General TAYLOR. No. The last thing in the world. Why have another four-star man sitting around the Pentagon?

Mr. NICHOLS. The subcommittee is going to recess just long enough to go vote, and Mr. Crane will be next, when we come back, sir.

[Recess.]

Mr. NICHOLS. The subcommittee will come to order.

General Taylor, last year you recommended, and Congressman Skelton included in his bill, a National Military Council to provide the President and the Secretary of Defense advice in the fields of future and national policy and strategy.

As you recall, the Investigations Subcommittee last year accepted your concept, and I believe maybe Mr. Stratton moved that that Board be created.

Following the creation of that Board in our committee bill last year, however, you were somewhat critical of the formulation of the Senior Strategy Board that we created.

Let me ask you. Do you still believe such a body is needed?

And, if so, do you favor the formulation in Representative Skelton's bill? Would you comment generally on what you found wrong with the manner in which we created it last year?

General TAYLOR. I do believe very much in the desirability of such a small group of elder statesmen with a background primarily in military strategy. I would not bar a particularly well-qualified civilian like John McCloy, for example, to join with four or five carefully selected three- or four-star generals or admirals of the thoughtful type. Because you have four stars doesn't mean that you have thought very much or fought very hard. You can do both; it would be nice if these men were equally good in both.

I would be against a large committee, and furthermore I would never prescribe exactly how many. I think I said about five. But all should be chosen on quality; none just to fill a vacancy.

If, indeed, they are willing to give up their major activity to initiate recommendations as well as respond to requests for study from the President, the Secretary, or the Chief of Staff, I have already said the concept is good. Finding these people is hard, but it could be done.

At first it could be tried without legislation, using a volunteer group of men without official status. If I were the Secretary of Defense I think I would vote to do that, and see to what extent able men could be kept busy at worthy tasks and whether the net effect would be to have truly detached, impartial advice without service bias on subjects that don't require speed.

This is where you are thinking a decade ahead, doing the kind of thing that many of them would like to do; but as I indicated before, they can't possibly do.

Mr. NICHOLS. Mr. Ray, do you have any more questions?

Mr. RAY. Yes, sir.

Representative Skelton's bill, in addition to placing the staff under one Chief of Staff, provides a charter for the Joint Staff, and includes measures designed to protect the promotions and other career aspects of Joint Staff officers.

The overall effect of Representative Skelton's bill would make the Joint Staff less dependent on service influence. The administration bill contains no similar provision.