

so, the biases with which they live for so many years. I think that is a good thing.

Mr. NICHOLS. Your suggestion has a good ring to it, but there are questions I have to ask you. Once a four-star retires, then he becomes a member of the old guard, so to speak, and you have a new crowd in, new ideas, new viewpoints and so forth. You recall the testimony received from the former Secretary of Defense before the full committee just a few days ago. This gentleman, for all of his expertise 16 years ago, has been out of pocket 16 years, out of the mainstream. The question was asked the gentleman, as you recall: Have you been briefed recently? The response, I believe, No, he did not need to be briefed. Is this the type of person that you visualize would serve a real spot in trying to rectify some of the things that are of concern to both of us?

Mr. SKELTON. I would first say I disagree with a number of his decisions some 16 years ago. Second, it would be the duty and the opportunity for anyone serving on this Joint Military Council, Mr. Chairman, to be briefed, to be brought up to date with modern proposals. That would be his job. He would not sit in an ivory tower with his 1940 books. He would be thinking in today's terms using his vast years of experience in making recommendations.

Mr. NICHOLS. Now you bring these people back. You put them in uniform. You would restore their stars for the term of office in which they serve. You would need additional slots in order to do that. The services traditionally bring requests before the Military Personnel and Compensation Subcommittee, now chaired by the gentleman from Wisconsin, for additional general officers. You were not in the Congress when this last came to the floor, but I can tell you the persuasion of Congress has not been very sympathetic toward providing additional general officer and admiral slots. It is always brought to the attention of the Congress that currently we have more admirals and we have more generals than we had during the height of World War II; I believe the figure is around 1,175 or 1,200. What degree of optimism would you feel toward Congress granting those additional slots, five four-star billets?

Mr. SKELTON. I would not think there would be much trouble at all given the fact this is going to end up making a more unified operation and an opportunity to save money within the military. I think, quite frankly, the people in the Congress could understand the reason for what we are doing. We are providing a method which in the long run will allow us to have a strong, adequate, lean defense.

Mr. NICHOLS. Well, we will need your help on the floor to help us argue that point.

Mr. SKELTON. Yes, sir, you have that.

Mr. NICHOLS. Mr. Lally.

Mr. LALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Skelton, in our hearing last year, any proposal for centralization of military authority in one individual was generally opposed by both active duty and retired military personnel. It was more favorably received by the civilian witnesses that we had.

The objection seemed to be that this would be a trend away from the civilian control over the Department of Defense by centralizing