of the distribution of power or information, liberalism contends that state preferences are far more contingent and generated by the configuration of political actors domestically. It helps explain what Krasner alluded to when he discussed why regimes form. He wrote, "Regimes do not arise of their own accord[.]" suggesting that they arise from some other state-motivation (Krasner 1982). Moravcsik suggests that those motivations go deeper than the state and reflect the preferences of specific people, groups, and institutions within a given society.

[5] Moravcsik uses "liberalism" to focus on the study of sub-state actors and preferences in the formulation of foreign policy and not to refer to the "liberal" traditions of the European enlightenment, per se (such as free markets, private property, the rule of law, minority protections, democratic governance, etc).

Moravcsik's work is important to frame this project insofar as the development of defense diplomacy is about the development of democratization and liberalization as national goals of the United States. These "national goals" are not the simple byproduct of strategic analysis, but rather they are the preferences of the American polity. President George H.W. Bush gave many speeches to American ethnic communities with a passionate interest in spreading freedom and democracy in central Europe. Indeed, his speech to the Polish American community in Hamtramck, Michigan was a foundational policy-making speech within his administration (Bush 1989d). His solicitation of and response to the political preferences of the Hamtramck and similar communities shaped the policies pursued by members of his administration. Responding to the preferences of these communities became national policy. Moravcsik would call this "ideational liberalism" which "stresses the impact on state behavior of conflict and compatibility among collective social values or identities concerning the scope and nature of public goods provision." (Moravcsik 1997, 515) The preferences for deep interaction between the United States and these states were not, however, solely driven by the ethnic communities in the United States. Rather, the domestic populations of the European states themselves were eager to engage with the United States as broadly and deeply as possible. Specifically, American military personnel were intensely popular in central Europe and there was a widespread preference for more and deeper interaction with the American military.

Moravcsik's theory also describes other, contributing domestic motivations for defense diplomacy. As will be shown, American firms sought increased investment and market opportunities in central and eastern Europe while those new democracies were desperate for the economic growth they hoped would come quickly with democratization and liberalization. On both sides of this equation, there was an exuberance to deepen all manner of ties so that these new states might develop stable and secure markets. This describes Moravcsik's "commercial liberalism" which is focused on "the impact on state behavior of gains and losses to individuals and groups in society from transnational economic interchange." (Moravcsik 1997, 515). Additionally, and crucially, Moravcsik's conception of "republic

liberalism" is crucial in framing defense diplomacy in that it zeroes in on "the impact on state behavior of varying forms of domestic representation and the resulting incentives for social groups to engage in rent seeking." (Moravcsik 1997, 515) This sets up a common critique of defense diplomacy that it is simply a bureaucratic power grab and maneuver by the US military to assign itself new missions, and therefore more power and influence. Given that liberalism is focused on how one state's preferences configure with another's, there is an analog to how foreign militaries seek deep interaction with the US military as a means of enhancing their domestic institutional status as well as the personal status of the officials engaged in defense diplomacy. In each of these three forms of Moravcsik's liberalism, therefore, it is possible to find a rationale explaining defense diplomacy.

Ikenberry's "liberal internationalism" is a prescriptive and descriptive guide for international relations. He contends that liberal internationalism is the "cluster of ideas about how to build world order—starting with the liberal democracies—to realize the gains from modernity and guard against its dangers." (Ikenberry 2020, xviii) It is liberal in that its core values are those of the Enlightenment tradition and it is progressive in that it assumes democratic governance has a mediating role in responding to and managing modernity. For Ikenberry, liberal internationalism is a pragmatic international relations strategy aimed at making possible international cooperation in a way that promotes the success of liberal democracies and thereby promotes human flourishing to the greatest extent possible. He argues this project is non-utopian because it acknowledges that modernity and human intercourse will always bring new political conflicts. Nevertheless, Ikenberry notes that the liberal international order is good and should be maintained and strengthened. The order allows those states on the inside "to be more secure and more prosperous." To be part of a "sort of moral community" (Ikenberry 2020, 210). Liberal states joined together through the shared policies of liberal internationalism, were made secure through collective security arrangements such as NATO along with other forms of security cooperation and they were made prosperous by economic openness, trade, and capitalism at home.

Ikenberry's work adds contemporary support for a point of view that was common in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Namely, it is a return to the type of welcoming, jubilant liberalism championed by the Bush and Clinton administrations that sought to use democratization and liberalization as means of engaging and enlarging the liberal international order and making peace more durable and prosperous (Maoz and Russett 1993). The early 1990s were a period of enormous change; they were a period where modernity posed many challenges. Technological and political shocks begged for government action to mediate and manage them. The United States, its partners, allies, and even adversaries acknowledged that the pace of change was "dizzying" and liberal democracy seemed an appealing tool to, as Ikenberry would put it, "manage modernity" (Gates 1990; Ikenberry 2020).

The final strand of liberalism important to the study of defense diplomacy is that of state-building and political development. Famously dubbed by Francis Fukuyama as the "End of History," this period saw a general sentiment that liberal democracy had proved itself as the best means of organizing human society and the one most likely to promote the greatest degree possible of prosperity, happiness, and peace. Fukuyama's argument was essentially Churchill's aphorism that, "democracy is the worse form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried[.]" (Churchill 1947). Fukuyama warned that both nationalism and theocratism posed potential future threats to liberalism but noted that both these phenomena could be accommodated within a well-managed liberal democratic society because, "While they may constitute a source of conflict for liberal societies, this conflict does not arise from liberalism itself so much as from the fact that the liberalism in question is incomplete." (Fukuyama 1989, 15). Fukuyama wrote that while the End of History was a joyous occasion, it would also be characterized by "boredom." This ennui would stem from a dynamic where the big questions had been solved, the major battles fought, and "the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of consumer demands." (Fukuyama 1989, 17)

This sort of technocratism implied by Fukuyama was certainly evident in defense diplomacy. In the immediate post-Cold War era, the US military attempted to refashion former Warsaw Pact militaries in ways that converted their destructive potential to domestic utility. They would be warehouses where certain key technical skills were nurtured and maintained (disaster response, civil engineering, air traffic control, etc.) and were these potentially violent institutions were firmly subordinate to civilian politicians and technocrats. This impulse to build state institutions that are effective and pro-social previews Fukuyama's later argument on the need for state-building to focus on "competence" (Fukuyama 2004). Thinking of defense diplomacy as a state-building tool continues to undergird its rationale as a foreign policy tool that is unique from and irreplaceable by the ideal-type of civilian-to-civilian ambassadorial diplomacy (Reno 2018).

Fukuyama's contributions to the study of defense diplomacy are therefore all about their descriptive power to portray the consensus thinking at the time. Military officials, Congressional leaders, ambassadors, and foreign leaders all believed, in line with Fukuyama, that: major power war was highly unlikely, that militaries served social, political, and practical purposes, that the US military could play a key role in molding the militaries of central and eastern Europe into agents of positive democratic change and stability. Defense diplomacy, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, was developed as a tool of liberal democratic state-building, first and foremost. It was a way to ensure that history did not return.

Taken as a whole, this varied, yet complimentary liberal literature is particularly useful for encouraging a rich and historically contingent study of American foreign policy behavior. Realist and institutionalist theories are parsimonious and often adequate providing a logical framework to interpret defense diplomacy, but they do not satisfy in fully describing the socio-political context within which these tools were developed. Liberalism-inspired analyses, however, do. They encourage such an investigation to observe the commercial interests on both sides of a bi-lateral relationship that want to see US-European interaction broadened and deepened. They drive a researcher to question the moral and

ideological beliefs of both polities to see what role "attraction" played in suggesting deeper partnership (Nye Jr. 2004). They further suggest that analysts studying state behavior pay particular attention to the preferences and structural determinants of preferences of key groups within the government to discover the forces that caused them to prefer and promote certain courses of action. Observing the development of defense diplomacy on these levels leads to an analysis that is richer and historical but also theoretically grounded.

Constructivism and defense diplomacy

Constructivist ways of thinking about international relations are of obvious benefit to the study of defense diplomacy. Constructivists are concerned, in large measure, with the production and promulgation of norms. They are interested in how norms and patterns of international behavior are socially constructed by a broad array of actors both inside and outside state apparatuses. In the study of defense diplomacy, a few key concepts are useful. These are epistemic communities, security communities, and social construction. First, are the notions of "epistemic communities" (Haas 1992). As described by Haas, these are "networks of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area." (1992, 3) The US military found itself in a leadership role within the worldwide community of military professionals in the early 1990s. Its battlefield successes in Panama and Kuwait (especially) imbued it with an aura of excellence in military affairs making it a desirable partner for the militaries of central and eastern Europe who lacked confidence in their abilities and those of their former patron, the USSR (Alloway 2022). Through the maturation of various defense diplomacy tools, the United States military was able to establish its position as the nation that defined the cultural and doctrinal preferences for "professional" militaries all over the world.

When Karl Deutsch coined the term "security communities," he thought of a grouping of states in which "there is real assurance that the members…will not fight each other physically but will settle their

disputes in some other way." (Deutsch 1968, 5) Deutsch argued that states that are pluralistic and open themselves would opt for international political structures that were as well. Pluralism acted as a key promoter of political integration among states. He wrote, "this policy concentrates upon increasing the machinery and traditions of mutual consultation, communication, and cooperation. It seeks to eliminate all expectations of warfare among [the members.]" (Deutsch 1968) Deutsch describes a primary end of defense diplomacy: the binding together of separate national militaries into something of a pluralistic whole. States that may fight together, but never against one another. Through social, cultural, and economic interactions, these militaries joining together into a community would make it easier for their parent countries and societies to do so as well.

Deutsch's ideas were taken further and infused with broader social constructionist notions around the time that the Cold War was ending and the "New World Order" was pined for (Bush 1990b). Alexander Wendt argued that anarchy was a social construction and that states develop their international policies based on the interaction of domestic politics with international politics (A. Wendt 1992). Wendt suggests that the institutions are indeed important factors in shaping the preferences of key actors, but that such a conclusion does not require rational egoist states cooperating under conditions of anarchy. Instead, the institutions themselves are but one more (significant though they may be) venue for human interaction where values and preferences are mutually constituted. In essence, Wendt argued that states form their preferences based on the preferences of key actors within the state and that these key actors form their preferences through a complex, inter-subjective dynamic whereby individuals are constantly interacting with each other on the domestic and international levels. Thereby, they form identities and interests and those go on to inform state policy. This is in many ways wholly concordant with Moravcsik's liberalism described above. It is also usefully descriptive of the way American foreign policy preferences were developed in the 1980s and 1990s. Key officials, responding to the zeitgeist and popular consensus, came to accept that democratization and liberalization were unalloyed goods. They assumed, as George H.W. Bush did, that they should be pursued cautiously, but confidently (Bush 1991). Indeed, they also assumed

that liberalization could not be imposed from the outside; it must arise organically from within a given society. So, in Bush's addresses to the peoples of Europe as well as to ethnic communities at home he consistently emphasized that the United States would eagerly assist but it could not make them democratic and successful from the outside (Bush 1989c, 1989d, 1991).

It would be too much to say this project is "constructivist." It does not seriously engage in detailed discourse analysis, nor does it attempt to trace the individual linkages between specific actors in an attempt to construct an intellectual genealogy of defense diplomacy. However, constructivist insights are important to this project, especially concerning how key actors inform one another and seed within one another certain preferences and beliefs. Namely, the belief that the US military had an important role to play in democratizing central and eastern Europe through bilateral military exchanges and the understanding that democratization was the goal of America's European foreign policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Bureaucratic politics and defense diplomacy

The final approach that provides insight into the study of defense diplomacy worth mentioning here is bureaucratic politics. This is especially useful because it is among the most commonly invoked explanations for why the US military has assumed missions beyond traditional warfighting. Bureaucratic politics is important to this study in two ways. First, it provides a theory of foreign policy that centers on the role of key foreign policy institutions, such as the US military. Secondly, it informs other more ideological, and sometimes polemical, critiques of defense diplomacy.

Bureaucratic politics is often invoked as an explanatory vehicle for describing the habits of the United States government, especially when there is some implied conflict or competition between agencies (Allison and Zelikow 1999). As such, the notion of the Department of Defense veering into Department of State lanes quite clearly implies a bureaucratic politics explanation. This explanation would be largely premised on the idea that following the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the US military quickly found a new *raison d'etre* to stave off budget cuts, force reductions, and loss in relative

prominence for the military and its leaders. The Pentagon, therefore, carved a niche for itself as a peacetime engagement force thereby making it indispensable to the new era of *Pax Americana.* In so doing, the military drifted into the diplomatic and developmental realms. Indeed, at least parts of this explanation seem to explain the United Kingdom's embrace of "defence engagement" in the later 1990s (Kennedy 2020).

But this explanation fails to address why other government departments—especially the State Department—seem to have supported the creeping of the military into the diplomatic realm. If the Pentagon was encroaching upon diplomat's turf, shouldn't this have elicited strong resistance from the diplomatic arm rather than, in many cases, support for the military's broad-based engagement? After all, while much of the evidence listed above is military in character, these are ultimately diplomatic activities over which the Department of State controls the funding and retains the authority to approve or disapprove (Serafino 2016). A purely bureaucratic politics explanation, therefore, does not explain why the State Department would be complicit in the military's encroachment. Neither does it explain the military's internal debate and, in some cases, anguish over this "mission creep" (Deni 2015; SASC 2015b). Military leaders consistently warned against over-extension into engagement and the resultant loss of focus on large-scale conventional combat. For their resistance to more diplomatic and peacekeeping roles, the military was occasionally accused of being "out of control" and transgressing the bounds of acceptable civil-military relations (Avant 1996). Reluctance by the institutional services to "creep" beyond their preferred mission of major power war indicates that something more than bureaucratic politics is at play.

Perhaps the biggest shortcoming of bureaucratic politics explaining institutional development is that it is more interested in agency behavior than in agency evolution. As Amy Zegart observed bureaucratic political explanations of agency behavior are more often inductive than deductive. They seek to explain outcomes by focusing on which agencies were involved and surmising how their bureaucratic preferences led them to pursue the aims they did (Zegart 2000, 20–21). Such an approach is insufficient

for this project because this study requires not just an understanding of outcomes—a given state behavior or policy choice—but also the reasons why a given organization has the form and bureaucratic interests it does in the first place. “After all,” Zegart asks, “how can we hope to develop systematic explanations of agency behavior without systematic explanations of agency origins and development.” (Zegart 2000, 21)

In short, defense diplomacy was not uniformly nor obviously the preference of the military nor was it necessarily resisted by the State Department. Furthermore, it has become common for senior defense and military officials to advocate for more diplomatic funding and to blush self-consciously over the funding imbalance. Military leaders themselves along with several successive secretaries of defense have lamented the perceived imbalance in diplomacy vs. defense budgets in *their* favor as an overly militarized foreign policy (Gates 2008; Gramer 2018). Separately, senior officers and defense officials occasionally grouse about how defense diplomacy activities “consume readiness”[6] and pine for a more independent and robust civilian foreign policy apparatus (SASC 2015b). In this case, there must be more at work than pure, bureaucratic aggrandizement from the Pentagon to explain why so much of the United States' diplomatic efforts are militarized.

The defense diplomacy literature

Defense diplomacy is not a new concept being introduced for the first time in this paper. There is a robust body of literature addressing the practice, directly and indirectly. Keeping in mind that this project is about the historical development of contemporary defense diplomacy, it is not necessary to exhaustively cover each study of the current manifestations of it. This project takes inspiration from a few key strands of the defense diplomacy literature. First, the overall theoretical framework of defense diplomacy as a form of soft power, as suggested by Winger, is foundational to this project. Secondly, studies on the roles and purposes of multinational military exercises as well as other specific forms of defense diplomacy are important as means to help confirm, define, and elaborate on defense diplomacy as

[6] Author’s personal observation.

a phenomenon. Finally, there are important studies of the specific defense diplomacy tools under investigation here that deserve introduction and framing.

Winger describes defense diplomacy as, "a military variant of soft power which relies on the processes of norm diffusion and state socialization to influence the strategic thinking of foreign governments." (Winger 2017) More concretely, he defines it as "the cooperative use of a state's defense apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through collaboration with other countries." (Winger 2017). Winger's concept is deliberately "elastic" and designed to cover a wide array of activities. This study accepts this broad framing, even though this particular research focuses on only one instance of defense diplomacy in the Joint Contact Team Program. Winger focuses on defense diplomacy as an activity that generally occurs "below the level of political elites" (Winger 2021) and this location, he argues, insulates it from other, more public forms of inter-state relations. In building his theory of defense diplomacy, Winger focuses primarily on its instrumental utility. That is, how states wield this soft power suite of tools to achieve concrete foreign policy goals.

This study of defense diplomacy departs from Winger's work in a few subtle ways. First, and foremost, it is concerned with the political development of the tool on both the supply (United States) and demand (central and eastern Europe) side rather than just the theoretical function of the tool. Secondly, this study does not necessarily agree that defense diplomacy is clearly employed to advance the strategic aims of a government. Indeed, this study finds that defense diplomacy was developed from bottom-up momentum from within a few (important) corners of the US military and ambassadorial corps rather than as a directive issued from the White House itself. It was, as has been described, as a response by the American foreign policy apparatus to the overall impulse toward democratization and liberalization. As such, it is possible to frame it as a strategic tool achieving strategic ends, but its organic and effervescent origins suggest its development was also the consequence of institutional dynamics, historical contingency, and individual agency. A third, and relatively minor, departure from Winger's formulation is the definition employed here. This study conceives of defense diplomacy as a "peacetime" tool. It is true,

as mentioned in the introduction, that defense diplomatic activities can be (and often are) employed in times of war, but this study is primarily interested in a singular historic moment. At that time, relative peace was important to the development of the phenomenon. There were looming threats, rising needs for peacekeeping, and to build capable coalitions, but it was not deployed in such a way as to bolster a country facing invasion. A key comparison would be the way defense diplomatic tools (such as professional schooling, training, and foreign military sales/financing) are used to boost Ukraine's ability to fight Russia in 2022/3 as compared to military liaison to help develop constitutional governance in Poland in 1992. Both can happen at the same time, but this study is interested in why the latter developed and not in the strategic logic of the former.

Derek Reveron is one of the more prominent academic advocates of what he often calls "security cooperation" which is close to the concept of defense diplomacy offered here. In his more documentary—but also partially theoretical—work, Reveron describes the routine mechanics of many of the security cooperation programs that the United States employs (Reveron 2016). In particular, Reveron focuses on the structure and motivations of the geographic combatant commands and he centers on their post-Cold War role as a key reason that the United States began "exporting security" (Reveron 2004). Reveron's work, however, does not dwell much on the origins of these individual practices. Reveron does make several key contributions to the study of defense diplomacy and key among them is his notion that the military has become "civilianized" through the practices of security cooperation and this civilianization is a more noteworthy and honest interpretation of the dynamics at play than its Janus face, the "militarization" of diplomacy (Reveron in Adams and Murray 2014).

This characterization of American foreign policy as having been militarized is an important feature of the academic literature as well as of the commentary of public intellectuals and some practitioners (Bacevich 2013; Brooks 2016; Farrow 2018; Maddow 2013). Adams and Murray compiled the most complete volume to make this case and in it, they point to the various ways, meanings, and consequences of "militarization." Defined as an "imbalance of resources and authority over national

security and foreign policy between the Defense Department and the civilian tools of American statecraft" (2014, 18), Adams, Murray, and most of their contributors affirm the notion the military has become dominant in the conceiving of priorities and options for foreign policy. That this ascension of military perspectives is the result of a "gradual seeping" which over decades led to the atrophy of civilian foreign policy agencies and "a growing reliance on the military for the execution of a widening range of foreign and national security programs and building capabilities in the US military that go well beyond traditional military core competence." (Adams and Murray 2014, 28) This argument is thoughtful and nuanced. They acknowledge that much of what they term militarization is not the result of a military power grab, but rather a result of an invitation—or abdication—by other foreign policy institutions. Further, they document the complex nature of these dynamics which seem to militate against any easy alternative to militarization.

This strain of the literature does generally not take seriously enough the implications of this "invitation" by the rest of the American foreign policy establishment to the military to develop soft power tools. Neither do they address the demand-side pull for defense diplomacy from the states that seek deeper ties with the United States. Furthermore, in this volume, they do not sufficiently address the implications of the fact that most defense diplomatic tools are controlled and funded by the State Department (Serafino 2016). This project seeks to explore this dynamic of the mutuality and complementarity of defense diplomacy between DoD and DoS. Though Adams and Murray do emphasize that they do not believe that DoD aggrandized these powers to itself out of robotic bureaucratic motivation to grow, they also do not address the implications that this habit of statecraft developed in large part from outside the military.

As a final point, Adams and Murray—and their contributors—place too much importance on Iraq and Afghanistan to describe militarization. Like other contemporary authors on the subject, they view the global war on terror (GWOT) as a distorting event that threw American diplomacy out of balance away from civilians and toward the military (Farrow 2018). Consequently, a reader is left thinking that perhaps

after a decent interval has expired following the end of the GWOT, the "imbalance" between civilian and militarized engagement might be corrected. The present project instead seeks to explain what produces defense diplomacy to understand why it both predated the GWOT and seems likely to persist after it has faded more completely from headlines and strategy documents.

Often, studies of defense diplomacy focus narrowly on one or another practice but do not attempt to unite an entire defense diplomacy enterprise. Carol Atkinson's studies of the uses and meanings of America's military professional education programs for foreign partners have spurred interest from numerous scholars to evaluate the international military education and training (IMET) programs. Atkinson's work generally casts IMET as a vehicle of socialization whereby American military professional, social, and cultural norms are transmitted to allies and partners (Atkinson 2015). Here, she agrees with Mendee who also employs constructivist ways of thinking to claim that military exchanges and exercises are a means of military socialization and the demand for this American-centric socialization is demand-driven and self-generated in the small states themselves (Mendee 2013). Other scholars have focused on IMET's role in influencing the domestic and foreign policy behaviors of the participant nations. This includes a positive correlation with coups (Savage and Caverley 2017), a negative correlation with militarized interstate disputes (Barceló 2020; Fabian 2020), and with United Nations General Assembly voting behavior (Martinez Machain 2020).

Running through all these studies is an explicit acknowledgment that IMET is unique compared to other forms of foreign national university-level education programs in the United States. Where civilian foreign exchange students often pursue education in the United States as a first step toward immigration, IMET students are always sent home to continue their national service. IMET is often prestigious, attracting high performers or the well-connected. IMET graduates often go on to positions of influence within their military and even within their political elite. During the Cold War, IMET was focused on teaching foreign military personnel specific, technical skills to improve their warfighting capacity. After the end of the Cold War, IMET changed dramatically to focus on educating more senior

officers (ministry of defense civilians) on history, sociology, and governance issues as relates to the military as a profession (Cope 1995). As a tool of defense diplomacy, IMET is highly visible and well-studied. This research will not address IMET in detail but does indeed acknowledge it as a prominent form of defense diplomacy that pre-dated Goldwater-Nichols and has evolved dramatically since the end of the 1980s.

Military exercises provide another important type of defense diplomacy. Wolfley provides an explanation of the growth of US military multi-national exercises as a strategic tool of uncertainty management (K. J. Wolfley 2021). By engaging in public exercises, militaries signal to each other their intent to fight together and they signal resolve and preparedness to potential adversaries. Doing so eliminates, Wolfley argues, some uncertainty and ambiguity from the international system and clarifies state intention and capabilities. Through their presentation of the growth in multinational military exercises over the past three decades, authors like Wolfley and O'razio shine a spotlight on an important, but often unobservable feature of international politics. These exercises are whole-of-government events and are important in and of themselves in reinforcing norms, expectations, and relationships (D'Orazio 2013).

There are many different forms of defense diplomacy beyond the two means listed above of IMET and exercises. Conferences (AUSA 2021; Richardson 2016), the state partnership program (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014; Kapp and Serafino 2011), formal security sector reform mentorship programs (Gerspacher and Shtuni 2012), and the routine conduct of the DoD's academic-think tank regional study centers (RSC) (GAO 2013) all provide specific tools available to American foreign policymakers to engage on individual, institutional, bi-lateral, and regional levels.

The diversity of the defense diplomacy research program points to its cross-cutting nature and wide variety of tools. From the more theoretical investigations of defense diplomacy as a variant of soft power (Winger 2017) to the more granular studies of it as different individual programs each with its own institutional and legislative history (Serafino 2016), the study of defense diplomacy could lead in many

directions. This research will focus on the development of the overall phenomenon as expressed through a single individual tool (military-to-military contact programs in Europe). Rather than focusing on a given exercise or speculating on the effects of IMET over time on international politics, this research will instead situate the overall instinct that the US military is a peacetime democratizing force as the product of historical processes. By doing so, this research intends to push beyond the "militarization" debate described above by providing more historical "bite" to the phenomenon. Such a historical grounding of the intellectual and institutional origins of defense diplomacy is necessary if policymakers and analysts intend to consider this American foreign policy practice in its complete context.

The Goldwater-Nichols defense reforms

The academic writing and commentary on the Goldwater-Nichols defense reforms are substantial. This includes the contemporary commentary and all the retrospective and stock-taking analyses that sought to interpret the results of this legislation. This project relies on a few key texts, and more importantly, the Congressional Record, to construct a picture of these reforms as they were understood by the framers who drew them up. Perhaps the most useful source on this topic is James Locher's *Victory on the Potomac* which was part personal memoir and part history of the defense reforms from a Congressional (especially the Senate) perspective. Locher was the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) senior staffer and led the reform effort as well as the production of the Senate's foundational document on the matter: *Defense Organization: The Need for Change (*SASC Staff 1985). Though Locher's work is unapologetically "pro-reform," this point-of-view issue would only have been problematic if this current project was very much concerned with whether Goldwater-Nichols was a good or bad idea. It is not. Instead, this project accepts Goldwater-Nichols as a unique and momentous historical event and seeks to understand the totality of motivations that drove its proponents.

To this end, Locher's book as well as subsequent reflections on the reforms were essential (Locher III 2022; J. Locher 2022; J. R. Locher 2001; SASC 2015a). Locher's work is well-complemented by the work of Goldwater-Nichols skeptics as well, but only insofar as it concerns the original

motivations and unintended consequences (Krulak 1983; Owens 1986). For instance, Steven Wills finds that the reforms materially damaged the Navy's ability to plan and develop a global naval strategy because of the way it transferred too much authority and talent for such endeavors to the combatant commands and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (Wills 2016). Additionally, earlier work by the House Armed Service Committee staff-lead on this issue, Arch Barret, was also important in confirming Locher's claims and influencing the direction of the project (Barrett and Jones 1983). This finding is important to the work but only as it confirms both the original goal of the legislation and the second-order effects.

As the 40th anniversary of the reforms approach, it is appropriate to approach the 1980s defense reforms as a historical event more than as a policy question.[7] Though this may seem obvious, most of the discussion and literature surrounding these reforms focuses on their appropriateness as relates to contemporary foreign policy challenges and the degree to which national security leaders support the legislation.[8] There has been less attention paid to the historical nature of the reforms in their own context, in their own time. This is understandable given that the international security environment shifted so rapidly after 1986 that the reforms themselves quickly became engrained and expected features of the US military. At this stage, however, revisiting the reforms on their own historical terms is a worthwhile endeavor.

Historical institutionalism and organizational behavior

This project may best be described as a work of foreign policy analysis using historical institutionalist approaches. This is an investigation of the origins, causes, and development of defense diplomacy with special attention placed on the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. This project draws on two

[7] I am grateful to Steve Wills for this insight.
[8] Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, for instance, was asked during his confirmation hearings for his thoughts on Goldwater-Nichols and any need, in his view, to modify them. His response was that the reforms were good, but could potentially be broadened to force more interaction between other foreign policy agencies (DoS, USAID, etc.) with the military to make a whole-of-government approach to foreign policy more tangible (SASC 2011).

specific historical institutionalist studies of American foreign policy development, both having to do with the National Security Act of 1947. First is Brian Mabee's study of the development of the National Security Act of 1947 and second is Amy Zegart's study of how the initial debates, negotiations, and compromises in that legislation cast long-tail effects on the development of the United States' national security institutions (Mabee 2011; Zegart 2000). Methodologically, this project relies on the broader historical institutionalist literature and those connections are reviewed more thoroughly in Chapter 2 as part of the theoretical framework introduction.

Brian Mabee provides a useful example of an institutional development study for American national security institutions through his 2011 study on the origins of the National Security Act of 1947 (Mabee 2011). Mabee found that the 1947 reforms were derived from a critical juncture that was inclusive of World War II and the onset of the Cold War (1941 – 1947). For Mabee, Pearl Harbor was a necessary, but insufficient shock to cause the massive reorganization of the War Department and national security apparatus. To spur reform, the attack on Pearl Harbor would need to be magnified by popular (and elite) dissatisfaction with the United States' unwieldy and inefficient command arrangements in World War II,[9] as well as the gathering global confrontation with the Soviet Union. Mabee emphasizes that reforms of this magnitude required the combined weight of the three pressures to come to fruition. Mabee also highlights how the 1947 reforms also had deeper historical roots predating 1941. He argued that the "causal chains leading from World War II to the passing of the National Security Act and creation of the NSC are more complicated than a straightforward reading suggests" because the reforms themselves were not wholly a reaction to the post-1941 world (Mabee 2011, 35). Instead, he notes that the reforms enacted in 1947 had been in the public discourse for years, and decades, before Pearl Harbor, but that with World War II and the burgeoning Soviet threat, their "time had come." (Mabee 2011, 35)

[9] In particular, the over- and underlapping command authorities in the Pacific theater where the Navy and Army were fighting two separate campaigns under service-centric chains-of-command (Barlow 1994).

There are clear connections to the evolution of the 1947 reforms with the Goldwater-Nichols reforms, nearly four decades later. The consensus ideas that undergirded Goldwater-Nichols had been in the political bloodstream of the United States' foreign policy elite for long before the 1980s debates (Blue Ribbon Panel Report 1970; Lawrence 1960; Steadman 1978; Taylor 1960). Indeed, it is quite reasonable to understand Goldwater-Nichols as the partial fulfillment of the original desires of reformers in 1947 who wished to see a Secretary of Defense with more authoritative control over the military, a military leadership that was more effective and responsive to civilian authority, and a military that was more centralized and less prone to inter-service squabbles (Zegart 2000).

Mabee's work also demonstrates the utility of an institutionalist approach for studying the evolutions of the American national security establishment. Institutional change seldom occurs just because it is a good idea. It is not enough that influential people agree that an alternative set of institutional arrangements, roles, missions, and relationships is preferable to the current configuration. Reforms, instead, occur when the political conditions are propitious for change. In the case of the National Security Act, change required public agreement on the wisdom of reorganization but also a broader appreciation for centralized, civilian control of the military and national security state (Mabee 2011). Goldwater-Nichols rested on a different constellation of rationales from the National Security Act including widespread national disappointment at military underperformance, fear of the Soviets (again), and frustration over perceived fiscal waste in the Department of Defense. These events, combined with an extremely unique lineup of political players—especially the pro-reform defense hawk in Goldwater at the head of the Senate Armed Services Committee—made defense reform possible in 1986. With institutional development, timing is not just practical, it is political (Pierson 2004). Change depends on more than just what *should* be done, but *when it can* be done.

Finally, Mabee calls attention to the fact that state-level institutions attract little attention from international relations scholars. This shortcoming, he argues, results in scholarly neglect of "the development of institutions that mediate foreign policy within the state[.]" (Mabee 2011, 28) This project

takes this point further. Rather than examining the domestic factors leading to the development of a given institution—Mabee's goal—, this project investigates how state-level institutions develop interdependencies with international entities. Over time, and through repeated interaction, the practices of a state-level foreign policy institution become the expectations of its bi-/multilateral entity or foreign audience. Participation in the activity, especially when repeated, will form expectations for such behavior as a routine feature of international political conduct.

In short, these state-level foreign policy agencies create norms of international relations. When this occurs, they can become habits of the states involved. This is because within foreign policy studies, the lines between state-level, international, multi-national, and bilateral institutions are often blurry. What may seem an obviously state-level entity, such as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has an inherently international portfolio of responsibilities. As the CJCS develops habitual relationships, recurring events, and enduring programs with other states he is forging international institutions. By setting norms and expectations for relations between and amongst states, a state-level entity can therefore shape international expectations and institutions.

Amy Zegart's study of the ways bureaucratic and political competition amongst the national security apparatus affected the "flawed" design of the National Security Act of 1947 is also important to this study (Zegart 2000). While Mabee focused his foreign policy analysis on the crises preceding the 1947 legislation, Zegart focused hers on the way the legislation was crafted and implemented. Her study is intensely theoretical in that she presents an explanation of the behavior of "national security institutions" that sets them apart from domestic policy institutions. At base, she argues that national security institutions draw upon relatively weak constituencies as compared to the broad-based and varied constituencies interested in domestic policy institutions (Zegart 2000, 35). Instead, the constituencies for national security institutions are the presidency, the bureaus themselves, and a small cadre of the interested public. These constituencies are the key players in any drive to reform the nation's security apparatuses.

Importantly for this study, Zegart allows for a special role for legislators to play in the oversight of national security institutions but argues that it is qualitatively different than the type of oversight they perform over domestic institutions. She notes that there is a certain sort of "national security intellectual" member of Congress who is deeply engaged in the affairs of these agencies, but that such legislators "stand apart from the herd."[10] (Zegart 2000, 32–33) Because "questions of JCS design do not make or break Congressional elections," she argues that, "legislators may not be lame ducks, but they are weak birds." (Zegart 2000, 32, 36) When they do engage in oversight of the national security institutions, they are likely to do so out of a peculiar district-level motivation to defend defense industry jobs among their constituencies or in response to a public outcry (Cushman in Adams and Murray 2014).[11] This study reaches somewhat different conclusions from Zegart on this point, however. The 1980s defense reforms were wholly a Congressional product. Capitol Hill required some important external stimuli, but once set into motion, both houses of Congress were extremely motivated to force reform on the Department of Defense. This points to a dynamic in which the long process of defense reform required some tipping point after which the momentum became irreversible. Rather than behaving as "weak birds," Therefore, Congressional national security intellectuals can become, as in the case of Goldwater-Nichols, 800lb gorillas who forced their will on the executive branch.

Zegart's book, *Flawed by Design*, demonstrated the importance of using historical institutionalist approaches to the study of national security apparatus. This project seizes on this perspective to shed light on both the inputs that go into agency formation (such as the Goldwater-Nichols legislation), while also tracing their outputs. Zegart focused on *why* the United States developed the national security system it

[10] Some contemporary examples of Zegart's "national security intellectual" in Congress may be Senator John McCain (R, AZ), Senator Sam Nunn (D, GA), Senator Marco Rubio (R, FL), and Senator Bob Menendez (D, NJ).
[11] Congressional disinterest in oversight of national security institutions has historically been especially acute when it comes to the more sensitive and morally questionable aspects of national security like covert operations. Senator Goldwater in 1982 said, "it would be best if they [the CIA's leaders] didn't have to tell us anything." (in Johnson and Wirtz 2019, 295) Goldwater was referring specifically to the likelihood of leaks of sensitive information emanating from Congress, but he was not alone in his assessment that the political value of oversight of overseas covert action was more trouble than it was worth (CQ 1976).

did (Zegart 2000). This project provides such a perspective on the development of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms while going further. It assesses how the resultant (re)configurations of power amongst the post-reform national security institutions shaped certain foreign policy outcomes.

One final historical institutionalist author requires mentioning here. Kathleen Thelen provides an extremely useful methodological taxonomy that informs much of this project (Thelen in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; K. Thelen 1999). In her study of the evolution of certain labor practices among industrialized countries, she sheds light on how institutions evolve and change over time (K. A. Thelen 2004). She calls attention to an oft-neglected aspect in the study of path dependent phenomena and that is the study between the critical junctures. She warns against using "an especially strong version of a punctuated equilibrium model," to study institutional evolution because doing so "[e]ncourages the analyst to draw a sharp line between the 'critical juncture' moments in which institutions are originally formed (or perhaps re-founded) and long periods of stasis characterized by institutional continuity." (K. A. Thelen 2004, 28) Rather than focusing solely on the "founding moments," as Zegart would say, Thelen encourages analysts to look for the ways an institution persists, evolves, and changes over time.

One final concept from Thelen does bear mentioning at this point and that is the notion of "institutional complementarities." Adopting this concept from political economists, Thelen describes institutional complementarities as the "mutually supportive" ways that "various institutional arenas cohere[.]" (K. A. Thelen 2004, 285) She describes them as, "synergies and mutually supportive interactions between specific institutional realms." (K. A. Thelen 2004, 285) Referring to "institutional density" Paul Pierson similarly pointed out that government institutions exist amongst one another in a tightly coordinated environment (Pierson 2004, 35). Further, Pierson notes that this government institutional web is generally not as "farsighted" as market institutions and is prone to respond to the tyranny of the moment (Pierson 2004, 29). Individuals within such institutions are likely to adopt the habits of their predecessors as well as their predecessors' expectations for how their sister institutions should behave. Over a fairly short period—after all, government, especially military and diplomatic,

positions have a rapid turnover rate—these short-run experiences easily become cultural expectations passed from one generation to the next.

Institutional complementarities are not necessarily forged in the single legislative "big bang" that the institution was borne of. As the individuals within that institution carry out their work, they exercise agency and respond to their environment. When the actions of one institution find a purchase in the expectations and behavior of another, then the practice is likely to persist (and reproduce). In this way, defense diplomacy was made "sticky" because it supported several different institutional "arenas" ranging from European democratization, collective security, and economic liberalization. These implicated other agencies and indeed foreign governments creating a networked community that was familiar with and expectant of such behaviors in the future. These complementarities help explain not just the emergence of the practice, but also its endurance.

This project will attempt to chart a middle path between Zegart's focus on "founding moments" and Thelen's emphasis on reproduction over time. Whereas this study is absolutely concerned with the critical juncture of Goldwater-Nichols as the "genetic moment" for certain institutional behaviors, it is also interested in the long shadow cast by the legislation (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). Those reforms adjusted the institutional dynamics within the United States' foreign policy apparatus in ways that favored the production and reproduction of a certain habit of statecraft. Therefore, a perspective that appreciates the tensions at play during the critical juncture as well as how patterns of behavior emerged and were reinforced over time is crucial to this project.

A final note on the institutionalist literature is an anticipation of a critique. Paul Pierson wrote that often in historical or sociological institutionalist studies, "it is difficult to discern clear propositions in this literature about the circumstances that are conducive to particular patterns of change in formal institutions." (Pierson 2004, 134) Effectively, such studies may lose a tether to an explanatory theory and instead resemble blow-by-blow histories of a given phenomenon. This project acknowledges this tendency and sets out to avoid such criticism with an explicit theory that guides the investigation. As with

any historical inquiry, details matter as do chronology, but this project does attempt to forego minutiae where possible to present an explanation of institutional evolution that is theoretically useful to other researchers.

Chapter conclusion

The primary goal of this project is to understand the institutional, social, and political forces that led the United States to develop defense diplomacy—especially military-to-military contacts—as a tool of American foreign policy. This is important because the practice has evolved, developed new repertoires, and has become embedded within US military practice the whole world over. It is a feature of international politics and important to US foreign policy. And yet, its origins are poorly understood. To address this shortcoming, this project travels rather far afield for a close look at the 1980s defense reforms. This is a thoroughgoing attempt to prove a negative. It is an effort to establish that while there was no interest in remaking American diplomacy on behalf of the Goldwater-Nichols framers, they did so anyway; that defense diplomacy was an unintended consequence of Goldwater-Nichols. To do so, this project focuses deeply on the history of Goldwater-Nichols. Then it will transition to the effects of those reforms a few years later in an international political environment transformed by the end of the Cold War.

Proving the negative that the Goldwater-Nichols architects were *not* interested in military diplomacy and demonstrating that the latter was dependent on the former relies on insights from multiple academic fields. As this review establishes, this study concerns international relations, political science, security studies, organizational behavior, and a variety of sub-fields and disciplines thereof. Multi-disciplinary research is enriching because diverse approaches, different levels of analysis, and alternative ways of framing inquiry all provide rewarding insights otherwise unattainable via a singular approach. While ambitious, this point here is not an exhaustive or complete review of the entire literature of any of these fields. Instead, the goal of this review was to draw key insights from these fields that might aid in

the explanation of why the United States developed this new foreign policy tool in the first place. Doing so permits reflection on the long-tail consequences of sweeping governmental reforms in general while also enabling us to consider how one might refashion the current suite of American foreign policy tools.

Chapter 2. Theory and method

This chapter proposes a theory to explain the institutional development of American defense diplomacy. This theory proposes a new way of understanding defense diplomacy as a foreign policy habit created unintentionally by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. Through the early 1990s, this habit(s) was sustained through mutually complementary dynamics among several American foreign policy actors and constituencies. This explanation emphasizes how the shape of institutions goes on to shape the conduct of foreign policy. This theory holds that the Goldwater-Nichols Act altered the configurations of power and interest in the production of American foreign policy. While the reforms seemed limited to the military and relatively narrow to most outside observers, they nevertheless had long-tail consequences that reverberated throughout the foreign policy establishment. The Act encouraged the US military—through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the US European Command (EUCOM)—to focus on the here-and-now of American foreign policy issues and to develop initiatives that would bolster emergent challenges within the State Department's purview. These initiatives would mature into accepted and expected missions for the US military. The post-reform structure created and nurtured interdependencies between the various foreign policy entities (the SASC, the Joint Staff, the ambassadorial corps, the COCOMs, etc.) which encouraged and sustained defense diplomatic practices.

This chapter contains three sections. First, a summary of the theoretical framework that serves to ground it in the institutionalist tradition. Second, a review of the analytic method for this project and the empirical bases. Finally, a fuller presentation of the overall theory and argument.

Theoretical framework

This dissertation relies on a deductive theoretical framework that evaluates the role of certain actors in the production of American foreign policy. To clarify that framework, it is important to present some key terms that provide the theoretical skeleton of the project.

Path dependence

Path dependence is a core idea of institutional developmental studies. It is a simple concept that casts historical outcomes as the consequence of specific antecedent events which made certain futures likely and others not. Mahoney defines a path dependent process as, "historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties." (Mahoney 2000, 507) Path dependent analyses are historical, but they are not pure history as such. Rather than simply assembling chronological facts, a path dependent analysis is inherently "theory laden" because "the presence or absence of contingency cannot be established independent of theory[.]" (Mahoney 2000, 508) A path dependent study is often concerned with the contingent historical cause (often the *critical juncture*) followed by the dynamics that reproduce a certain outcome or behavior.

Therefore, a path dependent explanation requires a theoretical framework that relates the outcome to the causal event as well as the reinforcing processes that sustain it. Pierson describes this by noting, "dynamics triggered by an event or process at one point in time reproduce and reinforce themselves even in the absence of the recurrence of the original event or process." (Pierson in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 195) Often, the outcomes of a given event or decision are delayed with substantial "lags" between the cause and effects (Pierson 2004, 91). Discovery of such lags can be one of the more rewarding aspects of a path dependent study because it illuminates connections between sometimes obscure historical events and patterns of behavior long into the future. By demonstrating the unintended and unforeseen connections between past events and future outcomes, path dependent studies can uncover structural patterns that mediate social behavior.

By now, defense diplomacy as an institutional behavior of the US military has persisted over several decades. But it was "new" at some point and therefore a worthy topic for path dependent inquiry. This study attempts to not only explain its origins but the key dynamics that sustain it in order to better understand this particular practice of the US government.

Critical junctures

Most historical institutionalist studies begin with a *critical juncture*. These are a "period of significant change" (R. B. Collier and Collier 1991, 29) and are the "historical cause" of a given path dependent process (Pierson in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 195). Capoccia and Kelemen defined a critical juncture as a, "*relatively* short period of time during which there is a *substantially* heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest." (2007, 348) They are "an essential building block" of the field and are periods of rich historical inquiry owing to the high degree of change and "institutional flux" resident within them (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 341). During critical junctures, individual actors clearly have more agency and are more important in shaping institutional outcomes than they are during a period of stability or stasis. A critical juncture occurs because present conditions have rendered past practices ineffective, obsolete, irrelevant, or undesirable. Actors, therefore, are required and encouraged to take more individual decisions than one would anticipate under stable conditions. This agency is highlighted in the way Thelen calls critical junctures the, "initial *choice*" (emphasis added) when certain decisions are made that have long-term ramifications for the future of a given institution (K. A. Thelen 2004, 385).

This project conceives of the 1980s defense reforms as a critical juncture. They were a choice event for the United States Congress to force substantive reforms on the Department of Defense that significantly altered the power configurations for the military. During the implementation of these reforms, key figures within the US military made decisions and initiated programs with their newly reconfigured authorities and interests that would have path dependent consequences into the future.

Cleavages

Critical junctures would not occur without some sort of *cleavage*. This is a crisis point that "produc[es] or generat[es] the critical juncture." (R. B. Collier and Collier 1991, 32) Out of the stability of the antecedent conditions "emerges [a cleavage which] triggers the critical juncture." (R. B. Collier and Collier 1991, 31) It is useful to conceive of cleavages (or crises) as events that render a given institution

or institutional behavior no longer compatible with the current conditions (R. B. Collier and Collier 1991). In Mabee's work, the combined effects of World War II and the Soviet-US confrontation made the status quo ante of national security arrangements untenable (Mabee 2011).

The cleavage that caused Congress to pursue the Goldwater-Nichols reforms was less a single trigger event than an accumulation of motivations that coalesced in an opportune political moment. Therefore timing, contingency, and personality are crucial to understanding why institutions do the things they do because today's institutional forms are in large part a product of yesterday's contingent political circumstances (Pierson 2004). As discussed earlier, this project differs from the common presentation of cleavages as a preceding event that renders a given institutional arrangement open to change. As relates to the US military's institutional development, there was a crisis that led to Goldwater-Nichols (Chapter 3), and then a separate crisis event—just a few years later—that breathed new life and shape into the 1986 reforms (Chapter 4). The collapse of the Soviet Union was a cleavage event that introduced flux into US foreign policy. The uncertain strategic environment encouraged military leaders to use their newly reconfigured power and interests—derived from Goldwater-Nichols—to respond to the changed environment with new foreign policy repertoires.

Causal process observation

Causal process observations are the clues a researcher looks for to confirm a hypothesis. They are the evidence that provides the researcher with some level of confidence that their theory has merit (D. Collier 2011). Causal process observations are central to process tracing and highlight what sets apart a process trace from a blow-by-blow historical account. A process trace seeks these observations to test a pre-existing hypothesis. Such an investigation is inherently deductive where the researcher begins with a given hypothesized notion of cause and effect and then searches for observations that confirm that such a causal process exists. Some observations can lead to extremely strong proofs of a hypothesis— "smoking guns"—while others can lead to a weaker confirmation that points in the direction of the hypothesis, but are not definitive proof (D. Collier 2011, 825).

Concerning the development of defense diplomacy, this research sought causal process observations to confirm the hypothesis that this particular behavior was caused by the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and that it would have been unlikely to develop had those reforms not occurred. In particular, this research sought observations where key actors and institutions supported or promoted defense diplomacy at different historical points to determine what change occurred with the enaction of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. Readers can decide the degree to which the hypothesized relationship between the reforms and defense diplomacy is proved. At a minimum, the research here affirms the hypothesis but may fall short of authoritatively confirming it. Access to additional materials such as those discussed in the sources section below would certainly assist in this effort.

Self-reinforcing sequences

Path dependent processes are often characterized by *self-reinforcing sequences*. These occur when, "initial steps in a particular direction induce further movement in the same direction such that over time it becomes difficult or impossible to reverse direction." (Mahoney 2000, 512) The process by which a certain institution or behavior was inaugurated is likely to be different than the process that sustains it (K. A. Thelen 2004). Self-reinforcement is often the result of tradition, norms, and expectations that accrete over time. The process is aided by the sort of "institutional density" according to Pierson or "institutional complementarity" according to Thelen (Pierson 2004; K. A. Thelen 2004). Once a given institution's behaviors have generated expectations in related institutions that the behavior will persist, then the outcome is reinforced. It becomes stickier and more likely to endure.

Self-reinforcement is evident in defense diplomacy most obviously because these activities invariably involve at least two other parties at all times: the foreign military and the US State Department. Therefore, each defense diplomatic interaction benefits from multiple institutions each acculturated to the activity. When the activities are popular and well-received, they create routinized, normalized expectations that they will continue into the future.

Mechanisms of reproduction

These self-reinforcing processes are characterized by a reproductive quality that adds momentum, habits, and "increasing returns" to the process (Mahoney 2000, 512). These reinforcing processes are the *mechanisms of reproduction* that generate continuity between the historical event and legacy process (Pierson 2004, 52; K. A. Thelen 2004, 7). They are the connective tissue by which a researcher may tether a given historical event (the critical juncture) to an evolving institutional practice.

As noted earlier, public institutions are prone to dense interconnections and overlap. This is true in foreign affairs as well as domestic policy and is evident in how often US government officials speak of the need to leverage "the inter-agency" for any specific foreign policy problem. A given behavior by one institution almost invariably implicates another. The more routinized and patterned a given behavior in one institution, the more likely it is to develop roots in another. Such interdependent *institutional complementarities* provide an important explanation of the durability of defense diplomacy and of its mechanisms of reproduction.

Logics of change

Also called "mechanisms of change" by Mahoney, *logics of change* are "events and processes that might disrupt the stable reproduction of [an] institution, and in so doing open up possibilities for change." (Mahoney 2000, 517; Thelen in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 221) Just as a researcher interested in a path dependent phenomenon must identify the mechanisms by which that phenomenon reproduces over time, they should determine what may cause the institution to shift course or even abandon a practice. Institutional behavior may change without another crisis leading to a critical juncture. Instead, an institutional practice may simply drift over time in a way that converts an institution to new forms and purposes (K. A. Thelen 2004). Identifying these logics of change is often a theoretical exercise if the process under examination remains stable. Therefore, presenting hypothesized logics of change is a useful means by which of assessing what may cause future institutional change and how it might unfold.

This research explores these change logics largely via theorizing on what may cause dramatic shifts in or even the abandonment of defense diplomacy as a tool of American statecraft. Because this project argues that the practice remains a core feature of American foreign policy, however, these logics of change are speculative though they are grounded in the empirical evidence presented.

Method and sources

Method

This project is a historical analysis of institutional development relying on process tracing. It is centered on two particular historical events: 1) the development, passage, and enaction of the 1980s defense reforms collectively referred to as Goldwater-Nichols; and 2) the subsequent rise of the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP) as means of democratization and form of defense diplomacy. The former led to the latter by providing institutional raw materials with which the US military would respond to the end of the Cold War.

To research historical events is to wade into minutiae. US government archives, the personal papers of former officials, and the reminiscences of historical figures uncovered via interviews, each of these sources are thick forests of data. Process tracing requires some selectivity on behalf of the researcher in determining which periods, which decisions, and which moments are more important than others. These causal process observations are the moments most likely to demonstrate a cause and effect, the historical moments where the assumed causal dynamics are at play. They are, "strategically selected pieces of evidence [that] play a critical role in disciplined causal inference." (Collier, et al. in D. Collier and Brady 2004, 2)

As Collier, et al. describe it, a CPO need not be a single event or an individual "smoking gun.". Rather, they can be broad insights gained through a careful study of the available data. This research does attempt to focus on specific events in order to uncover a causal process and test it against the theory that drives the project. These events, however, are sometimes quite broad gauge. The entire defense reform

effort of the 1980s is a single event driven by peculiar political, strategic, and interpersonal dynamics. This project set out to establish the precise motivations driving legislators to confirm or deny any ambition to remake American diplomacy. One might charge that if looking at such a long event—from 1982 through 1986—a researcher might just rely on the secondary source literature as there would be too much detail to parse through over a multi-year period. On the contrary, however, it is entirely feasible to approach a longer-term event such as the defense reforms from primary sources and still derive broad contextual information about the causal factors at play. To do so however requires a careful reading of the primary source literature, in the case the Congressional hearings and staff study which provide something of a "fossil record" for Congress's work.

If two phenomena are causally linked, then the CPOs should lead to one another like breadcrumbs. Without using the term CPO, Van Evera described this expectation by writing, "The cause-effect link that connects independent variable and outcome is unwrapped and divided into smaller steps; then the investigator looks for observable evidence of each step." (Van Evera 1997, 64) This study establishes clear links between the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and the development of defense diplomacy. These links occur on the macro level—the empowered CJCS can generate his own policy initiatives—and on the more micro where individual, lower-ranking officers play key roles in developing defense diplomacy in ways that were likely impossible before Goldwater-Nichols.

Summarizing the methodological logic of this project nicely, George and Bennett wrote that process tracing is a technique, "to trace the links between possible causes and observable outcomes. In process tracing, the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident[.]" (George and Bennett 2004). Process tracing offers the most versatility and utility for testing as complex and historically contingent phenomena as defense diplomacy. As theorized, this phenomenon is the emergent outgrowth of complex interdependencies and complementarities between multiple institutions at

a specific point in history. To evaluate how defense diplomacy was caused by the configuration of relationships and power among key foreign policy institutions, process tracing offers the best options.

Sources

This is a historical study and relies largely on primary sources directly addressing the objects of study. These sources are generally divided into two buckets: those relating to the Goldwater-Nichols Act and those relating to the development of the Joint Contact Team Program. This section will address some key sources and approaches to the study of each of these events and provide some insight to readers as well as future researchers on the strengths and weaknesses of certain sources.

First and foremost, this project relied on the Congressional record. Primarily, this concerned the Congressional hearings and testimony. A major goal of this project was to prove that defense diplomacy was *not* intended by the framers of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Consequently, it was crucial to comb through the testimony via the Hein online database for all defense reform hearings leading up to the Goldwater-Nichols reforms.[12] Though these documents were .pdfs, they were not perfectly searchable. However, even if they were, it would have been inadvisable to simply search for keywords to understand the overall intent of the framers. Instead, this research required a careful reading of the entire suite of defense reform hearings from 1982 through 1989. It was necessary to review the defense hearings past the passage of Goldwater-Nichols because the defense reform process was something of a dynamic or "living" process. It did not stop when President Reagan signed the bill into law and continued through subsequent oversight hearings and related legislation aimed at patching up holes in the original.

The Congressional record was also essential to understanding the foreign policy preferences of key actors in the development of defense diplomacy. This was particularly true to the confirmation hearings of key officials such as various CJCS, officials at the State and Defense departments, and

[12] The public facing link for the Hein online database is: https://home.heinonline.org/content/u-s-congressional-documents/

combatant commanders. The testimony of these individuals reveals their preferences as well as the Congressional reaction to their preferences when it came to the appropriateness of democratization as a military mission.

Another particularly useful source was oral histories from various officials within the executive and legislative branches. These provide a more intimate, and often more honest, recollection of their time in public service and reduce the amount of noise and performativity inherent to Congressional hearings. The oral histories are professional interviews, usually by historians or other qualified individuals, and are maintained in confidence for a certain number of years before being made publicly available. This project relied especially on the Miller Center at the University of Virginia which maintains Oral Histories for all modern presidents as well as various oral history archives for American diplomats and military officials. These documents were essential in confirming what was, and was not, going through the minds of public officials during key historical moments. Additionally, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training maintains a rich database of oral histories from American diplomats that were extremely useful in shedding light on the role of these key mid-level officials in shaping US foreign policy.[13] The various military services maintain a somewhat disorganized collection of oral histories, but no central repository.

Similarly, this project relied on the memoirs of key officials to augment their oral histories and often fill in gaps. Memoirs are certainly biased as information sources, but they nevertheless provide useful details that are often hard to gather elsewhere. For instance, this research draws a clear connection between Admiral William Crowe's exchanges with his Soviet counterparts beginning in 1988 and such an analysis could not have been possible without his memoir. Additionally, Colin Powell's memoirs were essential to understanding his priorities and intentions at key historical moments.

Personal and original interviews were crucial to this project. The period under study—the 1980s through the early 1990s—is fading into history. Consequently, not all the individuals that would have

[13] https://adst.org/oral-history/oral-history-interviews/#gsc.tab=0

been useful to interview were available, but several key individuals were. In particular, the SASC's lead staff member and driving force behind the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the lead of the Joint Contact Team Program in Europe, and the lead officer responsible for coordinating Joint Contact Team Program affairs in Washington D.C. These individuals were indispensable in constructing an accurate portrait of the motivations driving both Goldwater-Nichols and defense diplomacy.

On a final methodological note, this research notes something of a "hole" in the historical record. Though this period is a matter of history at this point, and the events under consideration are long past the standard mandatory declassification review date (normally 25 years), most documents remain unavailable to researchers. Even with visits to the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush archives, most National Security Council documents remain "withdrawn" regardless of their classification status. This is because the NSC is an inherently interagency body. If an NSC meeting only involved individuals within the executive offices of the president (the White House staff), those documents are likely to be available in full. However, if the meeting involved any other agency—especially the Defense Department, State Department, or intelligence agencies—those records are inaccessible. Each individual organization would have to approve a given record for public release. Each NSC deputies meeting record, each memorandum staffed through multiple agencies, and each email sent from an NSC staffer to their colleague on the Joint Staff. All of these are pending declassification review and the skeleton staffs at the various National Archives locations are not only incapable of doing so owing to their staffing limitations, but they are also unable to do so because they are not declassification authorities for the various departments in question.

Similarly, Joint Staff documents are not available to researchers for the period in question. The National Archives does indeed maintain Joint Chiefs of Staff documents for public review, but only through 1978 (National Archives 2016). From that point forward, the records are maintained by the Joint Staff historian on a classified system and likely face the same sort of review backlog described of the NSC records at the presidential libraries. With the proliferation of email, the exponential growth of document production within the government, and the consequential explosion in the amount of classified

material produced daily, this problem will only worsen. Moreover, during the period in question (the mid-1980s to mid-1990s), the Joint Staff was undertaking a shift to digital record keeping. As its historians adapted to these new processes, the records are neither as well-kept nor accessible as they are for other periods (before and after).[14] Perhaps the National Archives and various government agencies may find uses for new technologies to assist with the declassification process. Perhaps artificial intelligence systems may comb through the volumes looking for documents that should remain shielded from public view while declassifying the vast majority of the backlog. Such a solution might help but would require exposing vast stores of classified information to machine learning software with fairly unpredictable side effects. Another option may just be recruiting an army of college students or reserve officer training corps cadets to review select documents under the proviso of non-disclosure.

Whether applying machine learning or brute force via a declassification cadre, this problem will bedevil researchers studying the contemporary electronic era for decades to come. Ironically, the era of mass electronic communication has made historical research more dependent in some ways on the more analog techniques of interviews, memoir reading, and the careful review of personal effects and notebooks. These time-honored techniques are certainly effective, but his research no doubt suffered from a lack of NSC and JCS documents. In particular, documents that clearly detail the goings-on at the NSC deputies meetings and the correspondence of mid-tier NSC officials with DoD and DoS personnel would have been quite useful in establishing causality, sequencing, and motivations behind key events. As it is, this research has been able to infer with confidence that defense diplomacy was a mutual product of supply (the CJCS and European Command) and demand (Ambassadors and foreign governments), but having access to the NSC deliberations would have made more clear the degree to which the White House did, or did not, have much interest in the topic. Nevertheless, this methodological hurdle was not

[14] In personal conversation, historians at the Joint Staff referred to this period as something of a “black hole” that produces difficulties even fore them to follow the work flow of key documents.

insurmountable. Though the study would have been stronger with more data, the findings herein are strong enough to confirm the broad course of institutional development which led to defense diplomacy.

A configuration theory of the development of defense diplomacy

Why did the United States embrace defense diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy following the end of the Cold War? Why did the State Department not assume total primacy over diplomatic statecraft once the existential security threat of the USSR had been extinguished? Why did the military embrace democratization and statebuilding as a key means by which it contributes to American foreign policy? The answer to these questions is one of path dependence. The Goldwater-Nichols reforms were a critical juncture that altered the structural dynamics of American foreign policymaking in ways that favored defense diplomacy. In this "genetic moment," the seeds of defense diplomacy were sown because the reforms created new institutional arrangements necessary for the development, reproduction, and amplification of defense diplomacy in subsequent years (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 342).

Defense diplomacy's development was also heavily influenced—and favored—by another momentous event, this one exogenous: the end of the Cold War. The disappearance of East-West hostilities, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO, or Warsaw Pact) formed one enormous rupture event that fundamentally altered the international political environment. The end of the Cold War created an opportunity for defense diplomacy to emerge, but it did not create the internal organizational conditions required for it to do so. The Cold War's end was important for the development of defense diplomacy, but not sufficient and likely not even necessary. The Goldwater-Nichols reforms, on the other hand, gave birth to whole new configurations of power and influence in American foreign policy which made defense diplomacy possible. They were a re-founding of the JCS system with profound effects on the military's role in foreign policy. While the end of the Cold War may have animated these new configurations, they were sown by the 1986 reforms.

These Goldwater-Nichols derived dynamics favored the institutionalization of defense diplomacy by embedding a desire for the American military to engage in foreign policy beyond purely the military domain. These dynamics were mutually reinforcing. They created and sustained "institutional complementarities" between various foreign policy actors and organizations which, on net, favored the development, promotion, extension, and habituation of defense diplomacy (K. A. Thelen 2004, 3–4). Once developed and employed, defense diplomatic tools soon became familiar American foreign policy repertoires on bipartisan, institutional, and global levels. They became accessible, expected, and utterly routine ways for the United States to go about its international affairs. For all types of problems in all types of security environments, with all types of partners, defense diplomacy has grown as a means of engagement. It is, in other words, a habit of American statecraft and one embedded in the expectations of the foreign policy establishment.

As is often the case with path dependent phenomena, American defense diplomacy was developed via the confluence of accidental and coincidental factors. The Goldwater-Nichols reforms were not aimed at altering American diplomacy (J. Locher 2022). Instead, they were a response to three specific problems which the Congressional Armed Services located within the Department of Defense (Chapter 3). Congress sought to address poor military performance highlighted in public embarrassments such as the failed Iranian hostage rescue, the 1983 bombing of a Marine barracks in Beirut, and others. The Goldwater-Nichols framers further noted the USSR's military might with trepidation and feared the US military was not measuring as favorably as they hoped against the Soviets. Finally, Capitol Hill (and eventually the White House) felt impelled to reform the Defense Department as a response to public dissatisfaction over perceived fiscal waste. The authors of the original legislation were not at all concerned with even the potential for diplomatic impacts. Their goals were simply to make the American military more nimble, more effective, more lethal, more coherent, and more unified.

Nevertheless, the most well-known outputs of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms were crucial to the development and stable reproduction of defense diplomacy. These were the elevations of the Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) above the Service Chiefs and the of the geographic combatant commanders above the regional service components. The Chairman's elevation was of particular importance. The Goldwater-Nichols reforms provided the CJCS a separate fund from which he could dole out resources to combatant commands (indeed Congress insisted that he *should*) for engagement initiatives such as the JCTP. Furthermore, the structural changes to the Office of the CJCS (OCJCS) were crucial in reconfiguring the responsibilities of the CJCS himself. Through the addition of the VCJCS, especially, the CJCS became more focused on foreign policy and less so on budgetary and force development matters. Finally, through the Goldwater-Nichols reforms, Congress demanded that the military play a larger role in the production of national strategy. The law charged the CJCS (with his newly empowered Joint Staff) to develop net assessments on the security environment and to play a leading role in the development of the National Security Strategy (a new requirement). Through Goldwater-Nichols, Congress—the SASC especially—incentivized the post-reform CJCS to focus on his here-and-now strategic role. With the Cold War over, this strategic role transformed from one focused solely on military matters to one that might address the United States' broader program of liberalization and democratization.

Specific *mechanisms of reproduction* are responsible for the institutionalization of defense diplomacy. Following the critical juncture of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, these mechanisms made defense diplomacy more attractive, more available, and more routine. This was true in cases where American policymakers were responding to crises or under what may be considered "normal" circumstances. Outlined below in TABLE 1, these mechanisms of reproduction include: *CJCS and COCOM patronage* for the development of here-and-now military diplomatic means in foreign policy; *Congressional support* for the military to adopt peacetime engagement missions and to play a leading role in national strategy development; *foreign government eagerness* to engage diplomatically with the American military; *Department of State deference* to the CJCS, the COCOMs, and to its ambassadorial corps who all recommended adding the military to the peacetime diplomatic tool kit; and the *Department of Defense's*

acceptance (unenthusiastically at first) of its new and broadened role. These mechanisms produced positive feedback effects and interdependencies between the various institutions that encouraged the further evolution of American military practices toward engagement and diplomacy. As these mechanisms complemented each other, defense diplomacy became more deeply engrained in the habits of mind and practice of American foreign policy practitioners.

Table 1. Defense diplomacy mechanisms of reproduction

Mechanism of Reproduction	Description
CJCS & COCOM patronage	These two institutions were the most affected—and empowered—by Goldwater-Nichols. The law and its related reforms encouraged both to focus on the here-and-now of international affairs and remain relevant and proactive in foreign policy, even in times of proliferating peace.
Congressional support for military peacetime engagement	Key Congressional leaders—especially from the Armed Services Committees—encouraged the military to assume an active, peacetime engagement role while encouraging the CJCS to lead this effort. After Goldwater-Nichols, the H/SASC developed more of an interest in steady-state, peacetime foreign policy and in pushing the military to play a leading role in national strategy development.
Foreign eagerness	Foreign partners and allies developed increasing appetites for American defense diplomacy as a means to draw closer to the American government and NATO. They hoped to benefit from military exchanges and to shore up political and security weaknesses domestically.
Department of State (DoS) deference	Street-level diplomats (ambassadors) solicited defense diplomacy from EUCOM and the CJCS as a means of engagement to achieve diplomatic goals. "Big State" may have been ambivalent and sometimes skeptical of the military's diplomatic role, but was focused on broader, bigger issues than the bilateral relations of the United States and smaller nations.
Department of Defense (DoD) acceptance	US military leadership (OSD-level and Service chiefs) acquiescence to demands for more persistent peacetime engagement coming from the CJCS, COCOMs, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict. The extension of JCTP into the National Guard Bureau's portfolio further solidified the activity as an enduring habit.

These mechanisms are closely related. If one or more loses their appeal—or boosters—it is possible that the broader appeal of defense diplomacy will weaken. These mechanisms stem from different agencies and different organizations. They are a prime example of the sort of "institutional

complementarities" Thelen describes as, "synergies and mutually supportive interactions between specific institutional realms[.]" (K. A. Thelen 2004, 285) The different motivations and practices for defense diplomacy "go with" one another. The Congressional Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees both support the development and institutionalization of these practices—at different times and for different reasons—and as such provide a powerful engine propelling their development. The CJCS and COCOMs have deep interests in providing defense diplomatic tools to Ambassadors and foreign countries directly as means of addressing pressing concerns (both immediate and long-term). These complementarities are highly contingent relationships. Thelen writes:

> The existence of these kinds of complementarities must be seen as an historic achievement of considerable significance, since it is clear that the various institutional arrangements that comprise any national polity or political economy were not created in a single 'big bang.' Individual components were forged at different historical junctures, brought into being through the actions of different political actors and coalitions. (K. A. Thelen 2004, 285)

The more complementarities, the more sticky a given institutional behavior will be. By the same token, if some of these interdependencies break down, the worse the case will be for continued reproduction.

Based on this research, it seems unlikely that defense diplomacy would have developed without the 1986 defense reforms. Yet, those reforms would not have yielded defense diplomacy had the Cold War not ended. Thus, these two events are tied closely together with this phenomenon and require a deliberate step-through process trace to determine what effect each had on defense diplomacy. What emerges in this analysis is a confirmation of the sort of "lags" that are common in path dependent phenomena. These lags often occur when institutional changes are incremental and cumulative, usually leading to some sort of threshold level above which institutional change is evident. Pierson describes this aptly writing that, "small movements can push above some critical level [a threshold], triggering a process of positive feedback that leads to much more dramatic, (nonlinear) change." (Pierson 2004, 85). In the peculiar case of defense diplomacy, however, the triggering event (the end of the Cold War) came from a process that was distinct from that which yielded defense reforms. Once the triggering event occurred in 1991, however, the seeds of defense diplomacy could begin to sprout and bear fruit.

Institutions either reproduce or break down (K. A. Thelen 2004, 30). They either adapt and serve a relevant political purpose, or they lose their relevance over time. When institutions lose a hold on the constituencies whose support they would require, they are likely to whither or to be converted into some new arrangement. They do not endure with automaticity; they do not behave like an object drifting through outer space. There are several *logics of change* that would disrupt the stable reproduction of defense diplomacy and cause the American foreign policy repertoire to abandon, or at least de-emphasize, this tool.

Such institutional change may stem from a collapse of the prestige of the American military both domestically and abroad. Following victories in the Cold War and Gulf War, the US military was an attractive and prestigious institution and foreign countries and peoples wished to have their status enhanced through association with it (Cossaboom 1997). If this should change materially, if the US military is seen as either ineffective, partisan, or destabilizing, then one could expect the supply or demand side of defense diplomacy to diminish. Second, Congress could decide to simply change the law. Defense diplomacy was made possible via legislative action and could therefore be undone by it. This is unlikely absent some sort of national security crisis that prompts a revisitation of the basic legal underpinnings of American foreign affairs, national defense, and intelligence, but is nonetheless imaginable. Finally, defense diplomacy could fall out of favor with the military itself. The US military could decide that it no longer wishes to apply significant time and resources into such an effort, that it no longer wishes to inculcate its personnel with an appreciation for the political role of militaries and the US military's civilianizing mission abroad.

The institutional complementarities described above are what have given rise and stickiness to the phenomenon. Institutional "reversals," according to Thelen, "flow from changes in the coalitional foundations on which institutions rest." (K. A. Thelen 2004, 33) Any erosion of either the supply or demand for defense diplomacy could quite conceivably lead to a withering of the practice, whole or in part. This is extremely unlikely, however. The collective set of defense diplomatic practices are

entrenched habits among foreign countries as well as within other US foreign policy agencies. They are funded, as with all other government activities, via annual appropriations and have a high degree of inertia locked in. Even if an individual country seeks to downgrade its partnership with the United States, the practices of defense diplomacy are almost certain to endure elsewhere.

The diagram below graphically depicts this theory. At the top left, "Defense Diplomacy Repertoires" acknowledges that the military has engaged in some diplomatic behavior before Goldwater-Nichols. Over time, however, these activities became more diplomatic and a more significant part of military life. The arrow, therefore, becomes thicker as it travels from left to right. The Goldwater-Nichols Act had limited foreign policy (FP on the chart) effects on these repertoires at the time of its passage. However, the USSR's dissolution triggered the military to develop and refine the tools of defense diplomacy with some urgency. Doing so was possible due to the reconfiguration of power and relationships stemming from Goldwater-Nichols. One new tool, in particular, is emblematic of this process. To aid in the democratization and liberalization of central and eastern Europe, the CJCS developed a military-to-military contact program with the USSR which led to the development of the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP). This was a sort of public diplomacy repertoire of the US military that required a great deal of promotion and support from the CJCS. The JCTP evolved over time giving rise to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) plan and the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP). This repertoire was sustained by the mechanisms of reproduction described above. Under changed circumstances, it is conceivable, but unlikely that the military will become less involved in diplomacy, though this is unlikely. The logics that might drive such a change is depicted in the bottom right.

Defense diplomacy is the consequence of the (re)configured relationships of key foreign policy actors via the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The elevation of the CJCS and the COCOMs along with the Congressional appetite to steer the armed services into foreign policy at a time when the Cold War was ending created dynamics that encouraged the military to present a peacetime foreign policy tool to policymakers. Had the legislation not reconfigured these key roles, points of view, and abilities, it is

unlikely that such a tool would have been developed in the manner it was nor with the speed and enthusiasm that it was.

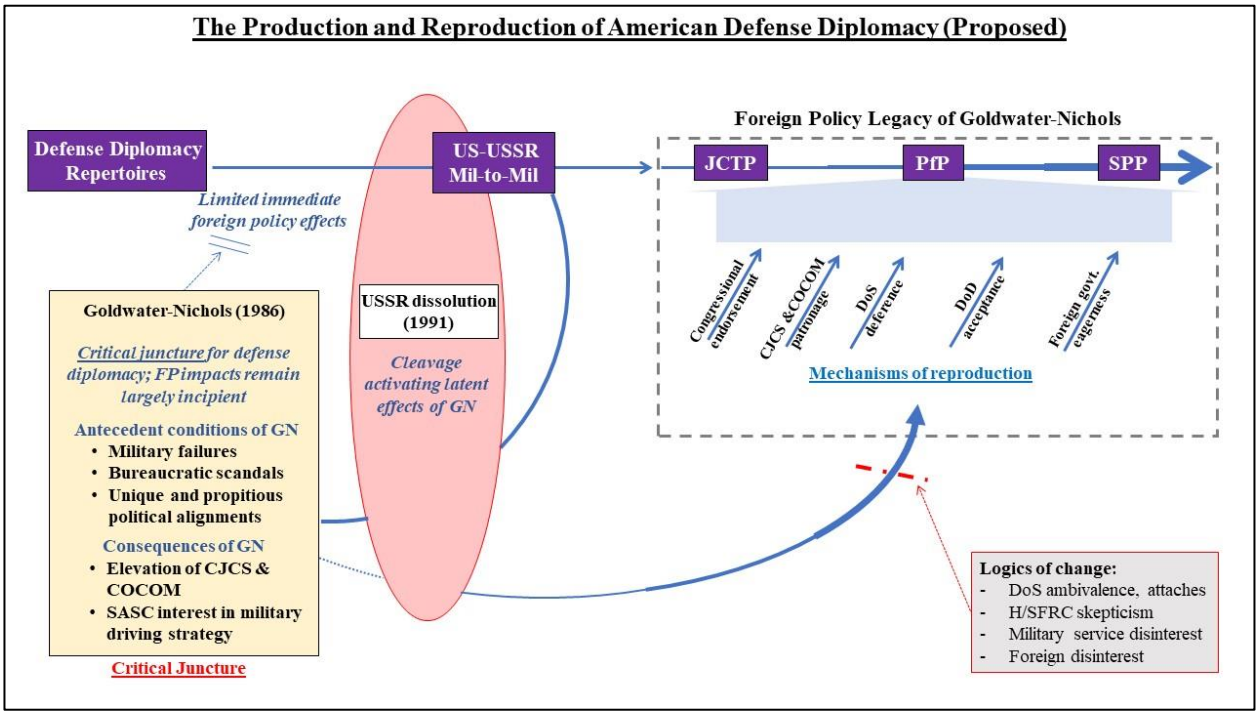


Figure 1. The production and reproduction of American defense diplomacy

Chapter 3. To what ends? The motivations and outputs of the 1980s defense reform

> *"In general, only major failures—in a major war, and with national consequences—clearly traceable to the organization are likely to provide motivation for a radical change."*
>
> – Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, November 17, 1983 (SASC 1983, 517)

This chapter has two purposes. First to evaluate the Congressional motivations driving defense reform in the 1980s and, second, to assess how the ultimate reforms set the conditions for defense diplomacy to emerge in the following years. Born out of a desire to address military failures, better posture the military to compete with the USSR, and control government spending, the Goldwater-Nichols reforms were a direct response to the pressing foreign policy challenges of the day. Its provisions, however, did more than just address these issues. Some of its measures substantially altered the processes and power configurations within the US foreign policy apparatus leading the military to assume new and different roles in American foreign policy. This chapter examines the framers' actual motivations to establish that while defense diplomacy was a major consequence of Goldwater-Nichols, it was far from its original purpose. This signals the unpredictability at the heart of policymaking and how institutions evolve in response to complex factors and in ways unimagined by their designers.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. First is an analysis of how the Congress "got to Goldwater." This frames the impact of previous—and aborted—defense reform efforts in the 1960s and 70s on the 1980s efforts. Next, this chapter will categorize the primary motivations behind the 1980s defense reform efforts. In brief, these were: responding to operational and strategic failures; balancing against the Soviet Union; and controlling DoD fiscal waste. Third, this chapter will explore the key provisions of Goldwater-Nichols and its companion legislation, the Nunn-Cohen amendment to the 1987 NDAA as they related to the coming emergence of defense diplomacy.[15] Lastly, this chapter will examine

[15] The Nunn-Cohen Amendment, passed near contemporaneously with Goldwater-Nichols, was spin-off legislation borne of the Goldwater-Nichols hearings and investigation designed specifically to reform Special Operations in the

key aspects of Goldwater-Nichols's implementation to shed light on how these new institutional changes set the stage for defense diplomacy to emerge.

To reconstruct the debates and thought processes surrounding the 1980s defense reform, this chapter relies on several primary and secondary sources. The Congressional record provides thousands of pages of rich testimony during the many hearings on JCS and defense reform in both the Senate and the House from 1982 to 1986. Table 2 (below) lists the most important hearings and efforts that composed the 1980s reform efforts. This chapter also draws upon the first-person reminiscences of these efforts via oral histories, original interviews, and documentary evidence from the Reagan administration available at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

United States military. Its most prominent impacts were the establishment of the Undersecretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and the elevation of Special Operations Command as a full combatant command.

Table 2. 1980s Congressional hearings leading to Goldwater-Nichols (October 1986) and Nunn-Cohen (August 1986)[16]

Date	Organization	Chairman	Hearing/Effort Title	Result
21 Apr – 5 Aug 1982	HASC	Richard C. White (D, TX)	Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff	H.R. 6828, Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization Act of 1982
16 Dec 1982	SASC	John Tower (R, TX)	Structure and Operating Procedures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	None. Commitment for future hearings in the next session.
14 – 29 Jun 1983	HASC	Bill Nichols (D, AL)	Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff	H.R 3718 Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization Act of 1983
28 Jul – 17 Nov 1983	SASC	John Tower (R, TX)	Organization, Structure, and Decision-making Procedures of the Department of Defense	None. Commitment for future hearings in the next session.
13 – 26 Jun 1985	HASC	Bill Nichols (D, AL)	Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- 1985	H.R 3622 Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization Act of 1985
15 Jul 1985 – Jun 1986	President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management	David Packard	"The Packard Commission"	Commission Report: "A Quest for Excellence"
16 Oct – 12 Dec 1985	SASC	Barry Goldwater (R, AZ)	Reorganization of the Department of Defense	Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Goldwater-Nichols)
N/A*	HASC	Bill Nichols (D, TX)	1987 NDAA Hearings	Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the 1987 NDAA (Creates SOLIC and makes SOCOM a COCOM)
	Senate Armed Services Committee	Barry Goldwater (R, AZ)	1987 NDAA Hearings	Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the 1987 NDAA (Creates SOLIC and makes SOCOM a COCOM)

[16] The Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the FY 1987 NDAA was approved by voice vote in the Senate in August 1986 whereas the entire NDAA was approved in the Senate in November 1986. The passage of the Amendment is the date most important to tracking the relevant issue.

* The NDAA hearings were not solely, or even primarily focused on defense reorganization but rather on reviewing the President's budget request for defense. The Cohen-Nunn amendment was attached to the NDAA because Congress wanted a separate legislative vehicle for the special operations reforms that was distinct from the reorganization reforms even though the impetus for the reforms were part and parcel to the broader reforms. This separation was a calculated decision to ensure that the special operations reforms passed as intended and would neither slow down the Goldwater-Nichols bill's passage. By affixing them to the NDAA, the proponents believed they could ensure passage without having to negotiate away their desired goals (Locher III 2022)

Getting to Goldwater: The long road to defense reform

Malaise

The Congressionally-led effort to achieve a military renaissance must be understood within the larger context of the United States' "crisis of confidence" in the 1970s and 80s (Carter 1979). This crisis was multi-causal and expressed itself in both the international and domestic spheres. When President Carter famously diagnosed this national self-doubt, he identified multiple causes in both the international and domestic domains. Carter nodded to the long-reverberating impacts of the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., to the "agony of Vietnam," to Watergate, to the 1973 oil crisis, and to stagflation. He encouraged the American public to engage in national soul-searching with the hope of achieving a "rebirth of the American spirit" (Carter 1979).

President Carter delivering his "crisis of confidence" speech (Carter, 1979)

The "malaise" that Carter evoked—though he never did use that word in his speech—matched the mood of prominent legislators as well (Mattson 2021). In justifying the opening rounds of the defense reform efforts in 1983, Barry Goldwater tapped into the same sort of disappointment that the nation was underperforming. He described the defense reform efforts in terms that evoked the malaise as well as a determination to overcome it. He said, "We have lost the last two wars we have fought [Korea and Vietnam] …That is the number 1 reason for these hearings." (SASC 1983, 3) Adopting Carter's tone, the *New York Times* endorsed defense reform in 1985 by declaring that there existed a "Defense Malaise" characterized by inefficiency, complacency, and bureaucratization leading to a "paralysis" which had neutered the military's ability to accomplish its most important tasks (The New York Times 1985). By the early 1980s, on both ends of the political spectrum, there was a

sense that things were not working as they should, and that effort was required by politicians, bureaucrats, and even common people to right the ship.

Defense reformers were not alone in feeling that the United States lacked the assured military superiority it hoped for. Among the American public, there was a general sense that the US military was over-matched by the Soviet Union. Public opinion polling in May 1982 indicated that only 9% of Americans felt the United States was militarily superior to the Soviet Union while 47% felt it was inferior (Smith 1983). This assessment of inferiority was combined with a sense that things should not be thus.[17] In 1980, 56% of Americans felt the United States "should be superior to the Soviet Union" and 67% felt the United States "should be stronger in military terms than Russia[.]" (Smith 1983). As a presidential candidate Ronald Reagan shared and promoted this sense of undeserved decline on the campaign trail saying in 1980, "[In 1965] we led the Soviet Union in about 40 strategic military categories. Today, they lead us in all but 6 or 8 and may well surpass us in those if present trends continue…We find ourselves increasingly in a position of dangerous isolation. Our allies are losing confidence in us, and our adversaries no longer respect us." (Reagan 1980)

In this environment of insecurity and self-criticism, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), US Air Force (USAF) General David Jones published a soon-to-be infamous article in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* titled "Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change" (Jones 1982). Jones argued that the JCS was an ineffectual committee. One prone to groupthink, operationally disastrous inter-service compromises, and the giving of milquetoast advice. Jones warned that if legislative reforms were not undertaken to strengthen the Chairman and improve the quality of the Joint Staff, "major surgery will be required" after a future crisis (Jones 1982, 149). Jones told the HASC in 1982, "The system is broken. I have tried to reform it from the inside, but I cannot. Congress is going to have to mandate

[17] The public and elite consensus that the Soviet Union was militarily—and perhaps economically—dominant resulted from a fundamental misread of the Soviet Union. Even within the intelligence community, Soviet strength and vitality was over-estimated and American weakness and sclerosis was exaggerated. By not accounting for the rampant productive waste inherent to the USSR's planned economy, many in the United States mistook quantity for quality and came to believe that they were losing (or had already lost) their competitive edge (Chapters 2 and 5 in Mahnken 2020).

necessary reforms." (J. R. Locher 2001) He noted that his diagnoses of the problem and his recommended solutions have been long advocated by others, but that, "the difference this time is that the proposals for improvement are coming from someone inside the system who for many years has been in the best position to understand the causes and consequences of its short-comings." (Jones 1982, 138) His article was explosive. It set into motion a series of momentous Congressional hearings and major think tank efforts to reopen the then-dormant topic of the Department of Defense's organization, roles, and responsibilities. From the Spring of 1982, when the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held the first hearings on JCS reorganization, to the enactment of the legislation in the fall of 1986, the center-of-gravity for the debate was the US Congress. Specifically, it was the investigation sub-committees of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee. Congressional leaders were generally supportive of the new Reagan administration's defense buildup, but also eager to tackle the institutional issues raised by Jones that seemed to be holding the US military back (Locher III 2022).

These hearings were the beginning of a constitutional and moral battle over defense reform. Constitutionally, it represented a bipartisan effort in which the legislative branch attempted to assert its authority to shape, direct, and hold accountable major institutions in the executive branch. The executive branch, especially DoD, was generally cool—if not resistant—to change, especially change imposed upon it by Congress through legislation. Morally, these efforts were all anchored in some way to the "crisis of confidence" in American military and strategic competency. Most reformers saw Congressionally mandated defense reorganization as a necessary tool to reinvigorate the American military and American strategy-making capability. Describing why he felt these hearings were the appropriate capstone to his political career, Senator Goldwater invoked the central idea behind the American project, "[T]he only purpose of America is freedom. It is not economic, it is not welfare, it is not unemployment; it is freedom. And we want an armed force sufficiently trained and organized to ensure that freedom[.]" (SASC 1985, 17) What in practice was a debate over institutional structures and bureaucratic processes was frequently framed as a debate over America's moral role on the world stage and its capacity to uphold it.

Decades of accumulating consensus

Formally, the 1980s defense reforms began when HASC Investigations subcommittee Chairman Dick White (D, TX16) gaveled in the first hearing on JCS reform on April 21, 1982. White was responding to the internal criticism of outgoing CJCS Jones and to his own sense that Congress should help steer the Reagan administration's defense buildup. In that first hearing, Congressman White spoke to the need to address DoD structure as a Congressional companion effort to the President's as he said, "…organizational realinement [*sic*] to improve the performance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if needed, should be considered part and parcel of any national commitment to rebuild our defenses." (HASC 1982, 2) It was not difficult for White to solicit input on how to realign the Joint Chiefs. In his first set of hearings, his long witness list included the principal authors of previous studies (see Table 3) on how to reorganize the DoD.[18] A brief portrait of each is useful here to demonstrate the degree to which both the problems and recommended solutions relating to defense organizations had been swirling about for many years by the time Jones wrote his article.

[18] The witness list to these first House hearings included former Senator Stuart Symington and Richard Steadman each of whom were lead authors in previous studies (Symington in 1960 and Steadman in 1978) as well as Maxwell Taylor whose 1960 book, *The Uncertain Trumpet* included a detailed reorganization proposal of the JCS system. The initial hearing also discussed the impact of the 1970 "Fitzhugh" report commissioned by President Nixon in detail. Each of these sets of proposals contained deep similarities in tone, temperament, and substance to the ultimate Goldwater-Nichols reforms.

Table 3. Major studies on defense reform prior to Goldwater-Nichols

Name & principal author	Appointed by	Year completed	Key findings
Symington	Candidate for President, Senator John F. Kennedy	1960	- Strengthen and elevate the CJCS. - Enhance the power of the SECDEF.
Fitzhugh	President Nixon	1970	- Strengthen and elevate the CJCS. - Relive service chiefs of operational responsibility. - Give unified commanders "unfragmented authority".
Steadman	President Carter	1978	- Strengthen and elevate the CJCS. - Give CJCS more budgetary influence. - Strengthen the connection between CJCS and unified commanders. - Give unified commanders more control over their forces and missions.

The most obvious, and well-known, previous effort at defense reform was the 1947 National Security Act itself. During and immediately following World War II, there was a common view that the United States was fortunate to have overcome an inefficient and duplicative structure for managing the war (Zegart 2000). Primarily, the division of the Departments of the Army and the Navy was seen as an obvious source of friction and an area requiring immediate correction if the United States was to prepare for longer, global competition with the Soviet Union (Mabee 2011). Also, the lack of civilian oversight of the military chiefs was clear during World War II with the then-Secretary of War lacking the authority and staff to command and control the military departments. The 1947 National Security Act attempted to correct these and other deficiencies, but as Amy Zegart argued, the resultant institutions were "flawed by design." (Zegart 2000)

Bureaucratic compromises which insulated the military services from subordination to a singular civilian or military authority led to a watered-down final bill. The act created a Secretary of Defense, but one that was relatively weak with authority largely limited to budgetary matters. The Secretary's ability to exercise his budgetary authority—as the clearest expression of civilian control of the military—was *de facto* circumscribed by the fact that initially he had a small staff and relied instead on the military

departments to do most of the work relating to procurement, acquisition, budgeting, and planning.[19] The 1947 act formally created the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as an official military leadership council. The JCS would soon adopt an informal, yet powerful, tradition of consensus decision-making. This led to a well-documented pattern of "lowest common denominator" decisions and advice on any matter where more than one service perceived potential equity (Blue Ribbon Panel Report 1970). Consequently, JCS advice was, as former Secretary of Defense Arthur Schlesinger put it, "generally irrelevant, normally unread, and almost always disregarded." (Schlessinger in SASC 1985, 187) As former Army chief of staff Gen. Meyer described the effect of this tradition, "…when you adopt a consensus view, the hard crisp issues often tend to become watered down." (HASC 1982, 20) This maleffect of the JCS system was recognized early on as an issue and remained a central preoccupation of the 1980s debates.

Subsequent reform efforts from the 1950s forward frequently diagnosed the same recurring issues without the ability to enact recommended changes. In 1960, John F. Kennedy—as a presidential candidate—asked Senator Stuart Symington (D, MO) to study the Defense Establishment and report on his recommendations. The so-called "Symington study" was not a formal Congressional investigation and thus could be concluded quickly and more inconspicuously than a formal Congressional or presidential investigation. Symington ultimately recommended drastic changes to President-elect Kennedy such as the abolishment of the JCS, the abolishment of all civilian service secretaries, the creation of a separate "military advisory council" to produce American military strategy, and the creation of additional functional joint commands to oversee military operations (Lawrence 1960).

However, because of the unofficial nature of the study, Senator Symington backpedaled on a great many of these recommendations out of concerns from Kennedy's aides that these seemingly radical changes would place the new President in a "thoroughly uncomfortable and untenable position." (Leva 1960) Kennedy's aides instead favored milder reforms that ultimately mirrored quite closely much of what was ultimately included in Goldwater-Nichols, such as strengthening the CJCS without eliminating

[19] An amendment in 1949 attempted to correct this deficiency by creating the Department of Defense and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to which all military departments were assigned.

the JCS and strengthening the authority of the Secretary of Defense (Leva 1960). The more drastic reforms initially recommended by Symington would have required Congressional action and would have demanded substantial political capital from a young President who was entering office with already suspect national security credentials.[20] Upon publication, Kennedy distanced himself from the report calling it "interesting and constructive" and needing to be "carefully analyzed by the Congress and incoming administration." (Lawrence 1960). President Kennedy was not willing to spend the time, effort, and energy on such a draining task as defense reform nor was Congress interested in forcing him to do it.

The next waypoint on the way to the 1980s defense reform push was the 1970 "Blue Ribbon Defense Panel." President Nixon was facing criticisms for perceived "prodigious waste" and mismanagement at the Pentagon (Herbers 1969). Nixon asked Gilbert Fitzhugh, a businessman with no military or DoD experience, to lead a comprehensive review of the DoD and the military to determine if and how management, operations, and strategy might be improved. Upon his appointment, Fitzhugh echoed the popular sentiment that there simply must be ample room for improvement in the DoD's operations and management practices, "All I know is what I read in the papers. Somebody ought to look into it and it looks like it's going to be me." (Beecher 1969).

Fitzhugh's recommendations were sweeping. Many echoed the Symington report. In particular, the panel concluded that the President and Secretary of Defense were receiving watered-down advice from the military and DoD as a result of inter-service conflicts (Blue Ribbon Panel Report 1970). The panel recommended that the military departments and service chiefs (e.g.: Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, etc.) be "relieved" of the need to supervise military operations, which would in effect remove them from the JCS. Instead, they recommended creating a "single senior military officer, who should also supervise [a] separate staff which provides staff support on military operations and the channel of communications from the President and Secretary of Defense to the Unified Commands."

[20] Symington's recommendations were ultimately set aside, but he saw the report as at least a partial victory in that Kennedy's pick for Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, "willing to use every ounce of authority he had, and in the doing of that, without legislation, he accomplished most of the recommendations that we made in our report." (Symington 1964, 23)

(Blue Ribbon Panel Report 1970, 4). The panel also recommended strengthening the authority and broadening the purview of the unified commands (what are contemporarily referred to as "combatant commands") to provide them "unfragmented authority" and reducing the operational influence and interest of the services at both the national and regional levels (Blue Ribbon Panel Report 1970, 7).

In 1978, President Carter directed the Defense Department to conduct an internal study that addressed the expansive topic of the United States' "National Military Command Structure." Commonly referred to by the name of its lead author, the "Steadman Report" reached many of the same conclusions that would animate Goldwater-Nichols and did so pointedly. The report concluded that the CJCS needed an independent voice on policy and budget matters, that the CJCS should act as the champion and representative of the unified and specified commands, that those commands required more influence in making US defense policy, and that they needed more control over their forces (Steadman 1978). The report criticized the current system which was biased towards enabling the various military services to protect their interests while undervaluing the operational concerns of the regional commands (Weinraub 1978).

In April 1982, when the HASC held the first hearing of what would be the Goldwater-Nichols reforms effort, it did not start from a blank slate. These various reviews of the DoD spanned nearly four decades reaching a tipping point with CJCS Jones's insider critique in February 1982 (Jones 1982). Indeed, the starting point as well as the ultimate conclusions of the 1980s Congressional efforts mirrored quite closely those of previous generations from Symington to Fitzhugh to Steadman. At each stage, reform advocates called for a diminishment of the operational and strategic influence of the military services and departments, and an enhancement of the power of the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman, and the joint commands. Other recommendations became common aspects of the defense reform debate as well. Namely, that the services should focus on manning, training, and equipping their forces and not operational matters. Those should be left, reformers argued, to the joint force commanders who should have full unified command over their assigned forces without intrusion from the services. Additionally, at

each stage of this decades-long iterative process, reformers woefully concluded that the United States underperformed in the field of strategy-making.

In each of these previous attempts at defense reform, the presidents simply lacked the commitment to force a showdown with the national security institutions and risk their political capital on issues that were neither pressing nor obviously popular with the American public (Zegart 2000). With no popular constituency for defense reform, and with an entrenched bureaucratic constituency for the status quo, these many panels and investigations accumulated more dust than momentum until the 1980s. Neither Congress nor the presidents had sufficient incentive to force changes. The issues at play seem esoteric and far from meaningful for most citizens. Moreover, taking on such issues does not benefit legislators who risk their public reputation—by being labeled anti-military "doves" during the Cold War—and may gain little in return.

However, these panels, commissions, and investigations did succeed at fostering a multi-generational conventional wisdom about the problems and potential solutions concerning the Department of Defense. This created a suite of off-the-shelf solutions in waiting if the political stars ever aligned to make defense reform possible. This consensus ensured that regardless of what form a future defense crisis took, the suggested solutions would be over-determined by past studies. Following Cohen, et al.'s "garbage can model" of organizational decision-making, the solutions to a wide variety of defense problems were simply lying in wait, on the top of the garbage can, available to be picked up and applied to at the next choice point (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972).

Congressional motivations for Goldwater-Nichols

> *"Oh, there will be those who say the system ain't broke, so don't fix it. However, it is broke, and we need to fix it. If we do not, our military effectiveness will be seriously impaired. If we have to fight tomorrow, these problems will cause Americans to die unnecessarily. And even worse, they may cause us to lose the fight. I might remind you that we have lost our last two wars [referring to Korea and Vietnam]."*
>
> — Sen. Barry Goldwater opening the final formal hearings on Defense Reform in October 1985 (SASC 1985, 8)

Throughout the 1980s Congressional defense reform hearings, the perceived sources of the defense department's maladies remained fairly stable. Indeed, the hearings themselves grew quite repetitive over the years to the point where witnesses, even some reform skeptics, simply asked Congress to press forward with legislation and not dally with further hearings. When former Secretary of Defense Schlessinger testified in 1985, he offered no statement and simply asked the SASC to include his statement from two years prior because his opinion and arguments were unchanged (SASC 1985, 99). In those same hearings, the commander of US Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) simply told the SASC, "I believe that you are now at the point where there is really no further need for study. Everyone who wanted to participate in the discussion has had, or will have, the opportunity to speak. Further study will serve no useful purpose; it will only delay needed decisions." (SASC 1985, 320–21) As Congress settled on necessary reforms, it also settled on a set of consensus reasons for defense reform. The "why" of Goldwater-Nichols was crucial because it is what set it apart from the previous defense reform efforts (Table 3) that failed to capture sufficient Congressional interest to make the effort worthwhile.

There were three primary motivations, and this section will briefly address each in turn. The first, and overriding, motivation was to address high-profile operational strategic failures over the previous two decades. The second was to better posture the military to deter and if necessary, defeat Soviet aggression. The final motivation was the most mundane yet arguably the most politically salient: to control fiscal waste at the Pentagon. Proponents of these reforms did not envision the military becoming a more important tool of non-military foreign policy. However, in a bid to improve "strategy," Congress—especially Sen. Goldwater himself—did wish to empower the military to have a greater voice in the production of "military strategy" (SASC 1983, 3). There was little consideration as to how one might distinguish between "military strategy" from "national security strategy" or "foreign policy." Congress's direction to have the military play a larger role in shaping strategy would contribute directly to the military playing a larger role outside of strictly military affairs.

Operational and strategic failures

> *"It has been a long time since this country has ever won one. I think a lot of people are forgetting that that really is the first business of a Department of Defense, not planning contracts and all these other things."*
>
> – Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown (HASC 1982, 145).

High-profile operational embarrassments and deep-seated anxiety over America's strategic competence animated the 1980s Congressional reform hearings. The failures dated back to the late 1960s and spanned multiple administrations. They included: The USS *Pueblo* capture (1968), the SS *Mayaguez* capture (1975), the failed hostage rescue of Americans in Iran (Operation EAGLE CLAW, 1980), the Hizbollah bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut (1983), and the US invasion of Grenada (1983).[21] Looming over each of these were the still raw, and politically powerful memories of Vietnam. The H/SASC investigation committees that built the case for defense reform cast these events as more than one-off failures. They pointed to them as evidence of a pervasive pattern of strategic and operational underperformance of the American military.

Each of these events provided a sort of one-word shorthand for a particular sort of defense dysfunction. Poor intelligence, the *Mayaguez*. Poor command relationships, the *Pueblo*. Poor judgment, EAGLE CLAW. Mission creep, Beirut. Poor interoperability, Grenada. Strategic bankruptcy, Vietnam. However, most of these events were an all-of-the-above catastrophe where each expression of dysfunction was visible. Table 4 summarizes and simplifies the lessons imparted by these failures on the Goldwater-Nichols debates. This is a gross oversimplification but is useful in clearly visualizing how each of these blunders was the consequence of multiple shortcomings. Contrary to the famous quip, it seems failure has many fathers. Each of these cases suffered from a variety of causes. The table below presents the pro-reform lessons learned that are important to this analysis. This presentation does not necessarily validate these critiques; the point here is not to establish what caused the failure. The goal of this research is to

[21] Operation URGENT FURY was not a failure, per se. The United States achieved all of its objectives. However, it is often assessed as an example of worrisome underperformance owing to the US military superiority over the small, poorly trained, and disorganized adversary forces they faced. Consequently, it is not unfair to refer to it is a "failure" here because it was in that context that reform advocates referred to it.

establish what the Goldwater-Nichols reformers believed about the failures' causes. It is those beliefs that breathed life into the reform efforts and gave it shape.

Table 4. Defense reform lessons learned from operational and strategic failures
P = primary lesson from the event; S = supplementary lesson

Event	Date	Poor interoperability	JCS Overstep	Disunified Command	Poor strategy	Remarks
USS *Pueblo*	1968	S		**P**		- Convoluted chain of command poor joint planning
SS *Mayaguez*	1975	S	S		**P**	- Diplomatic failure as well with little concern to engaging Khmer Rouge govt for release or with Thai allies for support - The military role in diplomacy via Thai mil-to-mil contacts not explored - Diplomatic implications not of interest to 1980s reformers
EAGLE CLAW (Iran)	1980	S	**P**	S	S	- Poor plan with an unacceptably low likelihood of success - Multiple commanders - Poor intelligence analysis
Beirut	1983		S	P	**P**	- Weak unified command undercut by service lines of authority - Bad strategy
URGENT FURY (Grenada)	1983	**P**	S	S		- Poor interoperability - Interservice competitiveness driving overly large invasion
Vietnam	1965 - 75	S		S	**P**	- Conflicting and overlapping lines of authority - JCS advice is not useful and not relevant to policymakers

Poor joint service interoperability

The primary example of poor interoperability[22] was Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in October 1983.[23] Most memorably, an Army ranger used a personal AT&T calling card and a payphone to coordinate naval gunfire because his radio could not communicate with the navy ships offshore (Keller 1985; J. R. Locher 2004, 135). Opening the 1985 SASC defense reforms hearings, Senator Nunn pointed directly to the lack of communication interoperability in Panama and said, "the facts overwhelming established that there are real problems that must be addressed." Nunn further asserted that this matter was simply not up for debate, "…I do not have an open mind on whether or not there are serious deficiencies both in the Department of Defense and in the Congress that must be corrected."[24] (SASC 1985, 5–6) The hearings and the staff report addressed interoperability (or lack thereof) as a contributing issue to many of the other failures, but this communications issue was the most vivid and memorable.

Scrawls, 1983

[22] Military interoperability refers to "the ability to act together coherently, effectively, and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational, and strategic objectives." (DoD 2022, 103) Most often, interoperability is used to refer to technical matters (are different radios compatible?, are units using the same ammunition?, etc), but it is also concerned with matters of culture, training, and knowledge (are skills transferrable to do different environments?, do units speak the same language?, do they understand each other's doctrine?, etc).

[23] President Reagan ordered the US military to invade Grenada with the primary task of rescuing American citizens who were attending medical school on the island nation. Following a left-wing coup, the Americans were treated as prisoners within their dormitories and there was substantial concern for their safety. Strategically, the United States was concerned that spreading socialism into the Caribbean basin could pose a threat to US allies and partners in the region as well as repeat of the Iranian hostage crisis (Reagan 1983). There was substantial evidence that Grenada was receiving material support—to include direct military support—from Cuba and President Reagan sought to provide support to neighboring Caribbean nations who feared for that a similar fate may befall them if the United States did not intervene. The United States recovered the medical students, restored the previous government to power, and helped establish a coalition peacekeeping force on the island along with other Caribbean nations.

[24] Pointing to Congressional deficiencies, Senator Nunn was acknowledging that much of the Department of Defense's acquisition process by which radios, and anything else, is purchased is constrained by law and that legislation would be needed to truly fix such an issue.

The other examples of poor interoperability were generally more about poor organizational interoperability rather than technical interoperability. For example in Operation EAGLE CLAW,[25] the services did not have helicopter pilots at the ready that could both fly the dangerous mission profile *and* were also certified on the Navy helicopter selected for the mission (Ryan 1985; Special Operations Review Group 1980). In the case of the 1975 SS *Mayaguez* hostage rescue, the military intelligence community coordinated quite poorly amongst itself and did not share vital information quickly, accurately, or in a way that enabled commanders to understand the environment and the threat.[26] These were certainly examples of poor interoperability, but for the Goldwater-Nichols framers—and the public—the image of a soldier calling for artillery via circuitous call chain and his AT&T calling card was especially galling.

JCS involvement in operational matters

The JCS was not designed to be an operational body. It was intended to provide broad military policy advice to the president relating to the capabilities and readiness of the military while shaping their

[25] In April 1980, the United States launched a daring rescue mission to recover the 52 hostages captured six months earlier during Iran's Islamic revolution. The mission, dubbed Operation EAGLE CLAW, was ambitious and complex. The United States hoped to covertly insert special operations forces from the Persian Gulf into Tehran and then extract them to Egypt. All movements were to happen via helicopters and airplanes. The plan called for establishing a refueling point over 1,000 miles inside Iran where the Army's Delta Force hostage rescue team would board helicopters and proceed to Tehran. The refueling point, known as "Desert One," became synonymous with failure; it ended up being the terminus point for the aborted mission instead of its jumping off point.[25] Foul weather, no margin for error, poor strategic decision making, and bad planning all played a role in the "debacle" (Bowden 2006). Operation EAGLE CLAW is written about skillfully and with great detail by Mark Bowden in a 2006 *Atlantic* article as well as in his larger book about the Iranian hostage crisis, *Guests of the Ayatollah* (Bowden 2006, 2007). Paul Ryan's 1985 study of the failure is less dramatic than Bowden's but was used extensively by the SASC to cite the mission's shortcomings (Ryan 1985). Additionally, the Pentagon's official review, commonly known as the "Holloway report" is publicly available, but should be read in conjunction with more detached and critical histories such as Bowden's and Ryan's (Special Operations Review Group 1980)

[26] The intelligence support was severely flawed and was the core shortcoming of the *Mayaguez* rescue. Most significantly, the intelligence community grossly underestimated the size of the enemy force that was holding the *Mayaguez* crew. The military combat forces planned based on an assumed enemy force that was approximately five-fold smaller than the one they would face (HASC 1982, 885–86). A second, perhaps more damning, intelligence failure was the fact that the hostages were no longer at the location (Koh Tang island) that the military believed them to be when they launched their assault. They had been moved to the Cambodian mainland two days earlier. The Khmer Rouge was likely in the process of releasing the hostages when the military began its assault (Head 2012). Because the Ford administration had placed no value on diplomatically engaging the Khmer Rouge on this incident, they potentially denied themselves to resolve this incident without launching the attack.

respective services for future requirements. The actual conduct of operations was to be completely left to unified commanders which the JCS were to establish to conduct actual operations when needed (Sec. 211 The National Security Act of 1947 1947). On routine matters, this division of labor seemed reasonable, but when military responses were sensitive, short-notice, and fraught with political risk, as they often are, the JCS tended to become deeply involved with operational matters (Locher III 2022). When it did so, the corporate JCS often transferred many of the pathologies that plagued its routine efforts to these sensitive operational matters. Namely, lowest-common-denominator consensus-seeking, logrolling, and compromise. During the reform debates, the JCS's preference for consensus was cited as a substantial obstacle to effective operations because it often led the JCS to design sub-optimal command structures and operational concepts out of a desire to satisfy each service's desire for inclusion rather than to meet operational requirements.

In the Iranian hostage rescue attempt, the selection of helicopter pilots was a particularly sensitive issue, as noted above. There were better-trained pilots, and more of them, available for the mission than those selected. The Marines were chosen because that service was not well-represented in the overall mission otherwise (Bowden 2007; Ryan 1985). The Army provided the commandos, the Navy provided the helicopters, and fixed-wing aircraft support came from the Air Force and a Navy aircraft carrier. The SASC staff committee concluded that every service wanted "a piece of the action" (SASC Staff 1985, 361). Because planning was being managed *ad hoc* by the JCS itself, the practice of dolling out particular mission assignments to each service appeared to the committee as a sort of military logrolling designed to share the reputational benefits of participating in a high visibility event. Paul Ryan wrote that this was a "political consideration" and an effort "to get *all* of the services involved." (Ryan 1985, 132) Going further, Zbigniew Brzezinski who was National Security Adviser to President Carter testified before the reform committee saying, "One basic lesson is that interservice interests dictated much the character of the force that was used. Every service wished to be represented in this enterprise and that did not enhance cohesion and integration." (SASC 1983, 503)

To Congressional investigators, similar pathologies seemed to be at play in URGENT FURY. Shortly after the successful invasion, criticism of the planning and conduct emerged out of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill. Prominent among these critics was William Lind, a staffer to Senator Gary Hart (D, CO) on the SASC, who wrote a critical report on URGENT FURY for Congressional defense reformers (Lind 1984). In his report, Lind charged the JCS with altering the unified commander's (Commander-in-Chief Atlantic Command, LATCOM) plan by larding it with more forces from the other services. Lind found that the original LANTCOM plan called for the use of only a Marine infantry unit for the assault on Grenada, but that the JCS "insisted that each Service should have a piece of the action." (SASC Staff 1985, 364) In an interview, Lind wryly commented that, "the major lesson learned is that the Pentagon refuses to learn lessons." (Mohr 1984a)

Disunified chains-of-command

Closely related to the above criticism of the JCS as having been too involved in operational plans, was the criticism that the US military too often muddled through operations with overlapping, underlapping, and unclear chains of command. This manifested itself in two pathologies. One was overly complex command and control schemes in theater and the other was the interference of military services with the conduct of military operations. For the defense reformers, the former was exemplified by the USS *Pueblo* and SS *Mayaguez* debacles whereas the Beirut barracks bombing became the poster child for the latter.

The USS *Pueblo* was a navy intelligence gathering vessel captured in January 1968 by North Korean forces while spying on their country.[27] The crew was imprisoned for 11 months, and the vessel remains in North Korean hands to this day. After the Pueblo's crew first radioed for help, there was no

[27] For a detailed review of the Pueblo incident, two sources are of particular value. The first document would be the Pike Commission report commissioned by Congress and led by Congressman Otis Pike who would later lead the House's investigation into the US intelligence community. For a more complete history, turn to Michael Lerner's *The Pueblo Incident* where he is able to use declassified information from the Johnson administration and interviews with individual participants to reconstruct the event at multiple levels (Lerner 2002).

effective response until four hours later and by then it was too late (J. R. Locher 2004, 190). In a subsequent Congressional investigation (the "Pike Commission"), this "sluggish response" was cited as the primary reason why the attack was successful and self-evidently pointed to a military that was "simply unable to meet the emergency criterion outlined and suggested by the President himself." (Pike 1969, 1619) The slow response was the consequence of an extremely disunified command structure.[28] Owing to the fragmented command of US military forces in northeast Asia, Naval authorities in Japan approved the mission without the input of other forces in the region or sufficient consideration of the risk of capture or what support might be needed to deal with a North Korean confrontation (SASC Staff 1985, 358).

This undeserved low-risk determination by the Navy command was commensurate with a low priority for maintaining stand-by forces at-the-ready to come to the *Pueblo*'s aid. In assessing the meaning of the *Pueblo* incident on the defense reform debate, the 1985 SASC staff report concluded the lack of a clear, singular chain of command below the level of the unified command was an appalling shortcoming. The SASC staff concluded that the, "uncoordinated and slow reaction of U.S. forces in the Western Pacific during the seizure of the *Pueblo* may be the best example of this organizational failure." (SASC Staff 1985, 314).

Six years later, another American vessel was captured by hostile forces in Asia which produced more embarrassment for the US military. In May 1975, just weeks after the United States watched the North Vietnamese capture Saigon, a joint American military force fought what Ralph Wetterhahn dubbed

[28] There were many different operational-level service commands operating semi-autonomously in Northeast Asia including the commander of naval forces in Japan (COMNAVFORJAPAN), the 5th US Air Force also operating out of Japan, the 8th US Army in Korea, and other naval forces afloat in the region but assigned to the Navy's 7th Fleet and not under the operational control of COMNAVFORJAPAN. All but the ground-based Army forces were heavily implicated in the *Pueblo* crisis. Once the *Pueblo* was attacked, there was no way for its operational command, COMNAVFORJAPAN, to quickly redirect other available forces to come to its aid because that command had none of its own and no authority to direct the others. More troubling, the other forces in the region were not prepared in any way to rapidly respond to the crisis because the *Pueblo'*s mission and their own were not well-integrated and there was minimal mutual-awareness of each other's activities.

the "last battle" of the Vietnam War (Wetterhahn 2002).[29] In the waters of neighboring Cambodia, the newly empowered Khmer Rouge seized an American merchant vessel, the SS *Mayaguez*, and held the crew hostage.[30] The JCS proposed, and President Ford approved, an aggressive mission to liberate the crew.

The plan was a disjointed jumble with different services all hurriedly contributing to the hostage rescue and vessel recovery but without clear lines of authority or a unified chain of command. To the degree these various chains of command were united at all, it was only true at the very top of the chain of command—in the White House. Summarizing the convoluted chain of command challenges, William Head wrote:

> …from the outset, there was confusion over command and control as well as a long chain of command stretching all the way back to the White House running down to the JCS, CINCPAC, Marine, Air Force, and Navy forces on the scene and numerous intelligence agencies such as the DIA, Naval Intelligence, the [CIA], and even a multitude of layers of the State Department, the NSA, and the Ford Cabinet (Head 2012, 62).

In the final analysis, serious failures emerged at the operational and strategic levels.[31] Operationally, these failures indicted overlapping, underlapping, and convoluted chain of command that precluded effective planning and execution. Additionally, the inability to deliver the best-available intelligence to the combat forces was a clear failure. Encountering more resistance than planned for, the withdrawal from Koh Tang

[29] The USS *Pueblo* is covered in detail in several historical treatments. One of the more accessible and useful is Ralph Wetterhahn's book *The Last Battle: The Mayaguez Incident and the End of the Vietnam War* (Wetterhahn 2002). For a much shorter overview, see David Met's reflection on the event and its impact in *Joint Force Quarterly* titled, "Last Flight from Koh Tang' (Mets 2007).

[30] In Washington, President Gerald Ford had barely entered his ninth month in office and faced the *Mayaguez* seizure with the humiliating of the fall of Saigon still quite raw in the public memory. He was anxious to portray strength to domestic and foreign audiences and to use the reputationally-damaged American military to act "quickly and resolutely" (Head 2012, 59).

[31] The intelligence support was also severely flawed with the core shortcoming being the gross underestimation of the size of the enemy force that was holding the *Mayaguez* crew. The military combat forces planned based on an assumed enemy force that was approximately five-fold smaller than the one they would face (HASC 1982, 885–86). A second, perhaps more damning, intelligence failure was the fact that the hostages were no longer at the location (Koh Tang island) that the military believed them to be when they launched their assault. They had been moved to the Cambodian mainland two days earlier. The Khmer Rouge was likely in the process of releasing the hostages when the military began its assault (Head 2012). Because the Ford administration had placed no value on diplomatically engaging the Khmer Rouge on this incident, they potentially denied themselves to resolve this incident without launching the attack.

Island was hasty and chaotic. Several US Marines were left behind, presumed dead, as the assault force withdrew under heavy pressure.[32] Henry Kissinger framed the *Mayaguez* incident as the humiliating coda to the Vietnam War writing, "With this, Indochina disappeared from the American agenda…We entered Indochina to save a country and ended by rescuing a ship." (Kissinger 2011, 575) William Head assessed that the ultimate "success" (i.e., the successful recovery of the vessel and the crew) was despite a, "micromanag[ing]" president, a convoluted and nearly unworkable plan, a "lack of good intelligence and poor cooperation among the services." (Head 2012, 72).

The 1980s reformers would find in the *Mayaguez* incident a clear example of the United States' unpreparedness for special operations. Discussing the importance of the *Mayaguez* in 1985, Senator Cohen (D, ME) said:

> In the *Mayaguez* affair we lost more lives than we saved…Is it that the special operations forces do not have an effective spokesman or voice within the services, they are not getting the kind of representation they need?...I think this is the major kind of conflict we are going to see in the future…the kind of low-end threats, low-intensity threats, I should say, at that end of the spectrum. (SASC 1985, 673)

Cohen's sentiment was reflected in the final SASC staff study which concluded that, "While unified commands may be organized to conduct theater campaigns similar to those of World War II, it is evident that they are not organized to respond to lesser threats like the *Pueblo* seizure or the *Mayaguez* incident." (SASC Staff 1985, 314)

A final example of disunified command oft-cited by the reformers was the Beirut barracks bombing of October 1983.[33] The attack in Beirut that killed 241 American servicemembers was the first operational failure to weigh on the Reagan administration and the first failure that occurred after the

[32] Reports emerged for years after the fact that they were actually still living and resisting at the time of the withdrawal and ultimately suffered capture, torture, and execution at the hands of the Khmer Rouge (Head 2012).
[33] The United States became involved in Lebanon in the early 1980s as part of a multi-national effort to contain and end fighting between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization which had metastasized in an extremely complex civil war playing out within Lebanon. Mara Karlin's 2017 study of US security force assistance efforts provides an excellent case study of the US involvement in Lebanon and the role of the Beirut bombings in altering the American strategic calculus (Karlin 2017).

HASC initiated the defense reform process in 1982. The Beirut bombings highlighted the need for unified combatant commanders to exert unqualified command over their forces and the need to root out fragmented service lines of authority that undercut the theater chain. EUCOM had operational command of the mission, but that authority was undercut in a way that led to over- and under-lapping oversight of the force in Beirut. In particular, the chain of command seemed to be excessively long with the Navy service component coordinating directly with the Chief of Naval Operation's and Marine Corps Commandant's offices on operational matters.[34]

This resulted in slowed communications and, more importantly, a sense that each other level of the chain of command was responsible for tasks that were not in fact being accomplished. The Department of Defense created the "Long Commission" to review the Beirut Bombings which found that the subordinate commanders, "lacked effective command supervision" from EUCOM and that there was a "failure of the USCINCEUR operational chain of command to inspect and supervise the defensive posture of the [Marines ashore]" which "constituted tacit approval of the security measures and procedures [at the barracks.]" (Long Commission 1983, 54). The Long Commission, as the Pentagon's official review effort, was extremely critical of EUCOM and by implication, the EUCOM commander for simply failing to live up to the responsibility inherent in his command authority. But the SASC would draw a more nuanced conclusion and would find significant troubles within the informal relationships emanating out of the Pentagon directly to the operational theater. Instead of faulting EUCOM solely, the SASC staff instead homed in on an improper web of operational relationships primarily out of the Department of the Navy. SASC Staff lead James Locher remembers:

> Washington was bypassing EUCOM to a much greater extent than either [CINCEUR Gen.] Rogers or Long imagined. An investigation uncovered thirty-one units in Beirut that reported directly to the Pentagon. Orders to the carrier battle group off Lebanon came 'straight from the jury-rigged Navy-only chain of command' that originated with the CNO. Only after the navy had set plans for fleet operations were superiors in the operational chain of command informed. The

[34] Authority flowed form the President to the Secretary of Defense to the EUCOM commander and then through the Naval service component in Europe, to the Mediterranean assigned 6th Fleet, to a subordinate tailored task force, to the Marine commander on the ground.

navy's meddling 'spoke volumes about the loss of discipline among the forces committed to Lebanon.'" (J. R. Locher 2004, 144).

Summarizing the impression of the SASC committee as it drafted legislation, the staff wrote, "The basic problem is that the unified commanders have weak authority over service component commands, limited influence over resources, and little ability to promote better unification." (SASC 1985, 33) These lessons would be reflected in the coming legislation in a way that strengthened the unified commanders and ensured they were in complete control of their forces and directly responsible only to the Secretary of Defense. Congress wished to empower these commanders to achieve military goals in wartime, but also to look after US interests in peacetime (J. R. Locher 2004).

Bad strategy

Beyond the more military-centric issues described above, 1980s defense reformers also hoped to solve deeper problems at the highest policy levels. They wanted the United States to produce better strategy that would enable it to better choose which conflicts to become involved in and to be more successful in achieving its goals. While most of these crises point to strategic shortcomings, only one is necessary to highlight here, Vietnam. No "failure" animated the hearings as much as Vietnam, and none indicted national foreign policy-making as thoroughly.[35] America's long and painful odyssey in southeast Asia introduced some of the thornier issues into the defense reform debate because it highlighted the intensely personal, political, and contextual dynamics of foreign policy decision-making. While most agreed that the strategic decisions in Vietnam were retrospectively unwise, reformers hoped that shuffling Pentagon power relationships might prevent such missteps in the future, while status quo advocates argued that no re-shuffling could alter the human relationship-laden factors that strategy-making depends upon.

[35] For understanding the role of the JCS in the formulation of strategy in Vietnam, a fine place to start is H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty.* This book presents a detailed portrait of how the three-way relationship between the White House, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. McMaster finds fault with the JCS for not resisting the Johnson administration's graduated response policies, but in truth, it presents a portrait of senior military leaders with little influence over the president.

For many reformers, Vietnam represented civilian micromanagement of military strategy more than a broken JCS system. Senator Goldwater (R, AZ) frequently invoked the conflict as a "loss" and attributed it to politicians meddling in military affairs. In one of the more ironic and overlooked aspects of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms, Sen. Goldwater frequently pointed to Vietnam as evidence that the military in the United States should be *less* subordinate to civil authority. In 1983, Goldwater raised this issue as his primary goal in pursuing defense reform and it is worth quoting from his statement at some length here:

> I have one overriding question that I am going to pursue…can we, as a country, any longer afford the 207-year-old concept that in military matters the civilian is supreme? We have some old saying wandering around someplace, 'Don't let Generals run wars.' We have lost the last two wars we have fought because they have been run by civilians in Washington. These civilians are thousands of miles away from combat and have no concept of combat. Now, I realize the sanctity of the idea of the civilian being supreme. It is a beautiful thing to think about. The question in my mind is, can we any longer afford to allow the expertise of men and women trained, at terrific expense, in what I consider to be the finest military academies in the world, to be set aside for the decisions of the civilians whose decisions have not been wrapped in war.
>
> We lost Korea, no question about that, because we did not let the military leadership exercise military judgment. We lost in Vietnam. There is no question in my mind about that…When you are flying a mission and you see a target and you ask the pilot, 'Let's go down and hit that thing,' and he says, 'We can't, we have to take a picture of it and send it back to Washington,' that is a heck of a way to run a war…That is the No. 1 question I am going to pursue. (SASC 1983, 3)

Later, Goldwater emphasized, "There is nothing in the Constitution that requires civilian control. It is merely a hand me down." (SASC 1983, 338). In the final set of hearings, he opened the session by saying he was, "hopeful that after the hearings…the American people will take a better interest in their relationship to their military and *the problems that the overbearing influence of civilian control can have and has had during war*." (emphasis added) (SASC 1985, 58)[36]

[36] By the final set of hearings in 1985, Goldwater had received counsel from the SASC staff and amended his position, but only slightly and seemingly half-heartedly (Locher III 2022). He said, "Some people may get it in their heads that the staff, and particularly the chairman [speaking of himself], might be opposed to the idea of the civilian being dominant…[.]" He then went to quote at length from the staff study which asserted the importance of absolute civilian control of the military in war and peace. Once finished reading from the study, he ad-libbed saying that civilians maintained "overbearing influence" during war indicating his actual views had not moderated much.

Goldwater's beef with civilian control was not just with the president and defense secretary, but with the proliferating size of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and with Robert McNamara's "whiz kids." Goldwater was not alone here. Senator Gramm (R, TX) indicated his goal was to "de-McNamaraize" the Department of Defense through this legislation. (SASC 1985, 67). Also speaking of the civilian analysts in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), former CJCS, Adm Moorer, said in a 1982 HASC hearing, "There is no question about the fact—in the case of the Vietnam war, no military man in his right mind would have operated that war like it was operated…You had people [referring to "whiz kids" in OSD] who were not professionals, who had no experience, laying down very hard and fast rules…everyone wants to be a field marshal." (HASC 1982, 164). Moorer amplified his thinking a few years later before the Senate saying, "Professional military judgments were being analyzed by people who never missed a meal or heard a hostile shot fired." (SASC 1985, 179)

For other reformers, the "Whiz Kids" civilians were an epiphenomenon and not a problem unto themselves. Secretaries of Defense, they argued, increased the size of their office and employed more such analysts because the military advice was poor. Secretaries of Defense afforded "undue influence" to the whiz kids because, as former Secretary of Defense Brown argued, the recommendations of the military staffs were poorly "conceived and [un]responsive…to the needs of civilian decision-makers…Consequently, Secretaries of Defense have turned to civilian staffs….to get advice on policy and on planning that is at least as much military in nature as political, technical, or international relations oriented." (HASC 1982, 112–13). Brown added that, "if the military in the form of a joint military staff is able to do analysis that seems less biased to the Secretary of Defense, then the joint military staff will be relied on for the answers to many questions that are now passed on to civilians in the Office of the Secretary of Defense." (HASC 1982, 113) Both reformers and the status quo accepted that civilian whiz kids were a problem, that civilians had too large a say in military policy which had become, "overshadowed by civilian analysts" (Barrett and Jones 1983, 293). They agreed that military officers on the Joint Staff, working for the Chairman, should play a much larger role in the development of strategy.

The debate about strategy in Vietnam is important for another reason. The final legislation formalized the production of American national security strategy and gave Congress a central role in overseeing that strategy. This was an outgrowth of these hearings in general, but Vietnam in particular. However, strategy was never well-defined in the reform debates. Sometimes, it would be referred to as "military strategy" and other times simply as "strategy." The line between strategy and foreign policy was always blurred. Similarly, the reformers had a difficult time determining how they might improve "strategy" with legislation. Primarily, they argued that the military leaders were often "irrelevant" in the provision of strategic advice to the president and that this irrelevance stemmed from the institutional dynamics of the JCS design.

Reformers argued that the JCS system produced bad strategy because of the perverse inter-service dynamics. Because the services found themselves naturally pitted against each other when it came to any recommendation—operational or procurement—they would generally use JCS procedures to find common ground and reach lowest-common-denominator decisions. Thus, the JCS system was less an "invitation to struggle" than it was an invitation to accommodate (Corwin 1957, 171). Former CJCS Jones describes this dynamic saying that the service chiefs are "understandably reluctant to forward disagreements [to the Secretary of Defense]." (SASC 1983, 64) He continued that the JCS system created:

> a greater drive for agreement than for quality: the process usually results in extensive discussion and careful draftsmanship of a paper designed to accommodate the views of each Service—at least to the extent of not goring anyone's ox… As would be expected, papers produced by such a multiple committee process are often watered down or well waffled, although not as badly as Dean Acheson judged when in his 1969 memoirs he wrote of the Joint Chiefs organization: 'Since it is a committee and its views are the result of votes on formal papers prepared for it, it quite literally is like my favorite old lady who could not say what she thought until she heard what she said. (SASC 1983, 64)

For the pro-reformers, this led to a Vietnam war that was badly managed by the military as they were initially more concerned about ensuring that all services were in on the action rather than an ends-ways-means analysis of the strategy (SASC Staff 1985, 316–22).

The status quo advocates took different strategic lessons from Vietnam even though they agreed the United States pursued a flawed strategy. Instead of wondering why the chain of command was less rational than it could have been, they focused on advice not heeded. They contended that Secretary McNamara, President Kennedy, and President Johnson all received higher quality advice than was generally thought, but that those leaders so desired to control the outcome, that they shaped the JCS environment to get the advice they wanted. They would limit the types of matters they sought advice from them on, limited them to tactical recommendations, and then demurred on any issues relating to the broader logic of the conduct of the war (McMaster 1997). As such, the status-quo advocates would argue that the strategic advice from the JCS is highly contingent on the relationships between specific presidents and specific military officers.

Former CJCS Gen. Maxwell Taylor spoke fondly of his "happy days with John Fitzgerald Kennedy" as he recalled having both a good influence and a good relationship with the President (HASC 1982, 428). These "happy days" may not have been because Taylor provided good advice and might have been more the result of Kennedy hearing what he wanted to hear from Taylor, or more importantly, from Taylor editing what he told Kennedy (and later Johnson) about the JCS deliberations to match the president's preferences (McMaster 1997). [37] No amount of institutional redesign, the status quo advocates argued, would alter the fact that strategy-making is politics and politics is a human endeavor. Presidents, they argued, get to make decisions, and those decisions are based on an intensely personal, contingent, and political set of circumstances and relationships.

In much of the Congressional reform debate, there were references to problems bigger than the JCS and both questions and answers would veer into territory dealing with the National Security Council, or the State Department, or the Foreign Affairs committees. At each point, however, these lines of inquiry

[37] This pathology mirrors what intelligence studies scholars have described as a maleffect of the intelligence-policy relationship when analysts and intelligence community leaders become too interested in helping the policymaker reach their desired conclusion by presenting "intelligence to please" as opposed to neutral facts and analysis (Rovner 2011, 44).

were treated like digressions so that the S/HASC could focus on their task: the JCS and DoD. When Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested to SASC Chairman Tower in 1983 that what was needed was not so much JCS reform, but NSC reform and expansion, Senator Tower eventually shifted the subject saying, "Let me try to more narrowly focus on the Department of Defense which, of course, is our primary concern." (SASC 1983, 407) In another 1983 exchange, Sen. Pete Wilson (R, CA) asked former DoD and NSC official, Philip Odeen, whether it would improve strategy to "downgrad[e] the role of the [National Security Adviser] by trying to eliminate competition with the Secretary of State." (SASC 1983, 103) Odeen responded as did many other witnesses over the 1980s saying that while the Secretary of State was responsible for "diplomatic actions," that "national security policy has become far too complex for the Secretary of State to have the lead." Further, the National Security Adviser needed to be someone that "the President has…near him who can give him 'gut' advice on [foreign policy] issues." (SASC 1983, 103–4) Odeen emphasized that everything from the selection of the National Security Adviser to the functioning of the NSC had to be flexible enough to accommodate the idiosyncratic habits, relationships, and challenges faced by each administration. Odeen emphasized that while there were issues, the National Security Adviser position is one idiosyncratically tied to each president and administration. Senator Kennedy (D, MA) picked up that line of questioning from Senator Wilson, but it petered out and when he yielded to the SASC Chairman, Sen. John Tower (R, TX), the focus was quickly back on the JCS. Throughout these hearings, whenever a failure implicated national-level decision-making, which they all did to varying degrees, the discussion would divert to the NSC but return to the JCS.

Within Congress in the 1980s, the sense that the military was mired in an institutional crisis was pervasive and sticky. This sense was bolstered by high-profile catastrophes (like Beirut and EAGLE CLAW) and very public displays of seemingly lackluster performance (like URGENT FURY). These military embarrassments—from "Vietnam to Grenada," as the SASC staff study put it (SASC 1985, 33)—aroused public anxiety about the military readiness of the United States. Taken as a whole, they contributed to the sense of malaise that Carter evoked in his "crisis of confidence" speech, they

underscored the appeal of Regan's call for a fiscal and moral reinvigoration of the American military, and they spurred Congress to look for systemic organizational design flaws to complement this effort. The sum weight of these many shortcomings was crucial in enabling the ultimate passage of Goldwater-Nichols. The accumulation of these anxieties was necessary to do what previous defense reform efforts could not: attract sustained Congressional interest. The H/SASCs, assigned to itself a responsibility to recover the United States' military vitality as much as the White House did in setting a course for defense build-up.

Status quo defenders argued at the time, and not without merit, that these operational failures were "setbacks" which reformers had cherry-picked as post hoc rationalizations to suit the arguments. Senator Warner (R, VA), a former Navy Secretary himself, made this argument in 1985 commenting on how certain instances of under-performance were given more weight in these hearings than had been given to successes. Furthermore, he brought up a recurring debate that the "bad advice" that led to prominent military failures was often ignored or filtered through a presidential decision-making process that led to compromised missions and strategy:

> …But we have singled out the *Pueblo*, we have singled out certain other chapters which are not distinguished in our military history, but nevertheless this system has given us 40 years of peace in Europe, which has been historically the battleground on which this Nation suffered its greatest losses, that together with the Pacific war. And if you go back in history, in all probability Vietnam and Korea, the unsatisfactory portions of that were written by politicians and not the military…[T]his whole question of the advice and what is followed and what is not followed is implicit in these recommendations. And certainly the Presidents have had the flexibility to reach down and talk to whomever they wish. (Warner in SASC 1985, 61)

Warner voiced a common criticism against over-determining the need to reform out of fear that matters could be made worse, not better. Though Warner and others argued that the portrait of crisis and failure was unwarranted, they were often drowned out by a larger chorus who successfully painted such issues as symptoms of a systemic disease that required Congressional action to treat. Because the pro-reform side had a varied, overlapping, and multi-causal theory of defense dysfunction, criticisms like that of Sen. Warner were not sufficient to derail reform momentum.

This analysis does not take a position as to whether or not the pro-reform camp was fair in its criticism of the military operations discussed here. Instead, this section merely notes that it was these tangible, recent experiences that provided the empirical seed corn required to make the case to the American public that Congressionally imposed DoD reforms were necessary, justified, and patriotic. It is impossible to know if these operations would have been appreciably different had they occurred post-Goldwater-Nichols. It seems likely that *Pueblo's* surveillance mission may not have been attempted had a joint force commander had more explicit authority over all such operations in the region, but the others are less clear-cut. They were also far more reliant on presidential decision-making and NSC dynamics. What is clear from this analysis, is that none on the H/SASC intended to make the military more involved in foreign policy-making, per se. They simply wanted the military better postured to over military advice that was on time and on target. That is, advice that is relevant to the ongoing policy and political debates in the White House and therefore capable of influencing short-notice crisis decision-making as opposed to, "products [that are] ponderous in presentation, chronically late, and diluted by excessive negotiation and compromise." (Lynn and Posen 1985, 76)

In 1983, early in the defense reform debates, former Secretary of Defense Brown seemed pessimistic on the possibility for defense reform. He worried that, "only major failures—in a major war, and with national consequences—clearly traceable to the organization are likely to provide motivation for radical change." (SASC 1983, 517) In fact, it was an accumulation of smaller failures that did so. Not a single catalyst, but a growing consensus that reform was necessary.

Balancing the Soviets

> *"Our problem is that the potential enemy is better than the potential enemy was five years ago. The threat is greater."*
>
> – Senator William Stennis (D, MS), 1985 (SASC 1985, 13)

In the early to mid-1980s, defense officials and foreign policy wonks of all stripes believed that the Soviet Union was militarily ascendant. Capturing the early 1980s expert consensus, Drew Middleton

wrote in the *New York Times*, "The conventional wisdom of the Pentagon is that in purely military terms, the Russians are in a far better position vis-à-vis the United States than Hitler was against Britain and France in 1939." The author continued to describe the 1980s as an opening "window" for the USSR during which "Soviet military strength, nuclear and conventional, will be superior to the United States, encouraging adventures in the third world and elsewhere" (Middleton 1980). A few years later at the start of the 1980s defense reform journey, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Adm Holloway confirmed Middleton's assessment by telling the HASC, "…I think we are passing through equivalence, and the trends are that the Soviets are soon going to gain a measurable and useful strategic superiority." (HASC 1982, 54–55) In the Senate staff study, Locher's team wrote that "During the past two decades, the military dimensions of the U.S.-Soviet balance of power have shifted adversely for the United States." (SASC Staff 1985, 283). This sense of a rising Soviet threat grew from two interrelated perceptions. First, that the United States was in a state of general decline dating back to the Vietnam war and, second, that the Soviet military was becoming more powerful.

Soviet-US comparisons stalked the entire discussion of defense reform. They included discussions over what sort of military institutions are more desirable: ones with high degrees of central control (like the Soviets) or ones with more diffuse authority and inefficiency with competitive services (like the United States). But the debate also included judgments regarding the broader societies. These comparisons took the form of which system of politics and government is more stable (authoritarianism or popular democracy) or which economic model was better (command or market). In all cases, Congressional leaders answered these questions easily and concluded that the American system was far superior.

However, that confidence in the ultimate superiority of liberal democracy was itself a cause for concern. For many, their apprehension about Soviet military power was amplified by a sense of fragility across the broader Soviet society. Soviet economic, political, and social weakness magnified fears of Russia's war machine. This domestic fragility, many feared, would promote erratic and destabilizing

behavior around the world. In 1985, former Secretary of Defense James Schlessinger described how he remained concerned that the totalitarian nature of the Soviet state made it particularly dangerous. Schlessinger feared Soviet leaders might mobilize the country for war against their interests saying, "[In a democracy] the public is prepared to follow its leaders for a while. After a while, if the policy seems endless or hopeless, the public is not going to follow any more. They can opt out in a democracy in a way that they cannot in an authoritarian state." (SASC 1985, 175)

As with Schlessinger's early exposition of the democratic peace theory, these comparisons frequently veered into conversations on the societal and political differences between the superpowers (Maoz and Russett 1993). These diversions provided an important backdrop for the overall focus of the hearings, defense and hard power. The Soviet threat, as far as the HASC and SASC were concerned was overwhelmingly concerned with coercive potential in the form of artillery tube comparisons, naval power, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and allied strength and reliability. At few points in these hearings was diplomacy mentioned and at no point did the Goldwater-Nichols framers consider a future diplomatic role for the military as a means to improve the relative balance of power.

This section will briefly describe the threat-based logic of the 1980s defense reform. Whereas the previous section evaluated some more introspective assessments of American "failures," this section focuses on how threat perception shaped the debate. The Soviet threat influenced the Goldwater-Nichols framers in two key ways. First, the Soviet threat was a constant throughout the 1980s reform era. It provided sustained cover for Congressional actors of both parties (especially Republicans) to advocate for defense reform, defense buildup, and—most often—both as a means to enhance American security. Next, the Soviet threat was also considered particularly acute due to their "adventurism" in the Third World (Kennan 1981). As mentioned above, this debate centered on hard power. Congress was anxious to make sure the military was investing in the right technology, fielding the right forces, and deploying and employing them in such a way as to produce maximum advantage for the United States. At almost no point in this debate was the defense department considered an important tool for the soft power competition with the Soviet Union. However, the result of this focus on the growing Soviet war machine

was an acceptance—or rather a Congressional demand—that the Pentagon take on more responsibility for crafting and implementing American grand strategy.

The constancy of the Soviet threat in the 1980s debates

Impressions of the Soviet threat throughout the 1980s were remarkably stubborn. It was generally taken as a given by Congressional leaders in both parties that the Soviets posed a military threat that required an increase in American military might for nearly all of the 1980s. These Soviet assessments were malleable, too, in that they could be wielded by relative hawks and doves for different types of defense reform initiatives. Some viewed the Soviet Union as fundamentally fragile when viewed as an economic, social, and political whole, but this only bolstered the case to see Moscow as a military threat. An early example of this was Alexander Haig's description of the threat of Soviet fragility when testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1981:

> On the one hand, we have this growth in sheer Soviet military power, which…[is] inorganic because it was not accompanied by growth in other segments of Soviet society[.]…I think history would confirm that totalitarian states, when plagued with internal failure, and armed beyond the limits of prudence and reasonableness, frequently indulge in external diversions to insure their incumbency and continuation of power. (SFRC 1981, 112)

Those that interpreted the USSR in this way found ample need for the United States to reinvigorate its military and reform the DoD. Haig saw in the Soviet "diversion" into Afghanistan evidence that the USSR would wield military power abroad despite—or perhaps because of—domestic weaknesses.

This view persisted into the late 1980s even after Gorbachev had made the USSR less confrontational abroad. Gorbachev's reforms led to concerns among Soviet hawks in the United States that the USSR might become *more* of a threat. Robert Gates, then Deputy CIA director, argued up through late 1988 that the Soviet Union was growing "domestically more vital" and "politically more adroit" while not giving an inch toward democratization (Gates 1988). Even at this late stage—a little over a year from the fall of the Berlin Wall—Gates worried that *perestroika* was a mere smokescreen for Soviet reinvigoration and that Western politicians were liable to be fooled by Gorbachev's overtures. Richard Nixon agreed with Gates and encouraged such public remarks telling him, "In the literally

hundreds of pieces on the Gorbachev era I have read over the past few months, yours has to be rated as one of the very best. I hope our decision makers—not only in this administration but the next—will take heed[.]" (R. M. Nixon 1988).

Many in the military reinforced this view. The US EUCOM deputy commander testified to the SASC in 1988 that, "It does not appear that Perestroika or Glasnost have resulted in any redirection of resources away from the Soviet military machine." (SASC 1988) A year before, Secretary of Defense Weinberger testified that the Soviet threat had increased during the entirety of the Reagan administration saying, "The basic change in the Soviet position has been an increase in their military capabilities, an increase and continuation of their unwillingness to sign any kind of agreement that would provide for verifiable reductions in armaments, and attempts to secure military advantage by continuing unilaterally with their strategic defense which they started many years before we did." (SASC 1987a, 38)

While some—like Gates and Nixon—saw the Soviet Union growing more politically and socially vigorous in the late 1980s and others—like Haig—believed they were internally weak, they all still agreed on the central premise. That is that throughout the 1980s, the problem was Soviet military strength and totalitarianism on the one hand and American military weakness and complacency on the other. Regardless of how they interpreted the vitality of the USSR domestically, the common ground they found on the military was a primary fuel source for the Congress's 1980s defense reform efforts.

Soviet adventurism and Third World disorder

The indirect competition in the Third World between the two superpowers was also a source of intense insecurity that fueled the 1980s reform debates. Often described as Soviet "adventurism," this consisted of all attempts by the Soviet Union to expand its security relationships around the world and was defined in large measure by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Richman 1991). The 1985 SASC staff study was the clearest and most full-throated presentation of the pro-reform case and in it, the authors expressly pointed to this Third World adventurism as an impetus for major DoD reforms. The SASC staff authors wrote:

> The growth of Soviet military power is the most ominous trend in the international security environment[.] During the past two decades, the military dimensions of the U.S.-Soviet balance of power have shifted adversely for the United States. The geographic scope of challenges to U.S. and Western security interests has expanded substantially over the past decade, due in part to the growing reach of Soviet military power. The competition for power and influence between the United States and the Soviet Union has become truly global in nature. A new boldness and adventurism in Soviet policy toward the Third World has resulted in the proliferation of threats to U.S. interests in distant world areas which are outside the traditional system of Western alliances. In addition, while the improved ability of Soviet forces to operate in non-contiguous areas heightens the potential for direct U.S.-Soviet confrontations, more immediate threats to U.S. interests have risen from the aggressive behavior of Soviet clients such as Cuba and Vietnam. (SASC Staff 1985, 283)

The SASC staff wrote this while recalling recent instances where Soviet clients and proxies were acting in ways counter to US interests in Libya, Grenada, El Salvador, Cuba, Lebanon, and elsewhere. The Soviet relationship—direct or indirect—with these states became more politically salient in the United States as "terrorist" incidents and other low-intensity conflict challenges emanated from them. Thus, Soviet "adventurism" posed a strategic military challenge to the United States in the 1980s defense reform debates because it served as the backdrop for the type of operational, strategic, and diplomatic [perceived] failures that were making headlines in the American press.

Among defense officials, the regional unified commanders were the most concerned with the Soviet's apparent expanding geographic influence. When regional commanders testified before Congress either in the 1980s defense reform hearings or during the contemporaneous confirmation hearings, they would focus their remarks on specific threats to American security in their regions. This had the effect of sharpening the Congressional debate and providing a focus on specific strategic challenges. This sharper focus stood in contrast to much of the other content of the defense reform hearings which was more often esoteric and theoretical as witnesses and members of Congress debated the meaning and utility of concepts such as "jointness," the quality of strategic advice, and the nature of bureaucracies.

For instance, during the first HASC hearings in 1982, Adm. Long, the commander of PACOM, informed the committee that he perceived an aggressive effort by the USSR to establish friendly relations with several Southern Pacific islands. Long reported that the USSR was making inroads in the

"Solomons, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, [and] Western Samoa." (HASC 1982, 839) Assenting to a Congressman's question, Adm. Long affirmed a dynamic wherein the Soviets would offer infrastructure construction (such as an airport) in exchange for basic rights and port access. Long implored Congress to approve provisions that would enable long-term basing and leasing agreements with other small island nations—Tinian and Saipan—to enable the United States to maintain its training regimen in and around their waters and shores.

For Long, Soviet adventurism was at least partially explained by bad American strategy. He told the HASC in 1982:

> For some time, particularly since the Vietnam war, we basically have pulled in—we have in effect unilaterally disarmed so far as the Soviet Union is concerned. We have focused our attention very heavily upon the central front of Europe, which is very fine. But events in the last several years have shown quite clearly that that is not the only place where U.S. interests are threatened. [T]he Soviet threat is global…we must be prepared to meet that threat globally, sustained, and in a conventional way. (Adm. Long in HASC 1982, 837–38)

Long believed that in the 1960s and 70s, the United States had the luxury to afford a more casual approach to strategy, "I think it is important that we recognize that a decade ago the need for crisper strategic guidance was probably not as great as it is today. The United States, a decade ago had overwhelming military superiority in most areas. Today that superiority has evaporated[.]" (HASC 1982, 827).

Though his prescriptions were more tepid than most reformers, Long certainly wanted Congress's help in crafting a more integrated, aggressive strategy to stem the growth in Soviet power and influence. Citing strategy and a whole-of-government approach as the key missing ingredients, Long continued:

> [T]herefore the need for this crisper, more effective strategic guidance, war-fighting concept, to me has become more evident…we need to do a better job translating national strategic objects into guidance upon which the theater [unified] commanders' can build their war plans. (HASC 1982, 827)

DoD reform was necessary, therefore, only insofar as it enabled commanders to receive and provide better strategic guidance/advice to and from national command authorities.

Long's testimony was unique in some ways because he spent little time considering issues of "jointness" or parochialism. Instead, he highlighted the need for the unified commanders to receive strategic guidance that was expressly "whole-of-government." He highlighted to the committee that he engaged constantly with American ambassadors all over the PACOM area of responsibility because it would be damaging and "myopic" for any executive agency—especially the military—to pursue courses of action without consultation with other US government representatives in the region (HASC 1982, 828). For Long, this sort of fusion was necessary for him to carry out his military mission and he assumed that it occurred at higher levels as well. Long's view of his responsibilities and of what was required to counter Soviet adventurism was fairly broad gauge. He cast himself as only influencing the military domain but advocated for integrating that domain with other elements of national power. This testimony, and that of the other regional combatant commanders shone a light on what "strategy" meant to those responsible for the daily management of American power and that was the long-term, consistent, and predictable engagement by the United States.

At US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Long's contemporary, Gen. Gorman, shared similar opinions. He explained that Latin America's prominence in American foreign policy had waned for many years and had done so to the overall detriment of the United States' strategic position in the region. Gorman pointed more to structural issues within the JCS and DoD for why this was so. He believed that because so much of American defense policy was decided by the JCS and because the JCS was dominated by the services, that an "economy-of-force" theater such as SOUTHCOM would not receive the attention it might otherwise get if it was considered within a more wholistic strategy.

Gorman felt that the significance of waning US influence in Latin America was not resonant as a salient issue at the national level because of intervening factors. Namely, he blamed inter-service rivalry in the Pentagon. He blamed the fact that his subordinate service components (such as US Army Southern Command and Naval Forces Southern Command) were, "weak advocates" for Latin American interests and that they were more preoccupied with protecting service prerogatives (HASC 1982, 307). He recommended, "strengthening the Joint Staff at the expense of the Service staffs" and bolstering the Joint

Staff's "capabilities for operation and strategic planning (*including politico-military planning*)" (emphasis added) (SASC 1983, 309). In so doing, Gorman hoped that unified commanders such as himself could drive the strategic conversation regarding their region and cut out any service-centered opinion on a regional strategy that traveled from the service components to the Service chiefs (JCS).

These concerns about Soviet influence and adventurism in the Third World were amplified by the concerns described above over the United States' military's failures/shortcomings in unconventional warfare. For the defense reformers, the need to reorganize the Department of Defense was not simply to get involved in "small wars," but to respond to Soviet expansionism across the Global South (Locher III 2022).

By the late 1980s, popular assessments of the Soviet Union shifted with more Americans sensing a diminishing threat (Richman 1991). American fear and antipathy toward the Soviet Union reached a high point in 1984 but then fell quickly during Gorbachev's tenure as his "New Thinking" a sense that the Cold War was nearing an end (Holloway 1988). The public was optimistic that Gorbachev's public commitment to *glasnost* and *perestroika* would lead to more stable superpower relations. Within the debates on defense reform, however, these more optimistic interpretations played little role in the debate. Defense reformers remained quite concerned with Soviet ambitions. On Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon, Gorbachev was generally assessed with skepticism and the Soviet military was seen as the same sort of menace as Haig had apprehended it to be in 1981. Had defense reform lingered as an issue past 1987, it is easily conceivable that the status quo ante would have predominated. The pressure for a defense buildup would have likely subsided along with the Soviet threat and there would have been little reason to pursue broad-gauge organizational reforms to DoD in an era without clear and present threats.

Nevertheless, Congressional reform advocates sensed Soviet power on the march globally from the early to mid-1980s. They were keen to have the US military produce a better, more coherent, and useful strategy for the United States to preserve and improve its global position. Because the H/SASC took it upon themselves to reform the military, because they believed it was the military's job to fix grand strategy, and because there remained high levels of popular anxiety over the Soviet menace, the ultimate

legislation placed renewed importance on the military to play a leading role in American foreign policy development.

DOD fiscal waste and the political economy considerations for defense reform

> *"A President must manage that budget. I will keep us strong, but you'll not do that unless you command that budget and make certain we get the strength we need. When you pay $500 for a $5 hammer, you're not buying strength."*
>
> – Walter Mondale to Ronald Reagan in a 1984 presidential debate (The Candidates Debate 1984)

Goldwater-Nichols would not have been possible without popular outrage at the perceived fiscal ill-discipline of the DoD. While Reagan campaigned heavily on a program of large-scale increase in the US military, there was a great deal of skepticism that the money would be spent wisely and not simply wasted on boondoggles and bureaucratic bloat (Halloran 1981). Reagan selected Casper Weinberger as his Secretary of Defense largely because of Weinberger's reputation as "Cap the knife," a "budget cutting scrooge" with a particular skill at "Government waste disposal" in order to staunch criticism that increased defense spending would be wasted (Lyons 1980; Clurman 1981). The effort to control DoD waste was not at all new to the Reagan administration and Weinberger's immediate predecessor focused heavily on this issue within the "Steadman report" (Halloran 1980). Why the effort may not have been new, however, it did pose a challenge to Reagan's proposals for a massive defense buildup across all the services. Indeed, the two issues—defense buildup and defense waste—were interconnected from the campaign trail forward. Together, they animated the political economy of defense reform in the 1980s provided the broad, bi-partisan appeal ultimately needed to sustain the Congressional reform effort and secure overwhelming Congressional support.

For President Reagan, acquisition scandals were politically salient and dangerous (Sweet 1984). As Locher wrote in *Victory on the Potomac,* during the 1984 Presidential campaign, "Congress and the media began heavily criticizing the Pentagon's management of acquisition. Horror stories emerged regarding '$500 hammers and $1,000 toilet seats.'" (J. R. Locher 2004, 266) An individual Congressman

made headlines in 1984 by paying $10,000 less than the Pentagon for items in a toolkit when he bought the same items at a Washington DC hardware store (Roberts 1984). In a nationally televised debate, the Democratic Party candidate, Walter Mondale, took the waste issue directly to President Reagan saying:

> Your definition of national strength is to throw money at the Defense Department. My definition of national strength is to make certain that a dollar spent buys us a dollar's worth of defense. There's a big difference between the two of us. (Mondale 1984)

The line drew applause from the audience and an admonition from the moderator to maintain decorum. Implicit in Mondale's criticism was the notion that the Pentagon was being poorly managed and supervised and that it is the president's job to do so.

Acquisition scandals animated the public more than the debate over civil-military relations, civil control, or grand strategy (Roberts 1984). Throughout the 1984 campaign, there was a steady drumbeat of news articles revealing shocking instances of DoD fiscal waste ranging from a "$7,622 coffee pot" (Mohr 1984b), a $700 flashlight (New York Times Editorial Board 1984a), a $670 armrest among many other exorbitant price tags (New York Times Editorial Board 1984b). Toilet seats became common accessories to cartoons with Secretary Weinberger by the mid-1980s. Given that so much of the Reagan administration's rhetoric and policy was centered around taming and shrinking government, it was crucial that senior administration officials demonstrate a personal commitment to such issues (Lehman 2008).

Herblock, 1987

By the mid-1980s, many in the White House—especially on the NSC—were convinced that Congress would indeed impose reform on the DoD (J. R. Locher 2004). Michael Donley and John Douglass, both from the NSC's defense policy directorate, operated an effective direct backchannel with the SASC staff (Donley 1985b, 1985a; Douglass and Donley 1985). By early 1985, National Security

Adviser "Bud" MacFarlane sensed that the White House's previous strategy to remain neutral on the issue would no longer be tenable. He concurred with Donley and Douglas who concluded, "the proponents for change are looking to the NSC for leadership, while DOD…will ultimately look to us for protection." (Donley 1985b, 3) McFarlane asked his staff if the NSC "ha[d] a plan?" for defense reform, and they concluded, "clearly no." (Donley 1985b, 1) Forced to choose a side, the NSC favored Congressional reforms.

As the NSC staff became involved in this issue, they came to share frustrations with the SASC over the way OSD was handling it. Donley was convinced that the Pentagon's approach to the reform pressure was little more than stonewalling and foot-dragging (Locher III 2022). Weinberger had charged Deputy Secretary of Defense Taft to manage the Congressionally motivated reorganization issue and Taft, in turn, assigned Assistant Secretary of Defense Chapman Cox the responsibility. Cox formed an "Ad Hoc Task Force" to monitor and respond to Congressional requests, develop proposals and counterproposals, and formulate official DoD positions on all related issues. However, it had become clear in Congress and at the NSC, "the Cox Group's" efforts were "reactive" and unlikely to "promote a constructive dialogue with Congress." (Donley 1985b) Senators Goldwater and Nunn sent a joint letter to Secretary Weinberger saying, "Dear Cap,…"

> In general, we are troubled by the negative public stance that the Department of Defense has taken on various organizational proposals that are beginning to surface in the defense academic community.[38] These premature reactions are likely to complicate efforts by the Congress and Executive Branch to develop a cooperative approach on this subject. In addition, we are disturbed by reports that some officials of the Department of Defense are working behind the scenes to discredit the work of private organizations [CSIS] that are studying this subject. (Goldwater and Nunn 1985, 1–2)

A few weeks after Goldwater and Nunn sent that letter (a copy of which they forwarded to the NSC), Donley wrote to McFarlane that the Pentagon's Cox Group was more focused on halting Congress'

[38] This referred to a complimentary effort to Congress's official reform efforts undertaken by Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS 1985). Their final report had "the support of every former Secretary of Defense from McNamara to Brown" and mirrored the ultimate conclusions of the SASC staff committee it its report. The interaction, cross-pollination between the CSIS study and the Senate Staff study is well-documented in Locher's *Victory on the Potomac* (J. R. Locher 2004).

reform efforts rather than considering legislative reforms. Cox had requested that the Department of Justice review the limitations of Congressional authority to legislate organizational changes indicating a disinclination to constructively participate in the reform effort (Donley 1985b, 1).

Donley argued that the President would have to weigh in. The President would either have to endorse the Pentagon's position that "no significant changes are in order" while "making sure that this tug o'war does not get out of hand to the detriment of the President's interests" or to permit the NSC to work more closely with Congressional reformers to "protect the President's credibility" and to ensure that certain reforms are achieved to Congress's liking (Donley 1985b). Donley and other NSC officials concluded that the President had several key interests in the defense reorganization issue. Chiefly among these were "The overall credibility of the Administration, particularly as it relates to the management of the [DoD.]" and that "The President has an interest in maintaining business-like relations with Congress; and in particular, positive bipartisan working relationships with key Members who deal with national security issues." (Donley 1985b) Especially worrisome to NSC officials was the impression that the Cox Group and, by extension, the DoD was placing the President in a politically disadvantageous position.

The Reagan administration had weathered the campaign attacks in 1984 stemming from the procurement scandals, but by the Spring of 1985, the scandals threatened the defense authorization bill. Locher recalled, "The procurement horror stories triggered a rapid erosion of public and congressional support for a planned six percent increase in the defense budget. The House votes to freeze military spending at the previous year's level, while the Senate was headed toward a level that would add only enough money to cover inflation." (J. R. Locher 2004, 275) The NSC staff advocated forcefully to the President that he must get ahead of this issue and that an independent presidential commission was the best way to exert some leadership while also releasing some pressure on the system. Secretary Weinberger and CJCS Vessey aggressively resisted the creation of a Presidential commission to investigate the business practices of the Pentagon. Weinberger saw such a commission as "[doing] the opposition's work" and attempting to slow or halt the defense buildup (J. R. Locher 2004, 275). Major General Colin Powell and future EUCOM commander, George Joulwan (aides to Weinberger and Vessey

respectively) leaned on NSC officials to stop "putting ideas in the president's head" and ignore the issue of a separate defense reform commission in the executive branch (J. R. Locher 2004, 275). But despite the Pentagon's protestations, the political pressure had become too great, and Reagan heeded the advice of the NSC to appoint a Blue-Ribbon Panel to investigate the potential for defense reform.

The commission would be headed by David Packard who was a well-known business leader and respected by both members of both parties. He was also a friend of Secretary Weinberger, which enabled him to go about his work more easily than if he was seen as an adversary. McFarlane prevailed on the President to give this commission a broad mandate that would allow it to work in concert with the Congressional leaders that were also pursuing defense reform. While the commission would focus on acquisition and procurement, it would almost certainly touch on issues of strategy and overall DoD management (J. R. Locher 2004, 278). Once established, the "Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management" enabled the President to resolve some of the brewing tension between Congress and the DoD and signal an awareness of problems at the Pentagon and an openness to reforms.

The Packard Commission ultimately played an important role in the Defense Reform effort and endorsed many of the proposals that Congress was working towards (SASC 1985). The greater significance of the commission for this analysis, however, was its creation. President Reagan responded to pressures he felt on the campaign trail which undercut his credibility on defense issues and competent management of the Pentagon. Though the scandals revolving around exorbitant pricing and overpaying were misleading and over-hyped, they did highlight just how peculiar DoD practices were. Defense officials would point to legislative provisions that tilted toward head-scratching inefficiency,[39] but there

[39] In an analysis of the how the procurement scandals gave way to reform, Airon Mothershed focused on the political and media dynamics of the hammer and toilet seat stories. He concluded that, "In reality, the true nature of the spare parts scandal was that the Government's 'host of burdensome and intrusive laws and regulations' relating to commercial item acquisition were 'costly, burdensome, and risky' for most commercial businesses" (Mothershed 2012, 866). Mothershed focused on the way these scandals—whatever their provenance—contributed to reform efforts, but he did not consider their relationship to the much broader and sweeping DoD reform efforts embodied in the Goldwater Nichols legislation itself.

was no doubt that many items were being purchased at substantial markups (Lehman 2008; Mothershed 2012).

Writing in the New York Times in 1985, Edward Luttwark married the issues of the ill-disciplined defense spending with defense reform when he wrote that despite the "angry wavings of $600 toilet seats and bipartisan threats of huge budget cuts" the source of Pentagon waste was deeper and more structural than just bad procurement decisions made by individual program managers (Luttwak 1985). "The real obstacle," he said, "for effective oversight is a fundamental defect in the structure of the military—in a Pentagon where the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are each very powerful, while the Joint Chiefs of Staff are merely a weak coordinating committee." (Luttwak 1985) This sentiment was central to the work of the SASC staff and its allies in the NSC. It was that the entire DoD required Congressionally mandated reorganization and the procurement scandals were mere symptoms of the problem. Critically, the procurement scandals enabled and encouraged Congress to pursue defense reform and Reagan's willingness to join sides with reformers (via the creation of the Packard Commission) signaled that these two issues were paired for him as well.

At the prodding and recommendation of his National Security Council, the President accepted a course of action that made reform likely, and on Congressional terms. His NSC, especially Donley, Douglass, and MacFarlane, was pro-reform, closely tied with Congress, and frustrated by Weinberger's general style and management of the issue (Donley 1985b; Locher III 2022; J. R. Locher 2004). President Reagan may not have had a strong preference for defense organization, but he was indeed irritated by the long-run nature of the spending scandals at the DoD and eager to ensure that they did not derail his defense buildup goals (Locher III 2022). While the President may not have blamed Weinberger—or even defense bureaucrats—for the spending scandals, they were at any rate a distraction that was damaging politically (Reagan 1986). The Packard Commission conducted its investigation within a year just as the Congressional reform efforts were reaching their crescendo. To observers inside and outside the Beltway, they were essentially part of one big defense reform effort.

The public perception that the Defense Department was a bloated, wasteful bureaucracy with little concern for stewardship of the public's taxes was widespread by the mid-1980s. In the early years of the Reagan administration, this was not the case. In the early 1980s, the prevailing opinion was that the United States was losing ground to the Soviets and that its military was ill-prepared for a serious test. A 1980 survey found that 75% of the American public favored an *increase* in defense spending (Roper 1980). Six years later, 53% favored *cutting* defense (Roper 1986). Coupled with fears about the increasing federal deficit, concerns of a return to high inflation, and, most importantly for this analysis, concerns that the Pentagon was wasting the money already provided to it, it is not surprising that by the mid-1980s the American public was feeling less generous in the realm of defense spending.

After years of exhaustive hearings and detailed research, both houses of Congress agreed on a defense reform bill, and it was signed into law on October 1, 1986. It received unanimous approval in the Senate—no small feat—and overwhelming support in the House (383-27). Proud of his capstone political accomplishment, Barry Goldwater said his namesake bill was, "the only goddamn thing I've done in the Senate that's worth a damn…[now] I can go home happy, sit up on my hill and shoot the jack rabbits." (Wilson 1986)

Examined with some historical distance, the passage of Goldwater-Nichols seems even more unlikely than it likely did at the time. Numerous attempts at defense reform had failed dating back to the establishment of the modern DoD and most contemporary observers took for granted that reform was unlikely barring some sort of Pearl Harbor-like calamity (Barrett and Jones 1983; Zegart 2000). Credit for the bill's passage goes to the peculiar alignment of political personalities (hawks and doves; budget crusaders with defense skeptics) along with the peculiar timing (a defense boom amid calls to control the federal deficit) as providing a particularly ripe moment for reforms. Most credit Barry Goldwater himself for being the *sine qua non* for the legislation. Without a sponsor with solid Republican political credentials, most think the legislative effort would have simply petered out (Locher III 2022). After its passage, Senator Biden (D, DE) observed, "You know that old comment—and you will not like the comparison—that only Nixon could go to China. Only Goldwater could produce this. If anybody else had

been the one who had been advocating reorganization, every military man and woman at the Pentagon would have been down our backs as communist sympathizers." (Wilson 1986) With Goldwater as the head—perhaps figurehead—of this broad "reform coalition" reform was possible. As Zegart concluded, "Only in 1986, with a once-in-a-lifetime political alignment of the stars, did the agency finally undergo substantial reform." (Zegart 2000, 131) Zegart notes what Biden did at the time. That the prospects of such reform were entirely contingent on chance events and political dynamics. That, "The truth is Goldwater-Nichols should never have happened. No theory or general explanation could have predicted its passage. Reform succeeded only because a series of factors converged at just the right moment, in just the right way. Had any of them been missing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would still be hobbled today." (Zegart 2000, 162)

The substance of the legislation

Having now thoroughly reviewed the political and policy motivations behind the 1980s defense reforms, it is important to briefly outline the substance of the legislation itself. That is the concrete, legal changes to the DoD. This section will focus on the top-line changes that flow from the reform motivations detailed above. They are the various provisions that strengthened the Chairman; the various provisions that elevated the regional commands; the various provisions designed to improve national strategy; and the institutional changes to embrace "low-intensity conflict."

Strengthening and elevating the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)

Efforts to strengthen the CJCS centered on making that office independent and superior to the other JCS members. Through each of the 1980s reform hearings, reformers grappled with whether they should dissolve the JCS entirely and relegate the service chiefs to a sole focus on the maintenance and development of their services, or if they should attempt to reform the JCS. Ultimately, they chose the latter. Goldwater-Nichols elevated the chairman as the singular "principal military adviser" to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. The other service chiefs were now

free to offer advice to these bodies but are generally constricted from doing so via custom unless they go through, or with the knowledge of the CJCS (PL 99-433 1986, para. 151). By distinguishing the CJCS as *the* principal military adviser and reducing the service chiefs to simply additional military advisers, the legislation eliminated any specific need for the CJCS to speak with the other chiefs before rendering an opinion to civilian leaders. This drew the Chairman closer to the president and created an expectation that the Chairman would work hand-in-glove with the national command authorities to formulate policy. The service chiefs would then become an additional voice, or as the bill envisioned a dissenting voice, on key strategic issues.

The newly empowered chairman was also given far more sweeping and individual responsibilities compared to what the position held as part of the corporate JCS. The post-Goldwater CJCS was responsible for all manner of strategic planning and direction that ranged from long-run "net assessments" to reviewing and approving the unified combatant commanders' contingency plans. The services would play no official role in approving these plans and the entire contingency preparation activity was accelerated. Related to the responsibilities to plan, the CJCS would also personally recommend the budget for the combatant commands (Sec. 153 (a, 4) PL 99-433 1986). These provisions drastically expanded the portfolio of the CJCS as an individual and his relationship with the combatant commanders.

To enable the accomplishment of these new responsibilities, the CJCS was given a much more capable staff. The Joint Staff was expanded in size and made directly, and solely, accountable to the CJCS. Previously, the Joint Staff worked for the corporate JCS as a whole and, as one would expect, a staff that worked for five separate bosses was neither timely, nor crisp, nor relevant as Gen. Jones observed (Jones 1982). The legislation allowed the Joint Staff to assist the service chiefs, but only if the Chairman directed them to do so (PL 99-433 1986, para. 155).

The framers intended that the Chairman develop a close and fruitful relationship with the national command authorities consisting of routine, prompt interaction. With the Chairman now responsible for a much wider portfolio of responsibilities—supervising the combatant commands, developing joint doctrine, approving strategic and operational plans, and interaction with Congress—the Chairman

required more assistance in the management of the Joint Staff. The solution here was to create a four-star "vice" chairman who could act as the "alter ego" of the Chairman when he was otherwise unavailable or engaged. This Vice Chairman would prove particularly important in future administrations as will be discussed in more detail below. In short, however, the basic result was that there was an additional, senior military office that could attend National Security Council deputy meetings which were the beating heart of the foreign policy in the late Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations (Gates 1996; C. L. Powell and Persico 1995).

Strengthening and elevating the Unified Commanders

Three provisions of Goldwater-Nichols were particularly important to the future ennoblement of the combatant commanders to what *Washington Post* reporter Dana Priest would eventually describe as their "proconsul" status (Priest 2004). Firstly, the legislation altered the chain of command for these joint commands to flow through the CJCS and not through the JCS. This modification was accompanied by language that made clear that the CJCS had a special supervisory, but not command, authority concerning the regional commands and made clear that the commands' business was the Chairman's business because it was the real-time management of American military strategy.

The second set of provisions regarded modifying the relationship between the regional commands and their subordinate commands. These subordinate commands are comprised of individual "service components" who before Goldwater-Nichols were subject to a great deal of operational control from their respective services. The legislation made clear that the unified commanders could, "[give] authoritative direction to subordinate commands and forces necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command" and that this would be the final word on any matters of mission, organization, the chain of command, and relative authority (PL 99-433 1986, para. 600).

Finally, the matter of independent and specific budgeting for the combatant commands was crucial to elevating their prominence and relevance in American foreign policy. The 1986 legislation required that the Secretary of Defense "after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff"

include specific funding for each commander that addressed "joint exercises, force training, contingencies, and selected operations." (PL 99-433 1986, para. 601) This modification forced the DoD to develop, assign, and authorize specific regional strategies that eventually grew to include all manner of defense diplomacy and engagement activities. The exercises that were specifically called for required commanders to work directly with the CJCS to develop their theater exercise concepts and plans which have generally grown in size, scope, and prestige for each theater involving more and more new allies and partners each year (K. J. Wolfley 2021). Furthermore, the Chairman was eventually given control of an independent pot of money that he could dispense to enable the unified commands to meet their operational, training, or other needs. These "CINC initiatives funds" were crucial to the development of defense diplomacy and grew out of the Congressional impression that the Service-centric budgeting process in the Pentagon ignored emergent here-and-now issues that the unified commands needed to address (J. R. Locher 2004).

These efforts to empower combatant commanders seemed to have an immediate impact. James Locher recalled:

> After Goldwater-Nichols got passed, the combatant commanders, whatever they wanted they got. The service chiefs were complaining that everyone had to bow down to the combatant commanders. In the past the combatant commanders were weak. And now all of a sudden they had the authority to express themselves. They didn't work for the Chairman or the Joint Chiefs. They work through the Secretary of Defense. (Locher III 2022)

Citing how Congress continued to play a role in shaping the inter-relations and power dynamics within the defense department, Locher cited the SASC's role in confirmations for the combatant commanders after Goldwater-Nichols as an example of Congressional power in setting the military agenda. He said, "[Prior to 1986,] we [Congress] didn't really often take seriously the [combatant commander] confirmation process, but after Goldwater-Nichols strengthened them, they got a lot more attention in the Senate Armed Services confirmation process." (Locher III 2022) In an appropriation hearing three years after Goldwater-Nichols was signed into law, Senator Daniel Inouye said, "Too often in the past we have

relied primarily on the testimony of military representatives from Washington [the services] and failed to hear the concerns of several commanders in the field [the unified commanders]." (SAC 1989, 2)

Improving national strategy

As discussed, a major goal of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms was to make better national military strategy. Though always expressed in the hearings and testimony as a need to improve America's military strategy, it is clear from the tone, tenor, and content of the dialogue that what the framers hoped for was a better foreign policy. Given the committee of origin for this legislation—the Armed Services Committees—it is not surprising that the issue was restricted to "military strategy." But "military strategy" or "national security strategy," has a porous and often arbitrary border with "foreign policy." The Goldwater-Nichols framers were aware that their Congressional committees would assert more control over foreign policy in general. In the very first NSS hearing, Senator Warner (D. VA) suggested that oversight of the national security strategy should be a joint endeavor of the SASC and Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SASC 1987a).

A key provision in this effort was the requirement for the President to, "transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States." This report would address:

> the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States…[t]he foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy…,the proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States…, [and] [t]he adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States[.] (PL 99-433 1986, para. 603)

The resultant National Security Strategy (NSS) document would become a heavily analyzed, and often pro forma, statement of American foreign policy (Snider 1995). Regardless of whether one believes it is a useful document, however, the process of its production puts the CJCS at the center of American foreign policy-making. The NSS, to be clear, is a presidential document produced largely by the National Security Council. But its contents rely heavily on inputs, on problem-framing, and on the perspective of

the CJCS, the VCJCS, and the Joint Staff. Moreover, the presentation of this document to Congress and the oversight hearings in front of the SASC to review this document indicate how closely linked the military and national strategy became via the Goldwater-Nichols reforms.

In the very first NSS review hearings before the SASC in January 1987, Senator Nunn framed the Congressionally directed requirement for NSSs as an effort to force both Congress and the Pentagon to avoid budgetary minutiae as their primary focus. He said, "the Congress and the Pentagon are drowning in budget detail. This has diverted the committee, as well as the Department of Defense, from its broader constitutional responsibilities. I hope that we can spend less time playing trivial pursuit, which diverts both congressional and Pentagon attention from the larger challenges we face in the national security arena." (SASC 1987a, 2) Nunn noted that though it was not the intention of his committee to produce a "congressional alternative to our current strategy," that he did want the SASC to "stimulate thought on this subject." (SASC 1987a, 2) The ranking Republican member, Sen. Warner (R, VA) joined Nunn in asserting the urgency for a better national strategy and described its wide-ranging application saying, "The national strategy should provide the overarching framework from which our military strategy *and foreign policy are derived*." (emphasis added) (SASC 1987a, 7) The defense reformers in Congress came to expect that the US military would play a leading role (if not *the* leading role) for the United States' overall foreign policy. Doing so would bring far more foreign policy development, writ large, under the scrutiny of the H/SASC.

Several SASC members did try and highlight that conducting oversight of national strategy was a shared responsibility between their committee and the Foreign Relations Committees, but this hearing as well as the NSS requirement itself, was a SASC initiative. A reasonable case could be made that the reason the S/HASC placed so much responsibility for strategy-making on the military was that these committees were in fact the *armed services committees* and their oversight appetite grew to implicate broader national issues. In the NSS hearings, the SASC would grill uniformed officers from the Chairman through the combatant commanders about the whole-of-government US strategy in their region and the degree to which they felt it was sufficient (SASC 1989a)

The goal of this aspect of the legislation was explicitly to "change American foreign policy" as Locher recalled. (Locher III 2022). The habit of inserting the military, formally, into the production of an annual national security strategy enabled and encouraged them to take a leading role in answering "what is our national security strategy after the end of the cold war." (J. R. Locher 2004) At that first NSS hearing, and those in subsequent years, pride of place was given to the CJCS and each unified command commander to testify on the national strategy for their regions. While the service chiefs prepared for budgetary and organizational policy discussions in the springtime NDAA hearings, the CJCS and regional commanders discussed the proper foreign policy for their regions during the January NSS hearings. Not only did this shift the Congressional dynamics with the SASC from one of bean counting to one of foreign policy design, but it also sharpened the focus of these Goldwater-Nichols empowered entities on the creation of foreign policy.

Embracing low-intensity conflict

Through the 1987 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress created an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)) and it elevated Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to a four-star specified combatant command on equal footing with the other "CINCs" (CENTCOM, PACOM, et al.). The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation did not address special operations in any way, but the 1980s reform efforts and the many hearings that produced Goldwater-Nichols were keenly focused on improving the United States military capacity for these sorts of "irregular" conflicts and missions. As the legislation's lead author and future ASD(SO/LIC), James Locher recalled "The special operations command would have never been created if it hadn't come on the heels of Goldwater-Nichols, if it hadn't been part of Goldwater-Nichols." (Locher III 2022) The Cohen-Nunn amendment—as it came to be known—of the 1987 NDAA was the direct result of all the 1980s reform efforts to deal with perceived military failures and shortcomings in the third world.

SASC leadership at the time decided to create SOLIC and elevate SOCOM through an amendment to the NDAA rather than within the Goldwater-Nichols legislation because they feared it

would be compromised away during legislative mark-ups and debates. As Locher recalled, insulating these actions from Goldwater-Nichols was:

> really sort of the need to [acknowledge] that [special operations] was a highly sort of specialized area of expertise…We decided to break off those reforms from Goldwater-Nichols because Goldwater-Nichols was a huge piece of legislation and there was only a few people on Capitol Hill that knew anything about Special Operations and we were fearful that if we let it get into the larger debate, and there was gonna be lots of amendments and compromises, that we were fearful that the special operations legislation would be the first thing that would be lost. (Locher III 2022)

Ironically, therefore, the legislation meant to address what was arguably the most animating rationale for the 1986 reforms—addressing irregular warfare failures in the Third World—was cut from the main military reform bill and handled separately as an amendment to the "must pass" 1987 NDAA.

As will be discussed below, the SOLIC office under Locher played a key role in developing and cheering on operational and strategic concepts that would contribute to defense diplomacy. Locher led an effort at his level to champion a national strategy of "peacetime engagement" that relied on all forces—not just special operations forces" to engage with partner militaries outside of combat or conflict and develop ties between the United States military and the broader societies in which the United States military was likely to operate (Hahn 1993; J. R. Locher 2004; OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a). Thus, SOLIC as a direct outgrowth of Goldwater-Nichols added an important voice to the chorus that would cheer on the development of defense diplomacy.

Goldwater-Nichols's implementation and initial impacts

The Pentagon had little time to reflect on (or brood over) the passage of Goldwater-Nichols and its companion Cohen-Nunn amendment to the 1987 NDAA. The momentous geopolitical changes described above, along with an extremely tight budget environment, demanded the Pentagon adapt to its new institutional reality and move on. Exigencies aside, many expected that Goldwater-Nichols would face a rocky road to full implementation. Given the Pentagon's general opposition to the reforms throughout the 1980s debates, Congressional leaders worried that both the spirit and the letter of the law would not be supported enthusiastically by the Defense Department (J. Locher 2022). However,

responding to the advice of his own NSC, President Reagan directed the full implementation of Goldwater-Nichols and the Packard Commission's recommendations via executive order (Reagan 1987).

This presidential directive coupled with Weinberger's autumn departure from the Pentagon led to what was, by most accounts, a surprisingly smooth implementation.[40] While the law did not provide for an "implementation period" per se, it is useful to conceive of the final years of Adm. William ("Bill") Crowe's term as CJCS as that transitional period (1987 – 1989). Crowe was first confirmed as chairman in 1985 and served for two terms culminating in 1989 when Gen. Colin Powell succeeded him. By 1989, the most difficult aspects of Goldwater-Nichols's implementation had been solved. More importantly for this study, by the fall of 1989, some of the second and third-order effects of Goldwater-Nichols which would enable defense diplomacy were already in the offing. Three of these are important to this study: the policy-making impacts of the new Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff position, the new budget authority of the CJCS, and the creation of the ASD(SO/LIC) office.

The Alter Ego: Impacts of the establishment of the Vice Chairman position

A key goal of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was to make the CJCS more influential in policymaking. The direct means of accomplishing this have been discussed sufficiently already and require little more elaboration here (namely: the elevation of the chairman above the other JCS members and making the Joint Staff solely responsible to him). The legislation also empowered the chairman in more subtle ways that often elude observation. These were unintended, second-order impacts of the law which are more obscure to analysts and taken for granted by those within the institution. Among these were those impacts related to the new configuration of responsibilities within the Office of the CJCS stemming from the establishment of the Vice Chairman of the JCS position. These changes quickly altered the policymaking landscape with significant impacts on policymaking itself.

[40] Secretary Weinberger resigned in November 1987 and was replaced by then National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci who favored the reforms.

Goldwater-Nichols provided a four-star Vice Chairman of the JCS to serve as the "alter ego" of the Chairman (J. R. Locher 2004, 51; SASC 1985, 512). While that structural addition is well-known, some of its impacts are less so. One immediate impact was an increase in the CJCS's travel ability. The VCJCS enabled more travel by the Chairman because having his "alter ego" safely ensconced in Washington meant that the CJCS could trust that the joint staff would be managed, interactions with Congress would be attended to, that the White House (and NSC) would remain supported, and that the OSD would also have a single senior officer to call on joint matters. Previously, travel by the CJCS meant that one of the other JCS members would serve as "acting" chairman which always carried the risk of having a leader who was missing context on previous issues and one not necessarily empowered to quickly task the joint staff for rapid turn-around responses to highly political questions. Having a VCJCS—along with the ever-increasing quality of global communications technology—freed the chairman (Reveron 2004). Knowing that the VCJCS would represent the military well during their temporary absences, the post-Goldwater-Nichols chairmen had more freedom to move than their predecessors.

The first two CJCS after Goldwater-Nichols played an important role in establishing the roles and responsibilities of the VCJCS. Adm. William Crowe and Gen. Colin Powell handled their VCJCS relationships differently but generally agreed on the sane responsibilities for their respective vices. Crowe opted for a memorandum of understanding with his VCJCS (USAF Gen. Herres) to delineate their responsibilities whereas Powell favored a less formal division of labor with his (USN Adm. Jeremiah) (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995).[41] In the case of Crowe, the VCJCS's portfolio included many of the biggest problem areas that Goldwater-Nichols was meant to solve, the budget and acquisition portfolios (Crowe Jr. 1993; Rehome 2009).

[41] For Crowe, this formality is understandable given that the position was entirely new and likely required more deliberate thought for the VCJCS employment and to attain buy-in from the other service chiefs regarding this new four-star's remit.

With the Vice handling much of the squabbles on budgets and funding between the services and OSD, Adm. Crowe had more time to veer into the diplomatic realm and he did so by orchestrating a robust series of military-to-military exchanges with the USSR from 1989 to 1991 (see Chapter 4). This early defense diplomacy initiative was important in setting the stage for Powell's more robust efforts through the JCTP. For both, the existence of a Vice Chairman was crucial in elevating their office because it provided an officer at the four-star level to manage crucial matters that otherwise would have occupied the Chairman's time and attention (Crowe Jr. 1993).

The new VCJCS position achieved some of its most important policy impact by determining, and reconfiguring, meeting attendance. The NSC met regularly below the principal level with a sometimes informal and situationally dependent cast of characters from the various agencies. However, in the late Reagan and Bush administrations, there was often a core group led by the deputy national security adviser. This included key officers within the NSC as well as members of other cabinet agencies, State, Defense, and the intelligence community. When Powell was the deputy national security adviser (December 1986 – November 1987), he named this group which he led the "policy review group" (PRG). The PRG was a key engine of American foreign policy at this, the "sub-cabinet" (i.e., deputy) level (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995, 326). When Robert Gates assumed the deputy national security adviser position (1989), he renamed the PRG as the "Deputies Committee," but it retained—or even gained—influence. Gates described its portfolio as the body that, "would develop the medium- and long-range objectives of U.S. policy and would manage U.S. policy day to day[.]…[I]n the early fall of 1989, the Deputies Committee also was assigned by the President to handle crisis management for the American government." (Gates 1996, 459). Before the existence of the VCJCS, there was no senior military leader who was routinely in attendance at these meetings. Instead, the military would attend as required, as invited, and often, at much lower ranks.

The newly established VCJCS found a ready home in the PRG/Deputies Committee. With Crowe and Powell having a four-star representative at this meeting where foreign policy decisions were shaped

discussed, and sometimes made, they were both more tuned into the fast-moving policy requirements and political contexts of a given moment. Thus, when cross-cutting foreign policy issues arose—such as how to handle liberalization of eastern and central Europe—the Deputies Committee was the place where they were first discussed. The Deputies Committee would also be the place where various departments and agencies developed a sense of the overall policy direction even if no official presidential directive had yet done so. When the ambassadors developed programs and built initiatives because they thought the winds were blowing in a certain direction, it could be partially attributed to the discussions in this forum (Palmer 1997).

When the CJCS decided to pursue military-to-military contacts with the Chief of the Soviet General Staff (as Crowe did) or to back a highly informal and improvisational set of contacts with the former Warsaw Pact or Soviet Republics (as Powell did), they did so with the express knowledge of the policy preferences of the NSC and the White House as gleaned from and confirmed by the PRG/Deputies Committee. Under both Powell and Gates, this body had a reputation for being hugely influential in shaping American foreign policy.[42] Issues resolved at this level were ready for action often without the explicit concurrence of the president. Thus, having the VCJCS attend provided the CJCS a window into more emergent foreign policy issues and provided the opportunity to develop military responses before explicit tasking. Just as having the VCJCS taking care of OSD-level budgeting allocation freed the CJCS for more travel and improvisation, having the VCJCS at the Deputies Meeting plugged the military into foreign affairs questions earlier and more substantially than was the case pre-Goldwater-Nichols.

[42] The deputies committee produced very little in the way of official records because people like Gates and Powell simply verbally assigned tasks for action during the course of the meeting (Gates 2000, 18–19). An important challenge in researching this body in particular is this paucity of official records. This is magnified by the larger access issue related to the NSC in general. Textual records remain "withheld" even if they have past their declassification review date given. Because so many different agencies are part of the NSC, each needs to review and approve individual declassification requests. This gives rise to the enormous backlogs of not-yet-available materials leaving research to infer much of the meetings' contents through context and through memoirs, oral histories, and interviews.

The VCJCS position also caused new configurations of responsibilities on the Joint Staff to meet the CJCS's new statutory (and emergent customary) responsibilities. Goldwater-Nichols conferred upon the Chairman the sole responsibility to be *the* principal military adviser to the president and Secretary of Defense. Previously, the JCS as a corporate body shouldered this responsibility. Goldwater-Nichols also widened the aperture so that the CJCS would be the principal military adviser for those two (the president and defense secretary), but also the for the National Security Council (PL 99-433 1986, para. 151).[43] Serving as the principal military adviser to the NSC meant that the CJCS—especially Gen. Powell—felt compelled to meet the Secretary of State's needs for military advice.

This was intended by the framers, indirectly, as they hoped that the VCJCS position would enable better military advice in the "interagency process" (Adm. Watkins in SASC 1985). Upon implementation, a novel solution emerged whereby the Joint Staff did provide better military support to the other NSC cabinet agencies (and broader interagency), especially the State Department, but not necessarily through the Chairman or Vice Chairman. Instead, a pre-existing three-star position on the joint staff known as the "Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" evolved post-Goldwater-Nichols. Previously, the ACJCS was the Chairman's "outside man" that liaised with the NSC, OSD, and State Department (SASC Staff 1985, 151–52). This was a great deal of liaison for one individual resulting in more episodic outreach to the various positions. Moreover, the Joint Staff itself was overworked and of poorer quality prior to Goldwater-Nichols resulting in less support for this lone three-star responsible for all this outreach.

After the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, the role of the ACJCS position changed dramatically, and far from public view. As described, the Vice Chairman would attend to most OSD requirements

[43] Making the CJCS a servant of more of the Federal government, and not just the president, was a theme resonant throughout the 1980s defense reform hearings. Many in Congress expressed the need for the CJCS to also serve as the principal military adviser to Congress, and not just to the executive branch officials. This was of-a-piece with the larger concerns throughout the 1980s of rolling back the so-called "Imperial Presidency" and (re)asserting Congressional authority. Though CJCS was never formally named a Congressional adviser, it became routine in subsequent Chairman confirmation hearings for the SASC to seek assurances from CJCS nominees that they would give their own personal, unfiltered advice *to Congress* as well as to the president.

(especially the planning, programming, and budgeting), the NSC requirements—especially the PRG/Deputies Committee and would attend to other cabinet-level agencies as well when they had a discrete issue concerning the military. The State Department, however, always had significant overlap with the Defense Department and had more robust demands for liaison with the Chairman. This sort of liaison required more dedicated support than even the new VCJCS could provide given his new responsibilities. The Assistant to the CJCS began to focus on a single customer: the Secretary of State.

This process began early under Adm. Crowe and was not obvious to outside observers, even to Crowe's successor. In fact, upon assuming the chairmanship, Gen. Powell initially wanted to abolish the three-star "assistant to" position believing it to be redundant with the VCJCS. Having come from the NSC, this is understandable. He would have been used to seeing the four-star VCJCS at his PRG meetings or occasionally the Chairman but would not have been privy to any of the direct liaison between the ACJCS and the State Department. Once in the chairmanship, however, he began to see the value of the "outside man" that liaised directly with Secretary Baker. Powell recalled in an interview:

> Powell: "The three-star officer who was assistant to the chairman had become a very powerful figure over time."
> Interviewer: "More so than the director [of the joint staff]?"[44]
> Powell: "Yes, closer to the chairman, and not bogged down running the Joint Staff." [45]C. L. Powell 1998, 24)

Reflecting further, Powell said:

> [The Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] essentially became the chairman's eyes and ears to that person the chairman had responsibility for providing military advice to but had to be delicate in doing it, and that was the secretary of state. Whenever the secretary of state traveled, whenever there was a State Department section that needed insight from the chairman, it was the assistant to the chairman who provided the insight and performed that role. It was a given among the State Department bureaucrats, who tended not to like having anybody from Defense with them, that the chairman's man would always be in the airplane with them. I seldom saw the assistant to the chairman, because he was usually flying around with the secretary of state. (C. L. Powell 1998, 24–25)

[44] The director of the joint staff (DJS) is another three star position on the joint staff but is more the "inside man" responsible for overseeing the work of the joint staff itself.
[45] Internal to the Joint Staff, there was another general officer (also a three-star) known as the "Director of the Joint Staff." This individual was focused on JCS "internal" affairs and as the name implies directing the work of the Joint Staff.

<u>Top left</u>: Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with ACJCS Fogelsong (right) while in Saudi Arabia to visit Maj Gen. Radcliffe (left) to discuss Operation SOUTHERN WATCH (Iraqi no-fly zone) (U.S. Department of Defense n.d.)

<u>Top right</u>: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton walks with Vice Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., to the Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad in St. Petersburg, Russia, on June 28, 2012. [State Department photo/ Public Domain](U.S. Department of State 2012)

<u>Bottom left</u>: Secretary of State Kerry in Ho Chi Minh city with ACJCS Pandolfe and former Senator Kerrey prior to the opening of a Fulbright University in Vietnam. Photo: US Department of State (U.S. Department of State 2016)

<u>Bottom right</u>: Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan poses for a photo with Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji, U.S. Ambassador to India Ken Juster, and ACJCS Major General Waddell, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bhutan, on August 12, 2019. [State Department photo by Nicole Thiher/Public Domain] (U.S. Department of State 2019)

It is easy to see the value for the Secretary of State to have a well-positioned, but relatively unknown, general officer in his keep. The Secretary of State is charged with leading the United States' foreign policy and it is beneficial, therefore, for the Secretary to appear as though he or she speaks for the president and with the authority of the entire United States government. Having a senior military officer travel with you is important for such appearances. Additionally, having a senior military officer that is plugged directly into the CJCS enables the chairmen to provide relevant and immediate support to the Secretary of State thereby improving the overall quality and responsiveness of military advice.

Further, it is reasonable to assume that a Secretary of State would not want a too well-known, too high-ranking, or too powerful military officer traveling tagging along. Therefore, a three-star—still quite senior, but more ordinary—officer provides a "just right" level of seniority and martial authority without the distraction that would come with a four-star.[46] Goldwater-Nichols had no intention of providing the Secretary of State with a traveling military liaison. Nevertheless, the creation of the VCJCS combined with the expanded principal military adviser duties enabled this institutional evolution which better tuned the CJCS and the military to the foreign policy and diplomatic needs of the secretary of state. It also made the secretary of state more knowledgeable on the mindset and priorities of the chairman thereby providing a more fertile ground for defense diplomacy to take root.

The Chairman's new budget authority from Goldwater-Nichols

The Goldwater-Nichols reforms also enabled defense diplomacy via new budgetary powers it granted the CJCS. Giving this funding to the chairman was not in the original Goldwater-Nichols legislation but was instead done so later as Congress tried to implement their original intent more completely. Congress had designed Goldwater-Nichols to not only give the regional combatant commanders more of a say in the budget development process but to also give them their own expressly

[46] As of this writing (2022) this is a two-star position but fulfills the same role.

delimited funding in each NDAA. To this end, the final legislation mandated that the Secretary of Defense, "shall include in the annual budget of the Department of Defense submitted to Congress a separate budget proposal for such activities of each of the unified and specified commands[.]" (PL 99-433 1986, sec. 166). The law further stipulated that those CINC budget requests *shall* include funding requests for "such activities that the Secretary (after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) determines to be appropriate for inclusion" and that these types of activities *may* include—in Congress' estimation: "Joint exercises, Force training, Contingencies, [and] selected operations" (PL 99-433 1986, sec. 166). Via this statutory requirement, the framers of Goldwater-Nichols intended that the regional commands conduct their own strategic planning, that they program resources against their priorities, and that they force OSD and the JCS to balance theirs against others.

The legislation was not as clear, however, as the framers believed it to be. When Congress stipulated that the Secretary and Chairman might determine what activities were "appropriate for inclusion" in the budget request, they believed they were providing *more* latitude and flexibility for the combatant commands to request budgets for all manner of creative programs and operations (Locher III 2022). However, the law was sufficiently vague so that it could be interpreted oppositely: that if the Secretary determined that separate budgets were *not* appropriate or were, in fact, redundant, then such funding requests from DoD to Congress were not required at all. This is the precise interpretation that OSD under Secretary Carlucci and the CJCS under Crowe and Powell arrived at.

When Congress held hearings on the overall implementation of Goldwater-Nichols, they expressed disappointment that COCOM budgets remained absent. In a legislative mark-up session in March 1989 on proposed changes to Goldwater-Nichols, Congressmen Nichols said:

> we should address…tightening the CINC budget requirement. I think we ought to remove any ambiguity from the legislative requirement that the Secretary of Defense submit a separate budget proposal for the unified and specified commands…The intent of the law was to require the Secretary to submit a CINC budget proposal, but to give him latitude over its exact contents. The Department of Defense took advantage of the phrasing in the legislative provision and has not submitted a CINC budget. My proposal would remove the unintended latitude of the Secretary to determine whether or not he will submit a CINC budget. (HASC 1989, 208)

The Pentagon, however, did not want to do separate budgeting for the CINCs. From the OSD to the Chairman to the commands themselves, they argued that the operational requirements of the CINCs were well-represented via the current budget process. The deputy commander for EUCOM told Senator Nunn in April 1989 that they had "adequate influence" and therefore required no separate, congressionally sanctioned funding authorizations (SASC 1989a, 583). Furthermore, they argued that full implementation of a unique budget request for each CINC would ultimately encourage administrative bloat throughout the department. General Cassidy, the commander of Transportation Command told the SASC that while the strategic direction of Goldwater-Nichols was being implemented, it would be "counterproductive" and "inadvisable" to "mandate submission of budgets by CINCs." His rationale—which seemed to persuade Congress was that "the myriad of details involved in preparing budgets…could only be accomplished if the staffs of the CINCs were substantially enlarged, and such functions could be fulfilled only to the detriment of the CINC's combat missions." (SASC 1989a, 583)

By contesting the budget requirement and appearing to do so in good faith, the military convinced Congress to modify its proposal. Instead of requiring large budgets to solidify the independence of the CINCs, Congress instead turned to a more novel compromise. The 1989 NDAA required each of the combatant commands to submit a report on the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols concerning the budget requirement. Those reports also required them to offer Congress feedback on whether it would be desirable to have a "small budget (in annual amount of no more than $50,000,000) that would be managed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff but which would be controlled for execution by the [combatant] commander for activities to which the commander assigns a high priority[.]" (SASC 1988, sec. 714). In that same section, Congress listed the activities that could be funded by this shared CJCS-CINC budget. They included: "non-JCS exercises (including foreign country participation)[47]; on-going

[47] JCS exercises refer to a specific suite of joint exercises executed by the various combatant commands with funding that it specifically allocated in advance. By stipulating that this fund could be used for "non-JCS exercises" Congress was attempting to open the door for the unified commands to dream up new foreign partner engagement opportunities.

contingencies; command and control; training; and selected operations." This fund would be known as the "CINC initiative fund" with $50,000,000 authorized for its first year in fiscal year 1990.[48]

The fund was not used during Adm. Crowe's tenure, however. The reason for this is not entirely clear but may simply indicate confusion on the Joint Staff over how to implement this new policy tool. Speaking on the impact of the new fund, Senator Inouye of the appropriations committee was disappointed. He noted, "Unfortunately, in fiscal year 1990, the CINC initiative fund did not work as planned. The Department of Defense did not use this funding for high-priority readiness. Financial execution was particularly poor and the Department of Defense did not include funding for the fund in the fiscal year 1991 budget." (Inouye 1990, 29034) The first year of the fund was also the last year for Adm. Crowe as CJCS. Under pressure from Congress, Gen. Powell agreed to work harder as chairman to leverage the funds for their intended purpose. He wrote to Sen. Nunn on June 29, 1990, specifically requesting the continuation of the fund. The CJCS did pay a price for allowing the funds to lay dormant that first year and the appropriators slashed funding for it by nearly a third to $35 million (Inouye 1990, 29034).

The existence of the fund as well as the importance placed upon it by powerful members of the House and Senate reinforced to Gen. Powell the high priority on using these funds to increase the prominence of the combatant commands. Additionally, as Chairman, Powell could see the tussle over these funds as a microcosm of Congress' anxiety over Goldwater-Nichols's implementation more generally. The SASC and HASC wanted an active chairman working directly with the combatant commands to implement innovative and frequent initiatives. They wanted their military forces actively working to advance US security objectives and not mired in procurement battles. When DoD failed to allocate resources directly to the unified commands as intended by Goldwater-Nichols, Congress gave the CJCS this flexible fund to spend at his discretion. The intent all along was that the military be more

[48] The Senate actually wanted to fund it at double that amount—$100 million—but the House held them to the $50 million. (Murtha 1989, 28439)

nimble, engaged, and relevant in emerging foreign policy issues. Both the fund itself and the importance placed on the fund by Congress would substantially shape the development of defense diplomacy over the next few years.

Together, the more robust staff and independent budget authority of the CJCS were crucial to the development of defense diplomacy. Both encouraged the Chairman and Joint Staff to focus more on strategic policy and initiatives in the here and now rather than spending on the budgeting and procurement battles that had been the main focus of their predecessors. This is not to say that the CJCS was not interested in these topics. However, the addition of the VCJCS meant, bluntly, that he now "had people for that," so to speak. The Goldwater-Nichols reforms through the immediate implementation period, made defense diplomacy more likely because it placed the Chairman and his senior representatives directly in *more* policy forums (like the NSC Deputies Meeting or the ACJCS traveling with the Secretary of State) than there had been. They also freed up the CJCS to set his own schedule and travel more which led to more interest in launching a "chairman's initiative." Such initiatives were quite likely to be borne out of the travel and the travel was closely focused on visiting and understanding the view from the geographic combatant commands. Once the CJCS developed the skill and interest in wielding the CINC Initiatives Fund, these visits could lead to experimenting with new initiatives. Successful experiments could become enduring features of American statecraft. This was the case with the Joint Contact Team Program. This forward-leaning, empowered posture of the CJCS was a consequence of these key Goldwater-Nichols reforms.

Establishing ASD(SO/LIC)

While most of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms were implemented smoothly (especially the Joint Staff and CJCS changes), the SOLIC and SOCOM provisions created immediate tension between Congress and the DoD. This particular Goldwater-Nichols reform was more slowly implemented than the others and this delay was largely due to a relative lack of interest and intensity by the Secretary of Defense (Locher III 2022). Senator Nunn, in particular, was frustrated by the pace of implementation of

the Cohen-Nunn amendment's provisions and felt that the department's first nominee for the ASD(SO/LIC) position was someone designed to sabotage the position itself (Engelberg 1987). The Reagan administration's initial nominee, Kenneth Berquist, was thought by SASC leaders to be a trojan horse who was not "truly committed to making this [position] work[.]" (SASC 1987b, 495) Though Berquist had an impressive resume as a decorated Vietnam veteran and as a CIA case officer, he was known to have been opposed to the creation of the ASD position. This was more than enough to convince a bipartisan group on the SASC that his nomination was insincere and insufficient (Kelly 1988; SASC 1987b, 599).

The delay in filling the position prevented resulted in it not having much of an impact from 1986 to 1989. However, once the George H.W. Bush administration assumed office, Congress was able to pressure the administration to implement the ASD(SO/LIC) reforms via pressure in confirmation hearings.[49] Senator Nunn maneuvered to get his preferred candidate, James Locher, into the posting (Wilson 1988). Locher was the SASC's senior staffer responsible for leading the Goldwater-Nichols defense reform efforts culminating in the SASC staff report: "The Need for Change" (SASC Staff 1985). He was confirmed by the Senate as the ASD in the fall of 1989 along with the rest of the George H.W. Bush administration's initial DoD nominations. Once in position, he recalled facing immediate resistance from within the Pentagon (Locher III 2022). Locher sensed that many Weinberger loyalists in the Pentagon felt that his presence there was an affront to the work done over the preceding eight years and that he represented a Congressional mole within their midst (Locher III 2022).

As ASD(SO/LIC), Locher set to work elevating irregular warfare-related concerns as part of America's defense strategy. His initial priorities in the posting were heavily shaped by perceptions born of the Goldwater-Nichols debates. Specifically, that irregular warfare and terrorism would be an

[49] Though not germane to this analysis, the SASC's sense that the DoD suffered from what Senator Alan Simpson called a "lack of enthusiasm" in implementing the Cohen-Nunn legislation was pervasive in the late Reagan and early Bush administrations. Gen. Powell was asked about this as a CJCS nominee in 1989 and so was Frank Carlucci as the SECDEF nominee in 1987.

increasing challenge for the United States, and this would require a more prominent role for special operations. Locher believed that the United States needed to be more comfortable using special operations forces and need not shirk from deploying military power as a tool of engagement.

Especially following the end of the Cold War, Locher promoted and expanded the use of US-partner nation special operations training missions known as Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) where US special forces—mostly Army Green Berets—would travel to a foreign country and teach their special operations forces new skills (Locher III 2022). JCETs were largely combat-focused but still bore many other similarities with the JCTP in that there were robust social aspects built into the training, they were coveted by the host nation, and they were seen within the Pentagon as a means to demonstrate the military's political responsiveness and practical utility (Locher III 2022). More broadly, Locher became a forceful proponent within the Department, and to the White House, for an operational concept known as "peacetime engagement" which embodied the sort of defense diplomacy inherent to the JCTP (Hahn 1993; OASD(SO/LIC) 1993b).

Chapter conclusion

Considering the birth of the CIA, JCS, and NSC out of the 1947 National Security Act, Amy Zegart concluded that, "founding moments loomed large." (Zegart 2000) The critical junctures or "genetic moments" when institutions are either created or so thoroughly altered as to become something new are crucial to understand if one hopes to grasp the future trajectory of those institutions (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). This is true of the "new" military following Goldwater-Nichols. The legislation sprung forth from an era of rapid and large-scale growth in the military, of a popular desire to celebrate and reclaim pride in a powerful and morally good military, and of skepticism that the military bureaucrats would spend money wisely. It represented a guarded embrace of the military. It was Congress's way of asserting partial ownership, or perhaps joint custody, over the defense establishment in order to save it.

After four decades, the 1980s defense reform debates have long faded from the front pages of newspapers and have in many ways shifted from being a component of "policy discussions" to the realm of American political history. As a historical process and historical outcome, the Goldwater-Nichols legislation deserves to be situated within its place and time and analyzed as such. This chapter attempted to accomplish this while also providing a clear understanding of the ways the legislation's framers—and commentators—did not predict some of the most meaningful consequences of the legislation. It is unfair to expect that the legislators would have foreseen the future shifts in the character of the US military that would develop as a result of Goldwater-Nichols. Of the motivations, both stated and unstated, for Goldwater-Nichols reforms, none had anything to do with making the military a larger contributor to American soft power. The framers were primarily concerned with addressing and preventing military failure, developing better American strategy, and saving money. The framers of the legislation were focused, narrowly, on these issues largely because they were members of the Armed Services Committees. Discussing and addressing the long-tail foreign policy impacts, the function of the National Security Council, and the integration of the DoS, USAID, Treasury, and others into a whole-of-government strategy-making body, was beyond their purview. Goldwater-Nichols, therefore, reflects the place of origin for the reform. By empowering DoD (against the Pentagon's wishes) through the CJCS and COCOMs, the legislation set the table for the Department to play a leading role in America's post-Cold War foreign policy.

There are several key conclusions we can draw from the history of the development of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms that have explicit implications for American foreign policy in general and defense diplomacy in particular. First, the super-empowered CJCS would become an engine of American foreign policy production. While the first CJCS under Goldwater-Nichols—Adm. William Crowe—may not have filled this role, he was largely a transitional chairman. When Gen. Colin Powell assumed the position, he used this position to promote and advance specific foreign policy goals. As will be shown, Powell was certainly a uniquely politically savvy and experienced officer, but it was more than just his personal instinct. The position and presidency demanded that he become an active developer of

diplomatic initiatives. This is simply hard to imagine without the raft of Goldwater-Nichols reforms that empowered him to do so, especially the role of the Vice Chairman.

Second, the combatant commanders after Goldwater-Nichols had a hotline to the Chairman in a way that did not exist previously. The staff of the regional commands and the joint staff worked hand-in-glove to develop concepts, plans, and policies that would define defense diplomacy in the 1980s and 90s. Without Goldwater-Nichols, this COCOM/CJCS relationship would have been weaker, and more diluted by service component initiatives, and there would have been less focus and ability to take advantage of what amounted to small windows of opportunity for defense diplomatic outreach.

Finally, the reforms altered the mindset of the SASC and focused the committee's attention on the importance of its role in overseeing the operations of the defense department. Their approach to confirmation hearings, strategy reviews, and their involvement in broader foreign policy would act as a powerful pull for an enlargement of the Pentagon's role in diplomacy generally (Locher III 2022).

Chapter 4. Post-Cold War democratization and the emergence of defense diplomacy

> "*The time has come when we have to think about our role, about the role of the armed forces*."
>
> – Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, December 10, 1987 (Akhromeyev 1987)

> "*We are doing democracy activities. You find men and women of the armed forces around the world sort of working with our friends who want to learn from us…Those types of things will take on greater importance [for the US military]. Why?...to help preserve democracy, to deal with that danger[.]…Our forces in Europe that are providing forward presence are spending more and more of their time traveling into the nations of the former Warsaw Pact to teach them, to learn from them, to exchange experiences, and to help get them to understand the role of the armed forces in a democratic system*."
>
> – Gen. Colin Powell, CJCS. September 1, 1993. (Aspin and Powell 1993)

Introduction

Isolating the cause of contemporary American defense diplomacy is a complicated and somewhat uncertain task. This is because the US military embraced defense diplomacy following two events—one endogenous, one exogenous, each of which could credibly claim causal power. Endogenously, the US military's substantial organizational changes resulting from the Goldwater-Nichols reforms altered the power configurations, habits, and priorities of the military. Exogenously, the end of the Cold War was a massive international political rupture bringing with it new possibilities and challenges to interstate relations. Each of these events clearly shaped American foreign policy thought and habits, but the question is which more influenced defense diplomacy's rise?

The task of causal attribution is further complicated by the deep interrelation of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and the Cold War's end. These events shared three important features. First, they were close temporally. Depending on when one marks the beginning of the end of the Cold War, one could say that a mere two years separated these two events.[50] Secondly, and relatedly, many of the same individuals

[50] Nearly as soon as the Goldwater-Nichols act was passed, Gorbachev had publicly embraced "New Thinking" in the USSR and the end of the Cold War was in sight (Holloway 1988). More concretely, if one accepts the Soviet's April 1988 withdrawal from Afghanistan as the beginning-of-the-end of the Cold War, then only a year and half

that were central to the reform debates were also key leaders of American foreign policy in the emerging post-Cold War era.[51] Finally, the events themselves were closely related. Goldwater-Nichols itself was, in large part, a Cold War stratagem by the US Congress. In terms of timing, the players involved, and the issues at hand, Goldwater-Nichols and the Cold War are in many ways inseparable.

Beyond the interdependencies of these two events, there is a further complication to this task. The period within which defense diplomacy took hold from the late 1980s through the early 1990s, was eventful in international politics. Beyond the USSR's dissolution and the democratization of Eastern Europe, this period witnessed the ascendance of the "information age," the development of the "Washington Consensus" for international development and economic liberalization, and the counter-narcotics emergency in Latin America,[52] to name a few. All of which occurred essentially contemporaneously from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. By 1991, the contours of America's foreign policy debates were in many ways unrecognizable from what they were in 1982 when the Congressional defense reform effort began in earnest. While Goldwater-Nichols was aimed at the original, Cold War goals described in the previous chapter, its implementation came in this wildly different environment. That dynamic foreign policy environment certainly played a key role in shaping policy in its own right.

Nevertheless, while it is difficult to isolate a single causal engine for defense diplomacy when so much other significant change was underway, this chapter intends to do so. To accomplish this, this

separate it from Goldwater-Nichols's passage. More generously, the fall of the Berlin Wall in the Fall of 1989 puts three years between Goldwater-Nichols and the end of the Cold War.

[51] Senator Sam Nunn was in many ways the driving force behind the reforms reached the height of his power in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the chairman of the SASC where he often set agenda items for American national strategy (Nunn 1990). Colin Powell was the Deputy National Security Adviser and National Security Adviser as Goldwater-Nichols neared passage and through implementation. He then became Chairman himself.

[52] The "drug war," originally declared by President Nixon in 1971 to deal with the scourge of heroin use within the US military, animated most of American foreign policy to Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s (Graham 1970; R. Nixon 1971; Reuters 1971; Steinbeck IV 1968; Zinberg 1971). Often, Democratic members of congress would criticize the Reagan and Bush administrations for timidity and for not using the military enough to stem the tide of drugs, to depose the leaders of narco-states, and to patrol the southern border (SASC 1989a, 423–24; SASC 1989b, 620; SFRC 1988, 2). Closely tethered to the debates over drug policy were other prescriptions for robust support to democratization and liberalization in South America. The military, especially Southern Command leadership, supported such policies full-threadedly whenever given the chance. Nevertheless, Southern Command remained a small enough command and low-enough priority that their habits and preferences did not necessarily alter the character of the rest of the military.

research analyzes a single foreign policy and defense diplomacy adaptation—the Joint Contact Team Program. By evaluating the development of the JCTP, this chapter demonstrates the ways this important evolutionary milestone in American defense diplomacy was derivative of Goldwater-Nichols. This presentation will clarify how Goldwater-Nichols nurtured defense diplomacy and, by extension, the JCTP by reconfiguring relationships and roles within the US national security enterprise. This will permit an evaluation of the underlying theory of how Goldwater-Nichols stimulated *institutional complementarities* between different foreign policy entities that supported, promoted, or at least accepted defense diplomacy for their own reasons.

This chapter relies on both primary and secondary sources leaning on original documents from the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush presidential libraries as well as the Robert M. Gates collection at the University of William and Mary. These sources document decision-making and official foreign policy developments. Additionally, this chapter relies on memoirs from key individuals, oral histories, and original interviews to reconstruct the dynamics surrounding the development of these diplomatic habits. By now, this era has passed largely into history with its connections to modern-day policy issues growing increasingly third and fourth-order. However, many of the primary source documents for this era remain inaccessible as nearly any document related to military personnel remains in limbo pending declassification review. Nevertheless, the available documents provide a full enough picture to support the assertions of this study.

The Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP)

> *"We had an image that they [the Warsaw Pact militaries] were robotrons, that they just followed the party line. They thought we were 10-foot giants and baby killers…When you get to know them, you find that they have kids who need braces, and they have the same problems with their wives, and how, really, all we want is a better life for our children."*
>
> – Lt. Col. Kevin Dunn, JCTP staff officer at EUCOM HQs, 1994 (Schulte 1994)

> *"[T]he [JCTP] did not originate in the Pentagon from some do-gooder policymakers far removed from the field, but from practitioners in the European theater eager to use their resources to address needs observed in their area of responsibility."*

– Mary Beth-Ulrich, *Democratizing Post-Communist Militaries* (Ulrich 1999)

As the Cold War rapidly thawed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the US military stumbled into the unfamiliar realm of diplomacy. This began through several novel initiatives consisting of military-to-military engagements, first with the Soviets and then with the militaries of the former Warsaw Pact. These engagements, in particular the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP), began as initiatives from within the Chairman's office and the EUCOM staff. In short order, they were celebrated, sanctioned, and promoted by key portions of Congress. This section will sketch out the contours of these engagements as a form of defense diplomacy and briefly describe their scope, scale, duration, and other key factors. Next, this analysis will evaluate these programs with respect to their initial logic, their promoters, and their detractors. It will conclude by assessing the degree to which these programs owed their existence to the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. In so doing, this research highlights the importance of the post-Goldwater-Nichols military institutions in promoting defense diplomacy and the role of Congress in shaping American foreign policy.

Notably, this chapter finds a general ambivalence, and sometimes skepticism, within the "high policy" arenas of the White House, Foggy Bottom, and much of the Pentagon at the OSD level to these activities. Nevertheless, these military-to-military engagements flourished through the efforts of the CJCS, EUCOM, and the SASC among other key boosters. Each of these institutions was bolstered—and in the case of the CJCS, transformed—by the Goldwater-Nichols Act which provided them with more power to design and implement such an initiative.

Program overview

The Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP) was an effort by the US military to establish recurring military-to-military relations with the Newly Independent States (NIS)[53] of central and eastern Europe

[53] "Newly Independent States" is a dated term that came into vogue at the end of the Cold War to refer both to the former Warsaw Pact countries as well as the former Soviet Republics that were made independent with the dissolution of the USSR (e.g. Ukraine, Estonia, et al.) As a term, NIS has, for fairly obvious reasons fallen from

and, to a lesser extent Russia, following the demise of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. The program's principal aim was to enable a smooth and successful transition from single-party, socialist dictatorships to pluralist, liberal democracies. The architects and proponents of the JCTP believed that the NIS were at a particularly fragile stage of political development and easily imagined their backsliding into authoritarianism.

Hoping to mitigate the effects of these fast-moving political changes, CJCS Powell sought to aid the democratic transitions by focusing on the post-Soviet/Warsaw Pact militaries. Together with EUCOM, the CJCS developed a bilateral contact program with partner states to inculcate these forces with an American-style ethos of civil-military relations. These exchanges most often took the form of site visits, symposiums, or demonstrations. Attendant to Soviet suspicions, the EUCOM commander prohibited any JCTP event from covering topics related to the actual conduct of war and fighting (Alloway 2022; Deverill 2022). Consequently, no JCTP events related to discussions of firepower, maneuver warfare, tactics, etc. Instead, JCTP "focus areas" were limited to the universe of military capabilities that were either dual-use (civilian-military) or expressly unrelated to warfare. Marybeth Ulrich studied the US military's 1990s democratization efforts with regard to Czechoslovakia and Russia and concluded that the only common thread to the focus areas was that they were relegated to essentially "nonlethal military activity." (Ulrich 1999, 57) Table 5 below enumerates the JCTP focus areas highlighting how "non-military" they were.

common usage. Much as this project routinely uses the phrase "Third World" to describe countries throughout the Global South, it also uses Newly Independent States because its usage aids in grounding the reader within the context of the subject matter. These were the common phrases of the time in academic, policy, and popular discourse. Similarly, this paper refrains from using the term "combatant commander" to describe the military's regional commands because that usage did not become popular or common until Donald Rumsfeld's defense secretary tenure in the George W. Bush administration. For a more complete discussion of the "NIS" term, see the preface to James Minahan's "Miniature Empires." (Minahan 1998)

Table 5: JCTP Focus Areas (Ulrich 1999, 57)

Airspace Management	Information Management	National Guard/Reserves
Air Traffic Control	Inspector General	Personnel Management
Civil Engineering	Legislative Liaison	Public Affairs
Communications	Logistics	Resource Management
Education and Training	Meteorology	Safety
Environmental	Military Chaplaincy	Search and Rescue
Fire Fighting	Military Legal System	Security Policy
History	Military Medicine	Services

Within the executive branch, the JCTP itself was overseen by an Interagency Working Group on defense and military relations with eastern Europe.[54] The working group was officially formed in late 1989 and consisted of officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Staff, the Department of State, the National Security Council, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency (Cossaboom 1997; Deverill 2022). Originally, the IWG was formed by CJCS William Crowe to coordinate his personal initiative of pathbreaking military-to-military contacts with his Soviet counterpart (described below). The IWG was Crowe's attempt to pull other agencies—and the NSC—into the fold so that they were aware of the Chairman's diplomatic activities and, most importantly, would not cancel such initiatives due to lack of coordination (SASC 1989a).

When the JCTP was forming under Crowe's successor, Colin Powell, the same IWG was repurposed to coordinate the more robust and lower-level exchanges. Robert Cossaboom, a historian who captured the basic history of the JCTP for the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OCJCS), neatly described the function of the working group saying that it "oversaw military-to-military relationships developing between the two countries" and "also served as a clearinghouse for proposed military exchanges and for reviewing and approving each of these contacts." (Cossaboom 1997, 4) EUCOM was JCTP's principal agent responsible for proposing, planning, resourcing, and executing

[54] This working group followed quickly on the heels of a similar IWG for defense and military relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union working group was the one developed in response to Crowe's slate of exchanges with his USSR counterpart in the late 1980s.

JCTP activities. EUCOM would submit its proposals to the Joint Staff which would then bring those JCTP proposals to the Interagency Working Group for approval.

Operationally, the JCTP relied on two organizational components. These were the Military Liaison Teams (MLT) and the Traveling Contact Teams (TCT). In most instances, the JCTP established full-time, forward-deployed Military Liaison Teams (MLT). Generally, these teams went to former Warsaw Pact states as well as some select former USSR republics. The MLTs consisted of small teams of four to six American servicemembers that worked in-country, often in office space provisioned by the host-nation military headquarters or defense ministries. The MLT's office space and even transportation were usually negotiated directly between EUCOM's JCTP leadership and the host country (Alloway 2022). Once in the country, the MLTs coordinated with their counterparts to determine the types of training most desired and would consult with the American ambassador to develop a program proposal that they would then forward to EUCOM.

The execution of the actual JCTP events would fall to the tailored TCTs so that, for instance, a group of chaplains might hold a symposium with Polish military officers, or judge advocate general lawyers might liaise with military legal officials in the partner state for a few days, and so on. In countries where it was either not possible or unadvisable to establish a permanent MLT, the JCTP would rely on temporary "facilitating teams." These were similar in structure and size to the MLTs but only conducted short-duration visits to plan the bilateral military-to-military program. The facilitating team option was favored for certain former SSRs (e.g. Ukraine and Moldova) to neither offend Russia nor exacerbate a tense domestic political environment (Alloway 2022). Importantly, the decision to opt for a facilitating team vs. a MLT was always mutual and there was not an instance where the Americans wanted the more visible MLT while the host nation wanted a facilitating team. Whether the country had full-time MLTs or short-term facilitating teams, the individual events would fall to TCTs for execution.

Given the rather informal and social nature of many of the activities, they often drew criticism as little more than "soldiers drinking beer" as opposed to a coherent program of democracy promotion

(Alloway 2022). That harsh characterization was, however, not without truth. JCTP team members, especially in the early years earned a reputation as "military tourists" with senior officers—especially colonels—often organizing boondoggles for themselves to visit JCTP events (Alloway 2022). But the JCTP leadership isolated this problem and put a stop to country visits in short order with policies that limited JCTP participation to those clearly connected to the various missions (Alloway 2022). Rather than simple tourism, JCTP missions were "punching above their weight" in terms of their intended effects. For instance, in Albania, a relatively junior US Army lawyer assisted in the drafting of their national constitution (Kasper Jr 1994, 16). In Czechoslovakia, engagement led to annual institutional events that continue to this day celebrating democracy, freedom, and shared culture with "the West" (Leary 1990; Pilzen n.d.).

This research does not intend to pass judgment on the overall effectiveness of the JCTP, but it is important to make one point to address critics who charge that such programs accomplish little. The JCTP was but one plank in the broader democratization strategy that the United States was pursuing at the time. This strategy, at the national level, was clear but unfocused. Congress directed some programs, different federal agencies others, individual ambassadors free-lanced, and the military too conjured up its own contribution. Though the JCTP was a state-building strategy, there was no "state-building czar" for the US Government that oversaw the democratic transition of socialist Europe. Instead, individuals and individual agencies responded to incentives, to the zeitgeist, and contributed as they saw fit and as their institutional structure permitted.

Over time, the JCTP grew quite large encompassing 12 countries by 1993 (Table 6). By the late 1990s, the JCTP was subsumed into successor programs. Foremost among these was the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) which is now a global activity in which the National Guards of individual American states partner with foreign country militaries for exchanges and training. The JCTP also eventually gave way to the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program which differed from JCTP in that it did in fact focus on operational military capabilities. NATO's PfP maintained a commitment to

democratization in so far as the host country would need to meet the political milestones for NATO accession, but the PfP itself was focused on the development of military readiness and NATO interoperability (NATO 2022a). The partner nations who enthusiastically joined the JCTP did so in large measure because they hoped to make the case for NATO accession. Once the PfP had been established, JCTP as a stand-alone, bilateral initiative lost some of its unique appeal. The JCTP did not die so much as fade away, In the late 1990s. EUCOM folded its separate JCTP staff back into its plans section (J-5) and the National Guard, via the SPP, coordinated and executed the events. In this way, the program endures today as the SPP and is present on every continent.

Table 6. JCTP MLT locations and establishment dates

Country	**JCTP MLT Arrival**
Hungary	Jul-92
Poland	Feb-93
Albania	Feb-93
Latvia	May-93
Estonia	Apr-93
Lithuania	May-93
Romania	Apr-93
Bulgaria	Jul-93
Czech Republic	Jul-93
Slovakia	Aug-93
Slovenia	Sep-93
Belarus	Aug-93

With the foregoing background, this analysis will now turn to the institutional development of this program. Specifically, a more detailed view of the basic logic(s) of military-driven democratization and why they gained purchase in this era[55]. Next, this analysis will turn to an evaluation of the people and institutions that both supported and detracted from the development of the JCTP with a focus on how

[55] There is indeed a long history of the US military being assigned, and assigning itself, a role in democratization and statebuilding. There are deep connections here to the modernization theory-inspired campaigns in Vietnam as well as previous efforts in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. Indeed, these logics drive *through* JCTP to Vietnam. However, the logic of democratization and modernization in the early 1990s is unique to this era and to that region and deserves its own consideration separate from, but cognizant of, the modernization logic of counterinsurgency campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, or the Philippines (Boot 2014; Latham 2011).

Goldwater-Nichols influenced their organizational development. This framing grounds this study and aids in determining the causes of the overall, post-Cold War embrace of defense diplomacy.

The logic and impetus of the JCTP

JCTP initiatives were democratization schemes for the Newly Independent States. Robert Cossaboom wrote the official history of the JCTP for the CJCS's office in which he captured its purpose as an effort, "to highlight the role of the military in a democracy" (Cossaboom 1997, iv) and to encourage progress toward, "democratic self-determination and the creation of market economies." (Cossaboom 1997, 4) The program had both positive and negative goals in this regard. Positively, JCTP was a tool to assist in the enlargement of the liberal, democratic world. JCTP proponents hoped to encourage the militaries of these nascent democracies to imagine for their formations broader domestic and pro-social sets of responsibilities. In keeping with the JCTP "focus areas" (see Table 4 above), the JCTP hoped to enable the military leadership to play a reinforcing role toward liberalization.

Returning to the "negative" or preventative logic of the JCTP, the CJCS and EUCOM commander hoped to minimize any potential for NIS militaries to "engage in activities disruptive to civilian government." (Cossaboom 1997, iv) Such fears for the NIS were amplified by—if not imported from—concerns many in the Bush administration held relating to Russia itself. Reflecting on his time as National Security Adviser to President Reagan, Colin Powell recalled the common fear that communist hard-liners—especially those in the military—would reject the overall trends to liberalization and democratization and then oust Gorbachev for, "abandoning the Soviet dream[.]" (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995, 363).[56] JCTP's proponents were less concerned about outright military putsches in the NIS, and more worried over the potential for political violence, mass movements, ethnic pogroms, and economic dislocation wrought by the Soviet collapse which *could* give NIS military leaders a practical and pressing rationale to intervene in domestic affairs.

[56] These concerns proved well-founded in the attempted, but unsuccessful, 1991 August coup wherein Soviet military and KGB officials attempted to turn back the clock. (Lepingwell 1992)

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, such concerns were far from theoretical. Many feared instability in these nascent democracies and that these states were "cauldron[s]" which might "boil over" via the liberalization process (Duffy in SASC 1990). In a private conversation between the Soviet KGB Chief, Vladimir Kryuchov and the US Director of Central Intelligence, Robert Gates, the Soviet spymaster confided that he was worried about the uncontrollable economic, political, and nationalistic forces unleased by *perestroika* and *glasnost*. He anxiously pointed out to Gates that "change should be applied gradually, like oxygen. Too much too quickly could make one dizzy" (Gates 1990). Kryuchov appeared to have a point. The United States had observed violent disorder in Georgia (Keller 1989), Romania (Binder 1989), Azerbaijan (Keller 1990), and Lithuania (Seward 1991). By the early 1990s, it was clear that Yugoslavia was heading toward a chaotic crack-up and that perhaps Czechoslovakia might as well. Most concerning of all, the Soviet Union was shaky. As will be returned to several times in this chapter, the August 1991 coup attempt in Russia was a clarifying moment for the United States and European nations. It highlighted just how precarious and volatile the European political and security situations were. The architects of JCTP would point to the experience of military coup in Russia and the potential for coup-producing disorder in central and eastern Europe as the key rationale for expanding military contacts. US officials hoped that by modeling and teaching the NIS militaries American-style civil-military relations that these forces might eschew political involvement and not stand athwart the potentially painful democratic transitions underway.

These fears did not disappear once the USSR dissolved. Regarding the newly independent Russian Federation, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft told President Bush in April 1992, that Russian President Yeltsin showed "formidable courage" in his willingness to follow through massive economic liberalization program but that his reforms and style had endangered the stability of the state itself. Scowcroft wrote:

> The resulting sense of disorganization and chaos take on a dangerous air because they threaten the last relatively well-organized institution in Russian society: the military. It was the military which effectively chose Boris Yeltsin over Mikhail Gorbachev last December. Since then it is the

> military to which Yeltsin has had to make the most promises as he seeks to keep it at bay while its budget is slashed and the fight over loyalty oaths threatens to tear it apart. (Scowcroft 1992, 2)

He went on to warn that of the "many ways in which Boris Yeltsin could fail" a major concern remained that "the military could eventually force him to back off or even overthrow him." Scowcroft worried that "uncontrolled chaos" was a real possibility for Russia, but that it was in the United States' interest that he succeeds because, "A triumph of democratic values in Russia would transform that region from a global threat to a global asset" while "failure could carry very high costs not only for Russia, but for all of us." (Scowcroft 1992, 3)

Scowcroft's concerns were magnified by news and intelligence reports of growing disquiet—and outright hostility—from within the Russian military toward its political leadership. Yeltsin and his defense minister presided over a conference of military officers (some quite junior) where the officers were permitted, indeed encouraged, to speak freely. Some of what they said echoed back to 1917 when their predecessors also involved themselves in politics during a different period of Russian political turmoil. One Russian lieutenant colonel told Boris Yeltsin:

> We are falling into a state of primeval chaos. If we are not stopped, the consequences will be terrible. The army is the only force that can stop society from sliding towards a precipice. I shudder that someday what we will see in our gunsights won't be cardboard dummies but the guys we went to school with, officers, soldiers, sergeants we served with, ones we taught to fight, now separated by political barricades and borders. (Montaigne 1992)

Yeltsin's defense minister, General Shoposhnikov, exasperatedly resigned during this conference only to be cajoled back into service by Yeltsin himself while the two were backstage. Shoposhnikov attempted to reassure the officers that, "I will never allow any use of the armed forces against our people to solve ethnic and political disputes…we will never come to a point when our bayonets will help put somebody on the throne or push somebody off it." (Montaigne 1992) Yeltsin pleaded, "I appeal to your honor and dignity—please stay calm. It's easy to start a fire, but much harder to put it out." (Montaigne 1992)

In this volatile environment, the over-riding Bush administration concern was to stabilize Russia, enable it a successful democratic transition if possible, and avert a collapse into chaos. This was the logical and international consensus opinion. In August 1991, the newly democratically elected Polish

President told President Bush that he was unconcerned about a Soviet invasion attack, but that, "We are afraid of one thing in the Soviet Union,— anarchy." (Bush and Walsea 1991) Poland, along with its neighbors was concerned about Russian refugees in the event of economic collapse or civil war. Additionally, the United States was seriously concerned about the command and control of Russia's nuclear arsenal. Scowcroft represented consensus NSC opinions when he recommended to the President in early 1992, shortly after the dissolution of the USSR, that the United States, "enhance military-to-military ties" with the Russians (Scowcroft 1992, 4). To these ends, Scowcroft recommended stabilizing the overall US-Russia relationship through a range of means. Among them, is an improved defense relationship.

This proposal vis-à-vis Russia, was not controversial but was indeed different in both motivation and the means it implied than the engagements that would characterize the JCTP in central and eastern Europe.[57] The differences reflected tensions between different strategic approaches favored by certain elements of the US foreign policy establishment. There was a divergence of opinion in the senior rungs of the Bush administration about how to manage the Soviet unraveling. The Defense Department under Secretary Cheney sought to treat this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should not be missed to tear down the iron curtain and break up the Soviet empire (Scowcroft 2000, 52). This implied focusing on the NIS and aggressively aiding their liberalization to ensure democracy took hold successfully. By contrast, the State Department emphasized the US-Russia relationship and feared disorder at the core of the old Soviet Union. Secretary of State Baker hoped to lean primarily on high-level diplomatic talks and summitry to manage any changes including national boundaries and alliance/treaty obligations (Sparrow 2015, 436). Whereas the State Department wanted to go slow and focus on Russia, the Defense Department wanted to accelerate and lock in the changes in Europe.

[57] The JCTP was not the only military-to-military program at the time. Others, however, were not specifically aimed at democratization. Special programs to prevent WMD proliferation from Russia and Ukraine and foreign military sales that required American trainers all co-existed with JCTP. These other programs served more discrete purposes, however. JCTP was unique for its broad and relatively ill-defined nature of its goals to generally assist in the promotion of democracy.

The US-NIS relationships in central and eastern Europe took on the more opportunistic characteristics advocated by Defense Secretary Cheney and others who wanted to capitalize on the moment. This meant more improvisation and more low-level engagements within EUCOM. Consequently, nearly all the European NIS were included on some level within the JCTP framework, but Russia was not. Though neither Cheney nor Baker hoped to destabilize Russia or sow chaos, they expressed different risk tolerances in 1991 for how to best lock in gains for the United States. Moreover, the stakes in the former Warsaw Pact and NIS seemed lower compared with the US-Russia relationship. Whereas the State Department senior leadership asserted close control over US-Russia relations, there was more maneuver room for experimental initiatives at lower levels to blossom between Americans and the central and eastern European states (Palmer 1997). Thus, even though the National Security Adviser recommended to President Bush that the US expand military-to-military ties with Russia, they did not expand with the energy and enthusiasm as with the European states. Nor did they expand within the context of the JCTP. They were instead managed separately, through separate channels (Alloway 2022; Deverill 2022).

To be clear, this does not indicate that there was any sort of "policy fight" or conscious compromise between State and Defense that led to this differentiation in military-to-military engagement between Russia and the NIS. Instead, it seems that these different courses were essentially the products of the overall "tendencies and potential" of the United States' unique relationships with the countries in question (Jullien 2004). This bias for stability within superpower relations and for high diplomacy was something of an enduring feature of the more senior and official positions from the State Department. (Scowcroft 2000, 52; Sparrow 2015, 308) Given the perceived high stakes inherent in the US-Russia relationship the State Department retained tighter control of the engagement plans and conducted more engagement at the senior general (e.g., CJCS or EUCOM commander), high-ranking ambassador, or (assistant) Secretary of State level. For instance, at the 1990 NATO London Summit, the United States championed efforts to "intensify military-to-military contacts" but this did not endorse—or likely even

contemplate—the type of low-level exchanges characteristic of JCTP. Instead, these related to, "visits by NATO military commanders to Eastern capitals." (White House Press Secretary 1990) These engagements remained at the level of "high politics" wherein diplomatic encounters were tightly controlled by well-institutionalized defense attachés and experienced Russia hands while being managed between the upper reaches of the State Department, the OCJCS and OSD, senior NSC officials, and by the robust and mature US diplomatic mission in Moscow.

Whereas the American diplomatic potential for Russia was robust, institutionalized, and senior, the US relationships with the NIS states were generally not. The embassies were often small, immature, and weakly institutionalized (Miller 2003; Palmer 1997). American ambassadors to countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and others had small staffs and were presented with rapid-onset political and security developments. Consequently, the NIS missions generally favored the ad hoc, informal, and relatively low-ranking encounters inherent in the JCTP because they were easy to plan and execute and relatively low risk in terms of potential for diplomatic disaster (Ulrich 1999, 160).

American defense attachés in Moscow, on the other hand, were skeptical of the military-to-military exchange programs and thought they might do more harm than good. Specifically, the attachés were frustrated that there seemed to be no clear master plan or strategy for engagement that they could show to their Russian counterparts. Instead, they saw an ad hoc, "path of least resistance" program that would schedule events based on what was easiest hoping simply to "let a thousand flowers bloom." (Ulrich 1999, 160) While the less mature US missions to central and eastern Europe were amenable to such engagements, there was no appetite within State or the attaché community for such a slipshod approach to the US-Russia military relationship.

Another way US-Russia military engagement differed from other JCTP partners was that Russia's military was far more volatile than those of the other members of the former Soviet Union (FSU). The loyalty oaths Scowcroft mentioned were a controversial means for the former Soviet republics (especially the members of the newly forming Commonwealth of Independent States such as Ukraine and Belarus) to

assert their sovereignty. The nascent governments of these states often required the Soviet *cum* Russian soldiers still stationed on their (now sovereign) territory to swear loyalty to the government of the NIS as opposed to that in the Kremlin (LA Times 1992). Moreover, the Soviet military was a central actor in the 1991 August Coup that attempted to oust Gorbachev. The potential for divided loyalty created an environment where many—like Scowcroft—feared the development of politically active factions. Therefore, among the former Eastern Bloc, the Russian military was the most likely candidate for involvement in politics. It is ironic then that the Russian military—which was the most likely among the NIS to participate in a coup—was the least engaged via JCTP which was to a substantial degree a coup-proofing activity.

Outside the USSR/Russia, American officials had fewer concerns about the political potential of their militaries than for other societal elements. In fact, it was the various state security apparatuses (e.g.: interior ministries) and their former members that were most concerning. In Romania, for instance, the army emerged as a symbol of national pride for its refusal to follow Ceausescu's orders and to crack down on protesters in 1989. While the Romanian army absolutely participated in a coup, it was a "pro-democratic" coup in which the military fought the security services, arrested the Romanian leader, his wife, and others, tried them in a military court, and executed them (Stojanovic 1989).

Similarly, in Poland, US Ambassador Davis feared that the conservative "power agencies" would mount a backlash against the democratization movement in the late 1980s, but this concern centered more on the interior ministry than the military (Simons Jr. 2005, 164). In mid-1989, the Hungarian Prime Minister told President Bush that his "goal was to keep the Interior Ministry and the Army out of politics" and that this goal was "held by the leadership of these institutions as well." His major concern was that Hungarian communists would not respect the popular desire for liberalization—as expressed via elections—and thereby not put these security institutions in an awkward position of choosing a side, either democrat or socialist (Nemeth and Bush 1989). Though the Hungarian PM was initially wary of the military, the army signaled its limited appetite for politics and quickly moved its forces from its Western

border to signal benign intentions to NATO and acceptance of the emerging democratic order (Karacs 1989). In most cases, the military leaders of the former Eastern Bloc simply struggled to keep their jobs and had little appetite for politics. Their soldiers often supplemented their income by serving as cheap labor in the communities surrounding their garrison and many Warsaw Pact military leaders were focused simply on down-sizing and preventing their troops from becoming impoverished (Meißner et al. 2021). In addition to that primary goal, military leaders generally sought to prove that they were not socialist idealogues and hoped to avoid anti-communist purges and keep their jobs (Tamayo 1991). Simply put, the democratic revolutions in central and eastern Europe were robustly supported by the people and there was less fear of an anti-democratic coup from their militaries as compared to the Soviet/Russian case.

The JCTP was a product of both optimism and fear. Optimistically, the proponents of military-to-military engagements felt that, as Powell did, that "all contact was good" and that more exposure to the United States military would instill positive, democratic values of civil-military relations in these states (Ulrich 1999, 57). Fearfully, the proponents worried about political tumult and the potential for "Democracy's Third Wave" to reverse (Huntington 1991). They pieced together the JCTP as the military's attempt to contribute to coup-proofing and statebuilding in these fragile new democracies. As coup-proofing, it hoped to neutralize militaries as political actors and subordinate them to the nascent democratic processes underway. As state-building, it hoped to inculcate as wide a swath as possible of mid-career foreign officers with a positive opinion of the United States, its military, of democracy, and of the role of the military in a Western-style democracy.

Though the JCTP's architects at EUCOM and the Joint Staff may have hoped that a thousand flowers would bloom via fairly free-form exchanges, they did not plant many seeds within the country at the biggest risk of collapse. As will be described later, there were other more targeted and limited programs with Moscow (mostly aimed at securing its nuclear weapons and fissile material), but the more public diplomacy program (the JCTP) did not gain purchase in Russia. This is even though Russia was the declared object of military diplomacy by the National Security Adviser in a policy recommendation to

the President (Scowcroft 1992, 4). Because the State Department retained authority over the engagements, because that diplomatic institution resisted encroachment by the JCTP into its sphere, the JCTP simply did not expand there.

Many influential members of the US Congress from both political parties understood the JCTP as a coup-proofing and democratization scheme and expressed unqualified support for it. And yet, it does not appear to have been a specific, clear, plan developed by America's grand strategists and chosen by senior US officials to achieve these ends. Instead, the JCTP grew rather organically, becoming an attractive solution in the eyes of a broad array of individuals within different institutions and at differing levels of seniority. Though they varied in many ways, these individuals all felt as though the United States government was aiming at democratization and that they were committed to this cause regardless of whether the official policy had caught up or not. It was a moment that maximized individual agency to bolster "Democracy's Third Wave" and to prevent disorder (Huntington 1991).

This overarching motivation to support new democracies at the twilight of the Cold War appears to have been a necessary condition for the development of defense diplomacy. Certainly, it was necessary for the development of the JCTP. But it is not at all clear that this urgent international political environment was sufficient to alter the character of the US military as occurred. Instead, it is necessary to survey the key proponents (and detractors) of the JCTP initiative to assess the mechanisms through which they exercised their influence on the program. By doing so, it becomes possible to judge the degree to which these institutions—empowered by Goldwater-Nichols—were able to initiate such a diplomatic initiative as a consequence of the 1986 legislation.

Proponents of the JCTP

Demand: foreign government and ambassadorial eagerness for defense diplomacy

The Ambassadors

At the presidential level, the cautious approach to supporting democratization in the Newly Independent States was understandable. The Bush administration was especially concerned about managing the Soviet/Russia relationship and prioritized stability given the ever-present nuclear threat. While the White House feared that pushing too hard might topple Gorbachev or Yeltsin, lower-level American officials were more inclined to chart an aggressive path within their own remit to support democratization amongst the NIS and former Warsaw Pact states. These officials built upon pre-existing momentum and consensus for the overall generic goal of democratization and then cultivated their own means to accomplish it. Often applying a thousand-points-of-light approach, American ambassadors were emblematic of this phenomenon as they developed (or solicited) independent initiatives in the hopes that some or all would bear fruit and prevent the United States from "missing the boat" of democratization. If such programs proved successful—or even just popular—they were often subsumed into broader policy at the national level and then mimicked in other regions adding more tools to the American government's democratization and statebuilding repertoire. The proponents of these efforts were uniquely empowered by the structural adjustments to the US military from the Goldwater-Nichols Act to quickly gain high-level Defense Department (and then NSC) buy-in for their initiatives and subsequently enable the proliferation of such initiatives around the globe.

The JCTP exemplifies this dynamic of improvisation by lower-level, forward-stationed officials at the country or regional level followed by program approval and enlargement in Washington. In the late 1980s, the US Ambassador to Hungary, Mark "Robie" Palmer, was energetically pursuing a raft of programs designed to hasten the country's transition to democratic governance and market economics. In June 1987, Palmer began by organizing roundtable discussions among Hungarian and Western academics to discuss politics, democracy, and governance (Gamarekian 1988). In 1988, Palmer organized a trip for

the newly elected Hungarian President, Karoly Grosz, to meet with American politicians (including presidential candidate Michael Dukakis), investors, and senior business leaders (Reuters 1988). Palmer was committed to deepening Hungarian American relations on every level: academic, financial, business, political, military, and cultural. He helped Christian missionaries establish ministries as joint ventures with the Hungarian government and he persuaded George Soros to fund the establishment of an American-style business school in Budapest (Bubar 1989; Palmer 1997; Straub and Bush 1989).

Palmer's idiosyncrasies partially explain the energetic way he pursued these many initiatives. He was a self-described "radical" when it came to freedom and individual liberty and boasted of having been both a member of the far-left Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and of Bill Buckley's "Party of the Right" while a Yale undergraduate in the 1960s (Palmer 1997). He was enthusiastically laudatory of President Reagan's clear messaging concerning the relative values of West and East and his evil "evil empire" labeling of the USSR (Palmer 1997). Palmer's affinity for Reagan's democratic zeal contrasted with the ambassador's general disdain for what he perceived as the George H.W. Bush administration's overly cautious approach to ending the USSR (Palmer 1997).

Palmer's approach was in some ways a case-in-point of a long-held critique of the State Department that it is prone to "clientism" or putting the preferences of the partner nation—Hungary in this case—ahead of US policy (Lowenthal 2022, 176). But this capture of—or really influence on—Palmer by Hungarian democrats really demonstrates the tension between the ground-level State Department bureaucrat deployed abroad (the ambassador) and the "seventh floor" of senior State Department leadership at Foggy Bottom. Instead of being captured by Hungarian interest groups, Palmer was simply pursuing on his initiative what he believed US policy to be, even if he had at times exceeded the direction he was given. Palmer's approach earned him plenty of critics. The Soviets and conservative Hungarians complained that Palmer acted like an American pro-consul (Palmer 1997) Senior State Department officials told Palmer that his many initiatives were "making it more difficult for [the White House] to deal with the Soviets" because "the Soviets were focusing on [Palmer] and what [he] was

doing." As Palmer recalled, this caused friction with Soviet officials because they said, "the U.S…is destabilizing things and that they—the Hungarians—weren't standing up and stopping it." (Palmer 1997). This critique from State reinforces the reminiscences of Scowcroft and the histories of Ulrich and Cossaboom which concluded that the senior rungs of the State Department privileged the US-Soviet (and later Russian) relationship over the United States' other bilateral relationships in the region. Whereas Palmer was keenly tuned to the task of helping democrats in Hungary, senior American diplomats were sensitive to the impressions and preferences of their superpower peers.

Though he may have frustrated the senior officials, Palmer's energy earned him many fans among Western business and civil society groups. The CEO of an American heavy equipment company wrote to President Bush in October 1989 that, "In the last 20 years…we have had many experiences with US Ambassadors. Mark Palmer is by far the best of any that we have come in contact with, and that view is shared by all of the 500 members who met him at our meeting." (Cummins 1989) Incidentally, President Bush concurred with that assessment and wrote back saying "I am *very* high on Mark!" (Bush 1989b). In 1998, after Hungary's transition from Communism had moved into the rear-view mirror, the Hungarian President quipped to Vice President Gore years later that Palmer had been the "best governor that Hungary ever had." (Palmer 1997, 150) Among the many programs for which that Ambassador Palmer deserves credit—partial, yet substantial credit—were the military-to-military exchanges between Hungarian and American forces which evolved into JCTP.

In the Fall of 1987, Palmer attempted to connect the Hungarian military with its American counterparts just as he had been doing in other sectors. He helped convince Secretary of Defense Weinberger to approve tightly controlled interactions that would occur the following year including academic roundtable discussions (this time involving US military historians and their Hungarian counterparts) and a marksmanship competition at Fort Benning (Cossaboom 1997, 4). These initiatives were kept far from the public eye and attracted no media coverage but were nonetheless significant in demonstrating a potential diplomatic and political use for the military at the end of the Cold War. In

particular, they sensitized the EUCOM commander and staff to their potential role in NIS outreach (Cossaboom 1997).

Palmer was the most prominent of the ambassadors that supported the JCTP, but he was certainly not alone. Other new ambassadors in the nascent Bush administration found themselves in foreign capitals undergoing enormous political changes but still with relatively small US diplomatic missions compared to the policy priority assigned to "democratization." In Slovenia, Ambassador Alan Wendt had three staff members: himself, his wife/secretary, and a foreign national translator (E. A. Wendt 1996). Wendt fought for the inclusion and expansion of the JCTP as a means "of furthering American interests" and stabilizing the former Yugoslavia (Cossaboom 1997, 46). He also pursued it as a means to add an American initiative to his country that came with its own planning, coordination, and execution thereby requiring little from his "staff" other than his endorsement.

Officials in the State Department and EUCOM were hesitant to accept Wendt's requests. At State, there was a general fear that US military troops in Slovenia would add to an already volatile situation. Moreover, Wendt recalled, the Department of State leadership was not comfortable with diplomatic experimentation. He remembered, "the State Department really didn't want to see Yugoslavia break up, just as initially we didn't want the Soviet Union to break up. We had become accustomed to, I suppose, the stability we thought these regimes represented, even though, we didn't like the communist regimes as such. But it was the devil we knew." (E. A. Wendt 1996, 118) Consequently, Wendt concluded that at the Secretary and regional Assistant Secretaries of State level, the Department was "aloof" and "standoffish" to the democracy movements in some of these smaller NIS, especially in the volatile Balkans. (E. A. Wendt 1996, 124).

Notwithstanding the uneasiness with change and political tumult, President Bush publicly charted a course that, for the most part, nurtured the radical expectations for these European democratic transitions. Consistently, President Bush's public rhetoric was clear that the United States should model, guide, and assist these states in transitioning to democracy. In April 1989, President Bush gave a well-

received speech to the heavily Polish-American community of Hamtramck, Michigan. Alongside the town mayor, a Catholic cardinal, and in front of a crowd waving Polish and American flags, Bush reprised a line from his inaugural speech saying, "In man's heart, if not in fact, the day of the dictator is over. The totalitarian era is passing; its old ideas blown away like leaves from an ancient leafless tree." (Bush 1989a) He declared, "…Congress, the Polish American community, the American labor movement, our allies, and international financial institutions—all must work in concert if Polish democracy is to take root anew and sustain itself." It was an enthusiastic speech. Bush spoke of the need for the West to "be bold in proposing a vision of the European future" and that "We share an unwavering conviction that one day all the peoples of Europe will live in freedom."

President Bush hedged, however, in Hamtramck and similar speeches when it came to how much the United States could do to achieve freedom for "all the peoples of Europe." He noted that progress in Poland was "dependent" on "significant internal reforms" and "significant political and economic liberalization." He reminded the audience that "help from the West will come in concert with [their own internal] liberalization." (Bush 1989d) In a 1991 speech in Ukraine, President Bush expressed similar support for democracy but also for caution in pursuing reforms that were too radical, too nationalistic, and too punitive toward the *ancien regime* (Bush 1991). Dubbed the "Chicken Kiev" speech by William Safire, President Bush's remarks made clear that at the presidential level, the United States attempted to have both sides of the issue (Safire 1991). To be magnanimous to the Russians and avoid disorder while supporting and aiding liberalization. To be certain, Bush proposed and managed several concrete proposals such as debt relief, trade preferences, and eventually the large Congressional aid package known as Support for Eastern European Democracies (SEED). But some of those policies and their effects took time to implement. In his public remarks at Hamtramck, Kiev, and many other settings, Bush clearly communicated to the public and private sectors that it was American policy to support liberalization in Europe, to do so without antagonizing the Soviets, and to do so without radically destabilizing these nascent democracies.

That concrete policies did not emerge immediately to support the rhetoric did not alter the fact that the speech *was* policy and was seen as such by those inside and outside the administration, especially by the ambassadors. During the first half of 1989, the Bush administration spent much energy on wide-ranging policy reviews at the NSC with a special focus on Soviet and European policy (Scowcroft 2000). The President and his staff were criticized in many fora for the long period of apparent indecision caused by the publicly announced but slow-to-conclude reviews. But as former NSC official, Don Snider later wrote, official policy documents are often delayed echoes of policies already underway. It is, Snider argued, more politically advantageous for policymakers to divine policy from a variety of sources that all point in the same direction but do not necessarily bear the imprimatur of "official policy." "[F]ar better" Snider wrote, for American officials to divine policy via "current, personal testimonies by administration officials before the Congress, supported by Presidential and cabinet-level speeches[.]" (Snider 1995, 4)

This appears to describe the dynamic encountered by the US Ambassador to Poland at this time, Thomas Simon. He portrayed the myriad of US democratization schemes as the consequence of the overall sensibility of the entire American government and culture rather than the result of concrete government policy per se. Simons recalled fielding an onslaught of requests from US government departments that all wanted to implement new programs in Poland. The tidal wave of requests came from all sectors based on the sense that the President and Congress all placed a high priority on US-led liberalization. Simons recalled:

> What did happen was you got a flood of not [just] non-governmental organizations, but of government agencies who wanted to come to Poland. By the time I got there, the Embassy was already bursting at the seams with new political and economic reporting officers, sections that we had beefed up. *But Washington was getting the not incorrect feeling that George Bush liked Poland and cared about Poland, and suddenly agency after agency wanted to put people into Poland,* into my Embassy…I let [the requests] pile up until there were these seventy requests, and then I spent a whole weekend writing a cable to Eagleburger with the subject line 'Washington on the Vistula[.]' (Simons Jr. 2005, 175) (emphasis added)

Among these many requests were proposals from the US military's European Command to place a training team in Poland. Simons embraced it and also pressured EUCOM to expand some of its other

defense diplomacy tools simultaneously.[58] Simons's desire to not only promote the JCTP, but also to demand the expansion of other defense diplomacy initiatives is an exemplary case demonstrating how ambassadors formed a critical layer that mediated vague policy prescriptions for democratization at the presidential level with the enthusiasm from activists, civil society groups, and the business community at the street level. They used their influence to promote defense diplomacy initiatives alongside similar entrepreneurial initiatives from the rest of government and civil society to apply a kitchen sink approach to forging the "New World Order" (Bush 1990b).

The foregoing does not imply that the Bush administration was unsupportive of the initiatives by ambassadors and other agencies to engage with counterparts and civil society in the NIS. Rather, the prevailing mood of the administration at the presidential and Secretary of State level was a combination of apprehension over the potential Soviet reaction (or its potential collapse) and disinterest. This lack of interest stemmed from a simple hierarchy of concerns. Issues like defense engagement at this level did not rise to a level of concern for senior leaders and were often thought of as a potential source of distraction and friction when they were more focused on Soviet nuclear weapons and the stability of Gorbachev's government.

Consequently, ambassadors like Palmer, Simons, and Wendt were afforded more "freedom of movement" to experiment with novel programs and initiatives (Domber 2001). While Palmer was sending a "demand signal" for engagement to EUCOM, crowd-funding economic and academic initiatives, and recruiting English teachers, the administration was focused on how to manage conventional force reductions in Europe (Simons Jr. 2005, 162–63). The American ambassador to Poland was advising Polish political figures on how to strategically split their votes in parliament between the parties to bolster their democracy while the Bush administration considered how to press forward with the Open Skies Treaty (Domber 2001). At the NSC level, the administration was attempting to construct a coherent

[58] Ambassador Simons demanded that EUCOM take steps to invest in and promote the Marshall Center as a new tool of democratization and defense diplomacy if it expected to place JCTP elements in Poland (Simons Jr. 2005).

National Security Review of East-West relations and not entirely attendant to the minute details and fleeting opportunities that ambassadors were seizing upon (Sparrow 2015). While the administration focused on these larger issues, it naturally fell to these lower-level officials to develop and advance US policy from what they knew and believed the overall policy direction to be. That direction was, it was clear, cautious but confident support for liberalization that sought to make gains irreversibly but also to limit the potential for political chaos, communist backlash, and military coup.

The ambassadors were able to promote initiatives, such as JCTP, because of their close relationship with EUCOM. As EUCOM officials discussed ways the command might assist with democratization, the mutual conclusion was invariably some version of military contacts with the emerging democracies (Cossaboom 1997). Therefore, the ambassadors' demand signal was sent to EUCOM where it could then be sent directly to the Chairman.

Host Nations

The demand for defense diplomacy was more than an American-induced phenomenon, more than ambassadorial initiative and salesmanship. The emerging democratic states of central Europe themselves provided a critical "pull" for defense diplomacy. Central European leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s agreed completely with President Bush's frequent exhortation that Europe should be "whole and free" and sought American help to achieve this (Bush 1989e). The "whole" referred to the lifting of the Iron Curtain and the integration of economies and cultures into a more seamless Europe. The "free" referred to an embrace of liberal democracy as the default mode of government and to the removal of the threat of foreign (Soviet) military intervention, invasion, and occupation. To be free, these leaders believed their countries required the protection—directly or indirectly—of the United States. Such protection was necessary, they believed, to guarantee their sovereignty. In particular, the "Visegrad"

states of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia[59] highlight this demand-side pressure.[60] From 1989 to 1992, these states grew increasingly anxious about their economic foundations, their political stability, and their security (internal and external). The JCTP was attractive to these states because it provided an early, uncontroversial "stitch" in their overall effort to knit themselves to Europe, themselves to the United States, and the United States to Europe.

In retrospect, it may seem obvious that these states sought NATO membership as the best politico-security means to further their European integration. However, despite their desire to become more [Western] European and to draw closer to the United States, which was evident in 1989, these states were hesitant to push for NATO membership. Some of their more radical democratic and anti-Soviet actors may have preferred that option, but in the main, their politicians assiduously attempted to avoid antagonizing the Soviets with talk of NATO accession (Meißner et al. 2021).

This hesitance stemmed from hard military realities. Soviet troops remained garrisoned in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary and these central European states feared that the Soviets could have a change of heart and no longer tolerate their growing democratization, political pluralism, and Westernism (see Table 7 below). Poland's position was especially precarious as it was the last to see the Soviet/Russians withdraw and because it acted as a massive trans-shipment route for the hundreds of thousands of Red Army personnel stationed in East Germany. The Soviets had no barracks or facilities in Russia capable of receiving these large contingents (and their families) which had long been garrisoned in Europe (Meißner et al. 2021; C. L. Powell and Persico 1995). USSR/Russia's ability to absorb their forward forces into their homeland was such a significant issue that Poland volunteered to construct new

[59] In 1993, Czechoslovakia split into two separate states: the Czech Republic in the west and Slovakia in the east. This project does not analyze that split in detail but will simply refer to the appropriate countries in the context of the time period presently under analysis.

[60] These states formed a regional association known as the Visegrad Group in 1991 with the purpose of cooperating on economic, political, social, and security issues and to further their joint European integration. The group name "Visegrad" is derived from the Hungarian town in which they held a summit in February 1991 and signed a declaration establishing their group (Latawski 1993).

facilities for them *in* Russia as a free-of-charge gesture of goodwill and to speed up the Soviet withdrawal (Meißner et al. 2021).

As the presence of Soviet troops acted as a brake on the Visegrad's appetite and enthusiasm for NATO membership, it also dampened the United States' desire to move fast with other initiatives out of the same fear of antagonizing the Soviets. President Bush and his national security team worried that moving too fast would imperil Gorbachev. Bush feared that Gorbachev might not survive politically and that there was no guarantee his replacement would also "want to go forward, not backward." (Bush and Goncz 1990). Though the Visegrad states welcomed all manner of interactions with the United States both sides proceeded with caution while the USSR remained intact and while the Soviets garrisoned their countries (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995).

Fearing such a Soviet change of heart, Polish leaders opted for caution until the USSR withdrawal was irreversible. The Polish foreign minister noted in March 1991 that the Soviet Union remained a capable military power and that moving too quickly toward NATO might alarm Moscow which, "neither NATO wants [and] nor do we." (Borowiec 1991) While Poland's security challenge vis-à-vis Soviet troops was the most long-lasting and acute, the same logic of cautiousness concerning European security integration (in NATO) applied to the whole Visegrad community. With the Soviet Union remaining a material threat to their sovereignty, the Visegrad leaders understood that "the time was not right for pushing" and that they risked severe repercussions if they attempted to join NATO at that stage (Mastny in Bozo, Rey, and Nuti 2008, 240).

Table 7. USSR/Russia troop withdrawals from "Visegrad" states[61]

USSR/Russia Troop withdrawals from Central Europe (Meißner et al. 2021)			
Estimated total troop number (in thousands)*	Hungary	Czechoslovakia	Poland
	65	73.5	53
Withdrawal begins	April 1988	March 1990	08 April 1991
Withdrawal ends	19 June 1991	30 June 1991	17 September 1993

**Numbers do not include family members and civilians which generally increase each total by approximately 60%*

Instead of pushing for NATO membership, these states generally sought—or pined for—a new security architecture for post-Cold War Europe. Often, this took the imagined form of an invigorated Commission for Security Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)[62] in which NATO was one of several key "pillars," as Czechoslovakia's Vaclav Havel was fond of putting it (Bush and Havel 1990). Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki told President Bush that he preferred an "expanded CSCE" as the security regime of choice for post-Cold War Europe (Mazowiecki and Bush 1990b). Hungarian President Goncz preferred an "associate" or observer membership in NATO while new security institutions might be developed (Bush and Goncz 1990). Hungarian Prime Minister Antall described walking a fine line between East and West when he told President Bush in October 1990, "European integration is important to us" and that "we are not turning against the Atlantic idea," but noted that the Soviet Union sees "the image of the enemy in NATO" and that it would do more harm than good to antagonize them (Antall and Bush 1990).

In more poetic and self-conscious terms, Havel framed this NATO hesitancy as a form of self-help. In an address to a joint session of the US Congress in February 1990, he told the American people of his hopes de-securitize the continent and that Europe needed to "pay the world back" for the wars it

[61] This table does not address the most significant troop withdrawal challenge for the Soviets which was East Germany. There, the Soviets garrisoned over 500,000 troops with more staff in support. The logistical hurdle of recovering this massive contingent is primarily responsible with the slow withdrawal from Poland which was the transit route for the Soviet troops stationed in Germany.

[62] Later renamed the OSCE ("O" for organization) and not to be confused with the US government agency the "Commission for Security Cooperation in Europe."

caused in the 20th century (Havel 1990). For Havel, Europe owed the world and therefore it should assume responsibility to forge its own new security institutions that did not require American guarantees, per se (Bush and Havel 1990). Optimistically, Havel expressed a vision of a Europe that managed its own security affairs successfully and where, "for another hundred years American soldiers shouldn't have to be separated from their mothers just because Europe is incapable of being a guarantor of world peace, which it ought to be in order to make some amends, at least, for having given the world two world wars." (Havel 1990)

Havel championed an "associate" membership within NATO which would provide consultative missions with NATO, but not necessarily act as a down payment on membership. Interestingly, this same position was supported by Margaret Thatcher who felt that letting former adversaries into the military structure of NATO weakened NATO as a military institution and transformed it into an overly political institution. She felt, as did Havel, that the CSCE was a better alternative for the integration of the Warsaw Pact's refugees (Zelikow and Rice 1995, 316–17). Summing up these concerns in March 1991, the Polish Foreign Minister said of Visegrad NATO accession, "[N]either NATO wants it nor do we." (Borowiec 1991)

The more aggressive push toward NATO membership would only come later as 1991 rolled on and brought a series of crises. In January, the Soviet Union faced a military conscription crisis in which several states—Lithuanian foremost—refused to comply with their goals for compulsory military service in the Red Army (Hill 2018). As independence movements gained steam in the other republics, the USSR faced difficult decisions of accepting the disintegration or violently suppressing the movements in core Soviet Republics like Georgia, the Baltics, and Azerbaijan (Seward 1991). Still, the Visegrad states remained cautious about piling onto this anti-Soviet moment out of fear of losing the democratic and independence gains they were already achieving. The August 1991 Soviet coup attempt changed this dynamic. As news of the coup attempt was first breaking, Polish President Walsea told President Bush in 1991, "We certainly hope that the NATO alliance will get stronger" and implored the American leader to,

"please…help us unite with the rest of Europe." (Bush and Walsea 1991). Up until this point, Soviet political instability was more hypothetical than real. After the coup, the nightmare scenario of Gorbachev being deposed and replaced by communist, imperialist hardliners seemed possible.

Beyond concerns of Soviet political instability, central Europe needed an international security system capable of delivering peacekeeping, -making, and -building to manage other crises. At this point, the crises in Yugoslavia became increasingly acute while Czechoslovakia faced its own break up along ethnic Czech and Slovak lines (the so-called, "Velvet Divorce" (Svec 1992)). In the early 1990s, these states were grasping for any security initiatives that might mitigate the potential for and fallout of, a possible Soviet policy change (or coup), civil wars in the region, refugee flows, and domestic political instability. In such a context, the need for functioning security partnerships for central Europe was, by the fall of 1991, quite acute (Mauthner 1991).

The Visegrad states had to deal with these security demands *before* they were ready to seek NATO membership *before* NATO was even ready to manage accession, and *before* the CSCE was viable as a security guaranteeing institution (Mastny in Bozo, Rey, and Nuti 2008). The two key mechanisms for NATO expansion—the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Partnership for Peace program—had not yet been developed. Even as they were inaugurated, it was not obvious to those states involved that participating in them would guarantee future membership (Sanner 1992). The tension between "associate membership" and "candidate" remained an issue that motivated these states to deepen their bilateral security ties with the United States as a means to achieve significant security cooperation with the United States directly (Sanner 1992). The JCTP emerged as the primary means by which these former adversaries could engage with the United States, and by extension NATO (NATO 2022b). Poland would not declare its intention of joining NATO until November 1992 (Sanner 1992). The United States would not officially develop its policy of "enlargement" for another three years during the Clinton administration (The White House 1994). Combined, these led to an urgency for effective security

cooperation with the West while discussions of NATO membership were seen as both provocative and reckless.

In this context, the appeal of the JCTP becomes clear. Relatively low-level, bilateral military-to-military exchanges with the Americans which focused on "democracy" and statebuilding activities seemed innocuous. These exchanges would signal security cooperation and partnership between the United States and these fragile states and therefore they would provide a partial, yet *de facto*, security guarantee at a time when they faced pressing security demands. With hopes for an invigorated CSCE fading and their security anxieties becoming more immediate, the Visegrads approached the JCTP as a key stepping stone toward eventual NATO accession. This was because the JCTP could be made ready for them before NATO and because JCTP was quiet, benign (non-operational), and bilateral. JCTP provided the desired benefit of the United States securing "post-unification Europe…with troops," as Hungarian President Goncz put it to President Bush in 1990, while not being freighted within any sort of treaty ramifications (Bush and Goncz 1990). JCTP, instead, was merely a series of limited exchanges on mundane topics not unlike similar exchanges which had already been normalized between the United States and the Soviets. In short, JCTP was a means to keep the United States in Europe as an invited guest of these countries without overly antagonizing the Soviet occupation forces.

Central European leaders welcomed American military engagement because, in addition to making strategic sense, such activities were popular politically. This was especially true as the American military presence was often contrasted with the Red Army. In 1991, Polish PM Mazowiecki told President Bush that he was fielding complaints from Polish citizens because he had not invited large numbers of American troops into Poland to occupy the former Soviet garrisons (Mazowiecki and Bush 1990a). In Czechoslovakia, citizens of the western city of Pilsen launched a massive "Liberation Day" festival to celebrate the American liberation of their town from the Germans in World War II and for the departure of the Soviets in 1990 (Mio 1990; Soviets Where? 1990). The rump Soviet troops were not welcome in Czechoslovakia where memories of the 1968 crackdown of the "Prague Spring" were well

within the living memory of Czech citizens (Svec 1988). To mark the final departure of the Soviet troops at the end of June 1991, there was an enormous rock concert in Prague (Meißner et al. 2021). In an exhaustive study of Czech and Slovak press from the era, including local publications, Barnabas Vajda concluded that the population only felt a "huge relief." (Vajda in Meißner et al. 2021, 218) He noted once the Red Army had departed, "that one sensed hardly any sign of mercy, sympathy, or even empathy toward the departing Soviet soldiers." That their presence faded into "oblivion" with virtually no attempts to even recognize or "thematize" their presence (Vajda in Meißner et al. 2021, 217–22).

Not only was the American military popular, but it was also impressive in a way that the Soviet forces were not. After the United States' decisive victory over Iraq in the Gulf War, these countries added yet another reason to seek close military ties with the United States (Alloway 2022). Indeed, many officials associated with the JCTP cited their counterparts' general awe of the US military's performance in DESERT STORM/DESERT SHIELD as something that stimulated a desire on their part to emulate and learn from them (Cossaboom 2012). Upon interaction with American troops, former Warsaw Pact states cited superior professionalization—especially among non-commissioned officers—as compared to their Soviet former rivals (Alloway 2022). These countries wanted American troops as a means to help them be more politically Western and to signal this new Western mindset to their polities. Displaying this Westerness through semi-permanent bilateral military exchanges made clear to their population (as well as the American government) that their leadership was embracing a popular vision for the future. Crucially, their enthusiasm for Western military contacts also made clear to Western political and military leaders that NATO did have a future beyond the Cold War as did EUCOM (Bush and Goncz 1990). The popular demand in central Europe for Western military integration was important to making this case as were the operational demands of managing the Yugoslavian dissolution.

The logic of JCTP-style military partnership notwithstanding, the program was not fully underway until early 1992. Partially, this delay was because defense diplomacy like JCTP was below the level of concern for senior political leaders relative to other issues. Defense diplomacy competed for the

attention of presidents and prime ministers alongside domestic economic issues which were always near the top of the agenda. For instance, Hungary faced a flagging economy and concerns that liberalization would be a flop. People's living standards had fallen since 1989 and there was an ever-present fear of a refugee calamity stemming from a potential Czechoslovakian civil war and break up, a Yugoslavian crack-up, and a Russian economic collapse (Antall and Bush 1990). Hungarian politicians were primarily concerned with invigorating their economy during this period and were anxious that their plight as a fledgling democracy would be lost in the turmoil of the era. In late 1990, the Hungarian Prime Minister warned President Bush that he was "counting on [him]," and that "our part of the world should not be pushed into the background by the Gulf crisis." (Antall and Bush 1990) The Hungarian PM and President both separately told President Bush that they feared the West (especially Europe) was not moving fast enough to buy Hungarian exports, to invest in Hungarian business, and to add wind to the sails of the Hungarian liberalization movement. (Antall and Bush 1990; Bush and Goncz 1991). They warned that economic failure in Hungary could mean political failure for democratization which would "be a huge propaganda victory for conservatives in the Soviet Union and China." (Antall and Bush 1990) Singing from the same hymnal, Polish President Lech Walesa begged President Bush for more Western investment and trade in March 1991 saying, "We will dismantle whatever is not good in our system [in order to secure American investment] ...We are willing to be the example. We offer Poland as an experiment, as a demonstration." (Walsea and Bush 1991)

What emerges from this study of the host nations' demand for military-to-military contacts is a complex portrait of many, complimentary pressures that made bilateral defense diplomacy with the United States a popular initiative. On dimensions ranging from domestic politics to international security, there was sufficient consensus for the adoption of JCTP-like initiatives. These countries would send strong demand signals through their ambassadors and through EUCOM itself back to the CJCS for these sorts of engagements even if such requests only partially registered in the White House. (Cossaboom 1997; Havel and Bush 1991). Such requests made it to the level of the deputies meeting, primarily, where

the VCJCS could sense the overall policy need and take such concerns back to the Chairman as they mulled options (Jeremiah 2010). The CJCS could then push the rest of the American foreign policy apparatus to back this effort via the interagency working group (IWG) in Washington to add momentum to the program. But as evidenced by the fact that the JCTP did not officially begin until 1992, such programs were always subordinated to broader political concerns and were generally suppressed in their planning and initiation owing to the priority issues of Soviet stability. Nevertheless, the programs were developed by the CJCS and EUCOM and could be deployed once the strategic risk calculation shifted. For these states, the JCTP was an attractive and easy means of increasing their own security ties with the United States, of taking an intermediate step toward NATO, and a way to signal their "Westerness" to their own populations.

Supply: The Chairman & EUCOM

Turning to the supply side of defense diplomacy, the impact of Goldwater-Nichols becomes clearer. The actors most responsible for defense diplomacy were those most empowered by the reforms. In particular, the CJCS and Joint Staff, EUCOM, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)). These organizations and positions had all been either transformed, enhanced, or, as in the case of ASD(SO/LIC), created by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Their new prominence enabled—if not encouraged—them to pursue policies focused on the United States' most pressing and emergent foreign policy issues such as European democratization. To substantiate this, it is necessary to trace the role of the first two post-Goldwater-Nichols Chairmen as well as EUCOM and to assess their motivations in pursuing democratization as well as the means by which they did so.

Adm William Crowe, CJCS 1985 – 1989

In the late 1980s, CJCS William Crowe established himself as an important American diplomat. As Chairman, Crowe orchestrated several top-level visits for himself and his Soviet counterpart, Chief of the General Staff, Marshall Sergey Akhromeyev. The visits were extensive. In the summer of 1988,

Akhromeyev brought with him all the vice chiefs of the Soviet military services and they spent over a week in the United States. Adm. Crowe showed them a naval aviation demonstration in Virginia, a missile test in Oklahoma, and a tank exercise in Texas. Furthermore, Crowe took Akhromeyev to a series of civil-society engagements including speaking engagements with business groups and a visit to a Native American community in Oklahoma[63] (Andrews 1988; Cromley 1988; Legro 1990).[64] Akhromeyev reciprocated by showing Crowe and the vice chiefs of the American military services a massive tank exercise and other facility tours in the USSR (see Table 8, below, for a summary of the visits). On the first such visit in the summer of 1988, Akhromeyev reflected on why he was engaging in such meetings

[63] Crowe was a proud Oklahoman who told Akhromeyev, "You haven't seen America until you've seen Oklahoma." (Cromley 1988)

[64] Ironically, while the visits enabled a warm personal relationship between the two men, the naval air demonstrations bolstered Akhromeyev's suspicion that the United States was an aggressive, belligerent power and not committed to a defensive posture. After observing the capabilities of an American aircraft carrier, Akhromeyev said, "Don't tell me they're not devastating. I've seen them. I know what they can do, and they represent a genuine threat to my country." (Crowe Jr. 1993, 280)

telling an audience that, “The time has come when we have to think about our role, about the role of the armed forces.” (Akhromeyev 1987)

Marshal Akhromeyev (left) and CJCS Crowe (right) at a cattle herding exhibition in Oklahoma (Photo by Martinez, 1988)

Marshal Akhromeyev adorned in Native American headdress while visiting Oklahoma (Photo by Martinez, 1988)

CJCS Crowe pointing skyward as Marshall Akhromeyev observes flight operations aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier (Photo by Ross, 1988)

Table 8. Summary of Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges, December 1987 – March 1990

Dates	Location(s)	Positions	Attendees/Entourage	Notes
Dec 1987	USA: Pentagon "Tank" Briefing	Crowe-CJCS; Akhromeyev-Chief of the Soviet General Staff	US: Full JCS; USSR: Akhromeyev	Impromptu meeting following an uncoordinated invitation from Crowe to Akhromeyev while the USSR delegation was at the White House for INF talks. Results: agreement to establish a formal mil-to-mil dialogue
Summer 1988	USA: Norfolk, Texas, Oklahoma	Same	US: Crowe and various officials at each site; USSR: Akhromeyev and Soviet vice service chiefs	
June 1989	USSR: Stalingrad	Crowe: CJCS; Akhromeyev: Special Advisor to General Secretary Gorbachev; Gen. Moiseyev: Chief of the Soviet General Staff	US: Crowe and vice service chiefs; USSR various officials at each site	
October 1989	USA	Crowe: Private citizen Akhromeyev: Special Advisor to General Secretary Gorbachev	Crowe as an individual	Informal. Crowe's retirement kept him off Akhromeyev's official itinerary but the two spent a great deal of time together.
March 1990	USSR	Crowe: Private citizen Akhromeyev: Special Advisor to General Secretary Gorbachev	US: Crowe and foreign policy expert from Rand corporation USSR: Multiple.	Produced 1990 Rand report on visit authored by Legro.
Summer 1991	USA	Crowe: Private citizen Akhromeyev: Special Advisor to General Secretary Gorbachev	US: Crowe as a private citizen and member of the Presidential Intelligence Advisory Board; USSR: Akhromeyev as a member USSR START delegation	Final visit occurring not long before the August 1991 coup

Congress lauded Crowe and Akhromeyev for the exchanges. From the outset, the two most senior members of the SASC went out of their way to congratulate Adm. Crowe for assuming this diplomatic role. In 1989, Senator Warner (SASC minority ranking member) and Senator Nunn (SASC chairman) specifically congratulated Crowe for this initiative telling him that such a politico-military engagement was indeed inherent to the vision of the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and Senator Nunn was pleased to see them bearing fruit three years later (SASC 1989a, 428). The ability and willingness of the CJCS to further develop a robust series of engagements with his Soviet counterpart had been unheard of to this point.

It certainly mattered that the Cold War was thawing, but it also mattered a great deal that the CJCS now had his own independent authority—post-Goldwater-Nichols—a more robust and personally responsive staff and a deputy to focus on internal Pentagon matters (Rehome 2009). Outside the CJCS, there was a great deal of apprehension surrounding the potential engagements. Secretary of Defense Weinberger was not supportive and did not believe it was the place of the CJCS to be talking with the Soviets in general and certainly not in the friendly and open manner proposed by Crowe (Crowe Jr. 1993, 272). At State, Secretary Schultz was open to the concept, but not necessarily enthusiastic (Crowe Jr. 1993). Other senior State Department officials at the Assistant Secretary level were concerned that Crowe did not know what he was doing and would damage American diplomatic priorities as a result. They feared, according to Crowe, that the CJCS was in over his head being that it was foolish to let loose "an Okie military type loose with the Soviet Chief of the General Staff." Crowe understood this common concern from State noting, "We [he and Akhromeyev] were going to be in each other's company for days on end, and it was inevitable that we would end up talking about sensitive subjects, and [the State Department believed] only 'diplomats' can talk to foreigners sensitively." (Crowe Jr. 1993, 276)

To get final approval for the visits, Crowe made a strategic decision to simply "announce" the itinerary by sending it to the White House as opposed to asking for formal approval (Crowe Jr. 1993, 272). This move prevented the proposal from any sort of staffing and instead allowed Crowe to execute his own scheme without much additional interest or oversight. Crowe's approval strategy also highlights

the personal agency of Crowe in launching this defense diplomacy initiative and the importance of the CJCS's institutional power in doing so.

Goldwater-Nichols enabled the Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges on several levels. First, and practically, they were made possible by the existence of a Vice CJCS (VCJCS). As described earlier, the VCJCS enabled the CJCS to pursue his own Chairman's agenda simply by soaking up other pressing agenda items which would have otherwise been left to the Chairman himself. USAF Gen. Robert Herres was the VCJCS and Crowe had made him responsible for a wide variety of formerly "Chairman's duties" including oversight of the planning and budgeting efforts across the services (Rehome 2009). Throughout the Goldwater-Nichols debates, the argument in favor of creating a VCJCS position explicitly centered on the need for a senior official while the Chairman was traveling. In practice, this not only allowed the Chairman to travel, but it encouraged it. Without a Vice, the JCS had poor continuity when the CJCS was out of town and, crucially, resulted in the Chairman traveling less than he would post-Goldwater-Nichols (Crowe Jr. 1993, 152). The Crowe-Akhromeyev visits were seven days in the United States and ten in Russia which represents an uncommonly long period for the CJCS to be out of Washington.

In addition to the freedom afforded the Chairman while the Vice "minded the store" in Washington, Goldwater-Nichols made Crowe more engaged in contemporary, non-military foreign policy issues than he had been prior to the bill's passing. Crowe felt comfortable rendering more advice, more quickly, and with less consultation with the rest of the JCS (Crowe Jr. 1993). That Crowe was engaged so deeply on this political level points to another side effect of Goldwater-Nichols. That is that as CJCS, Adm. Crowe saw himself as a political actor, as a diplomatic actor, independently achieving foreign policy goals for the nation as opposed to simply serving as the "principal military advisor" to the president.

Another impact of the Crowe-Akhromeyev visits was that they also tuned in the broader foreign policy establishment to the role of the CJCS and the Joint Staff in such diplomatic enterprises. Though these exchanges were high-level, small, and limited—confined to the senior-most officers of both

militaries—they explicitly demonstrated the role of military exchanges in fostering good diplomatic relations. Thus, the Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges set the table for the JCTP in two important ways. First, they served as something of "a proof-of-principle" for senior military-to-military contacts that resonated in NATO's 1990 "London Declaration." That document called for military leaders to visit each other's capitals and to host conferences at senior levels and this insight drew inspiration from Crowe's very public success with the USSR (NATO 1990). Just a few months after the London conference, the deputy commander of EUCOM was in Poland hearing requests from the Poles for F-16s (Ulrich 1999, 51). Instead of promising the hardware, however, Gen. McCarthy agreed to send them a team of American military experts to discuss airspace management in keeping with the types of programs favored by the JCTP. The Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges normalized the idea of military-to-military exchanges between senior leaders which in turn paved the way for technical exchanges on military (and dual use military-civilian) activities.

The second, more concrete, way the Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges fostered contemporary diplomacy was that they resulted in the creation of the joint interagency working group to manage the visits (Ulrich 1999). This same body would serve as a blueprint for the subsequent interagency working group (IWG) that would oversee the JCTP (Deverill 2022). Consequently, the Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges altered the expectations for defense diplomacy within the military (at the Joint Staff level) and for civilians as well. By yielding an interagency body to assist the joint staff in coordinating Crowe's agenda, the exchanges altered the institutional landscape for foreign policy. They created precedent, expectation, and a formal institution for the Chairman to play a diplomatic role.

A final aspect of these exchanges worth mentioning was the extraordinary level of candidness and honesty between the military leaders which made them quite useful diplomatically. On Crowe's second visit to Russia, Akhromeyev openly communicated his apprehension of and disdain for the liberalization that was afoot. *Perestroika* and *glasnost* were rapidly destabilizing the political and social order giving rise to "democracy and demagoguery" (Legro 1990, 2). Crowe stood by and watched as the Soviet

general suffered the indignity of being lectured on economics and agriculture by a young Ukrainian collective farm manager desperate to liberalize his operation. The farmer was insistent on the need for John Deere tractors and privatization to boost production while Akhromeyev argued back that "there should be no private property because that leads to capitalism." (Crowe Jr. 1993, 293; Legro 1990, 2). Just as remarkably, the two military men went to a meeting with the editor of *Izvestia*. Crowe looked on while the editor lectured Akhromeyev on the virtues of press freedom. Akhromeyev confided in Crowe that he felt like a man apart and that he was losing the country that he and his generation had fought for in the Great Patriotic War. Akhromeyev told Crowe that his daughter wanted him "to get out of the way" because he was "outdated" and to let liberalization take hold (Crowe Jr. 1993, 296–97). Crowe dutifully reported these exchanges to the White House and the State Department thereby contributing materially to the overall level of understanding of the President and other policymakers (Crowe Jr. 1993).

It is noteworthy that Akhromeyev, uncomfortable though he may have been, participated in these meetings with frustrated Soviet citizens with Crowe present (Legro 1990). The pair's warm personal relationship, built in long airplane rides across the United States in 1988, played an immense role in that decision but so did the important diplomatic roles that these two senior-most military officers played in their respective national politics. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude that their elevated diplomatic roles would not have been assigned had it not been for the warm relationship they shared and the role their 1988/89/90/91 exchanges played in accelerating the thaw of the Cold War. These visits provided a crucial window into the fragile state of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's precarious domestic position. Crowe visited the White House upon his return from the 1990 visit to the USSR and briefed both national security advisor Brent Scowcroft and Secretary of Defense Cheney. Crowe emphasized to them both that these meetings were unusually candid and represented a potential shift in the overall opinion of Gorbachev from the military and the party apparatus (Crowe Jr. 1993). Crowe told Scowcroft and Cheney that Akhromeyev was indeed very disturbed and unsettled by the direction his country was taking and that he feared Gorbachev would go so far as to give up the gains won by the Red Army in their defeat of the

Nazis nearly 50 years earlier. In the event, Akhromeyev's unease with New Thinking likely led him to support the attempted August 1991 putsch to oust Gorbachev thus confirming fears from the White House and intelligence community that the military might turn on the General Secretary (AP 1994; Desch 2001, 46; Pearson and Weil 1991).[65]

One might argue that the fact that Akhromeyev, after all this defense diplomacy with Crowe, still attempted a coup is indicative that defense diplomacy was a failure in transmitting Western values to the Soviets. However, Akhromeyev was clearly quite inspired by his visits with Crowe. In the United States, Akhromeyev was received jubilantly by a range of civil societies groups (like a Chamber of Commerce dinner in Austin) and many ordinary Americans approached him to personally thank him for the visit and congratulate him for helping lead liberalization (Crowe Jr. 1993). Akhromeyev was keen to reciprocate when Crowe visited Russia. Akhromeyev looked on approvingly while an old woman who survived the siege of Stalingrad embraced Crowe and wept when he confirmed to her that he did not believe there would be another war (Crowe Jr. 1993). These events built trust between two important international security actors and thereby created an important conduit between the national security establishment of each state and the heads of government. Powerful legislators recognized Crowe's crucial role as a go-between with the Soviets and Sam Nunn reached out to Crowe to confer on the internal politics of the USSR in late 1991 (Crowe Jr. 1993, 297). Similarly, Akhromeyev promised to tell Gorbachev "everything" that Crowe discussed with him from the outset and Crowe immediately reported back to senior defense and White House officials on key aspects of the exchanges (Crowe Jr. 1993). Simply because the Soviet Union was roiled by political turmoil and finally collapsed, does not mean that these exchanges were fruitless. Indeed, the personal warmth between these two men—and those in their respective entourages—likely had a positive impact on how the Soviet Union ultimately dissolved. Akhromeyev's decision to participate in the coup points less to the failure of defense diplomacy in transmitting Western values then it does the overall sense that he was a man out of time who felt that he

[65] Shortly after the attempted coup, Akhromeyev killed himself.

no longer fit in his own society with little option other than to take his daughter's advice and "get out of the way." (Crowe Jr. 1993, 296–97)

The diplomatic opening provided by the unprecedented exchanges between the US CJCS and the USSR Chief of the General staff helped stabilize the military-to-military relationship on both sides during this tumultuous period while also providing a crucial channel for diplomatic intelligence back to both capitals. By the time of Crowe's second visit to Russia, his term as CJCS expired and he retired from the military. He participated in that visit less as a private citizen and more as an emissary for the Bush administration taking with him a large contingent of Russia hands from the Rand corporation to observe and report on the trip (Legro 1990). It was not unusual for a former flag officer to turn diplomat, but it was unusual for his diplomatic practice to begin while in uniform and not after.[66]

Crowe's exchanges with Akhromeyev were examples of pure diplomacy. True, there were a few demonstrations of military capabilities during each visit—tank exercises, missile demonstrations, aircraft carrier drills—but these were little more than martial window dressing for the key aim of the exchanges. That is, the military aspects were a vehicle through which the two leaders could discuss politics, international and domestic. With VCJCS Gen. Herres "minding the store" in Washington, Crowe was able to dedicate an enormous amount of time to shooting the breeze with Akhromeyev. Not only did these two develop a close relationship, but they also established a precedent for their respective governments and militaries to consider the military's role in diplomacy. Each of them exposed their deputy service chiefs to the exchanges to acculturate the next generation of senior leaders to diplomacy and politics ensuring that the experience of the exchanges grew into something more permanent in the future (Akhromeev 1987). Additionally, through the newly established interagency working group (IWG) to

[66] Former generals and CJCSs were not uncommon as Secretaries of State. George C. Marshall and Maxwell Taylor both previously made the switch as would Colin Powell. Crowe himself would eventually serve as the US ambassador to the United Kingdom during the Clinton administration.

help manage the visits in the United States, the Crowe visits altered the institutional landscape and position of the CJCS and Joint Staff creating new organizational momentum for just this sort of activity.

Gen. Colin Powell, CJCS 1989 – 1993

Crowe retired after his second, two-year CJCS term in September of 1989 and was replaced by an old Washington hand, Colin Powell. Powell's selection for Chairman appeared to surprise many who, like Crowe and Powell himself, assumed that Powell was too junior and that Air Force general and then-VCJCS, Gen. Robert Herres, would be the more obvious choice (Crowe Jr. 1993; C. L. Powell and Persico 1995). Not only had his experience as Vice Chairman trained Herres for the CJCS position, but it was also the "air force's turn" for the Chairmanship (SASC 1989b).[67] Skipping the air force and returning to the army required political consideration by civilian officials rather than just the obvious "next-man-up" mentality of the department.

This decision proved monumental. While it is true that Goldwater-Nichols created institutional pressures that favored defense diplomacy, Colin Powell was a unique figure in many ways whose personal agency was important to the development of this phenomenon. Powell's tenure as CJCS witnessed more than his share of momentous historical events which provided considerable opportunity to him—as a dynamic Chairman—to steer toward his desired goals (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). He led the military through a controversial and enormous downsizing, the "don't ask, don't tell" debates, the American military campaigns in Panama (Operation JUST CAUSE) and Southwest Asia (Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM), and most significantly, the end of the Cold War. His term also marked the beginning of the definitive era for the development of defense diplomacy. Powell was instrumental in personally promoting and developing the JCTP and similar programs. During an era when so much of the military was facing budget cuts, Powell ensured that defense diplomacy gained. This section will describe the important and unique aspects of Colin Powell as an individual and how these affected the

[67] Customarily, the Chairmanship rotates amongst the services. Given the highly contingent and political nature of the position, this is a rather weakly maintained custom but, nevertheless, the Air Force appeared in-line for the Chairmanship after Crowe's tenure.

development of defense diplomacy as well as the structural mechanisms of the post-Goldwater-Nichols chairmanship that did so as well. Together, these dynamics provided the overall tendency toward and the potential for a program like the JCTP to blossom.

Crowe and Powell were well-known to each other and worked together closely when Powell served as the National Security Adviser in the late Reagan administration while Crowe was the CJCS. Given his experience on Reagan's NSC, Powell was close with key figures in the Bush administration including the President (with whom he once shared an office). He remembered the Bush foreign policy team as "old friends" saying, "We had all worked with each other in different capacities, so we knew each other. This was a gang of professional killer angels. We all knew each other, we knew what each one of us thought, we knew our strengths and weaknesses and Bush would let us argue in front of him." (C. Powell 2011, 12) Indeed, Powell was likely closer to members of the Bush administration than he was with many of his peers in the service. His time in Washington stretched back to most of the 1980s as military adviser to both of the highest-ranking civilians in the defense department.[68] Throughout the decade, he only spent brief periods away from Washington in leadership/command positions and these tours seemed strategically designed to quickly advance his career and return him to the capital.[69]

Powell would acknowledge that he was certainly the beneficiary of a certain preferential treatment and was keenly sensitive to the charge of being a "political general." (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995, 261, 305) The accusation stung and he would remind people that "if they take a hard look they will find that I was a pretty good infantryman for 15 or 20 years" and that it was not until he was a brigadier general (one star) that his career took on a political trajectory (C. L. Powell 1998, 47). Further, Powell

[68] Powell served as military aide to Deputy Secretary of Defense (and future Secretary) Carlucci and to Secretary of Defense Weinberger.

[69] Powell served a short—and not entirely successful—assignment as the assistant division commander of the 4th Infantry Division in Colorado and an extremely short tour (five months) as the commander of the army's 5th Corps in Germany before being spirited back to the White House to serve as the Deputy National Security Adviser. His performance as a one star assistant division commander, as seen through his official fitness reports was, as he put it, "damning"; he felt that one star assignment would be the coup de grace for his career (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995, 261–63). Yet, via intervention from senior Army officers and civilian officials, he was placed in a subsequent assignment to earn a second star and then a third without any of the expected command assignments.

remarked that political generals were quite common in American military history and that his career was more conventional than many of them. He noted with pride that he "had more command than Marshall or Eisenhower did." (C. L. Powell 1998, 47) His time with Secretary of Defense Weinberger (and Frank Carlucci) however, made him a known commodity to the Reagan administration and he was placed in key billets that allowed the Army to continue to promote him even if he held far fewer traditional prerequisite command assignments on his way to the top.[70]

Powell acknowledged that his connections and political acumen had something to do with the Reagan administration's desire to see him successful (C. L. Powell and Persico 1995, 445). Powell was direct about the role of a political sensibility for a military officer. He would insist that,

> I was supposed to provide military advice for the purpose of solving a political problem. So I had to understand the politics of a given situation and try to understand all the pressures working against the president and the secretary of defense, who was also a political figure. I had to not just sit there as a nice clean Mr. Military Man[.] In order to give useful military advice, I think it was incumbent upon me to understand the entire political environment in which he was selecting political goals. That is not crossing the line, that's just being useful. (C. L. Powell 1998, 31–32)

Between his personal relationships with the Bush foreign policy team and his facility for marrying politics with policy, Powell became an obvious choice for CJCS. Members of both parties on the SASC were enthusiastic about Powell's selection and eager to confirm his nomination with more congratulations than questions.[71] Senator Warner summed up the mood by noting that though Powell was a deep selection and a politically "courageous" one, he was a welcome nominee (SASC 1989b, 612).[72] The substantive questions he received at his nomination generally dealt with the war on drugs. Democrats on the committee, especially, wanted Powell to advise for a more forceful role of the military in Latin

[70] Powell's unique career was more noteworthy for the military jobs he never held rather than the political ones he did. He never commanded a division (two-star level) and commanded a corps (three star) only for a short time. He was also never a service chief nor a combatant commander, two four-star jobs that usually precede CJCS selection.
[71] However, conditions had shifted slightly by Powell's renomination for his second and final term two years later. By then Senator Nunn—chairman of the SASC—held his confirmation for reasons Powell describes as essentially sour grapes over the fact that he (Nunn) had been on the "wrong side of the Iraq war" and that his ambitions for higher officer (Nunn hoped to be Secretary of Defense) were dashed. (J. R. Locher 2004; C. L. Powell 1998)
[72] Colin Powell was the first African American, the first ROTC graduate (not West Point), the first officer to have never commanded a division, and the youngest man to have been selected for the Chairmanship. His resume still stands out as non-traditional in these ways as compared to his successors.

America and along the US southern border. Republicans meanwhile wondered about the precedent and restrictions of using the military outside of a declaration of war and for law enforcement (or law enforcement adjacent) tasks (SASC 1989b). Importantly, the SASC Chairman, Senator Nunn, went out of his way to remind Gen. Powell of the parameters of Goldwater-Nichols and that he was now statutorily the principal military adviser to the president, the defense secretary, the secretary of state, and also (informally) to Congress hoping to reinforce the notion that Powell should be offering his unvarnished opinions to each of those entities.

Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger confers with Maj. Gen. Colin Powell during testimony before the Senate Budget Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on Thursday, Feb. 8, 1985. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite) (Associated Press 2021)

The point of the foregoing exposition of Powell's resume is not merely biographical. It is to note that he had extensive and unique personal authority in the political world. He derived this authority from multiple sources. He had deep connections with key members of the Republican Party foreign policy establishment dating back to the early 1980s and moved effectively in these circles.

Powell also had a certain genius for bureaucratic maneuvering, and he deftly steered the joint staff to go about its work more informally, personally, quickly, and effectively than had been the case before his arrival. This style was especially well-suited to launching novel, small-scale initiatives like the

JCTP. For example, he had a penchant for limiting the paper trail and veto points on any given proposal, especially contentious ones. Instead, Powell would rely on slide presentations that would be hand-carried to and from meetings and presented at the desk side of the senior policymakers (Deverill 2022; C. L. Powell 1998, 16). He created a sense of urgency that allowed him to take punchy recommendations directly to the president and secretary without detailed considerations from the services. Describing how this worked, Powell said:

> The base force[73] was sold to the President of the United States without ever a paper going over on it. It was done by rapid turnaround analysis, 8x10 slides, oral presentations to the President, telling members of the Joint Staff that I needed the material right away because it had to go to the President…[Previously] the Joint Staff was not relevant and should have been. Then suddenly they were relevant. They saw they were supporting their chiefs and chairman with enhanced positional authority and influence, and they are now agile. They have a quick turning radius. They are moving faster than the civilian staff. (C. L. Powell 1998, 23)

He did this also with his recommendation to President Bush to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons (against the wishes of the other service chiefs) (C. Powell 2011, 9). Most importantly for this study, he used these same no-paper trail and verbal approval techniques to launch the JCTP as well. It was through informal, oral consultations that he would gain the approval to initiate the JCTP in the first place (Deverill 2022).

His political instinct and flexibility suited him particularly well to steer the military through a period of momentous political and institutional change at the end of the Cold War. These characteristics gave him confidence that his favored initiatives such as JCTP and the Base Force were in keeping with policy because they matched the political mood and need of the moment. He smoothed potential civ-mil friction points by offering politically informed rather than anodyne apolitical military options.[74] Whereas JCS actions had been previously known for their "ponderosity," Powell's term was characterized by hyper-relevance because Powell himself was hyper-relevant (Taylor in HASC 1983, 92). Thinking about

[73] The "base force" was Powell's concept—which was eventually approved—for a massive reduction in conventional US military following the dissolution of the USSR.
[74] Admittedly, Powell was more effective in this regard during the Bush administration than he was as CJCS for President Clinton where the administration's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy became a major source of civ-mil friction.

why he focused on providing useful advice he pointed to his resume and his exposure to the momentous international politics of the late 1980s:

> [It was] not so much because I was in the NSC, but because of what I saw—I saw the Soviet Union coming to an end. I ran five summit meetings. I was at the side of the President [Reagan] and the secretary of state negotiating the INF treaty, START I, CFE; I spent hours with Gorbachev. When I went to Moscow[,] I would be taken to a private KGB hotel with [Soviet diplomat] Dobrynin so he could try and give me insight as to how serious this was and that they were not playing a game with us. To see all that and to be witness to such a period of history for two years and then go back and discover that I am Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the consequences of that history were unfolding, fundamentally changed me. (C. L. Powell 1998, 46)

His personal relationships and long-experience in Washington gave Powell advantages as chairman that went beyond the Goldwater-Nichols increases in the CJCS's statutory power. Coming into the job, Powell brought with him enormous advantages in terms of public reputation, personal connections, and experience which all made it likely that he would be a forceful and consequential chairman. Adding to his personal power were the persistent rumors that he would seek still-higher office, including the presidency (Clines 1995; Matthews 1997).

That said, it is easy to overestimate the effects of Colin Powell's personal agency over JCS structure when it comes to defense diplomacy. Though Powell was certainly a "political general," his predecessor (Crowe) was a "political admiral" in his own right. Crowe remains the only CJCS to have earned a Ph.D. and spent far more time in Washington than one would expect for a naval officer.[75] Indeed, Crowe quipped that he could only be CJCS and did not have the resume required to be Chief of Naval Operations (C. L. Powell 1998). As discussed, it was Crowe who initiated the military-to-military contact program with Akhromeyev and Crowe who established the interagency work group to manage the Soviet/Russian contacts. Crowe did so via sly bureaucratic maneuvering—as described above—where he did not actually ask for permission but simply announce his new program (Crowe Jr. 1993). Moreover, it was Crowe who oversaw the evolution of duties on the joint staff described above that enabled the

[75] Crowe remains the only CJCS with a Ph.D. (Princeton, politics) and spent much of his career in policy assignments in Washington. Like Powell, many of these assignments included several "assistant to" jobs for senior military and civilian officials in Washington. Unlike Powell, however, Crowe was a regional combatant commander (twice) at SOUTHCOM and PACOM.

VCJCS to become more active on the NSC and the ACJCS to be more dedicated to the State Department. By the time Powell entered the chairmanship in late 1989, the joint staff officer quality had improved dramatically. Powell's joint staff had a "tight turning radius" not just because he demanded it, but because the officers there were of a higher quality than had long been the case (Wills 2016).

The end of the Cold War was also more clearly insight as Powell took office. The entire joint staff—indeed the entire world—knew major changes were afoot as they watched the unraveling of the SSRs, the toppling of Ceausescu in Romania, Tiananmen Square, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. By late 1989, the entire joint staff was well-apprised of the overall policy direction and approaches favored by the administration. President Bush delivered his speech on US support to Poland (and other central European democracies) in April of that year setting the tone for his administration (Bush 1989d). Powell would not enter the office until October. As political events in Europe unfolded, Powell needed to ride the wave as much as steer the ship. He could rely on the joint staff to move rapidly to respond to these developments and for them to do so in the style he preferred: quick presentations, slides (not memos), and verbal approval. This is a case where structure, agency, and (of course) contingency, each mattered a great deal. Powell inherited from Crowe an institution that was already evolving toward more political relevancy and more diplomatic engagement. Powell entered the chairmanship well-tuned to this environment (having crafted some of it from the NSC) and would thrive in it.

Powell also inherited the interagency working group that Crowe established to manage the slate of interactions between the US and Soviet/Russian militaries (Ulrich 1999). These engagements were designed during the Crowe-Akhromeyev exchanges, and the interagency working group was to be a clearing house for the rest of the US foreign policy establishment to come together and shape these exchanges (Ulrich 1999). During Crowe's term, the working group was highly personalized and focused on formal events wherein the chairman himself would serve as a diplomat with the Soviets (Cossaboom 1997). With the precedent established for military-to-military contacts by Crowe and the interagency working group model already deployed, the JCS had a model to follow for similar exchanges in Eastern

Europe. Powell relied on this structure to (re)build the IWG for Eastern European Military-to-Military Contacts. Powell could not outpace the political environment, however. The evolved IWG was largely dormant from its founding in the fall of 1989 to its first meeting in August 1990 out of fear that this program would get ahead of the US-USSR relationship (Deverill 2022). Rather than setting and addressing general policy guidelines to facilitate broad-based engagement, the Eastern Europe IWG would, in its early days, simply respond to one-off inquiries and high-level visits by very senior, multi-star officials (Ulrich 1999).

Echoing the demand-side appetite for defense diplomacy in central Europe, two events served as catalysts for CJCS Powell to expand the contacts. They were the Red Army's accelerating withdrawal from Europe (refer to Table 6 above) and the August 1991 failed coup in Russia.[76] Once complete or irreversibly underway, the USSR military withdrawal provided the political space in which the United States could engage with former Warsaw Pact militaries on a deeper (and more junior) level without insulting the Soviets (Cossaboom 1997). The far greater obstacle to expanding the military contact program was the ever-present fear that Gorbachev would be deposed and that Russia would descend into chaos. When that nightmare scenario arrived in August 1991, it sent shockwaves through the American foreign policy community.

Powell became convinced that the situation was tenuous and that a peaceful end to the Cold War was not a foregone conclusion. Powell enthusiastically championed military-to-military contact as a tool the military could use to contribute to the most pressing foreign policy issue of the day. Over the winter holidays between 1991 and 1992, Powell directed his staff to develop a formal proposal for military contacts with the NIS (Cossaboom 1997). Though he had already gained informal approval to execute these contacts, Powell determined that he needed formal documentation to drive the inter-agency process

[76] For more information on the political, social, economic, and logistical aspects of the Soviet military withdrawal from Europe see *The Withdrawal of Soviet Troops* edited by Meißner and Morre (Meißner et al. 2021). Each chapter highlights the highly individual characteristic of the negotiations between the states and the USSR, but also the manner in which this movement became a cascade. Moreover, this volume demonstrates the high degree of agency of individual states in negotiating their own freedom with their fading imperial occupiers.

(Deverill 2022). The resulting concept paper outlined eight objectives for the proposal focused on a broad program of liberalization (see Table 9). After the coup, Chairman Powell sent a message to the EUCOM commander (Army Gen. Galvin) outlining his goals to formalize and mature military engagements with European states (Ulrich 1999, 52). Powell determined that "all contacts were good" and told Gen. Galvin he hoped to create "something akin to a military peace corps" (Ulrich 1999, 54). Powell believed that if the US military could develop relationships with these democratizing countries, then those relationships might help to steady these shaky new democracies.

Table 9. Joint Staff J-5 military contact program objectives (Cossaboom 1997, 9)

1) To promote the development of non-political military forces owing loyalty to a lawful constitution and accountability to democratic civilian leadership.
2) To restructure forces for legitimate defensive needs.
3) To remove the use of military force from the political process.
4) To instill respect for human rights and the rule of law.
5) To enhance public respect for the military within the society.
6) To expand cooperation/contacts between the armed forces of all nations.
7) To promote a democratic, free-market economy.
8) To enhance understanding of US values and way of life, and to engender support for US positions in international forums.

With the concept paper in hand, Chairman Powell directed the Joint Staff to work closely with other key stakeholders in Washington and the EUCOM staff as well. Initially, this was limited to the defense enterprise—the Joint Staff, the Services, OSD, and the Defense Security Assistance Agency—but was soon expanded to include State Department officials from the appropriate regional offices (Cossaboom 1997). This planning and coordination process created a sense of shared understanding and buy-in within the US government. By including the State Department in planning this concept, Powell was able to levy some "supply-side" pressure on Foggy Bottom that would correspond to the "demand-side" pressure it was already receiving from American ambassadors and the foreign countries themselves (Deverill 2022).

This entire process occurred at the level of the Joint Staff with very little involvement from anyone in the White House other than the verbal approval to proceed (Deverill 2022). At this point in late 1991, the White House had its hands full. Operation PROVIDE COMFORT was beginning to protect

Kurds and Shia Arabs from reprisal attacks with a US-led no-fly zone over much of Iraq. President Bush was also in the middle of a difficult re-election campaign while attempting to manage a sluggish economy and continued fears of Russian disorder. When the President did become involved, it was rather obliquely and in a way that only bolstered the program. On April 1, 1992, while at a G-7 summit in Munich, President Bush announced a plan for a large-scale increase in aid to Russia and the NIS ($5 billion) and an increased contribution to the IMF ($12 billion).[77] Bush's G-7 announcement generated even more momentum for CJCS Powell's initiative by encouraging the interagency community—especially the state department to back initiatives designed to bolster the new democracies of Europe (Cossaboom 1997). This dynamic mirrors what Amb. Simons recalled as ambassador to Poland where he began receiving representatives from across the executive branch to assist with European democratization even before official policy had instructed them to do so (Simons Jr. 2005). The policy was divined through speeches and remarks by the President and thereby breathed life into programs such as the JCTP.

Now that the program seemed even more synchronized with US policy, the IWG and the DoS worked quickly to implement it. On April 22, 1992, the Joint Staff issued a Chairman-approved charter for the military contact program including five policy guidelines listed in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Military-to-Military contacts policy guidelines (Cossaboom 1997, 10)

1) Promote positive long-term relationships.
2) Encourage the move to a civilian-controlled military.
3) Establish contacts at the junior-officer level.
4) Develop bilateral programs roughly in parallel with each other.
5) Encourage similar programs to be administered by our friends and allies.

By May, the Joint Staff had streamlined the contact approval process by working with the IWG to minimize the degree to which EUCOM required permission to act (Ulrich 1999). The Joint Staff—at Powell's direction—sought to gain blanket approval for EUCOM to execute JCTP events if they fell

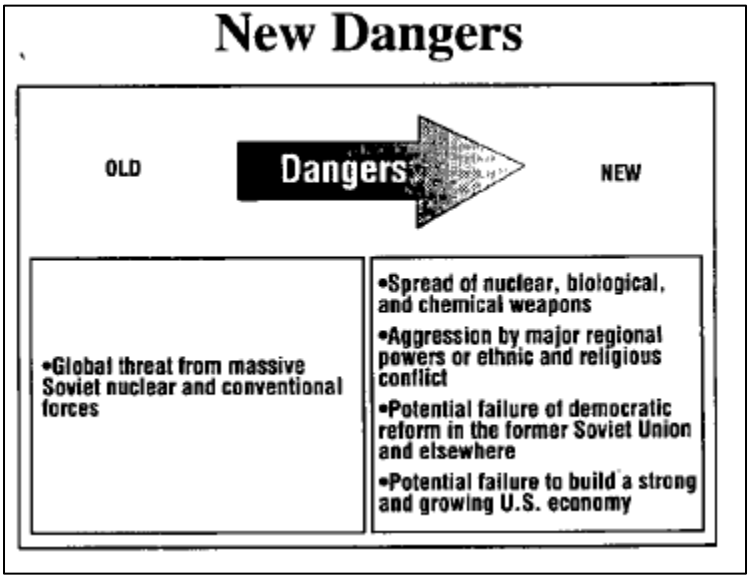
[77] President Bush made the announcement to blunt campaign attacks from Governor Clinton who was accusing the President of neglecting Europe. Bush personally favored foreign aid to boost democratization, but he was attempting a difficult balance as he tried to avoid dispiriting his own party who had grown weary of international commitments and spending. (Bennett and Ullmann 1992).

within an already-approved framework rather than seeking permission for each event (Cossaboom 1997; Deverill 2022). The Joint Staff designed the program so that EUCOM would be responsible for execution and management while the Joint Staff (and IWG) would provide oversight and direction. In particular, the Joint Staff greatly limited the number of veto points for any program essentially making the default response from the IWG for any proposed contact would be, "yes." (Deverill 2022)

Subsequently, the Joint Staff worked directly with EUCOM to develop the final "concept of operations" which was completed on July 8, 1992. In this final concept, Chairman Powell directed that the program be administered via an "in-country presence" whereby what would become the military liaison teams (MLT) would work directly with the partner militaries (Cossaboom 1997). This differed from how EUCOM first envisioned the program as a more episodic, event-driven program rather than one with an enduring contingent of Americans living and working in the NIS. The program was firmly underway by May 1992 when Powell informed Gen. Galvin that the IWG approved the plan to station MLTs in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia (Cossaboom 1997).

To complete the program's launch, Gen. Powell leveraged new funding tools which stemmed from the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The JCTP would not have been possible without the "CINC Initiatives Fund" which first appeared in the fiscal year 1989 National Defense Authorization Act and was modified in 1990. CJCS Powell knew that the fund had been slashed by $15 million after it went largely un- and poorly used in its first year under his predecessor. Powell almost certainly felt the pressure to use, or lose, this important funding (and authority) line (Deverill 2022; Inouye 1990). The CINC initiatives fund was crucial in making the JCTP possible. Without this flexible funding line, EUCOM could not have afforded the program without significant cuts to existing programs. The CINC initiatives fund derived directly from the 1980s defense reforms and represented an express desire on behalf of Congress to cut OSD and the services out of the decision-making process for flexible funding for regional commanders and the chairman. In this instance, it worked as intended and greatly empowered the chairman to launch his preferred policy initiative.

Powell remained an ardent champion of the JCTP throughout his time as chairman. Less than a month before his term expired and he retired, Gen. Powell stood in the Pentagon briefing room alongside Secretary of Defense Les Aspin to present to the Nation the results of the "Bottom-up Review." The review was intended to recalibrate the US defense and security strategy in light of tight financial realities and the end of the Cold War. Aspin spoke of the "Four Dangers" facing the United States (Aspin 1993).



The "Four Dangers" enumerated by Secretary of Defense Aspin in the 1993 "Bottom-Up Review" (Aspin 1993, 1)

During his portion of the presentation, Powell emphasized the need to rethink what the US military was for and singled out the JCTP as an example of the future of the US military. He told the audience:

> We are doing democracy activities. You find men and women of the armed forces around the world sort of working with our friends who want to learn from us. One of my great examples is we have an Army chaplain who is working with the Czech Republic in helping them put together a chaplain—a religious program for their armed forces—show them what we do to provide for the spiritual well-being of our armed forces. Those types of things will take on greater importance. Why?...to help preserve democracy[.] Our forces in Europe that are providing forward presence are spending more and more of their time traveling into the nations of the former Warsaw Pact to teach them, to learn from them, to exchange experiences and to help get them to understand the role of the armed forces in a democratic system. (Aspin and Powell 1993)

In one of his final public appearances as Chairman, it is fitting that Powell showcased a program he had done so much to initiate and sustain. The assembled media audience asked many tough questions about the bottom-up review, but none on the role of the military in Powell's "democracy activities."

Instead, they focused their questions on the size and cost of the force, questions of being a global "supercop," and puzzling over just how many major regional conflicts the United States should be ready to win at any moment (Carroll 1993). The wisdom of "democracy activities" and military-to-military contacts seemed obvious and elicited no concern from the press. Years later, Powell continued to be closely associated with the program with JCTP officers referring to it in their official correspondence and promotional materials in personalistic terms (Deverill 2022). When the EUCOM J5 published an "info sheet" on JCTP in 1994, it noted that the program was, "General Colin Powell's response" to the "yearning for knowledge of democratic processes and institutions [among the emerging democracies]." (EUCOM J5 1994, 1)

As CJCS, Powell was instrumental in developing the JCTP. He was uniquely capable of launching new initiatives given his personal and reputational power in the Bush administration, but he was substantially further empowered via the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. In particular, the JCTP was dependent on a chairman that was close to the White House, close with the COCOM, and independently powerful. Each of these depended upon the statutory, fiscal, and normative fruits of Goldwater-Nichols.

CJCS Powell discussed "democracy activities" as he presented the Bottom-Up Review. September 1, 1993 (Aspin and Powell 1993)

US European Command (EUCOM)

Powell's championship of the JCTP in Washington drew upon ground-level efforts at EUCOM. While it is difficult in some cases to determine which events preceded others, it is clear that the EUCOM staff and leadership were eagerly attempting to develop and mature this program, even before the August 1991 coup. One needs to look little further than the fact that the program was originally named the "EUCOM Assistance Program" or EUCAP before it was rebranded as JCTP before its 1992 launch (Cossaboom 1997). Table 11 below lists selected key EUCOM events in the JCTP creation chronologically. A glance at the table reveals quickly that this effort was as much "bottom-up" (from within the combatant command) as it was "top-down" (from the CJCS). It was a coalescence of interests and preferences from both the Chairman and the combatant commander that made this program possible.

Table 11: JCTP creation key dates

Date	Event	Remarks
June – August 1991	EUCOM J-5 visits HU, PO, and CZ to discuss expanding "staff talks"	Expansion on existing engagement; Intent on making talks more junior in rank
August 1991	EUCOM J-5 sends EUCAP concept paper to Dep. CINCEUR	Refined program before submitting to combatant commander (CINC)
October 1991	EUCOM J-5 briefs Gen. Galvin (CINCEUR) for EUCAP approval	Endorsed by J-5 (two-star) and DCINC (four-star) prior to submittal[78]
November 1991	IWG grants EUCOM authority to execute military-to-military contacts under pre-approved framework	Limits the amount of back-and-forth with Washington and encourages innovation in Europe
December 1991 – January 1992	Joint Staff J-5 codifies CJCS Powell's guidance into concept paper; approved on 14 Jan 92.	Established clear guidance from CJCS on the purpose and intent of the program.
February 1992	EUCOM Deputy CINC convenes three-day conference to discuss EUCAP	Ambassadors from HU, PO, and CZ all attended.
27 February 1992	EUCOM CINC, Gen. Galvin, sends proposal to CJCS	Final EUCOM EUCAP proposal with DoS (Ambassador) buy-in
01 April 1992	President Bush announced a general program (mostly economic) to boost NIS	Adds ideological and political momentum to the program.
22 April 1992	JCTP charter issued by CJCS Powell	Formally inaugurates JCTP
19 May 1992	First MLTs approved by IWG	HU, PO, CZ.

EUCOM had conducted bilateral military-to-military contacts dating back to 1988 including the included aforementioned exchanges of military historians and the Deputy EUCOM commander's visit to

[78] The deputy commander for European Command was long a four-star billet until the mid-2000s when it was graded down to a three-star in order to make room for four-star officer expansion needed for Africa Command.

inspect the Polish air force following the 1990 NATO London conference. The EUCOM J-5 (plans and policy) eagerly embraced these programs and began working on expansion proposals following the 1991 coup attempt in the USSR. Admittedly, it is not clear to what extent EUCOM may have felt pressure from the CJCS to expand the program, but from Cossaboom's history, it is obvious that even if EUCOM waited for guidance, they did not wait long (Cossaboom 1997). The EUCOM J-5 directed his staff to develop plans for bi-lateral staff talks with each of the Visegrad nations *prior* to the coup, in the summer of 1991, and planned to order the subordinate service component commands (US Army Europe, US Naval Forces Europe, etc.) to plan technical staff exchanges. This, in and of itself, represented an expansion of the military exchange paradigm that had been set by Crowe and Akhromeyev.

Following the August 1991 coup attempt, EUCOM pushed hard, alongside the Joint Staff to define goals and objectives as the Joint Staff. It was a EUCOM J-5 plans officer that drafted a concept paper for an expanded program including recurring, technical exchanges based upon the planning of a bilateral working group between the United States and partner nations (Cossaboom 1997). The final JCTP approval hewed quite closely to the EUCOM J-5 concept. The overall size of the staff at EUCOM dedicated to the effort (just short of 30) was close to the final authorization and the overall missions were close to what EUCOM conceived of. The only major change from the EUCOM proposal did come from the CJCS. This was Powell's encouragement that the program be centered around the in-country MLTs rather than solely around traveling teams (Cossaboom 1997). It is not surprising that such a suggestion came from Washington given that it would have seemed rather audacious to the EUCOM staff and likely beyond the scope of what they imagined possible. With the Chairman's endorsement and promise of funding, however, the investment required for in-country teams was possible.

EUCOM's role in initiating the JCTP went underappreciated by previous researchers. In Ulrich's account of the JCTP, she undervalues EUCOM's contributions and leans more heavily on the role of the Joint Staff. This is neither surprising nor particularly problematic. In a military command such as EUCOM where personnel turnover is at a fairly high rate, it is common that documents and institutional

memory would fall short of the needs of an academic researcher. This would be especially true for a new and novel program that was established in fairly short order on the backs of an ad-hoc team. Moreover, the labyrinth of bureaucratic offices may lead a lay researcher to look in one place and neglect another, especially when combatant command record keeping is invariably less airtight than the Joint Staff's. Demonstrating the degree to which Ulrich (mis)credits Powell with initiating the program, she noted that Powell wrote a "message to General John Shalikashvili…outlining his ideas to create a program akin to a military peace corps[.]" (Ulrich 1999, 54) While such a message was no doubt sent to Gen. Shalikashvili, it could only have been guidance from the Chairman reinforcing his intent behind an existing program. Shalikashvili did not assume command of EUCOM until June 1992 whereas the JCTP was launched in May on Gen. Galvin's watch. It is not surprising that a researcher would closely associate Gen. Shalikashvili with the JCTP. He was a Polish immigrant who quickly went on to serve as Powell's replacement as the CJCS. He was a prominent figure in American foreign policy during the 1990s and forged a close relationship with Madeline Albright (who was also an enthusiastic supporter of the JCTP) (Alloway 2022; Shalikashvili 1994). Nevertheless, the JCTP did indeed begin before he arrived at EUCOM.

The JCTP was mutually constituted by the Chairman and EUCOM. Though the historical record favors an overall weighting of CJCS Powell's role, this is partially the result of the natural tendency of official accounts to skew toward senior, more publicly well-known officials (like Powell and later Shalikashvili) as opposed to "worker bees." It is neither reasonable nor necessary, however, for this research to perfectly apportion credit to JCTP to either EUCOM or the CJCS. It is necessary instead to demonstrate that the program is a product of the Goldwater-Nichols institutions.

A review of the evidence indicates this. The earliest twinkling of the program came from Adm. Crowe's role in foreign policy. A role made possible by the emergence of a VCJCS to manage the mundane, yet extremely time-consuming aspects of the Chairman's job with regard to the budget process. The VCJCS could also easily engage with Congress, answer their queries and work with the OSD and the

Services. The Chairman, meanwhile, was freed for more travel and, in the case of Crowe, to forge a truly historic relationship with one of the most consequential figures of the late-Soviet era, Marshall Akhromeyev. VCJCS Herres attended all the NSC Deputies Committees meetings (as did his successor, Adm. Dave Jeremiah). The Assistant CJCS traveled everywhere with the Secretary of State. State and the NSC were now much more closely linked to the CJCS and vice versa. This provided Gen. Powell with more information and flexibility to shape policy the way he preferred: quickly and informally. Significantly, the "CINC Initiatives Fund" that Congress allocated as a means to reinforce their commitment to seeing the spirit of Goldwater-Nichols implemented was absolutely essential to launching JCTP in that first full year (fiscal year 1993). Without the CINC funds, EUCOM likely would have had to be more judicious and pennywise; it is questionable whether a program such as the JCTP would have made it off the drawing board without that funding line. Both EUCOM and the CJCS were instrumental in each of these steps and Goldwater-Nichols was instrumental in setting the conditions within which any of this was possible.

ASD(SO/LIC)

One final proponent for defense diplomacy came from a new position in the DoD created by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The legislation created a new senior defense official responsible for the creation and promulgation of policy to manage irregular warfare. Improving America's military capacity to manage terrorism, insurgencies, and peacekeeping operations was a key motivation behind the reform efforts, and this new position was Congress' organizational response to these needs. Because the United States seemed to be underperforming in irregular warfare, Congress—especially the SASC—was keen to create a new assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low intensity conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)).

James Locher was the first consequential ASD(SO/LIC) and was confirmed to the position in the same 1989 session which saw Gen. Powell placed in the chairmanship. In the position, Locher promoted a concept he called "peacetime engagement" wherein he advocated for an "active, flexible but lower-profile

political and military presence overseas." (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a) The phrase "peacetime engagement" was used relatively early on in the Bush administration including by President Bush in remarks at the Aspen Institute in August 1990 (Bush 1990a). When Bush originally used the phrase, he did so in an attempt to reconcile the fact that while a growing chorus wanted to see dramatic cuts to defense spending, there remained many security challenges even with the diminishment of the Soviet threat (Locher III 2022).[79]

Bush said that the United States required "a defense policy that adapts to the significant changes we are witnessing without neglecting the enduring realities that will continue to shape our security strategy, a policy of peacetime engagement is every bit as constant and committed to the defense of our interests and ideals in today's world as in the time of conflict and cold war." (Bush 1990a) In mid-1990, Bush was using peacetime engagement as an argument for continued investment in the military, even if it would be at a far lower level than during the Cold War. Bush's early mention of peacetime engagement mirrored his "new world order" hopes. As one analysis put it, Bush was hoping for "great power collusion" via peacetime engagement wherein major states would uphold the global order in the common interest of all peoples and states (Montgomery 1994, 24)

Locher and his team built out this early usage into a robust concept that went hopes for a new world order and became instead a more concrete "national security policy" (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a, 3). Locher's peacetime engagement strategy was a holistic theory of what the US military should do in a post-Cold War world. It would build coalitions and maintain a "proactive presence" throughout the world to provide "earlier threat warning, improved leverage, and influence with fewer resources, better preparedness for warfighting, if necessary, a head-start on building ad hoc coalitions, and an extended deterrent effect." (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a, 2). Locher's peacetime engagement proposal focused on the dangers he saw in potential disengagement. His proposal argued that adversaries—both state and non-

[79] In fact, Bush's remarks at Aspen when he spoke of "peacetime engagement" came as he learned that Iraq had invaded Kuwait.

state—would take advantage of the seemingly low-stakes provocations that would not elicit an American military response and therefore allow them to consolidate positions that would, in the aggregate, be inimical to US interests.

He argued that this "environment short of war" (ESW) constituted a domain for which the US government must develop doctrine. He noted that, "By far, most of the activities in the ESW fall in the 'diplomacy and support for diplomacy' mission area" and that the DoD did indeed have an important role in this space. In particular, he highlighted DoD's contribution to "build American influence through training, security and humanitarian assistance, foreign internal defense, civil military operations, peacekeeping operations, and disaster relief, among other activities." (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a, 16). Military engagement with foreign partners was crucial to the US ability to engage diplomatically because, "effective diplomacy presupposes the power to reward and punish." Diplomacy, he argued, "presupposes the existence of, and the will to use, all elements of our national power, particularly our military and economic might[.]" (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a, 16)

Crucial to Locher's peacetime engagement policy proposal was the notion that the Department of State should be elevated and better empowered. In his paper, Locher contended that while it might be tempting to use the military abroad to expand the scope of its activities into traditionally civilian sectors, that such mission creep would be a mistake. He argued that it would be better to "transplant" into American or foreign civilian agencies those characteristics of the military that make them "more efficient." Rather than simply having the US military manage the "nation assistance" programs for troubled countries receiving American aid, the civilian agencies should simply learn from the military how to perform those tasks better. The US military should instead, he argued, focus its efforts on increasing American influence and transforming foreign security services into more useful, constructive institutions that themselves are better placed to support their own domestic democratic institutions (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a, 21–25). In short, Locher argued that the civilian foreign aid agencies should

partially militarize themselves in terms of organizational efficiency and hierarchy while the military should partially civilianize in terms of a focus on state-building.

This is precisely the role assigned to the JCTP. By the summer of 1993, the concept had been circulated throughout the Clinton administration's national security council and to Sandy Berger, the national security adviser himself. This was when the JCTP was entering its most expansionist phase. It also coincided with the Clinton administration's decision to expand the US military mission in Somalia, deepen involvement in the former Yugoslavia, and expand NATO. In short, SOLIC's peacetime engagement concept matched the moment. It offered a unified approach to the post-Cold War that accommodated the need for overwhelming conventional superiority on the one hand while on the other advocating for the deployment and use of the US government's power in "low-level" conflicts. SOLIC's advocacy for this program was influential, but more importantly, it was emblematic. It was representative of a policy environment that was enabled by Goldwater-Nichols and then amplified by the end of the Cold War.

In this environment, offices like SOLIC made forceful arguments for the diplomatic use of the military in a wide variety of environments to accomplish the vague tasks of increasing America's "influence." As the ASD(SO/LIC), Locher would send these recommendations directly to the White House and to Congress. There, "peacetime engagement" was treated as an idea from within the Pentagon, but not necessarily as official policy (OASD(SO/LIC) 1993a). Therefore, the influence of SOLIC lay in the way it placed an influential actor at a fairly senior level of the Defense Department from where he could steer conversations surrounding American military strategy and diplomacy. As a Goldwater-Nichols institution, the SOLIC office's effective advocacy for engagement programs enabled the extension and growth of the JCTP and a broader agenda of defense diplomacy.

JCTP Proponents: Summary

The JCTP was a popular idea and did not have trouble finding supporters from a wide range of institutions and individuals. In particular, the diplomats responsible for managing American relationships

with central and eastern Europe were major proponents as were the governments themselves. The newly empowered joint staff and the CJCS developed the JCTP in a manner that both bolstered their institutional power and the overall role of the military in democratization efforts. Similarly, the combatant commander in question—EUCOM—eagerly developed and promoted the program as a means to advance American security interests in the region. Within the OSD, the newly minted ASD for SO/LIC promoted "peacetime engagement" and programs like JCTP as a means to guide American security policy in the post-Cold War era. Each of these different proponents promoted JCTP for various reasons ranging from the grand strategic (a desire to join NATO, for instance) to the more mundane (such as the desire to maintain the CINC initiative fund allocation from Congress). Many of these reasons, however, were shared. They commonly rested on a desire to engage with (or through) a particularly well-regarded institution—the US military—at a time when doing so seemed the best way to bolster democracy and security abroad. For these proponents, the program was both right, and at the right time.

Critics and detractors of the JCTP

The foregoing presentation indicates broad support for the growth of defense diplomacy via the JCTP during this crucial period of the late 1980s and early 1990s. While important constituencies of the Defense Department, the State Department, and Congress were all supportive of the program, this support was not universal. There was opposition as well and it is important to understand the sources and motivations of that opposition to understand why and how defense diplomacy grew during this era. In general, the opposition did not arise because it was thought to be a bad idea. Instead, the opposition was primarily motivated by more prosaic concerns over bureaucratic turf and status. A few key constituencies that were opposed, or at least lukewarm, to the expansion of military-to-military contacts deserve mention here to illustrate this point. They were the defense attaché community and "big State" (meaning the senior rungs of the State Department), certain members of Congress, certain corners of academia, much of the conventional military, and certain elements of the intelligence community. In truth, it is too much to label these as "opponents" or even "detractors." Instead, they were the braking forces that either provided a

counterargument to defense diplomacy expansion or they attempted to steer the JCTP in a different direction.

Attachés and the State Department

The defense attaché community was cool to the idea of military-to-military contacts. This may seem somewhat surprising given the mission of attachés was, and is, to facilitate effective military relations between two nations, but the types of contacts embodied by JCTP differed from traditional attaché interactions. Most importantly, these contacts differed because they were not conducted by attachés. They were instead conducted by general purpose forces or by specialists in a particular field (e.g., chaplains, engineers, air traffic controllers, etc.) as opposed to the trained diplomats within the attaché corps. Ulrich noted this tension in her early evaluation of the program writing in 1999:

> Parts of the U.S. defense bureaucracy that have traditionally played a role in political-military relations are reluctant to share their role or delegate substantial powers to the program. For example, defense attachés have not universally supported the program. The attitude of some of them actually undermines the effectiveness of the program and sends the signal to the host militaries that U.S. defense structures are not complementary or united in purpose. (Ulrich 1999, 68)

Because the attachés ultimately had a different chain of command than the JCTPers, they had a different incentive structure. The attachés worked for the ambassador, not the combatant commander. If the ambassador was supportive of the program, as was the case in many European states, then the attaché was generally supportive, even if only grudgingly (Alloway 2022). If the attaché was in a state like Russia where the military relations remained the preserve of high politics at the Secretary level, then the contact programs would remain limited and constrained.

Considering this question as to why military-to-military relations between Russia and the United States did not blossom to the same degree as they eventually did with central and eastern Europe, Mary Beth-Ulrich concluded that much had to do with sensitivity at high levels and perceptions of the higher stakes involved. She found “micromanagement” at “higher echelons with extensive Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) involvement with inputs from other interested departments” when Russia-US issues were in play (Ulrich 1999, 160). Hesitant to invite amateurish general-purpose forces into

diplomatic duties, attachés may have limited the expansion of the program to countries with more robust and mature diplomatic missions, like Russia. Furthermore, this hesitancy by attachés to enable on-the-ground coordination and interaction was noted with frustration by EUCOM. EUCOM wanted to do more, more quickly with all of the newly independent states as well as with Russia itself but found much of the approval for program initiation and scope retained at the Pentagon and—especially—within the IWG. There, the concerns of attachés as expressed through the State Department over-rode EUCOM's preference to expand the program further, especially when dealing with states in eastern Europe and the former SSRs (Alloway 2022; Deverill 2022; Ulrich 1999).

The defense attachés were not alone in their apprehension over the military-to-military contacts program. Going back to the earliest days of Adm. Crowe's visits with Marshall Akhromeyev, senior officials in the State Department were hesitant to allow the military, or some "okie" as Crowe recalled, to "get ahead of the political process" by establishing sub-political ties with these newly emerging, formerly communist nations. (Crowe Jr. 1993; Ulrich 1999, 54–55) These concerns were not unfounded. At the time that Crowe was hosting Akhromeyev, START negotiations were entering a final, delicate stage and the State Department was very much focused on this major security accord. As communist governments gave way to fragile democracies, the White House and the State Department were cautious. The Bush administration was extremely sensitive to Gorbachev's precarious domestic position and did not want to provoke a communist backlash in the USSR by unleashing too much in the way of Western democratization initiatives. As described earlier, the Bush administration was not alone in this concern and the host countries themselves were quite careful to avoid insulting Moscow in this manner. Consequently, the JCTP program remained relatively circumscribed. Though it was in demand, these concerns from the senior rungs of the administration and the State Department leadership prevented it from growing to the size initially envisioned by the CJCS or the EUCOM commander.[80]

[80] Gen. Powell and Gen. Shalikashvili (EUCOM commander) had hoped to expand the program to approximately 50 permanent American military officers per country to provide much larger permanent advisory teams. However,

Congress

In general, Congress was quite supportive of military-to-military contacts. Senator Warner lauded Adm. Crowe for spearheading these types of programs with his exchanges with Akhromeyev and Senator Nunn fought to extend the funding line to Gen. Powell to initiate the program via the CINC initiative fund (SASC 1987b; SASC 1988). But the JCTP did not enjoy unqualified support in Congress nor were its authorizations smooth and without controversy. Rather, the program was caught between different power centers in Congress with the Armed Services Committees initially serving as its authorizer and later the Foreign Relations Committees. The shift in committee oversight was one part of a larger tension within Congress where the House Foreign Affairs Committee sought to more tightly control the military aspects of foreign policy. As was the case with the resistance to JCTP from attachés, it was not that Congress was truly opposed to the program. Rather, within Congress, there were differences of opinion and preference on how to administer and manage such an initiative. Just as the attachés sought to retain control of their traditional province of military diplomacy, so did the foreign relations committee seek to (re)assert control over foreign affairs after sensing an encroachment from the SASC and the military (Cope 1995). Additionally, while many in Congress supported the program, it was also a bit of a "small potatoes" initiative in the grand scheme of the defense and foreign affairs budget, and as such it was easy to overlook.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act not only increased the foreign policy prominence of the military, but it also altered the foreign policy landscape of Congress. The legislation required the president to submit a national security strategy annually and it quickly became customary for the SASC to hold annual hearings on that strategy early on in each Congressional session. Senator Nunn sought to hold these "strategy" hearings in the January to February timeframe to foreground the committee's authorization work within an overarching global strategy (SASC 1989a). In their first few iterations, from 1987 to 1991, these

objections from the State department made this proposal untenable and it instead remained the small MLT-centered program (Alloway 2022).

sessions primarily focused on issues relating to US-USSR military capabilities. They focused on the potential operational and strategic impacts of various arms control proposals advanced either by Gorbachev or the Reagan and Bush administrations. However, second-tier issues also gained purchase in these hearings, particularly concerns about the military role in counter-narcotics operations, border enforcement, and democratization issues for both Europe and Latin America.

Related to all of these mission areas was a US Army training center for Latin American military officers known as the "School of the Americas" which became influential in the defense diplomacy discourse. This was a legacy institution with roots dating back to the Kennedy administration's efforts to modernize, democratize, and stabilize the Western Hemisphere. It was the source of significant controversy beginning in the early 1990s when reports emerged that a number of the school's graduates went on to participate in coups and other anti-democratic activities in their home countries (Grimmett and Sullivan 2001). The political rhetoric around this controversy in the United States was quite heated around 1993 and 1994. In an analysis for National Defense University, John Cope wrote of the public rhetoric:

> Initially opposition attacked the school's existence and the courses of instruction taught there, portraying it alternatively as a 'School of Assassins,' the U.S. Army's 'coup school,' and a 'School for Dictators'. After Congressional amendments to close it were soundly defeated in 1993 and 1994, critics modified their approach. One tack…[was] to suggest, 'It's not our impression the School of the Americas is training people to become murderers and a dictators. They don't need to come here to become thugs. But clearly the school gives them more prestige and gives them more power when they go home.' (Cope 1995, 17)

Though Cope was right that attempts to close the school initially failed, it is important to note that it also provided additional vigor to calls to reform the US military's international education system.

The School of the Americas controversy directly impacted the trajectory of the JCTP. As Congress allocated more funding for military-to-military contacts, they were leery of extending that funding directly to the DoD out of fear it would fund School of the Americas-like programs (Alloway 2022). Instead, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Dave Obey, was eager to redirect military-to-military contact funding from DoD to the State Department. In addition to being the HAC

chairman, Obey was also the chair of the appropriations sub-committee for foreign affairs. He wanted to ensure that military policy was subordinated to foreign policy and also to prevent future SoA controversies. In 1994, Obey shifted JCTP funding into the State Department's budget and out of the Pentagons (Stewart 1994). Additionally, out of skepticism of the SoA-like activities, Obey authorized an increase in military-to-military contacts, but only if it came along with a substantial (nearly 50%) decrease in IMET spending overall in that same year (Cope 1995, 66).

Rep. Obey wanted both programs, military-to-military contacts and IMET under his jurisdiction. Both were viewed with skepticism in light of the School of the Americas controversy. While both programs enjoyed support in testimony from Department of State and Defense witnesses during the appropriation hearings, they were still viewed as targets for cuts for appropriators. Because the military was successful in lobbying for an increase in the JCTP budget—even as it transitioned to the State Department account—Obey viewed it as essentially duplicative or interchangeable with IMET and cut the other as a result (Cope 1995).

As with the other constituencies mentioned here, this does not amount to Congressional "opposition" to JCTP, per se. After all, Congress is not a monolith. Rather, it demonstrates how institutional dynamics on Capitol Hill affected the stable reproduction of defense diplomacy. Defense diplomacy was eyed warily by certain members of Congress who were suspicious of defense programs that were diplomatic in nature and not under their jurisdiction. Furthermore, Obey's willingness to cut IMET in half in 1994 also demonstrates that purely defense diplomacy initiatives are fragile, especially in times of transition. The mid-1990s was a period where the defense budget was under significant downward pressure and there is little effective constituency for foreign aid programs to successfully lobby appropriators to maintain funding. Small, novel programs like JCTP faced headwinds when it came to the fight for inclusion in the defense budget. Instead, the appeal of JCTP and other defense diplomacy programs resided in their perceived strategic utility which was perceived to be more diplomatic than militarily.

What likely saved the program—really both JCTP and IMET—from being cut altogether was their explicit democracy-promoting nature. By the time Obey was making these decisions, Powell and Aspin had already warned that "dangers to democracy" were among the "four dangers" requiring the utmost attention for American defense strategy in their 1993 "Bottom-up Review" which was endorsed by the Clinton White House. Because JCTP, and IMET as well, were expressly described as "democracy activities" it likely endeared them to appropriators, even if they were hesitant to fully embrace programs reminiscent of the School of the Americas. (Aspin and Powell 1993) Nevertheless, this episode illustrates how Congressional committee organization affects defense diplomacy funding. Friction between authorizers and appropriators is common and the lack of a clear voting and contributory constituency for defense diplomacy made it vulnerable during the mid-1990s.

The Institutional Military

The military services were not proponents of the JCTP, but neither were they detractors. As with the State Department, their focus was elsewhere. With the Cold War over, the services were keenly aware of the budget pressures they would soon face. There was growing public demand for a peace dividend and a broad decline in military spending. Whereas the CJCS and EUCOM were eager to expand the military-to-military contact program, the services were effectively uninterested. The disinterest is understandable. The JCTP was a tiny program with fewer members actively participating in it than in a single infantry battalion (of which the 1991 Army had 108) (Webb et al. 1997, 107). Program funding for the JCTP came out of a separate CINC initiatives fund which bore no relevance to service operational funding. Oversight and planning for the program was split between the joint staff, the EUCOM staff, and the IWG and no input was required from the services. Consequently, there was little for the services to be involved or even interested in related to the program.

More importantly, the services had much more pressing matters to manage. At the time that JCTP was taking off, the services were preoccupied with prominent calls for their reduction as well as significant operational demands. The prospect of serious defense budget cuts loomed over the Pentagon's

congressional relations dating back to the mid-1980s when Gorbachev first started making his overtures for New Thinking. By 1989, CJCS Crowe acknowledged that cuts might be necessary to trim the US Government deficit but warned such cuts would cause modernization, readiness, and sustainability all to suffer (SASC 1989a, 430). From 1989 forward, President Bush attempted to walk a narrow path between meaningful force reductions in Europe—to match the burgeoning peace with the USSR—without dismantling NATO or the American military. Throughout 1989, and indeed throughout his presidency, President Bush found common ground with the leaders of Germany and all the Visegrad states that the United States did not "want to withdraw from Europe and come home" (Mazowiecki and Bush 1990c, 3) and that "post-unification Europe is best served by the U.S. remaining involved—with troops." (Bush and Goncz 1990) The pressure to cut was temporarily blunted as a result of the 1989 Panama invasion and the 1990/91 Gulf War, but the Congressional—and public—calls grew throughout 1991 and 1992 (Towell and Hager 1991).

The calls for reductions and reforms culminated in 1993 with Secretary of Defense Aspin's Bottom-Up Review (Aspin 1993). In this review, Colin Powell's "Base Force" from 1991 was reaffirmed with large-scale cuts to the military accompanied by a shifting mission focus toward peacekeeping and contingency deployment with less focus on garrisoning Europe. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had pushed hard for a similar, but possibly more wide-reaching "roles and missions" review in 1989, but was unable to get any traction behind this effort owing to several contingencies that required military deployments—Panama, Kuwait, Somalia, Bosnia—and the fact that Secretary of Defense Cheney at the time thought such a review was premature (Scowcroft 2000). Regardless of when the actual budget cuts began to set in, they overshadowed the defense authorizations throughout the Bush administration and into the early Clinton administration.

To the degree that the services were interested in the JCTP, they simply wanted to ensure that it was not a drag on already thin personnel. Ulrich found that the services were unable "to fully embrace the JCTP concept with funding and topflight personnel" and that this led the Joint Staff and EUCOM to seek

partnership with reserve and national guard forces for JCTP events (Ulrich 1999). These forces were appealing to EUCOM, Congress, the services, and the Joint Staff for several reasons. First, they were not "combat troops" in the sense that regular forces were and could thus be portrayed as less threatening to the Soviets/Russians (Ulrich 1999). Second, they could be funded on temporary assignments and by drawing on the Reserve Component (the Army national guard and Reserves) thereby keeping the program overhead costs contained. Finally, many Reserve Component JCTP participants had language skills coming as they did from various ethnic communities in the United States where they grew up speaking their central and eastern European mother tongue (Alloway 2022). With the National Guard Bureau willing to take more and more of the mission, the services were all too happy to throw their support behind the initiative without fully embracing it themselves (Cossaboom 1997).

The Intelligence Community

The American intelligence community had a somewhat conflictual relationship with the JCTP. As with the State Department and Congress, it far overstates the case to claim that the United States' spy services were "detractors." Rather, some elements of the intelligence community wished to use the JCTP in ways inimical to JCTP's core mission and the values held by its leaders. Consequently, the intelligence community did not resist the program but simply attempted to assert some influence within it, largely unsuccessfully.

The intelligence community had long been robustly represented in American defense diplomacy even pre-dating the post-Goldwater-Nichols evolutions. Defense attachés are the senior US military representatives to foreign governments throughout most of the world.[81] Their duties are flexible and wide-ranging, but intelligence is truly at their core. For this reason, they are assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) (DIA Office of Historical Research 2007) with responsibilities to collect intelligence information on foreign militaries and generally do so with the host government's full

[81] In countries where the United States has a substantial troop presence, the attaches may not be seen as the most senior US military representative per se but will remain a core member of the defense diplomacy apparatus.

awareness (Kennedy 2020). They also facilitate the exchange of defense intelligence information with their host governments and as such form an important plank in the United States' overt intelligence operations worldwide. As discussed earlier, defense attachés played a significant role in shaping the evolution and adoption of the JCTP, but largely in a restrictive manner. JCTP leadership, participants, and researchers recall that the defense attachés formed something of a gatekeeping layer to prevent conventional forces from veering too far into their diplomatic lane (Alloway 1996; Ulrich 1999). With regard to intelligence, however, the defense attachés were not concerned with JCTP because JCTP had few intelligence ambitions (really, it had none).

The program's lack of ambition when it came to intelligence gathering was despite the sustained interest in it by intelligence community members. Attaches were not generally interested in the JCTP for this purpose but the CIA and, in particular, US Army intelligence activities were (Alloway 2022). The CIA saw in JCTP a potential collection platform they hoped to leverage as a source of information on the Soviets/Russians, the NIS, and the transforming democracies of Europe. For the CIA, the JCTP represented an opportunity to rapidly extend its reach into these previously "hard target" countries and understand leadership intentions and domestic political, social, and economic dynamics (Alloway 2022). For the European-based US military, especially the US Army, JCTP represented a means to vastly expand their understanding of the inner workings of other militaries on the continent (Alloway 2022).

JCTP leadership stridently resisted cooperating with the US intelligence community. Recalling the rationale under which he forbade any cooperation with the intelligence community, Col. Lee Alloway—the JCTP program director in the mid-1990s and deputy director in the early 1990s—pointed to the need to preserve the integrity of the program. Alloway wanted his teams focused on the institution-building and the democratization aspects of the program and not on simply gathering intelligence. Collecting or even reporting passively gleaned intelligence, Alloway believed, would change the focus of every individual on every team. Going into each interaction, they would—he thought—become fixated on extracting some bit of information they were tasked to collect and not on the ostensible democratization.

Alloway recounted, “I had very strict rules on my guys that there would be no reporting. We don’t brief going in country with the intel guys because they could have you looking for things and whether or not you were overt about it, you know, it would very soon become obvious that we were an intel function.” (Alloway 2022)

Additionally, Alloway recalled, the JCTP teams were being watched.

> [W]e were very careful in all the teams initially…we always had counterparts—an officer and usually an NCO from *their* team. Plus an interpreter from their team who is almost always young, and pretty well-trained by the [partner nation] intel services. So, we always had somebody who is reporting on us. And I figured if we were there, there’s no way we can do any reporting without being compromised. (Alloway 2022)

Indeed, Alloway came to find out that in at least one instance, the local security services were spying on the JCTP team. The Belarussian military had provided them with a fax machine that passed all fax transmissions back through the Belarussian intelligence services while also passively listening and recording their office conversations. The team would joke that if they ever needed to pass a message to the Belarussian Ministry of Defense quickly, they should just go talk near the fax machine (Alloway 2022).

The intelligence community generally did not stand in the way of the JCTP or its expansion, except for one notable case. In Ukraine, in the late-1990s, JCTP was asked by EUCOM and the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to send in a team. The geo-strategic environment surrounding Ukraine was quite sensitive. Ukraine was more deeply and tightly connected to Russia than the other countries where JCTP operated and the American efforts to dismantle the Ukrainian nuclear weapons arsenal were a top national priority (Pifer 2019). As a condition of sending a team to Ukraine, the JCTP liaison team would have had to undergo sensitization to national-level collection requirements, to collect, and to report their observations. Alloway recalled, “I had a nose-to-nose with the embassy staff there and they wanted everybody to get briefed on the way in, out briefed, and to write intel reports, and I said, ‘we’re not doing that’ and they said, ‘you’re not coming.’ So we didn’t put a team in Ukraine.” (Alloway 2022)

The fact that the JCTP did not station a permanent MLT in Ukraine was not a mortal blow to American defense diplomacy for that country. It did however represent one source of tension that perhaps limited the program's growth potential. Had the intelligence community insisted on more access to the program in other countries, it is not clear whether they would have prevailed. However, it is clear that more institutional resistance from other government agencies, like the CIA, would have slowed the program's development and inhibited its proliferation. Their acquiescence or disinterest in JCTP was important to its development.

Civilian Critics

Finally, civilian observers including academics and commentators provided some occasional criticism of the program. This took on various forms. Some took issue with an expanded military role in civilian diplomacy. Others were impatient for the military to shrink so that the United States might capitalize on the post-Cold War peace dividend while Europe managed its own security. Still, others were generally supportive of the United States being active abroad and were supportive of democratization as a new task for the military but were skeptical of the JCTP as a means of achieving its stated ends of democratization. Their quibble was less about whether or not the military should do such a task and more about whether it was effective at doing so. The first two sources of criticism—the aversion to military diplomacy and the budget pressures—have been addressed within the earlier discussion on Congress' skepticism of the program and will not be addressed further here. Instead, it is useful to briefly address the substantive critiques that the program was ineffective.

Mary Beth Ulrich is cited many times in this research for good reason. She wrote the most detailed, contemporary analysis of the JCTP and came to some rather sharp conclusions on the program's worth. Ulrich argued that the JCTP was flawed from the outset because its aim of democratization did not match the means it employed. Namely, the JCTP planners at EUCOM, the Joint Staff, and the IWG did not consider deeper more structural ways the US military might shift the civil-military relations culture of a given country and instead simply provided training on haphazardly chosen non-combat tasks. Thus,

training on things like disaster response or air traffic control was too circuitous a route to go through on the way to a democratized military.

Ulrich argued that JCTP was "flawed on several counts" and that "American taxpayers did not get what they paid for. Funding was granted to the program with the assumption that it would directly support the *democratic* [emphasis in original] transition of the assisted states." (Ulrich 1999, 58) But it is doubtful that the military had such resident expertise at the scale sufficient to directly train and manage the acculturalization of a democratic ethos directly. Moreover, this is the task of primary school civics education and university-level discussions on political theory. It is not clear that either the US military or the partner nation was prepared to give or receive lessons in that vein. Instead, the JCTP managers choose to approach that goal obliquely hoping that all sorts of contact with the American military would simply rub off on their foreign counterparts. Additionally, the JCTP was not the only democratization activity. The Marshall Center's more senior-level and academic outreach to former communist military leadership and the IMET program was more expressly educational activities designed to inculcate their foreign students with an appreciation of Western-style civil-mil relations on a theoretical and policy level. JCTP, on the other hand, hoped to do so via osmosis.

In addition to what she apprehended as ineffectiveness, Ulrich criticized the JCTP for low-quality personnel. Citing the need for the US military to tap into National Guard and Reserve forces to provide the bulk of the MLT and TST personnel, she concluded that this demonstrated a lack of seriousness about the program by both the military and Congress. "Manning the teams," she wrote, "with reserve and guard personnel is more a function of bureaucratic politics and the reluctance of active components to offer their best and brightest for these positions than any particular expertise or talent that only these forces possess." (Ulrich 1999, 162) Ulrich correctly argues that active-duty personnel are better prepared and far more experienced in military matters, in general, than their reserve component counterparts, but she overlooked the unique capabilities of those part-time forces. In particular, they had language skills in greater density than did the active forces and they had primary responsibility for missions in the United States that are not

necessarily military in nature: disaster response, crowd control, and general support to civil authorities (Cossaboom 1997). These were the exact type of skills that many post-communist states wanted to develop. Furthermore, applying large numbers of active forces to the JCTP would have meant altering the extremely rigid—and largely Congressionally-mandated—career paths of a few hundred officers. The military has rarely been capable of making such accommodations and it is not surprising that it did not do so for a program that, while a CJCS priority, was fairly unimportant to the services which are responsible for the career progression of their personnel. What Ulrich dismisses as "bureaucratic politics" are better described as operational constraints around which the JCTP's promoters had to plan and navigate to accomplish their goals.

As Ulrich noted it was not at all clear that the JCTP was enabling democratization and it would have been very difficult to measure that even if the program was assessing itself effectively, which it was not. She appears to overstate its flaws, however, and forget that the program was intended to be improvisational, ad hoc, and aspirational (Priest 1998). At its early stage, it was one program among several that sought to use the military as a tool of diplomacy to achieve broadly valued foreign policy aims—the peaceful resolution of the Cold War, integration of Europe, growing the democratic community of nations, and enhancing American influence. Speed in its implementation was more valued than perfection in execution (Deverill 2022). As was discussed in the foregoing related to the CJCS's role in developing the program, the JCTP was not "directed" by any single civilian policymaker. It was conjured up mutually by EUCOM, the CJCS, and ambassadors (primarily) as one immediate way—among others—to steady the shaky democracies emerging from behind the Iron Curtain.

Reporting on the program around the same time as Ulrich's research, Washington Post reporter Dana Priest noted that "The program has had an entrepreneurial flair since its start in 1992[.]." (Priest 1998) It was an initiative launched to seize an opportunity. Funds were discretionary at the outset and came from appropriations with no Congressional assignment. Congress wanted the military (the Chairman) to spend these funds on immediate foreign policy priorities of the nation and supported the

military becoming involved with broader democratization efforts. These were a national priority; all oars were expected to row in the same direction even if they were not receiving specific guidance. In that environment, sub-par execution is not surprising. Ulrich's broader critique, however, is well-taken. The program may not have been a ringing success in its own right. Personnel assigned may have not been the very best that the United States had to offer but they were the ones available. Moreover, any shortcomings of the JCTP did not seem to dampen foreign partners' appetite for transitioning toward Western-style militaries. Instead, they deepened it as evidenced by the transition from JCTP to the NATO Partnership for Peace program (Alloway 2022).

Chapter conclusion

The JCTP represented the first major evolution in defense diplomacy following the end of the Cold War. Before the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, defense diplomacy was limited primarily to the sorts of IMET programs that had been popular throughout the Cold War. Much of this was focused on operational training and the transmission of useful, tactical, military skills. Following the lead of CJCS Crowe, however, military-to-military contacts emerged as a new sort of military operation, one that could be undertaken at multiple echelons to knit entire societies closer together. The JCTP led this transformation and was joined shortly after by the establishment of the quasi-academic regional study centers (e.g.: The George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies) and the expanded IMET programs which would focus on Western-style civil-military relations for soldiers as well as foreign government civilians (FAS 2003).

The JCTP was supported and reproduced via a variety of mutually reinforcing organizations, each responding to its own incentives. This constellation of JCTP supporters exemplifies what Thelen termed as "institutional complementarities." That is separate institutions respond independently to different internal pressures, perceived missions, and stimuli in ways that all reinforce some emergent behavior. Thelen noted that such circumstances are historically noteworthy because, as was the case with JCTP,

they required multiple institutions (host nations, ambassadorial missions, EUCOM, the SASC, the CJCS) to all row in the same direction. Writing of institutional complementarities, she said:

> The existence of these kinds of complementarities must be seen as an historic achievement of considerable significance, since it is clear that the various institutional arrangements that comprise any national polity or political economy were not created in a single 'big bang.' Individual components were forged at different historical junctures, brought into being through the action of different political actors and coalitions. There is no reason to think that the various 'pieces' will necessarily fit together into a coherent, self-reinforcing, let alone functional, whole. (K. A. Thelen 2004, 285)

Together, these complementarities provided the "mechanisms of reproduction" through which the JCTP was developed and initially promulgated. Mechanisms of reproduction are defined first by Collier and Collier in 1991 when they sought to explain the ways path-dependent institutional development occurred. They wrote, "These mechanisms of reproduction involve, in part, the fact that, once founded, a given set of institutions creates vested interests, and power holders within these institutions seek to perpetuate their own position." (R. B. Collier and Collier 1991, 35)

This chapter points to clear mechanisms of reproduction that inform the overall theory on the development of defense diplomacy. They are *CJCS and combatant command patronage*, *congressional support*, *foreign government eagerness*, *Department of State deference*, and *Department of Defense acceptance* (see Table 12). Some of these mechanisms rely more on inaction than actions as was the case with OSD and senior DoS officials remaining relatively ambivalent about the program. Others, the more important ones, rose directly out of the post-Goldwater-Nichols settlement wherein the CJCS, the COCOMs, and the SASC played a larger role in the development of and active participation in American foreign policy.

Table 12. Defense Diplomacy Mechanisms of Reproduction

• CJCS & COCOM patronage • Congressional support for peacetime engagement • Foreign government eagerness • Department of State deference • Department of Defense acceptance

This institutional change was not wholly unchallenged, however. Just as there were mechanisms of reproduction that made the shift likely, there were also "logics of change" that might impede institutional change. Thelen defined these as the "events and processes that might disrupt the stable reproduction…of institutions, and in so doing open up possibilities for change." (Thelen in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003, 222) The mechanisms that reproduced defense diplomacy were by no means impervious to these countervailing pressures. They had to overcome certain logics of change which in this chapter were shown to be the defense attaché community's instinct to protect their turf against the JCTP, "big State's" interest in marquee diplomatic initiatives, friction among competing power centers in Congress, disinterest on behalf of the military services, and skepticism by civilian analysts like Ulrich. Ultimately, these headwinds were not powerful enough to do so.

Put more accurately, these logics of change were weakly motivated with weak institutional complementarity between them. To disrupt the reproduction of defense diplomacy, the countervailing pressures would need to lock arms more tightly and doing so would require, most likely, new structural reforms to coordinate their efforts. The JCTP may not have been the preferred solution of some of these actors, but in general, ambivalence better describes their position relative to the program rather than detraction. In the face of strong support from powerful actors such as the SASC, the CJCS, the EUCOM commander, and foreign governments, the half-hearted skepticism from others did not provide much of a hurdle. Indeed, the case of the intelligence community demonstrates that if there were strong resistance to the JCTP—as there was in the case of MLT expansion into Ukraine—then the program's expansion was easy to halt.

Table 13. Logics of change

• Defense attaché protection • State Department leadership ambivalence • Congressional skepticism • Military services disinterest • Intelligence community coveting

The combined effects of these mechanisms of reproduction were that America's defense diplomacy developed into a "self-reinforcing sequence." Used by Mahoney, this refers to an outcome where, "initial steps in a particular direction induce further movement in the same direction such that over time it becomes difficult or impossible to reverse direction." (Mahoney 2000, 512) Not only did these steps generally all point in the same direction, but they also enabled the complementarities between these institutions. The military's diplomatic role became *expected* on behalf of Congress and the State Department's foreign service (ambassadors). Defense diplomacy became an expected part of the portfolio of American engagement that could be made to order by foreign officials.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Explaining institutional evolution is like explaining climatological variation. Both involve explaining current dynamics and processes through the combining, separating, and recombining of a dizzying array of factors. Whereas climatologists must account for a penumbra of physical characteristics such as air composition, water vapor, surface coloration, ocean currents, cloud structures, and so on, the social scientist studying human institutions must account for individual behavior, technological change, cultural attitudes, legal frameworks, and, when studying foreign policy, the same factors abroad. These are complex studies of complex phenomena, but they are not impenetrable. Just as the climate scientist may reach some conclusion with some level of certainty, so too can the social scientist claiming to explain institutional behavior and evolution. As applies to this study, the claims made are generally historical in nature. They explain the development, the well-spring, of defense diplomacy and point to the factors that continue to sustain it. This research does not, however, provide a high-confidence assessment of how this institution will evolve far into the future. Doing so would require a precise understanding of the complex interplay of strategic, political, technological, and economic factors that undergird all socio-political phenomena. Nevertheless, this conclusion will address questions about the future of defense diplomacy, and by extension, the potential future of American foreign policy. This conclusion will accomplish three primary tasks. First, it will summarize the key findings and takeaways from this research. Next, it will address the future of defense diplomacy with an eye toward its origins. Finally, this chapter will suggest avenues for future research, acknowledge shortcomings in the present analysis, and note remaining gaps in the historical record.

Key findings and takeaways

This research yielded a few key findings deserving clear restatement here. In particular, this project produced a middle range theory of American foreign policy that explains what led to and sustains contemporary defense diplomacy. Additionally, this research produced a few novel insights about the

inner workings of specific foreign policy actors in the United States that have gone underappreciated and understudied by previous researchers.

A configuration theory of defense diplomacy

The Goldwater-Nichols Act reconfigured key aspects of the US foreign policy enterprise and in so doing it created the conditions necessary for defense diplomacy to emerge as a habit of American statecraft. These new configurations of relationships, of organizational self-conceptions, and of tasks drove the institutional evolution of the military from being a tool overwhelmingly oriented on warfighting to one whose core missions also included democratization, state-building, diplomacy, and benign engagements. The evidence presented in this analysis indicates that the end of the Cold War was not sufficient to account for this new behavioral layer of the military institution. Indeed, had the CJCS not been so empowered and encouraged to undertake such initiatives, it is entirely possible that the military simply would have awaited its 1990s downsizing, focused on containing Saddam Hussein, and conducting peacekeeping operations as directed. Without the Goldwater-Nichols empowering the CJCS to steer the military toward novel and emergent goals, goals that the president had not explicitly directed but that Congress endorsed, it is quite plausible that modern defense diplomacy would not have emerged from this era. Indeed, some of the most commonly cited examples of defense diplomacy—the State Partnership Program, the Enhanced IMET program, and the Regional Security Centers —are explicit outgrowths of this intellectual lineage that envisioned the military as a soft power tool capable of democratization.

Congress did not intend for the military to become a more prominent diplomatic tool when it drafted the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. Nevertheless, the Act redesigned the structures within the national security enterprise which, in the aggregate, overdetermined the development of defense diplomacy. Goldwater-Nichols created the mechanisms that would be necessary for defense diplomacy to emerge and reproduce. The Joint Contact Team Program is just one—but one particularly illustrative and impactful—early example of post-Goldwater-Nichols defense diplomacy. This JCTP would evolve from a one-off, near-term response to the discrete problem of democratic frailty in central and eastern Europe

and soon become an all-weather, all-environment tool of American foreign policy mimicked and reproduced in each combatant command.

Defense diplomacy's mechanisms of reproduction are worth recounting here. *Congressional support*, specifically enthusiasm from the Armed Services Committees (especially the Senate's) plays an important role in dictating the outlook, preferences, and employment of the US military. Sen. Sam Nunn's admonishment to Colin Powell to start spending—or risk losing—the CINC initiative fund appears to have been a significant spark to the JCTP. Similarly, a few years earlier, Sen. Nunn and Sen. Warner's enthusiasm for Adm. Crowe's engagements with the USSR's Marshall Akhromeyev pre-dated the official approval for such visits and appear to have been important in convincing the rest of the foreign policy establishment to play along.

CJCS and COCOM patronage were closely interwoven with *Congressional support* and comprised a decisively important mechanism of reproduction of defense diplomacy. This point does not require much additional justification here, but it is important to emphasize that the CJCS and EUCOM were able to coordinate their efforts and preferences to develop a mutually desired strategy—military democratization in Europe—with little interaction with the rest of Washington other than a more-or-less "rubber stamp" approval from the interagency working group (Deverill 2022). The military services were generally uninterested in the activity and were happy to support so long as their support did not require much, at all, in the way of precious personnel, materiel, or organizational planning (Alloway 1996; Cossaboom 1997). The JCTP was truly joint, was truly a product of these two headquarters, and relied on the services for almost nothing.

Department of State deference and *Department of Defense acceptance* are the most subtle, but still quite important mechanisms at work in the development of defense diplomacy. For the State Department, military contacts were a small program of limited relevance. State did not oppose the program but was more interested in its other marquee diplomatic initiatives regarding arms control, non-proliferation, NATO evolution, and the diplomatic responses to the crises in Yugoslavia and Somalia.

Leaders at the State Department may have been skeptical of the military's capacity to promote democracy, but the JCTP was seen as one of many initiatives undertaken by other federal agencies to support democratization goals at the end of the Cold War. The department was willing to defer to the JCS—especially to Colin Powell—and to their ambassadors who were calling for such support. Similarly, at the level of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the JCTP was less a program to embrace and celebrate and more a small initiative that may or may not bear fruit, but of little consequence one way or the other. It does not figure prominently—or at all—in the memoirs of senior defense and government officials including Dick Cheney, Robert Gates, or Condoleezza Rice (Cheney 2011; Gates 1996; Rice 2011; Zelikow and Rice 1995). Moreover, it garners almost no mention—direct or indirect—in the oral histories of administration officials from the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Clinton administrations. Nor does it appear very often in NSC discussions except as background provided by the Joint Staff to NSC staffers. Rather than pointing to the insignificance of the JCTP, however, this paucity of references by senior officials indicates how quickly the program simply because routine, habituated, and expected. Rather than requiring the attention of senior officials, it was a routine matter for lower-level officials on embassy staffs and combatant command staffs to sort out. Its seemingly unremarkable nature also demonstrates how much of a CJCS program the JCTP was. It required relatively little support or interest external to the Chairman's office, EUCOM, and the country teams. The JCTP quickly transformed into both the State Partnership Program and the NATO Partnership for Peace program, both of which received far more notoriety than their progenitor. Because two heavyweights of American foreign policy, the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense were generally ambivalent to the JCTP, there was ample room for the newly Goldwater-Nichols-empowered CJCS to construct and implement his new program and elicit little outside interest.

The final mechanism of reproduction confirmed through this analysis was that of *foreign government eagerness*. The new democracies of eastern and central Europe were riddled with anxiety in the late 1980s and 1990s. Though optimistic about their future and delighted to be out of the Soviet

shadow, their leaders felt that authoritarian backsliding was a constant possibility. In the immediate aftermath of their transitions, they feared their security services, and to some (but much lesser) extent that their militaries might attempt a putsch to protect the status quo. They feared that the Soviet troops stationed in their countries either would fail to completely leave or would serve as a platform for Soviet/Russian influence until they were completely withdrawn to Russia. Finally, and most significantly, these states feared that democracy would not deliver the goods. They feared that their living standards would decline and that the people's initial joy over freedom would turn to malaise over economic recession. To solve these problems, these states relied on charismatic politicians that would woe American interest, attention, and investment in their countries. They eagerly courted Western, but especially American, attention and sought every opportunity to paint themselves and their national institutions as excited students of American liberal democracy. Following the United States military's performance in the Gulf War—and to some extent Panama—EUCOM enjoyed an unparalleled aura as an institution capable of teaching warfighting lethality and democratic civil-military harmony all at once. The newly democratic states hoped that by drawing closer to the West, they might assure their security through NATO membership and also improve their own domestic institutions through the application of American military traditions. The JCTP was a small step in this direction. A key finding in this research has been that though the program itself was modest, it represented the commitment of these states to democratic transition. This demand signal for American defense diplomacy remains underappreciated in the defense diplomacy literature both as a historical factor in its development and as a contemporary mechanism of its reproduction.

Combined, these five mechanisms of reproduction indicate a configuration of mutually reinforcing preferences and behaviors that developed and sustain defense diplomacy. These same factors could be applied to a study of other defense diplomacy repertoires such as large-scale multinational exercises, the IMET program, academic regional security centers, and even to the foreign military sales/financing programs. These configurations are interdependent representing the sort of "institutional

complementarity" that Thelen describes as being particularly important to institutional stickiness and lock-in (K. A. Thelen 2004). Their combination does not mean that American defense diplomacy could only be ratcheted in one direction. This habit of statecraft could easily fall out of favor and into disuse through changes in the security environment, changes in the configuration of power amongst these foreign policy entities, or through changes in the appeal (the demand signal) in foreign capitals. Alteration of defense diplomacy's foundation in any of these domains could certainly erode its appeal. However, this is unlikely barring a major crisis or international collapse in the prestige and reputation of the United States and its military. Given the high level of contemporary tensions between the United States and China, such a sea change in the policy environment seems possible, but not yet probable. Even still, defense diplomacy remains a favored tool by many small states antagonistic to China and therefore is likely to have a great deal of appeal as a means of bandwagoning with the United States with or without formal treaties (Mendee 2013).

Key US foreign policy actors worthy of further examination

Certain foreign policy actors emerged during this research as more significant than commonly thought of and also worthy of deeper historical (re)examination. These included both specific individuals and offices. Regarding individuals, three stand out. In particular, this research finds cause for closer examination of the tenure of Adm. William Crowe as the CJCS, Amb. Mark "Robie" Palmer, and James Locher.

Adm. Crowe was an enormously consequential CJCS and one who shepherded the United States military through important historical events. Crowe was the CJCS who did the most to adapt the Joint Staff to Goldwater-Nichols. He was the one who defined the relationship between the CJCS and the VCJCS, the one who evolved the duties of the ACJCS to be the State Departments' primary liaison, and to develop strategic "net assessments" to guide force development and employment (Crowe Jr. 1993; PL 99-433 1986; Rehome 2009). Most significantly, for this research, it was Crowe who dreamed up the idea of

serving as a diplomat to the USSR while CJCS and establishing a military-to-military conduit between himself and Marshal Akhromeyev. Crowe did this *sua sponte* over the apprehension of the State Department and with the ambivalence—and on some level unawareness—of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. These contacts were expressly diplomatic, and they created both a permission structure and a set of normative expectations about the types of diplomatic engagements senior military officers should engage in. From his tearful embrace with a Russian babushka who feared a war to his taking his counterpart to a Texas Chamber of Commerce dinner, these visits altered the way the Joint Staff itself thought about its role and the way the Senate, the State Department, and NATO considered the function(s) of the American CJCS. None of this is to deny the immense personal impact of Colin Powell, but his historical legacy has been exposed to sufficient scrutiny. For all the foregoing reasons, Crowe deserves a second look.[82]

US Ambassador to Hungary, Mark "Robie" Palmer, also emerged as an important figure in this research. Palmer appeared in a wide range of documents within the George H.W. Bush archives as a particularly energetic and effective ambassador. Serving in Budapest from 1986 to 1990, Palmer was the driving engine behind the whole-of-nation effort to democratize, liberalize, and assist Hungary. Palmer was an important figure pushing EUCOM and the Secretary of Defense for military-to-military engagement and sought to amass as many tools as possible from the entire US government and civil society to support Hungary during its democratic transition. One key shortcoming of this research is the lack of access to JCS archival material from the period under study. To overcome this, this analysis relies on recorded interviews, secondary sources, and other mechanisms to try and establish Palmer's exact role in promoting defense diplomacy. It is clear that he was one of the earlier—if not the earliest—non-

[82] Crowe also oversaw the development of Operation EARNEST WILL in the late 1980s where the Reagan administration re-flagged non-US oil tankers (Kuwaiti, mainly) as US vessels to allow the US Navy to escort them through the Persian Gulf and safeguard them from Iranian attacks during the Iran-Iraq war. This mission played an important role in ending that conflict, was coalitional (six NATO countries were also combatants) and was a source of significant controversy on Capitol Hill over presidential war powers. Any reassessment of Crowe's legacy must address EARNEST WILL and his role in shaping it.

military voices calling for military-to-military contacts, but the content and format of this request remain somewhat obscured without access to the JCS archival material (Cossaboom 1997).

One final individual worthy of additional study is James Locher. Locher is a bridge between the two primary phenomena under evaluation in this research: the Goldwater-Nichols Act and defense diplomacy. Moreover, Locher has played a leading role in driving considerations of major reforms of US foreign policy in the years since the reform's passage. In particular, he has led the "Project for National Security Reform" which sought to create momentum for a "Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency." (Locher III 2022) Specifically, that project recommended the creation of COCOM-like interagency structures to be stationed in various respective regions to act as foreign policy fusion centers. Though this project gained little immediate traction, it has been discussed on Capitol Hill and could well be the type of reform that remains simmering on the back burner until some new international crisis prompts a rethink of the American foreign policy establishment (PNSR n.d.; SASC 2015a). Knowing how Goldwater-Nichols's reconfiguration of roles, responsibilities, and power within the US military altered the foreign policy habits of the United States, it is worth considering the long-tail institutional consequences of such a dramatic reimagining of foreign policy as the Project on National Security Reform. Locher is therefore worthy of specific examination owing to his singular role in driving the Goldwater-Nichols reforms and for his subsequent work in suggesting sweeping changes to the US national security organization. If and when such a reorganization does occur, the intellectual histories of it will have to address his contributions.

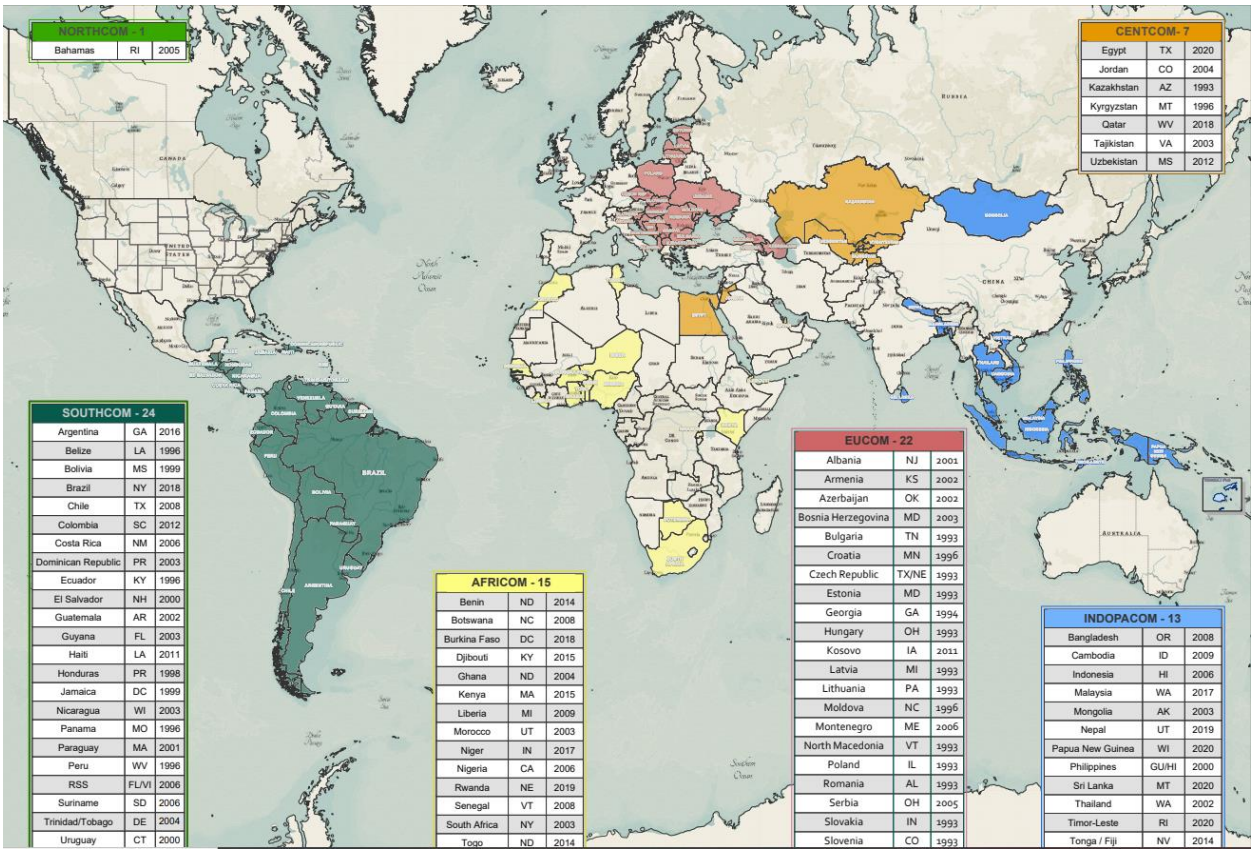
In addition to these specific individuals, certain institutions that were created or transformed by Goldwater-Nichols require further academic exploration to better understand the machinery of American foreign policy. Two positions in the Office of the CJCS emerged as central to the institutional history of defense diplomacy. These were the Vice Chairman and the Assistant Chairman positions. The Goldwater-Nichols' reconfiguration of roles and responsibilities within and around the CJCS was particularly impactful with these two positions—in addition, of course, to the Chairmanship itself. The VCJCS was

created out of whole cloth via Goldwater-Nichols fulfilling the desire of defense reform advocates and to the consternation of opponents. The Vice focused on the acquisition and intensive planning, programming, budgeting, and execution tasks which are time-consuming and central to the management of the Joint Force. Doing this and serving as the acting Chairman while the CJCS was traveling enabled much more travel and much more policy focus for the CJCS. Though no smoking gun was evident in this research as to what Colin Powell, or William Crowe, learned in their specific travels, the JCS archives (when available) will likely point to the importance of the VCJCS as a helmsman in Washington enabling the CJCS to survey the foreign policy frontier and craft new initiatives. Additionally, the VCJCS was a permanent, senior plug in the NSC Deputies meetings. These two immediate impacts of Goldwater-Nichols appear to have been hugely consequential in pushing the CJCS toward a more here-and-now orientation even when foreign policy issues were not clearly military ones.

Similarly, the ACJCS position was an important and understudied outgrowth of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The ACJCS position pre-dated Goldwater-Nichols, but its role and function changed as a consequence of the legislation. Prior to the arrival of the first VCJCS, the ACJCS was the Chairman's "outside man" for all coordination with all other US Government foreign policy agencies. After the VCJCS arrived, however, much of the routine interaction between the interagency community was handled via the NSC channels through the Vice's office on the joint staff. The three-star ACJCS became overwhelmingly focused on the military advice needs of the Secretary of State. Because the Goldwater-Nichols Act made the CJCS the principal military adviser to the NSC (in addition to the president and secretary of defense), he needed a way to provide that council to key members of the NSC. The VCJCS did that via the deputies meeting, but the ACJCS did that for the most important foreign policy actor in the US Government, the Secretary of State. ACJCS traveled everywhere with the Secretary of State and served as a high-speed and effective two-way conduit between the seniormost military and diplomatic arms of the US Government.

Finally, the National Guard's State Partnership Program is in need of systematic, qualitative evaluation. It is the descendant of the JCTP but has far outgrown its humble roots in Europe. As described above, this program routinely transcends the confines of military-to-military interaction and has led to diplomatic, academic, and commercial exchanges with foreign countries below the level of the US federal government (Boehm, Nestell, and Stearns 2014; Cutler 2021; Kapp and Serafino 2011; Maryland Estonia Exchange Council n.d.; Pierce 2017; UW 2012). The degree to which the SPP has become a transmission belt for American values, behaviors, and trade with foreign states is an important question. So too is the degree to which the SPP delivers specific tangible benefits to foreign countries in general or certain foreign leaders in particular.

State Partnership Program placemat in 1996 (Alloway n.d.).



State Partnership Program as of 2023 (NGB J-5 2022)

Notes for future researchers

This research affirms the necessity of analytical frameworks for historical research. To prevent facts, people, and events from washing over a researcher as "one damn thing after another," a researcher must utilize theoretically derived analytical frameworks to make sense of the history they are wading through. Lessons from this analysis suggest these frameworks should be partially pre-conceived and partially emergent from the study at hand. For instance, this project began with an intuition that Goldwater-Nichols was not about diplomacy but did not start with a strong opinion on what did motivate Goldwater-Nichols other than what conventional wisdom describes. The framework applied was one that evaluated the roles of key actors and institutions regarding defense reform, discerned their motivations, and then aggregated those motivations into categories that were necessarily clear and significant to be of analytical use. Here those became responding to strategic and operational failures, balancing the USSR,

and attempting to fix fiscal waste in the DoD. As relates to the JCTP and post-Cold War defense diplomacy, the analytic framework required a pre-conceived theory in order to search for the causal process observations that would confirm or deny the hypothesis. In this instance, this involved searching for specific behaviors by those implicated by the *mechanisms of reproduction* to determine if those individuals or institutions were functioning as predicted by the theory.

Coda

The use of the US military as a non-combat, non-coercive, and cooperative tool of soft power is well-established as a core purpose of the armed services today (Reveron 2016; Winger 2017). This project did not attempt to provide yet more evidence or examples of this phenomenon, but rather to trace its origins. By locating the Goldwater-Nichols reforms as a critical juncture that altered the nature of the armed forces, this research illuminated some underappreciated dynamics of US military institutional development. This research argues that the Goldwater-Nichols Act reconfigured the power dynamics, relationships, roles, and expectations of (and about) the CJCS and the combatant commands. This reconfiguration had unintentional effects on the military's willingness to be a more all-weather tool of American statecraft. This reconfiguration provided new and different raw materials with which the United States faced the end of the Cold War. Consequently, the military's embrace of democratization and state-building was directly related to the long-tail, structural effects of the 1986 defense reforms. Thus, the framers of Goldwater-Nichols knitted the Velvet Gauntlet as they drafted their legislation, but they did so less as an intentional accessory and more as an un-noticed byproduct.

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