

the faceless members of the Joint Staff. The result will be the creation of a new bureaucracy, and one that has even less accountability than those from which current responsibilities are transferred.

Finally, the Committee included a provision [Title I, Section 152(a)(2)], which was highly contested and strongly opposed by some members, to require that the term of a sitting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expire "not later than six months after the accession to office of a new President." In the view of several members of the Committee, that provision is a dangerous step toward even further politicization of the office of the Chairman.

Politicization has been evident for some years, but the tremendous powers given to the Chairman by the bill make the situation even more serious.

THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Somewhat to the surprise of several members of the Committee, the provisions governing the creation of the new position of Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff proved to be more controversial, and less susceptible to compromise solution, than those governing the Chairman and the JCS as a body.

The bill provides [Title I, Section 153(b) and (d)] for the creation of a Vice Chairman who is senior to all the other members of the JCS except the Chairman and who acts for the Chairman in the event of his absence or disability "unless otherwise directed by the President or Secretary of Defense."

The current members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the immediately previous Chairman, and many other authorities, took strong exception to the provision that the Vice Chairman act on behalf of the Chairman. Its effect and intent is to destroy the currently operative rotation among the Service Chiefs as Acting Chairman, and thereby to diminish substantially the incentive and rewards for the Service Chiefs to participate actively and effectively in the consideration of problems and formulation of advice. Many senior officers closely involved with the functioning of the JCS contend that the provision addresses a problem that no longer exists and has not existed under the current Chairman and his predecessor.

Moreover, the specification that the Vice Chairman rank ahead of all the members of the JCS except the Chairman has also been the source of considerable disagreement. Conferring a superior rank upon an individual who has no fixed responsibilities except as the alter ego of the Chairman is hard to reconcile with the considerable responsibilities incumbent upon the Service Chiefs in their capacities in their own Services.

Nonetheless, the Committee rejected the suggestions that the Vice Chairman rank as the sixth rather than as the second of the members of the JCS, that the current rotating system for the Acting Chairman be continued, and that the Vice Chairman not act as Chairman or do so only as part of the rotation.

In this instance as well, the position taken by the Committee and incorporated in the bill is substantially at variance from the position taken by the President's Blue Ribbon Commission. That Commission supports the creation of the Vice Chairman, but defines his standing and responsibilities in a very different way: