

Would you comment just briefly without calling any names or casting any wrath on anybody?

General VESSEY. Well, I think that all of those people probably have advice and wisdom to lend. I want to tell you that we have no reluctance to call on former chiefs or former commanders in chief of unified and specified commands for advice on either general or specific subjects. So, we can and do do that now.

Mr. NICHOLS. In practice do you frequently do this?

General VESSEY. Well, it all depends on what you call frequently, but certainly it is not uncommon to do it. For example, we are testing out a training program for newly appointed flag officers and we tasked three former senior field commanders, commanders in chief, to assist us in this evaluation of that program. After the rescue attempt in Iran, the Joint Chiefs at that time called on former chiefs and commanders in chief to evaluate that particular program and to give them advice on it. So, it is not an uncommon thing to do. The Defense Science Board frequently asks former chiefs or commanders in chief of—

Mr. NICHOLS. The Scowcroft Commission would be a very fine example of that.

General VESSEY. A good example.

Mr. NICHOLS. The President I believe has recreated that or extended that tour.

General VESSEY. Yes, sir.

Admiral WATKINS. Well, I certainly agree that advisory boards are important. I have had one, as had my predecessors for 11 to 12 years, called the CNO Advisory Panel. This executive group is mixed with bipartisan representatives, civilian and military. Admiral Inman, for example, is a member, a very valuable member of that committee.

In addition we meet annually with all the prior Chiefs of Naval Operations. We present them with the latest Soviet threat, the analyses we have conducted, our strategy, our maritime strategy, how it plays with, say, the war in Central Europe or defense of the United States, the Western Pacific, and the like. We then meet with the unified commanders and decide whether or not we should influence the maritime strategy out in the field. We have talked to General Rogers in Europe to show how the maritime strategy in the Northern Atlantic can help the outcome of the war in Central Europe. We are getting advice from as many people as we can.

In the Defense Science Board, Admiral Kidd was one of the members. General Blanchard, who had headed the Army in Europe, was another. So we do seek their advice.

I know when the report came out on the aborted hostage rescue that it made a recommendation that when we had a complex operation of this type in the future, that an advisory panel be brought in. These panels are not statutory in nature. I think when you go to statutory panels you have a different ball game. Then you have a committee. But can a committee have the full responsibility and accountability for a decision?

Who are on the committees? We genuinely tried to understand how to make the group of 10 advisers that were proposed in the prior congressional bill work by saying, How do you pick these individuals? How do you avoid politicization of that group? How do