

tween their joint and service responsibilities has precluded their effective participation in resource planning. . . . As a result, the JCS are unable to help civilian leaders set cross-service priorities and make the necessary tradeoffs to construct the defense program and budget.

These shortcomings in JCS performance stem from structural flaws and are not attributable to the distinguished officers who have been assigned to that body. Witnesses uniformly distinguished between the performance of individual service chiefs, whose personal advice was given high marks, and the performance of the JCS as a group of advisers acting collegially. The hearings clearly indicated that JCS problems are organizational in nature and by no means reflect on the competence of the members.

Among the most significant of the organizational problems are the following:

The contradiction between the responsibilities of an individual as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as chief of his service. As a JCS member, a chief is called upon to transcend service interests and to participate in developing advice from a joint, unified military perspective—a “national” viewpoint. Yet, as a chief of service, the same individual is looked upon as the principal advocate of his service. General Jones emphasized that “if a chief departed a great deal, and consistently, from what came up through the system—from his service—he would be in danger, as has happened in the past, of losing the support of his service.”

Contributing to the problem is the time demanded by the dual responsibilities of the chiefs. Gen. Omar Bradley once indicated that he did not have time to do both jobs well. General Jones emphasized this same point during the hearings.

The limitations of the Joint Staff.—The quality of Joint Staff work is adversely affected by the overwhelming influence exerted by service interests on the joint military organization. The Joint Staff is managed “on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.” The service chiefs, who comprise four of the five JCS members, have fashioned crippling procedural constraints that give inordinate influence to service staffs, thereby preventing the Joint Staff from authoring its own work.

The diffusion of military responsibility and authority.—At present the military chain of command extends by law from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the unified and specified field commanders. By Department of Defense directive, however, the Joint Chiefs have been inserted into the chain of command so that in practice the chain runs from the Secretary of Defense through the JCS to the unified and specified commanders. As the conduit during crises for orders and other communications of the highest national importance from the President as commander-in-chief to fighting forces in the field, the present system is flawed because it runs through a committee, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rather than a single military individual. The 1978 “Report to the Secretary of Defense on the National Military Command Structure,” prepared by Richard Steadman, noted that “the JCS . . . committee structure is not effective for the exercise of military command or management authority.”