

1990: Vanguard

Study: Vanguard (Mark D. Sherry, *The Army Command Post and Defense Reshaping, 1987–1997*. U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2008)

Purpose: Although the Army had conducted two major studies for reducing the Army's tactical force (those organized by Table of Organization and Equipment, or TO&E) in response to proposed budget constraints, it lacked a similar study for eliminating personnel from the non-tactical side, commonly referred to as the Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) Army. The Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff chartered Project Vanguard, which operated from May to December 1990, to evaluate all TDA organizations and provide restructuring options for a smaller Army of the future. The Vanguard task force largely capitalized on the data collected during the 1988 Robust Study Group, which had examined the TDA Army extensively and made fifty-seven recommendations. Although Army leaders had deferred action on Robust recommendations, the rapidly declining Army budgets since the late 1980s forced the Vanguard task force to either endorse the prior recommendations or find comparable sources of personnel and budget savings. During the initial concepts phase, the group determined which of the sixteen major command (MACOM) headquarters the Army would need in the future, suggesting the discontinuance of the Military Traffic Management, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation, and U.S. Army–South Commands, and consolidation of base operations in CONUS under a single MACOM. In the second phase, the task force developed at least one alternative for each TDA organization. Proposals included reorganizing TRADOC by transferring combat development personnel from branch and combined-arms “integrating” centers to a consolidated doctrine center at Fort Monroe and eliminating or consolidating branch centers, such as the Air Defense Artillery Branch and the Chemical Corps.

Outcome: Although a few approved initiatives eliminated nearly 7,000 military and more than 10,000 civilian personnel by the end of 1997, most Vanguard proposals remained in limbo by the Chief of Staff's decision briefing on 14 December 1990. Between the extensive coordination required of Phase II, the launching of Operation DESERT SHIELD, ongoing contingency operations in the Middle East, and the lack of concurrence of key HQDA officials, a full HQDA reorganization was postponed. However, Vanguard left a framework for future change, including a proposed 20 percent reduction in HQDA personnel from the earlier Goldwater-Nichols cap; merging most of HQDA's 122 field operating agencies and supply support activities; and improvement of HQDA's resource planning. The group suggested either expanding the Office of the Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation into a consolidated Army “program integrator” or transferring the office's functions and personnel to an Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, who would serve as the Army's resource manager.

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