



United States Department of the Interior

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 14, 1979

Memorandum

To: Deputy Assistant Secretary--Energy & Minerals
From: Director, Geological Survey
Subject: Comments on "Mapping, Charting, Geodesy, and Surveying"

Consolidation of many civilian mapping activities under one organization, the National Mapping Service, will be a valuable benefit of forming DNR. The pertinent questions, therefore, are (1) what the level of the organization should be, and (2) at what stage in the reorganization should it be formed? As to the latter question, I concur wholeheartedly with the staff conclusion that "The plan should be constructed to permit secretarial action to realign applicable functions as part of the DNR implementation when it is timely rather than effect realignment in the plan itself."

As to the level, two factors are involved, the fraction of civilian mapping that will be in the NMS, and the consequences to the USGS of the consolidation of mapping. First, the plan of putting all civilian mapping under one jurisdiction will not be accomplished under the DNR. Snow and soil surveys will still be in the SCS, as will some aerial photography for mapping purposes. Second, all DNR mapping and charting will not be in the same administration as the mapping organization as generally proposed. Nautical charting and bathymetric mapping will still be in NOAA. Third, if the NMS is not a part of the USGS, it will not include all the mapping in the Earth Science and Minerals Administration. This is because the USGS will do geological and geophysical surveys, flood and water surveys, resource mapping and other related activities for which no authorization or competence would exist in the NMS. Fourth, the EROS program would be in the USGS as would the advanced mapping procedures developed in the space program.

In a different vein, the separation of both the Conservation and the Topographic Divisions from the USGS would gut the bureau--which can hardly be desired by anyone.

I concur with both the staff conclusions, but would add a third:

The National Mapping Service should be a division of the Geological Survey. (It would not be exceptionally large, complex or widely dispersed compared to the Geologic or Water Resources divisions.)



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Mapping, Charting, Geodesy, and Surveying

Discussion: Surveying, mapping, geodesy, and charting responsibilities are dispersed and the resources diluted among a number of civilian agencies in the Federal Government. Included are NOAA and USGS which do the preponderance of basic work (as part of their program mission), and the remainder such as BLM and the Forest Service which perform surveys and produce maps in support of their own missions. The proposed Department of Natural Resources greatly enhances the opportunity for forming a civil mapping agency for the Nation by bringing NOAA and USGS into the same department.

This proposition -- a civil mapping agency -- has been studied over many years but the latest detailed and most comprehensive review was in 1973. The recommendation of the OMB-led task force was to consolidate mapping and charting under a single management structure. This included certain MC&G work from NOAA including geodesy and aeronautical map production and distribution. Cadastral surveys from BLM and other spacial positioning activities were also included. Other relevant categories included nautical charting, bathymetric mapping, geophysical/geological surveys, and platform related surveys. Map products like recreation folders for agencies that require such products were also to be assigned to the Agency.

The 1973 task force recommendations, including the consolidation proposal, were reassessed in 1976 by OMB and were reaffirmed but no action was taken. PRP, incident to its work of studying the natural resource sector, has also reaffirmed the civilian mapping agency concept and seizes on the current opportunity, e.g., the common placement of USGS and NOAA in the DNR. As such, the Civilian Mapping Agency has been identified as one of the tangible benefits of a DNR. Improved service, efficiency, and cost savings can be cited as the result. If the MC&G agency is to be created it may be best to state the intention as part of the proposal but to defer the functional realignments to the Secretary to accomplish as an implementation matter rather than include them as part of the plan. To permit this the plan would have to be constructed in a way that does not block the Secretary's ability to form a civil mapping agency.

Issues

- Specifically what functions of NOAA related to MC&G are involved in the civil mapping agency?
- Specifically what functions of USGS related to MC&G are involved in the civil mapping agency?
- Specifically what functions of the Forest Service related to MC&G are involved in the civil mapping agency?
- Specifically what functions of the other Interior agencies (e.g., BLM, NPS, etc.) are involved in the civil mapping agency?

- What is the intended relationship of the civil mapping agency to civil mapping requirements outside the DNR?
- Should the civil mapping agency continue to be presented as one of the intended benefits of the DNR?
- Where in the DNR should the MC&G agency be placed?

The Report of the Federal Mapping Task Force on Mapping, Charting, Geodesy and Surveying, dated July 1973, as reassessed in 1976, are the most relevant substantive documents in resolving the above issues. Copies of the documents have been made available to management of NOAA and Interior.

General support for a civil mapping agency can be anticipated although there are not highly visible constituencies pressuring for the proposal. Proponents tend to be more subtle, e.g., Officials of the American Society for Photogrammetry, Rand McNally, State Mapping Advisory Committees, Defense Mapping Agency, the Legislative Council for Photogrammetry, and to some extent the Committee on Geodesy, National Academy of Science, which is currently reviewing the 1973 Report as it relates to geodesy. No significant opposition has come to our attention.

Staff Conclusion

- We should continue to plan on the integration of mapping and charting as a clear benefit of the DNR.
- The plan should be ~~so~~ constructed ~~to~~ to permit secretarial action to realign applicable functions as part of the DNR implementation when it is timely rather than effect realignment in the plan itself.