

1967: Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Army

Study: Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (Center of Military History files)

Purpose: By early 1966, the traditional Army Staff organization and processes had proven unequal to demands placed on them by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's management methods, a failure exacerbated by the stresses expanding the active force for the Vietnam War imposed on Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA). Lt. Gen. Charles H. Bonesteel III proposed combining several elements within the Office of the Chief of the Staff of the Army (the Office of the Director of Special Studies, the Force Planning and Analysis Office, and the Office of the Special Assistant for Army Information and Data Systems) into a new office headed by a lieutenant general who would act as the "chief of staff to the Chief of Staff." This office would coordinate and integrate the work of the Army Staff in managing all the service's resources. An ad hoc study group in the Office of the Chief of Staff later that year made a similar recommendation for what they called the Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff. Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor, dissatisfied with the Army Staff's performance, made it clear he expected changes to be made. In early 1967, General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, learned that the assistant secretary of defense (systems analysis) had proposed to Secretary McNamara that he strip HQDA of its planning, programming, and budgeting powers, these functions instead to be performed for the Army by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. General Abrams urged Secretary Resor and General Harold K. Johnson, Chief of Staff of the Army, to block this proposal by establishing the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff position within the Office of the Chief of Staff. General Johnson did not consult his deputy chiefs of staff in this matter, knowing they would strongly object to any office placed between them and the Chief of Staff. Instead, he gave the Comptroller of the Army forty-eight hours to draft the new office's organization and charter.

Outcome: In February 1967, Secretary Resor approved General Johnson's decision to establish the Office of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff. The new office took charge of the U.S. Army Information and Data Systems Command and had four directorates: Studies, Management Information Systems, Weapons Systems Analysis, and Force Planning Analysis.

Dr. William Donnelly
Approved by: Dr. Peter Knight, GS-15