

retary that all is well with the Joint Chiefs of Staff system. I sincerely hope that this is not the view of this committee.

A better course, I believe, would be to recommend passage of the bill with certain amendments to give it more substance. Since a major purpose of the bill is to increase the authority of the Chairman, let's give him something of real significance. I would recommend the following three amendments:

A. Change the language of H.R. 3145 bearing on the chain of command to read as follows:

The channel of command runs from the President to the Secretary and through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the combatant commands. Orders to these commands from the President or the Secretary pass through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is authorized to communicate as needed with the combatant commands to verify the execution of such orders and to assure the maintenance of the state of readiness required by the strategic tasks assigned the commands.

Such a change would eliminate the impression that the Chairman is merely a communications robot mechanically conveying military orders from the President or the Secretary, neither of whom has a military staff to assist in drafting such orders.

My second suggestion:

B. Add a new paragraph to the bill as follows:

The Chairman, JCS, in presiding over the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be responsible from the timely conduct of business within that body, with authority to settle issues on which the members are divided. Any member may appeal the Chairman's decision to the Secretary of Defense.

This device of a so-called executive chairman was used quite successfully in some of the large standing committees in the Kennedy administration, where I think it did expedite business.

C. The third recommendation is a new paragraph, to make the Chairman, Joint Chiefs a regular member of the National Security Council. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by law, have long been responsible for advising the NSC, they have never had a representative of their own at the meetings. The Chairman has normally attended, but that has been at the invitation of the Secretary of Defense.

In combination, these three changes, I believe, should clarify and strengthen the position of the Chairman and thereby facilitate the job of General Vessey in carrying out his in-house reform program.

In addition, I should think that Congress would want to check periodically on the progress of this program and seek evidence that adequate military advice is reaching the President and the Secretary during the policymaking stage, as well as during policy execution.

This could be accomplished to some degree by requiring at appropriate times detailed answers from the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs to the following questions regarding our military policy:

A. What are the threats to national security which are deemed so urgent as to require ready military force to cope with them?

B. To provide this military force, what are the strategic tasks for which our Armed Forces should be prepared?

C. How will the major items of the next military budget contribute to these tasks? This is a test of the essentiality for spending money.