



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

DECEMBER 11, 1979

B-183124

The Honorable Harold Brown
The Secretary of Defense



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Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Estimates of Available Hours for Military Personnel in Wartime Distort Force Requirements and Planning (FPCD-80-6)

This concerns the policies of the services for estimating the availability of wartime military personnel. These estimates of available hours and workweeks per month are used in calculating personnel needed for future contingencies. This potential need is then taken into consideration for establishing peacetime personnel requirements.

We evaluated these policies to determine whether each of the services has an effective and up-to-date basis for planning, allocating, and using its manpower resources and whether the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has the tools necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate the service programs.

Recently we reported on the available hours used for civilian employees in civil agencies and the Department of Defense and for military personnel in the Army's combat units. 1/ In these reports we said

--availability determinations were not based on common criteria;

1/"Estimates of Federal Employees Available Time for Work Distort Work Force Requirements" (FPCD-78-21, Mar. 5, 1978) and "Continuous Management Attention Needed for Army to Improve Combat Unit Personnel Requirements" (FPCD-78-61, Sept. 5, 1978).

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--estimates were often old, incomplete, and unsupported;
and

--variances within organizations were not accounted for.

Our present evaluation, which extended the scope of these reports to interservice differences in determining war-time requirements, found no basis for changing these conclusions, except to note that the Air Force--alone among the services--supports its availability estimates with detailed and fairly current studies. (For examples of factors considered by the services in estimating available hours see enclosure I.)

Personnel requirements based on inaccurate and out-of-date available hours may be greatly understated or overstated. In addition to a possible impact on readiness, this can also create hardships and morale problems which affect retention.

We are aware that OSD has contracted for a review of the services' available hours used in determining military requirements and that it is OSD's intention to develop policy and criteria to overcome the recognized problems. We urge that action be taken as soon as possible for this purpose.

We believe that OSD managers must recognize their need for a consistent basis and accurate and up-to-date information to enable them to provide guidance and to fulfill their oversight responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that you develop guidance for

--defining availability and identifying the types of absences such as leave and training that must be accounted for in estimating available hours,

--defining the workweek criteria to be used as a basis for developing the combat force available hours,

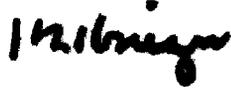
--requiring the annual validation or adjustment of available hours, and

--requiring the maintenance of documentation supporting the available hours.

We intend to review the progress on these issues shortly. In the interim, we would appreciate your keeping us informed of actions taken.

Because of their general interest and oversight, we are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services; the Chairmen, House Committee on Government Operations and Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Sincerely yours,



H. L. Krieger
Director

Enclosure

EXAMPLES OF FACTORS CONSIDERED BY
THE SERVICES IN ESTIMATING MONTHLY AVAILABLE HOURS
PER PERSON (MILITARY)

	Army	Navy		Air Force	
	All units	Watchstander	Aviation	Emergency	Wartime surge
Assigned hours	<u>365</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>303</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>313</u>
Less hours:					
Security	19.5	Service diversion and training			
Kitchen	7.3		19	30	Leave Permanent change of station Medical Organizational Education and training Social actions Miscellaneous
Work details	12.2				
Messing	22.8				2.0
Casualties	10.8				
Personnel needs	15.0				.8 .1 .1 .9
Total nonavailable hours	<u>87.6</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>19.3</u>	<u>3.9</u>
Estimated available hours	<u>277.4</u>	<u>301</u>	<u>273</u>	<u>241.7</u>	<u>309.1</u>

Note: The Air Force is the only service which supports its availability estimates with detailed and fairly current studies.

ENCLOSURE I

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