

Foreword

Established during World War II to advise the President on the strategic direction of the Armed Forces of the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) continued in existence after the war and, as military advisers and planners, have played a significant role in the development of national policy. Knowledge of JCS relations with the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council is essential to an understanding of the current work of the Chairman and the Joint Staff. A history of their activities, both in war and peacetime, also provides important insights into the military history of the United States. For these reasons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed that an official history of their activities be kept for the record. Its value for instructional purposes, for the orientation of officers newly assigned to the JCS organization, and as a source of information for staff studies is self-apparent.

Council of War: A History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942–1991 follows in the tradition of volumes previously prepared by the Joint History Office dealing with JCS involvement in national policy, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Adopting a broader view than earlier volumes, it surveys the JCS role and contributions from the early days of World War II through the end of the Cold War. Written from a combination of primary and secondary sources, it is a fresh work of scholarship, looking at the problems of this era and their military implications. The main prism is that of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but in laying out the JCS perspective, it deals also with the wider impact of key decisions and the ensuing policies.

Dr. Steven L. Rearden, the author of this volume, holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska and a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. His association with the Joint History Office dates from 1996. He has written and published widely on the history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and was co-collaborator on Ambassador Paul H. Nitze's book *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision—A Memoir* (1989).

This publication has been reviewed and approved for publication by the Department of Defense. While the manuscript itself is unclassified, some parts of documents cited in the source notes may remain classified. This is an official publication of the Joint History Office, but the views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Department of Defense.

—John F. Shortal
Brigadier General, USA (Ret.)
Director for Joint History