

The committee intends that Joint Staff procedures be revised to ensure its independence and to focus the efforts of the staff on achieving joint military objectives. H.R. 3622 would remove the requirement that the JCS chairman manage the Joint Staff "on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" and would provide instead that the Joint Staff perform such duties as the chairman prescribes. That is, H.R. 3622 would give complete, undiluted control of the Joint Staff to the JCS chairman. The bill would also direct the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Joint Staff is independently organized and operated. Finally, the bill would provide a charter for the Joint Staff that prescribes the objective of its duties: to support the chairman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in meeting the purposes set forth by Congress in the National Security Act of 1947, to provide for the unified strategic direction of the combatant forces, for their operation under unified command, and for their integration into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces.

One reason for shifting control of the Joint Staff to the chairman, of course, is to assist him with his increased responsibilities. Equally compelling, in the view of the committee, is the necessity to place in one individual the tools necessary to revitalize the Joint Staff. The provisions relating to the Joint Staff would provide unmistakable authority for the chairman to revise the current joint staffing procedures and a corresponding responsibility to do so in shaping the Joint Staff to fulfill its charter. In addition, the provisions would vest ultimate responsibility in the Secretary of Defense who would be charged with ensuring Joint Staff independence and that the charter be followed.

Mindful of the additional tasks to be performed by the Joint Staff, the committee, in accordance with an Administration request, also recommends repeal of the 400-man statutory limit on the size of the Joint Staff. According to Department of Defense officials, however, significant increases in Joint Staff size are not anticipated. The committee believes that streamlining the joint staffing process should free officers in the present organization to perform some of the additional duties. If, as a result of added responsibilities, staff increases are deemed necessary after Joint Staff procedures are updated, the committee expects the increases to be offset by corresponding decreases in service and other Department of Defense staffs.

The committee intends that the Joint Staff continue to receive information from the services and the combatant commands with respect to reports and recommendations prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As previously emphasized, the committee intends to establish conditions in which the Joint Staff is the independent author of its own work. The committee does not intend, however, to diminish the vital channels of communication between the Joint Staff, services, and combatant commands that are necessary to provide the basic information necessary for competent staff work.

Streamlining the Military Chain of Command

A number of witnesses during the hearings expressed concern that a committee, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has been included in the military chain of command by Department of Defense directive. These witnesses recommended placing a single military individual