NAVAL SUPPORT COMMAND

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This article is based on a presentation given to Naval Base Commanders, Fleet Staff and Naval Support Command Area Leaders by three of the authors on 8 July 1992.

ABSTRACT

This article reviews the need for change, explains the emerging structure of the Naval Support Command together with the planned timescale, and suggests the likely effects the new organization may have on the Fleet and the sea-going engineer.

Introduction

Some two years ago, Rear Admiral David Pulvertaft was invited to form a Project to study the workings of the interface between Controller of the Navy (C of N) and Chief of Fleet Support (CFS) and to lead on implementing its recommendations. For this task he was given the elegant title of the Director General Procurement and Support Organisation (Navy) (DGPSO(N)) and a Steering Committee was formed at 2 star level from representatives of all interested parties—Sea System Controllerate (SSC), Procurement Executive (PE), CFS and the customer (Commander-in-Chief Fleet), under the chairmanship of the Deputy Controller (DGSM), who were invited to endorse all major proposals. This is an important point since it demonstrates the breadth of the consensus that has been sought and obtained.

The Project's key proposal was that there should be separate and distinct authorities for the functions of Acquisition (under C of N) and Support (under CFS), the latter being called the Naval Support Command (NSC).

Need for Change

It may be helpful if we consider, briefly, what is meant by In-Service Support, and how the responsibilities for it are currently divided. The key elements, which do not only depend upon engineering disciplines but also the multitude of activities such as spares, fuel, victualling, armaments and port services, are the co-ordination and management of:

(*a*) Update and Upkeep.

(*b*) Diagnosis and Repair.

(*c*) Provision of Engineering Advice to the Fleet.

It might reasonably be supposed that the title of Chief of Fleet Support would imply control of them all. But as will be seen from TABLE 1 there are no less than four Navy Board members who have a role.

TABLE I—*In-service support responsibilities*

Controller of the Navy	*Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command*
Design Sponsorship	Naval Bases
Upkeep Policy (part)	
Update	
Engineering Advice	
Chief of Fleet Support	*Commander-in-Chief Fleet*
DED and Refit Supplies and Transport	Engineering Advice
	Upkeep Policy (part)
	Operational Authority

From a customer point of view, this is an excessive number of interfaces with a seemingly bottomless pit of authorities: what one might consider a fertile breeding ground for confusing and, on occasions, conflicting advice with a high probability of being given a 'dockyard run around' when in search of help. In this situation, it is easy to see why the Project brief included the need to identify areas of overlap between the In-Service Support responsibilities of the existing organizations and to recommend how they should be improved.

Before Admiral Pulvertaft reached the implementation phase of his work there were the dramatic events in the Warsaw Pact countries leading to the collapse of their Communist regimes. These historic events led to the review of the UK's Defence commitments, known as 'Option for Change', and strong pressures for a financial 'peace dividend'. These factors combined to lend a momentum to possible reorganizations which could offer the potential for reducing resource requirements.

After 'Options for Change' came PROSPECT—Post Options Restructuring of Support. One of its many studies looked at ways of streamlining the MOD organization to achieve 20% savings in Headquarters manpower in a very tight timescale. To give an idea of the scale in human terms, this means that CFS's HQ has to lose some 580 out of its current 2900 staff.

Forming the Naval Support Command

Although the vision of the NSC is the provision of a clear focus for the customer for all the previously mentioned elements within a single organization, the picture is complicated by the progressive nature of the development of equipment and ship platform projects as they pass from the cradle towards the grave. This leads to difficulty in defining the points at which transfers of responsibility should take place. We use the term 'maturity' to describe this

process. As this is not an easy concept to define it might best be demonstrated by the typical build profile of a class of eight ships (FIG. 1). This shows for each ship the periods for construction, trials and acceptance phases, against a notional timescale at the bottom.

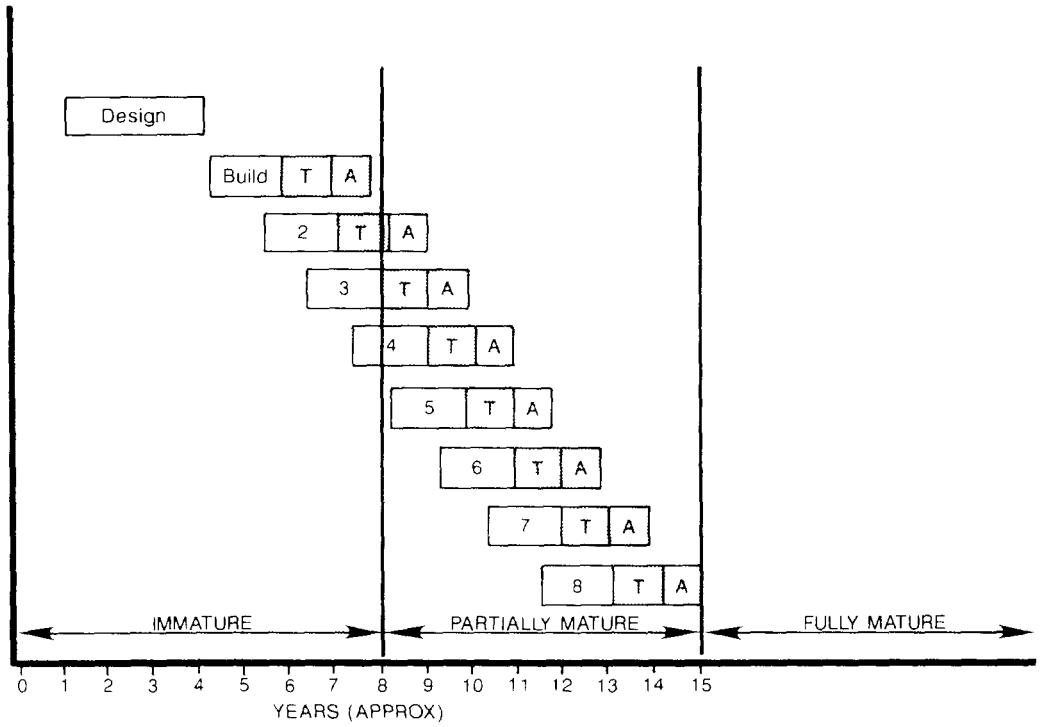

FIG. 1—MATURITY OF SHIPS AND SUBMARINES
A: Acceptance
T: Trials

Three categories of project maturity have been defined which are equally applicable to platforms and equipments:

- Immature—where all responsibility lies in the PE
- Partially Mature—where responsibility is shared between the PE and CFS
- Fully Mature—where all responsibility lies with CFS

The difficult area is, of course, Partial Maturity with the question of shared responsibility. This has been tackled by separating 'responsibility' for a project into two parts: Design Sponsorship and In-Service Support. In this Partially Mature Phase, therefore, the PE will remain the Design Sponsor while the NSC will have responsibility for In Service Support. However, those at sea can forget these bureaucratic complications and remember one golden rule: 'Irrespective of whether an individual equipment is Partially or Fully Mature, the NSC is the first point of contact for support'.

Naval Bases

For CFS to be able to discharge his new responsibility for the totality of In-Service Support, the Navy Board has decided that the support functions within the Naval Bases, such as Engineering, Base Services and Stores Supply, should come under his direct control. The precise details of the new arrangements are being developed.

Top Level Structure

The new top level structure of the Naval Support Command is shown in FIG. 2 which will need amendment in the near future to reflect the Navy Board decision on the management of the naval bases. Amongst these groups are four which are expected to continue to operate in much the same way as they do now. These are the Senior Finance Officer (AUS(FS)) and the Directors General responsible for Supplies and Transport (DGST(N)), Aircraft (DGA(N)) and the Hydrographic Office (H). It is not intended to dwell on these areas any further but to concentrate on the three new groups.

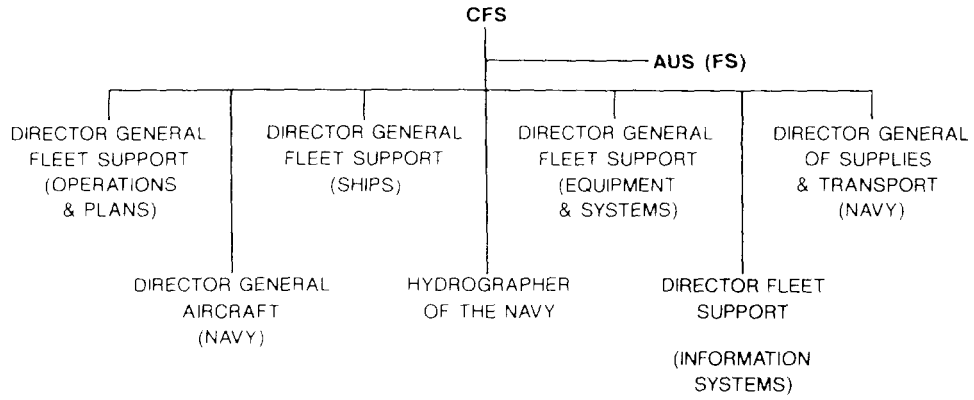

FIG. 2—THE STRUCTURE OF NAVAL SUPPORT COMMAND

Director General of Fleet Support—Ships

The new Director General of Fleet Support for Ships will be responsible for both the upkeep and update of ships and submarines. He will be the design authority for mature vessels and will set the overall engineering support policies for the Fleet. For the first time there will be one officer accountable to CFS for the 'Engineering Availability' of the Fleet. This is a major improvement on the current situation in which the division of responsibility leads to confusion and gaps in accountability. In order to discharge these responsibilities he will have an amalgamation of the current DGSR with the SSC's In-Service ship and submarine projects, further augmented by some members of Fleet Engineering Staff (FES).

Director General Fleet Support—Equipment and Systems

The new DG for Equipments and Systems will be CFS's Equipment expert—solving problems with the multitude of equipments and systems at sea and overcoming their obsolescence. He will operate within and contribute to the setting of DGFS(S) global policies and programmes for achieving Ship and Submarine availability targets. His team will be formed by bringing together from the SSC the majority of DGME and the In-Service Weapons Projects from Portsdown and Portland. This team will be enhanced by other members of the Fleet Engineering Staff, the intention being to pool the currently dispersed centres of expertise and experience. Diesels, gas turbines and sonars are just some examples where this should be possible. Of particular significance is the fact that these engineering teams will also be joined under the same Higher Level Budget (HLB) by their counterparts from the Specialist Engineering Stores Directorate within DGST(N); the concept being that the Support project should have within its own gift the means of most effectively maintaining availability, whether it be by throwing spares at a problem or by developing a design solution.

Director General Fleet Support—Operations and Plans

Finally, the new DG for Operations and Plans will have responsibility for Operational Logistics, the NSC's War Planning, Marine Services, and Communications and Information Systems.

The new Director of Communications and Information Systems will be principally responsible for the provision and maintenance of Logistic Information Systems and the associated Infrastructure for the Navy, which includes interlinking networks. This will include the policing of IT standards and direct control of systems which provide services to more than one business unit both in the long term, through the new Naval Logistics Information System (called NLIS), and in relation to the current systems that the NSC inherits. We also envisage him taking the lead for the Navy in the provision of a unit computing infrastructure for ships and, perhaps, associated activities ashore. His team will be formed by bringing together the NLIS and OASIS projects as well as those who currently manage the other systems which will be transferred to his control.

Location of NSC Headquarters

With some 75% of the new HQ staff already working in the Bath area, it has been decided that the new HQ will be located in the Bath/Chippenham corridor. A number of options are being considered ranging from existing site(s) up-rated, to a green field site.

Timing

The aim is to create the new NSC in time for it to be in business by April 1994. All elements will not, however, come together for the first time on that day as there will be a progressive programme towards that goal with some of the elements of the organization forming much earlier. For example, the Directorate of Naval Logistic Planning (DNLP) amalgamated with part of Directorate of Engineering support (Naval) (DES(N)) and the Directorate of Fleet Supply Duties (DFSD), together with some element of the Director General of Supply and Transport (Naval) (DGST(N)) and Commandant General Royal Marine (CGRM), to create the new Directorate of Naval Logistic Staff Duties (DNLSD) under DGFS(OP) in September 1992.

Effect on the Customer

What will this mean for the sea-going Engineer? First of all, to come right down to basics, if he sees no degradation of service then we have achieved our first objective and absorbed the impact of the PROSPECT cuts. But the aim is to do better than that, by providing a single focal point for 'help' where it is needed, thus reducing the current administrative load and improving the response.

The NSC should not be seen as the *cause* of resource reduction but rather as an example of a *response* to the demands imposed by cuts. The days when the Engineer could overcome bureaucracy by well-directed 'Blue Liners' or 'CSB' are all but gone and our support resources must be concentrated and carefully husbanded if the sea-goer is to get the help that he (or she, of course) needs.

The basic procedures that now exist between sea and shore are not likely to change fundamentally. The response to OPDEFs, for example, will continue to be guided by Fleet Staff to reflect operational priorities. We are, however, reviewing each of these in consultation with Fleet Staff, in order to identify and eliminate such things as bottle-necks or unnecessary duplication.

Mention was made earlier, as part of the process of reducing duplication, that some current FES functions and personnel would join the NSC's Ships and Equipment teams and suggested diesel and gas turbine specialists as examples. Some may doubt the ability of the NSC to deliver the same quality of timely

engineering advice as the current Fleet Engineering Staff (they certainly do). That certainly presents a challenge, not least because the NSC will comprise members from both uniformed and civil service cultures. It is, however, a challenge that has to be faced, since otherwise current pressures for manpower reduction will make some sections too small to be effective. A sizeable proportion of Fleet Engineering Staff will, of course, remain in being to provide the necessary technical advice to the operators and to 'hold the hand' of the inexperienced sea-goer.

Conclusions

This article has tried to make absolutely clear that the NSC is not just another study but an endorsed Project in its implementation phase. To conclude, it is perhaps worth re-iterating the key points that have gained approval:

- The NSC will form by April 1994.
- CFS will move out of London into the NSC HQ in the Bath area.
- The NSC will comprehend all the elements that made up the total business of In-Service Support.
- CFS's primary purpose, and thus the output of the NSC, will be the Material Availability to the Fleet.
- A source of strength for the NSC will be the establishment of multi-disciplinary groups, including integrated engineering and spares teams.
- Despite the complexity of the 'maturity' process, the NSC will always be the first point of contact for support.

There are, of course, a number of significant issues which have yet to be finally resolved and more will doubtless emerge before the NSC is formed. Now that the question of ownership of the Naval Bases is resolved, we are beginning to address the detail of the relationships between the organizations represented at the waterfront in order to provide a clear focus for the NSC's services. It is a firm intention to have the new Headquarters location announced before the end of 1992. Conversely, there is still much to be done to develop the concept of maturity into firm arrangements for conducting business between the new PE and the NSC.

With goodwill and understanding on all sides, these and other issues which will doubtless emerge will be resolved before the NSC is formed in April '94. This article was correct when going to print but the situation may have progressed by the time it reaches the readers.