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PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION
SCHOOLS

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Air Command and Staff College traces its organizational and intellectual roots back to the Army Air Corps Tactical School founded in 1931. The Air Command Staff School was founded in September 1946 and in 1954 it was renamed the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC). On 8 June 2009, ACSC graduated its 69th resident class, increasing the college's alumni to 37,705 leaders. Since the beginning, the mission of the college has been evolving. The first Air University Commander, Major General Fairchild, laid down a challenge for ACSC to be a pre-war school that looks ahead to the next conflict instead of being a post-war school looking backwards to past conflicts. ACSC embraced that challenge by being innovative and adaptive with the curriculum balancing the need to produce reflective thinkers with operationally-proficient Airmen capable of leveraging new ideas in the complex and fast-paced environment of military operations. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 (GNA) and this subcommittee's Panel on Military Education Report of 1989 were key influences shaping the evolution of ACSC through the 1990s and into the 21st century. The result is an ACSC program that is academically rigorous, steeped in joint operations, and a college that graduates students who are agile, critical thinkers prepared to meet any challenge.

ACSC's mission today focuses on preparing field-grade officers to develop, employ, and command air, space, and cyberspace power in Joint, Combined, and Multinational operations. ACSC is unique in that it provides an air-centric operational focus that is not available in other PME institutions or in civilian graduate programs. ACSC maintains a balance between its service perspective and Joint, Interagency and Multinational planning and operations in its curriculum. ACSC focuses on warfighting within the context of operational art and teaches joint operations from the standpoint of service forces in a joint force supported by service component commands. ACSC recognizes both the distinctiveness and interdependence of joint and service

schools in officer education. ACSC graduates are ready for operational-level staff positions working with or for combatant commanders, International Security Assistance Force commanders, senior level interagency officials, service components, and coalition partners.

Air University's successful accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, ACSC's accreditation and reaffirmations by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and other external and internal assessment processes confirm ACSC's effectiveness in meeting its mission. ACSC does not rest on its past laurels but continues to address key faculty, curriculum, and resource challenges to sustain this level of success.

Ironically, one of the greatest strengths of the college—its enthusiastic and energetic faculty and staff—is also an area which demands close attention from the College. ACSC views faculty as its weapon system and the most critical aspect of resourcing for mission accomplishment. The College's unique mission requires a distinctive mix of faculty qualifications and credentials. Faculty qualifications and credentials available to ACSC are enhanced through the synergy of all Air Force PME schools being located at Maxwell AFB. Traditional civilian academics provide the depth and breadth of subject-matter expertise to guarantee the academic rigor of the College's offerings while simultaneously ensuring adherence to validated pedagogical theory and practice. Military faculty (Air Force, sister service, and International Officers) contribute unparalleled currency and expertise in the operational courses so critical to the College's success. Title 10 authority (thanks to Congressman Skelton's assistance) has enabled ACSC to effectively address civilian faculty needs. ACSC has increased its civilian faculty presence from two in 1989 to 31 in 2009. This has been a significant factor in creating a more academically rigorous program. Although the civilian-military mix of faculty members is important to ACSC's success, it is equally important that the College establish the

right mix within its military faculty. The right mix begins with the Air Force-sister service mix. This helps meet the CJCS's aim for the College to provide a truly joint educational experience. Sister services have been very supportive in providing outstanding faculty members but an emerging issue is joint credit for faculty duty at ACSC. ACSC believes all military faculty members at the Service intermediate-level colleges should receive Joint credit because of teaching joint curriculum to a joint and total force student body.

Military faculty manning is an ongoing concern at ACSC. ACSC is currently minimally manned and has difficulty meeting the 4:1 student-to-faculty ratio mandated by the Chairman in the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP). A 4:1 student-to-faculty ratio is the CJCS accreditation standard for intermediate-level college resident programs. Small student-to-faculty ratios are essential to quality instruction. In addition to the overall number of faculty necessary to meet required ratios, ACSC must also have sufficient numbers of military faculty with command, joint, and aviation experience. We acknowledge the demand current operations place on manpower, but ACSC needs experienced commanders, aviators, and joint operators to meet its mission.

ACSC recognizes the need to invest in the professional development of its faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. The College provides opportunities and resources for faculty development and enrichment. ACSC faculty professional development is a continuous process, preparing individuals to assume duties within an ACSC department and, following initial orientation and qualification, enhancing professional qualifications and intellectual abilities. Faculty professional development activities enhance teaching skills, facilitate creative thinking, improve instructional methods, and maintain currency in and expand individual areas of experience. Faculty development is particularly useful to prepare our military faculty who

have not taught before or attended PME in residence. Each new faculty member is assigned a mentor and receives intensive assistance before teaching in the classroom. Another key aspect of ACSC's professional development program is the Advanced Academic Degree (AAD) program. This has been instrumental in enhancing the academic credentials of ACSC's military faculty members. The AAD program is an Air Force-sponsored program that selects highly-qualified faculty members for funded study at civilian institutions to acquire doctoral degrees in fields directly applicable to the ACSC curriculum. Continuing support and possible expansion of this program is very important to the ACSC mission.

The approximately 500 students in the typical ACSC resident class form a diverse, uniquely experienced population. The class mix contains a balanced mix of operational and functional expertise from the non-host military departments, the Air Reserve components, International Officers, DoD civilians and representation from other agencies. ACSC would benefit from more interagency representation in the student body. The caliber of the students attending ACSC has remained high and operational experience of students is at an all-time high. International Officers have attended ACSC annually since 1946. During its 54-year history, the college has graduated more than 2,500 International Officers from 92 nations with many of them becoming Chiefs of Staff, government officials in key national positions, heads of state, ministers, ambassadors, or members of Parliament.

One challenge the Commandant faces is curriculum insertions that come from various functional areas to ensure "their" subjects and topics are taught in PME. Contributing to the challenge is a lack of understanding on the differences between training and education. To help mediate the insertion of "pet rocks" the Air Force has established the Air Force Learning Committee to screen these recommendations similar to the process used by CJSC for insertions

into joint education. The methodical evolutionary approach that the Joint Staff has employed to change joint educational requirements is very much appreciated and serves as a good model for curriculum change by the Air Force. ACSC has also developed the concept of a “core curriculum.” ACSC’s core curriculum consists of those courses necessary to produce warfighters capable of critical analysis. The core is how ACSC achieves its mission in terms of preparing its students. First, the Joint, Combined, Multinational, and Interagency Operations area addresses the forces, organizational structures, planning processes, supporting doctrine, and operational concepts that enable the US military to engage as a joint team, across the full range of military operations. Second, the air, space, and cyberspace area addresses the heritage, theory, and employment of air, space, and cyberspace power, applying these critical concepts to current and future operations. Third, the War Studies area of the core addresses military history and strategy, focusing specifically on the nature and theories of war, methods of warfare, and the evolving operational art. Fourth, in the Security Environment area of the core modern leaders learn about the broader context of modern military operations, comprehending both the challenges and opportunities that confront the US in the 21st century. They also learn about security policies, national planning systems, and resulting strategies through which the US will employ its instruments of power to engage regionally and globally. Fifth, in the Leadership and Command area students learn about the challenges military officers face in today’s complex security environment. Military history is woven throughout all core courses and electives. The War Studies area of the core addresses military history and strategy, focusing specifically on the nature and theories of war, methods of warfare, and the evolving operational art. It provides a solid foundation in the canon of military theory, yet draws these classic ideas into the present, as students compare and contrast what they have learned to current operations. The Leadership and

Warfare course analyzes the factors that guide military leaders' actions in establishing and maintaining an effective leadership environment. The course also seeks both to educate and inspire students to their full leadership potential through the study of great commanders and their conduct of warfare, as well as current problems of command in contemporary joint operations. Students leave with a broadened understanding of the nature of conflict.

Changes to the core require careful analysis to ensure the addition of any new area does not result in the removal of critical topics essential for ACSC students to master the operational level of war. Yet this in no way means that the core curriculum is static and unchangeable; on the contrary, every element of the core is reviewed and updated to ensure each is relevant to the needs of today's warfighters and also prepare those warfighters for the challenges they will face tomorrow. Examples of ACSC's adaptability include institutionalizing "jointness" across the curriculum, embracing a robust regional and cultural studies program, embedding concepts and ideas about operational-level warfare throughout our core courses, and reflecting increased emphasis on irregular warfare, and the nuclear enterprise.

ACSC's curriculum is academically rigorous with embedded active learning methodology and a rigorous student evaluation program that includes long analytical papers and essay exams that receive letter grades. ACSC executes a distinguished graduate program that identifies the top 10% of the graduates and a recognition program for the top one third of the graduates. Two years ago a major initiative to make sure all ACSC exercises and war-games are realistic was launched and the result is that all ACSC planning exercises--the Joint Planning Exercise (JPEX) and the Joint Air Exercise (JAEX), the Capstone War-Game (CWG), and the interservice ACSC-CGSC (USA) Intermediate Learning Exercise (ILE)--all take place in real world settings involving real world allies using real world systems and collaborative planning

tools. Approximately 75 percent of all contact time is devoted to active learning methods such as seminar discussion guided by faculty, case studies and practical exercises. Scheduled contact time balances the need to preserve time for student reflection and interaction. Additionally, students are engaged in a research and electives program in which they investigate topics of particular interest to the Air Force in a rigorous fashion under the direction and guidance of a subject-matter expert. Through this program, students develop their ability to define an issue succinctly; conduct thoughtful, logical, and critical research and analysis; and create well-supported conclusions and recommendations of potential benefit to today's warfighters. ACSC's student papers are read by senior military leaders, generating ideas affecting operations and military strategy. We have already had reports that AY09 student research is being used to change the way DoD handles fuel distribution, how Congress views weather control, and how an intelligence operation will be executed.

As indicated earlier, ACSC cannot rest on its past laurels but must cast a vision for the future and address key faculty, curriculum, and resource challenges. We must continue to emphasize and focus on the core mission—professional military education. Although the focus of my statement is on the resident program, ACSC's mission encompasses both resident and distance learning programs. Distance learning is an increasingly important part of the mission. ACSC created nonresident programs in 1948 to provide intermediate-level PME to those midcareer officers unable to attend ACSC in residence. Enhanced technologies have enabled ACSC to enrich these programs and make them increasingly interactive.

Assignment of the right military faculty, with relevant master's degrees, combined with additional funding for civilian faculty members is required to meet future challenges. Emphasizing the importance of faculty duty for Air Force personnel by senior Air Force leaders

is critical for our continuing success. A more robust AAD program and close monitoring of post-graduate school faculty assignments would also enhance the faculty and the credentials they possess, both of which are critical to sustainment of the College's mission.

The expanding DoD-wide network security problems and resulting restrictions and lack of access to various research venues is affecting many faculty members' research and ability to collaborate with civilian colleagues and institutions. Solutions to these problems present significant challenges.

The GNA and the Skelton Panel have achieved their purposes at ACSC. ACSC successfully incorporates a Joint curriculum that meets CJCSI 1800.01C guidance (OPMEP), while at the same time maintains a distinctive air, space, and cyberspace flavor that meets Air Force requirements at the operational level. The OPMEP has been flexible enough to adjust to a changing environment yet has provided the strategic level guidance to achieve these initiatives. The Process of Accreditation of Joint Education has also provided the desired accountability needed to ensure schools continue to meet the intent of the legislation. "Jointness" has become our primary language. Process changes mandated in the GNA and by the Skelton Panel have now been institutionalized. In sum, our students are receiving the education necessary to critically reflect upon today's issues, while preparing to address the unforeseen challenges of the future.