Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 directed a broad range of organizational and functional changes to improve the ability of the military services to carry out successful joint military operations. Provisions in the act directed the Secretary of Defense to develop a definition of a Joint Duty Assignment (JDA) and to publish a Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL). This list includes those positions at organizations, outside the individual services, that address issues involving multiple services or other nations where the assigned officer gains a “significant experience in joint matters.”

The original implementation of Goldwater-Nichols, and the one used today, applied a broad-brush approach. Joint duty consideration was limited to pay grades of O-4 or higher. In some organizations (Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the unified commands), 100 percent of such positions were placed on the JDAL, whereas 50 percent of the positions in each defense agency were placed on the list. The law specifically prohibited positions in service organizations from receiving joint duty credit. This original implementation led to a list of approximately 8300 positions designated as JDAs.

From the initial implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, concerns were raised by numerous organizations. The defense agencies expressed their concern that only half of their positions would qualify for joint assignments whereas all the positions in other
organizations were on the JDAL. The services felt that certain positions within the services (which we call “in-service” positions) had a joint content and should be considered for the JDAL. Finally, examples were noted of positions on the Joint Staff or the unified commands that had little or no joint content.

The services also expressed their concerns about meeting the various constraints and promotion objectives specified by the law. They felt it was difficult to qualify a sufficient number of officers to meet the Goldwater-Nichols requirement that at least half the positions on the JDAL above the grade of O-3 be filled by Joint Specialty Officers (JSOs) or officers nominated as JSOs (termed JSO noms). They also found it hard to manage their “quality” officers to ensure that sufficient numbers served in joint duty positions while adequately staffing positions in their own service with “quality” officers.

Congress recognized these concerns and asked the DoD to revisit the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols. The conferees of the 1993 National Defense Authorization Act reviewed the procedures, both statutory and regulatory, for designating a position as a joint duty assignment and concluded that “the time has come to reconsider the joint duty assignment list, particularly with respect to Defense Agencies.”

**OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH**

In response to a tasking by the Director of Manpower and Personnel of the Joint Staff (JS/J-1), RAND conducted research on joint officer management that approached the issue from both the demand and supply sides. The goal of the demand-side research was to recommend a procedure for measuring the joint content of a position; the

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1Goldwater-Nichols established a new classification of officers. “Joint Specialty Officers” were to be “particularly trained in and oriented toward joint matters.” Prerequisites to becoming a JSO include Joint Professional Military Education Phase II (JPME II) and a prior Joint Duty Assignment. The majority of JSOs have completed both JPME II and a JDA. They are then nominated by their service and selected by the Secretary of Defense with the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Officers who have reversed the order of their joint service and JPME, and officers who have served two joint tours, can also be selected as JSOs. These alternative paths are less frequent and require waivers from the Secretary of Defense. Once selected as a JSO, the “tag” stays with an officer throughout his or her career.
goal of the supply-side research was to determine how many of the positions with joint content the services could support.

Overall, the research met these objectives by using the following general approach:

1. Develop a preferred method (algorithm) to measure the joint content of a billet;
2. Gather data on all candidate billets through the use of a survey;
3. Apply the preferred method to the billet survey data to produce a list ordered on the basis of joint content;
4. Evaluate the implications of different notional lists;
5. Identify the number of joint positions the services can support based on current law and policy;
6. Identify the portions of the law or the service or DoD policies that constrain the number of joint positions the services can support;
7. Identify changes to law or policy and determine the impact on supportability of these changes; and
8. Provide recommendations.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

Chapter Two summarizes the results and presents conclusions and recommendations from the demand-side analysis; Chapter Three does the same for the supply-side analysis. Chapter Four presents some observations from the research, including potential implementation problems and potential solutions associated with determining JDAs on a billet-by-billet basis.