

VI. Assistant Secretaries of Defense and Other Defense Officials

The number of assistant secretaries, with or without specific statutory designation, has changed over the years as needs or interests demanded. The assistant secretary positions are categorized in the pages that follow by functional areas, with listings of the assistant secretaries for each area. Changes in title and functions are noted under each heading. Some positions are no longer at an assistant secretary level but because they originally were so ranked, they are included under the major heading. Likewise, a position may not have been originally established at the assistant secretary level but is now so designated.

The 1949 amendments set the number of assistant secretaries at three. Reorganization Plan No. 6 of 1953 added six, making a total of nine. The Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 set the number at seven. Changes occurred occasionally in subsequent years. The current number of assistant secretaries is nine. They are: 1) public affairs; 2) networks and information integration; 3) legislative affairs; 4) international security policy; 5) international security affairs; 6) special operations/low-intensity conflict; 7) homeland defense; 8) reserve affairs; and 9) health affairs.

Several positions not currently designated as assistant secretaries are at the assistant secretary level: director of defense research and engineering; general counsel; inspector general; director, operational test and evaluation; principal deputy under secretary of defense (policy); and principal deputy under secretary of defense (personnel and readiness).