

- improved the efficiency of the defense procurement system and made it more responsive to future threats and technological needs; and
- reestablished the bipartisan consensus for a strong national defense.

The Packard Commission has charted a three-part course for improving our Nation's defense establishment. I have already directed implementation of its recommendations where that can be accomplished through Executive action. In this message, I ask that the Congress enact certain changes in law that will further improve the organization and operation of the Department of Defense. Now, the remaining requirement for reform lies within the Congress itself.

I began this message by emphasizing the important role of Congress in our defense establishment. In the organizational changes we now address, the Congress should be commended for fulfilling its broad responsibility to make laws to organize and govern the armed forces. However, with respect to the changes we must consider in the areas of budget, resource allocation, and procurement, the future is much less certain. To establish the stability essential for the successful and efficient management of our defense program, the Congress must be more firmly committed to its constitutional obligations to raise and support the armed forces.

Within the limits of my authority as President, I will continue to improve and refine the national security apparatus within the Executive branch. And I will support any further changes in procedures, regulations, or statutes that would improve the long-term stability, effectiveness, and efficiency of our defense.

In having fully committed ourselves to implementing the Packard Commission's recommendations, this Administration has overcome the difficult bureaucratic terrain that has stood in the path of previous efforts. Now, we face a broad ocean of necessary congressional reforms in which the currents of politics and jurisdiction are equally treacherous. We must not stop at the water's edge.

Only meaningful congressional reform can complete our efforts to strengthen the defense establishment and develop a rational and stable budget process—a process that provides effectively and efficiently for America's security over the long haul.

With a spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship, confident that we can rise to this occasion, I stand ready to work with the Congress and meet the challenge ahead.

RONALD REAGAN.

THE WHITE HOUSE, April 24, 1986.

