

The Report to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the Department of Defense by the Blue Ribbon Panel, or the Fitzhugh Commission Report, was published in 1970. The report was the result of a review of the management and organization of the Department of Defense by a commission chaired by David Packard, co-founder of Hewlett-Packard and future Deputy Secretary of Defense. The report was commonly known as the "Fitzhugh Report" or "Blue Ribbon Defense Panel Report" of 1970.

The Fitzhugh Report was an exhaustive look into the Department of Defense's operations and suggested reforms for improved efficiency and effectiveness. It was driven by the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the perception that the DoD wasn't as efficient or responsive as it should be.

Summary of the 1970 Blue Ribbon Defense Panel Report:

1. Organizational Structure:

- The report criticized the Department's structure, saying it was both overlapping in some areas and had gaps in others. It suggested reforms to ensure clear lines of responsibility and better decision-making.
- There were also concerns about the National Command Authorities and their ability to respond quickly in crises. The report felt that the DoD's decision-making was too centralized.
- To address these issues, the report recommended realigning the responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the military departments and reducing the size of the OSD.

2. Budgetary Processes:

- The report identified significant delays and inefficiencies in the DoD's budgetary process. It noted that budgets were often built around what was politically achievable rather than what was strategically necessary.
- The panel suggested reforms to prioritize projects based on their strategic importance and reduce wasteful spending.

3. Research, Development, and Acquisition:

- The DoD's process for researching, developing, and acquiring new technologies and weapons systems was seen as slow and inefficient.
- The report recommended streamlining the acquisition process, incorporating more flexibility, and fostering innovation. It suggested that the DoD should be more open to outside ideas and technologies.

4. Personnel Management:

- The report found that the DoD's personnel systems were inflexible and outdated, leading to problems in recruitment, retention, and overall morale.

- Recommendations included improving military education, revising the promotion system, and ensuring that both civilian and military personnel systems were more adaptable to changing needs.

5. Inter-Service Rivalries:

- The panel identified that rivalries among the different military branches were a significant issue. These rivalries sometimes hindered cooperation and led to unnecessary duplication of effort.
- The report recommended greater jointness in operations and planning. It also advocated for better integration among the services to tackle common challenges.

6. Readiness and Maintenance:

- Concerns about the readiness of forces were paramount, especially given the Vietnam War context. The report felt that the DoD had an emphasis on quantity over quality.
- It recommended a renewed focus on the quality of forces, equipment, and training. Maintenance of equipment, especially, was seen as a crucial area needing improvement.

7. Reserve Forces:

- The report discussed the vital role of reserve forces and noted the challenges in integrating them seamlessly with active-duty forces.
- It called for a better balance between active and reserve components, streamlining mobilization processes, and ensuring the reserves received adequate training and equipment.

While the Fitzhugh Report's recommendations were insightful and forward-thinking, not all of them were implemented. Still, the report serves as a critical review of the Department of Defense during a tumultuous period and offers a case study in organizational reform.