

directed the Chairman to include in the report comments and recommendations.

TRANSITION PROVISIONS

Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §204(a), (b), Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1011, provided dates for establishment of the uniform system of evaluating the preparedness of each unified and specified combatant command and for submission of the first report.

§ 154. Vice Chairman

(a) APPOINTMENT.—(1) There is a Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from the officers of the regular components of the armed forces.

(2) The Chairman and Vice Chairman may not be members of the same armed force. However, the President may waive the restriction in the preceding sentence for a limited period of time in order to provide for the orderly transition of officers appointed to serve in the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

(3) The Vice Chairman serves at the pleasure of the President for a single term of four years, beginning on October 1 of an odd-numbered year, except that the term may not begin in the same year as the term of a Chairman. In time of war, there is no limit on the number of reappointments.

(4)(A) The Vice Chairman shall not be eligible for promotion to the position of Chairman or any other position in the armed forces.

(B) The President may waive subparagraph (A) if the President determines such action is necessary in the national interest.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR APPOINTMENT.—(1) The President may appoint an officer as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff only if the officer—

(A) has the joint specialty under section 661 of this title; and

(B) has completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment (as defined in section 664(f)¹ of this title) as a general or flag officer.

(2) The President may waive paragraph (1) in the case of an officer if the President determines such action is necessary in the national interest.

(c) DUTIES.—The Vice Chairman performs the duties prescribed for him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Chairman with the approval of the Secretary of Defense.

(d) FUNCTION AS ACTING CHAIRMAN.—When there is a vacancy in the office of Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman and performs the duties of the Chairman until a successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases.

(e) SUCCESSION AFTER CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN.—When there is a vacancy in the offices of both Chairman and Vice Chairman or in the absence or disability of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, or when there is a vacancy in one such office and in the absence or disability of the officer holding the other, the President shall designate a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to act as and perform the duties of the Chairman until a successor to the Chair-

man or Vice Chairman is appointed or the absence or disability of the Chairman or Vice Chairman ceases.

(f) GRADE AND RANK.—The Vice Chairman, while so serving, holds the grade of general or, in the case of an officer of the Navy, admiral and outranks all other officers of the armed forces except the Chairman. The Vice Chairman may not exercise military command over the Joint Chiefs of Staff or any of the armed forces.

(Added Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §201, Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1008; amended Pub. L. 100-456, div. A, title V, §519(a)(1), Sept. 29, 1988, 102 Stat. 1972; Pub. L. 102-484, div. A, title IX, §911(b)(1), Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2473; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, §921(d)(1), (2), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2354.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 664(f) of this title, referred to in subsec. (b)(1)(B), was redesignated as section 664(d) of this title by Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title V, §510(g)(1), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2111.

AMENDMENTS

2016—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 114-328, §921(d)(1), substituted “for a single term of four years, beginning on October 1 of an odd-numbered year, except that the term may not begin in the same year as the term of a Chairman. In time of war, there is no limit on the number of reappointments.” for “for a term of two years and may be reappointed in the same manner for two additional terms. However, in time of war there is no limit on the number of reappointments.”

Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 114-328, §921(d)(2), added par. (4).

1992—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 102-484, §911(b)(1)(A), substituted “the duties prescribed for him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and such other” for “such”.

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 102-484, §911(b)(1)(B), (C), redesignated subsec. (g) as (f) and struck out former subsec. (f) which read as follows: “PARTICIPATION IN JCS MEETINGS.—The Vice Chairman may participate in all meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but may not vote on a matter before the Joint Chiefs of Staff except when acting as Chairman.”

1988—Subsec. (b)(1)(B). Pub. L. 100-456 substituted “completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment (as defined in section 664(f) of this title)” for “served in at least one joint duty assignment (as defined under section 668(b) of this title)”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2016 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, §921(d)(3), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2354, provided that: “The amendments made by this subsection [amending this section] shall take effect on January 1, 2021, and shall apply to individuals appointed as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on or after that date.”

EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Pub. L. 100-526, title I, §107, Oct. 24, 1988, 102 Stat. 2625, authorized President to extend until June 1, 1989, term of office of officer serving as Vice Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff for term which began on Feb. 6, 1987.

WAIVER OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §204(c), Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1011, authorized President, until Oct. 1, 1990, to waive certain requirements otherwise applicable for appointment of an officer as Vice Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff.

¹ See References in Text note below.

§ 155. Joint Staff

(a) APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO JOINT STAFF.—(1) There is a Joint Staff under the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Staff assists the Chairman and, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Chairman, the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in carrying out their responsibilities.

(2) Officers of the armed forces (other than the Coast Guard) assigned to serve on the Joint Staff shall be selected by the Chairman in approximately equal numbers from—

- (A) the Army;
- (B) the Navy and the Marine Corps; and
- (C) the Air Force and the Space Force.

(3) Selection of officers of an armed force to serve on the Joint Staff shall be made by the Chairman from a list of officers submitted by the Secretary of the military department having jurisdiction over that armed force. Each officer whose name is submitted shall be among those officers considered to be the most outstanding officers of that armed force. The Chairman may specify the number of officers to be included on any such list.

(b) DIRECTOR.—The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after consultation with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and with the approval of the Secretary of Defense, may select an officer to serve as Director of the Joint Staff.

(c) MANAGEMENT OF JOINT STAFF.—The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff manages the Joint Staff and the Director of the Joint Staff. The Joint Staff shall perform such duties as the Chairman prescribes and shall perform such duties under such procedures as the Chairman prescribes.

(d) OPERATION OF JOINT STAFF.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the Joint Staff is independently organized and operated so that the Joint Staff supports the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in meeting the congressional purpose set forth in the last clause of section 2 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3002) to provide—

- (1) for the unified strategic direction of the combatant forces;
- (2) for their operation under unified command; and
- (3) for their integration into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces.

(e) PROHIBITION OF FUNCTION AS ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF.—The Joint Staff shall not operate or be organized as an overall Armed Forces General Staff and shall have no executive authority. The Joint Staff may be organized and may operate along conventional staff lines.

(f) TOUR OF DUTY OF JOINT STAFF OFFICERS.—(1) An officer who is assigned or detailed to permanent duty on the Joint Staff may not serve for a tour of duty of more than four years. However, such a tour of duty may be extended with the approval of the Secretary of Defense.

(2) In accordance with procedures established by the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may suspend from duty and recommend the reassignment of any officer assigned to the Joint Staff. Upon receipt of such a recommendation, the Secretary concerned shall promptly reassign the officer.

(3) An officer completing a tour of duty with the Joint Staff may not be assigned or detailed to permanent duty on the Joint Staff within two years after relief from that duty except with the approval of the Secretary.

(4) Paragraphs (1) and (3) do not apply—

- (A) in time of war; or
- (B) during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress.

(g) COMPOSITION OF JOINT STAFF.—(1) The Joint Staff is composed of all members of the armed forces and civilian employees assigned or detailed to permanent duty in the executive part of the Department of Defense to perform the functions and duties prescribed under subsections (a) and (c).

(2) The Joint Staff does not include members of the armed forces or civilian employees assigned or detailed to permanent duty in a military department.

(h) PERSONNEL LIMITATIONS.—(1) The total number of members of the armed forces and civilian employees assigned or detailed to permanent duty for the Joint Staff may not exceed 2,250.

(2) Not more than 1,500 members of the armed forces on the active-duty list may be assigned or detailed to permanent duty for the Joint Staff.

(3) The limitations in paragraphs (1) and (2) do not apply in time of war.

(4) Each limitation in paragraphs (1) and (2) may be exceeded by a number equal to 15 percent of such limitation in time of national emergency.

(Added Pub. L. 99-433, title II, §201, Oct. 1, 1986, 100 Stat. 1009; amended Pub. L. 100-180, div. A, title XIII, §1314(b)(2), Dec. 4, 1987, 101 Stat. 1175; Pub. L. 101-510, div. A, title IX, §902, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1620; Pub. L. 102-484, div. A, title IX, §911(b)(2), Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2473; Pub. L. 103-35, title II, §202(a)(8), May 31, 1993, 107 Stat. 101; Pub. L. 113-291, div. A, title X, §1071(c)(1), Dec. 19, 2014, 128 Stat. 3508; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title IX, §903(b)(1), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2344; Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title IX, §901(a)(2)(A), Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1541; Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title IX, §924(b)(7)(B), Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3822.)

AMENDMENTS

2021—Subsec. (a)(2)(C). Pub. L. 116-283 inserted “and the Space Force” after “the Air Force”.

2019—Subsec. (h)(1). Pub. L. 116-92 substituted “2,250” for “2,069”.

2016—Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 114-328 added subsec. (h).

2014—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 113-291 substituted “(50 U.S.C. 3002)” for “(50 U.S.C. 401)” in introductory provisions.

1993—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 103-35 made technical amendment to directory language of Pub. L. 102-484. See 1992 Amendment note below.

1992—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 102-484, as amended by Pub. L. 103-35, struck out “and the Vice Chairman” before “in carrying out”.

1990—Subsecs. (g), (h). Pub. L. 101-510 redesignated subsec. (h) as (g) and struck out former subsec. (g) which read as follows: “LIMITATION ON SIZE OF JOINT STAFF.—(1) Effective on October 1, 1988, the total number of members of the armed forces and civilian personnel assigned or detailed to permanent duty on the Joint Staff may not exceed 1,627.

“(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply—

- “(A) in time of war; or
- “(B) during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress.”