

the very fact that we have one testimony today, a compromise testimony, which will be presented by General Vessey, points up the very same thing that I am saying. We have some fine military minds that obviously do not agree in every instance. General Meyer has been forthright enough to write an article and testify last year, if you will recall. It is the compromise system of doing things. You cannot do business that way. This is only cosmetic at best. The one good thing they recommend is to establish by law, which my bill does, the chain of command. Other than that, it is mere cosmetics and it does not attack the main issue.

Mr. NICHOLS. Elsewhere in your testimony you seem to feel that the military voice has declined in influence and scope and lost out to Pentagon civilian staffs.

Where do you place the blame for this? Are you blaming the military? Would you explain?

Mr. SKELTON. You cannot blame the caliber of the military, yet you have to blame the system, because their system is a committee system. You have to in any committee system have compromise, in essence a watering-down effect. When a Secretary of Defense or when a President receives recommendations in a compromise fashion or a watered-down-effect fashion he is going to look elsewhere for strong military advice. If it comes from the civilian sector in the Pentagon he is going to take it wherever he can get it.

We should let people of the caliber who serve in these positions express their views. The best way they can do it would be under the bill that I have, either as a service chief, on the one hand, or as a member of the military council that I provided. We have two outstanding members of the Joint Chiefs, Mr. Chairman, that are about to retire, General Meyer and General Barrow. Would it not be fantastic to have their advice in the years ahead as members of the Military Council to advise the President and Secretary of Defense? How blessed we would be would that be the case, but the law does not provide for it now.

Mr. NICHOLS. I want to ask you some questions about that a little later.

Mr. Ray.

Mr. RAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Skelton, for coming before us today and giving us your opinion on the reorganization plan you have here. Former Secretary McNamara recently estimated that 5 percent of the defense budget could be saved if the JCS was reformed—

Mr. SKELTON. Yes, sir.

Mr. RAY. So that it could give better advice on which service programs to keep and which to drop, how to eliminate and so forth. Do you agree with this, or do you have an estimate on how much you think could be saved?

Mr. SKELTON. I think Secretary McNamara is conservative in his thoughts. I think if you have the high caliber of people—I assume you would have the same high caliber—you could save up to 10 percent. However, Secretary McNamara's figure of 5 percent, 5 percent of \$188 billion, is a considerable amount. I think this is terribly important because the people of our country in the years ahead are going to expect us to have a strong military at a very tight budget. As the years go on, should there be a tightening of the mil-