

10 February 1947

MEMORANDUM FOR: Major General William E. Hill  
President, War Department Unification Board

SUBJECT: List of questions which might be expected from Congressmen and the answers thereto.

In compliance with your memorandum of 7 February 1947, there follows a list of questions which might be asked by members of Congress concerning communication unification and the answers which we propose to give:

QUESTION No. 1 How do you propose to handle the signal communications for the three services under this unification?

ANSWER— This is a broad question and in answering it, I propose to break it down into several major elements and provide a separate answer covering each part. The parts as I see it, break down to the following:

1. What organizational structure will you propose?

We propose no additional organization structure except such as will vest with executive powers the Joint Communications Board, which is now only an advisory board. That Board should consist of the Chief Signal Officer, the Air Communications Officer and the Chief of Naval Communications and one additional representative from each of the three major components.

2. What authority will it have?

The Joint Communications Board will have authority to operate, as a single integrated National Defense Communication System serving the Armed Forces, those parts of the three communication services of the National Defense components which can be operated in a common purpose. The Joint Communications Board will have authority to direct major components to construct, maintain and operate facilities comprising that net work, and it will have power to allocate to the use of any major element its needs in the facility regardless of what major element may be operating all or part of the facilities needed. In the interest of integration of communications and of economy, the Joint Communications Board will have authority to recommend the allocations of responsibilities between the three major components in all matters in the field of communication. The Joint Communications Board will control the engineering

Inclosure 1

of the integrated system and will allocate responsibilities for construction among the three major elements. This authority is derived from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to which the Joint Communications Board reports. The decisions of the Joint Communications Board when approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff are authoritative.

3. How does it exercise this authority?

The Joint Communication Board will exercise its authority in two ways: Its operating authority will be discharged through a single agency formed from the three major components and directly responsible to the Board. Joint Communications Board recommendations which have been approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff will be executed by the three major elements or by the operating agency of the Joint Communications Board as may be appropriate.

4. Over what activities will it have jurisdiction?

The Board will concern itself with all activities pertaining to communications. It will, therefore, recommend major policies concerning standardization, research and development, procurement, storage, maintenance, and distribution to the extent necessary to prevent duplication and to secure the maximum in coordination. Such policies will be in accordance with the announced directives of JCS and the JCRB. It will also standardize equipment operating methods and procedures. It will establish all signal security regulations governing the operation of the integrated communications system, and will coordinate the signal security regulations of the three armed services.

5. What consolidations or economies will be effected by the steps above?

Initially, no conspicuous economy can be realized. However, the organization will encourage eventual economies of some magnitude. In the beginning, a few circuits of the major components which parallel one another may be found also to duplicate, and small economies may be effected by the elimination of such duplications. The major economies which may be effected will result from standardization of equipment, so that American industry in time of emergency will be confronted with a far simpler manufacturing problem. Duplication of research and development activities, which is almost in some instances inevitable, can be held to a minimum with a resulting economy. It is also possible that the standardization of equipment will further a simplification of procurement and of storage and distribution of signal communication equipment. Similarly, it should be possible to use interchangeably the training facilities of the three major components when the training of like personnel is concerned. These economies will be vastly greater than those effected by the elimination and reduction of communication circuits, but will require much more time for final accomplishment.

QUESTION No. 2 What control or supervision will the Joint Communications Board exercise over the preparation of budgets and expenditures of appropriated funds within the major components?

Answer-- It will have no direct control. It will influence the preparation

of budgets by its location of responsibility. The three major components for construction, operation, training, research and development, procurement, storage, maintenance, and distribution. It will take cognizance of the failure of any major component to discharge the responsibilities assigned it by the Joint Communications Board; it will act through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to rectify the policy of the major component which is failing to meet its responsibilities. Its influence would be very similar to the staff supervision now exercised by the War Department General Staff over fiscal matters of the technical services.

QUESTION No. 3. What will be the relationship between the Joint Communications Board and the Commander of an overseas theater or department where all forces are under one command?

Answer -- The approved decisions of the Joint Communications Board will be executed by the theater commander. The theater commander should establish a theater Joint Communications Board to deal with intra-theater communication matters; the recommendations of that Board, when approved by the theater commander will be executed by the appropriate agency, at his direction.

QUESTION No. 4. Will the authority given the Joint Communications Board interfere with or undermine in any way the authority or responsibilities of the heads of the War Department, Navy Department or the Air Forces?

Answer -- No. The Joint Communications Board derives its authority from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, after approving the recommendations of the Joint Communications Board, will each implement those recommendations within his own component.

QUESTION No. 5. Could the unification of the War Department, Navy Department and Air Forces in the field of communications be brought about by giving the Joint Communications Board only advisory power with respect to matters concerning training, standardization, research and development, procurement, storage, maintenance, and distribution?

Answer -- No. The organization of the three major elements in communications is strikingly different. In the War Department, all of these functions are grouped under the direct control of the Chief Signal Officer. In each of the other major components these functions are distributed among a diversity of commanders or authorities, and the representatives from the latter two elements on the Joint Communications Board, cannot, except by coordination and moral suasion, secure within his own element the implementation of the agreements made on many subjects. On the other hand, the Director of Naval Communications has sole control for signal communications security within the Navy, whereas within the War Department, this activity is not under the Chief Signal Officer. The implementation of recommendations of the Joint Communications Board can be made only within each major component by direction of the commander of that major element, namely one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

QUESTION No. 6. If the communication organizations of the three components are as diverse as you say, do you think your unification scheme will fail unless the communication set-ups of the major elements are reorganized to have the same responsibilities?

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Answer -- No, but maximum economy, efficiency and coordination without such a reorganization cannot be achieved.

QUESTION No. 7. What do you recommend Congress do to implement your viewpoints on unification?

Answer -- It is recommended that when Congress authorized and empowers the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it likewise authorize and empower the Joint Communications Board as we have outlined.

QUESTION No. 8. Why can you not organize a single agency for the Department of National Defense and turn all communications over to it?

Answer --

1. In the first place, communications is a function of command. Command can be exercised only through communications; and therefore, the responsibility for the success of communication can never be divorced from command. Each of the major components must have responsibility for its own essential command and operational communications.

2. In addition, there is a vast difference in the communication requirements of the three major components as soon as we get below the top echelons of command. There is little similarity between communication between ships and the communications which must exist between ground forces, nor is there any counterpart in either the Navy or the ground forces of the Airways Communication System which must link operation airports. At the lower levels, the operation of communications is best done under the control of major component itself.

3. The provision of long lines communications services for the higher echelons of command is similar for the three major components, but the intense preoccupation of any commander with his communications precludes his reliance upon an agency which is in no way under his control. The system we have proposed is a compromise of this principle in the interest of economy. What we propose is that the service best fitted, for various reasons, to operate a given communication facility shall operate it, but that the Joint Communications Board will allocate channels within that facility to the three major components in accordance with their needs. The major component having channel or channels allocated to it in that plant facility will establish at the ends of the channel its own terminal equipment; and from a message traffic viewpoint, will operate those channels. The compromise, in the interests of economy, lies in the fact that this major component is relying upon some other major component for the physical maintenance of the facility in which it has been allocated channels.

QUESTION No. 9. Why can you not eliminate more duplicating circuits than you have indicated?

Answer --

1. You must distinguish between duplicate and parallel. In answering,

Let us consider first the continental United States and then overseas circuits. In the continental U. S., aside from operational communication requirements, all three major components use commercial facilities on an individual telephone call or message basis. When the number of calls or messages between two points reaches a certain volume, economy is achieved by leasing a circuit between those two points, and these leased circuits are formed into networks by the three major components. It is obvious that since circuits are leased for general use only when message volume over that circuit justifies the lease economically, such circuits may parallel but do not duplicate one another. There is a possibility of slight economy where the message traffic is extremely heavy; for example, between Washington and New York, the Navy might have traffic justifying 2 1/2 circuits, the Army might have traffic justifying 2 1/4 circuits, and the Air Force 2 1/4 circuits. Each operating individually might each lease three circuits; whereas jointly, 7 circuits should suffice.

2. Similarly, in overseas communication, there are Navy channels between Washington and Hawaii and there are also War Department channels. The channels of each are presently carrying heavy message traffic pertaining to the major components operating them. They parallel but do not duplicate one another. If a single service were to operate the whole system, any saving in channels could be made only after a careful traffic analysis.

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