

I. The Department of Defense

On 17 September 1947, James V. Forrestal took the oath of office as the first secretary of defense at the head of the newly created National Military Establishment. The NME became the Department of Defense two years later with the passage of the 1949 Amendments to the National Security Act.

The 1947 organization grew out of a three-year debate on the establishment of a single department for national defense. The effort to find an organization acceptable to the armed services concluded with the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947, approved by the president on 26 July 1947. This legislation established a secretary of defense, who was to be primarily a coordinator, developing general policies for three executive departments--the Army, the Navy, and the new Air Force. To assist the secretary of defense in carrying out his responsibilities, the legislation authorized three special assistants and sanctioned three existing agencies--the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Munitions Board, and the Research and Development Board.

Secretary Forrestal found the powers assigned to his office insufficient for the task confronting him and early in 1949 recommended substantial changes, many of them incorporated in the 1949 amendments to the National Security Act approved on 10 August 1949. By this time Secretary Forrestal had been succeeded by Louis Johnson.

The 1949 amendments stressed that the secretary of defense was to be the principal assistant to the president in all matters relating to the Department of Defense. The Army, Navy, and Air Force lost their status as executive departments and became military departments within the single executive Department of Defense. The 1949 amendments also authorized additional staff assistants for the secretary of defense--a deputy secretary, three assistant secretaries in lieu of the three special assistants, and a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The size of the Joint Staff expanded from 100 to 210 officers. The act included a new Title IV providing for uniform budgetary and fiscal procedures throughout the defense establishment.

In September 1950, President Truman named General of the Army George C. Marshall, formerly Army chief of staff and secretary of state, to head the Department of Defense. This required special legislation by the Congress because the National Security Act had stipulated that no officer who within 10 years had been on active duty in the armed forces could be eligible for appointment. PL 81-788 authorized General Marshall's appointment on 21 September 1950. At the end of one year, which was all General Marshall had agreed to serve, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett, who had been assistant secretary of war for air during World War II and under secretary to General Marshall at the Department of State, succeeded him.

After entering office, President Eisenhower's administration reviewed the organization of the armed forces in the spring of 1953. On 30 April 1953, the president transmitted to Congress Reorganization Plan No. 6, based on the recommendations of Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson and the Rockefeller Committee. This plan, effective on 30 June 1953, gave greater management flexibility to the secretary of defense. The president's message accompanying the plan made it clear that no function in the department was to be carried out independent of the authority of the secretary of defense and that the secretaries of the military departments were to be--in addition to heads of their departments--the principal agents of the secretary of defense for the management and direction of the defense establishment. The Reorganization Plan abolished several statutory boards and positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and transferred their functions to the secretary of defense. In addition it authorized six additional assistant secretaries, to a total of nine such positions, and a general counsel, and gave the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff greater authority in managing the Joint Staff.

After a review of the existing organization by Secretary Neil H. McElroy, President Eisenhower recommended further organizational changes in the Department of Defense in a special message to Congress on 3 April 1958. The Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, approved on 6 August 1958, embodied most of these recommendations. The new legislation increased still further the responsibilities of the secretary of defense, particularly in the operational direction of the armed forces and in research and development.

The 1958 act established a new chain of command running directly from the president and the secretary of defense to the unified and specified commanders, who were given "full operational command" over the forces assigned to them. However, by secretarial delegation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff gained authority to exercise operational direction over the unified and specified commands. This change abolished the former system under which orders went to the military departments acting as executive agencies before reaching the unified and specified commands. The law authorized reorganization of the Joint Staff and its expansion from 210 to 400 officers.

In recognition of the increasing importance of research and development activities, the 1958 act established the position of director of defense research and engineering. The new director was to be not only the principal adviser to the secretary of defense in all scientific and technological matters but also the supervisor of all research and engineering activities in the Department of Defense and director and controller of those activities that in the opinion of the secretary of defense required centralized direction. The law also reduced the number of assistant secretaries from nine to seven in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and from four to three in each of the military departments.

Frequent meetings between Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., and the Joint Chiefs of Staff achieved improved policy coordination by 1960. Gates also established the Defense Communications Agency in 1960 to improve economy and efficiency in the telecommunications field.

Starting in 1961, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara used the powers granted by the 1958 Reorganization Act to achieve increased unification. He combined the functions of the assistant secretary (supply and logistics) and assistant secretary (properties and installations) under a new assistant secretary (installations and logistics) and transferred the functions of the assistant secretary (health and medical) to the assistant secretary (manpower). He assigned the vacated assistant secretary positions to the assistant secretary (civil defense) and to the deputy director of defense research and engineering. When the Office of Civil Defense moved in 1964 to the Office of the Secretary of the Army, the assistant secretary position went to the new assistant secretary (administration). In 1965, the Systems Analysis Office received assistant secretary rank with the transfer to it of the assistant secretary position held by the deputy director, research and engineering.

Simultaneously, the organization of the military departments changed functionally to parallel the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In 1967 Congress authorized an additional assistant secretary position for manpower and reserve affairs for each of the military departments.

In 1961, Secretary McNamara established the U.S. Strike Command to bring under joint command the combat-ready forces of the U.S. Strategic Army Corps and the Air Force's Tactical Air Command. Also in that year he created the Defense Intelligence Agency to assume responsibility for various intelligence functions previously assigned to the military departments. A National Military Command Center became operational in 1962.

To achieve better use of resources, McNamara initiated a new Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS) in 1961, including a five-year forecast of forces and costs and supplemented by systems analysis or "cost effectiveness" studies. Centralization of common support activities came with the establishment of the Defense Supply Agency in 1961 and the Defense Contract Audit Agency in 1965.

In 1969, Secretary Melvin R. Laird revised management procedures to link planning and budgeting more closely, to insure wider participation in decision making, and to broaden the delegation of authority under specific guidance. Deputy Secretary David Packard established the Defense Systems Acquisition Review Council in May 1969 to advise the secretary of defense at critical decision points in the development and procurement of new weapon systems. The revised acquisition procedure reemphasized the primary responsibility of the military departments for executing these programs, and strengthened the authority of the project managers for each major system.

Establishment of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health and Environment) followed congressional authorization in November 1969 for an eighth assistant secretary of defense to manage health affairs. A ninth assistant secretary, authorized in December 1971, managed the field of telecommunications. Elimination of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense

(Administration) in November 1971 made available an ASD title for the new assistant secretary of defense (intelligence). With Secretary Laird's strong support, Congress authorized a second deputy secretary of defense in October 1972, but no one held the position until late 1975.

Although the functional responsibilities of some assistant secretaries of defense changed, the number of such positions--nine--remained constant from 1971 until 1977. In April 1973, Secretary Elliot L. Richardson established the position of assistant secretary of defense (legislative affairs) concurrently with the redesignation of the assistant secretary of defense (systems analysis) as the director of defense program analysis and evaluation. The assistant secretary (program analysis and evaluation) replaced the latter position in February 1974 after redesignation of the position of assistant secretary of defense (telecommunications) to director, telecommunications and command and control systems.

The defense agency concept expanded substantially in 1971 and 1972 with the establishment of the Defense Mapping Agency to consolidate most mapping, charting, and geodetic activities of the military services; the Defense Investigative Service to exercise centralized control over personnel security investigations; the Defense Security Assistance Agency to supervise the administration and execution of the Military Assistance and Military Sales Programs; and the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency, the successor of the Army's Office of Civil Defense.

Secretary of Defense Laird disestablished the U.S. Strike Command at the close of 1971, assigned its areas of geographic responsibility to other unified commands, and constituted a new U.S. Readiness Command, responsible for providing the general reserve of combat-ready forces to reinforce the other unified commands.

Many of these changes reflected the July 1970 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, appointed by the president and the secretary of defense in 1969 to undertake an overall review and evaluation of the organization and management of the Department of Defense.

A comprehensive review in the mid-1970s of the worldwide military command structure resulted in the consolidation or elimination of 19 major headquarters and reductions in other headquarters and defense agency staffs. As part of this effort, two unified commands--the Alaskan Command and the Continental Air Defense Command--ceased operations on 30 June 1975, and the Aerospace Defense Command, designated a specified command, gained enlarged responsibilities. In 1976, there was a realignment of staff elements in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and in the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to eliminate unwarranted duplication in related functional areas and to reduce the number of personnel serving in department headquarters.

Additional organizational changes made during 1976 pertained principally to intelligence. Responsibility for these functions went to a second deputy secretary of defense. Subsequently, the assistant secretary of defense (intelligence) gained the additional designation of director of defense intelligence, charged with line as well as staff authority for intelligence activities. The position of inspector general for intelligence was also created to provide for independent oversight of the legality and propriety of all defense foreign intelligence and foreign counterintelligence activities.

In February 1977 the Military Airlift Command became a specified command under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the Air Force retaining responsibility for administrative and logistical support of the command.

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown in 1977 and 1978 reduced the number of persons reporting directly to him. PL 95-140, 21 October 1977, abolished the positions of the second deputy secretary of defense and the director of defense research and engineering and established two new positions, under secretary of defense for policy and under secretary of defense for research and engineering. Earlier in the year transfers of functional responsibilities reduced the number of assistant secretaries to seven and eliminated the position of director for communications, command and control. Most of the defense agencies that had typically reported to the secretary of defense came under the direction of one of the under secretaries or assistant secretaries at this time, and the process continued later.

In June 1979 Secretary Brown established the Defense Audiovisual Agency (DAVA) to provide centrally managed acquisition, distribution, and depository support and services for selected audiovisual products to all Department of Defense components. In July of the same year dissolution of the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency led to assignment of civil defense responsibilities to the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A number of organizational changes took place in 1981. In January the assistant secretary of defense (program analysis and evaluation) became the director of program analysis and evaluation. In March 1981 the assistant secretary (communications, command, control and intelligence) became the deputy under secretary of defense for communications, command, control and intelligence. In April, following a reorganization of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the position of assistant secretary of defense (international security policy) was established. Also in April the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Review and Oversight) was created to coordinate the efforts of the department's auditors, inspectors, and investigators. In May the assistant to the secretary of defense for legislative affairs became the assistant secretary of defense (legislative affairs). In August the Defense Legal Services Agency (DLSA) was established to provide legal advice, services, and support for specified organizations and functions within the Department of Defense.

In September 1982 the Defense Department's new inspector general (IG), a position created by the FY 1983 Defense Authorization Act, 8 September 1982, assumed the role of the assistant to the secretary of defense (review and oversight). At the same time the Defense Audit Service (DAS) was dissolved and the IG took on its duties. The inspector general for intelligence became the assistant to the secretary of defense (intelligence oversight) in December 1982.

In January 1983, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger established a new unified command, the U.S. Central Command, with responsibility for the Southwest Asia-Persian Gulf area.

The FY 1984 Defense Authorization Act, 24 September 1983, contained provision for four new assistant secretary positions, leading to establishment of an assistant secretary of defense (development and support); an assistant secretary of defense (research and technology); an assistant secretary of defense (command, control, communications and intelligence); and an assistant secretary of defense (reserve affairs). This law further mandated establishment of an Office of Operational Test and Evaluation.

A presidential directive in January 1984 established the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO) as a defense agency reporting directly to the secretary of defense. Secretary Weinberger announced on 30 November 1984 plans to establish a new unified command, the U.S. Space Command, to provide an organizational structure to centralize operational responsibilities for more effective use of military space systems. In April 1985 Secretary Weinberger directed the disestablishment of the Defense Audiovisual Agency, effective 30 September 1985, and the transfer of its functions to the military departments.

A newly established assistant secretary of defense (acquisition and logistics) in July 1985 assumed the acquisition management functions of the under secretary of defense (research and engineering) and the installations and logistics functions of the assistant secretary of defense (manpower, installations and logistics). In 1987 the assistant secretary of defense (production and logistics) replaced this position. Also in July 1985 the assistant secretary of defense (manpower, installations and logistics) was redesignated as assistant secretary of defense (force management and personnel), with manpower duties only.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 provided for important organizational changes in the Department of Defense. The recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management (Packard Commission) and other studies and reports from knowledgeable sources foreshadowed many of these changes. The act reemphasized civilian control of the department in the person of the secretary of defense, gave increased functions and powers to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and established a vice chairman of the JCS. It enhanced the powers of the commanders of the unified and specified commands and permitted them some participation in the budget process. Finally, Goldwater-Nichols required reorganization of the headquarters establishments of the military departments.

In accordance with the Military Retirement Reform Act (PL 99-348, 1 July 1986), an under secretary of defense for acquisition took office in September 1986, but the official DoD directive establishing the position did not appear until February 1987. This act also redesignated the former under secretary of defense (research and engineering) as director of defense research and engineering, to report to the under secretary (acquisition). The position was not filled until 1987, and the official DoD directive did not appear until January 1989.

Changes in 1988 included the establishment of the assistant secretary of defense (special operations and low-intensity conflict) and the redesignation of the deputy assistant secretary (administration) as the director of administration and management. The latter also continued as director, Washington Headquarters Services. The director of program analysis and evaluation position was redesignated assistant secretary of defense (program analysis and evaluation). The functions of the assistant secretary of defense (research and technology) were transferred to the director, research and engineering.

In 1993 Secretary Les Aspin instituted a broad restructuring of the assistant secretary group. He eliminated four assistant secretary positions, for international security affairs, international security policy, force management and personnel, and production and logistics. He converted two other assistant secretary positions to lower levels--the public affairs position became an assistant to the secretary of defense, and the program analysis and evaluation slot became a directorship. Aspin created six assistant secretary positions to replace those he had eliminated or converted to lower levels: regional security affairs; strategy, requirements, and resources; nuclear security and counterproliferation; policy and plans; economic security; and democracy and peacekeeping. Of these, democracy and peacekeeping never became operative, because the nominee for the office did not receive Senate confirmation. Five assistant secretaries reported to the under secretary of defense (policy) when these changes became effective--regional security affairs, strategy, requirements and resources, nuclear security and counterproliferation, policy and plans, and special operations and low-intensity conflict (SOLIC), the last one in existence since 1986.

In 1993, Congress established the new position of under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and in 1994 it elevated the comptroller's position to the under secretary level. Also in late 1994 Congress authorized another assistant secretary position, which went to public affairs in 1996. When William J. Perry became secretary of defense early in 1994, he dropped three of Aspin's assistant secretary slots--regional security affairs, nuclear security and counterproliferation, and policy and plans--and replaced them with assistant secretaries for international security affairs, international security policy, and force management policy.

Between 1996 and 2002 Congress changed or established several executive-level positions in DoD. In 1996 it redesignated the position of assistant to the secretary of defense for atomic energy as assistant to the secretary of defense for nuclear and chemical and biological defense programs. In 1999 it established the position of deputy under secretary of defense for logistics and materiel readiness, in 2001 authorized the new position of deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and in 2002 created the positions of under secretary of defense for intelligence and assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense.

Between 1988 and 2000 the lineup of defense agencies changed, in some cases changes in name and in other cases the creation of new organizations: On-Site Inspection Agency (1988); Defense Commissary Agency (1990); Defense Finance and Accounting Service (1990); Defense Information Systems Agency (1991), replacing the Defense Communications Agency; Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (1993), replacing the Strategic Missile Defense Organization; Defense Special Weapons Agency (1996), succeeding the Defense Nuclear Agency; National Imagery and Mapping Agency (1996), replacing the Defense Mapping Agency and other DoD elements; Defense Security Service (1997), succeeding the Defense Investigative Service; Defense Security Cooperation Agency (1998), replacing the Defense Security Assistance Agency; Defense Threat Reduction Agency (1998), replacing the Defense Technology Security Administration, the Defense Special Weapons Agency, and the On-Site Inspection Agency; Defense Contract Management Agency (2000); and the Missile Defense Agency (2002), replacing the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

In August 2004, in addition to the secretary and deputy secretary, statutory positions included 5 under secretaries of defense, 9 assistant secretaries of defense, the director of defense research and engineering, the general counsel, the inspector general, the director of operational test and evaluation, the deputy under secretary of defense (acquisition and technology), the deputy under secretary of defense (logistics and materiel readiness), the deputy under secretary of defense (policy), the deputy under secretary of defense (personnel and readiness), and the assistant to the secretary of defense (nuclear and chemical and biological defense programs)--a

total of 25 executive-level statutory positions. Four of the assistant secretaries are designated by title in statute--reserve affairs, special operations and low-intensity conflict, legislative affairs, and homeland defense--and may not be changed without congressional approval.

In August 2004 executive-level positions in the Military Departments included 3 secretaries, 3 under secretaries, 13 assistant secretaries, and 3 general counsels--a total of 22 executive-level statutory positions. Seven of the assistant secretaries are designated by title in statute--manpower and reserve affairs (3); financial management (3); and civil works (1-Army)--and may not be changed without congressional approval.

In August 2004 there were 9 Combatant Commands, 16 Defense Agencies, and 10 Department of Defense Field Activities.

Brief details of the changes in titles and functions of the various areas of responsibilities in the Department of Defense are included in the following lists of offices.