

DISSENTING VIEWS OF HON. RONALD V. DELLUMS

I do not oppose this measure because of a belief that the reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), bureaucracy is unnecessary. There have been studies, hearings and testimony to the fact that a reorganization is imperative and I am in agreement with that general view.

However, I disagree that the best way to approach this problem is to greatly elevate the general stature of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This would be accomplished by several provisions included in the bill, some of them less objectionable than others. In the aggregate, these provisions will establish a position of tremendous military authority, and is then combined with a new, important political authority for the Chairman, which would then create the extremely dangerous possibility of a more militarized political establishment and a more politicized military establishment.

I am in particular and complete disagreement that the Chairman should have increased stature when it comes at the expense of the Secretary of Defense, who would suffer a relative loss of authority, and in some cases would be on the same level as the Chairman. It is my firm belief that this would seriously undermine the crucial doctrine of civilian control of the military, which we all know to be an essential element of our democracy.

I would like to explain in some detail my objection to that portion of the bill which would statutorily mandate the presence of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at all meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), and then briefly present some question raised by other provisions in the bill.

ATTENDANCE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AT ALL NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETINGS TO BE REQUIRE BY LAW

Under current law, the attendance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs at National Security Council meetings is allowed. He is there at the specific invitation of the President or the Secretary of Defense and is able to provide information and opinions as the President and Secretary of Defense require. There is nothing in current law that prevents the National Security Council from receiving these views as the Council sees fit.

Therefore, it is imperative to ask, why would it be necessary to change the law, and furthermore, what are the military and political implications of such a change? Is it realistic to assume that the President can be told, by statute, whose advice to listen to, or whose advice he should follow? Also, would the Chairman not be required to attend the meeting, by law, even if the President did not want him to attend?