

through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which may also issue orders by the authority and direction of the Secretary of Defense. The de facto role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in serving as the link between the Secretary of Defense and the combatant commands is nowhere officially recognized, and the Chairman is explicitly prohibited by statute from exercising military command over any of the armed forces. The Department of Defense legislative proposal would correct this anomaly and ensure the efficiency of the chain of command by recognizing the role of the highest ranking officer of the armed forces in transmitting the orders of the President and the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Clarification of this kind is essential to avoid any confusion or untimely debate of matters that may prove vital to the very survival of this nation.

The other general subject area of legislation that was identified as being in need of modification concerns certain statutory restrictions on the Joint Staff. It is, of course, the work of the Joint Staff that provides the essential support for the recommendations and advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Under the current law an officer on the Joint Staff, including its Director, is limited during peacetime to a three year maximum tour of duty, with reassignment to the Joint Staff not permitted under any circumstances for the Director and precluded for three years for other officers. Under the Department of Defense proposal the maximum tour would be extended to four years, with reassignment routinely authorized after two years. Immediate reassignment with the approval of the Secretary of Defense is also made possible for any number of officers on the Joint Staff, thereby overturning the 30 officer limitation on such reassignments imposed by the current law. In addition, the prohibition on the reassignment of the Director of the Joint Staff is rescinded, along with the 400 officer limitation on the total size of the Joint Staff.

The foregoing proposed modifications in the statutory restrictions on the Joint Staff are specifically designed to improve the functions of that organization by:

1. Eliminating the artificial limit of 400 officers in the Joint Staff. To satisfy the ever increasing complexity of the vital military issues faced by the Joint Staff it has been necessary over the years to create the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide necessary ancillary staff work in support of the 400 officer Joint Staff. To permit greater interchange of personnel and avoid artificial organizational arrangements and restrictions, the 400