

DOCUMENT RESUME

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[Rationale Justifying the Stated Mission Needs for Cruise Missile]. PSAD-78-44; B-163058. December 16, 1977. 3 pp.

Report to Sen. William Proxmire, Chairman, Department of Defense; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Federal Procurement of Goods and Services (1900);
Federal Procurement of Goods and Services; Notifying the
Congress of Status of Important Procurement Programs (1905).
Contact: Procurement and Systems Acquisition Div.
Budget Function: National Defense (050); National Defense:
Weapon Systems (057).
Congressional Relevance: Joint Economic Committee: Priorities
and Economy in Government Subcommittee.

In an April 1977 report to Congress, GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense reevaluate the role of cruise missiles to assure that developments are directed toward specific military requirements that relate to mission needs. It is uncertain whether the Department of Defense has developed mission needs data or whether they will develop this type of information for each variant of cruise missile as their plans and studies proceed. Findings/Conclusions: At this time, with the possible exception of the air launched version, GAO has not had access to data supporting the need for other land attack versions of the cruise missile. Some of the factors that make it difficult to identify specific mission needs include: the broad issues of strategic force planning, NATO requirements and policy considerations related to theater nuclear weapons, and SALT implications. Other complicating factors deal with the versatility of the cruise missile, its relatively low cost, and predictions of high accuracy, reliability, and survivability. The mission need for each variant should be identified. New developments to meet a mission need should proceed in a logical sequence from the identification and assessment of a projected threat, through identification of existing capabilities to accomplish the mission, assessment of the need in terms of a deficiency in existing capability, to development of a plan to explore alternative solutions. Valid mission needs may result from technological opportunities or opportunities to reduce operating costs. The mission need to be met by the Sea Launched Cruise Missile should be clarified. (Author/SW)



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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DEC 16 1977

The Honorable William Proxmire
Chairman, Subcommittee on Priorities
and Economy in Government
Joint Economic Committee

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As a result of the exchange of letters between you and the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Department of Defense identified what it considered the best source of data related to the need for cruise missiles. In a September 6, 1977, letter to you, the Department stated that the best and most comprehensive current source of data related to cruise missile rationale, threat analysis, and cost and effectiveness considerations is a Department staff study on modernization of the strategic bomber force. The Department stated that this study and Secretary Brown's testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on the fiscal year 1978 budget amendment provide information to support cruise missile rationale.

The Department pointed out that the bomber study only considered the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) but that additional analysis of ALCM requirements, together with analyses for the Ground Launched Cruise Missile and the Sea Launched Cruise Missile, are contained in interagency SALT documents. The Deputy Secretary advised that these documents are primarily assessments of various alternative SALT cruise missile limitations and are preliminary decision documents. It is his belief that it would be inappropriate to disseminate them outside the working group at this time. Moreover, he indicated that planning on versions other than ALCM is not firm and dependent on a variety of factors. In closing, the Deputy Secretary said that the Department could provide additional information as their plans and studies proceed.

At this time, with the possible exception of the air launched version, GAO has not had access to data supporting the need for other land attack versions of the cruise missile. As you are aware, GAO recommended in a report to the Congress dated April 26, 1977, that the Secretary of Defense

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reevaluate the role of cruise missiles to assure that developments are directed toward specific military requirements that relate to mission needs. GAO recommended that

"a thorough evaluation of the need for cruise missiles based on the threat, including identification of the deficiencies. . . to be met by deployment of a variety of cruise missiles; each Service's requirements, and in particular, the Navy requirements for nuclear cruise missiles; and the operational effectiveness of each cruise missile program."

The Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E) responded to this report by letter dated October 31, 1977. The Director's letter did not address the recommendation made by GAO.

We recognize that a variety of factors may affect the future of cruise missile programs. Some of these make it difficult to identify specific mission needs, i.e., the broad issues of strategic force planning, NATO requirements and policy considerations related to theater nuclear weapons, and SALT implications. Still other complicating factors deal with the versatility of the cruise missiles, its relatively low cost, and predictions of high accuracy, reliability, and survivability. We still believe, however, that the mission need for each variant should be identified.

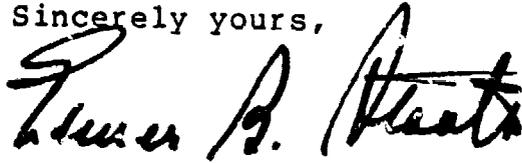
It is our belief that new developments to meet a mission need should proceed in a logical sequence from the identification and assessment of a projected threat, to identifying existing capabilities to accomplish the mission, to assessing the need in terms of a deficiency in existing capability, to developing a plan to explore alternative solutions. We also believe that valid mission needs may result from technological opportunities or opportunities to reduce operating costs.

In summary, we do not know whether the Department of Defense has developed mission needs data or whether they will develop this type of information for each variant of cruise missile as their plans and studies proceed. As we indicated in our April 26, 1977 report, an area of primary concern is clarification of the mission need to be met by the Sea Launched Cruise Missile--either submarine launched or surface launched and the Ground Launched Cruise Missile. These variants appear to be attractive options, however, they are costly

developments which should be discontinued if there is no need. We intend to pursue this in our ongoing work. We also have attempted to initiate discussions with representatives of the SALT working group to determine what information can be made available. To date, these attempts have been unsuccessful.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of the report. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas A. Stearns". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'S'.

Comptroller General
of the United States