

# Ready, Aim, Fire

Congress took aim at the Pentagon bureaucracy in the massive Fiscal 2017 defense authorization bill, stuffing the legislation with significant changes to everything from combatant commands to the defense acquisition shop in an effort to streamline the department's operations.

Many of the changes, some of which have been years in the making, will take effect at or near the outset of the Trump administration.

Perhaps one of the most sweeping reforms in the extensive legislation is language establishing US Cyber Command as its own unified command, a move that elevates the increasingly important and highly technical mission. Since it stood up in 2010, Cyber Command has been a subsidiary of US Strategic Command.

The effort started last year, when Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) said he intended to use the bill to separate Cyber Command from the broader Strategic Command, a move he hopes will make the mission more efficient. But the language actually originated in the House-passed defense bill, which stated that the promotion would "provide greater military readiness and preparedness to carry out assigned missions."

The bill also thwarts internal efforts made by some officials in the Obama administration to end the so-called "dual-hat arrangement" in which the National Security Agency director also serves as the chief of Cyber Command. Specifically, the bill blocks the Pentagon from making any moves to separate those jobs until the Defense Secretary and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman certify to Congress that doing so would not pose unacceptable risks to operations at Cyber Command.

McCain, who championed the provision, has said that he did not want to act prematurely on the matter in the administration's final days. But those who supported the separation, including then-Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., argued that it's simply too big a job for one person to hold.

Meanwhile, the bill makes significant changes to the structure of the Pentagon's powerful acquisition office. Effective February 2018, the bill divides the duties of the undersecretary of defense

for acquisition, technology, and logistics into two new undersecretary positions—one that handles acquisition and sustainment and another charged with research and engineering.

The new structure could change the way the Pentagon buys weapons ranging from bullets to the B-21 bomber. It creates what lawmakers hope will be a healthy tension between the "chief technology officer," who is expected to take risks, and the "chief acquisition officer," whose primary responsibility is delivering programs and services in a timely and cost-effective way.

Meanwhile, the bill seeks to cut 110 general and flag officers from the military's Active Duty ranks by the end of 2022 and requires the Defense Secretary to study job descriptions to justify each senior military position in terms of overall force structure, scope of responsibility, command and control requirements, and force readiness execution.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have expressed concerns that there are simply too many general and flag officers, creating a costly problem that has thrown the troops-to-leaders balance out of whack.

"Over the past 30 years, the end strength of the joint force has decreased 38 percent, but the ratio of four-star officers to the overall force has increased by 65 percent," according to a Senate Armed Services summary of the bill. "Especially at a time of constrained defense budgets, the military services must right-size their officer corps and shift as many personnel as possible from staff functions to operational and other vital roles."

The bill also seeks to cap the size of the National Security Council staff to 200 nonadministrative personnel, a move that lawmakers hope will rein in a White House organization that many on Capitol Hill believe has gained outsized importance in military decision-making as it has grown in the last 25 years.

Congress intended the NSC to be a small group of the President's close advisors, "focused on developing whole-of-government national security strategy and coordinating it across the interagency," according to the Senate Armed Services Committee summary of the bill. Some lawmakers, however, believe the NSC has become too involved in the Pentagon's daily operations and the chain of command.

Other bill highlights include:

- Prohibiting A-10 retirement until F-35 strike fighter initial operational testing and evaluation is complete.
- Boosting oversight of the follow-on F-35 modernization effort by imposing reporting requirements similar to major defense acquisition programs.
- Increasing reporting requirements on the B-21 bomber and establishing ongoing oversight by the Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm.
- Limits the availability of funds for the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System recapitalization program unless the contract for engineering and manufacturing development uses a firm fixed-price contract structure. ✪



Airmen work on cyber warfare operations at JBSA-Lackland, Texas.

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