

well be the case, and should be the case, at a time when the defense budget is rising at a peacetime record rate.

I find myself wondering what would happen if circumstances changed and you had to accept less than we talked about. Many critics claim that the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a group has very little influence on the budget because the members can't agree on cuts for their specific services. Since the Joint Chiefs of Staff cannot make these decisions, then the civilian sector, the program analysis and evaluation group and elsewhere, has to do this.

My question is, given the current Joint Chiefs of Staff's very harmonious relationship, could you gentlemen right now advise the Congress as a body, and the President, where to cut the budget from the administration's 10 percent growth in the event that we are going to have to accept something like 5 percent or thereabouts?

I guess I am asking you, as a body, in the confines of your deliberations, I am not asking you if we are going to cut this one or the other. But suppose we were to ask you that? Have you some sort of document, somewhere in the confines of the Pentagon drawers, that would assist this committee?

It is a tough question, General. Nobody likes the cut, but we are faced with the dilemma that is pretty apparent, I think, and I just have to put that question to you, sir.

General VESSEY. Let me give my part of the answer, then you might want to ask the other Chiefs.

Certainly the Joint Chiefs in their deliberations as a body look at the national strategy and look at force requirements for that national strategy. I think we have the best bit of advice on what the risks are if those force requirements aren't met.

We as a body can also give general directions on where one might have to cut, where one might cut with the least amount of risk in the general sorts of the force structure.

But I think when it comes to cutting within that guidance, when it comes to specific cuts, then we need the advice of the services because they are the ones that are responsible for building forces and they know where the efficiencies come in making cuts.

As a body we can give general strategic advice on what the general areas ought to be cut, and what general areas ought not to be cut. Then, it seems to me the mechanism has to work with the advice of the service chiefs looking at the individual budgets.

I would ask my colleagues.

Mr. NICHOLS. Before I seek responses from other members—the concern has been voiced about the situation when we get the knife out. And it is evident we are going to have to make some cuts. Admiral Watkins has 30 years in the U.S. Navy. He doesn't want to cut the carrier. General Barrow thinks there is nothing like the Marine Corps, and the same way with General Gabriel and General Meyer. There is a feeling that there are pressures within those services. They are saying, don't let them cut the Marine Corps, General. Be sure to save the B-1 and other planes, don't let them cut that.

Could I have some comments from the members on that? That is one of the concerns that has been expressed that needs change.