

ACQUISITION AND SOURCING MANAGEMENT

More than 200 billion tax dollars are spent each year on buying sophisticated weaponry, complex space and satellite systems, advanced technologies, and a broad range of goods and services needed to make the federal government run. This sum comprises the largest element of discretionary funding in the federal budget. Analysts for the Acquisition and Sourcing Management (ASM) team help Congress determine whether this money is being spent efficiently and effectively and if acquisitions maximize agencies' ability to meet their mission objectives. We also assist the federal government to adopt better ways of buying systems, equipment, and services. In the face of global economic pressures, we identify trends in national security industries and weaknesses in protecting critical capabilities and technologies.

Our Work

Our oversight responsibilities primarily include the Department of Defense (DOD) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) because they invest most heavily in acquisitions. Additional work with agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State examine opportunities for bringing about government wide improvements, particularly for such things as new contracting approaches, strengthening the acquisition workforce, and analyzing the defense industrial base.

We conduct our work for Congress with the aim of

- improving the government's ability to acquire sophisticated weaponry, space systems, and other goods and services;
- minimizing contracting risks faced by government agencies;
- improving DOD's access to efficient suppliers with technologically superior products; and
- enhancing the efficiency of government operations.

Our work also has an international focus. For example, we examine foreign military sales improvement efforts, foreign acquisitions affecting national security, export control proposals, and international alliances among DOD contractors.

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Accomplishments and Key Projects

Our work consistently results in billions of dollars in savings and improved business operations.

Our recent accomplishments include

- providing information to Congress that resulted in the reduction of the production rate of the Marine Corps' V-22 aircraft, saving the government about \$727 million;
- reporting on the Department of Homeland Security's pilot program to use innovative R&D and prototype acquisition methods to acquire cutting-edge technologies to help protect the nation against terrorism;
- improving the process by which DOD awards and oversees contracts to rebuild Iraq;
- ensuring that the Secretary of Defense approves adequate funding to develop combat identification systems that can improve the military's ability to prevent friendly fire;
- influencing the Department of Homeland Security efforts to develop Counter Man-Portable Air Defense System technology to protect commercial aircraft from surface-to-air missile attacks;
- prompting NASA to take steps to ensure that the decisions it makes for future space travel are made in concert with plans for the space station and the space shuttle; and
- recommending improvements in the State Department's licensing of defense goods and services.

Currently, we are working to

- ensure efficient acquisition of major weapon systems, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, the Future Combat System, and a variety of ballistic missile defense programs;
- evaluate NASA's efforts to address major management challenges, such as issues related to the space shuttle workforce, the International Space Station, and the President's vision for space exploration;
- identify conditions that undermine efforts to improve the export control process and mitigate the risk of sensitive military items or technology falling into the wrong hands; and
- identify ways to improve federal contracting - including adopting commercial best practices, improving business relationships, and evaluating competitive sourcing issues.