

*JCS chairman's advisory role*

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is uniquely qualified to assume additional responsibilities as an adviser championing the unified military viewpoint. He is the only member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who has no service responsibilities. Though chairmen continue to wear the uniforms of their services, experience has shown that they have traditionally assumed a joint or unified perspective in evaluating military issues, unbiased by former service ties.

H.R. 3622 would establish the chairman as the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense. It would, moreover, give him control of the Joint Staff to assist him in developing his formal positions. The chairman's advisory responsibility would be all inclusive. The committee intends, however, that the chairman give special attention to those issues that the corporate JCS has been unable to address effectively—for example, resource allocation, roles and missions, the Unified Command Plan, joint doctrine, and joint training.

The chairman would continue to preside over the Joint Chiefs of Staff and would benefit from the Chiefs' deliberations. The "essential linkage" between the input and output sides of the armed forces, emphasized by General Allen, would be maintained. The enhanced authority of the chairman would, however, correct the flaw in the established coequal committee structure. He would formulate his advice and perform the other duties now assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff from a national perspective detached from, but cognizant of, service interests.

The committee does not intend that strengthening the chairman's advisory role have the effect of excluding the Joint Chiefs from rendering advice to civilian authorities. To the contrary, the committee has included provisions safeguarding against this result. But the committee intends to focus the full JCS on the most significant joint issues. At present, the JCS system addresses approximately three thousands issues a year. Only a small fraction of those issues—perhaps as few as one or two hundred—involve major national security issues. Yet any service chief who wants his way on any issue can slow down the entire system, or bring it to a halt.

The committee intends that the chairman assume sole responsibility for handling the second-order joint military issues and that both the chairman and the full JCS address major joint issues. In strengthening the chairman, the committee intends to create a counterpoise to, but not a substitute for, the corporate JCS body. The committee believes that the advice of the entire JCS, from whatever perspective it is derived, should be available to the President and the Secretary of Defense on major issues. Consequently, the committee has included provisions in H.R. 3622 that ensure that the President and Secretary of Defense will receive the advice of the full JCS when they request it. The committee believes that the Secretary should establish guidelines for the submission of advice by the full JCS.

The bill also includes another provision to safeguard the channel of communication between the JCS and civilian authorities. It affords each service chief the right to submit his advice directly to