

DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS

In its more than 3-year study of the organization and decision-making procedures of the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Congress, the Committee examined a total of 34 specific problem areas. One obvious conclusion of the Committee's work is that the problems currently plaguing the Department of Defense have not just recently evolved. For the most part, they have been evident for much of the post-World War II period; some problems even predate this period. In the last several years, the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other DoD officials have recognized a number of these problems and have implemented numerous improvements. The Committee has concluded, however, that many serious problems remain.

For many of the problems examined by the Committee, legislative action would be inappropriate; others could only be partially remedied by legislation. In its work on this bill, the Committee focused on ten problems which it considered appropriate for legislative action. These problems are briefly described in this portion of the report. A more detailed description and analysis of each problem is contained in the Committee staff's study, "Defense Organization: The Need for Change" (Senate Print 99-86).

1. Imbalance between Service and joint interests

Under current arrangements, the three Military Departments and four Services exercise power and influence which are out of proportion to their statutory duties. The predominance of Service perspectives in DoD decision-making results from three basic problems: (1) the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) is not organized to effectively integrate Service capabilities and programs into the forces needed to fulfill the major missions of DoD; (2) the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) system is dominated by the Services which retain an effective veto over nearly every JCS action; and (3) the unified combatant commands are also dominated by the Services, primarily through the strength and independence of the Service component commanders within those commands and constraints placed upon the authority of the unified combatant commanders. In sum, the problem of undue Service influence arises not from Service malfeasance, but principally from the weaknesses of organizations that are responsible for joint military preparation, planning, and operations.

2. Inadequate joint military advice

The JCS system has not been capable of adequately fulfilling its responsibility to provide useful and timely joint military advice. The institutional views of the JCS often take too long to prepare; are not in the concise form required by extremely busy senior officials; and frequently do not offer clear, meaningful recommendations on issues affecting more than one Service.

3. Inadequate quality of joint duty military personnel "

Regarding joint duty military personnel, Hanson W. Baldwin, the noted newspaper columnist, made the following statement in 1949: