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PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

Statement of  
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Before the  
Panel on Military Education  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives



Mr. Chairman and members of the Panel,

I am pleased to be here today to discuss issues relating to our review of Phase I joint professional military education at the 4 intermediate and 3 senior service schools. Overall, the 7 service schools have responded very favorably to the Panel's recommendations. Each school has taken some form of positive action on at least 90 percent of the recommendations. Conversely, the schools have concerns with 10 percent or fewer recommendations.

In responding to your request, Mr. Chairman, we are preparing, under separate covers, 4 reports that detail actions taken by each service to implement recommendations made by the Panel concerning Phase I joint professional military education at intermediate and senior service schools.

Although the schools have taken many positive steps to improve the quality of joint professional military education, concerns exist in curriculum, faculty, and student evaluation areas which warrant the Panel's continuing attention. Specifically, these areas include

-- in-residence Phase I education,

-- the distinction between the intermediate school and the senior school curricula (at the Naval War College),

-- prescribed levels of non-host faculty and student mixes and student/faculty ratios, and

-- letter grades (at the Army senior school and at both Air Force schools).

Let me discuss each of these areas in more detail.

## CURRICULUM

### In-Residence Requirement

Officials of the service intermediate schools support the intent but do not believe that it is desirable to implement the Panel's recommendation requiring in-residence phase I education as a prerequisite to attending phase II at the Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC).

School officials expressed concern about what they perceive as an unintended result of this recommendation. They stated the recommendation would give the appearance that those officers who were selected for in-residence education were also being pre-selected for subsequent choice duty assignments and promotions. Conversely, this would send an unintended negative message to those officers not selected.

Army and Air Force officials also explained that completing intermediate in-residence or equivalent professional military education is a prerequisite for selection for promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In the Marine Corps, in-resident intermediate education is not currently a requirement for promotion. However, the Commandant of the Marine Corps has instituted a requirement that all officers in the future will complete intermediate in-resident or non-resident education.

The services have established non-resident and correspondence course programs to serve the professional military education requirements and are attempting to certify these programs to ensure that phase I joint intermediate education requirements are met as well. School officials recognize the shortcomings of non-resident and correspondence programs compared to resident programs, such as limited student-teacher and student-student interaction. However, they also expressed concern that it is impractical to send all of their officers to resident education programs.

School officials recognize and agree that phase I requirements must be met before attending phase II at AFSC.

## Distinctness in Navy

### Intermediate and Senior Schools

A second curriculum area of concern is that the Navy War College has not established the distinct curricula recommended for its intermediate and senior schools.

The Panel recommends that operational art be the focus at intermediate schools. Operational art is defined as the use of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations. The focus at senior schools should be national military strategy, defined as the art and science of using the armed forces to secure the objectives of national policy by applying force or the threat of force.

The curricula at the Navy intermediate and senior schools are comparable. The focus at both schools is on national military strategy. Despite some recent changes, extensive similarities exist in curricula, learning objectives, readings, and case studies. In addition, both schools share the same physical facilities, administration, and faculty. School officials said that the similarity is intentional since Naval officers do not have to attend both schools. Attendance at either school is not a requirement in promotion decisions.

The curricula at both schools in the Army and Air Force are distinct in terms of their focus on operational art and military strategy. The Marine Corps has recently established a senior school at Quantico which is co-located with, but distinct from, its intermediate school. Plans for this school are to offer a senior-level national military strategy curriculum which meets the Panel's guidelines.

Before leaving the area of curriculum, I would like to add that all the service schools have revised their curricula to strengthen their focus on joint matters. For example, they have incorporated Panel guidance on the contents of a joint curriculum to include joint and combined operations, joint processes and systems, and joint planning.

I shift my attention now to the second issue--faculty.

#### FACULTY AND STUDENT BODY

##### Faculty

Only the Naval War College schools meet the Panel's recommended level of non-host, or sister service, faculty mix.

For the service intermediate schools, the Panel recommended 10 percent from each non-host military department for academic year 1990-91 with an increase to 15 percent by academic year 1995-96.

For the senior schools, the Panel recommended 10 percent from each non-host school for academic year 1989-90 with an increase to 25 percent by academic year 1995-96.

The Army, Air Force and Marine Corps intermediate schools do not meet the Panel non-host faculty percentage goals. However, the Air Force school meets the MEPD goal of 5 percent while the other two schools fall slightly short of the MEPD goal. The Army and Air Force senior schools fall slightly short of the MEPD goal of 10 percent. The two senior schools say they can meet the MEPD level.

Officials at all of the schools have not yet addressed additional Panel faculty mix goals for 1995-96. The Army, for example, said it is unable to determine the impact of projected force reductions on staffing.

#### Student Body

Service schools plan to implement MEPD, but not the Panel, standards for student mix.

For intermediate schools, the Panel recommends 1 student per seminar from each of the non-host military departments counting the Navy and Marine Corps as one department, 2 students per seminar by 1995-96, and eventually 3 students per seminar thereafter. By contrast, the MEPD specifies a minimum of 1 non-host student per

seminar with no directive to increase this number by academic year 1995-96. The Navy and the Marine Corps meet the current student mix goals recommended by the Panel.

In the case of the senior schools, the Panel recommends 10 percent from each of the two non-host military departments and 25 percent in the outyears. Again, the MEPD only prescribes at least 1 student from each non-host service. Only the Naval War College has met the 10 percent goal. None of the senior schools has plans to implement the Panel's outyear goals at this time.

#### Student/Faculty Ratios

Computation of student/faculty ratios was complicated by the fact that there is no standard definition for faculty. The faculty composition is unique to each service school, and consequently, the methods for counting faculty vary from school to school.

None of the intermediate schools is fulfilling the Panel's recommended student/faculty ratio of 4 to 1, although the Army and Air Force school ratios are close (4.1 and 4.4 to 1, respectively). The ratio at the Marine Corps school is more than 6 to 1. Officials there expect this figure to improve with the addition of new civilian faculty on their staff. Due to the relatively small size of the Marine Corps intermediate school, officials there should be able to attain the Panel goal. It is



difficult to compute a similar figure at the Navy schools because the same faculty serves both schools. Collectively, the ratio there is higher (worse) than 4 to 1.

The Panel recommended a student/faculty ratio of 3 to 1 at the senior level. Only the Army senior school meets this standard (2.6 to 1), although the Air Force is close (3.3 to 1). Again, it is difficult to compute separate ratios at the Navy schools, because one faculty serves two schools.

#### Cadre of Career Educators

The Panel recommended the establishment of a cadre of career educators. While the schools recognize that quality faculty is fundamental to quality education, they prefer military faculty with operational experience. The Navy and Marine Corps schools have no cadre of career military educators. School officials stated that current operational experience is necessary to insure the credibility and validity of the material being taught. In general, the service schools use civilians and adjunct faculty as a cadre to provide subject matter expertise and continuity to complement the military faculty. A special group of military career educators exists only in the Army and Air Force schools which offer tenured or specially designated positions.

### Faculty Exchange Program

Although the Panel recommended a faculty exchange program between service schools and service academies, no school has established an exchange program. Furthermore, the degree of exchange that does exist varies across service schools. For example, the Air Force Academy has sent two members in a one-way exchange to the Air Force intermediate school. The Navy's exchange program entails one faculty member from West Point.

By contrast, the Army and Marine Corps do not find the exchange beneficial given differences in the missions and purposes of the two institutions. They see the academies as undergraduate schools emphasizing academics targeted toward pre-commissioned officers. The service intermediate and senior schools, on the other hand, are graduate schools emphasizing operations and strategy targeting instruction to senior officers. While no formal exchange program exists, they do bring in academy faculty as guest speakers when a particular topic necessitates such an exchange.

### Students Retained as Faculty

Although the Panel opposes the widespread retention of graduating students as faculty, the practice continues. This is especially apparent at the Air Force intermediate school, where 41 percent of

the current faculty are members of the 1989-90 graduating class, and also at the Naval War College, where 28 percent of the current faculty are graduates from the past 3 academic years. The other service intermediate and senior schools also retain graduates, although to a lesser extent.

The third issue I would like to discuss concerns student evaluation.

### STUDENT EVALUATION

#### Letter grades

While all service schools state they have rigorous student evaluation standards, letter grades are not administered at the Army senior school or at either Air Force school. Army senior school officials said that letter grades foster competition and discourage cooperation. Since Army senior students are recruited from the top 6 percent of all senior school eligible Army officers, they have already competed against each other to reach the senior school. Army officials told us that their emphasis should now be on achieving academic objectives in a joint strategic environment where cooperation, and not competition, is encouraged.

The Air Force, on the other hand, is examining the senior school's evaluation system. Air Force officials explained that it is more

important for their students to be able to demonstrate operational competency rather than academic excellence.

The Marine Corps recently adopted a letter grading system in academic year 1990-91. Only grades of "A" and "B" represent acceptable levels of performance as is the practice in most graduate programs. The Navy's letter grading system is further refined by attaching pluses and minuses to each letter grade.

#### Distinguished Graduates

Of the 7 schools we visited, 5 have implemented a distinguished graduate programs in one form or another, while 2 have not implemented any such program. For instance, the Army intermediate school designates a distinguished graduate but does not use a system of class rankings. A ranking list does not help the school identify students for special assignments since most students are assigned to their next position before the academic year ends. The Army senior school has no distinguished graduate program. Army officials said that since the top 6 percent of all senior school eligible Army officers are selected to attend the school, to further rank these officers against each other is neither desirable nor necessary. Two-thirds of the Army officers at the school are assigned to service joint or national command structure assignments, thereby already fulfilling the objective of a distinguished graduate program.

At present, the Air Force senior school has no distinguished graduate program. It is examining its evaluation system to attain the level of objectivity which could form the basis of a credible distinguished graduate program. The other service schools all have distinguished graduate programs varying in the percentage cutoffs.

As a final point, the Panel recommends that evaluations of a student's performance be captured in officer efficiency reports. Only the Navy and Marine Corps are using officer efficiency reports. School officials in the Army state that they reflect the spirit of the Panel recommendation by using academic reports. These reports are reviewed by promotion and selection boards and become part of an officer's permanent performance record. The Air Force uses training reports which, it states, are equally effective and better suited to an academic environment.

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Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement.