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WOMENS' ARMY CORPS

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This paper analyzes the impact of an arbitrary staff ceiling on the Department of the Army's approach to management. It traces the evolution of the staff and the various roles assigned in the past; it outlines the basic considerations in determining the size of the staff; and it proposes four alternative means for complying with a ceiling limitation.

IMPACT OF A 2,000 SPACE MANPOWER CEILING ON

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Every newcomer to the Washington scene is exposed to a series of stories and jokes about the size and complexity of the sprawling military headquarters known collectively as "The Pentagon". There are frightening tales of workers lost for days in the bowels of the Pentagon building. There are those who claim personal knowledge of two little old ladies in a cubby-hole office under a dark stairwell dutifully filing forms for an office that disappeared long ago in a reorganization shuffle, forgotten by all but the paymaster. Before long, each neophyte joins the chorus of weary action officers who mutter that their world would be a far better place if half the people in "The Pentagon" were sent home.

"The Pentagon" comes under frequent attack from its own members, Congress, the news media, and concerned citizens as being too cumbersome and too costly.

In 1970, a Presidential Blue Ribbon Defense Panel noted:

> All evidence indicates that the sizes of Headquarters' staffs in the Military Departments are excessive to what is required for efficient performance of assigned functions. Functional analysis of these staffs reveals an astonishing lack of organizational focus and a highly excessive degree of "coordination," a substantial portion of which entails the writing of memoranda back and forth between lower

> echelons or parallel organizational elements and which serves no apparent useful or productive purpose.[1]

The solution offered by the Panel was that:

> The Secretariats and Service Military Staffs should be integrated to the extent necessary to eliminate duplication; the functions related to military operations and intelligence should be eliminated; line type functions, e.g. personnel operations, should be transferred to command organizations; and the remaining elements should be reduced by at least thirty percent. (A study of the present staffs indicates that the Secretariats and Service staffs combined should total no more than 2,000 people for each Department).[2]

The Panel then went one step further and recommended that Class II activities of the staff be transferred to existing command-type organizations within each Service.[3]

The 1973 Army reorganization and staff reductions will implement the Panel recommendation in part, by eliminating some spaces from the Army staff and transferring others to major commands or field operating agencies. However, the Department has not yet come to grips with the idea of the massive reduction envisioned by the Panel, nor have the Secretary of Defense or the President announced their desires concerning implementation of this recommendation.

This paper analyzes the impact of an arbitrary staff ceiling, as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, on the Department of the Army's approach to management.

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[1]US Executive Department, Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, Report to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the Department of Defense (1 July 1970), pp. 37-38.

[2]Ibid., p. 58.

[3]Ibid.

EVOLUTION OF THE STAFF

The growth and decline of the Headquarters, Department of the Army staff during recent years (1950 through 1969) is shown at Appendix 1. By the end of Fiscal Year 1972, 8,165 spaces were authorized to the combined Secretariat and Army Staff. This figure represented a 26% reduction since 1969, with only token transfers of spaces to field elements of the Department of the Army. The 1973 reorganization of the Army calls for a further reduction of 813 spaces and transfer of an additional 1,986 spaces to other commands or field operating agencies.

The Army Staff has two basic functions: to support the Secretary of the Army in his role as resource manager, and to support the Chief of Staff in his role as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The size and composition of the staff is determined largely by the Secretary of the Army. Title 10, US Code states:

> Except as otherwise specifically prescribed by law, the Army Staff shall be organized in such manner, and its members shall perform such duties and have such titles, as the Secretary may prescribe.[4]

Within this broad charter, the Army headquarters element, to include the Secretariat, constantly fluxuates in size.

George Washington's staff was barely large enough to take care of his correspondence, let alone perform the traditional functions

[4]US Code, Title 10 - Armed Forces (1964 ed), Sec 3031(b).

of a military staff.[5] Later, the legislation of 1796 established a headquarters staff of "1 major general, 1 brigadier general, 1 inspector to do duty as adjutant general, 1 quartermaster general, and 1 paymaster general."[6] The staff of the War Department stayed in low profile for well over one hundred years with each new staff bureau growing quietly larger, stronger, and more parochial in its outlook. The Secretary exercised little control over these autonomous bureaus except during actual wartime. It was with this background that the 20th Century saw the beginning of a power struggle for executive control which led ultimately to the creation of a large headquarters staff element under the Secretary of the Army.[7]

When Elihu Root became Secretary of War in 1899, the time was right to assert greater executive control over the Department's operations. The Spanish-American War caught the Army unprepared to mobilize and field a citizen Army. The lack of planning and preparation for combat, the lack of coordination and cooperation between the bureaus during the war, and the costly delays caused by red tape had become a national scandal.[8]

President McKinley appointed Major General Grenville M. Dodge head of a commission to investigate the problem. The Dodge report

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[5]Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (1967), p. 49.

[6]James D. Hittle, The Military Staff, Its History and Development (1961), p. 183.

[7]For a well documented discussion of this struggle for control, see James E. Hewes, Jr., Army Headquarters Organization and Administration 1900-1963 (June 1971).

[8]Ibid., p. I-7.

pointed out the gross inefficiencies in the Department's operation and laid part of the blame on Congress for its insatiable desire for detailed information which required too much staff time to produce and left too little time for substantive matters. The Dodge report became the foundation for Mr. Root's arguments in favor of major changes in the War Department's organization. He asserted that a modern Army required intelligent planning for future military operations and effective executive control over current ones by a General Staff headed by a general manager, the Chief of Staff. He felt the need for a General Staff so urgent that Mr. Root appointed an ad hoc War College Board in 1901, officially to develop plans for an Army War College, to actually serve as his General Staff. Finally, in the Act of 14 February 1903, Congress provided authority for the Chief of Staff and the General Staff as requested by Mr. Root.[9]

Succeeding Secretaries sometimes used and sometimes abused the central control concept set forth by Mr. Root. William Howard Taft all but destroyed the concept when the early General Staff became too involved in detailed operations and forced him to constantly mediate jurisdictional disputes with the bureaus. Mr. Taft retaliated by supporting the bureaus. Henry L. Stimpson instituted reforms and applied principles of management being popularized by industry but soon ran into problems with Congressional leaders over his proposals for reorganization. The bureau chiefs of that day

[9] Ibid., pp. I-7 - I-15.

wielded great influence on the members of Congress who were dependent on them for detailed information and who felt a paternal interest in their organizations. The Secretaries who followed Mr. Stimpson were torn between a desire to maintain control and a desire to appease both the Congress and the bureau chiefs. By 1916, the General Staff had increased to 55 members but the National Defense Act of 1916 so limited the numbers that could be assigned in Washington that there were only 19 on duty when the United States entered World War I.[10]

When the United States declared war on Germany, Secretary Newton D. Baker returned to the policy of allowing the bureaus to run themselves and the General Staff became simply a war planning agency, as some critics indicated it should have been all along. The War College Division became the General Staff both in fact and in name. The staff planned, scheduled, and coordinated programs for mobilizing, training, and transporting the Army overseas. By the end of the war, the General Staff had grown to over 1,000 and was organized along functional lines into a directing instead of a planning staff.[11]

"Congress rejected the principle of tight executive control or unity of command developed by General (Major General Peyton C.) March almost as soon as the war was over."[12] The National Defense Act Amendments of 4 June 1920 were based on the prewar traditional

[10] Ibid., pp. I-15 - I-29.
[11] Ibid., pp. I-30 - I-56.
[12] Ibid., p. I-57.

pattern of fragmented, diffused authority and responsibility with effective control again at the bureau level, subject to detailed Congressional supervision. The General Staff was merely one bureau among equals with the function of preparing plans for mobilization and war, investigating and reporting on the efficiency and preparedness of the Army, and providing aid and assistance to the Chief of Staff and Secretary of War. The staff was not permitted to assume or engage in work of an administrative nature which was the jurisdictional responsibility of an established bureau.

When General Pershing became Chief of Staff, he appointed Major General James G. Harbord to develop a recommended organization for the staff. The resulting functional G-staff system, in one form or another, has remained in force to this day.

In 1939, General George C. Marshall inherited both the G-staff concept of the Harbord Board and the Board's basic set of assumptions regarding how the next war would be managed. Basically it was intended that the Chief of Staff take the field as Commanding General in a single theater of operations, drawing the nucleus of his GHQ from the War Plans Division and leaving his Deputy as Acting Chief of Staff. This concept was soon discarded when the United States entered World War II.

> Students of the War Department's organization on the eve of World War II have estimated that at least sixty-one officers had the right of access to the Chief of Staff and that he had under him thirty major and 350 smaller commands. Over a period of years a number of semi-independent agencies and offices, as jealous of their privileges as a clutch of feudal barons, had grown up.

> As a result the Chief of Staff and his three deputies were completely submerged in details.[13]

The 89-man General Staff was limited at this point to preparation of plans and policies and supervision of the execution of those approved by the Secretary of War in accordance with AR 10-15, dated 18 August 1936. The rising emergency proved quickly that the Chief of Staff could not handle the volume of routine work generated by the staff and the field and run the war as well. At this point, the most gigantic decentralization action in history was initiated with the creation of the Army Service Forces. Creation of this new command reversed the flow of paperwork so that it went from Washington to the field.[14] The old War Plans Division was redesignated as the Operations Planning Division and in effect became a super staff, by-passing the other General Staff activities. The General Staff soon passed 600 and, despite General Marshall's objections, became deeply involved in operations. Those involved believed that it was necessary for the Staff to make swift and binding decisions of a command nature in that time of national crisis and accordingly such decisions were made, with or without clearly stated authority.[15]

After the war, a Board of Officers on the Reorganization of the War Department was appointed, headed first by Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch and, after his death, by Lieutenant General

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[13]Forrest Pogue, Ordeal and Hope 1939-1942 (1965), p. 290.

[14]John M. Pfiffner and Frank P. Sherwood, Administrative Organization (1960), p. 191.

[15]Mark S. Watson, Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations (1960), p. 82.

William H. Simpson. Where General Marshall had insisted the General Staff must stay out of operations (with the notable exception of his Operations Planning Division), the Patch-Simpson Board came to the opposite conclusion, asserting that the limitation of the Staff to broad policy and planning was unsound. The Eisenhower Reorganization which followed abolished the Army Service Forces, transferred the functions of the subordinate Service Commands to six Zone of the Interior Armies and returned the technical and administrative staffs and services to the direct control of the Chief of Staff. "The War Department again became a 'loose federation of warring tribes' with 'little armies within the Army' as Mr Lovett said to the Patch Board."[16] The problems attributed to a lack of strong central control by the proponents of the General Staff were not solved by the teamwork, cooperation, and persuasion that General Eisenhower viewed as a better management philosophy than granting additional authority to the General Staff.

The National Security Act of 1947 and its amendment two years later led to the gradual transfer of effective executive control to the Secretary of Defense, reaching a peak of centralization during the tenure of Secretary of Defense Robert S. MacNamara. In order to be responsive to this new super-structure, the Army staff found itself embroiled in day-to-day operations, with less and less time for the planning and policy duties assigned. As the Army sought better ways to control internal operations through new functional

[16] Hewes, p. III-54.

programs and command management systems, the staff grew larger.[17] In 1957, the Technical Services, which until then had been under a separate manpower ceiling, were added to the Army Staff and the staff attained its peak strength of 16,304. Efforts to develop a more effective means of coordinating the operations of the Technical Services ultimately led to the creation of the US Army Materiel Command during the 1962 reorganization and decentralization of some functions and personnel from the Staff to that organization.

The struggle for control from Mr. Root's day to the present has been a seesaw battle between those who support the independent bureau system and those who seek to establish central control at the staff level. As a result, the staff role swings from that of planner to that of operator and back again with almost predictable regularity. "The War Department was drastically reorganized during both World Wars by creating new emergency functional agencies which were layered over the permanent statutory commodity-type or multi-functional bureaus."[18] As a result, both Congress and the public received the impression that the Department of Army was and is a huge, bureaucratic, red-tape-ridden behemoth that somehow manages to muddle through and field a winning team when it is needed.

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[17]The post World War II period found numerous Boards and Commissions studying organization, to include: the Johnston Plan (48); the Hoover Commission Reports (49 and 55); the Cresap, McCormich, and Paget Survey (49); the Palmer Reorganization (54-56); the Hoelscher Committee Report (OSD Project 80 Army) and the follow-on Project 39a (61 and 62); the Parker Panel Report (69); the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel Report (70); and the recent studies culminating in the Reorganization of 1973 currently being implemented.

[18]US Department of the Army, Comptroller of the Army, A Staff Study on Organization of the United States Army (15 July 1948), p. 2.

The Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, headed by Mr. Gilbert H. Fitzhugh, Chairman of the Board of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, reiterated the standard complaints of reformers since the time of Mr. Root and recommended the Service staffs be limited to 2,000 spaces each.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS IN DETERMINING THE SIZE OF THE STAFF

"For the next few years, the Department of the Army will be faced with management problems of increasingly serious proportions ---how to maintain a combat-ready Army of adequate size, with suitable equipment and quality personnel in the face of declining resources."[19] It is essential that the Army review its organization and management practices and determine those changes required to ensure the most effective, efficient, and economical organization possible.

A number of factors impact on the size of the staff besides availability of manpower, money, and materiel. i.e. -

1. The desires of Congress. Congress exercises close control over the budget appropriations and it passes on any major reorganization of the Services. The budget structure imposed by Congress forces much of the workload associated with budget preparation, review, and defense to be done by the Washington-based staff. Since planning must be done at the highest organizational level to ensure full coordination and integration of all known

[19] US Department of the Army, Chief of Staff, Report of the Special Review Panel on Department of the Army Organization (1 March 1971), p. I-B-1.

factors, it follows that translation of plans into budget proposals within the hydra-headed appropriation structure imposed by Congress also requires preparation and defense of the budget at the highest organizational level.

2. The size and responsibilities of the Offices of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the number of DOD executive level employees increases, there is a corresponding increase in the demand for detailed data from the Service staffs.

3. The degree of responsiveness demanded by external sources. If higher levels are unable or unwilling to wait for collection of data from subordinate levels of the Army, the staff must maintain an ability to respond from in-house resources.

4. Changing priorities. The tremendous growth of the staff during the Southeast Asia buildup was keyed mainly to logistic problems which rose to the highest level for intensive management and resolution.

The Staff has two basic tasks: to support the Secretary of the Army in his role as resource manager, and to support the Chief of Staff in his role as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As stated in the Project 80 report:

> The key to whether an Army function must be actively managed from the Headquarters is whether the function is one which should normally demand the personal attention of the Chief of Staff or the Secretary. If it is not a task they would do themselves if they had time, then the function can possibly best be handled by delegation to a responsible commander.[20]

[20] US Department of the Army, Chief of Staff, Study of the Functions, Organization and Procedures of the Department of the Army, OSD Project 80 (Army) Part II (October 1961), p. II-13.

Thus the desires of the principals must be taken into consideration. Another equally important consideration in determining the optimum size of the staff is the identification of those functions which cannot by law, or for any other cogent reason, be delegated to subordinate agencies.

In examining alternative means of reducing the size of the headquarters staff, it was assumed that:

1. The mission of the Department of the Army will remain unchanged.

2. The size of the Army will continue to decline under resource constraints imposed by Congress and the Department of Defense.

3. There will be no reduction in the level of support provided by external organizations (e.g. DSA, GSA, DIA).

4. DOD and Congress will not overrule any Secretary of the Army decision to transfer functions and personnel off the staff and out of the Washington area.

THE ALTERNATIVES

There are four basic alternatives available by which the staff could be reduced to 2,000 as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel:

1. Retain responsibility for all currently assigned functions as identified in AR 10-5 but limit the staff to the tasks of planning, providing policy direction, recommending program objectives and allocating resources, and inspecting to insure field

elements adhere to the directions of the Chief of Staff. This alternative would require a massive staff reduction in all functional areas of responsibility and would force the staff to divest itself of all operational tasks through transfers to appropriate subordinate commands. In effect, the staff would revert to its original role. There would be no need to drastically reorganize during time of war since the nucleus for each functional requirement would exist at the staff level and expansion could be accommodated with relative ease. During peacetime the organization would have sufficient flexibility to expand any given functional area to provide intensive management through the addition of ad hoc or standing committees from resources available at the major subordinate command level. The US Air Force Board Structure provides a hierarchy of standing committees which could serve as a model. The primary disadvantage in retaining functional responsibility at the staff level while moving personnel and operational tasks to the field is the inevitable delay that will occur in responding to one-time requirements from higher echelons.

2. Focus on contribution as the key to what should be retained at the staff level. Under this alternative it would be necessary to place every function now performed at the staff level "on trial for its life", retaining only those which absolutely could not be performed at a lower level and those of personal interest to the Chief of Staff and Secretary. In this way the staff would be contributing something unique to the management of the

Department. Once again overall planning and review of proposed program objectives and allocation of resources would necessarily fall within the category of functions to be retained. Considerable consolidation of functional areas could be achieved (e.g. logistic functions shared by ASA(I&L), ASA(R&D), DCSLOG, ACSFOR, CRD, and DCSCE). The primary disadvantages to this alternative are that it requires transferring responsibility for some functional areas to field activities geographically separated from the Chief of Staff and the organization would not be oriented toward the traditional wartime mission of the staff.

3. Orient the staff to the program and budget functions associated with resource management and delegate all other functions to the major subordinate commands. The staff would then review, proposed plans and policies in the context of resource management, coordinate with other elements of the Executive Department, defend the budget before Congress, and recommend allocation of resources. This alternative would orient the staff upward to respond to higher headquarters demands. Inquiries from that level that did not fall within the plans, programs, and budget areas would be transmitted directly to the responsible major subordinate commander for action. A major reorganization would be required to perform the traditional wartime mission of the staff or a separate wartime GHQ would be required.

4. "Double-hat" certain major subordinate commanders as

members of the staff (e.g. Commander AMC/DCSLOG). The "double-hatted" commanders would maintain a small liaison office with the DA staff to represent their interests. The Washington-based staff could then concentrate on planning for mobilization; packaging and coordinating plans, programs, and budgets; and monitoring the execution of approved programs. This alternative would provide a responsive and knowledgeable staff and yet keep the Washington contingent small. A major reorganization, or creation of a separate wartime headquarters, would be required in time of emergency.

CONCLUSION

It is not realistic to assume that the Department of the Army will be relieved of any of its functional responsibilities. Therefore it must be assumed that a reduction of the Departmental staff must entail reduction of effort and/or transfer of functions and personnel to a lower echelon. Decentralization is the key ... it has become almost a "gospel" of management both in government and in private industry. As one writer put it -

> Stultifying inflexibility, red tape, poor and costly service, a "civil service" mentality and other manifestations of organizational dry rot have all forced urgent attention to decentralization efforts.[21]

In addition to the philosophy of decentralization, the Army must also recognize that its programs and activities age and eventually outlive their usefulness. For some reason, Army programs are

[21] John M. Pfiffner and Frank P. Sherwood, Administrative Organization (1960), p. 461.

usually conceived as eternal and welded into the structure. This process must be reversed and each program forced to justify its existence periodically to ensure the best use of scarce manpower resources. Finally, the Department of the Army must be organized in such a way that there is a smooth transition from peacetime to wartime posture to preclude disruption of service and expedite emergency actions. This can be accomplished under each of the alternatives shown with proper planning, but it is facilitated by the structuring proposed under Alternative 1.

In summary, it is feasible to organize an effective Departmental staff under a 2,000 space manpower ceiling. In order to do this, however, it will be necessary to decentralize functions and responsibilities to field activities. To date there has been no pressure applied from any quarter to implement the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel recommendation. Nevertheless, in light of declining resources, it is encumbent on the Department of the Army to re-examine its management philosophy and ensure it is tailored to provide for the best possible use of scarce manpower resources.

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