

QUESTION: Do you think the JCS needs to be reorganized and given more authority to help control the power of and the conflicts between the Services?

GAO RESPONSE: The consensus among many knowledgeable observers of defense affairs is that JCS reforms are needed, mainly to improve the quality of military advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense and to strengthen the role of the JCS (or a similar high level entity) in interservice matters.

Many suggestions have been made about changes in JCS functions, powers and organization. We are currently reviewing joint system acquisition by the services and our preliminary findings indicate that such acquisitions would be more successful if there were a supra-service military umpire or military "court of appeals" to settle joint requirements disputes. This could be a role for the JCS.

Conspicuous support of joint acquisitions and interservice buying of finished products by such a high military authority would be a plus also.