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Introduction of Bill on Defense Reorganization

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Mr. President:

I have, together with the distinguished senior Senator from New Hampshire, the Honorable Styles Bridges, introduced S _____ pertaining to reorganization of the Department of Defense. I would like to emphasize that S _____ is identical to H.R. 11001, recently introduced jointly in the House of Representatives by the Honorable Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, the Honorable Paul J. Kilday, Chairman of Special Subcommittee #1 on Reorganization of the Department of Defense, House Committee on Armed Services, and the Honorable Leslie C. Arends, ranking minority member of the House Committee on Armed Services and Minority Whip of the House of Representatives.

This bill would effect a long overdue improvement in our defense organization. Essentially, this would be achieved under the bill's provisions by correcting the weak portions of our defense organization and strengthening that which has proved successful.

Passage of this bill will provide efficiency, reality, economy, and common sense in the organization and functioning of the Department of Defense.

In these perilous times when Communist aggression is being waged on a versatile and world-wide scale, our Nation cannot afford the dubious luxury of maintaining an ever-growing bureaucracy at the top of the Defense Department.

The manner in which power has been amassed by the functionaries surrounding the Secretary of Defense has been equalled only by the friction, inefficiency and waste that has resulted from that mushrooming administrative overhead.

I have come to the conclusion that Congressional admonitions and legislative restraints will not stop the growth of bureaucracy that has grown so rapidly since the office of the Secretary of Defense was established in the National Security Act of 1947.

At that time it was envisioned that the Secretary of Defense would exercise broad coordination over the Military Departments.
The following will indicate how far defense organization has strayed from what was intended by Congress when it passed the National Security Act of 1947: One of the authors of that proposal, the late Admiral Forrest Sherman, testified:

"The Secretary of National Defense should have a small executive office for directing and controlling the defense establishment.

"In addition to the four assistants provided by Section 104 I believe he could accomplish his mission with about 100 people, including stenographic personnel and file clerks..."

I would like to point out that that "small executive office" of about "100 people" has become an administrative jungle of what is conservatively estimated to be about 2400 civilian employees, plus the assigned military officers and enlisted personnel. This bureaucratic hierarchy includes assistant secretaries, deputies to assistant secretaries and assistants to assistant secretaries.

The late James Forrestal testified that it was his expectation that if the Office of Secretary of Defense were established it would "exercise overall direction but not go down into the departments themselves and deal with their functions, daily operations and administration..."

What is going on today, and what is impeding and impairing our national security, is that the direct reverse of Mr. Forrestal's expectations has taken place. Today the vast array of functionaries, upon whom finally rests the power so necessarily delegated by the Secretary of Defense, interferes directly with the activities and affairs of the military departments. The Office of the Secretary of Defense which Forrestal expected would exercise "overall direction" issues impressive directives on how to clean garbage cans and to drink water.

The bill is designed to eliminate such bureaucratic fantasy. It will place a limit of 600 civilian employees in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It will eliminate 14 of the present
Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries in the Department of Defense, bringing it to a reasonable total of 15 Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries.

The dangers to national security resulting from the over-concentration of power and functions at the top level of the Pentagon is not limited to the civilian bureaucracy.

One of the most alarming developments since World War II has been the gradual but continuing movement toward a single chief of staff and a supreme general staff after the German pattern.

It is a sure road to disaster for our nation and the free world to permit this trend toward a supreme staff to continue.

Our Joint Chiefs of Staff system is the strongest insurance against the militarily and politically dangerous supreme staff concept of the Kaiser. The bill improves and strengthens our war-proven Joint Chiefs of Staff system. It does this in two respects: First, by giving the JCS, as a corporate body, authority not only to establish unified commands, but also authority over assignment and withdrawal of forces in the unified commands, designation of boundaries between them and coordination between these unified commands; second, by providing legal encouragement and authority for the members of the JCS, who are also the uniformed chiefs of their respective services, to delegate, subject to the approval of their department secretaries, administrative details concerning their services.

This in no way -- legal or de facto -- separates the JCS members from their position as uniformed chiefs of their services. There must be no infringement of the unity of JCS membership and service command which provides reality in the military planning and avoids ivory tower theorizing.

Furthermore, the bill fundamentally is able to accomplish the strengthening of the JCS system without further increasing the powers and authority of the Chairman of the JCS. Frankly, I have grave reservation as to the vision of continuing that office. Since its inception as merely a presiding officer in...
the JCS, the position of Chairman has accumulated a degree of prestige and status which could well lead to the Chairman eventually becoming, for all practical purposes, a single chief of staff. Any increase in the power of the Chairman, in practice or in law, must be resolutely opposed. It might be well to consider the abolition of the office, since by its very existence it can be so easily distorted, by those who have long sought the opportunity, into a de facto single chief of staff — contrary to the intent of the Congress.

Also, I would like to invite attention to that portion of the bill which restricts, in peacetime, tours of duty in the Joint Staff to a maximum of three years. The Joint Staff, by the very nature of its position in the Department, and its relationship with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, could well develop into a supreme high command. Such a development would be the natural result of giving the Joint Staff operational function and authority. Significantly, the bill does not authorize any such dangerous increase in the authority or functions of the Joint Staff.

I believe that a real increase in efficiency in strategic planning will result from that provision of the bill which makes the Secretaries of the Military Departments regular members of the National Security Council. One of the most unfortunate trends in defense organization in recent years has been the constant erosion in the status and role of the Secretaries of the Military Departments. In the final analysis, it is the Military Departments with their uniformed services which are the agencies for finally getting things done. The Secretaries of the Military Departments have responsibilities of such vast scope and strategic importance and they possess such knowledge of military realities that they can, I believe, contribute greatly to the formulation of policy by the National Security Council. Their membership in the National Security Council will be at least one step in the long overdue process of restoring the much justified prestige and status that must be accorded their position.
This bill will do much to preserve the ability of the Congress and the public to have access to accurate information on military affairs. We can be sure that when the Pentagon reorganization proposals are forwarded to the Congress that the Pentagon's censorship and public information machine will accompany them with a barrage of publicity designed to make a quick sale of the proposition.

The one-sided nature of the publicity campaign will show what would happen if the control of the military departments should ever be centralized and consolidated under one man and one staff.

For those in the Congress and the public press who know the present difficulties in obtaining full and accurate information of military matters, let them consider what would happen to the flow of information if all controls are centralized in one man. No person in this country could obtain any opinions on military matters contrary to those of this one man. No information could be obtained except that which he was willing to release. If the Congress and the press are to exercise their duty to be informed they cannot view with favor any proposal to consolidate all control of the defense organization in the hands of an appointed official of the Pentagon. This bill prevents the lowering of a bureaucratic cloak over the military policies of the United States.

This bill provides that the Congress shall continue to exercise its Constitutional function of prescribing the basic roles and missions of the armed services. Those who have claimed that modern technology has made the present roles and missions competitive, would cure the alleged defect by handing the Constitutional function of the Congress to an appointed official in the Pentagon. The alleged defect, of course, is nonsense. There is no competition, for instance, between the role of the Army, to provide forces for combat incident to operations on land, and that of the Navy to provide forces for combat incident to operations at sea. Any proposal to cure this non-existing defect by removing the existing restraints on Pentagon tampering with
the roles and missions prescribed by the Congress, will bring on a Constitutional crisis.

There are ample indications that the Pentagon's fiscal officials have been able to exercise a degree of control of military operations and functions, supervening their fiscal judgment over those responsible and accountable for such matters. This practice has grown to the extent that the Pentagon's arbitrary management of the funds appropriated by the Congress in some cases amounts to a direct challenge to the Constitutional function of the Congress to determine what is to be accomplished by the use of public monies. It has come to the point that the adding machine in the Pentagon has become more lethal than the sword. This bill clarifies the functions and powers of the Comptroller of the Department of Defense, so that the bookkeepers do not dictate strategic planning to the military strategists.

The proponents of radical reorganization of the Defense Department have been acting on the premise that our organization for exercising military leadership in the strategic planning of NATO, of SEATO, in fact of the whole free world has been a miserable failure -- incapable of dealing with our own internal affairs, and hence not to be trusted in the larger considerations of world-wide military strategy. They would have us believe that our military posture is that of a defeated nation whose armed forces have been defeated and destroyed. Acting on that premise they would have us discard what has been in fact a remarkably capable and successful defense structure -- one that has been more than adequate to every emergency.

I believe that it is a serious mistake to give to the world this untrue picture of the U.S. military organization. It would be an unfortunate and unnecessary thing for there to be urged upon the Congress a highly controversial and Radical Reorganization of the armed forces. Only fundamental defects could justify radical changes in our organization. There is no reasonable basis for believing that the organization which has been uniformly successful has suddenly become fatally defective. Any attempt to conjure up a public conviction that it is
so defective, will injure the United States international prestige
and position with a permanence much more than the Sputnik incident.
This is one of my reasons for joining in support of this bill,
which leads to demonstrated improvements in our system, without
lending credence to attacks on our capability to act wisely and
strongly as one of the leaders of the free world.

In summary, the bill will result in a restoration of sound
administrative procedures, and will effect a reduction in the
bureaucratic overhead that today only serves to impair strategic
planning and to hinder the accomplishments of the military ser-
vices. The bill strengthens our Joint Chiefs of Staff and by
so doing will help prevent the development of a Prussian-type
high command which would be a sure road to disaster for our
Nation.

It is my firm conviction that the bill is constructive
without being disruptive. It will result in greater efficiency,
economy, and most importantly, in a greater security for our
Nation.