

advice from civilian staffs on matters where the military voice needs to be heard. You indicate that nothing short of fundamental changes in the Joint Chiefs structure is needed. But I would remind the gentleman from Missouri that the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization has been criticized for many decades and the opponents of change have succeeded in defeating even the slightest changes.

Why do you believe that determined action by the Congress to install more moderate changes such as those proposed by General Jones, included in our bill last year, which passed the House, will not be sufficient to take care of the concerns that you express?

Mr. SKELTON. Quite honestly, there is one fundamental flaw. I mentioned several, but the main fundamental flaw is that you have one person—fine and dedicated and truly outstanding as they are, and we are truly blessed, I might say, Mr. Chairman, with the Joint Chiefs that we have today; they are of the highest caliber and I think history will treat them well—but it is absolutely impossible for them in the morning to be head of their service and in the afternoon to sit in a second capacity and to undo what they have been doing in the morning in their own service.

For instance, let us take a Navy example. Suppose within the Navy the great issue is whether to spend a large amount of money on an aircraft carrier or on two *Ohio* class submarines, and this has been wrestled around within the Navy for weeks and debated among all of the military naval thinkers, and the Chief of Naval Operations and all of them finally agree we will build a new aircraft carrier. That is firm. That is our recommendation. Then the meeting is held with the Joint Chiefs and the issue is brought up and the Joint Chiefs have a different opinion. It is asking too much of the CNO to say yes, gentlemen, I will give up, I will yield to your thoughts. What usually happens is some sort of compromise. What usually happens is that each of the services has a wish list of programs and of procurements. One Chief does not drastically touch the others' lists. These are the wish lists provided to the Secretary of Defense and to the administration and hence to us.

We know what difficult times there are. We had to cut some \$10.5 billion from our budget this year. You will recall the tough job. Did we have direct advice from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on saying cut this program or cut this procurement? We had to do a lot of it, Mr. Chairman, on our own. That is the flaw. They cannot do two jobs. They are not superhuman.

Mr. NICHOLS. You go to great lengths in saying that you have tremendous respect for our people—

Mr. SKELTON. Yes, sir.

Mr. NICHOLS [continuing]. Who serve as our Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I know you share the same respect for General Vessey that I do. He will be testifying later. In view of the respect you and I have, would you give us your opinion on the administration's proposal that has been formulated by, and supported by, General Vessey, who has brought it to us before this committee?

Mr. SKELTON. It is the result of obvious compromise within the committee, within the joint system. I am disappointed, Mr. Chairman, that we do not have five testimonies before us today. I think