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## President's Notes

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## President's Notes



### Goals, Oversight and Change in Naval Education

**D**uring the past two years, as the Defense Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, I have witnessed both fascinating political reform and acute controversy. Tales of those years will have to await future columns, however, because now, in Newport, I have been plunged into a controversy over educational reform. The issues raised by this current controversy are what I would like to share with you now in this, my first Naval War College Note.

No educational institution is ever quite the ivory tower that outsiders take it to be, and a war college least of all, since by its very nature it deals with the most brutal of all realities. War colleges especially have a host of overseeing masters to whom they must account: the service they represent, the Department of Defense, the academic auditors who accredit their programs, and above all, the law of the land. In this instance the Goldwater-Nichols legislation has identified a problem among the services and requires that the war colleges help our services achieve an effective jointness. Inevitably, the controversy is not about whether we should dedicate our efforts to reaching this worthy goal, but about how best to reach it.

As we reorganize the curriculum to increase the amount of joint instruction it will offer, a process under way since well before the Goldwater-Nichols bill took effect, we are finding a broad area of disagreement. On the one hand, there is my view—shared by my faculty—of how to approach teaching jointness, and on the other, there is the approach that others are urging on us. They insist that the joint portion of the curriculum should be separate from its other segments, easily visible to the assessor's eye. Our experience has taught us, on the other hand, that the best

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way to introduce new educational materials into an already coherent course of study is to integrate them into what already exists. We want to weave jointness into the overall fabric of the curriculum, teaching it throughout the year at every appropriate level, rather than sticking it on as a new and discrete appendage.

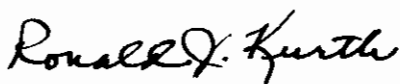
Jointness, we think, should not be taught separately because it is not a separate form of warfare. If we treated it as though it were distinct from its service-oriented components, we would build an artificial fence between it and the numerous service-specific issues on which it depends. For the past few years we have independently recognized the need to address joint issues and strengthen their presentation at the Naval War College. Accordingly, our operations course focuses primarily on joint warfighting, and each seminar has all-service representation, using wargaming as a device to integrate joint concepts. Joint force alternatives similarly dominate our force planning course. The sound integration of land, sea, and air power constitutes one of the five major themes examined in every one of the historical case studies that make up the strategy segment of our curriculum. Throughout the academic year, in every seminar in all three parts of our curriculum, we draw upon the specialized competence of our multiservice student body, which is truly joint—only 54 percent of our students are Navy officers.

I was proud to learn that our efforts had been recognized by the Pentagon's independent working group which evaluated the curricula of all five war colleges some months ago: the group found our curriculum the most joint of all. Ironically, now, because of the educational disagreement I have sketched, we at the Naval War College risk being perceived as unwilling to get on board the jointness bandwagon. Moreover, the Navy faces institutional constraints in establishing its intermediate and senior U.S. service college curricula that are apparently not faced by other services.

At the heart of this institutional problem lies an unavoidable reality. Because the Navy must deploy a large percentage of the total number of its officers with the fleet during peacetime, it can spare relatively few of them to attend both the intermediate and the senior programs during their careers. The only remedy for this persistent dilemma would be an increase in officer end-strength, which is an extremely unrealistic expectation for the foreseeable future. Taking a substantial time block in the command and staff course to teach a separate joint operational segment, as some are now urging should be done at all command and staff colleges, would require that all those hours be carved from some or all of the other three parts of the curriculum. This would be regrettable but perhaps feasible if all the intermediate officers returned here as seniors for a full course in what we believe is indispensable to an officer's education. Such is not the case. Few return for a second year of professional military education, so that they would lose permanently whatever we cut from the intermediate program. We have therefore

concluded that adding an additional segment on jointness to the core curriculum, rather than emphasizing jointness throughout all three segments, is not a viable option for the Naval War College. It would harm rather than enhance the quality and breadth of the educational experience we now offer.

This, then, is the first challenge I face as the new President of the Naval War College. Reasonable and thoughtful officers have for the past year wrestled with the problem of jointness, and all service colleges now approach the matter positively—with the goal of improving joint warfighting by intensifying joint warfighting instruction. It is nevertheless essential that the standards eventually chosen for joint professional military education not force all the war colleges into a rigid, lockstep curriculum that would crush originality and innovation and drive the more thoughtful, creative military and civilian faculty to use their skills and talents elsewhere or in some other pursuit. I understand and wholeheartedly support the congressional goal of increased jointness. In the end, we can best reach that goal by preserving and strengthening the strong intellectual tradition that has characterized our best service colleges. We can ensure that education in joint matters continues to be included in teaching historical case studies, in treating issues of future joint forces, and in gaming the employment of joint forces. Accordingly, I shall work with a committee consisting of some of my most valued academic advisors to devise a plan of action that will not dilute the quality of what we already do at the Naval War College, but will visibly obey both in spirit and in form the instructions of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. I am sure that my readers will make valuable contributions to our effort to meet the will of the Congress in Goldwater-Nichols. While I may not be able to answer all correspondents, I would welcome letters of comment.



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