

QUESTION: Does DOD have a single mission area structure for managing resources and reducing overlapping or conflicting service roles and programs? Should it in your opinion?

GAO RESPONSE: An unequivocal response to this question is extremely difficult. That is, we believe that mission area management is the logical approach to managing resources. As such, we believe that a single mission area structure, or at least the ability to tie numerous mission structures into one structure, should exist. This structure would provide the framework under which all DOD activities and programs would fall, defense objectives would be defined, issues addressed, and programs assessed throughout DOD. The Secretary of Defense has told us that DOD does in fact have a single mission area structure, namely the Five Year Defense Plan (FYDP). Thus, on the surface the answer to each of your questions appears to be an unequivocal yes. However, as discussed in detail below, there are a lot of other factors which, when taken into consideration, tend to cloud the DOD's claim to the existence of a single mission area structure.

As stated previously, the General Accounting Office supports the mission area management concept. We also support the use of mission area analyses as part of mission area management because these analyses provide decisionmakers with information that is essential to the resource allocation process. Our support for this concept has been based on and endorsed by the Commission on Government Procurement in 1972, the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974, OMB Circular A-109 in 1976, a GAO Report in 1977 on Mission Budgeting (PSAD-77-124, July 27, 1977) and by internal DOD studies.