



Reports Issued in February 1988

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National Defense

Aircraft Development: The Advanced Tactical Fighter's Costs, Schedule, and Performance Goals

GAO/NSIAD-88-76, Jan. 13.

The Advanced Tactical Fighter is being developed as a follow-on to the F-15 and as the Air Force's next generation air superiority fighter. It is expected to incorporate new technologies and expanded capabilities, including supersonic cruise, more maneuverability, shorter take-off and landing distances, longer range, low detectability, and greatly improved reliability and maintainability. It is also expected to provide much of the capability for detecting, identifying, and engaging the enemy at ranges beyond the pilot's vision. The Air Force plans to buy 750 ATFs at a total estimated cost of \$64.3 billion in then-year dollars and also plans to achieve an initial operational capability in the mid-1990s.

Procurement Budget: Defense Contract Provisions Affecting Congressional Controllability

GAO/NSIAD-88-110BR, Feb. 12.

Congress has raised concern that Department of Defense contractual provisions may have the effect of limiting its control of DOD's procurement budget. Specifically, in a constrained budget environment, some programs might be virtually exempt from budget reductions because of the nature of the firm fixed-price contracts used. Results of GAO's study do not indicate a need for congressional approval or reporting systems. Although GAO identified contract provisions which could reduce congressional controllability of the DOD procurement budget, it did not identify significant dollar amounts relating to these provisions. DOD and military service officials generally objected to the idea of approval or reporting systems, saying that would be burdensome and not cost effective.

Air Force Budget: Potential for Reducing Requirements and Funding for Aircraft Spares

Acc. No. 135068 (GAO/NSIAD-88-90BR), Feb. 18.

GAO identified potential reductions of \$1,226.9 million in the Air Force's funding for peacetime operating stocks of aircraft replenishment spares. GAO also pointed out that the Air Force's FY 1988 updated procurement requirements for aircraft replenishment spares were \$1,643.2 million less than the budgeted requirements on which its funding request was based. The Air Force was experiencing substantial shortfalls in obligating prior years' funding appropriated for the procurement of aircraft replenishment spares.

**Contract Pricing:
Defense Contractor Cost
Estimating Systems**

GAO/NSIAD-88-7, Jan. 5.

Some contractor estimating systems are not consistently producing accurate and reliable data for negotiating noncompetitive contract prices. In some cases, contract prices are higher than warranted because estimating weaknesses are not identified and considered during negotiations. In reviewing how contractors developed estimates for labor and other direct costs totaling \$885 million in 35 prime contract proposals, GAO found that some contractors did not have written procedures to follow and some failed to adequately document the methods and supporting data used.

**Contract Pricing:
Material Prices Overstated
on Tank Thermal Sights**

GAO/NSIAD-88-54, Feb. 5. Acc. No. 134962.

The U.S. Army Armament Munitions and Chemical Command in Rock Island, Illinois, awarded a multiyear contract to Texas Instruments, Inc., for a 5-year production of tank thermal sights. The Army negotiators did not always correctly use Texas Instruments' cost and pricing data. Consequently, the contract price was overstated by about \$6.1 million.

**Electronic Warfare:
Multiple Developments of
Costly Threat Simulators**

Acc. No. 134939 (GAO/NSIAD-88-93), Feb. 1.

The Army, Air Force, and Navy are paying contractors for multiple developments of simulators for the same threat rather than developing a simulator for a particular threat once and producing it in sufficient quantities to meet their needs. Substantial costs could be avoided by strengthening DOD controls to prevent the multiple developments but the services believe that their separate developments are justified because the simulators are of different designs and were acquired at different times to meet their unique requirements. Simulators which significantly misrepresent threat systems are being used to test the effectiveness of U.S. weapons and to train pilots in how to combat hostile systems. The potential consequences in combat could be serious.

**Battlefield Automation:
Better Justification and
Testing Needed for
Common Computer
Acquisition**

GAO/IMTEC-88-12, Dec. 31.

Since 1976, the Army has initiated several programs addressing battlefield automation and communication problems and unfulfilled needs. But it has not established that its approach for acquiring common hardware and software for battlefield systems is sound and economical. For

instance, Army (1) has not performed a cost and operational effectiveness analysis and (2) plans to buy production quantities before fully testing them. Two studies have questioned the economy, risk, and effectiveness of the common acquisition; one of them concluded that the acquisition strategy had a high degree of risk. Better justification and testing are needed for its computer acquisition.

**DOD Simulations:
Improved Assessment
Procedures Would Increase
the Credibility of Results**

GAO/PEMD-88-3, Dec. 29.

Computer models to simulate performance of major weapon systems are alternatives to testing weapons under conditions that replicate actual combat. Simulation results must be as representative of real-world outcomes as possible. But simulations are only approximations to reality and, therefore, their credibility is open to question. GAO developed its own assessment framework and applied it to three operational effectiveness simulations developed for Army air defense system programs. Using this framework, GAO found that each simulation had strong points but weaknesses and limitations degraded its credibility severely enough to question its usefulness.

**Depot Maintenance:
Problems in Procuring
Helicopter Parts Result in
Shortages and Added
Costs**

GAO/GGD-88-20, Dec. 17.

Repair parts shortages have been increasing at the Corpus Christi Army Depot causing significant maintenance cost growths and reductions of available aircraft. A major cause of the problem was that the Army had not exercised effective management over the procurement process to ensure that parts were ordered, manufactured, or delivered to the depot when needed. The growing shortages increased the labor cost of overhauling helicopters, engines, and components, because the depot had to resort to costly, inefficient actions such as repairing rather than replacing worn parts. Adding to the problem was defective parts received from contractors. Army has planned or taken some actions to improve its management control and oversight of the procurement process.

**Command and Control:
Upgrades Allow Deferral
of \$500 Million Computer
Acquisition**

Acc. No. 135088 (GAO/IMTEC-88-10), Feb. 23.

The Department of Defense has been upgrading and replacing the computer hardware and software that supports its World Wide Military Command and Control System through a \$2.3 billion modernization program. DOD will shortly decide whether to procure new computer systems, estimated to cost about \$500 million, to replace existing ones at 35 sites from 1989 through 1991. GAO believes that acquisition of the new computer systems is not justified because the upgrades Defense has made and plans to make will correct six of seven deficiencies identified. The seventh deficiency will not be corrected by upgrades and cannot be corrected through the planned replacement. Further, postponing this acquisition would permit DOD to make the analyses and evaluations federal guidelines require before new computer systems are acquired.

**DOD Fraud Investigations:
Characteristics, Sanctions,
and Prevention**

GAO/AFMD-88-5BR, Jan. 20.

GAO found losses totaling \$66.2 million in 794 cases of fraud within the Department of Defense during FY 1984 and 1985. DOD data also shows that fines and recoveries in these cases totaled about \$39 million. Theft was the most prevalent type of DOD case with procurement fraud a close second. DOD has initiated a short-term study to review closed criminal investigations involving product substitution and the illegal diversion and exportation of DOD property. A long-term study requires that the DOD investigative agencies identify underlying causes of fraud and provide this information to appropriate managers so that corrective action can be taken.

**Naval Audit Service:
Effectiveness of Navy's
Internal Audit
Organization Is Limited**

GAO/AFMD-88-12, Jan. 24.

GAO found serious deficiencies in the planning, execution, and reporting phases of the Naval Audit Service's work, resulting in significant reduced effectiveness of NAS' audits. Among the problems noted were (1) an inordinate amount of audit resources that were being devoted to areas not likely to produce important monetary findings; (2) undeveloped issues because management placed undue emphasis on strict adherence to standard work programs and to time limitations; (3) inadequate evidence of findings; (4) findings that seemed to warrant reporting but that were dropped without adequate justification; (5) reports containing important errors and omissions; (6) excessive delays in reporting; and (7) recommendations to correct systemic weaknesses

which were not made when appropriate. These problems contributed to NAS' relative lack of success in identifying potential monetary benefits.

**Military Exchanges:
Consolidation of Exchange
Service Distribution
Facilities in Waco, Texas**

GAO/NSIAD-88-82BR, Jan. 25.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is a nonappropriated fund activity that provides merchandise and services for resale to Army and Air Force personnel and their dependents. It also generates revenue to support the Army and Air Force morale, welfare, and recreation program. San Antonio and Fort Worth, Texas, were consolidated in Waco for AAFES warehousing distribution services resulting in 531 employees being affected by this consolidation. AAFES plans to provide several out-placement services for displaced employees. In addition it will reimburse employees for any expenses related to moving to Waco.

International Affairs

**Exports to Iran:
U.S. Controls Have
Recently Been
Strengthened**

GAO/NSIAD-88-97BR, Jan. 26.

In October 1986, Pratt and Whitney's Canadian subsidiary exported, to Iran, a partial shipment of helicopter parts valued at \$624,000. Although these parts were probably for military use, the sale was made in accordance with applicable U.S. laws and regulations. The Department of Commerce recently expanded controls encompassing exports to Iran. The reexport of U.S. nonstrategic parts and components from other countries (such as the U.S. parts shipped from Canada) was not subject to this control action. However, Canada has traditionally controlled its reexport of U.S.-origin items in a manner consistent with U.S. controls on direct exports of such goods.

**Export Controls:
Commerce's Assessment of
the Foreign Availability of
Controlled Items Can Be
More Effective**

Acc. No. 134987 (GAO/NSIAD-88-71), Feb. 9.

The export of significant commercial products to the Soviet bloc are not controlled if they are freely available from other countries—known as foreign availability— unless the President determines that national security requires such control. Foreign availability procedures, which

are administered by the Department of Commerce, have three weaknesses that limit their effectiveness—(1) too long a time to process foreign availability determinations because of difficulties in obtaining necessary information and because of reluctance to finalize determinations with the concurrence of the Department of Defense; (2) lack of information-sharing between Commerce and Defense; and (3) regulations that do not specify what information will satisfy Commerce's criteria for determining foreign availability.

**Export Credit Insurance:
Industry Participants'
Views**

Acc. No. 134938 (GAO/NSIAD-88-88), Feb. 1.

GAO conducted industry surveys to gain an understanding of the export credit insurance market and the perspectives of industry participants familiar with the operations of the Export-Import Bank insurance program. This program has been administered by Eximbank's agent, the Foreign Credit Insurance Association. The report outlines GAO's data collection objectives, scope, and sampling methodology; analyzes questionnaire survey responses from exporters and financial institutions holding FCIA insurance policies; and summarizes pertinent information obtained from former FCIA policyholders, current and former FCIA members, insurance brokers, and private insurers.

**Visas:
U.S. and Japanese
Practices for Granting
Business Visas**

GAO/NSIAD-88-48BR, Dec. 29.

In FY 1986, the U.S. embassy in Tokyo and the U.S. Consulate in Osaka issued about 9,700 E-visas and 4,000 L-visas to Japanese citizens. An E-visa is known as a treaty trader/investor visa and an L-visa is authorized for an intracompany transferee to continue employment with the international firm or corporation in a similar position in its U.S. operation. U.S. consular officers are given wide latitude in deciding whether a visa should be issued and the Department of State specifies what factors are to be used in considering visa applications but does not provide guidance on the relative weight or emphasis that should be assigned to those various factors. State is reluctant to provide more specific guidance because it believes that the flexibility of such visas to cover the myriad of situations in the business world would be reduced. Very few Japanese business visa applications, however, are refused by the consular offices in Tokyo and Osaka.

**Food Aid:
Integration With Economic
Assistance Programs in
Four African Countries**

Acc. No. 135106 (GAO/NSIAD-88-96FS), Feb. 25.

For FY 1987, food assistance to African countries totaled \$297.7 million, or 38 percent of U.S. economic aid to the region. This review shows that Public Law 480 food assistance was linked with non-food assistance in varying degrees, in the Aid for International Development's overall country development strategy statements in Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, and Senegal. For instance, in Ghana, food aid and development assistance target assistance to the agricultural sector to increase food production. In Senegal, the mission's strategy is to help increase agricultural production and reduce the government's role in that sector. Integration of food and non-food assistance during program implementation in-country also varied. In Kenya, for example, little integration took place because of multiple U.S. objectives and Kenyan perceptions of the program.

**Science, Space, and
Technology**

**Federal Research:
Small Business
Involvement in Federal
Research and Development**

Acc. No. 134940 (GAO/RCED-88-90BR), Feb. 2.

None of 10 federal laboratories that GAO reviewed has developed formal plans to transfer technology to small businesses—500 or fewer employees—as required by the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986. Some of the laboratories, however, have special outreach programs for small businesses. Others indicated outreach and cooperative research and development activities that included small business but they do not distinguish between small and large businesses. Hence, detailed information about interactions with small businesses is lacking. Information on contracts awarded to small businesses from 1982-86 shows that they have made significant gains in both actual dollars awarded and in percentage of contracts awarded.

**Financial Reporting:
NASA Can Improve
Compliance With GAO
Standards and Treasury
Requirements**

GAO/AFMD-88-21, Feb. 29.

In preparing its Report on Financial Position, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration substantially complied with GAO and Treasury standards and requirements. However, it did not report all accrued liabilities nor did it eliminate intra-agency balances when preparing its consolidated reports. This resulted in provided unreliable information to Treasury. NASA also provided incomplete information in that it did not disclose all of the supplemental information required.

Energy

**Nuclear Security:
DOE Needs a More
Accurate and Efficient
Security Clearance
Program**

GAO/RCED-88-28, Dec. 29.

The Department of Energy's process for granting or terminating personnel security clearances is overly long, thereby increasing costs, lowering productivity, and raising security concerns. Contractors and DOE are not fully complying with requirements that could accelerate processing and are not fully using pre-employment investigations to screen out unsuitable employees before they are hired and submitted for clearance. Furthermore, DOE has not maintained accurate data bases which it needs to effectively manage its clearance program. Files at headquarters and field offices contained over 4,600 clearances that should have been terminated and in over 600 other cases employees had clearance badges but did not have active clearances listed on the files. In addition, clearance files contain errors in holder names and are missing social security numbers.

**Nuclear Waste:
Information on the
Reracking of the Diablo
Canyon Spent Fuel Storage
Pools**

GAO/RCED-88-79FS, Feb. 8.

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company proposed to replace existing spent fuel storage racks at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in California with a rack that permits the storage of more spent fuel, a process referred to as "reracking." Three local groups challenged the proposal with the Sierra Club appealing the proposal and requesting a delay. However, the delay was denied and PG&E began reracking the Diablo Canyon storage pools while the appeal proceeded. As of January 1988, the appeal process had not been completed.

**Nuclear Waste:
Quarterly Report on DOE's
Nuclear Waste Program as
of December 31, 1987**

Acc. No. 135068 (GAO/RCED-88-99FS), Feb. 18.

At the end of December 1987 the Department of Energy began to adjust the nuclear waste program in accordance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1987. A major change requiring DOE's attention involves the termination of all site-specific activities—except reclamation activities—at the Deaf Smith and Hanford sites within 90 days. The amendments also authorized siting and construction of a nuclear waste repository only at the Yucca Mountain site. Accordingly, DOE will continue to investigate the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site as a repository. The Nuclear Waste Fund received about \$181 million in fees and investment income during the quarter, and DOE obligated about \$63 million for program activities. The fund balance as of December 1987 was about \$1.6 billion.

**Energy Conservation:
States' Use of Interest
Earned on Oil Overcharge
Funds**

GAO/RCED-88-51, Feb. 4.

GAO previously reported that the Department of Energy was unaware that some states were not using interest earned on the oil overcharge funds made available by the Warner Amendment for energy assistance programs. GAO now determines that although DOE has (1) since reaffirmed its policy on the use of interest earned on Warner funds and (2) obtained information on how states use earned interest, it has not ensured that its policy is being implemented. DOE needs to better communicate its policy on the use of interest and require states to certify its use for energy assistance programs.

**Public Utilities:
Information on the Cash
Position of the Natural Gas
and Telephone Industries**

GAO/RCED-88-97, Feb. 26.

The natural gas industry's level of cash availability in the aggregate was varied but generally favorable for the 1976-84 period. Its current ratios remained above 1.0, its cash flow was positive and, except for 1981, cash from internal sources contributed more than half of its total cash available. However, for the 1984-86 period, its cash availability had declined. In this 11-year period, cash devoted to construction had decreased while cash used to retire long-term debt and pay dividends had increased. Between 1976 and 1979, the telephone industry's cash availability had declined but then improved between 1979 and 1983. But between 1979 and 1983, the industry's current assets exceeded its current liabilities for the first time during the period. Since 1983, its cash situation declined.

Natural Resources and Environment

Air Pollution: Ozone Attainment Requires Long-Term Solutions to Solve Complex Problems

GAO/RCED-88-40, Jan. 26.

The Environmental Protection Agency's latest review of health data concluded that the ozone standard may not include an adequate margin of safety and that it may therefore need to be more stringent. GAO reviewed Charlotte, North Carolina; Houston, Texas; and Los Angeles, California, and determined that they did not reach planned air quality reductions because control measures were not implemented, control measures implemented were not enforced, or such measures were not as effective as anticipated. Deficiencies in the three areas' ozone control programs were not corrected, indicating that EPA's oversight was not as effective as it should have been.

Air Pollution: Efforts to Control Ozone in Areas of Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin

GAO/RCED-88-46BR, Jan. 29.

Wisconsin officials claim that pollutants from northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana are causing violations of the ozone air quality standard in Wisconsin and that neither state had obtained Environmental Protection Agency approval of its ozone control plans for these areas. Factors accounting for the lack of approval are EPA policy changes, the states' delay in implementing required vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, and the states' failure to adopt required controls and regulations. However, the states and EPA have been working cooperatively to develop ozone control plans and EPA has approved some portions. But because Illinois and Indiana were unlikely to reach attainment by a December 1987 deadline, EPA proposed to ban major sources of ozone-forming pollutants until it approves the states' ozone plans.

Groundwater Quality: State Activities to Guard Against Contaminants

GAO/PEMD-88-5, Feb. 2. Acc. No. 134964.

Little consistency exists among states in adopting federal drinking water standards. And with potentially thousands of unregulated contaminants, there is considerable uncertainty about the extent to which groundwater is being protected. Because of resource constraints, states

do not usually conduct their own research to develop information on toxicology or on the risks of groundwater contaminants to health. They rely instead on information from the federal government. When this is not available, they must develop their own information but this is duplicative when standards are developed for the same contaminant by more than one state. Generally, states report a need for federal leadership and a gap between the information they need and the information the federal government disseminates.

**Resource Protection:
Corps' Permitting of
Louisville Floating
Restaurant**

GAO/RCED-88-74BR, Jan. 19.

GAO found no evidence that undue pressure from the city of Louisville, Kentucky, or development interests affected the Corps of Engineers' decision to permit a floating restaurant on the Ohio River. The Corps followed its normal procedural requirements and appears to have given the permit application a balanced review, using relevant information from knowledgeable sources. It sought and obtained public comments on the permit application and performed time-lapse photography to obtain additional safety information. Based on these and its own internal analyses, the project was substantially revised from the original proposal before the permit was approved.

**Resource Protection:
Using Semipostal Stamps
to Fund the Nongame Act**

GAO/RCED-88-88BR, Feb. 1.

The Nongame Act authorizes a federal program to enhance and conserve fish and wildlife species not taken for sport, fur, or food. Although the program is authorized, the Congress never appropriated any funds. A potential funding source is income derived from sales of semipostal stamps by the U.S. Postal Service. These stamps bear a surcharge over the normal postage rate, often 50 percent. GAO estimates that revenues in the range of \$12 million per year might be raised from the stamp sales but Postal Service officials object. They believe such sales will have a negative effect on their lucrative stamp-collecting market, which generates between \$122 million to \$187 million annually. The officials are also concerned about the various administrative expenses of accounting for semipostal stamps at over 40,000 post offices nationwide.

**Resource Protection:
Using Gasoline Taxes to
Fund the Nongame Act**

GAO/RCED-88-87BR, Jan. 29.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980 (Nongame Act), authorizes a federal program to conserve fish and wildlife species not taken for sport, fur, or food. Although the program is authorized, the Congress never appropriated any funds. Federal gasoline taxes collected on fuel used in residential equipment such as lawnmowers, chain saws, and garden tractors generating between \$21 million and \$48 million, could be a source of revenues. However, the Federal Highway Administration is arguing against diverting federal highway funds for wildlife conservation and the Fish and Wildlife Service strongly supports the source of revenue to support the program.

Agriculture

**Farm Programs:
An Overview of Price and
Income Support, and
Storage Programs**

GAO/RCED-88-84BR, Feb. 29.

Farm price and income support programs net cash outlays during FY 1980-86 totaled over \$88 billion. Three programs—nonrecourse loans, direct purchase of farm commodities, and deficiency payments—accounted for 80 percent of the outlays. Corn, wheat, dairy products, and upland cotton accounted for 72 percent of the outlays. Net cash outlays in FY 1985 and 1986 combined totaled about \$44 billion and the Department of Agriculture estimates FY outlays will exceed \$23 billion. Net cash outlays for storing Commodity Credit Corporation-owned commodities were over \$6 billion during the 1980-86 period. Storage and related outlays in FY 1985 and 1986 were over \$2 billion and USDA estimates FY 1987 outlays will exceed another \$2 billion. A special barge storage program for corn was implemented in 1986 and 12 contractors were paid to store almost 65 million bushels of grain. Estimated additional cost of the special program was about \$44.8 million.

**Federally Owned Dairy
Products:
Inventories and
Distributions, Fiscal Years
1982-88**

GAO/RCED-88-108FS, Feb. 23.

Total milk marketed in the United States in 1982 was 135 billion pounds; it is projected at 145.5 billion pounds in 1988. The Department of Agriculture's purchases of milk and dairy products were 14 billion pounds in 1982; they are projected at 7 billion pounds in 1988. The Department's dairy product inventories declined between 1982 and 1987

and are projected to decline further in 1988. Its year-end uncommitted inventories of dairy products from which the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program distributions can be made declined between 1982 and 1987 and are projected to be zero at the end of 1988. Total dairy product distributions under USDA's sales and donations programs increased between 1982 and 1987 but are projected to decline in 1988. Dairy product inventories donated under TEFAP declined with a projection of all its dairy product donations ending after April 1988.

Commerce and Housing Credit

Bank Powers: Issues Related to Repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act

GAO/GGD-88-37, Jan. 22.

The Glass-Steagall Act separates commercial banking from investment banking to increase the safety and soundness of the financial sector and protect the consumer from conflict of interest abuses and other inequities. But the change in the financial picture of today has resulted in a potentially dangerous integration of the two industries. A moratorium that Congress placed on any further integration will expire in March 1988. Should the Glass-Steagall Act be repealed, GAO recommends that such repeal be phased in over a period of time necessary to ensure putting in place a renewed regulatory framework to oversee the relationships between the commercial banking and securities industries.

Postal Service: Cost Comparisons: Mail Delivery to Residential Addresses

Acc. No. 135067 (GAO/GGD-88-28), Feb. 19.

In FY 1985, an estimated 1.9 million, or about 4 percent, of the 53 million daily city mail deliveries nationwide were to cluster boxes. For residential customers living in detached homes, the estimated annual cost of a cluster box delivery was about \$10 less per customer than the cost of providing curbside mailbox deliveries — a savings of about \$4.5 million. For residential customers living in townhouses the annual cost per cluster box delivery was about \$11 less than delivering mail to the door. The annual cost per cluster box delivery to low-rise apartment customers is essentially the same as the cost per delivery to interior lobby boxes. The Service stopped providing cluster boxes to new low-rise apartment customers in 1984.

Transportation

FAA Technical Center: Mission and Role in National Airspace System Plan Implementation

GAO/IMTEC-88-6BR, Jan. 6.

The Federal Aviation Administration's Technical Center provides the test facilities, skills, and services necessary to support the development, testing, and evaluation of equipment, systems, procedures, and processes used in the National Airspace System. Its work primarily revolves around (1) modernization of the air traffic control system, (2) maintenance of operational automation systems, and (3) research into aircraft safety and aviation security. FAA has proceeded to production with several high-cost systems in its \$15 billion National Airspace System plan without adequately testing and validating their operation capability. It has also invested substantial resources in the Center. This report surveys the overall mission of the Center, its role in modernizing the air traffic control system, and the way in which the Center allocates and uses resources.

Air Safety: FAA's Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System

GAO/RCED-88-66BR, Feb. 11.

From 1975 through 1986, 329 mid-air collisions have occurred in U.S. airspace, resulting in 777 fatalities. The Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System is designed to reduce the risk of mid-air collision by providing pilots with an independent airborne backup to the Federal Aviation Administration's ground-based system of air traffic control. FAA plans called for three TCAS models—TCAS I for small commercial and general aviation aircraft and TCAS II and III for larger commercial air carriers. However, FAA now believes that industry can take over the development of TCAS I—the least sophisticated of the systems. The estimated cost for a TCAS I model will be \$8,500 per unit and as much as \$2,400 to install it on existing aircraft. TCAS II should be commercially available by early 1990. TCAS III will require about another 5 years of research and development at a cost of about \$27 million.

**Employee Travel:
Authority and Rationale
for Limitations on Travel
Advances**

GAO/GGD-88-42FS, Feb. 26.

General Services Administration and Treasury Department officials said that reductions in outstanding travel advances could result in savings to the government by avoiding interest payments on the funds that otherwise would have to be borrowed to finance those advances. This fact sheet describes the authority and rationale for the GSA regulations that limit the travel advances and Treasury policy guidelines that encourage, but do not require, federal agencies to limit the advances to no more than \$25 per day if the employee has been issued a GSA-approved charge card for official travel expenses. It also discusses travel advance policies and procedures of the six nondefense agencies that have the largest estimated travel budgets for FY 1988.

**Housing and
Community
Development**

**Rural Rental Housing:
Impact of Section 515 Loan
Prepayments on Tenants
and Housing Availability**

Acc. No. 135040 (GAO/RCED-88-15BR), Feb. 11.

Under its section 515 program the Farmers Home Administration provides housing loans to eligible borrowers who are otherwise unable to obtain credit at terms and conditions that would permit them to charge rents affordable to lower income households. Section 515 loan prepayments and the subsequent higher rents that have resulted have caused many lower income renters to leave their housing projects. Consequently, the Congress has legislatively restricted, since October 1986, the voluntary prepayment of loans originated prior to December 1979. GAO has no legal basis to dispute FmHA's legal position that it is required to accept voluntary prepayment of unrestricted section 515 loans originated prior to December 1979. GAO estimates that loans for at least 6,600 projects with about 125,000 units are currently eligible for prepayment and that loans for at least another 6,000 projects with over 161,000 units will be eligible to be prepaid between 1995 and 2006.

Social Services

Refugee Program: Status of Early Employment Demonstration Projects

GAO/NSLAD-88-91, Feb. 3. Acc. No. 134963.

Concern over prolonged welfare dependency of many refugees and the effectiveness of federal, state, and private efforts to move them toward employment and self-sufficiency has led to alternative approaches through demonstration projects funded by the Departments of State and Health and Human Services. Development of these approaches has been slow because of lack of funds and limited incentives of public and private agencies. Neither State nor HHS has approved any new projects for over 2 years. State has no current plans or funding for additional projects and HHS has not been able to approve any of the 11 proposals it has received as being in conformance with HHS application process criteria.

Vocational Education: Information on the National Research Center's Grant Award Process

Acc. No. 135038 (GAO/HRD-88-56), Jan. 29.

The University of California at Berkeley was selected over Northern Arizona University and Ohio State University as a recipient for a 5-year, \$30 million grant award as the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. The process to select the center was authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act which stipulates that the center be associated with a public or private nonprofit university that is prepared to make a substantial financial contribution to the center's establishment. This report describes and analyzes the process used to select the awardee. It also examines the qualifications of nonfederal panelists (field readers) selected to evaluate grant applications, each applicant's proposed financial contribution toward the center's establishment, and whether the difference between the two top-ranked applicants' final scores was statistically significant.

Work and Welfare: Analysis of AFDC Employment Programs in Four States

GAO/HRD-88-33FS, Jan. 5.

This review of programs providing employment and training services for participants in the Aid to Families With Dependent Children in the states of Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas, and Oregon, can provide insights into employment service alternatives being considered as part

of welfare reform. It presents tables analyzing selected program attributes and practices in (1) program overview and funding, (2) participation, (3) participant assessment and activity assignments, including the use of employability plans, (4) employment-related activities provided, (5) interaction with other agencies providing services to program participants, (6) child care assistance, (7) case management and caseworker backgrounds, and (8) program results.

Health

Debt Collection: More Aggressive Action Needed to Collect Debts Owed by Health Professionals

GAO/AFMD-88-23, Feb. 2.

Financial assistance provided to thousands of health professions students and medical facilities totaled \$1.1 billion as of September 1986. The delinquent portion of these debts was about \$127 million and the probability for collection is low. In addition, insured loans representing potential debts that may require future collection, exceeded \$1.9 billion. The Health Resources and Services Administration, which provides the financial assistance, has failed to follow established debt collection procedures and staff shortages have resulted in significant delays in the administrative collection process. Also, the Department of Health and Human Services, under which HRSA is a component, has not implemented the inspector general recommendation to offset Medicare payments to physicians delinquent on payment for educational assistance received from the Department.

Medicare: Number of Rural Hospitals Terminating Participation Since the Program Began

GAO/HRD-88-46, Jan. 29.

The number of hospitals participating in Medicare fluctuates from year to year. But the number of rural hospitals terminating their participation has remained relatively constant during 3-year periods since October 1974. As of December 1986, 2,918 rural hospitals were participating; a total of 446 had terminated participation since the program began. Of the hospitals no longer participating, 48 were in counties that do not currently have a hospital participating in Medicare. During the 3 years immediately before the prospective payment system implementation, 25 rural hospitals terminated participation, and 3 counties were left without a hospital participating in Medicare. During the 3 years immediately

after PPS, 41 rural hospitals ceased participation, and 14 counties were left without a participating hospital.

Income Security

Social Security Funds: Additional Measures Could More Fully Indicate the System's Financial Condition

GAO/PEMD-88-11, Feb. 5. Acc. No. 134965.

The “imbalance year”—the year in which social security trust funds would go out of close actuarial balance for the subsequent 75-year period—was developed by GAO as an indicator of more measures needed to document the financial condition of the funds. GAO also developed the “adjusted actuarial balance” which gives a fuller representation of the financial position of the funds than is now available. These projections suggest that (1) action will be needed soon if the trust funds are to remain in close actuarial balance and (2) options for the social security system are likely to include those that permit the accumulation of reserves in the near future as well as those that limit the reserve buildup.

Social Security Disability: Demographic and Economic Characteristics of New Beneficiaries

GAO/HRD-88-35BR, Jan. 22.

New disabled social security insurance program beneficiaries compared to the general public are older and more likely to be male. More than half are aged 55 to 64. Education attainment levels are generally lower than those of the general population—over half did not complete high school. Median monthly income is \$462 for the unmarried as compared to \$1,213 for married. Disabled beneficiaries held lower levels of all assets than did retired beneficiaries. Total median net worth, excluding residence, reported by disabled beneficiaries under age 55 was only \$54 as compared with \$1,114 for disabled beneficiaries aged 55-64 and over \$14,000 for retired beneficiaries.

Administration of Justice

Drug Control: River Patrol Craft for the Government of Bolivia

GAO/NSIAD-88-101FS, Feb. 2.

The United States provided the government of Bolivia with eight high-speed river patrol boats at a cost of about \$694,000 to be used in interdicting the transit of illegal drugs and precursor chemicals on the rivers of Bolivia. The Bureau of International Narcotics Matters and the Drug Enforcement Administration were opposed to providing the Piranha rivercraft to the Bolivians saying that (1) it was a poor way of spending limited narcotics control resources and (2) the boats were too complicated and expensive for the Bolivians to maintain. The costs associated with operating and maintaining the rivercraft will be funded by INM and will be about \$100,000 for the first 6 months of operation.

Drug Control: U.S. Supported Efforts in Burma, Pakistan, and Thailand

GAO/NSIAD-88-94, Feb. 26.

U.S.-supported crop control, enforcement, and interdiction efforts in Burma, Thailand, and Pakistan have not produced major reductions in opium production, and it is not likely that such reductions will be achieved in the near future. Law enforcement organizations in these countries have basic problems which inhibit effective enforcement and interdiction, including narcotics-related corruption and weak narcotics laws. Also, crop control programs were not effectively managed and development efforts did not fully support narcotics reduction goals.

Immigration: Studies of the Immigration Control Act's Impact on Mexico

Acc. No. 135039 (GAO/NSIAD-88-92BR), Feb. 17.

Concern has been raised that the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 might cause (1) the return of thousands of workers to Mexico, (2) a reduction in remittances sent from Mexican workers in the United States to their families in Mexico, and (3) additional social and economic pressures on Mexico's already strained political structure. This report identifies government agencies, private organizations, and independent researchers who have studied or are in a position to study the impact of the act on Mexico's economy and social and political structure.

**Product Liability:
Extent of "Litigation
Explosion" in Federal
Courts Questioned**

GAO/HRD-88-36BR, Jan. 28.

The Tort Policy Working Group, under the Department of Justice, reported that between 1974 and 1985 the number of product liability cases filed in federal courts increased 758 percent. GAO's analysis of the filings data indicates that (1) cases related to one product—*asbestos*—account for a significant percentage of the growth in filings and (2) using 1974 as the baseline year is likely to have led to an overstatement of the growth. When calculated from 1976 (the first year to include complete data), there was a 104 percent growth in cases unrelated to *asbestos* and two other products—the *Dalkon shield* and *bendectin*. This finding seems inconsistent with the contention that there is a rapidly accelerating growth in federal product liability filings across a wide range of products. GAO believes there is little reason for assuming that state courts have experienced the same trends as federal courts.

**Federal Courts:
Pretrial Management of
Civil Cases Varied at
Selected District Courts**

GAO/GGD-88-19, Jan. 12.

The number of civil cases in federal courts increased from 77,193 in 1969 to 241,842 in 1983. Revised procedures were intended to improve district court management of civil cases and scheduling orders were required to be prepared for most of the cases at 9 of 10 districts GAO visited. However, the extent to which judges complied with the requirement varied, as did the extent that they issued scheduling orders within required time limits. Virtually all of the civil cases filed in the tenth district were exempted from the scheduling requirement because the judges believed that scheduling was not necessary for most of their cases. The use of other revisions also varied among the 10 districts.

**Justice Department:
Litigation and Collection
of Civil Fines and
Penalties**

GAO/GGD-88-23FS, Jan. 7.

GAO reviewed a total of 100 cases involving the litigation and collection of civil fines and penalties at the Department of Justice and found that 22 cases did not require Justice to take any actions to collect fines. Of 78 collection cases, Justice declined litigation in 11 totaling \$29.1 million in government claims. These cases were declined because Justice attorneys concluded that payments could not be obtained for reasons of bankruptcy or defendants had no available assets to pay the claims. The government obtained an award or settlement in the remaining 67 cases; Justice or the referring agencies had collected the full amount awarded/settled for 25 cases totaling over \$17.1 million and partially collected

\$3.6 million out of \$11.8 million. For the remaining 23 cases with an award/settlement amount of nearly \$8.3 million, funds were not collected or records did not show that they were.

General Government

Federal Funding: Information on Selected Benefit/Mandatory Spending Programs

GAO/AFMD-88-31FS, Jan. 27.

The federal government annually budgets and spends billions for entitlement, benefit payment, and mandatory spending programs ranging from unemployment compensation to social service grants. This review identifies and describes over 100 of these programs and provides the appropriation authority and expenditures each had for the past several fiscal years.

Fund Accountability: Procedures Used for Selected Benefit/ Mandatory Spending Programs Are Adequate

GAO/AFMD-88-30, Jan. 27.

GAO surveyed seven major social welfare programs at the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education having a proposed combined budget authority for FY 1988 of \$49.3 billion to determine if they had a proper fund accountability framework. GAO found that procedures established by HHS and Education for these programs were sufficient to prevent overobligation of funds; that five of the programs provide grants to states in specific amounts, which limits the total payments that can be charged to the programs; and that for the other two programs, funding flexibility has been provided by the Congress through budget authority language contained in the appropriation acts.

Loan Asset Sales: An Assessment of Selected Sales

GAO/AFMD-88-24, Feb. 19.

The federal government is the largest single provider of credit in the United States with more than \$230 billion in loans outstanding. An initial January 1986 pilot proposal to sell over \$4 billion in loan assets has been followed by increasingly larger and more comprehensive proposals. This report shows that (1) sales and prepayment decisions must be made on a portfolio-by-portfolio basis, (2) investor acceptance and maximization of net sale proceeds directly depend on the government's willingness to share post-sale loan losses with investors, (3) sales should not

be promoted as deficit reduction tools, and (4) sales are not needed to identify the subsidy of federal credit programs. Overall, loan asset sales, in the short term, will result in the government incurring some additional costs. If the sales foster improvement, the costs may be offset in the future.

**Internal Controls:
System Problems Affecting
GSA's Financial Reporting**

GAO/AFMD-88-2, Feb. 4. Acc. No. 134961.

Problems in the General Services Administration's internal accounting controls and procedures could affect the integrity of its accounting and financial data and lead to inappropriate and inefficient use of financial resources. Opportunities for improving the problems exist in GSA's public buildings operations, strategic stockpile operations, general supply operations, fleet management operations, automatic data processing services operations, financial reporting, and other miscellaneous areas.

**Federal Employees:
Appointees Converted to
Career Positions, January
Through September 1987**

GAO/GGD-88-31FS, Jan. 28.

From January through September 1987, 29 agencies reported that they appointed 186 noncareer employees to career positions and 31 reported no appointments of this type. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation reported the largest number of conversions — 30. These employees were hired to handle the increase in bank closures. Of the 186 conversions, 124 were competitive appointments and 62 were noncompetitive.

**Financial Audit:
Senate Building Beauty
Shop Statements—
4-Month Period Ended
6-30-86**

Acc. No. 134974 (GAO/AFMD-88-7), Feb. 8.

The Senate Building Beauty Shop changed from a partnership to a sole proprietorship effective July 1986 whose inventory at that time was valued at \$2,528. Its net income was \$7,981.

**Financial Audit:
Senate Building Beauty
Shop Statements—
6-Month Period Ended
12-31-86**

Acc. No. 134975 (GAO/AFMD-88-8), Feb. 8.

This short audit period is the result of a change in Shop ownership from a partnership to a sole proprietorship, effective July 1986. Net income for the Senate Building Beauty Shop was \$13,723.

Congressional Testimony by GAO Officials

GAO's Views on the Default Task Force's Recommendations for Reducing Default Costs in the Guaranteed Student Loan Program, by William J. Gainer, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Post-secondary Education, House Committee on Education, House Committee on Education and Labor. Feb. 2. GAO/T-HRD-88-7. Acc. No. 134930.

Preliminary Observations on the Market Crash of October 1987, by Richard L. Fogel, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions Supervision, Regulation and Insurance, House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, Feb. 3. GAO/T-GGD-88-8. Acc. No. 134949. Acc. No. 134976.

Department of Defense Joint Officer Personnel Policies, by Louis J. Rodrigues, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Subcommittee on Investigations, House Committee on Armed Services, Feb. 3. GAO/T-NSIAD-88-13. Acc. No. 134950.

Issues Related to Repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General of the United States, before the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Feb. 10. GAO/T-GGD-88-9. Acc. No. 135001.

Reorganization of the Military Departments' Financial Management Structures, by Charles A. Bowsher, Comptroller General of the United States, before the Subcommittee on Investigations, House Committee on Armed Services, Feb. 17. GAO/T-NSIAD-88-12.

Review of SBA's 8(a) Procurement Program, by John H. Luke, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Senate Committee on Small Business, Feb. 18. GAO/T-RCED-88-18.

H.R. 3565—Allowing for the Garnishment of Federal Employees' Pay for Commercial Debt, by Rosslyn S. Kleeman, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Civil Service, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Feb. 18. GAO/T-GGD-88-11.

Status of the 1988 Tax Return Filing Season, by Jennie S. Stathis, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Oversight, House Committee on Ways and Means, Feb. 23. GAO/T-GGD-88-13. Acc. No. 135107.

Problems GAO Identified In Work On Child Support Enforcement Program, by Joseph F. Delfico, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation, House Committee on Ways and Means, Feb. 23. GAO/T-HRD-88-8. Acc. No. 135098.

Highway Safety: Monitoring Practices to Show Compliance With Speed Limits Should Be Reexamined, by Kenneth M. Mead, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Water Resources, Transportation, and Infrastructure, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Feb. 25. GAO/T-RCED-88-19.

Recapitalizing the Export-Import Bank of the U.S.: Why It Is Necessary; How It Can Be Accomplished, by Frederick D. Wolf, Accounting and Financial Management Division, before the Subcommittee on International Finance, Trade and Monetary Policy, House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, Feb. 25. GAO/T-AFMD-88-4.

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