

1962: Project 39a

Study: Project 39a (James E. Hewes, Jr., *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963*. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1975)

Purpose: In 1962, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara initiated Project 39a to improve the decision-making processes within each of the three military department headquarters while cutting their personnel strength by thirty percent. Each service would prepare their own plan for meeting these objectives. Secretary of the Army Cyrus R. Vance knew that the Army Staff had blocked a similar effort the year before during Project 80, so he rejected the normal staff study method. Instead, Vance directed the Directorate of Coordination and Analysis, an element within the Chief of Staff's office, to prepare the study. During the study, Vance consulted regularly with General George H. Decker, Chief of Staff of the Army, and senior members of the Secretariat, and he made sequential decisions concerning major aspects of the project as the study progressed. By doing so, he ensured that when the study was completed in October 1962, its recommendations were ready for implementation. Vance did not circulate the study for concurrence with the Army Staff before announcing his decisions.

Outcome: The most important change was splitting off some functions of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations into a new office, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development. It became responsible for training, doctrine, force planning and programs, weapons systems, Army aviation, and chemical, biological, and nuclear material and operations. (Although the new position was filled by a lieutenant general, it was designated as an assistant chief of staff because the Army was limited by law to three deputy chiefs of staff.) Project 39a established a Staff Action Control Office in the Office of the Secretary of the General Staff. The new office strengthened the Office of the Secretary of the General Staff in its role as the integrator of the Army Staff's efforts. It also became the principal point of contact for members of the Secretariat in matters relating to Staff actions. The new office relieved the Directorate of Coordination and Analysis of the integrating function so it could concentrate on Vance's directive that it provide him and the Chief of Staff with the same analytical tools, most notably systems analysis, used by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In meeting the personnel reduction target, McNamara credited fifteen percent of it to the cuts Project 80 had made in Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA). The remaining fifteen percent, achieved by small cuts in many offices, decreased HQDA strength from almost 14,000 to about 10,000.

Dr. William Donnelly

Approved by: Dr. Peter Knight, GS-15