

## REVIEWING THE DEFENSE AGENCIES

The Defense Agencies have their origin in Public Law 85-599, the Defense Reorganization Act of 1955. This act contains a provision stating:

Whenever the Secretary of Defense determines it will be advantageous to the Government in terms of effectiveness, economy, or efficiency, he shall provide for the carrying out of any supply or service activity common to more than one military department by a single agency or such other organizational entities as he deems appropriate.

This act recognized in statute the practice, already underway, of combining some of these functions under one agency. The National Security Agency had been created by Executive Order in 1952. After P.L. 85-599 was enacted, the Defense Nuclear Agency was formed from the old Armed Forces Special Weapons Project that was created in 1946. Their authority continues to this day to be based on the authority granted to the Secretary of Defense to create and specify their functions.

The propensity to create agencies to centralize the management of many functions common to the services has resulted today in eleven agencies not under the command of the services or the JCS. These are:

- Defense Security Assistance Agency
- National Security Agency
- Defense Contract Audit Agency
- Defense Intelligence Agency
- Defense Investigative Service
- Defense Logistics Agency
- Defense Mapping Agency
- Defense Nuclear Agency
- Defense Communications Agency
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
- Defense Legal Services Agency

These agencies have grown over the years to employ more than 80,000 personnel, possibly more, and to control significant operating budgets. Although the current Administration has placed these agencies under the line control of various Assistant Secretaries of Defense, in the past they often have reported directly to the Secretary of Defense, and operated with a low level of policy control. Critics claim that they have too little accountability to the joint structure or the combatant commanders.

Some Members of Congress, as well as some officials of the Department of Defense, have taken note of the proliferation and increasing power of the independent Defense Agencies. They were intended to reduce duplication and save money. Yet some analysts and observers are now suggesting that in some cases the agencies have been inadequate in providing the services they were created