

An excellent case for strengthening the authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been made by General David C. Jones. His recommendations echo a well-established pattern. His is but the latest expression of a frustration long felt by senior military officers—for all the reasons cited by General Jones—that there must be a better way to shape alternatives and to provide the best possible military advice. Virtually every serious student and practitioner has recommended that the Joint Chiefs of Staff be strengthened. The near unanimity of their views can no longer be ignored, particularly in the light of grave new dimensions to the problem of national security. It should not, therefore, be surprising that the four service chiefs found it somewhat difficult to sit down three times a week and act as a corporate body against some of the very remedies they individually were seeking to apply within their respective services. Given budgets which provide for less than minimum defense needs the Chiefs often found themselves unable to act responsively in their joint role except to the detriment of legitimate service requirements. This "dual hating" dictated by law confers real power with the service chief hat and little ability to influence policy, programing, and budget issues with the joint hat. This is the root cause of the ills which so many distinguished officers have addressed these past 35 years.

Mr. Chairman, that quote is from one of the greatest military leaders of our century, and one of the truly outstanding thinkers that has worn the American uniform, the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Edward C. Meyer.

Mr. Chairman, I submit the recommendations to you. This is a long and arduous trail for reform within the military, and one can only look to the past and see the flaws of the past. It is up to us now to put an end to this history. You know, they say stepping in a hole one time is not so bad, but when you step in that hole a second time, that is bad, you are at fault. Let us not step in the same hole, let us be prepared and have a strong military that can save money, work together, plan programs, and not be at each other's respective interests so that we can truly have a unified and strong military for this decade and for the decades ahead.

I thank the chairman for the opportunity to be with you today.

[Following is the prepared statement of the Honorable Ike Skelton together with the list of reform proposals and an excerpt of testimony by former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara mentioned in Representative Skelton's statement.]

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, Liddell Hart once said, "There are over two thousand years of experience to tell us that the only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out." Specific examples from our own nation's military history unfortunately bear this out:

It was only on the direct orders of President Lincoln that Union forces in the War Between the States began to use Springfield repeating carbines. Following the War, they returned to their single-shot breech loaders.

Despite the fact that the Wright Brothers demonstrated the feasibility of powered flight by heavier-than-air craft in 1903, the United States was compelled to rely on war planes of foreign manufacture throughout World War I. Indeed, the possibilities of air power were unrecognized by our military until a rather graphic demonstration by Billy Mitchell in the 1920's.

The American, Dr. Robert Goddard, pioneered rocketry during the 1920's and 1930's, but it was German, not U.S., ingenuity which put his theories to practical test during World War II.

Despite the development of tanks, automatic weapons, and air power, the U.S. armed forces maintained horse cavalry units through the 1940's. In fact, our current Commander-in-Chief served in one such unit on the eve of World War II.

At the close of World War II, President Truman and General Marshall wanted a truly unified armed forces, under a new Department of Defense. But resistance, particularly by the Navy, led to compromises. Many of the structural flaws in today's