



Fewer Generals, More Troops — 20% Cut to Admirals and Generals Shakes U.S. Defense

The Pentagon chief's latest radical move to restructure the armed forces' senior leadership targets top positions in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Meanwhile, bipartisan controversy is growing in Congress over the purges.

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WASHINGTON — Pete Hegseth is preparing to announce a 20% cut in positions reserved for admirals and generals at the Pentagon. Two defense officials confirmed this to *The Hill*, specifying that the measure is part of the secretary's broad plan to restructure and thoroughly overhaul military leadership.

The official announcement is expected Wednesday, during the State of the Force (*State of the Force*) address Hegseth will deliver to young officers and NCOs at the Marine Corps base in

Quantico, Virginia. The guidelines call for **the individual military services to implement the cuts by January 1**, with some positions simply downgraded rather than eliminated altogether.

"Fewer generals, more troops"

The new crackdown continues and accelerates the hard line already adopted last year. As early as **May 2025**, Hegseth had ordered the Pentagon to **reduce National Guard general officers by 20% and the total number of general officers and admirals by 10%** (one-star and above), also targeting active-duty four-star leaders.

The Pentagon chief's chosen slogan remains true to his resource-reallocation approach: **"Fewer generals, more troops"** (*Less generals, more GIs*), with the stated aim of cutting the administrative and bureaucratic costs of central commands deemed "bloated" in order to **transfer funds directly to operational units**.

The controversy and Congress's response

This move comes amid an already highly tense climate. Since taking charge of the Pentagon, **Hegseth has removed or forced the resignation of more than two dozen senior commanders** across all branches of the armed forces, **while also blocking numerous promotions** to one- and two-star ranks and reiterating that military leaders serve "at the pleasure of the president."

These decisions have deeply alarmed lawmakers from both parties in Congress. During a hearing in July, Republican Senator Susan Collins (chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee) described the situation as **"deeply concerning"**, noting that these are men and women who swore an oath to the Constitution. Similar concerns had been voiced in the spring by Republican Representative Austin Scott, who warned that dismissing prominent figures such as General Randy George (former Army Chief of Staff) would have a **"chilling effect"** on the armed forces' operational effectiveness.

Meanwhile, Hegseth's tightening measures have also sparked debate over organizational details: to attend the Quantico speech, **the Pentagon required troops to meet strict physical fitness compliance requirements** (waist-to-height ratio) and impeccable grooming standards.