

Other current concerns we have involve the adequacy of test resources, the effectiveness of joint operational test and evaluation, and the use of test and evaluation data by decision-makers. We have also been concerned with the emphasis being given in testing to reliability, availability and maintainability considerations. Progress has been slow in these areas.

Historically, GAO has supported the use of independent test and evaluation activities. The independent test and evaluation organizations established in each Service during the early 1970s have done creditable work. They should function well in the future if sufficient resources and time is allocated for operational testing. We feel that the need for a new independent Office of Operational Testing at the Secretary's level has yet to be proven and that the many arguments both for and against such an office need to be explored. At this time we feel that there are many obstacles to it becoming law and believe it may be more fruitful to strengthen and enhance the quality of operational test and evaluation planning, conduct, and reporting performed by the existing independent test organizations.