DISSENTING VIEWS OF HON. SAMUEL S. STRATTON

My opposition to this legislation stems from a perception that its principal authors believe that competition in ideas and controversy has to be injurious to successful military operations. They yearn for a supreme commander who can put the unruly commanders of their respective services in their place and end their alleged squabbling.

Unfortunately, this is not the way the American military machine works, as was borne out in the second World War, the last one where we ended up victorious.

Two excellent volumes have recently appeared highlighting the many controversies of the Pacific campaign, "Eagle Against the Sun," by Ronald Spector, and "The Pacific War," by John Costello.

Controversy was almost constant at the top level, not only as a result of differences between the Army and the Navy, but also between our European allies and ourselves within the combined staffs set-up.

For example, Admiral Ernest J. King, the Navy commander, strongly opposed General MacArthur in the South Pacific area and fought efforts to allow U.S. Navy carriers to operate in support of amphibious landings in MacArthur's area. Admiral Nimitz opposed MacArthur's plan to invade the Philippines, preferring to take Taiwan instead, since it was closer to the Japanese mainland. President Roosevelt had to fly to Hawaii to settle that dispute, in MacArthur's favor.

In fact the abundance of able commanders with differing and strongly held views represented one of the greatest strengths of American forces and was directly responsible for our ultimate success.

We make a serious mistake if we think Congress by legislation can stifle the interplay of ideas in our military establishment. In fact, if that is really our plan, we will be going down the road to disaster.

My second concern is that if we are indeed trying to move in the direction of a single chief of staff, it amazes me what insignificant proposals this bill mandates in order to bring about this supposedly dramatic change. They are two.

Number One. It provides the chairman a deputy. Big deal! How giving him an AA adds anything that will revolutionize our military capability I am unable to discern.

Secondly, the bill makes the chairman the boss of the JCS staff, which currently amounts to some 300 or 400 souls. Nothing very revolutionary there either. In fact, all this sounds too much like what we here in the House have been doing—proliferating staff over the last ten years, with little visible improvement in legislative performance and severely overtaxing our limited facilities on Capitol Hill.