ORGANIZATION

When President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947 on 26 July 1947, it signified the nation's awareness that it would have to meet the challenge of a world greatly altered by World War II and its far-reaching consequences. The act not only reorganized the military establishment; it also created a large, more coherent politico-military framework for the direction and execution of U.S. national security policy. This structure has endured for half a century, evolving in response to changing domestic and international circumstances. Despite adjustments in both form and substance, the military establishment has retained the essential features of the original 1947 structure.

After almost every war the U.S. government has found the wartime military arrangements defective and carried out reforms. Changes following the Spanish-American War and World War I tended toward centralization that seemed to be characteristic of the experience of most of the great institutions of American society. And always, resistance to this trend from many quarters caused proposed reforms to be compromised and modified. The 1947 legislation was not the first attempt to reshape the military. Between 1921 and 1945 some 50 bills had been offered in Congress for reorganizing the two military departments—War and Navy. Only one of these bills, in 1932, reached the floor of the House of Representatives, where it was defeated.[1]

It required the prolonged, intense, and all-embracing national experience in World War II to give new impetus and coherence to the movement for reorganizing the nation's military establishment. The war demonstrated that even though the United States had prevailed, its organization for national security was seriously flawed. Critical issues between the Army and Navy arose over allocation of resources, strategic priorities, and command arrangements, sometimes affecting the responsibility for, and the timing and conduct of military operations. To coordinate the war effort, a vast temporary array of some 75 interservice agencies and interdepartmental committees came into being. The ad hoc arrangements for directing the conflict worked, but only because the nation's resources were so abundant that they could compensate for the mistakes and internal divisions. Waging war on a global scale attested powerfully to the greatly increased complexity of mobilizing and employing the nation's material and human resources.[2]

The disputes between the Army and Navy over command and control of forces in the theaters of operations reinforced the conviction of many close observers that teamwork was the key to victory. The prewar system of voluntary interservice "cooperation" of the sort symbolized by the Pearl Harbor disaster had to give way to centralized control of strategy and operations. Commanders in the field exercised operational control over joint forces—land, sea, and air—in the great campaigns of the war. The joint efforts of unified commands in some areas, particularly Europe, were more impressive than in others—the Pacific—but by the end of the war there was little doubt that unified field commands were integral to an effective military establishment.

The problems and deficiencies revealed were of sufficient magnitude to lead to a broad consensus (the Navy Department was a conspicuous exception) on the need for more integration of foreign, military, and domestic policies at the center of power in Washington. The key lessons of the war were that the American response to the exigencies of a radically different postwar world would require coordination of policy, intelligence, resource allocation, and military operations on an unprecedented scale, and that military preparedness in peacetime was indispensable. These perceptions infused the three years of planning and debate that culminated in the National Security Act of 1947. The theme of unification became increasingly dominant in the demands for changes in the organization of the armed forces from 1944 on. What unification meant remained to be defined in practice.

Having entered two world wars in a quarter of a century unprepared, the nation's leaders recognized before the end of World War II that the United States would have to maintain a peacetime establishment of unprecedented size and cost to carry out the responsibilities of the world leadership role that had been thrust upon it. It could not afford to be unprepared in the event of another major conflict.

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947

The National Security Act of 1947 came into being only after almost three years of sometimes bitter controversy over whether and how to establish unified direction, authority, and control over the armed forces. Serious discussion about reorganization began in Congress and the military departments in 1944 and aroused much public interest. In April and May the House Select Committee on Post-War Military Policy held hearings on a "Proposal to Establish a Single Department of the Armed Forces." War Department officials urged the establishment of a Department of the Armed Forces and submitted a chart outlining its possible organization. Navy representatives urged further study. The committee called for study of the problem by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who had already established their own committee to look into the advantages and disadvantages of different organizational approaches. In April 1945 the JCS group, with only Admiral J. O. Richardson dissenting, recommended the establishment of a single department of the armed forces. The JCS took no formal action on the recommendation and forwarded the report to the president on 16 October 1945.[3]

With the end of the war and the beginning of an enormous demobilization that would reduce the military services to little more than one-tenth of their peak wartime strengths, the Army and Navy both gave the most serious attention to the future of the military establishment, each pursuing its own preferred concept. The strongest impetus for radical change continued to come from the Army, which consistently supported the establishment of a single department under a secretary of defense, with a chief of staff or military commander, a military high command, and unified service branches for ground, sea, and air warfare.

The Navy countered with its own proposals in the Eberstadt* Report, submitted to Congress on 18 October 1945. This report opposed a single department, accepted the creation of a separate Air Force, and proposed a larger structure including a national security council and a national security resources board, supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as special agencies for intelligence and research and a munitions board.[4]

Hearings before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs between 17 October and 17 December 1945 revealed the extent of the differences between the Army and Navy. Spokesmen for the Navy rejected the Army proposal of a single department with three services—Army, Navy, and Air—and supported the Eberstadt plan for organizing national security.[5]

The requirement for a separate Air Force seemed generally acceptable to the services, Congress, and the public. The Army Air Forces (AAF), granted a high degree of autonomy by the Army,† had played an impressive and highly visible role in all theaters of operations during the war. It had organized itself in anticipation of and in preparation for independence after the war. Its peak personnel strength of 2.4 million in 1945 was 31 percent of the U.S. Army, three-quarters the strength of the Navy, and five times that of the Marine Corps.[6]

Still, the prospect of an independent and dynamic Air Force, supported by powerful political, industrial, and public constituencies, engendered fear and dismay in the Navy and Marine Corps. Army Air Forces leaders, flush with high expectations, questioned the need for Navy and Marine Corps aviation, the loss of all or a portion of which could reduce the Navy and Marine Corps to appendages of the Army and the Air Force. Moreover, the Army had made clear its position that the Marine Corps should not be permitted to become a second land army, that it should be restricted to duties with the fleet, and have only lightly armed units for shore operations. The Navy and Marine Corps, imbued with great pride in their long histories and their wartime exploits, could not tolerate what they viewed as subordination to the Army and a new Air Force. They mounted and conducted a campaign in which they eventually succeeded in protecting their functions and the composition of their forces. They were not successful in their opposition to a single national military establishment, but the Navy preserved its position as an equal of the other services within the new structure.

To secure the major objective of a unified military establishment under a secretary of defense, the Army and the Army Air Forces had to yield on the naval aviation and Marine Corps issues. Strong congressional and public support for the Navy dictated compromise on roles and missions. Thus, as it turned out, the changes

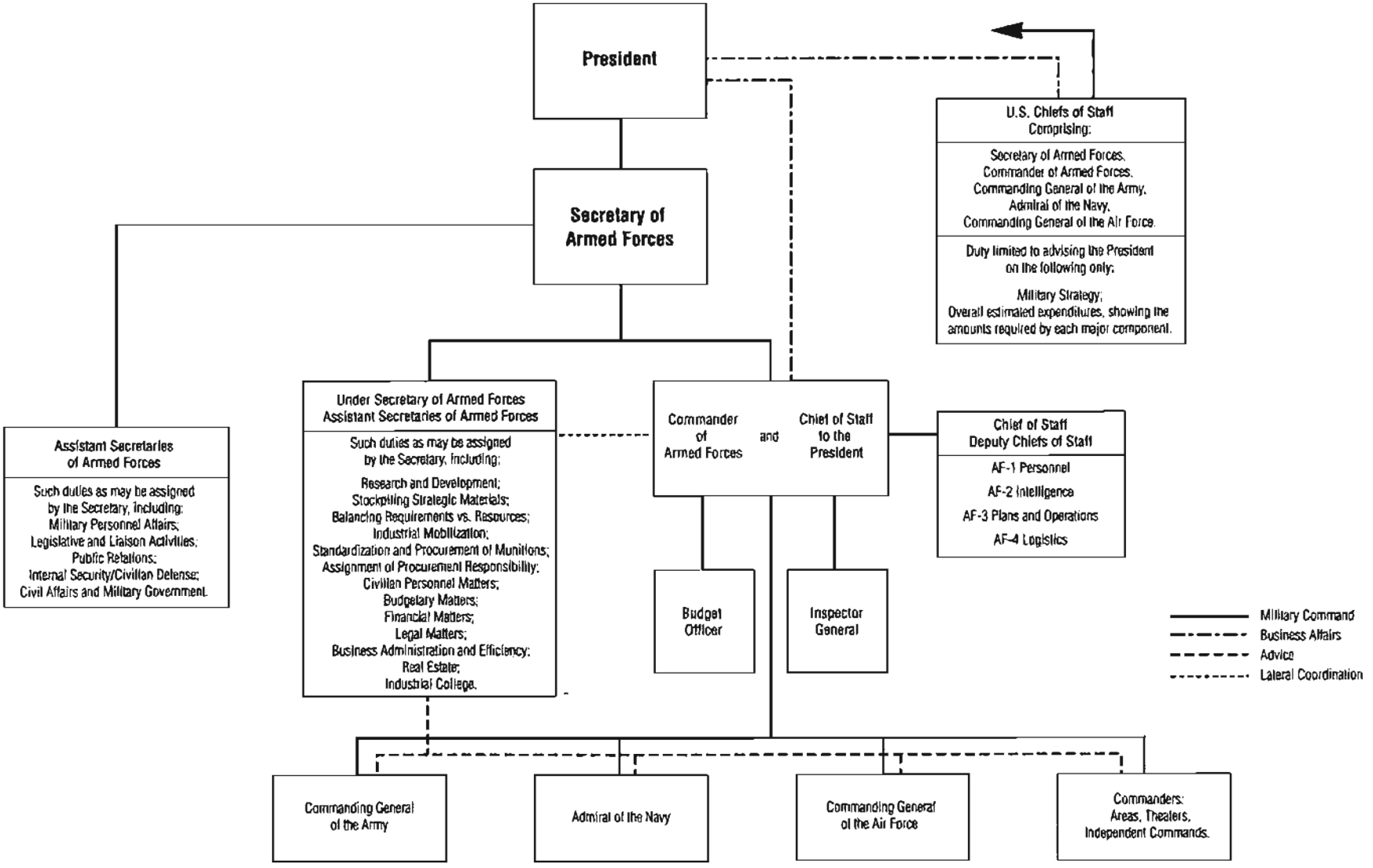
* Ferdinand Eberstadt was a close associate of Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal.

† The commanding general of the AAF was a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Chart 1

SINGLE DEPARTMENT OF ARMED FORCES PROPOSED BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF JCS (RICHARDSON COMMITTEE)

23 March 1945



President Harry S. Truman

that occurred on the civil side of the reorganization proved to be more radical and meaningful than those that occurred on the military side.

On 19 December 1945 President Truman sent a message to Congress recommending a single department of national defense with three coordinate branches —land, sea, and air. He emphasized the need to provide "the strongest means for civilian control of the military" and proposed that there should be a single chief of staff of the department, the position to be rotated among the services. The president became a driving force behind the campaign for reorganization of the national defense. His experience as chairman of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program during the war convinced him that the "antiquated defense setup" had to be changed. He spoke of "bureaucratic waste" and "overlapping jurisdictions."[7]

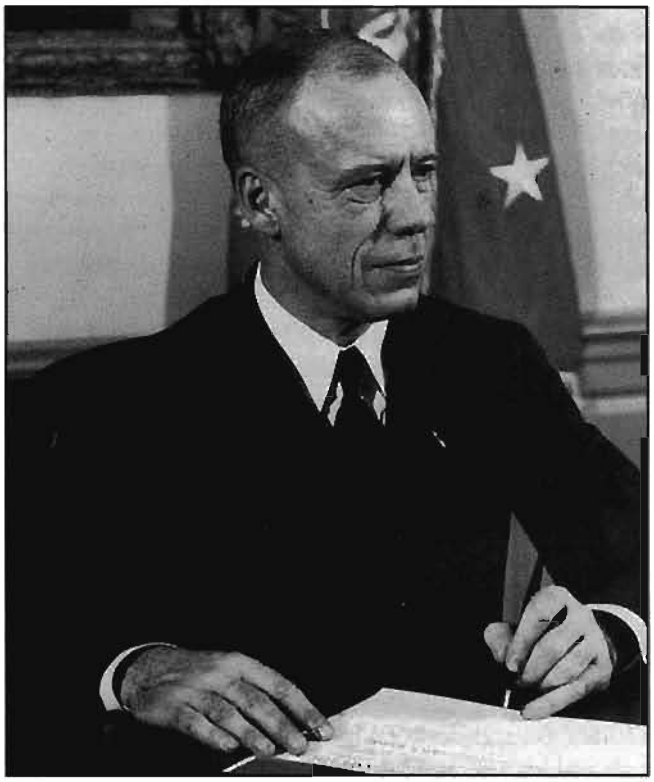
On 9 April 1946 three members of the Senate Military Affairs Committee introduced a bill that followed many of Truman's recommendations and included a number of the Eberstadt proposals for civil-military coordination. Shortly after, the Naval Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House, which strongly espoused the Navy position on change, countered this proposal. In a letter to the secretary of the Navy, the committees objected that the proposed bill concentrated "too much power in the hands of too few men," reduced civilian and congressional control over the military, and would empower the executive branch to abolish or emasculate the Marine Corps and transfer vital naval aviation functions to the Army Air Forces. The letter thus spelled out plainly the fears of the Navy and the Marine Corps that in a single department they would be dominated by the Army and a new and dynamic Air Force.[8]

Underlying the debate over unification was anticipation of the revolutionary impact on weapons, strategic plans, and national security policies of new military technologies—jet aircraft, missiles, radar, other electronic devices, and especially the atomic bomb. The Army had overseen the development of the bomb and the Army Air Forces had dropped it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Navy participated in the atomic tests at Bikini in 1946. All of the services desired to share in the control and use of nuclear weapons, which promised to have a powerful role in shaping their future, if not immediately, certainly during the next decade. The critical and revolutionary effect of nuclear weapons clearly indicated that control and policymaking must come from the highest government authority.

The impasse in Congress between the oversight committees caused President Truman, on 13 May 1946, to ask the secretaries of the War and Navy Departments to seek agreement on a plan for the reorganization of the armed forces. In their reply of 31 May, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal reported that they agreed on 8 of 12 major points. The points still in dispute were, of course, the nub of the matter—a single military department, three coordinate services or three departments, control of aviation, and the functions of the Marine Corps.[9]

Truman's response to the report on 15 June once again called for a single military department with three coordinate services under it, diminished naval aviation forces, and the status quo for Marine Corps functions. This represented a compromise of sorts, but not to the liking of the Navy. The president sent the correspondence to the chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Military Affairs and Naval Affairs with a request that Congress pass legislation based on the 12 principles he presented. Concurring in part with recommendations of the Navy's Eberstadt report, he endorsed the creation of a council of national defense, a central intelligence agency, a national security resources board, a research and development agency, an organization for military procurement and supply, and a military education and training agency.[10]

Opposition to the president's proposal persisted in the Navy and Marine Corps and in Congress. At



Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson

Forrestal's instigation, the Army and Navy agreed in November 1946 to work together to seek recommendations that would break the impasse. After two months of intense negotiations, Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad and Vice Adm. Forrest P. Sherman produced a compromise agreement that Patterson and Forrestal submitted to the White House on 16 January 1947. At the same time, the president prepared a proposed executive order clarifying the roles and missions of the services.[11]

The Patterson-Forrestal agreement that the president sent to Congress represented a real compromise, thanks chiefly to concessions by the Army. The accord provided for an organization under a secretary of defense to establish "common policies and common programs for the integrated operation" of the armed forces—this instead of a single department. It called for separately administered departments of the Army, the Navy (including naval aviation and the Marine Corps), and the Air Force, and continuation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff assisted by a joint staff. The agreement called also for the creation of a war council headed by the secretary of national defense to consider "matters of broad policy relating to the armed forces." Beyond the defense structure, it asked for a council of national defense, a central intelligence agency, and a national security resources board.[12]

Consideration of the proposed legislation by Congress lasted six months, during which its provisions underwent substantial changes. The House of Representatives, influenced by arguments of the Navy and Marine Corps, enacted a bill further limiting the authority of the secretary of defense and elevating the status of the military departments. This compromise of diverse viewpoints represented a lowest common denominator. The legislation went to Truman on 26 July; he signed it immediately.[13]

The preamble of the National Security Act of 1947 spoke to the law's general objectives:

> In enacting this legislation, it is the intent of Congress to provide a comprehensive program for the future security of the United States, to provide for the establishment of integrated policies and procedures for the departments, agencies, and functions of the Government relating to the national security; to provide three military departments for the operation and administration of the Army, the Navy (including naval aviation and the United States Marine Corps), and the Air Force, with their assigned combat and service components; to provide for their authori-

Admiral Forrest P. Sherman

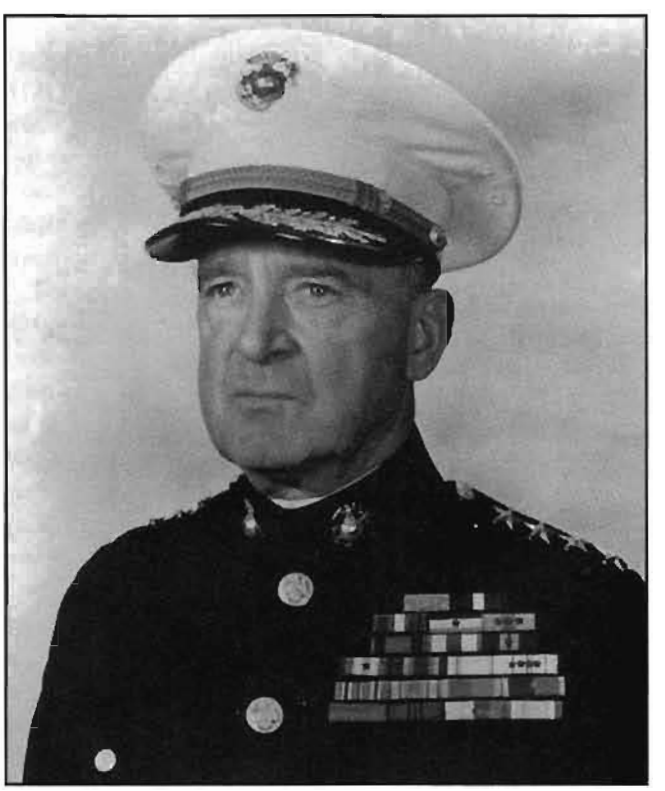
Maj. Gen. Lauris Norstad

> tative coordination and unified direction under civilian control but not to merge them; to provide for the effective strategic direction of the armed forces and for their operation under unified control and for their integration into an efficient team of land, naval, and air forces.[14]

This expressed the essence of the compromise that had been struck—a structure that fell somewhere between a centralized system and a loose confederation of military services. It preserved much of the autonomy of the services at the expense of the secretary of defense. Moreover it suited the political interests of Congress. As one observer noted, "Congressmen have traditionally seen their ability to influence defense policy enhanced under a decentralized structure and have feared loss of influence under a more centralized one . . . . America's defense establishment has reflected the pluralistic and decentralized nature of America's national governmental system."[15]

The National Security Act, then, represented a compromise not only between the military services but also between Congress and the president: Congress accepted the principle of unification but with what it considered safeguards. It sought to limit the powers of the executive branch, particularly the secretary of defense, over the new National Military Establishment (NME), and to maintain its own constitutional powers over organization and appropriations for defense. By creating the National Military Establishment instead of an executive department, and by placing three executive departments—Army, Navy, and Air Force—under the secretary of defense, it effectively compromised the latter's position and power. The secretaries of the military departments retained all of their powers and prerogatives subject only to the authority of the secretary of defense to exercise "general direction, authority, and control." This deliberately imprecise language reflected the reluctance of Congress to place wide powers in the hands of the secretary of defense and his staff and plagued the first secretary of defense, James Forrestal,* throughout his incumbency, causing him to request changes that became the 1949 amendments to the act.

Title I of the act established the machinery for coordinating national security. This included the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the president and including the secretaries of state, defense, and the three military departments, and the chairman of the National Security Resources Board (NSRB), which was to oversee industrial and civilian mobili-



General Alexander A. Vandegrift, Commandant of the Marine Corps, 1944-47, strong opponent of unification

* President Truman first offered the position of secretary of defense to Secretary of War Patterson, who refused it

zation. The NSC was to "advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security so as to enable the military services and the other departments and agencies of the Government to cooperate more effectively in matters involving the national security." The Central Intelligence Agency, successor to the Office of Strategic Services and the Central Intelligence Group, under the NSC would provide national security intelligence and coordinate the intelligence activities of government agencies; all existing intelligence agencies would continue as before.

Title II dealt with the National Military Establishment. It defined the secretary of defense as "the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the national security." His specific responsibilities included establishing "general policies and programs" for the NME; exercising "general direction, authority, and control" over the military departments; eliminating "unnecessary duplication or overlapping in the fields of procurement, supply, transportation, storage, health, and research"; and supervising and coordinating the preparation and implementation of annual defense budgets. The act provided legislative sanction for the preparation and submission of a budget for the whole U.S. military establishment. This proved to be the most significant power accorded the secretary of defense in his efforts to bring about greater integration and more efficient operation of the military services.

The act established the new Department of the Air Force and the U.S. Air Force under it, and changed the name of the War Department to Department of the Army. The three military departments retained the status of "individual executive departments" and were still largely autonomous with considerable control of their internal affairs. The act named the service secretaries members of the NSC and authorized them to present directly to the president and to the director of the budget any report or recommendation they deemed appropriate, after informing the secretary of defense. The provision reserving to the service secretaries all powers and duties not specifically conferred on the secretary of defense paralleled the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which reserves to the states or to the people all powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states.

The law placed limitations on the secretary's support staff, permitting him to appoint only three special assistants "to advise and assist him" and prohibiting him from establishing a military staff. Although he could hire civilian employees and draw on the military services for staff assistance, the limitations appeared to be—and indeed became—obstacles to the effective control of the new organization. The limitations seemed to be the result of concessions to still the fears of congressmen and others that a "super secretary" might impose a "Prussian-style general staff" on the nation. They also served to mollify opponents of unification in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Congress.

Title II also created a War Council and three other agencies within the NME. The Munitions Board and the Research and Development Board (RDB) were the statutory successors to existing boards. Responsible to the secretary of defense, each had a civilian chairman and military department representatives appointed by the service secretaries. The third agency, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had been in existence since 1942 but now received statutory sanction as the "principal military advisers to the President and the Secretary of Defense." Composed of the chiefs of the military services and the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief* "if there be one," the JCS remained a committee of equals. There was no provision for a chairman of the JCS, but the act did create a Joint Staff of 100 officers under a military director.

The law required that the Joint Chiefs establish "unified" commands. Such commands had been in existence since 14 December 1946 when President Truman authorized the creation of seven unified commands under the Unified Command Plan (UCP).† The UCP accorded the Joint Chiefs strategic direction over all elements of the armed forces in each command, and each chief served as "executive agent" with operational command and control over the forces in one or more unified areas. The National Security Act thus provided a statutory basis for the creation of unified commands.

The carefully and cautiously crafted overall organizational arrangement reflected the success of the Navy and the Marine Corps and their congressional supporters in limiting civilian control that they feared might operate to their detriment. The opponents of unification also succeeded in eliminating any provision for a single chief of staff or commander and a general staff.

Title III was a miscellany. The secretary of defense replaced the secretary of war in the line of presidential succession and the secretary of the Navy was eliminated from succession. It prescribed the salary scale for senior officials and authorized the appropriation of money to further the provisions of the act.[10]

The National Security Act left many loose ends that were bound to affect the operation of the NME, but it probably represented the best arrangement that could be obtained at the time. It gave the military services

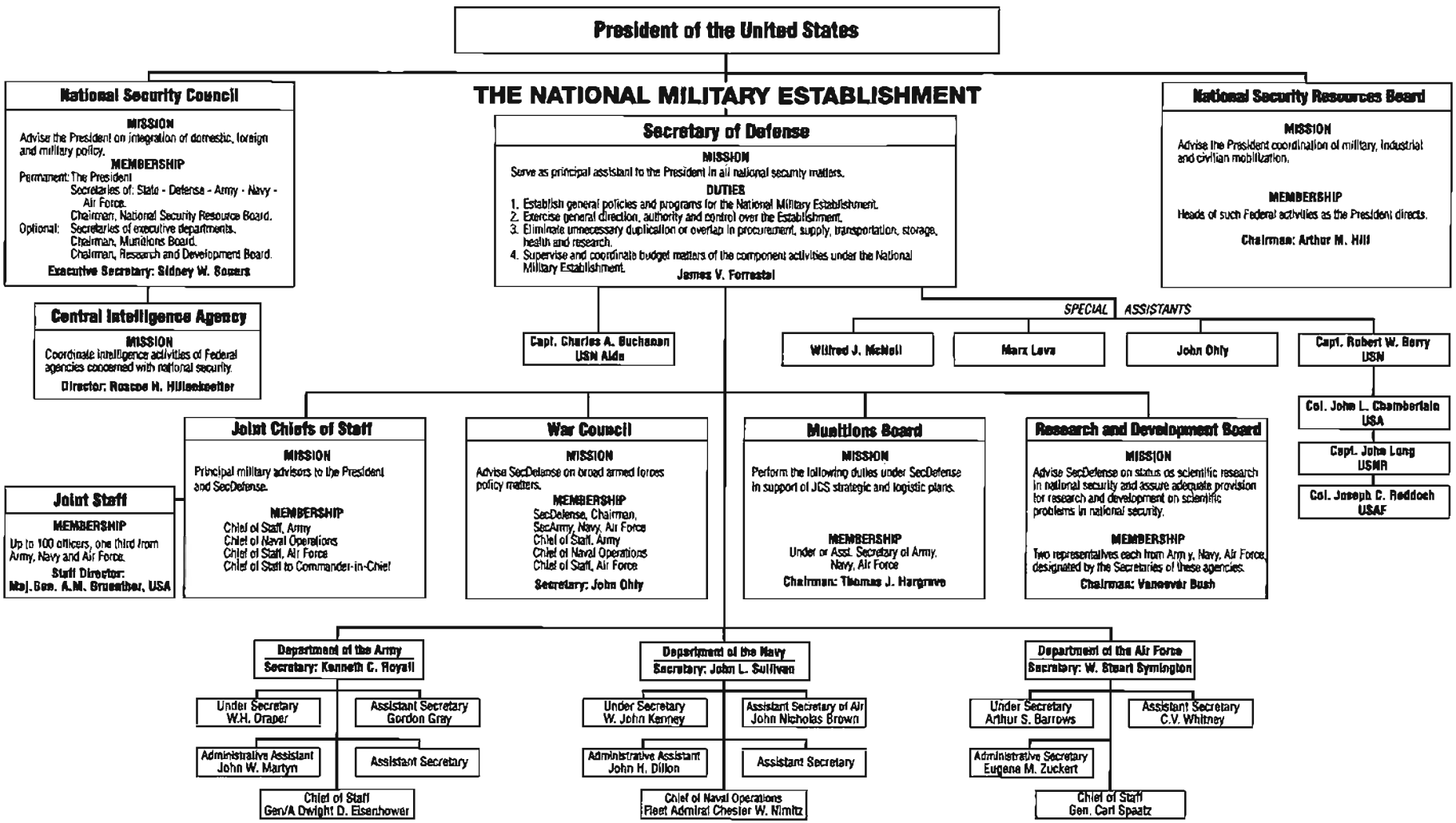
* Admiral William D. Leahy held this position until 1948, after which it lapsed.

† For a discussion of the unified commands, see pp. 49-50.

Chart 2

ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947

30 September 1947



a higher statutory position in the overall government policymaking hierarchy in recognition of the vital role they played in the development of national policy. It provided them greater entree in peacetime to the highest levels of government and lent substance to the term "politico-military." The act provided for direct civilian oversight of the military services at a higher level than the military departments but left unclear the extent to which the secretary of defense could exercise effective control over the military. The statute confirmed the principle of unification by cooperation and mutual consent, thus placing a high premium on the persuasiveness and force of personality of the secretary of defense.

The legislation establishing the National Military Establishment could not of course do more than provide an overall framework of a national security organization. It could prescribe functions, but it could not provide the means of ensuring that they would be carried out as intended. This could come only through actual experience and operation, which would reveal what further changes would be needed to achieve more efficient and effective operation of the military machine.

When Forrestal became the first secretary of defense on 17 September 1947, he faced the formidable task of attempting to create a viable military structure out of the diverse elements specified in the National Security Act. The military services still harbored much of the traditional parochialism and distrust of each other so strongly manifested during the unification debate. Moreover, they had strong differences over the division of appropriated funds, kinds of military forces needed, roles and missions, and how the new NME should operate. As secretary of the Navy from 1944 to September 1947, Forrestal had initially opposed unification and then helped shape the compromise legislation that he considered the best that he could do for the Navy. Shortly before taking office, Forrestal remarked to his friend Robert Sherwood that "this office will probably be the greatest cemetery for dead cats in history!" Despite this expressed apprehension, he could not have been fully aware of the minefield of resistance and complex problems on which he was entering.[17]

The institution that Forrestal now headed had an operating budget of more than $10 billion, about a third of the total U.S. budget, and 2.3 million military and civilian personnel. It was by far the largest and costliest government agency. It had worldwide responsibilities and powerful political and economic impact on the domestic scene. As one historian of this period commented,

> Nothing like it [NME] had ever before existed. As an 'establishment' rather than an executive department, it was a unique and somewhat nebulous entity. Existing law, tradition, and usage could provide only partial guidance for how the Secretary of Defense should perform his duties. To the extent that this would allow him to develop his own precedents and customs, it afforded him greater freedom of action than he might otherwise have enjoyed. But at the same time, deep-rooted traditions, customs, and interests of the services could just as easily handicap him and thwart his best intentions and endeavors.[18]

The creation of the position of secretary of defense was one of the most innovative and significant changes in the history of the U.S. military establishment and, indeed, of the U.S. government. The secretary of defense eventually became, in effect, the deputy commander in chief, with powers over the military establishment second only to those of the president. With the assistance of his staff and a number of Defense-wide agencies, the secretary came to exercise power over a vast global establishment that the president would otherwise have had to exercise himself with the help of a greatly enlarged White House staff. Gaining control over the array of proud and sovereign military services in the face of their resistance to centralization of power presented an immediate challenge to the first secretary of defense and remained a never-ending problem for his successors.

Forrestal's NME consisted of the three military departments and the three statutory agencies—the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Munitions Board, and the Research and Development Board. He had to fashion a structure, develop procedures, and create a staff to assist him. This became the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), which was an extension of the secretary himself as the civilian authority in the Department of Defense. It differed from the military services in its broader and more comprehensive responsibilities and authority—chiefly political, budgetary, and international. OSD did not secure statutory sanction until 1986, with the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Forrestal viewed himself more as policymaker than administrator. In describing his plan for OSD, he said that his own personal desire was "to keep it as small as possible, not only for reasons of economy, but because my own concept of this office is that it will be a coordinating, a planning, and an integrating rather than an operating office." He intended to use the three statutory agencies as staff in their separate spheres. Another statutory body, the War Council, consisting of the secretary of defense, the three service secretaries, and the Joint Chiefs, provided a forum for discussion of policy issues. Forrestal created another advisory body known as the Committee of Four—himself and the

Forrestal and his three special assistants

three service secretaries—which met biweekly to discuss matters more freely without the presence of the military advisers.[18]

During the 18 months of his incumbency, Forrestal built a supporting staff around his three special assistants—Wilfred J. McNeil, Marx Leva, and John H. Ohly—men of exceptionally high ability. One description of these early days reported that Forrestal "had no office, no staff, no organization chart, no manual of procedures, no funds, and no detailed plans." By the time he left office, all of these had come to be.[20]

OSD grew rapidly, increasing from the 45 people Forrestal brought with him from the Navy in September 1947 to 173 by the end of January 1948, and to 347 by the beginning of 1949. Until the coming of the Korean War, the number in the immediate office ranged between 350 and 400 employees, of whom 15 to 20 percent were military "on loan." To this number should be added some 1,200 civilians and military assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the two statutory boards, and other elements, making a total of about 1,600 within the secretary's ambit at the end of 1949. OSD grew as it responded to substantive problems and issues that were clearly related to policymaking.[21]

It became apparent to Forrestal and his assistants that OSD could not remain the small policymaking office he had envisaged, and that they could not rely on the military services for a high degree of voluntary cooperation and coordination. All the military services tended to resist or evade OSD control over their activities; their self-interest demanded as much autonomy and freedom of action as possible. Moreover, the continuing interservice rivalry had been compounded by the creation of the Air Force, making it even more difficult for Forrestal to get the services to pull together as a team. Effective direction of the NME required an OSD that could deal with these issues.

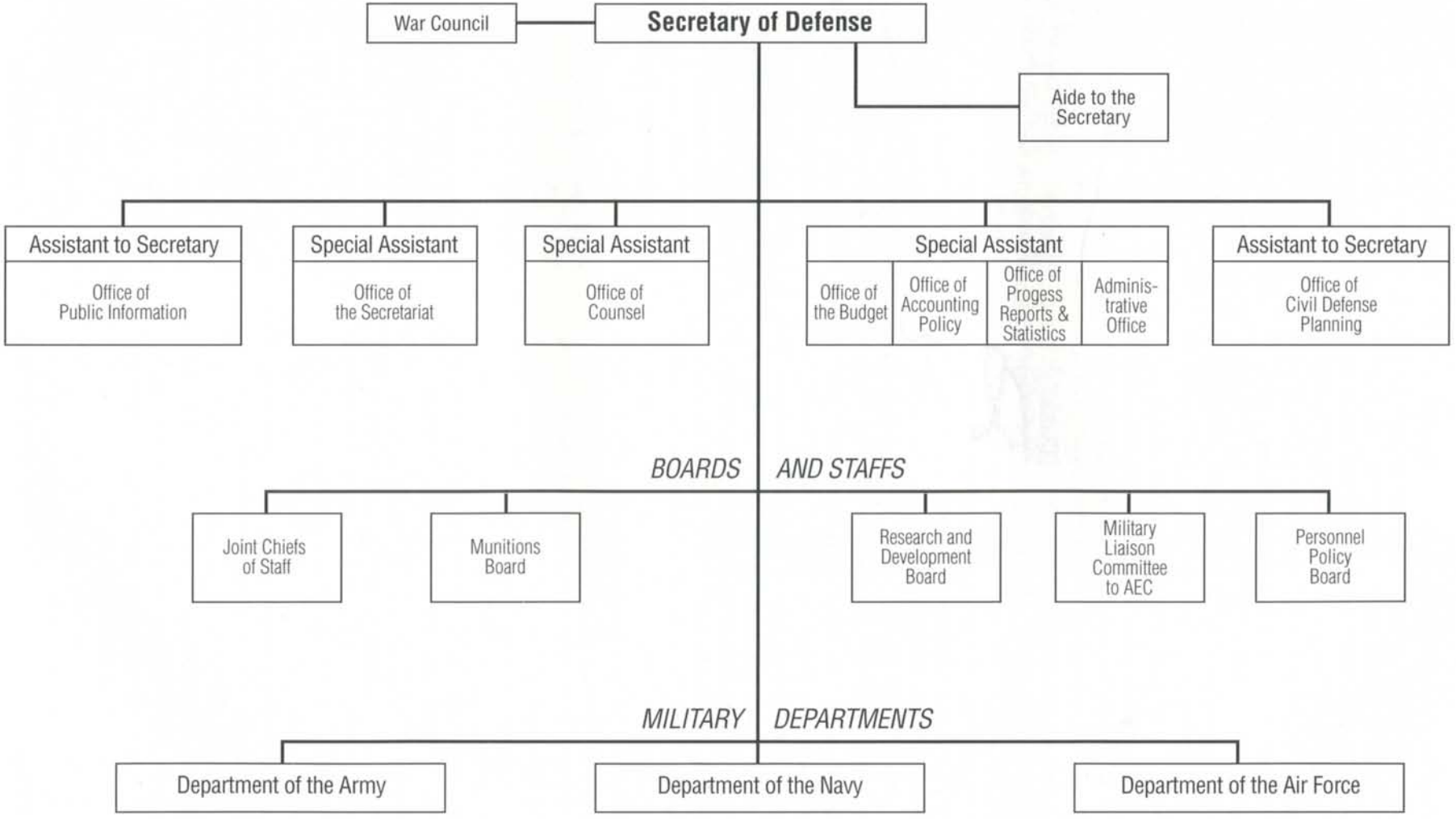
In his 18 months in office Forrestal could achieve only a few of the organizational changes that he came to see as necessary. He established in 1948 an Office of Civil Defense Planning that lasted little more than a year.[22] The Office of Public Information (OPI), on the other hand, became a permanent fixture.

Public relations presented Forrestal with a vexing

Chart 3

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

15 September 1948



problem. The "press war" between the services, which flared up every time a major issue arose, and which had been waged loudly, vehemently, and persistently since the end of the war, finally led him to undertake a step that he had hoped to avoid. Upset by the harmful and embarrassing publicity about the services and angered by security leaks, Forrestal decided on 17 March 1949, only days before his departure, to establish an Office of Public Information in OSD. It was to assume responsibility for security review and clearance of manuscripts; moreover, "no information of any kind whatsoever relating to performance or capabilities of new weapons or new equipment of any type . . . [would] be released to the public without specific clearance from . . . [OPI]." The military services retained their public information offices, but on a reduced scale. This did not prevent them from waging their press wars through other staff offices, as soon became apparent.[23]

At the same time he signed the National Security Act in July 1947, President Truman issued Executive Order 9877, which assigned roles and missions to the services. This had been drafted by the Army and Navy and approved by the secretaries of the services. But it soon became evident that the Navy and the Marine Corps had strong objections to language in the order that seemed to impose limitations on their functions, particularly naval aviation and land operations by the Marines. Since assignment of roles and missions obviously could shape the future of all of the services, and particularly the Navy and Marine Corps, by affecting their budgets and the size and composition of forces, the issue brought interservice controversy to a flash point.[24]

In January 1948 Forrestal sought to have the services, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, approve a revised executive order prepared in OSD. The chiefs failed to reach agreement on the order or any revision thereof and notified the secretary that their "fundamental disagreements" could "only be resolved by higher authority."[25]

The need for action on the matter (it was receiving wide public attention as the services, particularly the Air Force and the Navy, sought to enlist support) impelled Forrestal to meet with the Chiefs at Key West, Florida, from 11 to 14 March 1948. He provided guidance for a draft statement of roles and missions by the Chiefs entitled "Functions of the Armed Services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff." After further changes, Forrestal submitted the paper to President Truman, who revoked E.O. 9877 on 21 April, thus permitting Forrestal to issue the Functions paper the same day.

The Functions paper delineated both primary and secondary responsibilities of each service, thus giving recognition to the possibilities of collateral or joint efforts. The primary responsibilities listed simply reaffirmed the basic and mutually acceptable responsibilities of the services. The secondary or collateral missions involved naval aviation and the size and role of the Marine Corps. The Navy disavowed any intention to create a strategic bombing force and was permitted to have a capability to attack inland targets in pursuit of its primary mission. The Marine Corps would not be allowed to grow into a second land army, and its maximum strength was limited to four divisions.[26]

The Key West Agreement did not really settle the issues between the Air Force and the Navy; mutual suspicion and distrust persisted. The issues of strategic bombardment, strategic targeting, and control of atomic weapons continued to precipitate strong disagreements between the two services. Forrestal's efforts to promote a compromise acceptable to both parties met with little success, and he convened the JCS again for further talks.

At Newport, Rhode Island, from 20 to 22 August, the Chiefs added a supplement to the Functions paper that clarified the term "primary mission" so that the Navy would not be excluded from a role in strategic air operations. The Chiefs also agreed in principle to Forrestal's proposal to establish the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (WSEG) to provide technical advice and analysis of new weapons. Impartial technical evaluations of weapons by an independent agency within NME might help reduce partisan strife over roles and missions. Forrestal chartered WSEG in December 1948, after studies by the RDB and the JCS.[27]

1949 AMENDMENTS AND AFTER

Within a year of taking office Forrestal had become convinced that his original conception of the role of the secretary as coordinator and policymaker had resulted in failure. His inability to exercise effective control over the feuding military services and to resolve the disputes over budgets, weapons, strategic plans, and roles and missions could lead only to the conclusion that the National Security Act would have to be amended to enhance the secretary's authority. He so testified before the Eberstadt Task Force of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government (Hoover Commission) in the fall of 1948 and reiterated this conclusion in his First Report at the end of 1948. In February 1949 the Hoover Commission recommended that the secretary of defense be granted full authority and accountability for his department, that he have an under secretary and three assistant secretaries, and that he be empowered to appoint a chairman to preside over the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[28]

The administration reviewed proposals for changes

in the NME during the winter of 1948-49. President Truman sent his recommendations to Congress in a message of 5 March 1949. He asked that the NME be converted into an executive department to be known as the Department of Defense, that the secretary of defense be given "appropriate responsibility and authority," and that he be the sole representative of the department on the NSC. Other changes looked to reinforce the authority of the secretary of defense over the military departments, the JCS, the Munitions Board, and the RDB.[29]

Congress responded first to the Hoover Commission's recommendations for an under secretary of defense, and the president signed the measure on 2 April, shortly after Louis A. Johnson succeeded Forrestal as secretary of defense. The president named Stephen T. Early to the newly-created position.[30]

After several months of hearings and discussions, the two houses of Congress reached agreement on amendments to the National Security Act, and the president signed the legislation on 10 August 1949. It was too much to expect that Congress would accept all the recommendations of the president or the Hoover Commission. But the changes did increase the powers of the secretary and diminish those of the military departments. The legislation created the executive Department of Defense (DoD) in place of the NME and authorized the secretary to exercise "direction, authority, and control"—not qualified by the adjective "general"—over the department of defense. It reduced the three subordinate departments from executive or cabinet to military departments and redesignated the under secretary of defense as deputy secretary and the three special assistants as assistant secretaries. The law did not transfer the statutory functions of the JCS and the two boards to the secretary, as had been recommended. The amendments provided for a chairman to preside over the Joint Chiefs, but gave him no vote. The JCS collectively were designated principal military advisers to the president, NSC, and secretary of defense. The amendments prohibited the secretary from establishing a single chief of staff to command the armed forces and from creating a military staff of his own apart from the JCS. The secretaries of the military departments lost their membership in the NSC, but they retained the initiative to present recommendations to Congress after informing the secretary of defense. The military departments were to be "separately administered," and combatant functions were not to be reassigned, transferred, consolidated, or abolished.

A major feature of the amendments was the attention paid to the budget function by the addition of Title IV to the National Security Act. This conferred the title of comptroller on one of the three assistant secretaries of defense and provided for uniform budgetary and accounting procedures for the military departments. Title IV further reinforced the secretary's power over the military budget and gave him control of apportionment of appropriated funds within the department. This permitted him to regulate rates of obligation and expenditure by the services. Wilfred J. McNeil, special assistant to Forrestal since 1947, became comptroller and served until 1959. He played a major role in bringing about the enactment of Title IV and in implementing its provisions.[31]

It should be borne in mind that Congress is an integral part of the national security structure and exercises great powers over the defense establishment. During these postwar years Congress made significant modifications in its own structure that were certainly influenced by the fundamental change in the national military establishment and the overall organization for national security. No doubt committees also saw a need to provide more and better oversight of the armed forces, particularly of the appropriation process, if they were to carry out their constitutional responsibility.

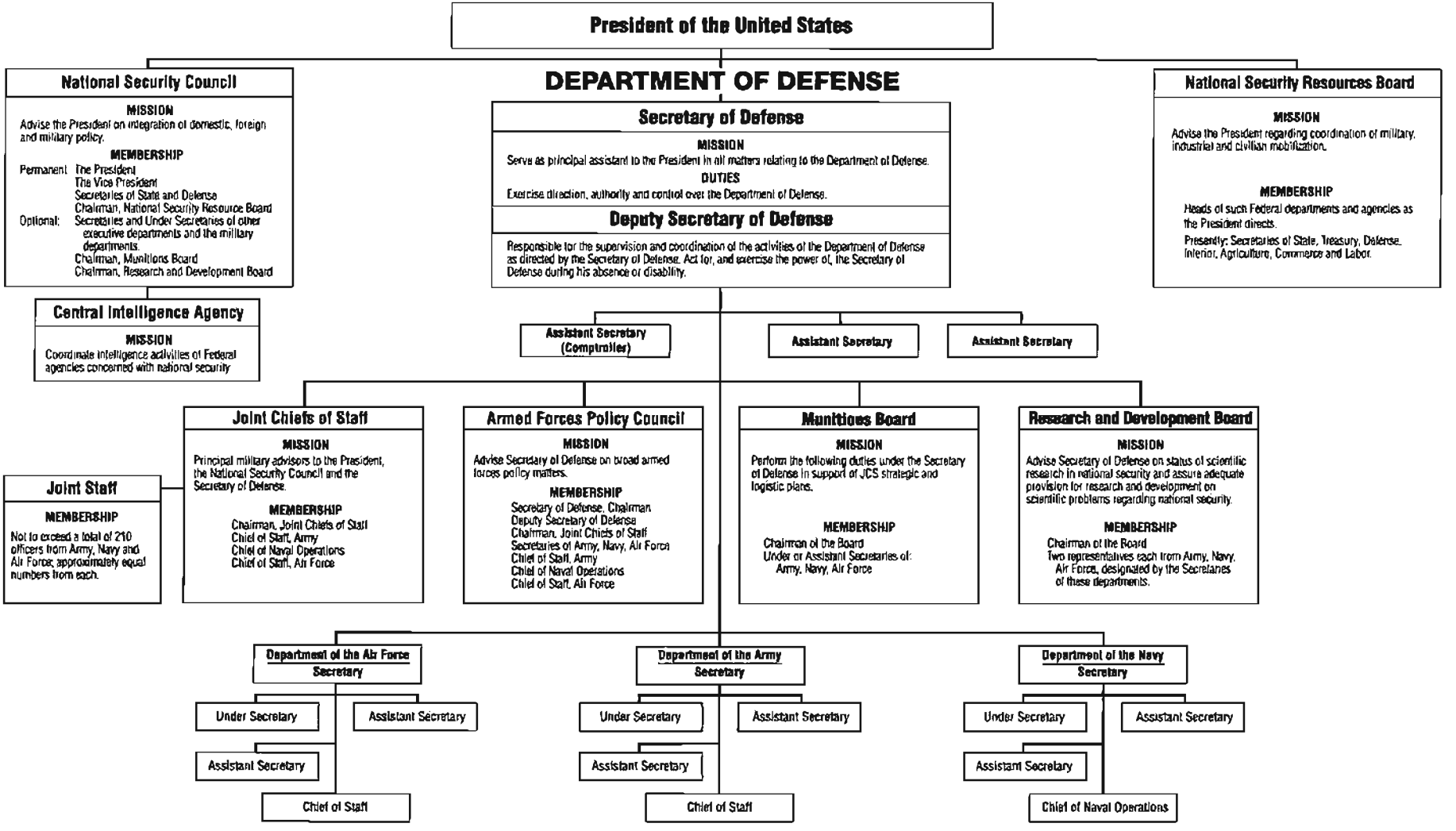
The power of the purse has always resided in Congress; it represents its ultimate weapon in dealing with the executive branch. The enormous and urgent requirements of the war, however, had created great pressures on the legislative branch and caused it to virtually suspend its use of the power. This acute wartime experience, on top of the dramatic expansion of government during the New Deal years in the 1930s, provided the motivation Congress needed to carry out self-reform that had long been advocated or contemplated. Not least among the spurs to action was the recognition that the greatly enlarged and more powerful executive branch presented a challenge that the legislative branch would have to face if it hoped to fulfill its proper constitutional role.

After more than a year deliberating changes, Congress passed the Legislative Reorganization Act in August 1946. The act was "clearly intended to improve the lawmaking function of Congress by consolidating and centralizing legislative powers," thus permitting "party leaders . . . to exercise a tighter control and more efficiently bring forth a cohesive legislative program." It reduced the number of standing committees from 33 to 15 in the Senate and from 48 to 19 in the House. The Military Affairs and Naval Affairs Committees of both chambers merged into Armed Services Committees —a significant change because it meant that a single committee in each chamber would have jurisdiction over all legislative measures pertaining to the common defense and the armed forces. This change anticipated the National Security Act of 1947 and the submission of a unitary budget for the whole defense establishment.

Chart 4

ORGANIZATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY
NATIONAL SECURITY ACT AS AMENDED

10 August 1949



The Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate did not merge their separate subcommittees for the Army and Navy until 1949, in time for the subcommittees to consider the first unitary budget—for fiscal year 1950—submitted by Defense, which included the Air Force as a separate service. The change completed a congressional structure that complemented the Armed Services Committees and the Department of Defense, thus providing Congress with an overall review of the total defense budget for the first time.[52]

The Key West and Newport Agreements had not really settled the issue over strategic bombardment and control of nuclear weapons. The wrangling came into sharper focus as the competition for diminishing funds became more intense. After 1947, therefore, competition for the defense dollar was one of the major facts of military life in Washington.

At the heart of the differences between the Air Force and the Navy still lay the issue of strategic air power. The Air Force, having retreated from its effort to secure control of all military aviation, saw the Navy's acquisition of large carrier task forces as an attempt to share the strategic air mission and thereby diminish the Air Force role. Moreover, it did not consider the carriers capable of accomplishing long-range missions. Navy strategists challenged the capabilities of the long-range bomber, particularly the new B-36, and, on occasion, the very concept of strategic bombing itself and even the effectiveness of the atomic bomb. The real competition was for money to purchase and employ expensive weapons, which had to be justified in terms of missions. Secretary Louis Johnson acknowledged that it was "primarily over the apportionment of funds that disagreements among the services arise."

The aggressive campaign for a large Air Force and the necessary funds, led by Secretary W. Stuart Symington, created a near-siege mentality in the Navy, anxious to find weapons and missions that would permit it to remain on equal terms with the Army and Air Force. The Air Force and the Navy each sought to make its case by attacking the other.

The fight between the two services became more acute and more open after the peremptory cancellation by Secretary Johnson on 23 April 1949 of the Navy's supercarrier, the *United States*. A majority of the Joint Chiefs had recommended cancellation; Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Louis Denfeld had, of course, dissented. Construction of this ship carried with it some of the Navy's highest hopes for its future. Navy Secretary John Sullivan resigned in protest, and Navy partisans intensified their attacks on the Air Force's new B-36 bomber. Anonymous documents circulating in the press in the following months alleged that corruption

Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan

had been involved in the selection of the bomber and that it did not have the performance characteristics claimed by the Air Force. The House Committee on Armed Services investigated the B-36 corruption charges in August and after extensive hearings dismissed them as utterly without credence.

Further hearings by the committee in October 1949 examined the merits of the B-36 and strategic air operations. Uniformed Navy leaders, in airing their frustrations and fears, presented what was essentially an indictment of strategic bombing as serving no useful purpose and being morally wrong. The B-36 was a mistake, they argued, and the supercarrier was a necessary and vital weapon for the future. It was also the Navy's hope for maintenance of a large aviation capability. Within the Navy, aviators headed by Vice Adm. Arthur W. Radford asserted leadership and dominated the strategy in the battle against the Air Force that came to be known as the "Revolt of the Admirals."

The Air Force case in refutation of the Navy criticisms convinced the majority of the committee. JCS Chairman General Omar N. Bradley pointed out that in spite of its criticism of the effectiveness of both strategic air power and the atomic bomb, the Navy had been arguing right along that it "should be permitted to use the atomic bomb, both strategically and tactically." Bradley offered his opinion that the real issue was a

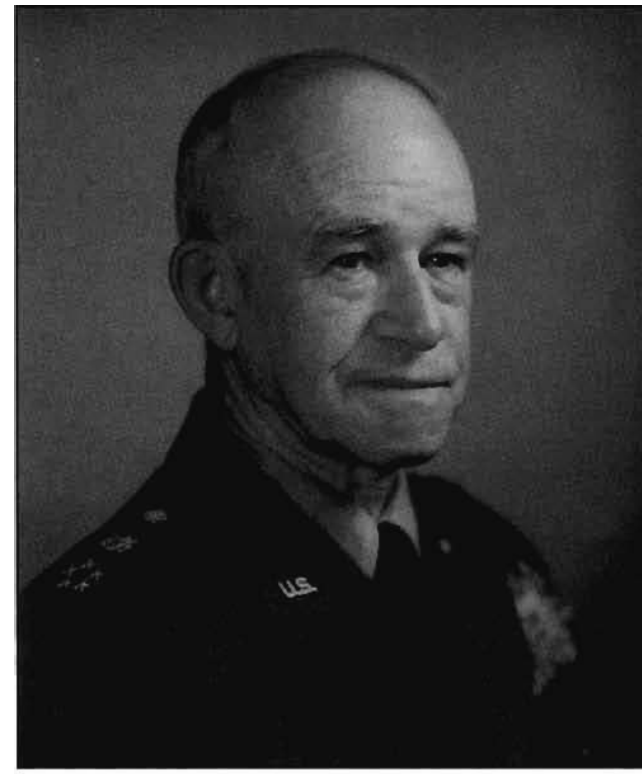
refusal by the Navy "in spirit as well as deed" to accept unification. An immediate outcome of the hearings was the dismissal of Admiral Denfeld, who had taken a position in direct opposition to the testimony of Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews, thereby losing the confidence of the president as well.

The final committee report, which appeared on 1 March 1950, criticized all parties to the controversy but did not address the substantive issues. It did not recommend reinstatement of the supercarrier, but it deplored "the manner of cancellation." Many members of the committee condemned Denfeld's dismissal as a reprisal for his testimony. The report had little to say on the matter of roles and missions and reached no decision on the relative merits of the supercarrier and the B-36. The hearings permitted a public airing of interservice differences and perhaps thereby provided an outlet for frustration, particularly for the Navy, that might otherwise have had more explosive effects.[33]

Between 1947 and the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Secretaries Forrestal and Johnson sought to provide themselves with a staff organization that could meet their increasing responsibilities. The statutory boards had prescribed functions. For other matters the secretaries resorted to the establishment of nonstatutory agencies—a personnel policies board, a civilian components policy board, and an office of medical services. The Military Liaison Committee (MLC) was a statutory body, created by the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 as part of the military rather than as an agency of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The committee served as the AEC's principal adviser on the military application of atomic energy. It came under the secretary of defense, who replaced the military chairman with a civilian in 1948.[34]

Although an OSD staff agency and the main connection between the secretary of defense and the military services, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were in practice advisers to the president, NSC, State Department, and Congress on a wide range of national security matters. The National Security Act gave them responsibility for strategic direction of the armed forces, preparation of strategic and joint logistic plans, formulation of joint training policies for the armed forces, review of major requirements, and establishment of unified commands. The 1949 amendments increased the Joint Staff from 100 officers to 210, drawn in approximately equal number from each service. From September 1947 to November 1949 the JCS had nine different members.[35]

General Bradley became chairman of the JCS in August 1949. He had limited powers in the JCS organization, but he had responsibilities to the president and the secretary, and the influence he might exercise would



General Omar N. Bradley

depend on his relationship with his superiors and with his peers in the JCS.[36]

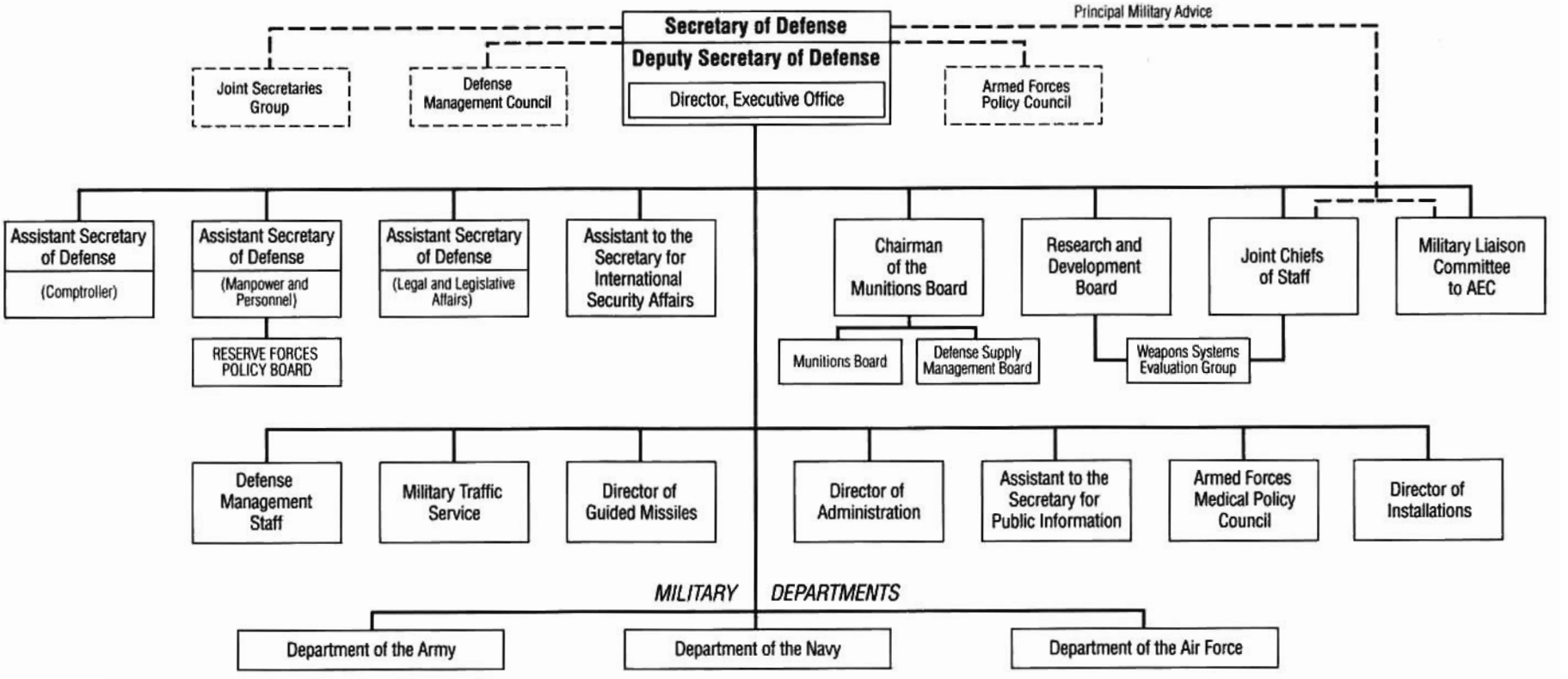
Both Forrestal and Johnson wanted a close relationship with the JCS, but the conflicting outlooks—the secretaries seeking to further unification and broker interservice differences, and the services resisting the growth of secretarial power and disagreeing among themselves—impaired the relationship and served to diminish the power and influence of the JCS. Still, the Chiefs were an indispensable part of the national security structure because, by providing the professional military judgment, they lent greater credibility to the whole process. The dual role of the Chiefs as members of the JCS and as heads of their services placed them in an inherently awkward position when considering issues; generally, allegiance to service prevailed. A later Army chief of staff, General Maxwell D. Taylor, described the dilemma faced by chiefs in reporting to Congress:

> The hearings on the defense budget are usually the most difficult for the Chiefs, as they raise inevitably the issue of their divided responsibility toward the Executive and Legislative branches of the government . . . . Very shortly a Chief of Staff will find himself in the position either of appearing to oppose his civilian superiors or of withholding facts from the

Chart 5

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

15 October 1952



> Congress. Personally, I have found no way of coping with the situation other than by replying frankly to questions and letting the chips fall where they may.[37]

As part of the national security structure, the Defense Department functioned within a larger framework. Forrestal and Johnson had to play active, growing, and highly visible personal roles in these external relationships, particularly with the president, NSC, and State Department. These relationships at the highest levels of government helped determine how influential Defense could be in the making of national policy and in securing its requirements. The two secretaries participated actively in the work and deliberations of the NSC, but the council did not achieve the influence in policymaking that Forrestal had hoped for.[38]

The role of the secretary of defense in foreign affairs visibly increased as changes on the international scene increasingly involved the Defense Department. The presence of U.S. military forces in most parts of the world, especially in Germany, Japan, and Korea, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, and the large-scale foreign military aid program moved Defense into the foreground of U.S. foreign affairs. Participation in international bodies such as NATO and direct talks with foreign governments on a variety of matters required that Defense maintain a close relationship with the State Department. The extensive range of business with State included such matters as overseas occupation duties; foreign military assistance; atomic energy issues; foreign economic affairs; export controls; regulation of armaments; and refueling, overflight, and base rights in foreign countries. All this required an elaborate network of associations between departments in this jointly-shared area of national security policy. OSD developed a staff office for international security affairs that eventually came to be referred to as the "Little State Department." The military services also had to create substantial staffs to handle these matters.[39]

The National Security Resources Board, another major element of the national security structure, had the responsibility "to advise the president concerning the coordination of military, industrial, and civilian mobilization in the event of war." The board never achieved the status of an independent operating agency and became little more than an advisory staff. The Munitions Board, an established operating agency within DoD, disputed the responsibilities of the NSRB in matters concerning Defense and contributed in some measure to the NSRB's decline. The lack of an explicit mission, the indifference of the president, and the absence of a full-time chairman during much of its existence contributed to the decline and eventual demise of the board in 1953.[40]

The National Security Act had recognized the importance of the intelligence function in national security by establishing the Central Intelligence Agency. That agency, too, had growing pains but survived to play the role intended for it as the central organization for collection, collation, and analysis of intelligence. This required a close, if sometimes adversarial, relationship between Defense and the CIA, for the military services had extensive intelligence organizations that constituted a major part of the intelligence community. At the OSD level, development of a capacity to oversee the intelligence functions of the military services proceeded slowly. For many years, the secretary and his staff were chiefly consumers rather than policymakers or directors of intelligence.[41]

The coming of the Korean War in 1950 greatly relieved budget pressures on the military services, thereby permitting them to fight the war rather than each other. In Washington the issues that had been raised by unification became muted, but controversies between the services did come to the surface in Korea, chiefly over the question of control and use of the various service air elements in the theater. It was now a matter of *four* services (the Marines were a service de facto by this time) contending for position, status, and recognition. The reluctance of the services to yield control of their own forces to a commander from another service has been a constant since World War II. Yielding command and control of U.S. forces to an international command headed by a non-American has encountered even greater opposition from both military and political partisans.

The pressures of the Korean War discouraged the initiation of any major changes in DoD organization, but OSD made modest progress toward integration of functions in some non-controversial areas. In July 1952 legislation established in OSD the director of installations with wide powers over facilities and construction activities. An early Defense agency prototype came into existence also in 1952 with the establishment of the Defense Supply Management Agency to develop and administer cataloging and standardization programs for DoD. Other functions integrated at the OSD level included technical information, parachute testing, and use of commercial transportation in the United States. Finally, of great significance for the intelligence community, President Truman established in 1952 the National Security Agency, under the direction of the secretary of defense, to coordinate communications intelligence and signals security.[42]

In response to technological development rather than any war pressure, Secretary of Defense George C.

Marshall acted under his own authority to appoint in October 1950 the director of guided missiles to advise the secretary in directing and coordinating the research, development, and production of guided missiles. The new office succeeded in accelerating guided missile programs of the services, but it could not put an end to interservice disputes over the potential missions of this promising new weapon.[43]

One other development during the war, in 1952, the result of congressional action, authorized the Commandant of the Marine Corps to sit with the Joint Chiefs of Staff when they considered matters pertaining to the Corps. A milestone along the path to eventual acceptance of the Marine Corps as the fourth service and full membership of the commandant in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it was a remarkable achievement, earned by the dogged persistence and unwavering belief of its leaders in the unique qualities and contributions of the Corps.[44]

REORGANIZATION PLAN NO. 6—1953[45]

The Eisenhower administration came into office in January 1953, before the Korean War had ended, determined to bring about further changes in DoD. The new president had criticized DoD during the election campaign in 1952 and called for greater unification. He had strong and firmly-held views on the need for greater civilian control of the military establishment. Congressional critics had pointed particularly to flaws in the organization and management of supply. In a letter to President Truman, outgoing Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett offered pragmatic and thoughtful recommendations for dealing with what he considered a defective organization. He believed that the secretary's powers over the military services and the JCS should be made more explicit and that the secretary should have a military staff in OSD to help him. He also implied that the Munitions Board and the Research and Development Board should be abolished and their functions transferred to the secretary. His thoughts about the JCS revealed his dissatisfaction with the existing organization, and he suggested a number of changes designed to give the secretary greater flexibility and authority in dealing with the chiefs.[46]

President Eisenhower, who had been thinking along the same lines, reacted favorably to Lovett's proposals, as did the new secretary of defense, Charles E. Wilson. In February 1953 Wilson appointed a committee, of which Nelson A. Rockefeller was chairman and Lovett a member, to review DoD organization. The three major problems addressed by the committee were the same ones discussed in 1949: (1) the powers of the secretary; (2) the inflexible board structure; and (3) the functions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization. A strong consensus emerged for clarifying the authority of the secretary of defense over all elements of DoD. As for the boards, their difficulties in functioning effectively made it a foregone conclusion that they would have to go. But the JCS problem was different; there was much dissatisfaction with their performance, but also recognition that opposition to radical adjustments would be strong. The major change placed the service secretaries in the chain of command to the unified commands in order to resolve the awkward situation by which the service secretary, who had administrative responsibilities, could be bypassed in such matters by his subordinate military chief in dealing with a unified command. Problems of this nature had arisen and revealed the ambiguity of the arrangement.[47]

After receiving the committee's report, derived largely from the extensive testimony of former officials, civilian and military, Eisenhower acted promptly in submitting to Congress on 30 April a message on reorganization of DoD, along with Reorganization Plan No. 6. He had sounded out congressional sentiment and found that a reorganization plan would be the most expeditious way to bring about change and that the proposed plan would be acceptable.[48]

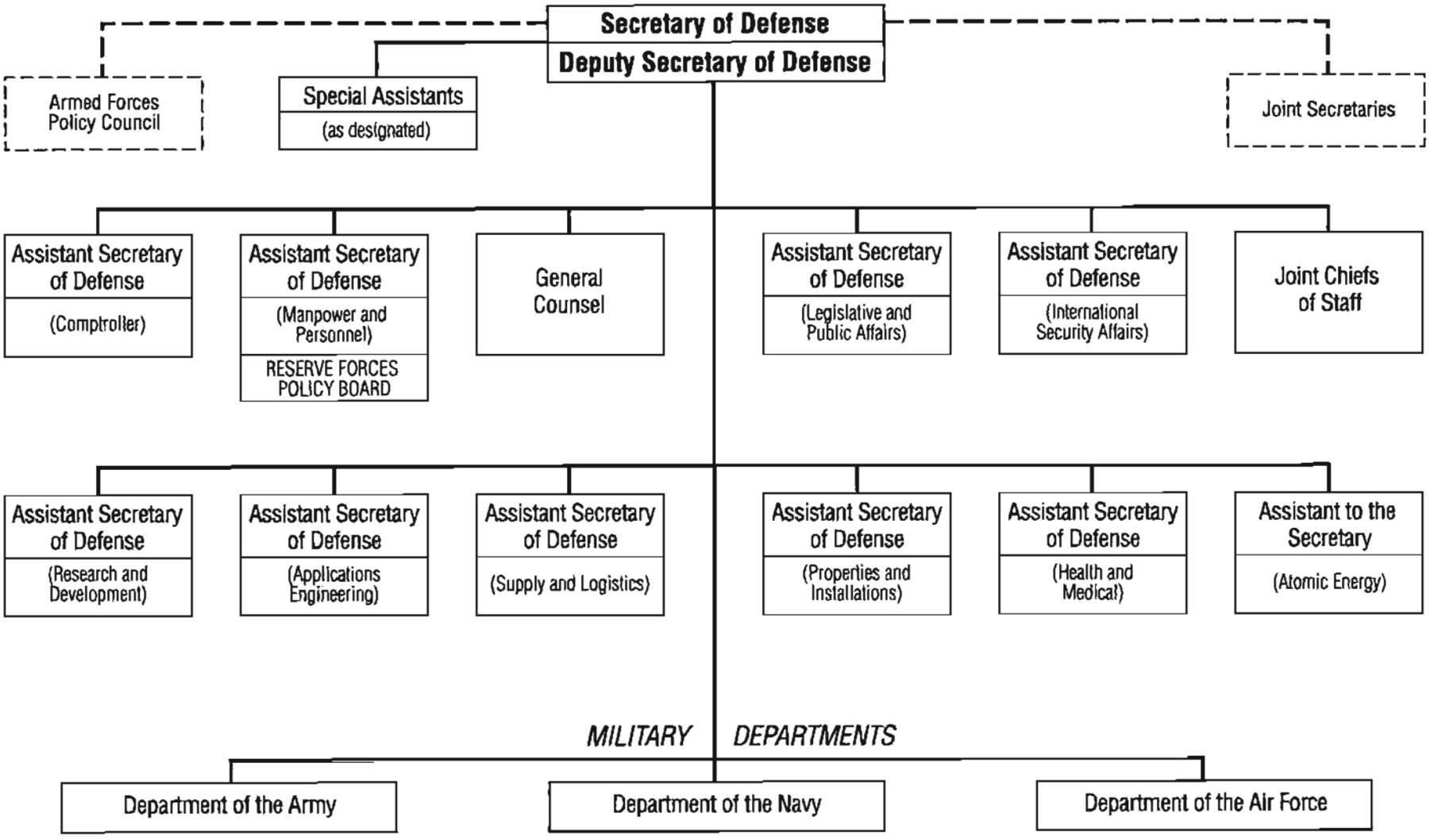
Congress accepted Reorganization Plan No. 6, and it became effective on 30 June 1953. The plan abolished the Research and Development Board, Munitions Board, Defense Supply Management Agency, and Office of the Director of Installations and invested their functions in the secretary of defense. It provided for nine assistant secretaries of defense instead of three and made the OSD general counsel a statutory position. It gave the secretary authority to prescribe the functions of the new positions as well as those of any other Defense agency or employee. To reinforce the secretary's authority, the president notified Congress in his message that "no function in any part of the Department of Defense, or in any of its component agencies, should be performed independent of the direction, authority, and control of the Secretary of Defense." This was considered necessary because of challenges to the authority of the secretary of defense by service secretaries and the Joint Chiefs, who claimed to have statutory authority for some of their functions outside the secretary's jurisdiction. The plan conferred on the JCS chairman management of the Joint Staff and approval of selection of its members, but it still did not accord him a vote in the JCS. The secretary of defense received approval authority for appointment of the Joint Staff director, a key position.[49]

Eisenhower notified Congress of his intention to make two additional significant changes. The Key West Agreement would be revised to designate military department secretaries rather than service chiefs as executive

Chart 6

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

22 September 1953



agents for unified commands, thus eliminating the authority of the Joint Chiefs to name one of their own number as an executive agent, and placing the service secretaries in the chain of command. The second change gave civilian officials responsibility for writing the efficiency reports of military assigned to OSD. These adjustments represented significant steps toward Eisenhower's goal of enhancing civil authority over the military, especially the concentration of more power in the secretary of defense.[30]

1958 Reorganization Act

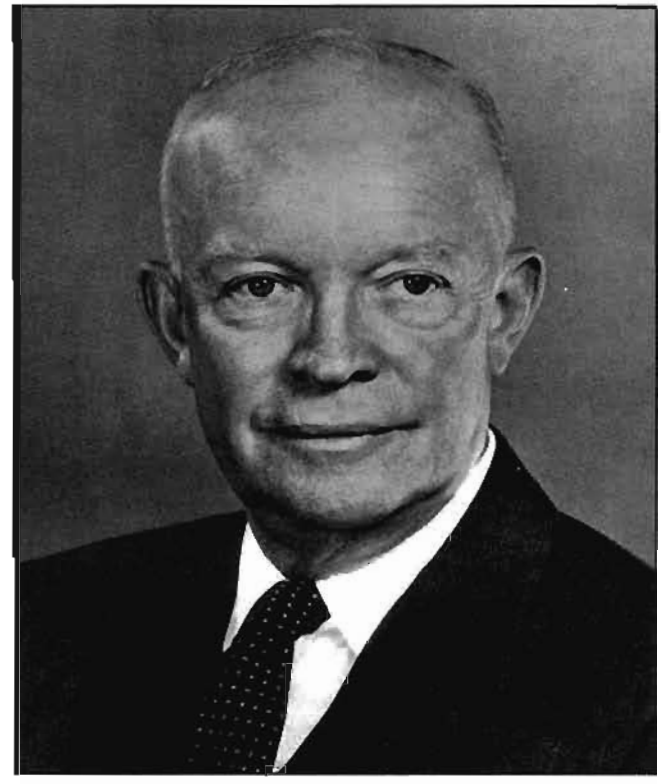
The 1953 reorganization represented only a small part of the change that Eisenhower wanted to make in DoD; it was a quick fix. In the years that followed, the president made clear his continuing dissatisfaction with Defense and his intention to seek further changes.[31]

Others also called for reorganization of the department. In 1955 the Hoover Commission recommended changes in DoD to improve economy and efficiency, but only a few adjustments followed, notably the merger of the assistant secretaries for research and development and for applications engineering and the establishment of the Defense Science Board. In 1956 Congress completed a task begun in 1948—codifying all laws relating to the military establishment under Titles 10 and 32, United States Code.

Eisenhower continued to express his desire for changes in DoD, and particularly in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who, he said, could not develop "corporate judgment" on major problems. In May 1956 he spoke of seeking a reorganization of Defense in the coming year, particularly to strengthen the positions of the secretary of defense and the JCS chairman. Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, on the other hand, did not see a need for fundamental changes.

Friction between the services also irritated Eisenhower and confirmed his view of the need for more control over them. The rapid progress in guided missile development had created fierce competition between the services. Disputes between the Army and the Air Force intensified as competing missiles approached the testing and deployment stages. By agreement in 1954 the Army received responsibility for surface-to-air missiles with a range less than 50 miles; the Air Force, for such missiles with longer ranges. The Army could develop and use surface-to-surface missiles within the zone of Army combat operations. The Air Force had sole responsibility for those of intercontinental range—5,000 miles or more.

Surface-to-surface ballistic missiles for intermediate-range use (IRBMs) became a problem in 1955 when development of 1,500-mile-range missiles accelerated



President Dwight D. Eisenhower

greatly. In 1956 the Army and Air Force fought in public the usual battle over turf, and OSD, the service secretaries, and JCS engaged in the usual protracted discussions, negotiations, and studies. Secretary Wilson issued a memorandum on 26 November 1956 that addressed a number of roles and missions issues. Although current statements of roles and missions did not require changes, new weapons and strategic concepts created a need for "clarification and clearer interpretation." The memorandum announced decisions on missile development and use and on Army aviation.[32]

Although Wilson intended that his memorandum dispose of the issues over missiles and aviation, sharp differences between the Army and the Air Force over their respective responsibilities for tactical air support of the Army persisted. On occasion in the past they had been able to reach agreement on the subject themselves, but this time it became necessary for Wilson to step in again. He issued on 18 March 1957 DoD Directive 5160.22, "Clarification of Roles and Missions of the Army and the Air Force Regarding Use of Aircraft," which superseded previous agreements and directives. Once again, it placed limitations on Army aviation.[33]

The question of Defense organization became a major public issue in October 1957.[34] The Soviet Sputnik shocked the nation and ignited a firestorm of criticism and argument about technology, budgets, and DoD.

These developments presented the president with both the need and the opportunity to take action. On 11 October he asked his new secretary of defense, Neil H. McElroy, to examine the Defense structure with a view to making changes. In discussions with his civilian and military advisers, the president continued to press for reorganization of DoD. The Bureau of the Budget (BoB) offered proposals for reorganization as did the president's Security Resources Panel (Gaither* Committee) that was considering broader questions. The director of BoB and the chairman of the President's Committee on Government Organization, Nelson A. Rockefeller, urged the president in November to send a reorganization proposal to Congress early in 1958. McElroy accepted their suggestion to set up a study group to examine the subject.

The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee inquired into matters of organization in hearings held in November and December 1957. Testimony from DoD officials, including the Joint Chiefs, did not reveal any firm views except for opposition by Secretary of the Navy Thomas S. Gates and Chief of Naval Operations Arleigh A. Burke to further centralization. The subcommittee's conclusions, released in January 1958, included a general recommendation for reorganization but offered no particulars.

Early in the congressional session in 1958 it became evident that much sentiment for Defense reorganization existed, particularly more centralized control at the top for military research and development. A number of bills to this end were introduced. McElroy had already taken steps in this direction, establishing the position of director of guided missiles† on 15 November 1957 and the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) on 7 February 1958. ARPA was to handle selected space projects as well as other advanced projects assigned to the secretary. Most space projects passed to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), created later in the year.

In Congress members partial to the Navy opposed centralization. Admiral Burke in a public speech denounced "public pressures toward centralization and authoritarianism in defense" and defended the JCS. The battle of public opinion was waged in newspapers and journals through surrogates of the services, chiefly of the Navy and Air Force.

Eisenhower moved to the forefront of the battle in his State of the Union address on 9 January 1958 when he listed Defense reorganization as the first of a number of matters on which action was "imperative." He set forth the objectives to be accomplished: "real unity" in military activities; clear subordination of the military to civilian authority; better integration of resources; simplification of scientific and industrial effort; and an end to interservice arguments.

Under pressure to follow the president's lead, McElroy announced the appointment on 21 January of an advisory group of civilians and military leaders to develop a reorganization plan. He appointed Charles A. Coolidge, a former assistant secretary of defense, as his special assistant to work with the panel. There followed a period of two months of intensive activity in which the president, members of the White House staff, McElroy and other DoD officials, and representatives of BoB participated in discussions with the advisory group. The group sought the views of some 60 outsiders in person or in writing. These included all former secretaries and deputy secretaries of defense, former JCS members, former service secretaries, former unified commanders, military "elder statesmen," prominent members of Congress, and business executives.

While the Coolidge panel worked, two committees in the House of Representatives held hearings in January and February that related to Defense organization. In both houses influential members introduced bills that would have diminished OSD while enhancing the status of the JCS. These were direct challenges to the administration's position. Both bills gave way eventually to the legislation proposed by the administration in April, by which time sentiment favorable to the president's views had emerged.

The Coolidge panel, very much in accord with Eisenhower's outlook, took strong positions on centralization in a series of drafts of the proposed legislation. McElroy agreed with them on the main lines of thought: increased power for the secretary of defense; a stronger JCS chairman with more control over the Joint Staff; elimination of executive agents from the chain of command; designation of the JCS as the secretary's military staff; and an enlarged and integrated Joint Staff. The panel opposed the creation of a single service. Although it favored downgrading the service secretaries to deputy or under secretaries of defense, it understood that such a move would arouse much resistance from the services and Congress. Research and development needed to be centralized to achieve maximum results from resources. The matter of appropriations—how to give the secretary more flexibility in handling funds—also had to be carefully presented to Congress, always jealous of its appropriations prerogatives. Something had to be done to make the JCS organization more responsive and effective, but it was difficult to make a choice among possible alternatives. Finally, there was no need for

* H. Rowan Gaither was chairman of the panel.

† The position of the same name established in 1951 went out of existence in 1953.

change in the unified commands except to ensure that the commanders had full operational control over all of their assigned forces.

Some of these issues the president intended to resolve through executive action as he had in 1953. He drafted a message to Congress that would set forth the objective of the proposed changes and methods of attaining them. Objections from the service secretaries brought about changes pertaining to the breadth of the legal authority of the secretary of defense and the authority to be given the assistant secretaries to issue instructions to the services. The revised draft that went back to the White House underwent a complete rewrite there without much change of substance. At a meeting between the president and legislative leaders on 1 April, McElroy and Coolidge described their proposals, which encountered no strong objections.

Eisenhower sent the message to Congress on 3 April 1958. In forceful language he affirmed the principles on which his recommendations rested.

> First, separate ground, sea and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort. Peacetime preparatory and organizational activity must conform to this fact. Strategic and tactical planning must be completely unified, combat forces organized into unified commands, each equipped with the most efficient weapons systems that science can develop, singly led and prepared to fight as one, regardless of service. The accomplishment of this result is the basic function of the Secretary of Defense, advised and assisted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and operating under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief.
>
> Additionally, Secretary of Defense authority, especially in respect to the development of new weapons, must be clear and direct, and flexible in the management of funds. Prompt decisions and elimination of wasteful activity must be primary goals.

He then put forward six broad objectives, with prescriptions for action on each one, as follows:

1. We must organize our fighting forces into operational commands that are truly unified, each assigned a mission in full accord with our over-all military objectives.
2. We must clear command channels so that orders will proceed directly to unified commands from the Commander-in-Chief and Secretary of Defense.
3. We must strengthen the military staff in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in order to provide the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense with the professional assistance they need for strategic planning and for operational direction of the unified commands.
4. We must continue the three military departments as agencies within the Department of Defense to administer a wide range of functions.
5. We must reorganize the research and development function of the Department in order to make the best use of our scientific and technological resources.
6. We must remove all doubts as to the full authority of the Secretary of Defense.

Eisenhower's proposals for carrying out these aims all pointed toward greater centralization and control from the top. The unified commanders would have full authority over their commands; executive agents would be eliminated from command channels; the JCS would serve as the secretary's staff in exercising direction of the unified commands and would perform no duties independent of the secretary's direction; the Joint Staff would have to be larger and stronger; the chiefs of services should be authorized to delegate a "major portion" of their service responsibilities in order to spend more time on their JCS duties; the secretary of defense should have "complete and unchallengeable" control over research and development, with the assistance of a director of research and development; the secretary of defense should have "adequate authority and flexibility" in handling funds, and authority to transfer, reassign, abolish, or consolidate functions of departments; the president would henceforth consider for nomination to the two highest ranks only those recommended by the JCS, and he proposed that the secretary have the authority to transfer officers between services.

Congressional reaction was mixed, much of it negative. Criticism centered on command arrangements, the status of the service secretaries, and how appropriations might be handled. Supporters of the services took predictable positions—Army and Air Force in favor and Navy and Marine Corps against. To allay Navy fears and make certain of their support, the president met with Navy Secretary Gates and Admiral Burke, who accepted most of the proposals but expressed their concern about

attitudes of others in the Navy, and particularly among the Marines, who were described as "emotional."

After at least seven drafts, the president settled several points at issue and sent the bill to Congress on 16 April, accompanied by a letter to Speaker Sam Rayburn. Eisenhower pointed out that the bill did not mention changes in appropriations of funds; the flexibility he desired in use of the funds could be met by changes in the 1960 budget format.

At a press conference the same day Eisenhower spoke to the subject of military officers who did not publicly support the bill. He drew a distinction between public speeches and congressional testimony. In keeping with established procedures, officers had an "absolute duty" to express real convictions in congressional testimony, but they were not entitled to give public speeches that amounted to "propagandizing." This was a matter of great concern to Eisenhower. He was infuriated, and would continue to be, by high-ranking officers who took or appeared to be taking issue with policy established by the president and the secretary of defense. Indeed, a year later he seriously contemplated dismissing a chief of staff and the commander of a specified command who took public positions of which he disapproved.* His commitment to civilian control over the military was consistently absolute during his presidency. He was fully aware, of course, that there would be a congressional and public debate over the proposed legislation and that Congress would undoubtedly make changes in it.

In Congress some members voiced the usual clichés in opposition to centralization of authority in Defense. Rep. Carl Vinson, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, attacked the bill as tending toward a "Prussian-type supreme command" and called it an "open invitation to the concept of the man-on-horseback." Eisenhower joined the issue immediately, pointing out that there was general ignorance of what the "Prussian general staff" really had been. The White House and OSD orchestrated a campaign to enlist the support of veterans, business, and other influential groups.

Congressional consideration of the bill consumed more than three months. The issues that emerged during early committee hearings centered on how much power the secretary needed, the rights of the service secretaries, and the JCS and the chain of command. The specter of a "Prussian general staff" arose again and had to be exorcised, this time by JCS Chairman General Nathan F. Twining, who explained that it was more myth than fact. As was predictable, the members of the JCS failed to agree on the bill. Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell D. Taylor and Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas D. White supported the measure. Admiral Burke endorsed the objectives but had reservations about the language. Marine Corps Commandant General Randolph McC. Pate saw no need for some of the provisions and expressed fears for the future of the Corps if the secretary had power to transfer or abolish functions of the services.

After hearing testimony from OSD civilian officials, the House Armed Services Committee drafted legislation that made changes in the bill submitted by the administration. These were intended to place some limitation on the secretary's powers in relation to the military departments and the functions of the services. The bill also retained the right of service secretaries and JCS members to appeal to Congress after first informing the secretary of defense. It limited the Joint Staff to 400 officers and forbade it to organize as an armed forces general staff or to exercise executive authority.

Eisenhower accepted the House bill with two crucial exceptions. He did not want the secretary of defense to have to exercise control through the departmental secretaries, and he opposed limitations on the authority to transfer functions. Moreover, he did not want the service heads to have the right of appeal to Congress. The House committee did not accept the president's proposed amendments and reported out their bill on 22 May. It affirmed congressional responsibility for the armed forces stating that Congress would not "abdicate or renounce its constitutional responsibilities relating to the national security."

Friends and opponents of the legislation lobbied vigorously with a wide array of constituencies. The Association of the United States Army and the Air Force Association supported the president, while the Navy League opposed, and retired Marine Corps Commandant General Clifton B. Cates urged a fight against the entire plan. The bill passed the House on 12 June by a vote of 402 to 1, after efforts to amend it as the president wished had failed. One significant amendment was added. This authorized the secretary of defense to establish common supply activities—the single-manager system.

In the Senate, as in the House, leading senators asserted forcefully the constitutional authority of Congress over defense matters. In the hearings that followed, McElroy and other OSD officials sought to have the House bill revised to accommodate the president's concerns. After further testimony from witnesses on both sides of issues, the Senate Armed Services Committee reported a bill with some changes from the House bill. The most important gave either house of Congress a period of time to negate transfers in service functions proposed by the secretary of defense. Other changes

* Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas D. White and SAC Commander General Thomas S. Power. A specified command was composed of forces from a single service only.

General Nathan F. Twining

gave the right of appeal to JCS members but not to service secretaries, and accorded the National Guard a statutory basis.

The House-Senate conference committee presented on 23 July a bill almost identical to the Senate bill except that it gave the service secretaries the right of appeal to Congress. The president announced his acceptance of the measure, and it passed both houses on 23 July without change. Eisenhower signed it on 6 August.[55]

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 gave the president most of what he had asked for, moving further in the direction of centralization and unification. What emerged from the long process of executive and legislative deliberation and negotiation were the following provisions: strengthening the authority of the secretary of defense, including greater control over the service departments; elevating the status of JCS chairman and eliminating the prohibition on his having a vote in JCS decisions; almost doubling the size of the Joint Staff; prescribing the establishment of unified and specified commands by the president; stipulating the number of assistant secretaries; and creating the position of director of defense research and engineering. The president had lost on two matters on which he held strong feelings—the right of appeal by service secretaries and JCS members to Congress and the procedure for transferring military functions. It now remained to implement the terms of the act.

Even prior to the passage of the act Secretary McElroy had made many of the changes that the president had indicated in his message to Congress. He directed that promotion to general and lieutenant general be at the recommendation of the secretary of defense rather than the service secretaries and that completion of a tour of duty with a joint or interallied staff be required for promotions beyond the rank of colonel (or Navy captain). Changes within OSD focused on the abolition of departmental committees, a recurring exercise: eventually 199 of some 300 DoD committees were dissolved.

JCS internal organization changes began in April also, calling for restructuring the Joint Staff along conventional lines, with directorates—J-1 through J-6—replacing existing groups or committees. A new J-3 (operations) responded to new JCS responsibilities deriving from the abolition of the executive agent system. Admiral Burke and General Pate opposed this plan as converting the Joint Staff into the kind of supreme general staff they feared, but they came around after the new act provided for the Joint Staff to operate as a conventional staff. The Joint Chiefs approved the change and it went into effect on 15 August. Subsequently the JCS took over staff direction of the unified and specified commands from the departmental executive agents, leaving the departments to provide administrative and logistical support for the commands. The Unified Command Plan was rewritten to instruct the commander to communicate directly with the JCS on strategic and logistic planning matters, direction of forces, and conduct of combat operations.

The president had made it clear that he expected the service chiefs to delegate some of their service responsibilities to their deputies as authorized by the law. Burke led the way on 28 July, and Taylor and White followed suit soon after.

The act stipulated that commanders of unified and specified commands would have "full operational command" of forces assigned to them. The House committee included a definition of the term in its report but not in the legislation. In January 1959 McElroy asked the JCS to formulate a definition. The Chiefs submitted a definition close to the House report version: "Those functions of command over assigned forces involving the composition of subordinate forces, the assignment of tasks, the designation of objectives, the over-all control of assigned resources, and the full authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission." The president approved this definition on 30 January. Over the years this term—full operational command—as rendered by the JCS, grew by accretions that tended to refine the meaning, and eventually other terms, most recently "combatant command," replaced it.

The new act made it necessary to revise the basic directives—5100.1 and 5158.1—that provided general guidance for the military establishment. Issued in 1953 and 1954, respectively, by Secretary Wilson, they set forth the functions of the armed forces and the JCS and prescribed modes of operation for the JCS and their relationship with OSD staff agencies. Bringing these directives into conformance with the 1958 Reorganization Act proved difficult and time-consuming because of the need for precise language that would gain consensus of the interested parties, particularly the JCS and the services, which sought to retain as much initiative as possible and to achieve as much freedom as possible from OSD authority.

Most of the matters at issue pertained to the relationship of the JCS to OSD, particularly whether the JCS was part of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The JCS made clear that they did not see themselves as a staff element of OSD. Moreover, they wanted "directives and requests" to the JCS from OSD assistant secretaries to be approved by the secretary or deputy secretary of defense. They made clear to the president that they did not want to be under the direction of assistant secretaries of defense. Up to this time the JCS had been included in OSD, and the question then became whether they should be removed from OSD, which had no statutory existence at this time and was therefore only what the secretary said it was. It was understood that the secretary had the legal power to place the JCS within OSD. Although the president and OSD officials strongly favored retaining the JCS as a part of OSD, Eisenhower accepted a compromise offered by the Joint Chiefs. This scheme placed the JCS under the secretary of defense as a separate entity from OSD and affirmed their separate access to the president. Eisenhower insisted that the direct responsibility of the JCS to the secretary under this arrangement should be clear and that the need for close coordination between OSD and the JCS be distinctly recognized.

After receiving White House approval, McElroy issued the two implementing directives—5100.1 (functions) and 5158.1 (JCS organization and relationships)—on 31 December 1958. These directives established the broad structural framework in accordance with the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 and the president's order. Directive 5100.1 stated explicitly that "the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, though separately identified and organized, function in full coordination and cooperation in accordance with . . . [DoD Directive 5158.1]." Moreover, "the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a group, are directly responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the functions assigned to them." The military departments, "separately organized," were to "function under the direction, authority, and control" of the secretary of defense. Orders to the military departments would come through the department secretaries from the secretary of defense or from authority delegated in writing by the secretary of defense. The chain of command was to run from the president to the secretary of defense and through the Joint Chiefs to the unified commanders. The commanders would have full operational command over the forces assigned to them.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff constituted the immediate military staff of the secretary of defense. The JCS were the principal military advisers to the president, the NSC, and the secretary of defense. Directive 5100.1 spelled out the functions of the JCS and of the military departments and the military services. Directive 5158.1 specified that "the duties of the chiefs of the military services as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall take precedence over all of their other duties" and that they should delegate service duties to their vice chiefs. It enjoined the JCS to maintain full and effective cooperation with OSD. The directive resolved the sticky question of issuing orders to the JCS by requiring that "responsible officers" of OSD have specifically delegated authority from the secretary of defense. The authority of the JCS chairman was marginally enhanced; he received responsibility for organizing and managing the Joint Staff and appointing the director of the Joint Staff with the approval of the secretary of defense.

Drafting of the charters, issued as DoD directives, of the seven assistant secretaries,* the director of defense research and engineering, and the general counsel, also occasioned differences between OSD and the JCS and the military departments. All parties, jealous of their prerogatives and anxious to obtain as much authority as possible, engaged in disputes over language in certain charters—particularly that for the Office of International Security Affairs (ISA). Such words as "establish," "supervise," "monitor," "coordinate," and "develop" became bones of contention between opposing parties. Mutually satisfactory language concerning the responsibilities of ISA and the JCS for the military assistance program came only after more than two months of debate.

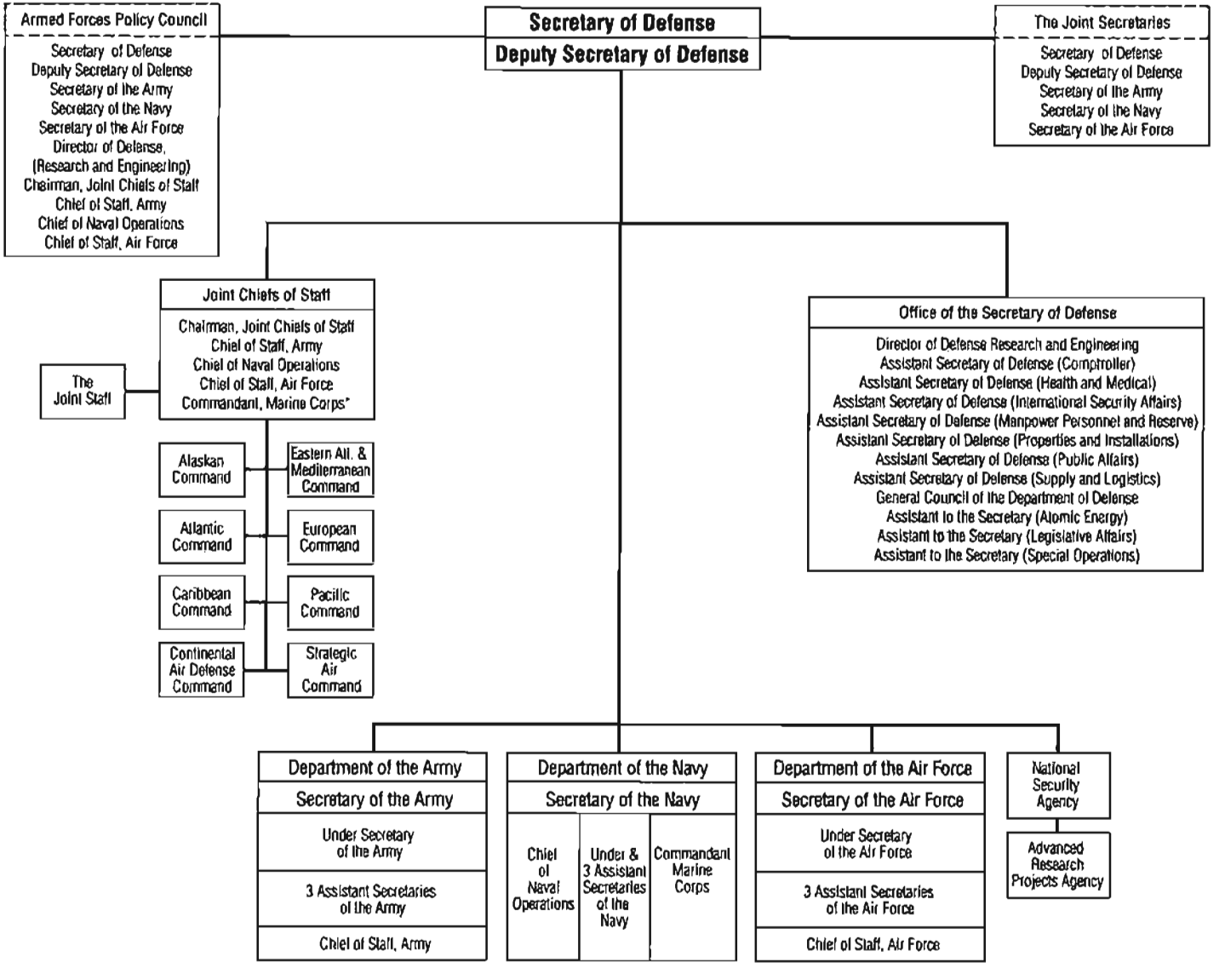
A charter for the new Office of Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E) had to await the appointment of the new director, Herbert F. York, on 24 December 1958. DDR&E would supervise all research and engineering activities in DoD, including programs

* There were eight assistant secretaries when the 1958 act was passed.

Chart 7

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

April 1959



*When pertaining to Marine Corps matters.

to meet military requirements, assignment of responsibility for developing weapons, and centralized management of research activities as directed by the secretary of defense. Challenges to the charter by the services were minimal, and it was issued on 10 February 1959. It abolished the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Engineering and transferred its functions and personnel to DDR&E.

The reorganization required expansion of the combined personnel strength of OSD and JCS from 2,176 on 30 September 1957 to 2,773 as of 30 June 1959. The increase derived largely from the growth of the Joint Staff and its support personnel and the establishment of DDR&E on a larger scale than its predecessor organization.

President Eisenhower was clearly the driving force behind the 1958 reorganization. He achieved a substantial measure of success in getting much of the change that he had proposed. To his role as chief executive and commander in chief he added the most impressive credentials of military experience. He paid especially close attention to Defense problems and expressed his views vehemently. Still, Congress had the last say on the legislation and refused to give the president some of the important changes that he had asked for, especially by limiting the power of the secretary of defense to transfer functions and requiring the secretary to exercise control through the departmental secretaries. On these issues, Congress responded to the concerns of the services and their supporters and would not yield. It would be almost three decades before these and other reorganization matters would be revisited in Congress.

It fell to Thomas S. Gates, Jr., who succeeded McElroy as secretary of defense in December 1959, to take further constructive actions that affected DoD organization and operations. Gates thought the 1958 law had been beneficial, he saw no need for further statutory changes until the reorganization had been "thoroughly digested," and he believed that "the Secretary of Defense has great power and the administrative ability to do a great many things." Accordingly he used his authority to further implement the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958. Like Forrestal, his Navy-colored perspective on DoD changed strikingly once he became secretary of defense.[56]

On the same day he took office, 2 December 1959, Gates directed that all line officers would have to serve a tour of duty with a joint, combined, or OSD staff before they could be considered for promotion to general or flag officer rank. Gates initiated the practice of sitting often with the Joint Chiefs in order to reach more timely decisions. This went beyond the practice of previous secretaries, who had attended JCS meetings only occasionally. Indeed, Gates or his deputy, James H. Douglas, did make final decisions on a number of important issues at these meetings.[57]

Two JCS "splits" were of particular importance and difficulty. They involved the related matters of control of the Polaris submarine forces and unified control of strategic targeting—the salient issues in the continuing struggle between the Air Force and Navy over strategic air operations. The Polaris missile submarine introduced a new dimension of strategic operations and gave the Navy promise of a major role in such operations. The Air Force viewed the new development as a threat to its primacy in planning, targeting, and directing strategic air operations. It pushed for centralized control of all strategic air assets, including the Polaris submarines.[58]

Coordinating strategic targeting to permit the most efficient and effective use of nuclear weapons caused a running dispute between the services as the number of targets and the number of commands increased. Targeting was, of course, intimately related to the conflicting strategies adhered to by the services—the Air Force's maximum deterrent force vs. the minimum deterrent advocated by the Army and Navy. The advent of the Navy's Polaris as a strategic deterrent weapon in competition with strategic bombers intensified the debate over deterrent strategy. The Joint Chiefs split on the issue. The Air Force proposed a "Unified Strategic Command" with two components—Air Force land-based weapons and the Navy's Polaris force. The Navy objected and wanted Polaris placed under unified commanders with naval forces.

The central questions were development of target lists, a single operational plan, and control of the striking forces. Burke opposed an overall strategic force command and a single operational plan, insisting that strategic targeting should be a JCS responsibility. The differences between the Chiefs during 1959-60 over whether targeting should emphasize urban/industrial or military targets delayed the preparation of the annual short-term and mid-term strategic plans.

Eisenhower and Gates agreed on the need to have a mixed force that could attack and destroy both military and urban/industrial targets. For two months, from May to July 1960, Gates met repeatedly with the Joint Chiefs in a vain effort to secure agreement on strategic targeting. In a meeting with the president on 6 July he proposed that the Strategic Air Command (SAC) have responsibility for strategic targeting and for preparation of a single operational plan, acting as the agent of JCS, and that its staff for this purpose be augmented by the other services. Eisenhower fully supported Gates's recommendations. Fearing a leak, Gates held the decision closely and presented his draft directive to the JCS on 10 August. He later recalled that "the Navy wouldn't agree on it. The others agreed."

The directive established a National Strategic Target List (NSTL) and a Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) to be prepared under the direction of the commander in chief of SAC, who, for this function, was designated director of strategic target planning (DSTP). Directly responsible to the JCS, he would have no command authority and would have a deputy from another service and a staff drawn from all the services.

At a meeting the next day with the president, attended by Gates, Douglas, and Twining, Burke expressed strenuous opposition to the directive. He accepted integrated target planning but adamantly disputed the desirability of a single operational plan. The president rejected Burke's arguments and approved Gates's recommendation.

Burke later told Gates that he did not agree "one damn bit" with the decision but that he would support it. Gates thought that the new procedure would permit the JCS to bring SAC, a specified command, more firmly under control. The deputy DSTP would, of course, come from the Navy. The secretary issued the implementing directive on 16 August, and the JCS approved the organization of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff with the commander in chief of SAC as the director.

Although the services and some of the unified commanders continued to voice disagreements over procedures and the substance of the target list and the SIOP, the JCS approved both in December 1960. This marked an important advance in the direction of centralized control over a crucial element of the military establishment. As Robert J. Watson has observed, "From a practical standpoint, the coalescence of separate plans into a single document, subject to periodic review by the secretary of defense, greatly simplified the secretary's task in directly influencing strategy, a fact that Gates's successors were to exploit to advantage."[59]

The 1958 act prompted other moves toward consolidation of DoD-wide functions in the form of Defense agencies. The first of these, the Defense Atomic Support Agency (DASA), was the successor to the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (AFSWP), which had been in existence since 1947 and responsible to the service chiefs. Its mission was to provide atomic weapon technical, logistical, and training services to the armed forces and to oversee DoD participation in AEC tests of nuclear weapons. The JCS wanted to retain control of the function, but Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald A. Quarles established DASA at the secretarial level on 1 May 1959 with a broad mission encompassing all of DoD. The existence of DASA may have lent weight to Gates's arguments in 1960 for greater coordination of strategic targeting and planning.[60]

The high cost and the steadily growing size and number of communications networks invited attention to them as objects for consolidation. Pressures came from the White House and Congress. The JCS proposed to combine long-haul facilities under their control. The services could not agree on the management of a joint military communications network, and Gates decided on an agency directly responsible to the secretary of defense. He established the Defense Communications Agency (DCA) on 12 May 1960 to supervise and control the worldwide Defense Communications System. He assuaged the Joint Chiefs by prescribing that the DCA would report to him through the JCS.

Admiral Arleigh A. Burke

The matter of better integration of intelligence functions received serious study during the last year of the Eisenhower administration. The JCS and an interagency group headed by a CIA representative prepared reports reviewing requirements and recommending changes, but they came too late in the day for the administration to act on them. It remained for the next secretary, Robert S. McNamara, to complete the work begun by Gates.[61]

THE MCNAMARA YEARS

National security and the performance of the Defense Department became major issues in the presidential election of 1960 between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. During the campaign, on 14 September, Kennedy appointed a committee of six civilians headed by Sen.