

itary budget, you are going to see the present system not doing well. As the budget expands, as more money is coming forward and coming forth, the present system works because everyone's wish list can be accommodated. When the wish list and various military services are going to have to be cut, that is when you have trouble.

Mr. RAY. Has your research indicated a specific percentage up to 10 or over 10 percent?

Mr. SKELTON. I would hope up to 10 percent.

Mr. RAY. The National Security Act states that the Congress does not intend to create a general staff.

Mr. SKELTON. That is correct.

Mr. RAY. But your proposal to establish a Joint Military Staff headed by a chief of staff, is that in conflict?

Mr. SKELTON. Not at all. I wish to point out, all during the hearings last year, and the recommendations made by General Jones, which are incorporated in my bill, at no time has there ever been an implication that this is the creation of a general staff. It allows for people to be appointed to the staff for 3 years, and to be reappointed for an additional 3 years. But they must then lay out. It does allow an increase in the number to be brought back, I think from 30 up to 100, to be brought back at less than a 3-year interval. But it still keeps the rotation going.

I have talked to a number of people, both active and retired, more active than retired. Many of the bright young majors, captains, lieutenant colonels, and their comparable ranks in other services, do not want a joint assignment. And you want those very, very able people to be drawn into this joint assignment. That is what we are trying to do. The only changes that we make is to provide for them to obtain some of the finest service officers and to also provide for their promotion which under the present system might pass them by should they be a member of the Joint Staff.

Mr. RAY. Your proposal would be that the National Military Council would be an ongoing body. Is that correct?

Mr. SKELTON. That is correct.

Mr. RAY. Now, if the President and the Secretary of Defense were not able to appoint their own choices to this body, would it be likely to have much influence in rendering military advice?

Mr. SKELTON. I think it does. First, they would be some of the outstanding, probably four-star, but in some cases three-star, retirees of our country. And they are staggered in terms, so that every year the President is going to have the opportunity to either keep or replace someone on that military council. I think that it would be a body that could keep its continuity, and yet upon the desire of the President and the advice of the Secretary of Defense, they could change its complexion over a period of just a few years.

Mr. RAY. But it seems to me that the members of your proposed National Military Council would lose touch rather quickly after they were separated from day-to-day operations. If so, could their advice be given credibility by the present Secretary of Defense?

Mr. SKELTON. Actually they do not lose touch. They lose the upward pressure from within their own service. They are still going to retain the bias of the Air Force and the Marines or the Navy or Army because that was their life for many, many years. But they would have an objective view. If you had the opportunity,