

DISCUSSION OF SELECTED PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

TITLE I—COMBATANT COMMANDS

The committee has concluded that the unified and specified combatant command structure needs to be strengthened. That structure consists of the 10 operational commands that would be engaged in combat operations in any military crisis or war. The authority and influence of commanders of the unified and specified commands is not commensurate with their responsibilities. The committee believes that the instances of poor performance and, from time to time, outright failures of U.S. military forces over a period of decades can be attributed in part to the weaknesses of the national military command structure.

Title I is intended to correct the organizational weaknesses of the combatant commands by ensuring that the commanders who lead them have the authority necessary to organize, train and otherwise prepare the forces for combat, enhancing their influence on the shape of the national defense budget, and in other ways modifying the command structure and assignment of forces to improve the combatant commands.

Section 124 of title 10 currently governs the establishment, composition, functions, administration, and support of combatant commands. That section would be repealed. As compared to the comprehensive treatment of the military services elsewhere in title 10, the few lines devoted to the unified and specified commands in section 124 do not adequately define the responsibility of the combatant commanders. More importantly, section 124 fails to ensure the authority of the commanders to carry out their responsibilities. Consequently, section 101(a) of this bill would amend title 10 by inserting a new chapter 6 entitled "Combatant Commands" that would replace the present section 124. The sections of the new chapter 6, as established by this bill, would be as follows:

161. Establishment.
162. Forces assigned to combatant commands.
163. Functions and supervision.
164. Administration and support of assigned forces.
165. Unified and specified commands: program and budget proposals; net assessments.
166. Combatant command subordinate commanders and CINC staff officers: selection and tenure.
167. Joint Commanders Council.

ESTABLISHMENT

Special combatant commands

Subsection (b) of section 161 of the new chapter 6 would authorize the President, with the advice and assistance of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and acting through the Secretary of Defense, to establish a "special combatant command" if he determines that a given situation warrants such a force to perform a specific military mission. The President would prescribe the mission, force structure, chain of command, and support and administrative arrangements of that command.