

idea is attractive but joint major system programs have been extremely difficult to carry out.

What the Congress and Defense Secretaries have wanted in ordering program mergers, we believe, is substantial commonality in fielded systems, reasonably satisfied participating services, and real visible savings.

Some successes in standardizing on component parts and in interservice buying of finished systems have been made. Notably, the Air Force was directed to buy the Navy's F-4 aircraft and the Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles, and these procurements worked out well. But our review of joint acquisitions, that is, joint development and procurement, has indicated no successes so far. Most eventually split up into single-service programs. There is no penalty if a service elects to drop out of a partnership.

The findings of our review, now nearly complete, parallel those mentioned in your letter to the Comptroller General. Some mergers have been ill-timed, or in retrospect, ill-chosen. The services are wary of joint ventures and their outcomes and are reluctant to participate. There are basic interservice differences which are difficult to overcome.