

Congressional micro-management has become pervasive. Last year, congressionally mandated studies and reports from DoD grew to 458, which is a 12-fold increase since 1970. Congress adjusted over 1,800 separate programs in the Defense Department budget request last year. This micro-management exacerbates the inherent management problems already existing within DoD and has served to trivialize the Congress' true responsibilities. The Congress spends more time worrying about trivia than about fundamental defense issues and policies.

*Focus on inputs, not outputs*

The Congress has become preoccupied with trivia because of its shortsighted focus on accounting inputs rather than on defense outputs. Both DoD and the Congress are approaching the defense program with an accountant's mentality, viewing the budget as thousands of individual debit and credit entries. Central policy initiatives get lost in the maze of minor budget details. Real growth instead of real defense has become the hallmark of the defense debate.

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Recognizing these fundamental problems, the Committee established three fundamental goals for congressional reform:

Disengage from patterns of micro-management and restore a focus on strategic policy and direction;

Shift the focus of congressional oversight away from resource inputs to mission outputs; and

Reinforce joint perspectives in defense programs and policies and discourage single-Service perspectives.

Congressional reform cannot, however, be readily legislated. Fundamental reform depends on a shift in perspective and a realignment of the process which will take time. However, steps can be taken to help introduce underlying changes. The Committee took the following concrete steps to start implementation of the goals that it established:

(1) Last spring the Congress approved the legislative provision recommended by the Committee to begin biennial budgeting for the Department of Defense, starting with the fiscal years 1988-1989 biennium. This change promises to be one of the most far-reaching reforms considered. It will bring needed stability to defense acquisition programs, limit the time required by DoD to plan and prepare defense budget submissions, and shift the focus away from annual budget details and toward broader policy issues.

(2) The Committee has significantly revised its approach to hearings. The new approach emphasizes hearings on joint operations and missions, highlights mission outputs, and seeks to minimize demands on senior Defense Department personnel. This shift in emphasis began in 1981 with the restructuring of the Committee's subcommittees along mission lines. New committee policies have strengthened this shift.

(3) Recognizing the need for fundamental realignment in the Senate, the Committee has petitioned the Senate leadership to create a task force of the defense oversight committees and sub-