

Although some of these variances are quite minimal, the existence of these different structures appears, in our opinion, to inhibit making consistent and complementary decisions concerning mission area capability needs and resource requirements. This would be especially true for areas that cross individual service responsibilities. This could be critical to the effective, efficient, and economical management of defense resources. It, therefore, seemed to us that sound financial management dictates the need for a standard mission structure within the DOD.

Consequently, on October 21, 1982, we sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense requesting that he provide us the DOD position on the need for a standard mission structure. In his January 5, 1983, response, the Secretary acknowledged the existence of the numerous mission area structures but described them as the unique way that the various DOD staff has broken down FYDP data for management purposes. He stated that, contrary to our impressions, DOD does in fact have a standard mission area structure for managing its resources. That structure is the Five Year Defense Plan. The Secretary said that the FYDP is the heart of DOD's Planning, Programming and Budgeting System, is mission-oriented, and continues to satisfactorily serve DOD's needs.

It is interesting to note, however, that during the same timeframe that the Secretary's January 5, 1983, response was being prepared and transmitted to us, the OSD Comptroller has contracted to define a standard set of missions for use through DOD. That effort would seem to contradict the Secretary's response to us.

In summary, based on our years of work in reviewing DOD programs, we have come to appreciate the usefulness of a single mission area structure for managing DOD resources. However, we have some problems accepting the Secretary's position that the FYDP constitutes such a structure. We know for example that the various DOD components do not analyze missions by the FYDP categories. The FYDP, in our view, is merely a display or record of decisions already made as a result of all the other analyses, military judgements, congressional impositions, etc., which come into play at various times throughout the entire PPBS.