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MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT (CSRA). (U)
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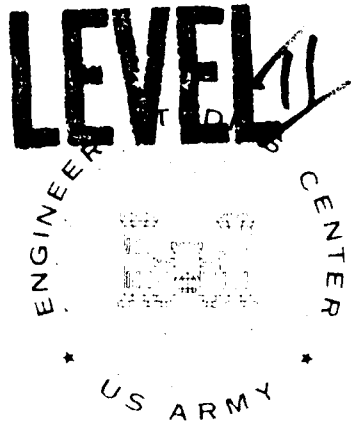
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MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT (CSRA)



Prepared by
US Army Engineer Studies Center
Corps of Engineers
September 1979

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THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT (CSRA)

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September 1979

Principal Author: Mr. John O. Moser

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ANNEX A--CORPS OF ENGINEERS TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT CSRA

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MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE REFORM ACT (CSRA)

1. Introduction.

a. At the Fall 1977 DE Conference, Task Group IV was assigned to study the "Quality of the Work Force." The Task Group reported the need for a study of employee mobility and development. The Engineer Studies Center (ESC) subsequently was tasked to study the broader problem of Corps work force needs. In October 1978, during the course of this study, President Carter signed the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA). This Act, although maintaining and strengthening the "merit" philosophy of the Civil Service System, allows a fundamental change in the future management of the government work force. The Act, if properly managed during its implementation, provides a highly significant opportunity to impact on and change the Corps work force over the next decade since it affects a wide spectrum of personnel functions to include hiring, development, training, and personnel growth.

b. The Corps of Engineers achieves its goals and objectives entirely through the efforts and energies of its people. CSRA seizes on employee/supervisor/manager interrelationships and organizational missions and objectives to provide additional management tools to help improve productivity. Figure 1 shows the interdependence of mission, jobs, workers, and management. In essence, the Act legislated the application of management-by-objective concepts with the employee becoming an integral cog of the work planning process. For the first time since

CSRA CONTINUUM ON CORPS OF ENGINEERS ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

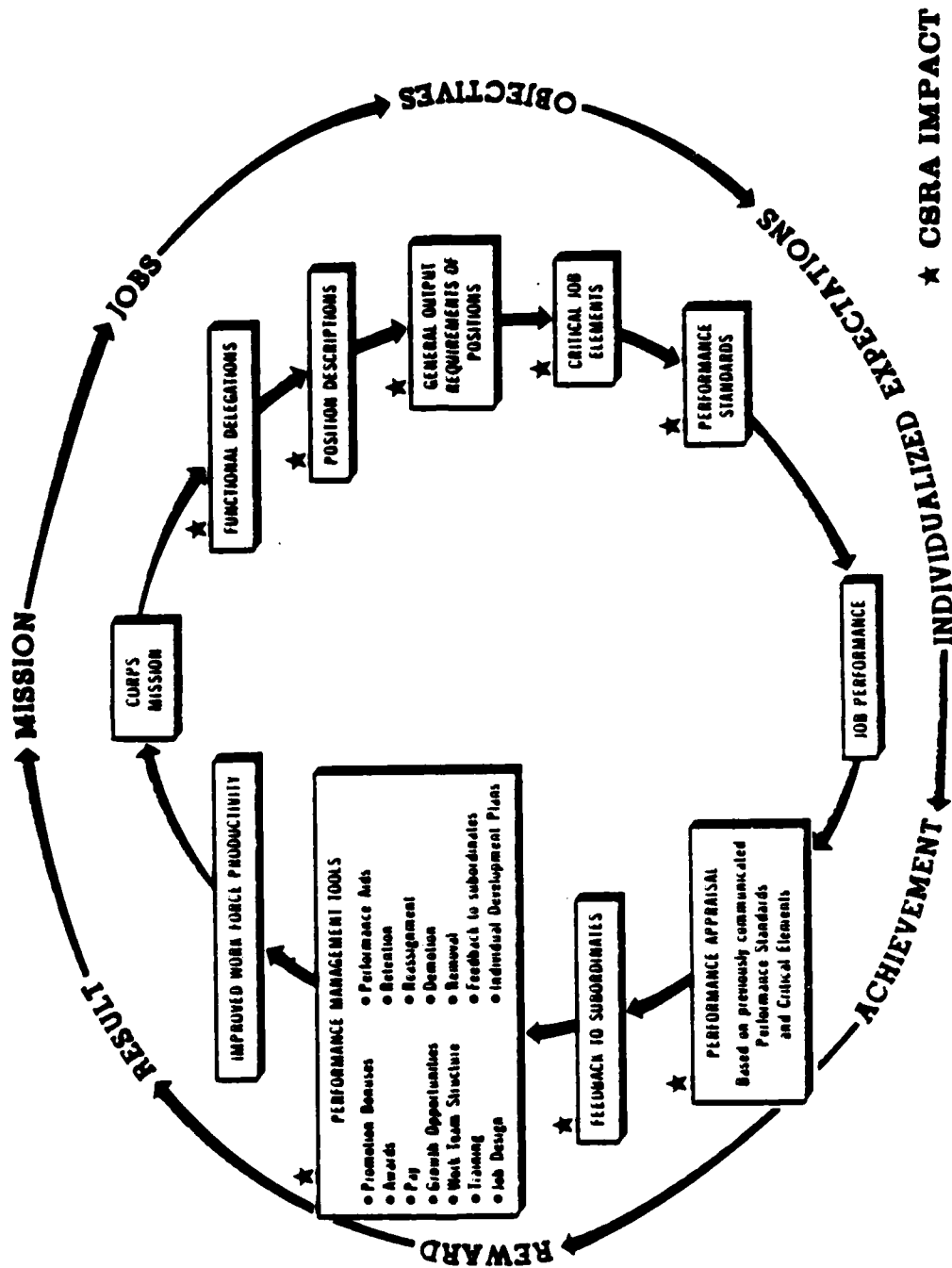


Figure 1

the Civil Service System was established, employees will be evaluated and accountable for specific performance. Job appraisals will be based on the effective monitoring of explicit job performance standards contracted between supervisor and employee.

c. CSRA is not a revolutionary concept. Many of the Federal work force's top managers have, in the past, attempted to enhance output and to improve the quality of public service using management by objective tools and techniques. In the recent past, the Department of the Army, and particularly the Corps of Engineers, identified annual goals to provide the nation with improved products and better service. These goals, in turn, were backed and supported by specific objectives to channel the efforts of middle management and agency workers. There is, however, another set of goals and objectives that usually impact on organizational intent. Members of the work force have their personal goals and objectives relating to careers, training, development, promotions, and even termination. Ideally, organizational and personal objectives and goals should coincide; unfortunately this is not often the case. CSRA offers a unique opportunity to capitalize on both organizational and individual objectives and, in the process, enhance productivity. Its main purposes are to improve the delivery of services to the American public and improve overall efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring fairness, development, growth, and reward to productive employees.

d. Fundamental opportunities such as CSRA do not often come to a government agency. In retrospect, one such pivotal event for the Corps occurred in 1969 with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Although the Corps had a long heritage of initiative in conserving the environment, it had come under heavy criticism in the mid-1960s. The Corps reassessed its attitudes and services in response to the criticism. The NEPA provided additional impetus and the Corps changed further. New goals were set, there were organizational shifts, there were changes in attitude, and the Corps' products and services improved. The Corps started a process of revitalization as it embarked on a new role of national service. It proved that large governmental organizations can change and improve.^{1/} However, this change is still in process and it is not being made without stress and strain on the organization and its personnel. CSRA occurred at a time when top Corps management was reassessing "who and what we are, and where we are headed (and should be headed)" in the 1980s. Since much more authority is delegated to the agency level, this Act allows us a new approach to organizational enhancement through better use, management, and development of the work force. Imaginative implementation of CSRA can be even more pivotal to the Corps than NEPA since it can help align individual career objectives and goals with those of the organization to successfully accomplish the much broader

^{1/} Brookings Institution, Can Organizations Change? Washington, D. C., February 1979.

Army and Corps objectives. A creative implementation of this legislation must be the model for our leaders and the managers of the Corps in the next decade; our continued ability to serve the Nation depends on it. The Corps' future work force must possess the capability and the capacity to continue the quality work that will be expected in the future. Now is the time for enlightened Corps management to take the initiative for implementing CSRA.

e. This monograph brings together and examines the implications and opportunities afforded by the CSRA. Specifically, it outlines the new provisions of the Act, delineates the status of its implementation schedule to date, and identifies the unique opportunities offered and available to management for improving the overall quality and productivity of the work force.

2. New Provisions of CSRA.

a. The overall intent of CSRA is to improve the hiring, training, development, rewarding, and terminating of Federal Government employees in order to improve productivity and enhance government services. These are all areas of prime concern to Corps management and a point that was continually emphasized to the ESC study team during its data-gathering field trips. Besides stressing decentralization, the Act opens up opportunities for greater communication between supervisor and employee--establishing early joint collaboration towards effective achievement of work objectives and, in the process, permitting accountability and

honest appraisal of work performance. Most of the provisions of the Act became effective in January 1979, others became mandatory in July 1979 (e.g., the Senior Executive Service (SES)), and the rest become effective by October 1980 (e.g., Veterans Preference) and October 1981 (e.g., Performance Appraisals). This section will discuss each of these and identify the major changes that could and should impact on the current management process of the Corps of Engineers.

b. CSRA has divided the functions of the Civil Service Commission between two new agencies--the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the independent Merit System Protection Board (MSPB). OPM is charged with managing the work force and with assuming the majority of the responsibilities of the Civil Service Commission. MSPB is to decide employee appeals and to act against abuses of the merit system. A position of Special Counsel within MSPB is established to investigate charges against illegal actions by agency management and to protect the rights of whistle blowers (i.e., those who expose illegal, wasteful, and mismanaged activities).

c. OPM's overall philosophy is the greater decentralization of personnel management responsibilities. It is imperative that operational Corps management adapt and apply this concept in planning and programing for the future. Personnel officers throughout the Corps already have advocated an across-the-board decentralization of personnel procedures as practiced in the Corps. Thus, this Act is an ideal vehicle for the Corps to legitimize the implementation of a more efficient and effective

personnel system. OPM has begun delegating many of its inherent powers to agencies, permitting them to manage their own activities within very broad guidelines. It is expected that additional delegations of authority will be given in the future.

d. Major impacts of CSRA for the future work force are in the areas of establishing job standards and responsibilities, providing for accountability, and revitalizing performance appraisals; granting of monetary awards for merit; establishing a probationary period for all new supervisors and managers; establishing an SES; and redefining adverse actions with changes in the appeal process. The Act provides for recruitment from a broad spectrum of society based on merit and assures equal opportunity for all through affirmative action.

(1) Job standards, accountability, and performance appraisals. Job elements and performance standards must be discussed between supervisor and employee and must be fully understood by each. Employees will participate in the establishment of those standards which will permit accurate evaluation of performance and, in the process, assign accountability and responsibility for actions. Consideration should be given to both organizational and individual objectives. CSRA abolishes the existing government-wide performance system. Agencies are charged now with developing and phasing in new systems to evaluate the previously communicated performance standards and critical job elements and closely aligning personal performance to personnel actions. The newly devised

system must be fully effective by October 1981. Not only is this system expected to assist employees in improving unacceptable performance, but it should be the basis for adverse actions if there is no improvement. No longer should it be common for nearly 99 percent of the entire Federal work force to receive a satisfactory rating, with the remainder either outstanding or unsatisfactory. Conversely, performance ratings should now also be used for recognizing and rewarding exceptional performance. Figure 2 shows a comparison of current and new features of the performance appraisals.

(2) Monetary rewards. A merit pay system, at this time only for GS 13-15 managers and supervisors, will be linked directly to job performance and not to length of service. It is intended to recognize and reward quality performance through individual merit pay adjustments (considering both individual performance and organizational accomplishment). It is based on cost efficiency; timeliness of performance; and improvement in efficiency, productivity, and quality of work or service. Personnel in this category do not receive periodic step increases or quality step increases. However, they are assured a minimum of one-half of the annual comparability increase granted other GS employees. OPM may, at its discretion, increase this amount. Nonsupervisory/manager employees below GS-13 will not lose any money when brought under this system.

(3) Trial periods for new supervisors/managers. Another new provision of CSRA establishes a probationary period before a new

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL COMPARISON

Item	CSRA	
	Present	
Employee/Agency Coverage	All employees/agencies in Executive Branch.	All employees/agencies except SES, government corporations, intelligence, and counterintelligence agencies.
Rating Plans	Agencies establish performance rating plans.	Agencies develop and use one or more appraisal systems.
Summary Adjective Ratings	Must use Outstanding, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory.	Ratings revealed--agencies must appraise job performance.
Evaluations	Performance requirements effective during rating period--employee informed at beginning of rating period.	Specific objective performance standards established--employee informed at beginning of appraisal period.
Frequency	At least annually.	Periodically.
Review of Rating	Impartial review and/or Board of Review.	Abolished.
Uses	Extra credit in RIFs; basis for step increases for wage board.	Basis for training, reward, re-assignment, promotion, retention, RIFs, termination.

Figure 2

appointment becomes final. If new appointees do not complete this period in a satisfactory manner, they may be returned to the same grade and pay that they occupied before assignment to the new position. Under no circumstances may this reassignment be considered an adverse action.

(4) SES established. To permit a greater degree of flexibility in managing senior government executives, SES was established for managers GS-16 through Executive Level IV. It is anticipated that SES will attract and retain top managers and will pay them based both on their individual and organizational performance. (Just about all Corps employees eligible for SES elected to participate.) Participants in SES may be reassigned to other positions within their own agencies, but may not be involuntarily transferred to other agencies. Positions in SES are primarily careerist (no less than 85 percent) with no more than 10 percent of all government-wide SES positions reserved for non-careerists. The remaining SES positions (5 percent) are available for limited appointments which require the approval of OPM. Retention in the SES program is to be based on performance (i.e., improvements in efficiency and productivity, work quality, timeliness, and success in meeting affirmative action goals). Although removal from SES shall not be subject to individual appeal, a hearing may be requested (at MSPB) by the individual involved. Those removed from SES shall be guaranteed placement in non-SES positions at grade GS-15 (and above) at no loss of pay, or they may select retirement at age 50 with 20 years of service.

(5) Adverse action redefinition. CSRA eliminates the concept of reduction in rank (a title and position change only) as an adverse action. However, suspensions of over 14 days (rather than 30 days or more), reductions in grade or pay, and all involuntary furloughs are considered adverse actions and may be appealed. All adverse actions must be fully documented and the employee must be informed of such actions 30 days prior to their implementation. The final decision must be communicated to the employee in writing within 30 days.

(6) Appeal procedures. All appeal actions are based either on adverse actions or discrimination.

(a) Adverse actions may be appealed to MSPB with burden of proof on appeals on the action-initiating agency. Appeal procedures have been tightened. Adverse actions based on other than poor performance must be supported by a preponderance of evidence. MSPB decisions may be appealed.

(b) CSRA provides new procedures for handling discrimination complaints in two situations. In a "mixed case," the employee claims agency discrimination of the type that may be appealed to MSPB (e.g., removals and demotions). The other situation involves discrimination complaints not appealable to MSPB (e.g., promotions or working conditions).

e. Other CSRA implications. Other features of CSRA provide for agencies to conduct minority recruitment programs, permit nonpaid

work by students in connection with educational programs, rescind restrictions against employing more than two members of the same family, eliminate Veterans Preference for non-disabled veterans at rank of Major and above, and limit annual dual pay for retired personnel in government to \$47,500. Another feature of CSRA is that OPM is given authority to conduct and support public management research and that it may delegate the authority for personnel management functions to the Federal agencies.

3. Implementation of CSRA.

a. Within the options provided by the CSRA, OPM has started delegating much of its authority to agencies for all grades up to and including GS-15. It has begun a decentralization process which gives individual agencies broader, more flexible personnel management responsibilities. Managers now have the authority to extend employee details beyond 120 days and to extend temporary appointments. OPM has also issued a policy eliminating restrictive regulations on merit promotion. Management can now select qualified candidates from any appropriate source within the constraints of high-quality competition. Agencies also have full authority to examine job applicants if they are the sole or predominant employer of an occupation. Thus, an agency could be responsible for examining, certifying, and developing rating schedules and evaluating applicants as well as answering inquiries. Partial delegation of authority could also be granted with OPM retaining the right to examine applicants.

b. The performance appraisal system is presently undergoing revision. (The Department of the Army planned to implement a new system by April 1979, but it is being revised to meet the CSRA "non-adjective" requirement. The revision should be completed and implemented well before the CSRA's mandatory date of October 1981.) The new system is to be the basis for training, assigning, developing, promoting, rewarding, and terminating all employees. Agencies will be required to link all personnel decisions and pay to employee performance and to provide better job definitions. Employees must have periodic appraisals of job-related standards; they must be provided critical job elements to ensure the establishment of performance standards permitting accurate objective evaluation of performance. Basically, this appraisal is intended to retain and reward top performers as well as to assist marginal performers. If, given the opportunity, an employee does not or cannot meet the performance standards, the employee may then be reassigned, demoted, or terminated. Conversely, if an employee's performance becomes acceptable and remains acceptable for 1 year, all references to poor performance will be excised from the records.

c. The SES is now operational. Furthermore, agencies are currently studying ways to implement the merit pay plan for managers and supervisors. Funds for these raises will be drawn from a 50 percent annual pay comparability adjustment and withheld funds previously used for step and quality step increases for these employees. There is no

specific information on the ultimate implementation of these monetary awards at this time.

4. Management Opportunities Under CSRA.

a. CSRA provides a special opportunity for the Corps as we ready ourselves for the 1980s through introspective reappraisal. It is also particularly apt in view of the strong desire among the Corps field elements for the greater decentralization of personnel management authority. (This desire was brought to the attention of the ESC study team during its field visits.) Furthermore, it appears unlikely that the Army will provide specific implementation guidance in the near future. The Corps must, therefore, act independently to assure managerial and operational needs are planned and met in compliance with CSRA. An early Corps implementation initiative can help pilot the way for the rest of the Army. Close coordination and negotiation with Army personnel can help eliminate future system conflicts. Since the nature of Corps work is changing, CSRA implementation should be primarily predicated on projected operational needs. The driving force of the implementation should be provided by corporate and line managers with Civilian Personnel Offices providing assistance.

b. At present, all management levels of government are assessing and preparing implementation plans. The Corps' judicious use of CSRA provisions can establish precedents that may well become the normal operating procedure through the Federal Government. The Act will impact

primarily in the areas of hiring, job elements definition, performance standards and appraisals, trial periods for new managers and supervisors, monetary rewards, and assignment and use of top managerial talent (as afforded by SES).

(1) Job standards-performance appraisals. Some call this provision of the CSRA the "cornerstone" of the entire reform package. It is primarily based on the joint effort of employees and managers to assign specific performance expectations and make employees accountable for meeting these expectations, thereby improving employee motivation and overall productivity. All managers and supervisors, together with the employees, must establish job standards and identify critical job elements on which the employee will ultimately be rated. This is particularly important to all individuals involved since this management tool will be used for promotions, awards, training, development, reassignment, demotion, and even termination. Managers and supervisors must appraise employees annually based on mutually established standards. OPM has delegated to agencies the authority to select the method of appraisal which best suits their organizational needs. The agencies have been encouraged to keep appraisal instruments simple, to prepare understandable performance standards, and, most importantly, to keep employee participation in this process at a continuously high level. The Corps-implemented appraisal system will be the main instrument available

to the employee for attaining his individual career goals. Properly used, it can foster the marriage of organizational and individual objectives.

(2) Trial periods for new managers and supervisors.

(a) The CSRA is vague and even contradictory on this. The Act provides a "period of probation" for personnel placed into supervisory/management positions but does not specifically state the elapsed time. There is no guidance on the future of incapable individuals promoted into supervisory/management positions. CSRA only states that they "shall be returned to a position of no lower grade and pay than the position from which transferred, assigned, or promoted." Seemingly there is a conflict since promotion normally implies greater monetary compensation and presently an involuntary reduction cannot be accompanied by a loss of pay. There is also the unresolved issue of what constitutes "unsatisfactory" performance during a trial period. One approach is to simply consider all moves to supervisory or managerial positions as conditional with promotion not taking effect until the probationary period is satisfactorily completed. However, it is important that the Corps establish a precedent in the very near future to permit the meaningful implementation of this segment of the Act and to assure a degree of stability for those identified for supervisory and management status.

(b) Trial supervisory and managerial assignments are particularly important to the Corps which has long recognized the problem of promotions into management positions based primarily on technical capability. CSRA provides easier testing and evaluation of an individual's management skills without damaging their careers if they are found wanting and without impairing Corps management by assignment of well-intentioned yet unqualified individuals to management positions.

(3) Monetary rewards. As presently delineated in CSRA, the merit pay system applies only to GS-13 to GS-15 managers and supervisors and basically links pay to performance rather than length of service. Each agency shall determine its own plans for awarding merit pay. Since no additional funds are to be allocated for these awards (see paragraph 3c), there is a finite dollar amount that may be expended. Competition for the awards is expected to be keen and criteria must be established in the near future if this system is to become operational within the stated time frame. A reward system, well planned and clearly defining the relationship of merit pay to superior performance, can help motivate Corps managers and identify the best people. However, there is also need for caution--individual competitiveness must not be stressed to the detriment of team work. Clearly the criteria for individual rewards must be framed in terms of success in achieving overall goals and objectives. Both direct and collateral management responsibilities must be met to be granted monetary recognition.

(4) SES.

(a) Establishment of SES provides agencies with the flexibility to recruit and retain highly competent and qualified executives and managers. Moreover, agency heads have the authority to reassign senior executives internally on short notice to best accomplish the agency mission. SES provides the Corps with obvious long-term and near-term advantages; top talent can now be moved to where it can be used best. Extreme care must be taken, however, in a military organization such as the Corps to stagger and to synchronize the turnover of military and civilian top management to maintain stability and assure leadership continuity.

(b) The Corps has been assigned 62 SES positions. Prior to the implementation of the SES, the Corps had 52 people in supergrade and Public Law positions. In view of upcoming requirements, and to assure uniformity in grade structure for similar jobs, the Corps requested additional slots. Each one, although initially refused, was subsequently approved by the Army. Some of these new positions are already committed; those still open cannot be filled at this time by qualified Corps personnel, but must be opened to Federal-wide competition. The Chief of Engineers (COE) is not the selecting official for filling these slots. He only may nominate to the Army for selection. All SES positions are subject to rejustification and biannual audit by the Army and DOD. Any future change in the Corps' program and mission, therefore,

can be accommodated at the top management echelon with the potential gain or loss of slots an inherent risk.

(c) SES is a new concept with tremendous potential which has not, as yet, been fully explored. There is an opportunity for the Corps to be creative in implementing SES and possibly even to establish precedents for other governmental organizations. The COE may reassign SES personnel internally within the Corps; there is the possibility of detailing Corps personnel to other agencies and other agency personnel to the Corps. There is also the opportunity for intensive career management of those personnel already in SES and those who are identified to possess the necessary leadership and management potential to ultimately move into SES. CERL and the Institute for Behavioral Research and Creativity (IBREC), a CERL contractor, have done preliminary research into identifying management potential at other than SES level. OPM has already expressed interest for their services and expertise. Now is the time for a Corps program to identify early personnel for top leadership and management positions and begin their training and development for SES and develop programs to further develop those already part of SES. One of the tools uniquely applicable for the achievement of these goals is the concept of incorporating developmental assignments into the job standards and periodic performance appraisals of these individuals.

(5) Other opportunities. Additional facets of CSRA also provide management with opportunities to improve the existing personnel system. Modification of the appeal system simplifies the existing procedures and establishes more stringent standards for overturning an adverse agency action. CSRA authorizes retraining of employees separated through a RIF permitting management to retain motivated personnel. The Act also authorizes research programs and demonstration projects permitting agencies to experiment with new and different personnel management concepts in controlled situations to achieve more effective management of human resources and greater productivity.

c. Now is the time for seizing the initiative to implement all facets of the CSRA. One means of assuring that the Corps realizes maximum benefits would be to immediately establish an Advisory Committee from within the Corps. This committee should be responsible for a thorough review of all provisions of CSRA and charged with recommending Corps policies and procedures on key personnel issues. It should function as the Corps' focal point for coordinating and interpreting all matters related to the Act and other revisions of the personnel system needed to support the intent of the Act.

5. Recommendations.

a. The Corps is presently examining ways to improve the quality of its work force in order to better serve the future needs of the Army

and the Nation. Certain provisions of CSRA will assist in achieving this goal. It is important to the Corps' future that all of the Act's opportunities are wisely implemented.

b. To assure the attainment of the Corps future goals, ESC recommends that the following actions be initiated:

(1) MAKE CSRA IMPLEMENTATION A CORPS OF ENGINEERS

OBJECTIVE. Raising CSRA to the level of a major Corps objective will infuse it into the management plans of all Divisions, Districts, and FOAs; foster its rapid implementation; and make it an item for Command Inspections.

(2) ESTABLISH A CSRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The work force is serviced and logistically supported by the Civilian Personnel Office (CPO) but individuals are selected for specific jobs by the operational elements of the Corps. CSRA is a management tool for the operational supervisor and manager of the Corps rather than an instrument for the CPO to use in performing its functions. A CSRA Advisory Committee should provide the Corps implementation with an essential line-management focus. Therefore, it should be composed primarily of a cross-section of line and staff managers and supervisors selected from all geographic regions and levels--OCE, Divisions, Districts, FOAs. Of course, it should have some CPO representation. The Committee should remain active until 3 months after the final implementation of CSRA in 1981 to allow for the publication

of an inclusive "Lessons Learned" report. The annex to this monograph shows the concept structure and its organizational relationships.

(3) MAKE CSRA AN AGENDA ITEM AT THE FALL 1979 DE CONFERENCE.

This will provide an opportunity to relay the COE's concern for early implementation of CSRA to the Corps' top managers. The COE can present his views on the opportunity facing the Corps under this legislation, present the organizational objectives in accomplishing effective implementation, and provide his personal guidance. DEs will be able to discuss their roles and responsibilities in the implementation process as well as compare their needs and share their ideas.

(4) HIRE AN OUTSIDE CONSULTANT FOR ADVICE ON THE CSRA IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. This should be a consultant of national renown with established expertise in public administration and management and well-grounded knowledge of CSRA. This person should be hired to evaluate current Corps personnel policies and identify the maximum opportunities available under CSRA. The consultant should work with the COE and the Advisory Committee to plan their implementation.

(5) HAVE THE COE MAKE A VIDEOTAPE ON CSRA EXPLAINING ITS IMPORTANCE AND OUTLINE THE CORPS IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH. This videotape should communicate the Chief Executive's concern and personal interest in improving the personnel system through rapid implementation of CSRA, and indicate its importance to all Corps employees. Furthermore, it will help allay the fears and uncertainties which normally accompany a major change.

c. These ESC recommendations have the potential for high return at an extremely modest investment level. Except for the contract-hiring of the outside consultant, all can be accomplished from presently available Corps resources. In fact, it is reasonable to expect that a concentrated command focus may actually conserve resources since it will eliminate "spinning of wheels" and wasted effort.

6. Summary.

a. CSRA arrives at an opportune moment in the 204-year existence of the Corps of Engineers. We are presently engaged in self-analysis and evaluation while we are planning for the future. We know that in the next 5 years approximately 25 percent of the Corps' work force will be new. During this same time period, we know that there will be changes to the Corps' missions and services to both the Army and the Nation. These two factors make it necessary for us to tailor and develop our work force for the requirements of the 1980s. The creative implementation of CSRA provisions can assist us in achieving this goal.

b. The Act will be key in the achievement of our mission since it impacts on employee motivation and productivity. The success of CSRA is basically in the hands of operational supervisors and managers and should, therefore, be an operational rather than a Personnel Office responsibility. Its proper implementation should be aimed at identifying the individual's full potential, enhancing personal growth and development, and, for the first time, making individuals accountable for specific

performance. It can and must be made an effective tool in the management of personnel and in the execution of the Corps mission.

c. Implementation of CSRA will not be easy and will require the fullest cooperation and support of each employee in the Corps of Engineers. However, a dedicated and unified effort intensively managed, within a relatively short period of time, will prove beneficial to the employees, the Corps, the Army, and the Nation.

LAST PAGE OF MAIN PAPER

ANNEX A

CORPS OF ENGINEERS TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT CSRA

ANNEX A

CORPS OF ENGINEERS TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT CSRA

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1. Purpose. This annex describes the concept, structure, and organizational relationships for a Corps of Engineers' Task Force to manage its implementation of the provisions of the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA).

2. Task Force Mission. The Task Force's mission is the successful implementation of the CSRA and modifications of the current personnel management system (not specifically mandated but necessary). Its goal is to complete implementation as early as practical but not later than the time limits provided in the CSRA.

3. Task Force Roles.

a. The Task Force's management role includes planning and scheduling implementation actions to be carried out by staff and line elements, coordinating and facilitating their execution, and monitoring progress.

b. Specifically, the Corps CSRA Task Force roles include:

(1) Advising the COE on how to change the Corps personnel management system to capture the intended advantages of the CSRA for Corps managers and employees and to the public at large.

(2) Planning and scheduling the implementation with participation of staff and line management.

(3) Guiding, coordinating, and facilitating staff and line management's execution of planned actions.

(4) Monitoring and reporting substance and timeliness of progress; taking corrective actions for shortfalls.

(5) Helping correct problems and schedule slippages.

(6) Exchanging ideas and experiences with those involved or knowledgeable about CSRA implementation efforts of other agencies.

4. Task Force Composition. The corporate-level Task Force is composed of three parts: full-time members, advisory field members, and a consulting team. Figure A-1 shows a "strawman" organization structure depicting membership and relationships.

a. Full-time members (three people) should be selected to provide a combination of functional representation and personnel attributes to form a balanced team of line, staff, and civilian personnel managers. The line manager should be chairperson. The staff representative should be selected primarily for his/her personal attributes to balance the team with that person's organization representation as a secondary factor.

Permanent members need not be from Corps Headquarters. However, there is certainly merit in the civilian personnel member being a Headquarters person knowledgeable about the Army, DOD, and OPM civilian personnel staffs.

b. Advisory members should be selected to represent the field as follows: one line manager from each division, one representative from research and development to represent all labs, and/or one representative for FOAs. These members should serve a dual role. They should act as field members to the Corps Task Force and as the principal or project officer to coordinate and monitor the implementation actions in their organizations. In addition, each field organization should select a civilian personnel staff member to assist and work with the project officer as the management nucleus of the division/FOA implementation effort. The field civilian personnel members should be considered ex officio members of the Corps Task Force. While permanent Task Force members will meet on a daily basis, field representatives, including civilian personnel members, should meet with the permanent Task Force on a periodic basis, at least once every other month. These meetings would be in addition to normal communication by letter and telephone which would occur more frequently.

c. Consulting team. There are two people on the consulting team.

(1) One representative should be a professional non-Corps consultant hired to advise the Task Force during the implementation planning and during the execution of the plan. He should be knowledgeable in public administration (particularly skilled in the performance appraisal process) and the CSRA. The amount of consultant time required is left to the Task Force, but undoubtedly the heaviest investment will be in thinking through and planning the implementation actions.

(2) The second consultant should be a Corps person, or former (retired) Corps person who is knowledgeable in Corps operations. The idea is to have the Corps consultant work with the hired consultant to bring him/her up to speed in background and style of the organization. The Corps consultant should be a field person with a broad background in Corps operations and personnel practices.

d. Idea exchange board. A group of individuals from other Federal agencies and OPM should be invited to sit as a board of review for the implementation of the plan, and to monitor its progress to help gain objective insights into problems which may arise and how they can be handled or avoided. Knowledgeable individuals from the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) and academia could also be invited to participate. The FEI Alumni Association can help set up this board. It could meet two or three times a year in Washington, at FEI, or in the field.

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