

## DOCUMENT RESUME

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[Management Improvements Needed in the Military Affiliate Radio System]. LCD-77-119; B-144236. August 23, 1977. 3 pp.

Report to Secretary, Department of Defense; by Fred J. Shafer, Director, Logistics and Communications Div.

Issue Area: Military Preparedness Plans: Military Communications and Information Processing Needs (803).

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Military (except procurement & contracts) (C51).

Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Although the Department of Defense (DOD) rejected 1975 recommendations regarding the management of the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS), a limited follow-up effort indicates that the Secretary of Defense may wish to reconsider those recommendations. Findings/Conclusions: Although the DOD Director, Telecommunications and Command and Control Systems (DTACCS), stated that an ad hoc working group would be organized to study the single manager concept and the use of appropriated funds for MARS, the committee was never formed. Instead, the Director considered written comments furnished by the military departments, historical MARS information, and information obtained in telephone discussions with military personnel concerning their respective MARS programs before reaching any conclusions. DTACCS concluded that MARS should continue as a duly constituted entity within each military department and that there was a continuing need for the 183 military owned and operated MARS stations. Recommendations: The Secretary of Defense should reconsider the recommendations, made originally in September 1975, that the feasibility and economy of establishing a single manager concept within DOD for MARS be studied. If appropriate, the results of such a study should be implemented and the MARS stations operated and funded by military commands should be reviewed to determine the need for these MARS stations in view of the other communications and related features available. The need for these MARS stations should be evaluated in relation to the operating costs incurred by the Government, and, where appropriate, appropriated funding of such stations should be eliminated. (SC)



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

03082

LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS  
DIVISION

B-144239

AUG 23 1977

The Honorable  
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We wish to bring to your attention various issues concerning the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) for further consideration. Our letter report (LCD-76-103), dated September 24, 1975, to your predecessor recommended that the Department of Defense (DOD) study the feasibility and economy of establishing a single manager concept within DOD for MARS and review the MARS stations operated and funded under DOD with a view toward eliminating appropriations for unnecessary stations. Although DOD rejected these recommendations, our limited follow-up effort under assignment code 94110 indicates that you may wish to further consider these recommendations.

Specifically, our letter report recommended that the Secretary:

- study the feasibility and economy of establishing a single manager concept within DOD for MARS and, if appropriate, implement the results of the study and
- review the MARS stations operated and funded by military commands to (1) determine the need for these MARS stations in view of the other communications and related features available, (2) evaluate the need for these MARS stations in relation to the operating costs incurred by the Government, and (3) where appropriate, eliminate appropriated funding of such stations.

During October 1975 the military departments and the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency (DCPA) furnished comments on our report to the Director, Telecommunications and Command and Control Systems (DTACCS)--subsequently this organization became part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Communications, Command and Control and Intelligence). All three military departments basically agreed with our recommendations for a study and a review and DCPA stated that it could not foresee any problem if the single manager concept was implemented.

DTACCS' December 1975 response to our report agreed with our recommendations and stated that an ad hoc working group would be organized to study the single manager concept and the use of appropriated funds for MARS.

In a letter dated February 19, 1976, DTACCS requested the military departments' views on whether or not changes in the management, mission, and/or functions of MARS would provide cost-effective improvements. The letter also advised the departments that their findings and recommendations would be reviewed by a DOD ad hoc working group for the purpose of establishing a DOD policy and recommending appropriate action, if necessary.

The Navy and Air Force responses to DTACCS agreed with our recommendation to study the establishment of a single manager within DOD for MARS. The Air Force even included an outline of an approach to such single managership, including a listing of potential departmental management areas for consolidation, for consideration by DOD's ad hoc working group. However, without presenting any evidence that a study was performed, the Army expressed a position against establishing a single manager at the DOD level because it would cause an increase in personnel--estimated to be five positions at the DOD level with the retention of or increase in the existing Army's staffing--and management costs.

The Air Force and Navy responses agreed with our recommendation for reviewing the need for MARS stations operated and funded by military commands. Also, the Air Force stated that it was conducting a review of MARS resources (personnel and equipment). Conversely, the Army's response was directed toward the missions, functions or roles of such stations and did not expressly state whether such a review should be performed.

A DTACCS official stated that the DOD ad hoc working group was never formed because the MARS costs of approximately \$4 million did not justify such actions. Instead, he considered written comments furnished by the military departments, historical MARS information and information obtained in telephone discussions with military personnel concerning their respective MARS programs before reaching any conclusions. DTACCS concluded in its August 9, 1976, letter to GAO that MARS should continue as a duly constituted entity within each military department. Also, DTACCS believed that there was a continuing need for the 183 military owned and operated MARS stations.

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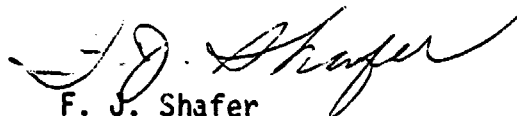
In our opinion, DOD's review methods or techniques described above do not appear to represent an independent evaluation or to adequately consider our letter report conclusions and recommendations. We also wish to point out that although DTACCS concluded that there was a need for the existing MARS stations, the Air Force did, in fact, realign its stations in 1977. The net result of this realignment was a net reduction of 61 authorized personnel positions for MARS. Thus, we believe that our recommendations should be reconsidered.

If you have any questions regarding these matters, we would be happy to meet with you or your staff.

As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report. We would appreciate receiving copies of these statements.

We are sending copies of this report to the House Committee on Appropriations; Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense; House Committee on Government Operations; Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs; House Committee on Armed Services and its Subcommittee on Investigations; and the Senate Committee on Armed Services. We are sending copies also to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force; and the Director, Defense Civil Preparedness Agency.

Sincerely yours,

  
F. J. Shafer  
Director