

institutional pressure to insure that Service roles and missions are not abridged, that major Service weapons systems are emphasized, and that a proposed strategy does not imply more than a fair share of emphasis for another Service.

The Joint Staff action officer must prepare the initial draft of the response—called the Flimsy. In doing so, he or she is bound to consider the views of the Service action officers and the appropriate CINCs. . . . Each Service representative might write a portion of the paper, a portion of the paper might be provided by a CINC or his staff, or the Joint Staff A/O (action officer) might assume the entire task. Generally, because the Service staffs are larger and have Service-unique data and analysis not available to the Joint Staff, the Joint Staff action officer is very dependent on Service Staff inputs.

Once the Flimsy is prepared, the Joint and Service action officers meet to discuss its content. . . . For a substantive paper of some length, each Service action officer may have as many as 100 recommended changes. They quickly learn the art of compromise—each agreeing to support the balance of the changes proposed by the other in return for equal support. The Joint Staff action officer then publishes a Buff paper—reflecting the consensus of the meeting. . . .

Each of the action officers who worked on the Flimsy takes the Buff paper to his Service or Joint Staff planner (O-6). . . . There may be as many as 20 issues left to be resolved. The Planners generally are able to resolve all but two or three of them. The Joint Staff Planner then . . . publishes a final draft on Green paper. . . .

The Service A/O and Planner present the Green to their Service Operations Deputy (on some occasions an additional review layer—the Deputy Operations Deputy—is added). . . .

The Operations Deputies represent the first level of review at which a truly joint perspective is brought to bear on the issue. However, the Operations Deputies are dual-hatted, as are the Chiefs, and they are under great institutional pressure to represent Service as well as national interests. . . .

. . . Significant compromise may occur at this level of review. Yet to be resolved issues and divergent views, if any, are highlighted, and the Green is placed on the agenda for the Chiefs to consider.

The Chiefs then consider the Green, make adjustments as necessary, and send the paper to the SECDEF. . . .

In sum, the current Joint Staff process encourages compromise, relies too heavily on Service participation, and depends on staff officers who are well versed in Service interests but are ill prepared to address issues from a joint perspective.