

It is often said that change must be an evolutionary question. But the key question is this: Does the present system allow us to evolve fast enough to do what we must do in order to provide for the common defense?

THE ROLE OF THE CINCS OF THE UNIFIED AND SPECIFIED COMMANDS

The combatant forces of the United States are organized into ten unified and specified commands. Six unified commands attempt to bring all U.S. forces designated to geographic regions of the world together under joint command control. These are the European Command, the Atlantic Command, the Pacific Command, the Southern Command (responsible for Central and South America), Central Command (responsible for Southwest Asia), and the Readiness Command (responsible for both continental U.S. defense, and for crisis mobilization and reinforcement of other commands). Three specified commands have functional missions: the Strategic Air Command, the Aerospace Defense Command, the Military Airlift Command.

This arrangement dates from World War II when the principle of "unity of command" replaced "mutual cooperation" as the doctrine of interservice relations. The principle was designed to provide for the integration of land, sea and air forces under the authority of a single commander-in-chief. Senator Barry Goldwater recently related this principle to our problems in Vietnam:

In Vietnam, we never had unity of command. Unity of command is one of the fundamental principles of any military operation. Every West Point plebe knows that. It means that there's only one commander. It means there is only one chief and he's over all the Indians—no matter what tribe. In his "Maxims of War," Napoleon said: "Nothing is so important in war as an undivided command." Too many cooks mean spoiled broth, and too many commanders mean lost battles. General Westmoreland never had command over all the forces in the Vietnam theater. Single service interests continued to block and frustrate unity of command and joint operations. For example, Gen. David Jones, a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, has observed:

Each service, instead of integrating efforts with the others, considered Vietnam its own war and sought to carve out a large mission for itself. For example, each fought its own air war, agreeing only to limited measures for a coordinated effort. "Body count" and "tons dropped" became the measures of merit. Lack of integration persisted right through the 1975 evacuation of Saigon—when responsibility was split between two separate commands, one on land and one at sea, each of these set a different "H-hour," which caused confusion and delays.

I don't need to dwell on the outcome of our more than 10-year military commitment in Vietnam.

Unity of command thus means integration of the nation's fighting forces. Yet critics such as former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger have observed:

In all our military installations, the time-honored principal of 'unity of command' is inculcated. Yet at the national level it is firmly resisted and flagrantly violated. Unity of command is endorsed, if and only if, it applies at the service level. The inevitable consequence is both the duplication of effort and the ultimate ambiguity of command.

Academic observers, such as Samuel P. Huntington, author of the classic treatise *The Soldier and the State*, have commented on the pervasive nature of Service autonomy in a supposedly unified command system: