

Chapter Two



*Do We Need a Goldwater-Nichols
Equivalent for the Homeland?*



Foreword

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*In preparation for battle I have often found plans to be useless,
but planning indispensable.*

—General Dwight D. Eisenhower

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 was a major watershed for the defense community. Previously, each service acted and planned largely in isolation. There was division and duplication of efforts, competition over resources, and few economies of scale. Planning and execution occurred independently, which could negatively impact operational success.

Goldwater-Nichols changed all this. Procurement, planning, training and action became more unified, rather than competitive, processes. Most importantly, the Act fostered a sense of “jointness”—the idea that the United States Armed Services exist to get a job done, not to perpetuate themselves. “Thinking purple” is about more than just cooperation—it is about the creation of a truly unified structure in which each service asks how it can best contribute to the overall mission.

Although caution should be exercised when transposing aspects of a military model into the civilian context, there is substantial merit in looking to the military environment for lessons learned and key features that might be translated and imported into the homeland security context in order to enhance the nation’s safety. In both contexts, however, processes established in peacetime may provide a framework for effective response in times of crisis. For the military, this can mean successful prosecution of a war.

The challenge of successfully executing interagency coordination is age-old. To the extent that the various moving parts in our preparedness and response system are not working well together or are not doing so in an optimal way, it is necessary to remedy these deficiencies and weaknesses, because the price to be paid for not doing so is simply too high, and the costs are not simply monetary. A Goldwater-Nichols equivalent may therefore be needed for the homeland context—and not only at the federal level, but also between and among the states themselves and their local counterparts.

This is not to suggest that such change must be mandated at the state level or that the military should be tasked with primary responsibility for providing security for the homeland. Rather, this chapter explores from different perspectives—including that of the military and the policy community—what the military culture/mindset, structures, procedures, and so on may have to offer as we seek to bolster our civilian security posture. To this end, the papers in the chapter examine and address a range of relevant practices and elements including logistics, training, transfer of expertise and knowledge, strategy and the regional approach.

To help us puzzle through these challenging issues, in a series of policy papers, is a distinguished group of scholars and practitioners from the fields of homeland security and defense:

Joel Bagnal, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security, emphasizes the importance of achieving unity of effort across the agencies of the federal government in order to plan and execute catastrophic disaster response operations effectively. He argues in favor of a regional approach to homeland security, with “integrated...offices where interagency staffs would regularly work together...with State and local governments and private sector organizations...” Additionally, he contends that federal agencies should institute an interagency professional development program to heighten the effectiveness of both planning and response efforts.

Colonel Michael Edwards, Director of Operations, Air Force Combat Support Office, examines the need for the Goldwater-Nichols Act prior to its enactment in 1986, and reviews the

positive outcomes the Act has had on U.S. armed forces. He supports a Goldwater-Nichols equivalent for homeland security purposes that would leverage capabilities for prevention and robust response, and forge the Department of Homeland Security and other relevant entities into a cohesive force – one bolstered by cooperation with the DoD and the necessary funding to push forward change.

Christine Wormuth is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies. She was a contributing author for the Center’s “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase II” study. In this chapter, she makes recommendations for instilling in the homeland security context the core achievements of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, including “establishment of strong, unified leadership at the federal level, empowerment of operational leaders in the field, strengthening of the strategy development and planning process, and the creation of a more joint cadre of homeland security professionals...”

Daniel Prieto is Vice President for Homeland Security and Intelligence at IBM. He suggests that more than another reorganization is needed to promote the jointness that the Goldwater-Nichols Act encouraged. In his paper, Prieto advocates, among other things, a network-centric approach to finesse our homeland security coordination and management efforts. Such an approach “recognizes the limits of hierarchical command-and-control structures, and seeks to improve decision-making by leveraging improved information and communications among participants distributed throughout a network.”

Jointness. Regionalization. Strengthened leadership and investing in our people through continued and expanded education and training opportunities. A network-centric approach. Adequate funding. These are just a few core ideas that merit serious consideration as we move forward and grapple with the challenge of how best to achieve homeland security.

My own views on this issue, expressed at our symposium and in other forums, are well known. A Goldwater-Nichols equivalent for the

homeland security community would bring together all of the now largely disparate components of our disaster preparedness, response and management efforts. Regional homeland security offices would maximize the various components of homeland security in cooperation, integrating all levels of government and all relevant agencies at each level, as well as building relationships with private sector and non-governmental entities that could and should be involved in preparedness, response, and information sharing. At the same time, we need to foster a culture of preparedness that is truly all-hazards and risk-based in nature, that encompasses a range of threats and crises from terrorist attack to infectious disease to natural disaster—all while bearing in mind that response must be flexible, capable of integrating ad hoc, entrepreneurial and creative elements when circumstances demand. Learning from those incidents that we have seen will help us better prepare for those over the horizon.

Admittedly, this is a tall order. Thoughtful consideration of these issues by leading figures in the policy world, the military and beyond will take us closer to our goal, however—and it is my hope that this chapter constitutes one small but significant step forward in that direction.