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Reports Issued in May 1987

National Defense

National Defense Stockpile: National Security Council Study Inadequate to Set Stockpile Goals Acc. No. 132959 (GAO/NSIAD-87-146), May 4.

The National Defense Stockpile consists of 62 strategic and critical materials valued at approximately \$10 billion. Stating a need to modernize the stockpile, the National Security Council proposed to reduce it from \$16.1 billion to \$0.7 billion. The NSC study results are far more sensitive to assumption changes than indicated by the study report, and key NSC study participants stated that some of the assumptions are questionable. Because of these concerns GAO concluded that the study does not provide a sufficient basis for setting stockpile goals, or for other U.S. mobilization planning. Problems, such as a lack of accurate information on raw material demand and supply and a current lack of organizational capability to plan and manage the stockpile, hinder assessments of stockpile requirements.

Military Airlift: Requirements for Aerial Port Personnel in Wartime Need to Be Determined Acc. No. 132934 (GAO/NSIAD-87-115), May 11.

The Air Force's Military Airlift Command spends about \$300 million a year for aerial port personnel to support peacetime airlift operations and to help load and unload military units and resupply those units during wartime. The Air Force, the Marine Corps, and the Army have also assigned or identified personnel to perform these duties, and many have been trained and participate in unit moves and other exercises. Part of this duplication results from the disparity between the regulations that establish the services' responsibilities and the implementing regulations. Also, MAC is unsure of the services' capabilities to meet their responsibilities and of how many of its personnel will be needed to ensure that such operations run smoothly.

Air Defense Training: Contract Cost for Replacing T-33 Aircraft Training Mission Acc. No. 133017 (GAO/NSIAD-87-153BR), May 20.

The Air Force plans to retire obsolete T-33 aircraft which are used primarily for providing airborne electronic countermeasure training. The flying hour costs to restore, operate, and maintain 60 T-39s, which would replace the T-33s, would be \$401.3 million for the first 5 years. The 5-year operation and maintenance cost for 60 T-33s is estimated to be \$344.3 million. The T-39, being more fuel efficient and capable of

staying airborne longer than the T-33, could provide the required ECM training with fewer total flying hours and fewer aircraft. Under the Air Force's plan to contract out, there is a budget shortfall in FY 1988. GAO did not evaluate and compare T-39 costs to estimated contract costs beyond 5 years since the T-39 proposal was intended to be an interim replacement for the T-33. However, a 25-year cost comparison by the Air Force showed that contracting would continue to be less costly.

Navy Manpower: Squadron Manpower Program Needs Improvement GAO/NSIAD-87-101, May 19.

Navy's Squadron Manpower program covers approximately 85,000 officer and enlisted positions. Personnel costs associated with these positions is about \$2 billion annually. The number of officer and enlisted positions Navy says it needs to operate and maintain its aircraft squadron is subject to question because (1) the staffing standards, maintenance work load, work load allowances, and workweek time factors used to determine most squadron manpower requirements are unsupported by documentation and are not periodically reviewed; and (2) a significant number of requirements are directed by the Chief of Naval Operations, are based largely on corporate management judgment rather than measured work load, and are not supported by documented justification consistent with established guidelines.

Navy Shore Manpower Program: Decision to Decentralize Needs to Be Rethought

GAO/NSIAD-87-99BR, May 11.

Navy's decision to decentralize the responsibilities for the shore component of the Navy Manpower Engineering Program was not thoroughly analyzed. It may adversely affect the Navy's ability to meet congressional directives calling for determination of manpower requirements through an effective manpower management system. Specifically, (1) the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the major Navy organizations affected by the decision were not consulted. (2) no cost-benefit studies were done and the only option considered was decentralization, and (3) the resources and management controls necessary for an effective decentralized program have not been provided.

Financial Management: More Controls Needed Over Army's Obligation of Funds

Acc. No. 132958 (GAO/AFMD-87-18), May 14.

Of \$3.3 million in operation and maintenance funds carried over from FY 1985 to 1986 at Army activities, \$2.9 million had been improperly

obligated. This caused (1) deobligations of funds that could not be used for valid purposes and (2) extension of the life of 1-year appropriations which would have otherwise expired. Army needs to strengthen its year-end obligation process and submit quarterly deobligation reports.

Accounting Systems: Army's Effort to Redesign Its Accounting Systems

Acc. No. 132963 (GAO/AFMD-87-19), May 19.

Army's project of redesigning its 60 accounting systems into a small family of standard systems is expected to cost about \$380 million. This project is to strengthen accounting system controls, correct other problems such as manual processing, and implement a single, integrated financial management system. However, Army needs to update its development plan in a more timely manner and in sufficient detail to manage the interdependent systems. Project-manager authority and control need to be strengthened and the internal controls in the Standard Finance Systems Redesign and the computer requirements of the Program Budget Accounting System need a closer look at.

Navy Contracting: Fiscal Year 1986 Contract Award for Construction of SSN 688 Submarines GAO/NSIAD-87-120, May 4.

In March 1986, the Navy announced that Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics Corporation had been awarded a fixed-price incentive contract in the amount of \$1,032,667,000 in FY 1986 for the construction of four SSN 688 Class nuclear attack submarines. While the procurement plan permitted a split award, the Navy concluded that to award one of the four ships for that purpose would cost at least an additional \$102 million. In FY 1985, a contract for three ships was awarded to Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company based on price, and a contract for one ship was awarded to Electric Boat for industrial base purposes at a premium of \$33 million. GAO believes that Electric Boat's FY 1985 contract price for one ship was not excessively high nor was Newport News' contract price for three ships. GAO also believes that the FY 1986 contract will probably experience a cost overrun of \$898 million: all the SSN 688 submarine contracts that have been awarded to Electric Boat since 1978 have overrun or are overrunning their target costs.

Contracting: Procurement of Lithium Batteries for Air Force Missile Systems

Acc. No. 132996 (GAO/NSIAD-87-144BR), May 20.

Lithium batteries are used as emergency power sources for the Minuteman and Peacekeeper missile systems. The Air Force solicited bids for 180 lithium batteries for Peacekeeper missile silos and had documentation showing that Altus Corporation of San Jose, California, which won over GTE, Sylvania, had passed qualification tests and had produced lithium batteries which met Air Force specifications.

DOD Revolving Door: Post-DOD Employment May Raise Concerns

GAO/NSIAD-87-116, Apr. 16.

This report determines how often former Department of Defense personnel were employed by defense contractors on the same project or program that they had worked on while with DOD. It provides information on the (1) extent that the DOD responsibilities of former DOD personnel could have affected defense contractors; (2) extent of work-related communication between former DOD personnel and DOD; (3) salary former DOD personnel received from defense contractors compared with their final DOD salary; and (4) opinions of former DOD personnel on potential employment prohibitions. The study is limited to high-and mid-level personnel who left DOD during FY 1983 and 1984.

Army Procurement: Restricted Competition for Water Purification Equipment Not Justified GAO/NSIAD-87-129, Apr. 28.

The Army plans to acquire 3,000 gallon-per-hour reverse osmosis water purification units and to limit competition for the first production quantity. GAO believes that the decision to limit competition is questionable and recommends that the Army solicit full and open competition unless an analysis shows that the risk of doing so outweighs the benefits.

Material Management: Repair of Defective Government-Furnished Material

GAO/NSIAD-87-85BR, Apr. 9.

Government-furnished material received from suppliers is provided to prime contractors for incorporation into major weapon systems such as aircraft, missiles, and ships. The government incurs additional expense if it pays the prime contractor to repair defective GFM or repairs it at government facilities rather than returning it to suppliers. GAO examined the repair of defective GFM in three aircraft. Two contractors had repaired defective GFM at additional government expense instead of returning it to suppliers. This was done to avoid costly shutdowns of the

aircraft production lines, which would have been necessary to obtain replacement parts. Navy officials have difficulty in requiring suppliers to repair defective materials at their expense because most items have been accepted by government inspectors. Thus, inadequate government inspection is the primary reason for defective GFM being shipped to contractors.

Military Construction: The Letterkenny Army Depot Retrieval System

Acc. No. 133016 (GAO/NSIAD-87-112BR), May 21.

The Army incorrectly classified and funded the \$1.8 million Letterkenny Automated Storage and Retrieval System building as equipment rather than as a military construction project and therefore spent funds that were not available for this purpose. The result is a violation of the Antideficiency Act.

Software Development: Information on Department of Defense Central Design Activities Central design activities are activities within each military service that are responsible for developing, testing, and subsequently maintaining automated information systems software used at more than one location. This fact sheet provides information on the number of CDAs in each military service and their purposes; the number of automated information systems, particularly those involving modernization or redesign efforts, supported by these activities; and the resources reflected in the defense budget for these activities and the systems they support.

DOD Inflation: DOD's Inflation Dividends—May 1987 Update

Acc. No. 133053(GAO/NSIAD-87-150), May 8.

GAO's revised estimate of FY 1987 inflation funds within the Department of Defense's budget for nonpay, nonfuel accounts is \$3.0 billion as compared to \$3.5 billion for FY 1986. The Congress reduced the FY 1987 nonpay, nonfuel requests by \$2.4 billion for excess inflation. In total, this amount is \$0.6 billion less than the amount GAO calculated for the FY 1987 nonpay, nonfuel appropriations. GAO's estimates for fuel accounts is \$1.4 billion. DOD had reported \$1.8 billion in excess fuel inflation funds for FY 1987 and \$1.2 billion for FY 1986, for a total of \$3.1 billion. The Congress reduced the FY 1987 fuel requests by \$3.0 billion. If OMB's January inflation projections for FY 1987 are correct, the congressional reductions of approximately \$1.8 billion for FY 1987 are in excess of the \$1.4 billion fuel inflation dividend that GAO calculated.

DOD Inflation: DOD's Inflation Dividends and Unobligated Balances— May 1987 Update GAO/NSIAD-87-151, May 8.

GAO's revised estimate of FY 1987 inflation funds within the Department of Defense's budget for nonpay, nonfuel accounts is \$3.0 billion as compared to \$3.5 billion for FY 1986. The revised estimate for fuel accounts is \$1.4 billion. For FY 1986, DOD's actual unobligated balances, including unexpended balances, as of January 1987, were \$1.6 billion less than those estimated as of February 1986. For the FY 1987 unexpended and unobligated balance estimate, the January 1987 estimate is \$10.6 billion less than the February 1986 estimate.

International Affairs

International Trade: Symposium on the Causes of the U.S. Trade Deficit Acc. No. 132965 (GAO/NSIAD-87-135S), May 15.

This report is a summary of a symposium on the causes of the U.S. trade deficit, the outlook for the deficit, and possible courses of action to deal with it. The symposium was held in Washington, D.C., attended by leading international trade specialists, and is published as a supplement to the GAO report, <u>U.S. Trade Deficit: Causes and Policy Options for Solutions</u> (GAO/NSIAD-87-135).

Foreign Aid: Impact of Overseas Private Investment Corporation Activities on U.S. Employment Acc. No. 132853 (GAO/NSIAD-87-109), May 5.

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation is a U.S. government agency established to encourage and facilitate private U.S. investment in developing countries by providing loans and political risk and loan guaranty insurance. Some OPIC-assisted projects have direct negative impacts on U.S. trade and potentially negative impacts on U.S. employment. OPIC's methodology for computing the economic impact on the United States of the projects it assists obscures the direct effects of these projects and results in overly optimistic reports to the Congress regarding the magnitude of economic benefits to the United States. OPIC needs comprehensive policies and procedures for use in its project screening and monitoring functions.

Honduras: U.S. National Guard

Construction Exercises

GAO/NSIAD-87-66, Apr. 23.

A National Guard road-building exercise in Honduras from January to June 1986 included deploying personnel and equipment to Honduras, constructing a base camp, upgrading access roads, constructing a 13-mile section of road in north central Honduras, and redeploying the personnel and equipment to the United States. The total cost of the exercise was about \$10.7 million. This included about \$5.1 million for pay and allowances funded from National Guard personnel appropriations, \$1.9 million for supplies and other items funded from Operations and Maintenance appropriations, and \$3.7 million for transportation funded from Joint Chiefs of Staff O&M appropriations. Current law imposes a \$100,000 limitation per project for reserve construction. Honduras paid for most of the costs that would have been attributable to the \$100,000 limitation on the use of O&M funds for reserve construction projects.

International Trade: Libya Trade Sanctions

GAO/NSIAD-87-132BR, May 21.

The Libyan trade sanctions were imposed in January 1986 and generally prohibit (1) exports to Libya from the United States of goods, technology, or services; (2) imports into the United States of goods or services of Libyan origin; (3) transactions by a U.S. person relating to transportation to or from Libya; transportation services to or from the United States by Libyan persons, vessels, or aircraft; or the sale in the United States by any person holding authority under the Federal Aviation Act of any transportation by air which includes any stop in Libya; (4) purchase by any U.S. person of goods for export from Libya to any country; (5) performance by U.S. persons of contracts in support of projects in Libya; (6) extension of credits or loans by U.S. persons to the government of Libya; and (7) transactions by U.S. persons relating to travel by U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens to Libya or their activities within Libya.

Terrorism: Laws Cited Imposing Sanctions on Nations Supporting Terrorism

GAO/NSIAD-87-133FS, Apr. 17.

Federal agencies—primarily State, Treasury, Commerce, and Transportation—have identified 13 laws that authorize the President to invoke sanctions against nations supporting terrorism. No central source identifies individual sanctions with specific laws. However, GAO identified sanctions since 1979 associated with 11 of the laws. The sanctions

included import embargoes, export license controls, freezing assets, terminating new loans and credit extensions, restricting arms sales and foreign assistance, terminating air services, and curtailing other activities between the United States and the nations designated as supporting terrorism.

Revenue Estimate: Panama Canal Commission Estimated Revenue for Fiscal Year 1988

GAO/AFMD-87-25, May 1.

The FY 1988 revenues of the Panama Canal Commission are estimated at \$463 million. Vessel tolls are estimated to be \$339 million, and nontoll revenues are estimated to be \$124 million. The toll revenue estimate was based on the commission's survey of activities and trends in the maritime industry. Nontoll revenues were based on the estimated costs of providing services such as navigation services, water and power production and delivery, and housing.

Science, Space, and Technology

Patent Policy:

Recent Changes in Federal Law Considered Beneficial GAO/RCED-87-44, Apr. 16.

The government has taken several actions to stimulate the commercialization of federal technology and to provide a less expensive alternative to a patent that would protect against patent infringement law suits by subsequent inventors. These actions affect inventions made by both the recipients of federal contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements and federal laboratories. Public Law 96-517 gave universities, other non-profit organizations, and small businesses the option to retain title rights to federally funded inventions that they developed. Public Law 98-620 amended P.L. 517 by extending the coverage and easing or removing some of its restrictions. It also transferred responsibility from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and GAO, respectively, to Commerce for issuing government-wide regulations to implement the act and reviewing federal agency exceptions for not giving a nonprofit or small business funding agreement recipient title to an invention.

Energy

Nuclear Materials: Alternatives for Relocating Rocky Flats Plant's Plutonium Operations GAO/RCED-87-93, Apr. 14.

Major operational problems in a plutonium-processing building at the Department of Energy's Rocky Flats Plant near Denver, Colorado, have existed since the building became operational in 1981. High estimated costs have been associated with repairing the building and potential risks have been associated with the plant's proximity to a major metropolitan center. Four alternatives have been identified for relocating plutonium processing that would cost between about \$200 million and \$600 million. These alternatives would require between 4 and 10 years to implement, including design, construction and/or alterations and startup. This is in comparison to an estimated cost of about \$300 million to repair building 371 at the Rocky Flats Plant and an implementation period of 8 years. The alternative that addresses fabrication operations, the major contributor to safety and health risks at Rocky Flats is to relocate all Rocky Flats plutonium operations. This would cost over \$4 billion and take as long as 24 years. On a cost basis alone, this alternative does not appear justified.

Nuclear Waste: Quarterly Report on DOE's Nuclear Waste Program as of March 31, 1987 Acc. No. 132947 (GAO/RCED-87-139FS), May 13.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act established a national program and policy for safely storing, transporting, and disposing of nuclear waste. This fact sheet provides the status of the Department of Energy's program activities. They include (1) the release of a draft amendment to the mission plan in which doe extends by 5 years its target date for beginning first repository operations and information on doe's decision to postpone site-specific activities for the second repository; (2) a monitored retrievable storage proposal and related documents; (3) receipt of comments from utilities, state regulators, and others on its Notice of Inquiry on proposals for the calculation of fees for defense waste disposal; and (4) information on the Nuclear Waste Fund collection of over \$135.4 million in fees and investment income and obligations of \$139 million for program activities. The fund balance as of March 31, 1987, was about \$1.5 billion.

Oil Reserves: An Analysis of Oil Fill Alternatives

GAO/RCED-87-145BR, May 21.

The Department of Energy is planning to obligate about \$670 million in FY 1987 to develop and manage the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, increase storage capacity to 581 million barrels, and fill the reserve at a 75,000-barrel-per-day rate. It is also planning to stop developing additional storage capacity through its cavern leaching program after which SPR will have about 47 million barrels of storage capacity available for fill in FY 1988. Lower oil fill rates would increase the time needed to fill available capacity and would probably increase the total oil costs. Continued leaching to increase oil storage space would add about \$22.4 million to DOE's proposed FY 1988 budget and \$118 million during FY 1989-92. GAO concluded that it is generally less costly to the government to fill the SPR at the maximum rate—as fast as capacity is developed.

Small Business Act: Energy's Disadvantaged Business Advocate Not Reporting to Proper Management Level

Acc. No. 132948 (GAO/GGD-87-69), May 26.

The Small Business Act requires each federal agency with procurement powers to establish an Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. The agency head shall appoint a Director for this office who shall be responsible only to and report directly to the agency head or deputy. Because the Director, OSDBU, is not reporting directly to and is not responsible only to the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Energy, GAO concludes that his reporting level is not in compliance with the Small Business Act.

Natural Resources and Environment

Acid Rain: Delays and Management Changes in the Federal Research Program

GAO/RCED-87-89, Apr. 29.

The National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program is to help resolve the scientific uncertainties associated with acid rain and determine if and how it should be controlled. It has yet to issue its first assessment report originally scheduled for release in 1985. NAPAP officials believe that, by 1990, their ongoing research program will provide sufficient new information about the causes and effects of acid rain to serve as the basis for policy recommendations. However, they acknowledge that they

will not have answered all scientific unknowns in several areas, such as acid rain effects on forests and man-made materials. NAPAP has also substantially reduced its research on the economic effects of acid rain. Given these problems and the delays in reaching consensus on its first assessment, it is unclear whether NAPAP will meet its 1990 objective.

Air Pollution:

States Assigned a Major Role in EPA's Air Toxics Strategy GAO/RCED-87-76, Mar. 31.

The Environmental Protection Agency initiated a strategy whereby states would set standards and regulations for toxic air pollutants and pollution sources that EPA found to pose no national problems. The strategy of broad delegation to the states raised three areas of concern consisting of legal issues, public health implications due to inconsistencies in state programs, and industry location implications. This delegation of regulatory responsibility is now under litigation

Parks and Recreation: Patowmack Canal Preservation Responsibilities Being Met by Park Service

GAO/RCED-87-110, Apr. 23.

The Patowmack Canal, at Great Falls, Virginia, was built during the late eighteenth century to provide a navigable bypass to the Great Falls of the Potomac River. The National Park Service has a longstanding policy against rebuilding any structure unless it can be rebuilt in accordance with the exact original specifications. In the case of the canal, not only are such specifications not available but any attempt to rebuild the canal would result in the destruction of what remains. GAO found no legal basis to conclude that the Park Service, by preserving the canal in its present state rather than rebuilding, is not meeting its statutory responsibilities.

Agriculture

Agricultural Competitiveness: An Overview of the Challenge to Enhance Exports Acc. No. 132884 (GAO/RCED-87-100), May 7.

U.S. agricultural exports fell from al all-time high of \$43.5 billion in FY 1981 to \$26.3 billion in FY 1986, a decline of 40 percent. This decline has raised considerable concern about the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in the international marketplace and has created a serious challenge to farm programs and policymakers to expand exports. Reversing

this downward trend partially depends on whether this country can increase foreign demand for its agricultural commodities and compete against other suppliers. Views differ on which policies and programs would be the most effective. From a long-term perspective, U.S. policy-makers are faced with the challenging task of expanding total world agricultural trade and formulating future U.S. agricultural policies that are based on sound research, are flexible, and are geared toward achieving long-term goals.

Food Stamp Program: Trends in Program Applications, Participation, and Denials GAO/RCED-87-80BR, Apr. 2.

The number of households applying for food stamps nationwide declined from about 16.8 million in FY 1983 to about 12.6 million in FY 1985—about 25 percent. During that period the number of households approved declined from about 13.7 million to about 10.0 million. The number of households whose applications were denied declined from about 3.1 million in FY 1985. The percentage of applications approved and denied remained relatively constant at about 80 and 20 percent, respectively. The total estimated number of households participating in the program nationwide declined from about 13.7 million in FY 1983 to about 12.8 million in FY 1985. On a state-by-state basis, participation increased in 11 states, while 42 states experienced declines, 29 of which were in excess of the national percentage decrease. On a state-by-state basis, improper denials or terminations of benefits from 1980 to 1985 ranged from 0 (Delaware and Kansas) to over 11 percent (Washington and the District of Columbia), although in FY 1985, most states' improper denials or terminations were 4 percent or less.

Commerce and Housing Credit

Thrift Industry: Forbearance for Troubled Institutions, 1982-1986 Acc. No. 132931 (GAO/GGD-87-78BR), May 6.

Forbearance is the Federal Home Loan Bank Board practice of giving a financially troubled thrift more time to work out its problems rather than closing or merging it. Forbearance has had mixed success; some thrifts have improved their conditions and others either have remained

in the same condition or worsened. Of those that deteriorated, the capital position of some declined substantially as a result of their incurring heavy losses. Economic conditions during 1985 and 1986 were especially favorable for the recovery of thrifts that had experienced previous difficulties but 13.5 percent of the industry is still insolvent. Given the possibility that future changes in interest rates and inflation will be less favorable for profitability than those of the past, it is difficult to conclude that prospects are good for recovery of these institutions.

Financial Audit: Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation's 1986 and 1985 Financial Statements Acc. No. 133052 (GAO/AFMD-87-41), May 27.

The financial statements for the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation reflect a net loss of almost \$11 billion for 1986 and a deficit of more than \$6 billion at the end of 1986. From December 1985 to December 1986, the Corporation's caseload of institutions in serious financial trouble virtually doubled—from 93 to 183. This condition has continued to deteriorate. The Corporation's cash and investment securities, which declined from \$6.1 billion to \$4.0 billion during 1986, have further declined, and at May 1987, stood at \$913 million. The Congress is considering legislation to recapitalize the insurance fund with amounts ranging from \$5 billion to \$7.5 billion over 2 years. But given the severity of the situation, it appears that these amounts would not provide the monetary resources necessary for the Corporation to address the problems. It therefore may be unable to continue to fulfill its mission and meet its financial obligations.

Information Management: Leadership Needed in Managing Federal Telecommunications GAO/IMTEC-87-9, May 6.

The Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration are not providing the leadership necessary for the \$10 billion federal telecommunications system. This lack of leadership affects almost every area where action by a central manager is required and it is critical that an overall strategy be formulated so that all federal requirements are considered and all technical and management alternatives are thoroughly evaluated. OMB and GSA have no overall framework for a federal management strategy to (1) determine which requirements must be met by centrally provided services, (2) establish guidelines for buying versus leasing equipment, (3) provide governmentwide standards, and (4) define the responsibilities of the central managers and the individual agencies. Basic decisions have not been made, such as identifying what criteria should be used to choose among alternatives or what

technical information should be used to determine agency requirements. Such circumstances expose the government to serious problems in the development of new replacement telecommunications systems. Furthermore, these circumstances make it impossible to ascertain with any confidence whether the government is meeting its overall telecommunications objectives.

U.S. Postal Service: Postal Inspection Service's Independence and Reporting Requirements

GAO/AFMD-87-24, Apr. 16.

This report (1) compares the independence and reporting requirements of the Inspection Service with those established by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, for the Offices of Inspector General, and (2) identifies possible actions that the Congress may wish to consider to strengthen the Inspection Service's independence and to provide for congressional reporting requirements.

Transportation

FAA Staffing: Air Traffic Controllers' Work Load and Operational Performance

GAO/RCED-87-138FS, May 6.

In February 1987 GAO testified that because of shortages of full performance level controllers at Chicago's air facilities, controllers and their supervisors were concerned about their ability to maintain system safety. Retirements, training attrition, and increased air traffic had contributed to an increased work load. Operational errors at the O'Hare tower had also increased and because of inadequate flow control procedures and minimum staffing of traffic management units. Chicago's existing traffic management system relied on controllers' judgments as to how much traffic they could safely handle. This fact sheet provides information on 15 other centers and 25 terminals. Specifically, it provides data on air traffic activity, controller staffing, traffic management unit staffing, overtime, field training attrition, and operational performance.

Aviation Safety: Procedures for Registering and Certifying Air Carriers

GAO/RCED-87-115FS, May 5.

Any air carrier intending to engage in air transportation for compensation or hire must meet certain registration or certification requirements established by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation. Requirements for the majority of air carriers are minimal. Requirements for the remaining air carriers are more extensive and include an assessment of whether the air carrier has the resources and capabilities to carry out its proposed air service. If the carriers' application and supporting documentation satisfies its requirements, they are issued either a registration or a certificate, depending on the size and capacity of the carrier's aircraft. In addition, an airline cannot operate until it receives a Federal Aviation Administration air carrier operating certificate.

Trucking Deregulation: Proposed Sunset of ICC's Trucking Regulatory Responsibilities GAO/RCED-87-107, Apr. 23.

In FY 1985, the Interstate Commerce Commission spent about 483 staff-years on trucking regulatory functions, of which about 242 were spent on ancillary functions. The remaining staff-years were spent on reviewing new entrant applications and proposed rates. The budgetary effects of deregulation of these ancillary functions would depend both on which functions were retained and on what enforcement approaches were adopted by the agencies assuming these functions after ICC's role in trucking regulation ended. Gao found no consensus on the merit of retaining ICC's regulations and that sufficient information on the effectiveness and importance of these regulations was unavailable. It did identify important issues relating to insurance regulations, cargo damage liability, and data reporting that deserve close congressional attention if trucking deregulation legislation is acted on.

Housing and Community Development

Public Housing: Problems Experienced in Rehabilitating Two Projects in Glen Cove, New York GAO/RCED-87-71, Apr. 15.

Rehabilitation work on the Daniel Daly and Kennedy Heights public housing projects started in August 1984; it was anticipated that the work would be completed in August 1986 and that the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs would not have to spend more than about \$6.1 million. About 2-1/2 years have passed and the work is still not complete. HUD's financial obligation could increase by more than \$1.6

million. Cause of the problems started with the general contractor's inability to carry out the work required under his contract and his unsatisfactory performance. The Glen Cove Housing Authority refused to honor the contractor's payment request of \$214,280 after he had been on the job for nine months but it appears that HUD could have taken action earlier to have him replaced. GAO believes that HUD was remiss in not taking sufficient action to resolve construction and other problems as they were identified and may not have been placed in a position of paying for cost overruns due to the general contractor's default.

Federal Buildings: Comparison of Oakland and San Francisco Alternatives

Acc. No. 133043 (GAO/GGD-87-79BR), May 15.

This report compares the construction of a new federal building in Oakland, California, to the acquisition of a building now under construction in San Francisco, California. The Oakland building design process has not reached a point to allow a complete life-cycle cost analysis or to compare design efficiencies but the cost analysis GAO did perform favored the Oakland building; however, it is clearly dependent upon assumptions subject to change. The General Services Administration has broad concerns of reducing leasing costs on a nationwide basis. It is correct in seeking ways to reduce these costs and has made a commitment to Oakland which represents a way of reducing lease costs in the San Francisco area. This arrangement represents a potential change in the way the federal government finances its building projects which, by fostering cooperation with local and state governments, could lead to long-term budget reductions.

Social Services

Plant Closings: Information on Advance Notice and Assistance to Dislocated Workers GAO/HRD-87-86BR, Apr. 17.

About 16,200 business establishments, with 50 or more employees, closed or had a permanent layoff resulting in the dislocation of 1.3 million workers during 1983 and 1984. Most establishments (66 percent) with 100 or more employees provided 14 days or fewer advance notice to their workers. While employers with 100 or more employees reported offering a wide range of assistance to workers affected by closings or layoffs, less than 30 percent offered some of the workers both financial and reemployment assistance. The most common form of assistance

offered were severance pay, continuation of health and life insurance, and job search assistance. Financial assistance, in the form of severance pay was offered by employers significantly more often to white-collar workers than to blue-collar workers.

Financing Higher
Education:
Examples Comparing
Existing and Proposed
Student Aid Programs

GAO/HRD-87-88FS, Apr. 22.

Administration proposals comparing existing federal financial assistance available under the Higher Education Act with the (1) total aid received by a student, (2) portions provided as grants and loans, and (3) portion of the student's postgraduation income that would be required to repay the loans for a range of income levels, showed that under the proposal, less aid would be provided, and there would be a shift from grants to loans which would result in larger debt burdens for students upon graduation. Graduates who work in higher paying occupations, such as engineering, would pay higher monthly payments and would repay their loans faster and with less total interest cost than those in lower paying occupations, such as social work.

Bilingual Education: Information on Limited English Proficient Students Acc. No. 132964 (GAO/HRD-87-85BR), Apr. 30.

A limited English-proficient student is an individual who comes from a home environment where a language other than English is most relied upon for communication. He has sufficient difficulty in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing English to deny him the opportunity to learn successfully in all-English classrooms. Most school programs under the Bilingual Education Act must use teaching methods involving some use of a native language other than English. But many programs may not have a classroom teacher who speaks the native language. Current debate involves whether the majority of federal funds should be earmarked to support bilingual education and to what extent alternative instructional approaches for teaching limited English proficient students should be supported under the Bilingual Education Act.

Bilingual Education: Research and Evaluation Contracts

GAO/HRD-87-64, May 18.

The Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs and the Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation awards bilingual research contracts and contract awards to operate four multifunctional centers and the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education. GAO reviewed 34 of these contracts whose value totaled \$14.7 million. As modified, their value increased to \$37.8 million. No significant deficiencies in the award of or modifications to these contracts were identified.

Student Aid: Financial Assistance to Scholarship Athletes

Acc. No. 132932 (GAO/HRD-87-78BR), May 11.

GAO visited Michigan State University to determine the academic success of athletes who receive federal financial aid compared to that of nonathletes who receive such aid. GAO found that further review of federal aid to scholarship athletes is not warranted at this time because (1) few scholarship athletes receive federal aid, (2) academic requirements for athletes are changing, and (3) data and analytical difficulties would likely prevent such a review from yielding meaningful results.

Worker Protection: Notifying Workers at Risk of Occupational Disease

GAO/HRD-87-90BR, May 11.

Identifying and notifying individual workers that they might be at risk of occupational disease is feasible, but on a small scale. It would cost about \$25 million annually to notify 300,000 workers; to establish 50 health centers; and to improve methods for identifying and treating workers at risk by funding research, training, and education. No comprehensive cost estimates for a large scale program have been developed, however, primarily because of (1) uncertainty about the number of workers to be notified, and (2) dificulties in estimating costs associated with a notification program, such as possible increases in litigation and workers' compensation claims. The principal benefit of notifying workers is the possibility of quicker and improved medical treatment.

The Fair Labor Standards Act: Selected Enforcement Activities GAO/HRD-87-68FS, Apr. 16.

Noncompliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act's minimum wage, overtime, and recordkeeping provisions is a serious and continuing problem. Employers who violate these provisions are often not penalized and the Department of Labor's enforcement of the act is weak. Labor's findings show that back wages due employees have increased. GAO's findings show that the number of FLSA complaints in the national inventory increased between FY 1984 and 1985 but decreased between FY 1985 and 1986. The number of complaints in the regional inventories

in FY 1986 ranged from a low of 548 in Boston and Seattle to a high of 6,229 in Atlanta.

Health

Immunization: Safety and Use of Polio Vaccines

Acc. No. 132933 (GAO/HRD-87-83BR), May 11.

Four federal agencies, including the Federal Drug Administration, are performing or funding research on polio viruses that ultimately may improve the safety of live polio vaccine. Three private organizations that recommend which vaccine should be used believe the current federal research on the safety of the live polio vaccine is generally adequate because the risk of an adverse effect from this vaccine is low. The Immunization Practices Advisory Committee recommends the continued use of the live polio vaccine because of its advantages over the currently licensed inactivated polio vaccine. Several steps, such as demonstrating the efficacy and safety of an improved inactivated polio vaccine, are required before this vaccine could be recommended as the preferred polio vaccine for children.

Consumer Product Safety Commission:

Concerns About CPSC's All-Terrain Vehicle Task Force Report GAO/HRD-87-74, May 20.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission established a special task force to deal with the hazards associated with all-terrain vehicles. For FY 1985 and 1986, the review of ATVS cost CPSC almost \$2.3 million, of which \$0.3 million was for contracts. The ATV task force was not intended to operate independently. However, GAO found no evidence that high-level CPSC officials tried to influence the task force's findings and recommendations. Some members of the task force stated that the report overemphasized operator problems and underemphasized engineering problems. Enforcement options were intentionally omitted from the report because such information is exempted from release to the public under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Veterans Affairs

VA Health Care: VA's Patient Injury Control Program Not Effective GAO/HRD-87-49, May 18.

At nine Veterans Administration medical centers between August 1985 and November 1986 GAO found that unexpected deaths and surgical complications had been underreported due to disincentives for staff to report them and lack of reporting guidance from and oversight by VA's central office. The VA medical centers did not (1) conduct all required investigations, (2) forward all investigation reports to the medical inspector for review, (3) forward investigation reports in a timely manner, or (4) always trend and analyze available data. Out of 714 patient records, 613 incidents—86 percent—including post-operative injuries, unexpected deaths or suicides were not reported, often because nurses were reluctant to report physician-related problems, medical staff viewed such reports negatively and persons who reported problems were not guaranteed confidentiality.

VA Health Care: Building Hospital in Florida More Cost-Effective Than Buying One in Mobile Acc. No. 132905 (GAO/HRD-87-56), May 8.

To meet increased demand for health care services among veterans in the Florida Panhandle, the Veterans Administration planned to build a new hospital in Okaloosa County, Florida. This would be more advantageous than buying and renovating a facility in Mobile, Alabama because (1) more veterans in the Gulf Coast area would have better access to a hospital in the Panhandle than one in Mobile, (2) compared with a hospital in Mobile, a hospital in the Panhandle would minimize the shifting of projected inpatient workload from existing va hospitals, and (3) buying a hospital in the Panhandle would cost \$20 million less than buying and renovating the hospital in Mobile

Administration of Justice

Fraud Hotline:

8-Year GAO Fraud Hotline Summary

GAO/OGC/OSI-87-1FS, Apr. 8.

In the 8 years of the GAO fraud hotline, over 87,000 calls have been received on the toll-free line, resulting in 13,019 cases warranting further review. Of the calls warranting further review, 70 percent were received from anonymous sources; 26 percent of these were from federal employees. Of the 13,019 cases, 10,553 have been closed. Of these closed cases, 1,468 were substantiated and in another 545, the reported allegations were not substantiated, but the agencies acted to prevent or minimize the possibility of an improper activity from occurring in the future. GAO believes that it is reasonable to conclude that millions of dollars in waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement have been identified as a result of calls to its hotline.

INS Pre-Inspection: Trial Program at Shannon International Airport

GAO/GGD-87-71, Apr. 30.

Under the Immigration and Naturalization Service's trial pre-inspection program between July 1986 and October 1986, U.S. bound travelers' documents were inspected at Shannon International Airport rather than at domestic airports to determine such individuals' admissibility to the United States. The pre-inspection had no adverse economic impact on U.S. airports since airlines participating in the program did not change their flight patterns to take advantage of the program. The cost was about \$351,000 of which about \$51,000 was reimbursable to INS from participating airlines. INS believes that an expansion of the pre-inspection program will result in more detection of inadmissible foreigners to the United States than do its inspections at domestic ports.

Illegal Aliens: Extent of Problems Experienced by Returned Salvadorans Not Determinable

Acc. No. 132935 (GAO/NSIAD-87-158BR), May 12.

The Intergovernmental Committee for Migration has not reported a single case of political persecution involving returnees to El Salvador. However, some returnees have reported personal security problems. The reliability of information developed by ICM, human rights organizations,

and the U.S. embassy in San Salvador is limited, and therefore the frequency or extent of political violence or persecution experienced by returnees cannot be determined. Human rights abuses in El Salvador are still occurring but with distinctly less intensity and frequency than previously. But data limitations on these abuses weaken the validity of the information on the extent of such occurrences.

Immigration: How INS' Los Angeles District Office Responds to Enquiries GAO/GGD-87-74FS, May 12.

The Los Angeles District Office responds on average to 1,223 congressional inquiries each month through its Congressional Liaison Office. In FY 1986, LADO received over 330,000 in-person inquiries and 360,000 telephone inquiries. As of October 1986, it had a backlog of 2,000. Its telephone answering system provides pre-recorded information in Spanish as well as in English and the self-service area in its reception room provides printed information in both languages. The majority of LADO's information staff of 30 speaks another language in addition to English. For its staff who deal with the public, courses on immigration law and procedures, stress management, and cross-cultural awareness are available.

Drug Investigations:
Organized Crime Drug
Enforcement Task Force
Program's
Accomplishments

GAO/GGD-87-64BR, May 6.

During calendar years 1983 and 1984 the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force reported 1,408 offenders convicted: GAO identified 1,528. OCDETF also reported that about 80 percent of the 1,408 convicted offenders were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, with about 33 percent of those convicted receiving terms of more than 5 years. Criminal fines assessed were \$9.624,000, according to OCDETF: GAO identified \$9,607,900. Non-drug asset seizures were \$157.6 million and forfeitures to the government were \$52 million. GAO could not verify these amounts because supporting documentation was not maintained by OCDETF

General Government

Federal Pay:

Changes to the Methods of Comparing Federal and Private Sector Salaries Acc. No. 132945 (GAO/GGD-87-8), May 14.

In 1986, the federal government employed about 1.5 million white-collar employees under the General Schedule at an annual salary cost of about \$38.4 billion. To enhance the annual survey and pay comparability process, several changes have been implemented including (1) surveying additional occupations and occupational levels, (2) comparing only permanent, regular-rate employees, (3) using median rather than mean salaries, and (4) obtaining data from smaller establishments and additional industries. All but one of the changes resulted in a reduction of the calculated pay gap between federal and private sector salaries. The changes improved the accuracy of pay comparability determinations. Congress has directed that the annual survey be replaced with an even broader survey that would provide information on white-collar fringe benefits as well as on salaries.

Federal Personnel: Annual Report on Activities of OPM and MSPB, Fiscal Year 1986

Acc. No. 132946 (GAO/GGD-87-57), May 13.

This is GAO's annual report on the activities of the Office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board. It includes an analysis of whether the actions of the Office are in accord with merit system principles and free from prohibited personnel practices. Previous reports covering significant activities of each of these offices are discussed where appropriate.

Freedom of Information: Cost of Collecting and Processing Fees

GAO/GGD-87-58FS, Apr. 7.

Reasonable standard fees may be charged by agencies to citizens who request documents under the Freedom of Information Act. Cost estimates provided by 15 agencies GAO covered ranged from "negligible" to \$25.00 for processing individual fee. Only the Department of Health and Human Services was able to provide a detailed, step-by-step estimate which averaged \$12.40 for each transaction.

Internal Controls: Federal Supply Service Depot Transportation Costs Can Be Reduced Acc. No. 132904 (GAO/GGD-87-63), May 8.

The Federal Supply Service spends about \$37 million to transport depotstocked merchandise by motor freight carrier to federal agencies. Additionally, it spends about \$7 million annually to transport goods to federal agencies by other means such as small package carriers. FSS might be able to save at least \$3.8 million of the \$37 million annually by consolidating multiple shipments. GAO recommends that FSS modify the internal control system which holds its depots accountable for meeting shipment timeliness goals to include accountability for consolidating multiple, same-day shipments to the same customer agency. FSS should also include, as part of its depot automation project, the feasibility of modifying automated system processes to minimize the generation of documents that, without manual intervention by depot personnel, authorize multiple shipments.

Decennial Census: A Comparison of the 1980 and 1990 Census Questionnaire Contents GAO/GGD-87-76FS, May 11.

The proposed 1990 questionnaire content for the census is similar to that included in the 1980 census questionnaires, except that (1) congregate housing has been included in the 100-percent data and housing quality in the sample data; (2) nine topics relating to the identification of housing units and indicators of housing quality have been dropped; and (3) one topic, the presence of a telephone, was moved from the sample data to the 100-percent data.

Congressional Testimony by GAO Officials Current AFDC Work Program and Implications for Federal Policy, by Joseph F. Delfico, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy, Senate Committee on Finance. Feb. 23, GAO/T-HRD-87-9.

The Organization and Operations of the Postal Inspection Service: Proposals to Strengthen Independence and Reporting Requirements, by John J. Adair, Accounting and Financial Management Division, before the Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, April 30. GAO/T-AFMD-87-11. Acc. No. 132855.

Findings on Current AFDC Work Programs and Implications for Pending Legislation, by Joseph F. Delfico, Human Resources Division.

before the House Committee on Education and Labor, April 30. GAO/T-HRD-87-12.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Planned Use of Information Technology for the Space Station, by Cari R. Palmer, Information Management and Technology Division, before the Subcommittee on HUD-Independent Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations, May 1. GAO/T-IMTEC-87-5. Acc. No. 132821.

Medical Devices: Early Warning of Problems is Hampered by Severe Underreporting, by Eleanor Chelimsky, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division, before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, May 4. GAO/T-PEMD-87-4. Acc. No. 132822.

The Department of Transportation's Recent Efforts to Strengthen Pipeline Safety, by Kenneth M. Mead, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, May 5, GAO/T-RCED-87-22. Acc. No. 132873.

<u>Proposed Strategic Defense Initiative Institute</u>, by Harry R. Finley, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces and Nuclear Deterrence, Senate Committee on Armed Services, and the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Matters, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, May 6. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-32. Acc. No. 132874.

FAA Work Force Issues, by Herbert R. McLure, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Senate Committee on Appropriations, May 7. GAO/T-RCED-87-25. Acc. No. 132875.

Federal Aviation Administration's Acquisition of the Advanced Automation System, by Carl R. Palmer, Information Management and Technology Division, before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Senate Committee on Appropriations, May 8. GAO/T-IMTEC-87-6. Acc. No. 132908.

Effects of Delays in FAA's NAS Plan, by Herbert R. McLure, Resources. Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Senate Committee on Appropriations, May 8. GAO/T-RCED-87-23, Acc. No. 132907.

The Inspector General Act Amendments of 1987, by John J. Adair, Accounting and Financial Management Division, before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, May 12. GAO/T-AFMD-87-14. Acc. No. 132997.

Proposed Legislation For GAO Investigation of Displaced Salvadorans and Nicaraguans, by Joseph E. Kelley, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Subcommittee on the Rules of the House, House Committee on Rules, May 13. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-33. Acc. No. 132950.

Perspectives on the Securities and Exchange Commission's Budget, by William J. Anderson, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Securities, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, May 13. GAO/T-GGD-87-16. Acc. May 13. GAO/T-GGD-87-16.

<u>Va's Home Loan Guaranty Program</u>, by John H. Luke, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Housing and Memorial Affairs, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, May 13. GAO/T-RCED-87-24. Acc. No. 132937.

Medicare Payment for Hospital-Based Physician Services, by Michael Zimmerman, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Health, House Committee on Ways and Means, May 13. GAO/T-HRD-87-13. Acc. No. 132951.

Improving Internal Controls and Accounting, by Jeffrey C. Steinhoff, Accounting and Financial Management Division, before the State of New York Legislative Commission on Public Management Systems. May 13. GAO/T-AFMD-87-13. Acc. No. 132938.

Administrative Structure of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, by Franklin Frazier, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Consumer, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, May 13. GAO/T-HRD-87-14. Acc. No. 132949.

The Need for Strong Central Oversight of the Federal Government's "War on Drugs," by Arnold P. Jones, General Government Division, before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, and the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, May 14. GAO/T-GGD-87-17. Acc. No. 132939.

Inspection Activities of the Food Safety and Inspection Service, by Brian Usilaner, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, May 15. GAO/T-GGD-87-15. Acc. No. 132966.

Information System Security in Federal Civilian Agencies, by Thomas P. Giammo, Information Management and Technology Division, before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Aviation and Materials, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, May 19. GAO/T-IMTEC-87-7. Acc. No. 132998.

Legal Opinion Concerning the Exercise of Options in Section 8(a) Contracts and Comments on a Pertinent Provision in H.R. 1807 Amending the Small Business Act, by Harry R. Van Cleve, General Counsel, before the Subcommittee on Procurement, Innovation, and Minority Business Development, House Committee on Small Business, May 20. T-OGC-87-1. Acc. No. 133002.

Proposed Legislation for GAO Investigation of Displaced Salvadorans and Nicaraguans, by Joseph E. Kelley, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, House Committee on the Judiciary, May 20. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-34. Acc. No. 132999.

Small Business Administration Employees Assigned to the White House, by Rosslyn Kleeman, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Procurement, Innovation, and Minority Enterprise Development, House Committee on Small Business, May 20. GAO/T-GGD-87-19. Acc. No. 133000.

Federal Employee Drug Testing, by L. Nye Stevens, General Government Division, before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, May 20. GAO/T-GGD-87-18. Acc. No. 133001.

The Export-Import Bank of the U.S.: Financial Condition and Budget Issues, 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, May 21. GAO/T-AFMD-87-15. Acc. No. 133018.

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NTSB Recommendations, by Herbert R. McLure, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Aviation, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, May 28. GAO/T-RCED-87-28.

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