

1948: Johnston Plan

Study: Johnston Plan (James E. Hewes, Jr., *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963*. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1975)

Purpose: Soon after the organization of the Office of the Comptroller of the Army in 1948, the chief of its Management Division, Col. Kilbourne Johnston, received the assignment to develop a plan on how to best reorganize the Army Staff. A review of previous studies and boards showed that the Departmental Headquarters had adopted an emergency organization in both world wars because its peacetime statutory structure was dysfunctional with too many agencies reporting to the Office of the Chief of Staff and much duplication of effort by technical and administrative services. The Johnston Plan aimed to add two assistant secretaries for politico-military matters and resources and administration, establish a vice chief of staff and two deputy chiefs of staff to supervise the Army Staff and reduce the number of agencies reporting to the chief of staff, create new functional offices to replace old technical and administrative services to streamline the Army Staff, and reassign those installations and activities in the continental United States under the technical and administrative services to field commanders so the Army Staff could focus on planning rather than operations. Johnston divided his plan into three phases. During Phase I, the newly appointed assistance secretaries, vice chief of staff, and deputy chiefs of staff would begin reorganizing the Army Staff. Then, in Phase II, the Army Staff would functionalize the technical and administrative services. Finally, during Phase III, the Army Staff would transfer operational control of all installations and activities in the field to local commanders.

Outcome: The chiefs of the technical and administrative services strongly opposed the Johnston Plan. Chief of Staff General Omar N. Bradley favored implementing at least Phase I of the plan because his office was overwhelmed with its responsibilities. Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall also wanted more civilian control over business and finances in the Army. Consequently, the Army implemented a revised version of Phase I in Army Circular 342 in 1948. The circular gave the assistant secretary of the Army more control over procurement and industrial relations, created two deputy chiefs of staff for plans and combat operations as well as administration, and granted the director of logistics more authority over the technical services. The language in the circular emphasized its temporary nature until a better reorganization of the Army Staff could be agreed upon.

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