General Joints. A typical joint staffing action can be illustrated by outlining how a request from the Secretary of Defense for JCS views on an important defense issue would be handled.

The Joint Staff action officer is under institutional pressure to find a position with which each of the Services can agree . . . Likewise, the Service action officers are under institutional pressure to insure that Service roles and missions are not abridged, that major Service weapons systems are emphasized, and that a proposed strategy does not imply more than a fair share of emphasis for another Service.

The Joint Staff action officer must prepare the initial draft of the response—called the Primary. In doing so, he or she is bound to consider the views of the Service action officers and the appropriate CINCs. . . . Each Service representative might write a portion of the paper, a portion of the paper might be provided by a CINC or his staff, or the Joint Staff A/O might assume the entire task. Generally, because the Service staffs are larger and have Service-unique data and analysis not available to the Joint Staff, the Joint Staff action officer is very dependent on Service Staff inputs. . . .

Once the Primary is prepared, the Joint and Service action officers meet to discuss its content. . . . For a substantive paper of some length, each Service action officer may have as many as 100 recommended changes. They quickly learn the art of compromise—each agreeing to support the balance of the changes proposed by the other in return for equal support. The Joint Staff action officer then publishes a Buff paper—reflecting the consensus of the meeting. . . .

Each of the action officers who worked on the Primary takes the Buff paper to his Service or Joint Staff planner (O-6). . . . There may be as many as 20 issues left to be resolved. The Planners generally are able to resolve all but two or three or them. The Joint Staff Planner then . . . publishes a final draft on Green paper. . . .

The Service A/O and Planner present the Green to their Service Operations Deputy (on some occasions an additional review layer—the Deputy Operations Deputy—is added).

The Operations Deputies represent the first level of review at which a truly joint perspective is brought to bear on the issue. However, the Operations Deputies are doubhatted, as are the Chiefs, and they are under great institutional pressure to represent Service as well as national interests.

. . . Significant compromise may occur at this level of review. Yet to be resolved issues and divergent views, if any, are highlighted, and the Green is placed on the agenda for the Chiefs to consider.

The Chiefs then consider the Green, make adjustments as necessary, and send the paper to the SECDEF.

In sum, the current Joint Staff process encourages compromise, relies too heavily on Service participation, and depends on staff officers who are well versed in Service interests but are ill prepared to address issues from a joint perspective.

The committee intends that Joint Staff procedures be revised to insure its independence and focus its efforts toward achieving joint military objectives. H.R. 6954 provides that the JCS Chairman shall manage the Joint Staff in the performance of its duties. Moreover, it directs the Secretary of Defense to insure that the Joint Staff is independently organized and operated. Finally, it provides a charter for the Joint Staff which prescribes the objective of its duties: To support the Chairman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in meeting the purposes set forth in the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 401) to provide for the unified strategic direction of the combatant forces, for their operation under unified command, and for their integration into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces. These provisions provide unmistakable authority for the Chairman to revise the current joint staffing procedures and a corresponding responsibility to do so in shaping the Joint Staff to fulfill its charter. In addition, the provisions vest ultimate responsibility in the Secretary of Defense who is charged with insuring Joint Staff independence and that the charter be followed.

H.R. 6954 also modifies the terms of reference for managing the Joint Staff. It removes the condition that the Chairman's management shall be "on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." Thus the Chairman's authority is independent of the JCS. But his management must conform to the Joint Staff charter and would be subject to challenge by the JCS if that body deems Joint Staff support inadequate to its needs. Finally, the provisions would also give the Chairman latitude to elicit Joint Staff support in the performance of his duties as a military adviser in his own right.

An additional provision insures that the Joint Staff will continue to receive information from the services and the combatant commands with respect to reports and recommendations prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As previously emphasized, the committee intends H.R. 6954 to establish conditions in which the Joint Staff is the independent author of its own work. But the committee does not intend to diminish the vital channels of communication between the Joint Staff, services, and combatant commands which are necessary to provide the basic information necessary for competent staff work. To maintain continued intimate interaction among the various military elements as well as insure that channels for dissent remain open, H.R. 6954 provides that, subject to guidelines established by the Secretary of Defense, each officer serving as a chief of service or as the commander of a unified or specified command may have an opportunity to provide formal comments on any report or recommendation of the Joint Staff prepared for submission to the Joint Chiefs of Staff before the report or recommendation is submitted.

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