

in this initiative, as I see it, is that the Secretary is now willing to concentrate the power of this position in a single officer rather than in a less dangerous committee.

Now, the power, of course, is not great. In fact, the language of H.R. 3145 authorizes the Chairman to do little more than forward orders from the President and the Secretary to field commanders, which, to me, is pretty much a clerical function.

If the intention is to elevate the Chairman notably above his colleagues, that result is not achieved.

The other proposal in H.R. 3145 is to moderate some of the restrictions on service on the Joint Staff. The changes proposed are reasonable but also of little importance.

In reading H.R. 3145 and related papers, I get a quite different impression of the attitudes of the Secretary and of the Chairman toward the need for JCS reform.

The Secretary sees little, if any, need for change, convinced, as he says, that the present system "has provided Presidents and Secretaries of Defense with competent military advice for more than 30 years, while maintaining effective civilian control of the military."

The Chairman, General Vessey, in his testimony before you, is inclined to concede the existence of past faults in the system but believes that he and his colleagues have agreed on a series of remedial actions, which, if allowed to run their course, will correct the defects.

They make an impressive list, but unfortunately offer no remedy to old weaknesses, such as the following:

- A. The excessive workload of the dual-hatted Chiefs;
- B. Their demonstrated inability to produce timely advice on matters much beyond next year's budget;
- C. The inevitable service bias they bring to the council table; and
- D. The inherent defects of committee action—slowness, ponderosity, indecisiveness, and compromise.

Until some way is found to remedy these ills, my sincere hopes for the success of the Vessey program will remain considerably higher than my expectations.

Now, what action might this committee take regarding H.R. 3145?

It is clear that the Secretary is prepared to stand pat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff system as it is and would strongly resist any major changes such as those contained in Congressman Skelton's bill.

Even if Congress were to pass this latter bill, the cold reception it would receive in many parts of the Pentagon would nullify many of its basic purposes. For any such drastic change in military organization to succeed, it must have the support, cooperation and good will of the principal officials, legislative and executive, responsible for it.

If the committee shares my belief as to the present unacceptability of H.R. 2560, what should be done about H.R. 3145 and its pallid content?

It would be unfortunate, in my opinion, to pass it in its present form, if only because doing so would imply agreement with the Sec-