

Preface

The basic purpose of the National Security Act of 1947 was to establish an integrated structure to formulate national security policy at the uppermost level of the U.S. Government. The military establishment received special and detailed attention in this legislation because of its central role in making and executing national security policy. The changes wrought in the military establishment by the National Security Act and subsequent legislation and Executive orders—particularly the 1949 amendments, Reorganization Plan 6 of 1953, and the Reorganization Act of 1958—were intended to bring about unification of the armed forces through more centralized direction, stronger cohesion, and greater joint effort and mutual support. In the main, progress in this direction has been achieved through the exercise of control and coordination by the Secretary of Defense, whose powers have been significantly strengthened by legislative and executive actions. During the years since 1958 the Secretaries of Defense have used these expanded powers and sought relatively few changes in the basic law. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also have contributed to the integration of military policy and programs.

In this volume are gathered the basic statutes, Executive orders, and related documents that constitute the official authentication of the creation and organization of the Department of Defense since its establishment in 1947. These documents fall into two main categories. First and foremost are those pertaining to the fundamental instrument creating the Department of Defense—the National Security Act of 1947—together with all of the significant changes in that act in the years following. The second category (Part VI of this volume) consists of documents—executive rather than legislative—which pertain to the roles and missions of the armed Services. These are essential to an understanding of the evolution of the organizations and functions of the armed Services in relation to each other and to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

As is inevitable in such compilations, it has been necessary to be selective and discriminating in the choice of documents. The guiding principle was to restrict the choices to the highest levels of organization and function. Accordingly, documents pertaining to internal changes within the military Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense are included only if their significance extends beyond a single Service. Pertinent history of the legislative and executive branch documents appears in headnotes, together with citations to additional sources. The organization charts presented have been altered from their original form to correct errors, clarify content, and improve readability.

The texts of the National Security Act of 1947 and the later amendments are published as found in the Statutes at Large; however, many of the provisions of these laws were subsequently repealed and reenacted without substantive change as sections of Title 10, U.S. Code. This codification of the laws relating to the Department of Defense and the military Services was undertaken as part of a broader program to codify all the general and permanent laws of the United States. The U.S. Code serves as legal evidence and makes unnecessary recourse to the numerous volumes of the Statutes at Large; it also was designed to eliminate the contradictions, duplications, ambiguities, obscurities, and obsolete provisions of the many laws enacted by successive Congresses.¹

Title 10 also includes sections derived from other statutes that define the functions and prescribe the organization of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The legislative history of such provisions is beyond the scope of this volume, which concentrates on the organization of the Department of Defense and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

The changes in the legislation, particularly in 1949 and 1958, resulted in numerous deletions and additions to the basic act. All of the changes are incorporated in the texts of the act presented in this volume—deletions in italics within brackets and additions in bold face. These composite texts were prepared especially for this volume to present in one place the full scope of the changes made in each major review of the act.

Wherever possible, texts of the documents have been taken from official printed volumes—chiefly *Public Papers of the Presidents*, the *Congressional Record*, and Congressional documents. These printed versions often vary slightly in form from the original documents, but the editors have thought it preferable to use the printed texts so that readers may have readier access to the sources. Internal inconsistencies and errors in form and style that may be observed in some of the documents are as in the original printed source cited.

This volume was conceived and initiated by Rudolph A. Winnacker, Historian of the Office of the Secretary of Defense from 1949 to 1973. The other editors, Alice C. Cole, Alfred Goldberg, and Samuel A. Tucker, are all members of the Historical Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Special acknowledgement and appreciation are owing to Alice Cole for the masterful and painstaking final editing of the entire manuscript.

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¹ For a description of the principles involved in the enactment of Title 10, U.S. Code, see U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, *Revision of Title 10, U.S. Code Entitled "Armed Forces" and Title 32, U.S. Code Entitled "National Guard,"* H. Rpt. 970, pp. 1-18. 84th Congress, 1st session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955.