

50 sessions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrestling with a very difficult set of issues before the Presidential decision of last November. We had a differing set of views, which isn't bad in this town, and we came up with a 3-to-2 vote which got a lot of publicity. It is unfortunate it did. In my opinion, it was an internal decision. We all felt that MX had to be fielded. It had to be fielded right away and on time.

There was a question about the basing mode and we disagreed on that. The Chairman encouraged constructive dissent in accordance with the provisions of the existing law, and the Secretary of Defense encouraged that dissent to be expressed to the President. This Chairman of the Joint Chiefs gave a presentation before the National Security Council that was reported to have been one of the finest presentations ever made over there by a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff because he did put in the dissenting opinion of every member explaining why we dissented and our rationale.

Now, in my opinion that provision of the law is adequate today, and you will be better served by five people voting 3-to-2 than one person with an assured yes vote.

Mr. LALLY. General Gabriel.

General GABRIEL. I agree, I think taking the Chiefs out of the joint business will be a big mistake.

General MEYER. I believe there are two issues. I think that under the current situation, what has been outlined is correct, but I must remember there are legislative changes proposed to make the Chairman the principal military adviser to the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. LALLY. General Vessey, you identified the quality and the timeliness of advice as one of the criteria that you used in evaluating reorganization proposals. Have you been able to effect any changes which would improve the timeliness and the quality of the advice to the national command authorities?

General VESSEY. Yes, I think we have and I think that is part of our relationship with the President and the Secretary of Defense. That is, in times past, I am sure it has varied with different sets of Chiefs. I know in my past service, either as Vice Chief of Staff or Deputy for Operations, there have been times when the Chiefs felt that they weren't asked for advice. This particular body here has taken the view the President is going to get our advice whether he asks for it or not, and I think that is the right thing, the right view for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to have.

I don't think you change that by any changes in the law. There just needs to be that carefully tended relationship between and among the President and his military advisers and he has to understand he is going to get our advice. He doesn't have to take it, certainly, but we need to understand that he needs our advice and we need to get it to him on time on the important national security issues.

Mr. LALLY. In his testimony last year former Secretary Brown pointed out that he found, because of this lack of timeliness, that he and the President had to resort to the civilian advisers. Has there been any evidence of that during your tenure as chairman?

General BARROW. Let me add to that question because I have been there 4 years and I think we have been dancing around a