

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Committee on  
Armed Services, House of Representatives

July 1988

# MILITARY MANPOWER

## Problems in Accounting for Occupational Shortfalls



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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-199333

July 15, 1988

The Honorable Les Aspin  
Chairman, Committee on  
Armed Services  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In its July 1986 report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1987, the House Committee on Armed Services expressed concern that in the event of a major mobilization, the Department of Defense (DOD) may lack a number of the critical occupational skills needed for war. The Committee directed the Secretary of Defense to report on skills that might be in short supply during the early days of mobilization and on actions that could be taken to alleviate these possible shortages. DOD responded with a study that focused on the availability of men in the draft-eligible population with scientific, engineering, and technological skills. Noting that it is difficult to predict specific skill shortfalls at mobilization, the study did not attempt to do so.

You requested that we survey whether DOD's personnel management accounting and reporting systems could provide DOD managers with the kind of information they need to determine personnel shortfalls and excesses in occupational specialties. In part, your concerns arose from the problems we reported in attempting to get complete, consistent, and understandable data from the services to evaluate DOD reports about estimated wartime shortages of medical personnel in particular specialties.<sup>1</sup>

Our work focused on determining whether verifiable data exists or can be produced to reconcile occupation-specific skill requirements, authorizations (approved positions), and inventories for the total military force.<sup>2</sup> A periodic reconciliation of total force occupational needs and resources is necessary to validate occupational shortfalls and excesses, assess their impact on readiness and operations, and determine options for managing them.

<sup>1</sup>Medical Readiness: Progress in Stating Manpower Needs (GAO/ NSIAD-87-126, Apr. 29, 1987).

<sup>2</sup>The term "total force" refers to the total military resources (active, guard, reserves, and retirees) available to address military occupational manpower needs.

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Occupational requirements and the way personnel resources are used differ in peacetime and wartime operations. In peacetime, for example, active duty personnel often work in positions requiring different occupational skills than the wartime positions they would fill. Consequently, both sets of occupational demands—peacetime and wartime—need to be accounted for and reconciled.

Total force resources offer a number of options to deal with occupational shortfalls and excesses. For example, Individual Ready Reserves and retired personnel can be used upon mobilization to fill shortfalls of personnel in both active force and reserve component units and to bring these units from peacetime to wartime authorization levels.<sup>3</sup>

Reconciling and analyzing occupational skills, in a total force format, for both peacetime and wartime operations could show (1) the services' capabilities to transition resources from one mode of operation to another and (2) the interactions among available military resources to meet those needs. The prerequisites for a reconciliation include complete, accurate, and comparable data on total force occupational requirements, authorizations, and inventories; and procedures for computing, analyzing, and documenting occupational shortfalls and excesses on a total force basis.

We found that the services' accounting and reporting systems and the occupational analyses currently performed do not provide the necessary visibility to monitor and manage occupational shortfalls and excesses on a total force basis. The services' central accounting systems appear capable of producing occupation-specific skill data for total military force requirements, authorizations, and inventories. However, the methodology for producing a total force reconciliation had not been developed.

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<sup>3</sup>The Individual Ready Reserves is comprised of individual reservists who are not required to train regularly or be members of reserve component units.

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## Information for Validating Occupational Skills Shortfalls Not Available

DOD does not reconcile the total military force by occupational specialties. Also, the services do not consolidate and analyze occupation-specific skill data for their total force requirements, authorizations, and inventories. The Army is refining a process to reconcile mobilization requirements and resources for all its military occupational specialties.

Occupational management is handled separately for the active and reserve forces. The services' current manpower and personnel management systems do not require any type of consolidated total force occupational analysis. Consequently, service managers expressed little interest in devoting time and resources to developing a methodology for identifying and reporting occupational skills shortfalls and excesses on a total force basis.

In our April 1987 report, we described our inability to collect comparable data from the individual services to analyze statements by DOD officials about DOD-wide shortfalls in medical specialties. Because of the Committee's continuing interest in medical manpower shortfalls, we requested the Secretary of Defense to provide the data used by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs to develop and support its September 1986 public statements about wartime medical specialty shortages. Although we received a 3-page fact sheet from the Health Affairs staff, the information needed to substantiate medical specialty shortages was not included.

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## Data Available for Reconciliation in Services' Systems

Although the services collect the raw data needed to perform total force reconciliation, several refinements would be necessary before the data could be used for this purpose. Total force reconciliation requires developing a common data collection and analysis format to report on total military occupational requirements and the application of total military resources—active, guard, reserves, and retirees—to meet peacetime needs and wartime operations. To assess the feasibility of getting the data for a total force reconciliation, we requested the services to provide occupation-specific skill data for fiscal year 1986 personnel requirements, authorizations, and inventories. The services' responses showed that this data can be drawn from various personnel databases. However, occupational data is not consistent and comparable across services. To perform a reconciliation and compute shortfalls and excesses would require many adjustments to the available data. In addition, procedures do not exist for comparing requirements, authorizations, and inventory data on an occupation-specific, total force basis.

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## Conclusions

For DOD to effectively manage its resources, it should have data and analysis available to monitor the inventory and application of military occupational skills on a total force basis. Management needs to be able to compare manpower needs and resources across and within the services to identify occupational shortfalls and excesses and alternatives for managing them, and to determine the most cost-effective use of resources to enhance military occupational readiness. The services' manpower and personnel management accounting and reporting systems do not currently provide service management with the data and analysis needed to do so.

However, all three services stated that they have the capability to provide occupation-specific total force data. This data could serve as the starting point for a total force reconciliation at the service level. To perform a reconciliation, occupation-specific skill data must be consistently defined and specific criteria and procedures have to be developed to properly match requirements, authorizations, and inventories for peacetime, mobilization, and wartime operations. In addition, other impediments to occupational reconciliation and analysis noted in appendix I need to be addressed.

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## Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense

- review the services' central manpower and personnel management accounting and reporting systems to determine what changes can be made to these systems so that total force occupational requirements and resources can be related, monitored, and reported;
- develop and implement policies and procedures for reconciling, analyzing, and reporting total military force needs and resources by occupation for peacetime, mobilization, and wartime operations;
- use the results of total force occupational reconciliation and analysis to review and monitor service recruiting, training and assignment plans, strength changes, and force readiness; and
- maintain documentation of total force reconciliations and analyses to support statements of shortfalls and excesses.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD generally agreed with most of our findings and recommendations, and provided additional information where it disagreed. We have revised the report, where appropriate, based on additional information provided.

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DOD acknowledged that its total force analysis capability can and should be improved. In a March 22, 1988, memorandum, the Secretary of Defense directed that the Office of the Secretary of Defense oversight of service manpower be expanded to include regular access to service requirements and authorization data files. According to DOD, the Office of the Secretary of Defense is holding meetings with senior-level service officials to identify the data required from the services to allow a comprehensive matching of inventory, authorizations, and requirements on a total force basis. In addition, DOD identified several multi-year service initiatives to upgrade their capability to perform total force occupational analyses.

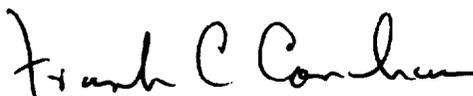
DOD agreed with our recommendations but objected to the level of Office of the Secretary of Defense management it believed we were recommending. DOD stated that it would continue to use macro total force data for its oversight with the services responsible for program execution. We did not mean to imply that the Office of the Secretary of Defense should micromanage individual service programs and have clarified our recommendations.

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Appendix I provides the detailed results of our work and discusses the need, benefits, and impediments to total force occupational analysis. Appendix II states our objectives, scope, and methodology. Appendix III contains DOD's comments.

As arranged with your Office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 5 days from the date of its issuance. At that time, we will send copies of this report to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, and Senate Committee on Armed Services; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of Defense, the Army, Navy, and Air Force; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General

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## Abbreviations

DOD Department of Defense  
WARMAPS Wartime Manpower Planning System



# Total Force Occupational Analysis: Need, Benefits, and Impediments

## Need for Total Force Occupational Analysis to Evaluate Shortfalls

Statements about military occupational shortfalls imply that an analysis of either personnel needs (requirements) or authorizations (approved positions) and personnel inventories by occupation has shown that there are not enough positions or personnel in a given occupation to satisfy either peacetime or wartime requirements. The DOD total force policy emphasizes the need to take full account of all available military resources and options for using them in an effort to attain the most cost-effective use of personnel resources.

Frequently, DOD and the services identify and discuss shortfalls in terms of individual units, force components (active, guard, and reserves), functions (medical, transportation, etc.), and occupations. These discussions do not consider the options for managing shortfalls using available military resources. For example:

- A unit in peacetime may report it is “short” on personnel needed for wartime operations. This statement does not take into account the service’s ability to move personnel from one location to another as needed. Before deploying, the unit may receive additional personnel resources from nondeploying units, thus eliminating the shortfall.
- In peacetime, requirements and resources are identified and managed by the individual components. However, in full mobilization, all components, including the Individual Ready Reserve and retirees, are integrated into one active duty force providing added capability to move personnel within and across components to minimize or eliminate shortfalls in any one component.
- DOD has reported large shortfalls in the medical area and in specific medical specialties for many years. Shortfalls in one functional area, if caused by too few authorizations, can sometimes be resolved by redistributing authorizations or resources among functional areas. Shortfalls in some occupational specialties could be filled by skill substitution through cross-training personnel in other specialties. For example, skill substitution with cross-training could enable an obstetrician to perform some of the work load of a general surgeon. To balance total force requirements, authorizations, and inventories, top-level management needs to have data providing visibility of conditions in all functional areas and occupations.

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## Benefits of Reconciliation

Periodic total force reconciliations could result in a number of benefits such as the following:

- Being able to evaluate total force requirements, authorizations, and inventories in the context of both peacetime and wartime operations. This capability could assist managers in developing plans for achieving a smooth, orderly, and effective transition from peacetime to wartime operations.
- Being able to assess individual, functional, and force component requests for manpower within the context of total force occupational needs.
- Providing manpower and personnel managers with occupation-specific information to use in developing and monitoring total force recruiting, training, assignment, and retention programs and policies.
- Being able to monitor whether total force resources have been or can be shifted among occupations, functions, components, or services to manage shortfalls or excesses.
- Being able to provide information to the Congress on the occupational skill status of the total military force.
- Establishing an audit trail for validating shortfalls and excesses.

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## Systemic Problems Hamper Total Force Analysis and Identification of Occupational Shortfalls

Developing the technical and analytical capability for total force reconciliation is not a simple undertaking. The services use many different databases and processes to develop and record requirements, authorizations, and inventory information for the hundreds of different military occupations. Coding of occupational information is not standard across the services. Without consistent data sources, standard coding, and rules for reconciliation, there can be no clear understanding of what a shortfall calculation represents.

Lack of integration in military manpower and personnel management systems is a major impediment to producing a total force reconciliation. Force planning and management information are dispersed among many different components (active, guard, and reserves), functional and operating groups (combat, logistics, manpower, personnel, etc.), and headquarters management activities (requirements determination, program development, budgeting, etc.). Management information is collected and maintained at the unit, command, and headquarters levels to satisfy particular organizational needs. The result is inconsistent data and differences among systems that require an inordinate amount of time and effort to reconcile.

DOD uses an analytic framework, the Wartime Manpower Mobilization Planning System (WARMAPS), to estimate its wartime manpower requirements, the supply, and the shortfalls. The WARMAPS database, however, is not the source used by the services to identify and analyze shortfall or excess conditions in individual occupations, or to evaluate alternatives for correcting these conditions. The DOD WARMAPS data system provides information by broad categories of skills (such as pilots, electronics technicians, and medical corps), but not by individual occupations within the board skill categories.

As noted in our 1984 report on mobilization planning data, the problem created by combining many occupations into a few categories is that it causes an appearance of excesses in some occupations to offset an appearance of shortfalls in others.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, although calculations of cumulative balances may be useful for managing the authorized strength during peacetime, they mask occupational shortfalls that would need to be filled in wartime.

In reviewing a draft of this report, DOD officials pointed out that the Air Force data systems and procedures provide for reconciliation of Air Force peacetime and wartime needs and resources. Although the Air Force database supporting WARMAPS contains information at the individual occupational level of detail, the Air Force only provides DOD information on board categories of skills.

The services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense have various projects underway to link requirements, authorizations, and inventory data for analysis. For example, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs is evaluating the occupational skill level match between wartime requirements, peacetime authorizations, and on-board inventories in reserve medical units. The Navy has long-range plans for linking personnel requirements, authorizations, and inventory databases. The Army has developed a mobilization-planning model called the "1322 Reporting System" that provides a limited capability to compare total Army requirements with total available assets (active, guard, reserves, and retirees) for each military occupational skill. The Army is currently developing a new mobilization evaluation system called MOBMAN that it expects will significantly improve the Army's ability to identify and resolve occupational shortfalls.

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<sup>1</sup>Better Use of Available Data Would Improve Mobilization Planning For Inductees (GAO/NSIAD-85-11, Oct. 22, 1984).

Other impediments hamper computation and validation of occupational shortfalls:

- Navy requirements, authorizations, and inventory data are not coded consistently across these three data categories, making reconciliations difficult, if not impossible. Also, the Navy assigns broad skill management codes to many officer billets and some enlisted authorizations. These officer generic designations and enlisted generic ratings, as they are called, provide the Navy maximum flexibility in managing assignments and provide officers and enlisted personnel with increased opportunities for billet selection. However, this practice creates a significant obstacle to computing occupation-specific shortfalls.

In its comments on a draft of this report, DOD stated that the Navy is taking steps to better standardize data element definitions and to more precisely define manpower skills by using subspecialty codes and additional qualification designations.

We believe the Navy's efforts to better define data elements and subspecialty codes should improve oversight of occupation-specific shortfalls.

- The relationships between terms (such as peacetime operations, wartime requirements, authorizations, available assets, etc.) and actual management accounting data are difficult to establish. We asked the services to provide us data showing occupation-specific peacetime and wartime requirements, authorizations, and inventories. We could not use this data to compute occupational shortfalls in any service because criteria or procedures to reconcile peacetime and wartime needs and resources were not available.

In one occupation, for example, the reported peacetime requirements and authorizations were 400 and 322 positions, respectively. The wartime requirement was 20 positions, indicating a minimal wartime need for this skill. However, without criteria for relating wartime and peacetime needs and resources, it was unclear whether the "excess" peacetime resources could be used effectively to fill other wartime shortfalls.

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# Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

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Our analysis was designed to identify the data available for occupational analysis in the services' central manpower and personnel accounting systems, and the capabilities and impediments to assembling this data in a meaningful form for management review of total military force shortfalls and excesses. We worked with the Army, Navy, and Air Force systems.

We focused on determining whether documentation exists or could be produced to validate excesses and shortfalls in occupational specialties for the total military force. The documentation could have consisted of either (1) a single DOD or service document or report showing a reconciliation that could be validated or (2) procedures or criteria for reconciliation or determination of shortfalls and excesses, coupled with available data from the central accounting systems which could be put together in a format for reconciliation.

We reviewed the services' manpower accounting directives to get an understanding of what the data contained in the various management accounting and reporting systems represents. We obtained occupational specialties data from the management accounting databases. We discussed manpower management accounting and reporting practices with the services' manpower officials. We also examined some DOD management reports to see if they provide sufficient occupational data to reconcile manpower needs and personnel inventories. We also attempted to validate the data and analysis used by DOD officials to develop and support statements about medical specialty shortages.

We conducted our work from August 1986 through December 1987 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

# Comments From the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel



FORCE MANAGEMENT  
AND PERSONNEL

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

11 May 1988

Mr. Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General  
National Security and  
International Affairs Division  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report entitled, "MILITARY MANPOWER: Problems in Accounting for Occupational Shortfalls," dated February 24, 1988 (GAO Code 391050/OSD Case 7544).

The Department agrees in part with the report findings and recommendations. The DoD recognizes that its total force analysis capability can and should be improved. In a recent memorandum, the Secretary of Defense directed the OSD staff to expand its oversight of Service military and civilian manpower to include regular access to Service requirements and authorization data files. In addition, each Service is in the process of upgrading its capability to perform Service specific total force occupational analysis.

The OSD will set a level of detail appropriate for its strengthened oversight role; it will not, however, necessarily be at the identical level of detail required for day-to-day management in the Services. As discussed in the enclosed comments, the proposed changes should be cost effective and not restrict the Services' ability to effectively manage manpower and personnel processes and systems to meet Service unique requirements.

The findings and recommendations are addressed in greater detail in the enclosure. The DoD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,

Grant S. Green

Enclosure:  
As stated

Appendix III  
Comments From the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for Force Management and  
Personnel

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED FEBRUARY 24, 1988  
(GAO CODE 391050) OSD CASE 7544

ON

"MILITARY MANPOWER: PROBLEMS IN  
ACCOUNTING FOR OCCUPATIONAL SHORTFALLS"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

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FINDINGS

**FINDING A: Need For Total Force Occupational Analysis.** The GAO reported that reconciling and analyzing occupational skills in a total force format, for both peacetime and war-time operations, could show the capabilities of the Services to transition resources from one mode of operation to another and the interaction among available resources to meet those needs. The GAO pointed out that the DoD total force policy emphasizes the need to take full account of all available resources and options for using them to attain the most cost-effective mix. According to the GAO, the DoD frequently identifies and discusses shortfalls in terms of individual units, force components, functions, or occupations. The GAO found, however, that these discussions do not consider the options for managing shortfalls using available Service resources, and cited several examples. The GAO pointed out that periodic total force reconciliations could result in a number of benefits. The GAO concluded, however, that in order to perform such reconciliations, complete, accurate and comparable data are needed on total force occupational requirements, authorizations and inventories. The GAO concluded that procedures for computing, analyzing and documenting occupational shortfalls and overages, on a total force basis, are also needed to enable total force reconciliations. (p. 3, pp. 10-12/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Concur. The DoD agrees that it is desirable the DoD have the capability to perform total force analysis. The DoD has built a comprehensive capability to look at current and historical personnel assignments on a total force basis, but has not linked this data resource with information on authorizations and requirements. Recent developments within the DoD will require that this capability be developed. In a memorandum dated March 22, 1988, the Secretary of Defense directed the OSD to expand its role in the oversight of Service manpower, and to be granted access to billet level authorization and requirements data. The combination of requirements and authorizations data files, with the inventory files maintained at the Defense Manpower Data Center, in the future will allow the DoD in cooperation with the

Now on pp. 2, 8.

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Services, to perform the types of analyses envisioned by the GAO. At present, this effort is now in the planning stages, although briefings with senior level Service officials are in progress. The exact level of data detail required by the OSD for total force analysis has not been defined. As discussed in the DoD response to Recommendation 1, proposed changes should be cost effective and should be appropriate to the strengthened OSD oversight role. Further the changes should not restrict the Services' ability to effectively manage manpower and personnel processes and systems to meet Service unique requirements.

Currently, there are several Service initiatives to improve total force analysis. The Army is upgrading its reserve component system to provide by September 1988 the same detailed MOS (Branch and Grade) information as the active component system. These systems assist the Army in monitoring each grade for each particular skill. The Active Army has a series of force alignment programs that are designed to reduce imbalances through a combination of integrated personnel management and planning programs. Current peacetime personnel management focuses on component specific skill/grade imbalances. The capability to cross-level between components exists, at present, only after mobilization.

The Army decision support system, FORECAST, contains an Enlisted System, which is undergoing a multi-year upgrade to determine total force occupational shortages and overages during mobilization. Specifically, this upgrade would provide mobilization planners the mobilization modeling capability to perform a roll-up analysis (requirements and assets) from unit level to Total Army (active and reserve components). This would allow the identification of trends and concentration of shortages and overages.

Navy long range efforts to integrate military requirements, authorizations and personnel data bases include the following projects:

- Total Force Manpower Management System (TFMMS) with initial implementation scheduled in FY 1990. Operational implementation of full capability is scheduled for FY 1993.

- Integrated Military Personnel Data Base (IMPDB) with initial implementation scheduled for FY 1992. Full operational implementation is scheduled for FY 1995.

The Air Force has developed data systems that satisfy Air Force internal total force planning needs using Air Force specific detailed occupational skill data. Through

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conversion programs, these detailed data are translated into DoD occupational codes.

**FINDING B: Available Force Planning and Management Information Hampers Total Force Analysis.** The GAO found that the Services use many different data bases and processes to develop total force information, and there is no standard coding system. The GAO concluded that, as a result, there can be no clear understanding of what a shortfall calculation represents. The GAO also found that force planning and management information are dispersed among different components, functional and operating groups, and headquarters management activities. According to the GAO, management information is collected and maintained at the various organizational levels, resulting in inconsistent data. The GAO reported that the DoD uses an analytic framework known as the Wartime Manpower Planning System (WARMAPS) to estimate wartime military manpower requirements and shortfalls. The GAO pointed out, however, that the WARMAPS data base is not used by the Services to evaluate their needs, since WARMAPS provides information by broad categories of skills, not individual occupations. The GAO acknowledged that the OSD and the Services have various projects underway to link requirements, authorizations and inventory data for analysis. Of those identified, however, the GAO concluded that only the Army 1322 Reporting System, which compares total Army requirements with total available assets for each occupational skill, is likely to provide a structured process for reconciliation and analysis. Overall, the GAO concluded that the lack of integration in military manpower and personnel management systems is a major impediment to total force reconciliation. (pp.3-4, pp. 13-15/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 3, 9-10.

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. Lack of integration is a problem, and an impediment to total force reconciliation at the DoD and Service levels. The unique requirements of the individual Services, the prior investments to achieve existing systems, and other competing priorities, however, suggest that the movement to this sort of system must be evolutionary, rather than revolutionary. An example of unique Service requirements is the Navy Machinist Mate rating for performing mechanical repairs to propulsion machinery. A similar, but not identical function is performed by an Army Tank Mechanic. To classify these two individuals in a generic occupational category of mechanic, invites the assumption that these individuals can be substituted for one another. This is obviously untrue, and demonstrates the necessity for retaining occupational skill definition to Service unique levels. A standardized DoD occupational data system must permit the occupational specificity required for Service unique skills to ensure that the supply/demand of a particular skill can be accurately analyzed. Aggregation on

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the scale inferred in the report will be useful for certain purposes in the OSD, but it must also retain necessary detail to enable day-to-day Service management of individual occupations.

The Army 1322, which the GAO cited as a model for reconciliation and analysis, provides limited analysis of mobilization assets at the occupational level. While this system has some capability, it is not sufficiently efficient nor detailed to meet the Army requirements. To improve this condition, in the summer of 1988 a new Army mobilization evaluation system, MOBMAN, will be tested and evaluated on the FORECAST system. This model will significantly improve the Army's ability to identify and resolve occupational shortages in a mobilization environment in both the active and reserve components at the MOS/Grade level of detail. As discussed in the DoD response to Finding A, the Navy also is working toward integrating its data bases for military requirements, authorizations, and personnel.

The DoD does not agree that lack of formal integration in military manpower and personnel management systems is an impediment to total force reconciliation for the Air Force. The Air Force data bases that support the Wartime Mobilization Manpower Planning System (WARMAPS) submission to the OSD provide data to occupational detail and are maintained by the Air Force Wartime Manpower and Personnel Readiness Team. While the data is gathered from manpower, personnel, guard, reserve, and retiree data bases, it can be and is, periodically reconciled at occupational detail level. This data is then provided to functional managers for their management attention.

**FINDING C: Other Impediments To Computation and Validation of Occupational Shortfalls.** The GAO cited several additional impediments to total force analyses. The GAO reported, for example, that Navy requirements, authorizations and inventory data are not coded consistently, making reconciliations difficult. In addition, the GAO noted that the Navy assigns broad skill management codes to many officer billets and some enlisted authorizations. According to the GAO, this practice provides the Navy maximum flexibility in managing assignments and providing personnel selection opportunities, but it makes computing occupation-specific shortfalls impossible. As another example, the GAO found that the relationships between terms (such as peacetime operations, wartime requirements, etc.) and actual management accounting data are difficult to establish. The GAO asserts that the data provided by the Services to show occupation-specific peacetime and wartime requirements, authorizations and inventories could not be used to compute occupational shortfalls in any Service because criteria or procedures to reconcile peacetime and wartime

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Now on pp. 3-4, 11.

needs and resources were not available. The GAO acknowledged that all three Services indicated the capability to provide such total force occupation specific data. The GAO concluded, however, that to perform a total force reconciliation such data must be consistently defined and procedures developed to match requirements, authorizations and inventories. (pp. 5-6, pp. 15-16/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. The DoD agrees that total force reconciliation requires consistent definitions and procedures to match requirements, authorizations and inventories. While there are some inconsistencies in trying to compare across Service occupational skills, the Services can complete an occupational-level analysis within individual Service specialties. Improvements to information systems discussed under the DoD Responses to Findings A and B should improve the Total Force reconciliation capability of the DoD.

The DoD does not agree, however, that the Navy system for assigning broad skill codes to officers and enlisted billets makes computing occupation-specific shortfalls impossible. Exactly the opposite is true. From the Navy standpoint, the broad skill management codes enable a more precise computation of occupation specific shortfalls. Unrestricted Line (URL) Officers are one example. These officers are capable of being used in a wide variety of assignments that may or may not require the use of their particular warfare specialty. Assignment of a broad skill management code of "URL" eliminates that billet from being incorrectly analyzed for the more specific skill of "pilot" or the even more specific skill of "F-14 pilot." The Navy is taking steps to better standardize data element definitions and to more precisely define manpower skills utilizing subspecialty codes and additional qualification designations.

It should also be recognized that the Air Force data systems and procedures do provide for valid reconciliation of Air Force peacetime and wartime needs and resources.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense review the Services' central manpower and personnel management accounting and reporting systems to determine what changes can be made to these systems so that total force occupational requirements and resources can be related, monitored, and reported (p. 6/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 4.

**DoD Response:** Concur. In a March 22, 1988, memorandum the Secretary of Defense directed the OSD staff to "significantly expand and improve its oversight of Service manpower." As

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part of this effort the OSD will determine what types of data are needed from Service central manpower and personnel management accounting and reporting systems to improve the relating, monitoring, and reporting of total force requirements. Meetings with senior level Service officials are in progress as a prelude to developing milestones for this effort. Proposed changes should be cost effective and should be appropriate to the strengthened OSD oversight role. They should not, however, restrict the Services' ability to effectively manage manpower and personnel processes and systems and to meet Service unique requirements.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense develop and implement policies and procedures for reconciling, analyzing and reporting total military force needs and resources by occupation for peacetime, mobilization and wartime operations. (p.7/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 4.

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. While the DoD agrees that it should develop an improved capability to perform total force analysis and understand total force requirements, the level of detail required for this should be determined by the OSD. As mentioned in the DoD response to Recommendation 1, consideration will be given to the cost effectiveness of any required changes and the Services' unique manpower and personnel management requirements. The OSD has taken the first steps to identify data requirements that will allow a comprehensive matching of inventory, authorizations and requirements on a total force basis. Significant progress is expected over the next year in building a total force analysis capability.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense use the results of total force occupational reconciliation and analysis to develop, support, and monitor, recruiting, training and assignment plans, strength changes, and force readiness. (p. 7/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 4.

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. While the DoD agrees that management improvements are necessary, it does not agree with the level of OSD management indicated by the GAO. The DoD will continue to use "macro" total force data for oversight and resource allocation decisions, and the data resulting from the system improvements will enhance this effort. The individual Services are responsible for execution of those resourced programs as they relate to recruiting, training and assignment plans, strength changes and force readiness.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense maintain documentation of total force reconciliations and analyses to support statements of shortfalls. (p. 7/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 4.

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**Appendix III  
Comments From the Assistant Secretary of  
Defense for Force Management and  
Personnel**

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**DOD Response:** Concur. In conjunction with other actions recently directed by the Secretary of Defense, the OSD will determine what documentation is required at the Departmental level to provide proper oversight of Service programs and maintain that which is necessary for its strengthened oversight role.

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