

1974: Abrams Reorganization of the Army Staff

Study: Abrams Reorganization of the Army Staff (Center of Military History files)

Purpose: During 1972-1973, Headquarters, Department of the Army, came under increasing pressure from Congress and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to reduce the Army Staff's strength and improve its performance. In response, the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army conducted several studies. They examined how to reduce strength while establishing clear responsibility in the Staff's five key functional areas (personnel, budget, plans, materiel acquisition); relieving the Staff of operational tasks; removing layers within Staff offices; and making better use of the headquarters of Army Materiel Command, Forces Command, and Training and Doctrine Command in managing the Army. Personnel spaces and budget trimmed from the Staff would be transferred to operational forces. General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., Chief of Staff of the Army, stressed that decentralization be the guiding principle in reorganizing the Staff.

Outcome: The reorganization eliminated the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, Secretary of the General Staff, Chief of Research and Development, Chief of Reserve Components, Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Assistant Chief of Staff for Communications-Electronics, and The Provost Marshal General. A new position, the Director of the Army Staff, in theory combined the functions of the Secretary of the General Staff and the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, but the new position lacked the powers that had made the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff an effective integrator of the Staff's efforts. Another new position established was the Chief of Research, Development, and Acquisition. It absorbed the function of the Chief of Research and Development and some functions from the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations received many of the functions performed by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Communications-Electronics, and was renamed the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. The reorganization expanded the responsibilities of The Inspector General to include audit, internal review, and manpower survey; the position was renamed The Inspector General and Auditor General. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel assumed the duties of The Provost Marshal General. After the elimination of the Office of the Chief of Reserve Components, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the Chief of the Army Reserve reported directly to the Chief of Staff of the Army. The Staff's strength declined from 2,766 civilians and 1,957 officers in 1973 to 2,313 civilians and 1,530 officers in 1974.

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