

We don't want to try to lead you to believe that only those changes in the law are all the changes that need to be made. We need to make some changes and we are making some changes in the way we do our business as a body, and the way we do our business with the Secretary of Defense and his civilian staff.

Mr. RAY. Thank you.

I read in last year's testimony, although I was not on the committee, that an overwhelming majority of the witnesses testified to the problems that were existing. It seems to me that your proposal for correcting some of these is rather modest. Do you think that is really going to do the job—the proposal that you have recommended?

General VESSEY. Yes, we think that proposal, plus the other changes that we see that need to be made; that is, those are changes that we believe do not require changes to the law. But we believe that both sets of changes need to be made, not just the changes in the law. We need to improve in all facets of it and we are working at that now. We think we see some progress. We have a longer way to go.

Mr. RAY. Well, thank you.

That is all the questions I have.

Mr. NICHOLS. Mr. Britt.

Mr. BRITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My understanding is that something like a fourth of the officers assigned to the Joint Staff have had previous joint experience. Only a fraction of those that receive the joint training have been assigned to the joint positions. In my experience in the Reserves, I find there is a lack of continuity. What would be your reaction to a joint specialty in each service or some means of identifying bright, cunning officers on a planned basis, giving them either a joint specialty or at least some of the interaction on a direct recurring basis, so that at some point they would have this awareness of the importance of the Joint Staff, or the joint decisions, and thus perhaps create a multiservice viewpoint rather than the single-service viewpoint?

General VESSEY. Well, what we have done is to propose a change in the law which permits us to extend the terms of service on the Joint Staff. The other changes that we can make are internal changes. First is the attention of these four service chiefs to providing high quality officers to the Joint Staff and to joint duty. They have all pledged to do that. I think that is underway.

There are some administrative things we have under way now. The services have agreed to a common system for identifying people who have had joint experience so that information is readily available to us. We can get a better look at the overall experience that might be available to fill a given job.

I would ask the Chiefs if they would like to respond.

General GABRIEL. I would like to comment on the quality of our people in the Joint Staff, just speaking primarily for the Air Force. I think some have maligned the quality there. It is much better than you think. The Air Force people on the Joint Staff have a much higher special rate of promotion at all ranks than the Air Force average. We have five four-stars in the Air Force today who either served on the Joint Staff or assisted in the Chairman's