

commands shall be issued by the President and the Secretary through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff."

Thus the only difference between the bill and the Department of Defense directive, now twelve years old, is the omission of the title, National Command Authorities, no reference to "duly deputized alternates or successors" and the replacement by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a body in the channel of command. The only news 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.

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, 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 all seem 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 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 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: (1) the excessive workload of dual-hatted Chiefs; (2) their demonstrated inability to produce timely advice on matters much beyond the next year's budget; (3) the inevitable service bias they bring to the council table; and (4) the inherent defects of committee action—slowness, ponderosity, indecisiveness and compromise. Until some way is found to remedy these ills, my truly sincere hopes for the success of the Vessey program will remain considerably higher than my expectations.

What action might this committee take regarding H.R. 3145? It is clear that the Secretary of Defense 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 H.R. 2560. 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 doubt 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 to pass it in its present form if only because doing so would imply agreement with the Secretary that all is well with the Joint Chiefs of Staff system. I hope that 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, Joint Chiefs of Staff, let us give him something of real significance. I would recommend the following:

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 Secretary, neither of whom has a military staff to assist in drafting such orders.

b. Add a new paragraph to the bill as follows:
 "The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in presiding over the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be responsible for 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."

In the Kennedy Administration, this device of an "executive chairman" was used with considerable success in expediting action in several senior committees.