The national military command structure also exhibits significant peacetime shortcomings stemming from the limited ability of the unified and specified commanders to influence the composition, capabilities, and readiness of the forces assigned to them. Even though the unified and specified commanders would be responsible for employing American forces in wartime, the services from their headquarters in Washington, D.C., currently wield the preponderant influence over the structure and readiness of forces in the field. The unified and specified commanders have no military supervisor in Washington.

In its 1984 *Mandate for Leadership II,* the Heritage Foundation provided a concise statement of what were termed "critical deficiencies" of the JCS organization.

> The JCS, as a body, is seen by many civilian leaders as either unable or unwilling to provide useful advice on tough issues. Joint Staff work comes across as superficial, predictable, and of little help to resolving issue.
>
> Several problems are particularly acute. First, the planning and the formulation of national military strategy that should occur in the joint arena is wholly inadequate. The individual military Services have clear views, but some coherent joint military view has been conspicuously absent. Second, the allocation of Service roles and missions is a function that the current organization essentially has abdicated. Last as discussed above, the JCS plays no meaningful role in the resource allocation and budgeting process.
>
> The roots of these problems are organizational; they lie in the inherent weakness of the joint structure and the overwhelming influence of the separate Services. Some of the weakness of the JCS are self-imposed. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have agreed to act only in unanimity, but unanimity is hard to achieve. Service parochialism is as ubiquitous as it is legendary, and the Services, which the Chiefs individually represent, cooperate only grudgingly. Often the wording of advice or recommendations that all the Services finally will endorse is so innocuous that it has little value—the fabled "common denominator" advice.

COMMITTEE APPROACH IN H.R. 3622

Though the hearings revealed a number of other significant problems within the joint structure, the committee chose to focus in H.R. 3622 on those problems that contribute to the most serious JCS shortcomings: inadequate military advice and diffused authority and responsibility. The legislative measures required to provide for timely, relevant, unambiguous military advice from a national perspective, to streamline the national military command structure, to remove or relax inhibiting restrictions, and to provide for a more independent joint organization are relatively clear-cut. Moreover, the legislative measures, though far-reaching, are moderate in the sense that they retain the principal elements of the present structure.