

In the World Wars we had the buffers of geography and of allies who could carry the fight until we mobilized and deployed. After World War II we depended largely on our nuclear superiority to cover a growing imbalance in conventional capability and deter direct clashes with the Soviets. However, today we no longer have the luxury of the buffers which in the past had allowed us to mobilize, organize and deploy after a conflict began. In fact today the factors of time, geography, and the strategic balance work largely to our disadvantage; they compound rather than mitigate our deficiencies in conventional force size, readiness and deployability.

In 1982, 1983 and 1984, the House Committee on Armed Services pressed forward with legislation aimed at JCS reform. Although the House of Representatives gave strong support to this effort, it was not reciprocated in the Senate. Beginning in 1985, however, the Senate Armed Services Committee indicated strong interest in pursuing structural reform issues.

In 1985, the House enacted legislation that provided for comprehensive reformation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That legislation, which is now before the Senate, will:

- Make the Chairman the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense;
- Extend the term of the Chairman of the JCS and authorize the Secretary of Defense to route the operational chain of command through him to the unified and specified commanders;
- Give the Chairman control over the Joint Staff;
- Create the post of Deputy Chairman of the JCS to act for the Chairman in his absence and thus insure continuity of operations and leadership;
- Give the Chairman or his deputy a voice in the deliberations of the National Security Council; and
- Strengthen the Joint Staff.

Only four years ago, when the committee began looking at JCS reform, these concepts were viewed as revolutionary and highly controversial. Many within the Pentagon argue that there is much more to be done. As retired General Edward C. Meyer, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and a member of the JCS put it:

I don't believe that you can tinker with the issues any longer; tinkering will not suffice. Only by taking on some of the issues which in the past have been put in the box which says "too tough to handle," are we going to have the kind of operational advice and military advisors that the next two decades out to the 21st century are going to demand.

Taking the comments of General Meyer to heart, the committee is now looking at the following four issue areas:

- (1) the role of the commanders-in-chiefs (CINCs) of the unified and specified commands.
- (2) the selection, training and promotion of officers serving in joint assignments.
- (3) the organizational structure and bureaucracy of the top management of the Department of Defense.
- (4) the role of the Department of Defense agencies (e.g., Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Mapping Agency, etc.).