

1952: Bendetsen Plan

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

Purpose: In 1952, former Under Secretary of the Army Karl R. Bendetsen, submitted a plan on how to reorganize the Army along functional lines to Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett who was expressing frustrations with his difficulties in controlling supply matters. He insisted that previous reorganizations of the Army had stopped short of solving the problem created by the technical and administrative services of overlapping responsibilities and seven organizations each carrying out design, procurement, production, supply, distribution, and warehousing of items. Furthermore, disagreements between the technical and administrative services required G-4 and G-1 to intervene far too often in issues these offices were not equipped to deal with. The Bendetsen Plan sought to remove the Army Staff from all such operational responsibilities. Five staff divisions would oversee manpower, intelligence, operations, force development, and procurement, supply, and services. Functional commands for personnel, development, combat, service, and special projects would replace the existing geographic continental armies and take over respective operations from the technical and administrative services. Instead of three deputy chiefs of staff, he envisioned three assistant secretaries of the army (manpower; procurement, supply, and services; and comptroller). Two deputy chiefs of staff would be responsible for plans and research as well as operations and administration.

Outcome: Nothing came of the Bendetsen Plan in 1952. Yet the plan informed a number of defense committees established after President Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in 1953. Additionally, Bendetsen again repeated his recommendations in a study that he wrote in 1955 while he was a reserve colonel on active duty in the Office of the Comptroller of the Army. The plan represented a growing consensus, inside and outside the Army, about the need to take a functional approach to Army organization.

Dr. Grant Harward

Approved by: Dr. Peter Knight, GS-15