

Today, the Investigations Subcommittee resumes its examination of the organization of the national military command structure. In effect, we have before us three alternatives: The administration's proposal, last year's bill, and a more far-reaching measure advanced by the Honorable Ike Skelton of Missouri.

In exploring these alternatives, the members of the subcommittee should recall that the bill we reported last year was criticized as being too modest to overcome the problems identified by a majority of the witnesses during the many weeks in which we received testimony last year. Yet the administration's proposal before us is much more timid than our 97th Congress bill. We shall need to find out why the administration believes that the few changes it is recommending will correct the rather fundamental flaws identified in the hearings last year.

On the other hand, we will need to explore with Representative Skelton and, later, Gen. Maxwell Taylor why we should dissolve the present organization and start over, as they propose, without first attempting more moderate remedies within the present framework.

Our first witness this morning will be Representative Skelton. Members of the subcommittee have copies of his bill in their folders. It is H.R. 2560, the Military Command Reorganization Act of 1983.

The bill incorporates a number of the proposals advanced by witnesses who appeared before the subcommittee last year. I want to commend Representative Skelton at this time for recognizing an area of our defense posture where improvement may be needed and working diligently to insure that result.

After Representative Skelton is finished, the subcommittee will hear from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[Following are documents detailing the proposals discussed in Chairman Nichol's opening statement.]

Letter, May 19, 1983, from Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger to the Honorable Bill Nichols supporting the administration's legislative proposal on the organization of the Joints Chiefs of Staff.

Letter, April 18, 1983, from General Counsel of the Department of Defense William H. Taft, IV to Speaker of the House of Representatives Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. with the following attachments: (1) a draft bill to amend Title 10 with respect to the organization of the Joints Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff; (2) sectional analysis of the draft bill. Note: The draft administration bill, when introduced, became H.R. 3145 dated May 25, 1983.

Investigations Subcommittee bill, 97th Congress, H.R. 6954, August 10, 1982, cited as the "Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization Act of 1982."

Speech by the Honorable Richard C. White, Chairman, Investigations Subcommittee, Committee on Armed Services, 97th Congress, Congressional Record, August 16, 1982, explaining the legislative intent of H.R. 6954.

Bill introduced by the Honorable Ike Skelton, April 14, 1983, H.R. 2560, cited as the "Military Command Reorganization Act of 1983."