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The effect of senior military officers' assignment policies and practices were reviewed with an emphasis on: the cost and extent of senior officer reassignment, reasons for reassignments, the services' assignment policies, and control which may be needed to manage turbulence. Findings/Conclusions: The military made 1.6 permanent change of station moves at a cost of \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 1977. Senior officers accounted for 1% of all moves and 4% of all costs. Worldwide staffing requirements, career development, training, promotions, and retirements are the principal reasons for reassignments. There are no criteria to define how often senior officers should be reassigned to provide continuity, accountability of decisions, good performance, and unit readiness. The thrust in recent years has been to achieve stability by reducing permanent change of station costs. While costs should be a factor, a more rational reassignment policy for senior officers should also consider the effects of frequent reassignments on other elements of personnel policy. The total effect of turbulence, a term used for refer to shortened tours and their effect on the permanent change of station budget, has not been measured. Since senior officers are only a small part of the total military personnel, reducing senior officer movement will not greatly reduce the permanent change of station appropriation. Recommendations: The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the services need to develop specific policies on senior officers. They also need to better control the reassignment process so that reassignments will not be excessive. This will involve defining turbulence and developing a control system that identifies total reassignments, measures levels of reassignments, and provides for corrective action. (RRS)

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REPORT BY THE *RELEASED 3/27/78*

# Comptroller General

OF THE UNITED STATES

## Reassignment Of Senior Military Officers Can Be Managed Better

The Department of Defense has continually improved its reassignment policies to reduce permanent change of station costs. The policy changes, however, were not based on systematic analyses.

Career development, job performance, accountability for decisions, combat readiness, and other personnel factors need to be evaluated and standards established. GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense establish these criteria and strengthen his current exception reporting system. This report was requested by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.





COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-125037

The Honorable Warren G. Magnuson  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On April 21, 1977, the previous Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, asked us to review the effect of senior military officers' (O-5 and above) assignment policies and practices on permanent change of station appropriation needs. He requested that the study compare the personnel rotation policies of large national and international corporations and foreign military services with the policies of our military departments. He suggested that this study be limited to O-5s and above and corporate executives. The suggested objectives were to determine (1) whether new policies that would reduce costs could be adopted and (2) the extent to which controls might be needed to see that those making permanent change of station decisions comply with the policies.

The Chairman's office told us on August 8, 1977, that a comparison of our military rotation policies with those of foreign governments was not necessary and that it was principally interested in the extent of short-term reassignments (whether permanent change of station is involved or not) of senior officers, which they referred to as "turbulence."

Appendixes I through V discuss

--cost and extent of senior officer reassignment;

--reasons for reassignments;

--the services' assignment policies, including a comparison with those of multinational corporations;

--controls which may be needed to manage turbulence;  
and

--the scope of this review.

COST AND EXTENT OF PERMANENT CHANGE  
OF STATION REASSIGNMENTS

The Department of Defense formally categorizes permanent change of station moves as (1) operation , (2) unit, (3) accession, (4) separation, (5) training, and (6) rotational. These apply to all reassignments of officers and enlisted personnel. We included O-5s as senior officers, although the military services do not.

The military made 1.6 million permanent change of station moves at a cost of \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 1977. Senior officers accounted for 1 percent of all moves and 4 percent of all costs.

Trends indicate that the number of moves is declining. The total number of moves will decline by 14 percent, and senior officer moves will decline by 5.5 percent between fiscal years 1975 and 1978. Inflation has caused average permanent change of station costs to increase. Between fiscal years 1975 and 1978, the average cost of moving a senior officer will increase about 18 percent.

REASONS FOR REASSIGNING  
SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS

Worldwide staffing requirements, career development, training, promotions, and retirements are the principal reasons for reassignments. Other reasons are to meet humanitarian concerns, statutory requirements, reorganizations, and billet changes.

When a reassignment is made it often creates a number of additional moves. This chain reaction is particularly pronounced at the general and flag officer level.

No criteria spell out how often senior officers should be reassigned to provide continuity, accountability for decisions, good performance, and unit readiness. Trade-offs should be made between the benefits of stability to be gained from leaving the officer in the position versus the benefits of a dynamic personnel structure to be gained from rotation and training. To make sure that reassignments do the most good, criteria setting forth the minimum number of reassignments needed to maintain combat readiness, career development goals, and all interrelated factors must be developed and used in making reassignments.

The thrust in recent years has been to achieve stability by reducing permanent change of station costs. While costs should be a factor, a more rational reassignment policy for senior officers should also consider the effects of frequent reassignments on other elements of personnel policy.

POLICIES FOR REASSIGNING SENIOR  
MILITARY OFFICERS

Department of Defense Directive 1315.7, "Military Personnel Assignments," establishes uniform rotation policies, including length of overseas tours. The services issued regulations and instructions implementing and expanding the directive. Most reassignment policies are directed at all officers and career enlisted personnel. The only grade distinction usually made is between general and flag officers and the rest of the officers. Only the Navy's established policies vary by grade.

In 1975 the Office of the Secretary of Defense began revising its guidelines to improve stability and reduce costs by:

- Extending a minimum continental United States tour from 2 to 3 years.
- Establishing a minimum 2-year tour for general and flag officers.
- Adopting a homebasing policy under which O-5s and below assigned to unaccompanied, hardship overseas tours will be returned to the location of their previous CONUS assignment.
- Providing quarterly exception reports to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

A revised policy incorporating the proposed changes was not issued until December 1977.

Tour length policies were developed on what appeared reasonable and achievable bases. Neither the Office nor the services formally analyzed whether their policies would provide optimum stability. Service arguments about Office revisions were usually based on what could not be done rather than on what could be done to guarantee optimum stability. As a result, neither the Office nor the services were assured that senior officers' tours would provide optimum stability.

Some major policies may permit too many senior officers to be reassigned. Minimum tours for all general and flag officers are 2 years. With the exception of the Marine Corps, studies made in 1976 indicated that many general and flag officer positions could be established for a minimum of 3 years. Despite these studies, the services argued against such a policy because too many exceptions would occur and it would minimize reassignment flexibility.

The minimum tour in the continental United States is 3 years. Liberal exceptions are provided in the policy, several at Air Force insistence. The policy does not require the services to report to the Office the curtailed tours for these exceptions.

Office of the Secretary of Defense policy changed from requiring a complete tour to waiving a tour after a minimum of 2 years on station for all officers selected for senior service school. Tours curtailed did not have to be reported. This change was made at the insistence of the Army and does not improve stability.

Prorating tours are used by the Army and Air Force. According to Office policy, officers assigned overseas are expected to remain in one place until the tour ends. However, Air Force and Army officers can meet overseas requirements by combining partially completed tours at multiple locations. According to service officials, the policy minimizes costs; it may not assure stability.

Officials of selected multinational corporations told us that they generally reassign executives individually and only in response to specific requirements. They do not have a planned rotation system similar to the services. We were also told that these corporations use foreign nationals to fill overseas positions. Executives being transferred received more benefits than those provided to senior military officers. These benefits included financial reimbursement for selling the family home, movement of unlimited weight, and expense-paid trips to find housing in a new city. Several industry studies support these remarks.

Neither the Office of the Secretary of Defense nor the services formally analyzed personnel management factors, job position requirements, and combat readiness needs when their reassignment policies were set up. Without these analyses, the Office, the services, and the Congress cannot know that the policies will foster optimum stability.

To better substantiate their reassignment policies, the services need to review the reasons for reassignments and explain why so many senior officers are reassigned.

Complete, formal analyses should promote policies that can support overall personnel objectives most cost effectively. Based on these analyses, Defense may want to establish special policies for senior officers to reduce their reassignments.

CONTROLS WHICH MAY BE NEEDED TO  
MANAGE TURBULENCE

Turbulence is a term widely used in the Department of Defense to refer to shortened tours and their effect on the permanent change of station budget. However, it does not include reassignments where an officer either is reassigned within the same area or rotated to a different job at the same site. Further, when a reassignment is made, negative consequences to continuity, professionalism, and accountability for decisions may occur. Therefore, we use turbulence in the broadest sense to include the other types of reassignment as well as the negative consequences of personnel reassignments.

The total effect of turbulence has not been measured. Therefore, we could not determine whether personnel reassignments caused too much of it.

Although the Office has a system to measure turbulence, it may be inadequate, because it does not:

- Identify the total turbulence picture.
- Measure acceptable turbulence levels.
- Highlight senior officers as a separate concern.
- Adequately measure turbulence from shortened tours.
- Direct the quarterly exception reports high enough in the Office so corrective action can be taken when indicated.

We analyzed three types of personnel reassignments that could cause turbulence.

### Shortened tours

Tours at the general and flag officer levels need to be better controlled. In each service, general and flag officers' tours are shortened more often than those of O-5 and O-6 officers, and general and flag officers have the lowest average time on station. The causes of curtailed tours are:

- Promotions and retirements.
- Command assignment opportunity or higher billet opportunity.
- Requirement changes.
- Critical or needed skills.
- Requests by a higher command or external authority.
- Senior service schools.
- Filling overseas requirements.

### Organizational changes

Excessive organizational changes decrease organizational continuity, accountability, and performance. Many officers go through two organizations in a time period ranging from 36.6 months to 48 months. They spend an average of 19.8 months in each organization.

### Job assignment changes

Excessive job assignment changes at the senior officer level also cause discontinuity. In the Air Force for example, lieutenant colonels frequently served in more than one job.

### CONCLUSIONS

Senior officers are only a small part of total military personnel. Reducing senior officer movement will not greatly reduce the permanent change of station appropriation. The services should, however, continue to manage costs associated with moving senior officers.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the services have made improvements in managing senior officer reassignments; however, we believe further improvements are needed.

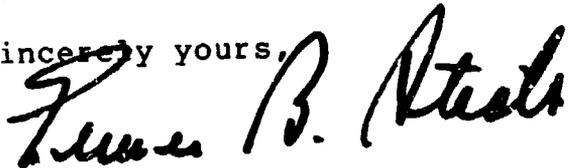
For example, the Office and the services need to develop specific policies on senior officers. This will require the services to review the factors involved in reassignment and the issues affecting senior officer turbulence.

The Office and the services also need to better control and monitor the reassignment process, so reassignments will not be excessive. This will involve defining turbulence and developing a control system that (1) identifies total reassignments, (2) measures levels of reassignments, and (3) provides for corrective action.

This report contains recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on page 29. We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the services to establish criteria to measure the total picture and set acceptable levels of turbulence and that the Secretary strengthen the current system for controlling turbulence.

Your Office requested us to arrange for release of the report 5 days after its issuance so the Department of Defense can begin immediately to act on our recommendations. Further, at your Office's request, we did not obtain comments on the report from the Department of Defense.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Stacks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Comptroller General  
of the United States

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CONUS	continental United States
GAO	General Accounting Office
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PCS	permanent change of station

PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION COSTS

Permanent change of station (PCS) moves are an integral part of Department of Defense personnel planning. PCS moves are required to maintain a balance of skills within the services, rotate individuals to and from overseas areas, train personnel in required military skills, and process personnel into and out of the services.

The PCS program is complex and costly. In fiscal year 1977, 1.6 million moves cost about \$1.6 billion. Senior officers, however, accounted for only a small amount of these moves and costs. In fiscal year 1977, about 1 percent of all moves and 4 percent of all costs were attributable to senior officers, so senior officer moves had little effect on the PCS budget.

Total PCS expenditures remained relatively stable while total PCS expenditures for senior officers increased. The increases were caused by inflation.

TYPES OF MOVES AND COSTS

PCS moves are classified either as accession, separation, training, unit, rotational, or operational.

- Accession moves occur when an individual enters active duty. Accession costs and moves are minimal for senior officers.
- Separation moves occur when an individual leaves active duty, and most are due to mandatory or voluntary retirements. The services claim to have little control over separation moves of senior officers.
- Training moves occur when an individual moves to or from a training site to attend a formal course of 20 weeks or longer.
- Unit moves occur when an individual is directed to move as a member of an organized unit from one location to another. These moves are usually caused by force realignments.
- Rotational moves occur when an individual goes from the continental United States (CONUS) to an overseas assignment or returns from an overseas assignment to CONUS. These moves are needed to maintain overseas strength and are subject to extensive management control. Rotational moves can be reduced by extending

tours and/or decreasing overseas requirements. These moves are the most costly.

--Operational moves occur when an individual goes from one duty station to another within the same theater. These moves are primarily caused by imbalances between grade and/or skill at individual installations. Operational moves are the most controllable PCS moves and are the first reduced when the PCS budget is cut.

The following table shows the percentage of PCS costs and moves in 1977.

<u>Type PCS moves</u>	<u>PCS costs</u>	<u>PCS moves</u>
	(percent)	
Separation	19	32
Accession	insignificant	insignificant
Training	6	8
Unit	insignificant	insignificant
Rotational	50	30
Operational	24	30

The total cost of the PCS program remained fairly stable during the last few years. Total PCS costs increased from \$1.44 to \$1.6 billion between fiscal years 1975 and 1977 and decreased to \$1.48 billion in fiscal year 1978. Although PCS costs remained fairly constant, the number of moves declined. In fiscal year 1975 about 1.74 million moves were made. The services estimate that 1.48 million will be made in fiscal year 1978, a 15-percent decline. Inflation primarily caused the increased costs. The average PCS cost for each move in fiscal year 1975 was approximately \$825. Based on figures provided by the services, we estimate that the average PCS cost in fiscal year 1978 will be approximately \$988, a 20-percent increase.

#### SENIOR OFFICER PCS COSTS AND MOVES

Senior officer PCS costs correspond to those of the overall PCS program. The number of moves is declining, while average costs are increasing.

We could not prepare comparative analyses for senior officers in each service because the Navy could not provide complete PCS cost data. Nonetheless, moves for the other services declined 5.5 percent between fiscal years 1975 and 1978, with an 18-percent increase in costs. Because the rate of inflation has increased faster than the rate of

decline in the number of moves, total PCS costs for senior officers should increase from \$37.6 million in fiscal year 1975 to \$44.3 million in fiscal year 1978.

Senior officer PCS moves and costs are a small part of the PCS budget. Senior officers constituted only 2 percent of the total military force at the end of fiscal year 1977. They accounted for 1 percent of all moves and 4 percent of all costs. Compared to the overall program, cost and budgetary considerations are insignificant at this level. For example, an arbitrary 10-percent reduction in the senior officer PCS budget will decrease the total PCS budget by less than 0.5 percent.

## REASONS FOR REASSIGNING SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS

The primary reason for making permanent change of station reassignments is to meet the worldwide requirements of the services. However, the reassignment process is heavily influenced by other elements of personnel policy including career development, training, promotions, and separations. The interdependent relationship of these factor must be weighed carefully when establishing reassignment policy and determining overall move requirements.

## NEED FOR PERIODIC REASSIGNMENT OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS

While most senior officers O-5 and above are located within the continental United States, these personnel are needed in virtually every area of the world by the ranks indicated in the chart below.

O-5s and Above by Area

Service grade	CONUS except D.C. area	D.C. area	Hawaii and Alaska	Europe	Asia	Africa	Central and South Americas and Caribbean Islands	Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Islands	Canada and Mexico	Middle East	Assigned to duty at sea
Air Force:											
O-5	9,106	1,481	346	1,070	369	3	62	53	5	42	-
O-6	3,692	816	179	471	158	3	28	20	4	12	-
Generals	185	315	11	37	7	1	1	1	1	4	-
Army:											
O-5	6,132	2,293	333	1,445	362	3	118	5	1	78	-
O-6	2,573	1,122	106	509	103	4	46	1	2	21	-
Generals	179	152	11	80	15	-	3	-	-	3	-
Marine Corps:											
O-5	928	344	40	32	131	-	13	2	1	1	4
O-6	317	172	31	12	56	1	2	1	-	-	3
Generals	30	29	3	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Navy (note a):											
O-5	3,524	1,671	301	270	205	11	101	46	1	20	1,492
O-6	1,576	1,316	148	147	92	4	47	26	4	10	295
Flag	120	205	28	19	6	-	6	1	-	1	28
<b>Total (note b)</b>	<b>28,305</b>	<b>9,626</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>4,093</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1,822</b>

a/Reflects billet structure. Actual officer location may vary slightly.

b/Does not include officers assigned to overseas duty at unspecified locations.

All personnel requirements, whether CONUS or overseas, are established by rank as well as by location. When staffing these requirements, the military normally assigns officers with the stipulated rank.

To avoid separating a service member and dependents from the mainstream of U.S. life for a long time, the services periodically rotate people into and out of overseas positions. The services' policy is to equitably assign people overseas, especially in areas where officers cannot be accompanied by their dependents. Long-term family separations can create morale problems, threaten family stability, and cause costly attrition. Therefore, unaccompanied tours are very short, usually lasting about 1 year.

#### Providing programed career development

Service policy is to provide all officers with a variety of assignments to broaden their experience and adequately prepare them to function in positions of increased responsibility and particularly to function in command-related positions. Through this process the services create a large pool of officers from which to fill limited leadership positions. Providing this experience while filling authorized positions requires officers to be reassigned.

Certain types of job experience are required before advancement to a higher rank. Frequent turnover in these positions, sometimes known as ticket-punching tours, is required to provide enough officers with the proper experience on their records. For example, Department of Defense Directive 1320.5 dated December 2, 1959, requires duty in a joint service billet as a prerequisite to promotion to general or flag rank. The services must assure that promotable candidates have such experience.

The services also send senior officers through grade O-6 to senior service school. This training normally lasts about 1 year. To attend school, the officers are reassigned to the school site. Upon completion of the course, officers must again be reassigned. In fiscal year 1977, the services sent the following numbers of officers to senior service schools.

<u>Service</u>	<u>0-5</u>	<u>0-6</u>	<u>Total</u>
Army	271	67	338
Navy	184	49	233
Air Force	420	111	531
Marine Corps	<u>66</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>86</u>
Total	<u>941</u>	<u>247</u>	<u>1,188</u>

The services also reassign officers as part of normal career progression. As officers are promoted they assume positions of increased responsibility. The services attempt to preserve the hierarchy of rank by matching an officer's rank and seniority with a position of appropriate responsibility. Therefore, shortly after being promoted, a senior officer is normally reassigned to a position of the appropriate grade.

During fiscal year 1977, the following numbers of officers were selected for promotion at the senior officer level.

<u>Service</u>	0-5 to <u>0-6</u>	0-6 to <u>0-7</u>	0-7 to <u>0-8</u>	0-8 to <u>0-9</u>	0-9 to <u>0-10</u>	<u>Total</u>
Army	655	42	24	16	5	742
Navy	495	43	35	7	1	581
Air Force	813	45	35	12	4	909
Marine Corps	<u>83</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>101</u>
Total	<u>2,046</u>	<u>142</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2,333</u>

A career field can also affect the need for reassignments. The Navy and Air Force especially identify officers by their career specialty. In each service the number of an officer's reassignments can vary according to career field. The Navy, in fact, formally varies its prescribed tour lengths by officer community, such as surface ship, submarine, or aviation. For example, because nuclear-trained submarine officers are in short supply, prescribed tours of duty at sea are generally longer than those of most other officers. These officers remain with their units longer and are reassigned less frequently.

### Retirements

Retirements are another source of reassignments. For each retirement, the officer is moved from the last duty station to the place of retirement. The position vacated must be filled by reassigning another officer into the open position. In fiscal year 1977, the following numbers of 0-5s and above retired from the services.

<u>Service</u>	<u>0-5</u>	<u>0-6</u>	<u>Flag and general</u>	<u>Total</u>
Army	877	472	43	1,392
Navy	624	402	50	1,076
Air Force	1,496	806	54	2,356
Marine Corps	<u>177</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>246</u>
Total	<u>3,174</u>	<u>1,738</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>5,070</u>

Retirements are normally approved when requested. The only requirements that must be met are:

- 1 year on current station or completion of overseas tour.
- 2 years in current grade.
- Completion of any educational obligation.

During fiscal year 1977, the services disapproved or delayed very few senior officer retirement requests when these requirements were met.

#### Effect of high stress positions

High stress positions also influence reassignments. For example, several positions in the officer billet structure, such as Strategic Air Command wing commanders, are exceptionally stressful positions. The Air Force recognizes that prolonged assignment to them exposes the officer to undue strain and heightens the danger of a major mistake. Consequently, officers serving in such positions are frequently reassigned.

#### Other requirements

The services also must respond to the human needs of their officers. Moves are sometimes required for compassionate reasons such as illness, death in a family, or other bona fide hardship.

Other moves are required by law. For example, 10 U.S.C. 8031 limits to 4 years the time an officer may serve in the executive part of the Department of the Air Force. After completing the tour, the officer must be reassigned or separated.

Reorganizations, changes in unit location or ship homeport, and installation deactivation are other reasons why personnel are reassigned.

### Chain effect of move requirements

Reassignments for any of the reasons above can often create a chain of moves. When the initial reassignment is made, the resulting vacancy must then be filled by reassigning another officer. For example, during fiscal year 1977, the Navy was unexpectedly requested to reassign a flag officer to a billet outside the Navy. This one reassignment required at least six other officer reassignments to fill the vacancies created. Similar chains can occur after general and flag officers retire.

Not every reassignment initiates such a reversion. In the Marine Corps, for instance, positions vacated by officers being reassigned to overseas unaccompanied billets are sometimes filled by officers returning from such billets. In these instances, no chain is created.

While chains are not always created by a reassignment, we believe the difficulty in efficiently reassigning senior officers should be recognized.

### FREQUENCY OF REASSIGNMENT

No criteria exist to adequately determine how often senior officers should be reassigned. Senior officers can dramatically affect their organization's performance. At this level we believe it is particularly important for reassignment to provide continuity, accountability, good performance, and unit readiness. Too many changes in these positions could produce such turbulence that critical performance problems could occur. Likewise, military components should not be permitted to grow stale under a leadership too long in one position. Determining how often to reassign personnel involves a trade-off between benefits from stability versus benefits of more dynamic personnel structure.

### Advantages of stability

Reduced turbulence can provide important benefits to the organization. In addition to reducing cost, fewer moves can improve organizational continuity, decisionmaking accountability, and individual job performance.

### Cost reduction

A tour can be defined as the time between reassignments. When officers remain on station longer, fewer PCS moves are made, resulting in reduced PCS costs. The House and Senate

Appropriations Committees have both identified this relationship in their Committee reports.

At the senior officer level, however, total costs are minimal and not the major issue. The more important advantages of stability at this level are related to reduced organizational turbulence.

Reduced PCS costs may not always be the best indicator of reduced turbulence. Officers can be reassigned, generating turbulence, without increasing costs. In many instances senior officers are reassigned from one unit to another in the same area with little or no money spent. Such reassignments can disrupt a unit as much as a reassignment out of the area.

#### Increased organizational continuity and decisionmaking accountability

Less frequent reassignments improve organizational continuity. Fewer leadership changes in key positions mean units spend less time adjusting to new leadership styles and concepts. This lets the unit better interact with its leadership which can improve unit readiness.

In addition to increasing organizational continuity, longer tenure can help improve accountability for decisions. When decisionmakers remain in positions long enough to experience the consequences of their actions, they can be expected to make decisions with a more long-term outlook in mind.

#### Improved individual job performance

Fewer reassignments can also benefit an officer's performance. When officers remain in their jobs for longer periods, the overall experience level increases and improved individual job performance results.

#### Advantages of more frequent turnover

Three advantages of more frequent turnover are fresh management ideas, better career development, and improved morale. Extended periods of incumbency, in contrast, can produce both organizational and individual dormancy.

A more dynamic personnel structure can bring improved operational readiness. With frequent senior officer turnover, new and different approaches are continually being brought to the unit. Accordingly, the leadership does not grow stale or complacent.

The career time frame of every officer is limited. With more and frequent reassignments, each officer can be exposed to more and different types of duty and responsibilities. This in turn gives the services more chances to assess their officers under varying circumstances and can facilitate better selections to top-level positions. More frequent turnover in command positions can improve readiness in event of hostilities by providing more officers with critical operational command experience.

Long-term duty in arduous positions or in areas where dependents are not allowed lowers morale and increases attrition. Conversely, more opportunities to serve in highly sought after positions (provided by fast turnover) provide an incentive to remain in the service and perform effectively.

### CONCLUSIONS

Reassignment requirements cannot be considered in a vacuum. The need for reassignments is determined by many interrelated factors, including force structure and distribution and established personnel procedures. The validity of these factors must be emphasized when assessing PCS requirements.

The most desirable number of reassignments is determined through a trade-off of the benefits from personnel stability versus those of a more dynamic personnel structure. This trade-off involves the inter-dependent relationships of numerous personnel policy elements. While the thrust in recent years has been to closely manage the reassignment process to reduce PCS costs and moves, sound reassignment policy for senior officers should objectively weigh each benefit and address its effect on other personnel policy elements.

POLICIES FOR REASSIGNINGSENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS

Rotation of senior officers is managed through various Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and service policies specifying reassignment criteria, tour lengths, and fairness to personnel. OSD policy is to promote personnel stability by limiting permanent change of station moves to those required to support personnel requirements. The policy also attempts to fairly distribute overseas duty assignments. Since 1973 congressional funding pressure and reviews by the Department of Defense and other agencies caused many changes to reassignment policies. Policies adopted, however, were generally developed without formal analyses defining optimum stability or reassignment frequency. Without evidence to substantiate the validity of reassignment policy in the context of overall personnel management, neither the services nor the Congress can be assured that the best tour lengths have been established.

Lacking convincing justification of reassignment policies, OSD and the services have had major policy differences. The issues raised affect the frequency of reassignments and the extent of resulting turbulence. These and other considerations should be weighed when reviewing reassignment policies.

TOUR LENGTH POLICIES CHANGING  
UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY

Department of Defense Directive 1315.7, Military Personnel Assignments, establishes uniform reassignment policies, including the length of overseas tours of all services. The services issue regulations and instructions implementing and expanding upon the directive. Most policies are directed at all officers but affect career enlisted personnel as well. The only grade distinction usually made is between general and flag officers and the rest of the officers. Only the Navy has established tour length policies that vary by grade.

In response to congressional pressures and various studies, OSD made several attempts to improve the directive. Several of its ideas were strongly opposed by the services, delaying approval of the revisions. The approved directive included many of the services' concerns.

### Reviews of reassignment policy

Reassignment policy has been frequently scrutinized to reduce personnel turbulence and conserve PCS funds. This attention has come from a variety of sources.

The Congress has supplied the most visible pressure for reducing PCS funds. Since 1973 Senate and House Appropriations Committees have closely monitored PCS funding requests. Over the years the Committees made numerous recommendations resulting in sizable cost reductions and changes to PCS policies. In fiscal year 1978 reports, the Committees acknowledged these savings and commended the services for their response. However, the Committees stated that PCS funding remains an area of particular concern.

Several OSD audit analysis groups also have critically reviewed the military reassignment process.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense formed the Turbulence Ad Hoc Study Group in April 1974 to study the possibility of reducing PCS costs and increasing force effectiveness. The study group analyzed 40 specific actions that might reduce costs and turbulence. It rejected 9 actions, decided to implement 5, and recommended that the remaining 26 be evaluated in greater depth by the services.

In July 1975 the Defense Manpower Commission issued a staff paper on overseas rotation and tour lengths. The study addressed the methods used to replace personnel required in overseas positions and the impact of overseas requirements on tours in the continental United States. The paper concluded that rotation of individual military members was cheaper and more efficient than unit rotation. The paper also determined that PCS cost and turbulence could be further reduced through specific service management actions.

In September 1975 the OSD audit group issued a report on selected PCS policies, procedures, and controls, including the projection of overseas travel requirements, PCS budgeting, and the role of PCS in career development. The report made several recommendations relating to PCS programming and budgeting. It also recommended that the services evaluate their career development assignment practices to make sure they are compatible with OSD turbulence reduction ideas. OSD generally agreed with these recommendations.

In September 1976 the OSD audit group also issued a report on reassignments from duty stations in the United

States. This report examined the validity of requirements for making PCS moves and the extent to which the services were moving people from U.S. stations before they completed their tours. The audit recommended that all services annually justify their move requirements from a zero base and that procedures be established to assure maximum compliance with tour length policies. OSD stated that zero-base budgeting for move requirements was not feasible. It did agree to use tighter controls to reduce personnel turbulence.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and we have also studied the reassignment issue. In September 1975 OMB produced a preliminary report, "Study on Military Travel System," directed at identifying and evaluating reassignment policies and procedures for managing each service's move program. It also evaluated move system efficiency and measured the consistency of move programs with established policy and procedures. Among its 21 specific recommendations were suggestions for Defense to prescribe uniform minimum CONUS tour lengths, extend the eligibility period for attendance at senior service school, and include cost considerations as explicit criteria in generating personnel reassignments. This report was never issued as a final report. OMB felt the preliminary report produced much of the desired effect.

In April 1976 we issued a report, "Rotation Policies and Practices Have Been Changed for the Better--But Room for Improvement Remains" (FPCD-76-45). This report was primarily directed at the services' efforts to control unnecessary rotations of enlisted personnel. The report commended the services for their initiatives but noted that many unnecessary enlisted PCS moves were still being made. The report suggested that the Congress require Defense to identify the effect of actions to reduce turbulence on future appropriations.

#### OSD policy being constantly revised

In the context of critical scrutiny by the Congress and other independent reviewers, OSD began in 1975 to propose revisions of its reassignment policy. These revisions were directed at Defense Directive 1315.7, dated July 9, 1974, that provided for

--a minimum 2-year tour in CONUS,

--3-year tours in major and installation headquarters,  
and

--3- to 4-year overseas accompanied tours.

In December 1975 OSD questioned this policy and proposed alternatives. The Brehm memorandum, issued by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) on December 24, 1975, proposed that tours for officer and enlisted personnel be for a minimum of 3 years, with the exception of unaccompanied tours and hardship locations. Additionally, general and flag officers' tours were to be for a minimum of 2 years. The services were requested to

- adopt a homebasing policy in which people assigned to unaccompanied overseas tours would be returned to their previous U.S. duty locations,
- establish objectives for satisfying total reassignment requirements with local no-cost moves, and
- provide quarterly exception reports to OSD.

Contrary to their initial expectations, OSD was slow in revising Directive 1315.7 to reflect ideas in the Brehm memorandum. The 1974 directive was not revised until 1976 and 1977, because of service objections, particularly by the Air Force and Army. The final version was approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on December 6, 1977. It establishes:

- Minimum 3-year CONUS assignments for all career personnel. To recognize service objections, however, a number of exceptions are authorized. For instance, the requirement is waived when an officer is sent to senior service school, to certain overseas billets, or during weapons system conversions.
- Minimum 2-year assignments for general and flag officers.
- A minimum 2-year time-on-station requirement for officers selected to attend senior service colleges.
- A homebasing policy under which O-5s and below assigned to unaccompanied, hardship overseas tours will be returned to the location of their previous CONUS assignment.

#### INDIVIDUAL SERVICE POLICIES

Each service developed reassignment policies to implement and supplement the directive. For example, sea duty

and duty with forces deployed unaccompanied in the Western Pacific are matters of interest only to the Navy and Marine Corps. Defense policy grants individual control over these tours to the Navy.

Service policies in effect during our review are shown in the chart below.

Service Policies

<u>Service</u>	<u>CONUS tour</u>	<u>Command tour</u>	<u>General and flag tour</u>	<u>Requirements for senior service school attendance</u>	<u>Overseas tour</u>
Navy	Varies by grade and community from 30 months for surface commanders to 48 months for aviation commanders.	Varies by grade and community from 1 year for aviation commanders to 3 years for submarine commanders and captains as well as aviation captains on nuclear carriers.	Two to 3 years, goal of 3 years except for combat commands at sea.	Completed previous tour of duty; attend at end of tour of duty within 3 years after selection.	Sea duty set by the Navy; varies by grade and community from 1 year for Medical Service Corps captains and commanders to 4 years for submarine commanders; overseas shore tours set by Defense directive, varying by country and accompanied status.
Marine Corps	Three-year minimum for O-5s and O-6s.	Depends on tour length in the area. Tenure in most command positions is not centrally prescribed but determined by local commanding general.	No written policy. Two years on station as set by OSD policy.	Minimum of 2 years on station.	Unaccompanied Western Pacific tour set at 1 year. Other overseas tours prescribed by Defense directive, varying by country and accompanied status.
Army	Three-year minimum for O-5s and O-6s.	One to 2 years in command billet, depending upon organization and locations.	No written policy. Goals of 2 or 3 years depending on assignment. Minimum 2 years as set by OSD policy.	Minimum of 2 years on station with liberal exceptions including (a) promotion to O-6 and other must move situations, (b) previous year deferral, and (c) selection on last year of eligibility.	Prescribed by Defense directive, varying by country and accompanied status.
Air Force	No tour length specifically prescribed. Regardless of location, policy is to remain on station 2 years, with authorized exceptions.	No specific policy.	No written policy. Two years on assignment as set by OSD policy.	Target either (a) completed overseas tour or controlled tour or (b) 2 years time on station with exceptions where the officer is in his or her last year of eligibility.	Prescribed by Defense directive, varying by country and accompanied status. Modified by policy that allows officers to fulfill overseas tour length requirements with consecutive assignments at different locations within the theater.

Service policies in effect at the time of our review were not entirely consistent with OSD guidelines. We believe these inconsistencies were the result of numerous OSD revisions. Service officials said their policies will be changed to comply with the December 1977 directive.

#### LACK OF EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS TO DEFINE THE BEST TOUR LENGTHS

When establishing tour length policy, OSD and the services have a wide range of options. One used historically is permanently stationing individuals at specific locations. Another the Marine Corps is experimenting with is periodically rotating military units composed of permanent members. OSD and the services have generally adopted a policy of systematically rotating individuals between permanently stationed units after a specified time limit has elapsed. However, they generally have not made analyses to determine the most appropriate frequency between reassignments. No objective measures for unit readiness and other factors affecting the trade-off between stability and faster turnover have been established. According to a Defense Manpower Commission study, no formal definition of optimal stability has been made.

OSD and service policies have been subjectively established through experience, modified by responses to funding pressures and attempts to reduce turbulence. The prescribed method of changing OSD policy also emphasizes its subjectivity. OSD requires proposed changes to tour length to consider the desirability of the area and compare it with acceptable patterns of American living, measured by such factors as climate, available recreational activities, and transportation. It does not require the services to show the effect of changed tour lengths on other elements of personnel management.

The only quantitative analysis we found was a Navy study on command tour lengths for O-5s and O-6s. This study evaluated tours for both sea and shore command positions. Weighing the number of officers at command level grades in each community and the number of available commands, the study recommended tour lengths that compromised the desires for stability and an acceptable level of command opportunity.

Comparable detailed reviews have not been made by any of the services or OSD. Without such detailed analyses we

believe it is impossible to say that any established policy provides the best balance between stability and needed personnel turnover.

### KEY POLICY ISSUES AND THEIR EFFECT ON TURBULENCE

Lacking fully justified tour length policies, a number of disagreements on tour length and related reassignments have arisen. The issues of general and flag officer tour lengths, basic CONUS tour lengths, and on-station requirements before senior service school attendance have all been matters of controversy in recent years. Additionally, we question the policy of satisfying tour length requirements with multiple assignments in an area.

#### General and flag officer tour lengths

General and flag officer tour lengths set by Defense have been the subject of considerable controversy. The 1974 Defense directive did not single out these officers for special policy. The prescribed tour length for all officers under this directive was 2 years. While calling for a minimum 3-year tour for most personnel, the 1975 Brehm memorandum continued to recommend only a minimum 2-year tour for general and flag officers.

In August 1976, however, OSD proposed an increase in general and flag officer tour lengths for certain key billets. OSD felt that increased stability would improve management skills, professionalism, and accountability. The services were directed to define the key general and flag officer positions that should require a minimum tour length of 3 years.

Each of the services, with the exception of the Marine Corps, did this, but insisted that such a policy should not be adopted. They argued that exceptions would occur because of (1) promotions, (2) unplanned personnel requirements, (3) career development moves, and (4) voluntary separations. The services felt that maximum flexibility was necessary to best match the man to the job.

Despite OSD attempts to increase the stability of general officer assignments, the services' arguments against the minimum 3-year tour prevailed. The directive issued in December 1977 established only a minimum 2-year tour for general and flag officers.

The reasons presented by the services for not meeting a minimum 3-year tour for all general and flag officers may be valid. However, we believe general and flag officers are so important to an effective and efficient military that providing for stability, continuity, and accountability should be the primary issue. In our opinion, current policy establishes inadequate minimum criteria that do not guarantee essential stability.

#### CONUS tour lengths

OSD's attempts to extend minimum CONUS tour lengths have also been a matter of contention. The 1974 Directive 1315.7 required a minimum of 2 years on station at CONUS locations. In a proposed revision, OSD and the services agreed that the 2-year minimum would be continued. However, in early 1977 the Secretary of Defense signed a different version of the directive that required a 3-year minimum time on station for CONUS assignments.

The Air Force strongly objected to this. Its policy required only 2 years on station and modifies even this requirement with liberal exceptions. The Air Force argued that the 3-year minimum requirement limited the Air Force's readiness and assignment flexibility. Specifically, it stated that major weapons system changes being undertaken required the flexibility to waive the 3-year requirement. Internal Air Force studies also expressed the concern that increased individual time on station might preclude matching the best officer to the assignment.

Air Force arguments strongly influenced the final directive. While the directive sets a 3-year minimum time on station for CONUS tours, it reflects Air Force concerns by waiving this requirement when moves result from major weapons system changes. Moreover, OSD does not require the services to report, through its formal reporting system, tours shortened for this reason.

#### Time-on-station requirements for senior service school attendance

OSD policy in effect during our review called upon the services to see that officers completed prescribed tours before being assigned to senior service schools. In revising its overall reassignment policy, OSD attempted to retain this requirement. The Army vigorously opposed this effort. Its policy requires only that officers have a minimum of 2 years on station before being reassigned

to school. The Marine Corps has a similar requirement. However, the Army extends its policy through waivers under a variety of conditions. Waivers are granted when:

- Officers are selected for schooling on their last year of eligibility. Officers with over 23 years of service are not eligible to attend senior service school.
- Officers have been deferred from attending the previous year.
- Officers have been selected for promotion to the next highest rank or are in other must move situations.

The Army argued for its policy on several grounds. It stated that basing senior school attendance on strict time-on-station requirements could result in educating available officers rather than the best officers. The Army also contended that by deferring officers until they completed their tours, they could not get the most benefit from this educational experience.

Army's objections resulted in changes to OSD policy. The revised directive authorizes the services to waive the normal 3-year on-station requirement when sending officers to senior service school. In these cases only 2 years on station is required. Again, the services do not have to report these exceptions to OSD.

#### Intratheater transfers could cause turbulence

Directive 1315.7 prescribes overseas tour lengths by individual countries throughout the world. Officers assigned to a country overseas are expected to remain there for the prescribed tour length. The Air Force and the Army policies allow this requirement to be circumvented. Both services' procedures permit officers to curtail overseas assignments if they are reassigned to another location within the same overseas theater. Because the two services view their procedures as a legitimate interpretation of OSD requirements, the resulting tour curtailments are not reported to OSD as policy exceptions.

The primary mechanism the Army and the Air Force use to modify OSD requirements is a system called tour proration. Under this policy, the individual officer can meet overseas time-on-station requirements by combining partially

completed tours at multiple locations without serving at any single location. For example, an Army officer assigned to a 12-month tour in Korea can satisfy the time-on-station requirement by serving 4 months in Korea (one-third of the prescribed tour), be reassigned to Okinawa and serve two-thirds of the prescribed 18-month tour. While the officer completes neither tour, the Army adds the one-third complete Korea tour to the two-thirds complete Okinawa tour and considers the overseas time-on-station requirements as met.

The Air Force also has a consecutive tour program for personnel volunteering for extended overseas duty within a theater. Under this program, eligible officers can satisfy OSD requirements by serving either the prescribed tour length at the location volunteered for or by combining service at original and new locations to equal at least 12 months more than the prescribed tour length for the original location.

These tour length policies could cause conflicts between cost and turbulence considerations. The Army and the Air Force justify their policies by citing cost savings. They say that filling overseas vacancies with personnel already in the area reduces the number of costly moves from CONUS to overseas. While cost savings may occur, such policies, particularly at the senior officer level, can stir up personnel turbulence. When a senior officer leaves an assignment early, the fact that the officer stays in the area does nothing to reduce the negative effects on the losing unit's stability, management continuity, and combat readiness. We believe that, at the senior officer level at least, the advantages of reduced costs are more than offset by the effects of turbulence. Policies that formalize a system which causes such turbulence should be seriously reconsidered.

#### DIFFERING REASSIGNMENT PHILOSOPHY OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The multinational corporations we visited have no formal policies requiring systematic rotation. These corporations generally reassigned their top executives individually and only in response to a specific job requirement. These corporations attempt to fill a vacancy with the best available executive willing to accept the position. Upon selection the executive is moved. There is no system of routinely reassigning executives after a prescribed period.

While the corporations did not systematically plan reassignments, they did recognize the importance of providing career broadening experiences to their management personnel. They encourage managers to obtain experience in differing segments of the organization. The officials indicated, though, that executives normally require about a year to become fully functional in a new assignment. They estimated the most desirable tenure in an assignment as about 4 years.

The large corporations also differ from the military by providing more lucrative reimbursement for costs associated with the move. Examples of the reimbursements provided by most large corporations include

- financial assistance in selling the family residence,
- movement of unlimited weight, and
- expense paid trips to find housing in the new city.

Many firms also guarantee the sale of the employee's former residence and provide a relocation service to ease the burden of resettling the employee's family in a new area.

While recognizing the differences in reassignment philosophy and reimbursement practices, officials interviewed strongly believed that their operations should not be compared with the military system. They stated that, unlike the military, they do not have to equitably meet overseas requirements. Moreover, multinational corporations use foreign nationals to fill their executive positions.

We agree that the military has entirely different staffing needs. However, the corporation philosophy of moving highest level executives only when needed merits consideration in an environment where costs and organizational turbulence are being closely monitored and optimum reassignment frequency has not been established.

### CONCLUSIONS

How often should reassignments be made? This question has not been answered through formal quantitative analyses. Without full justified criteria, OSD and the services cannot assure either themselves or the Congress that its policies

best achieve the multiple objectives of the personnel system. To better substantiate the current military reassignment policy, a comprehensive policy review is needed. Instead of reacting to specific issues or periodic funding difficulties, the review should concentrate on the fundamental causes of reassignment requirements and address the basic issues affecting turbulence at the senior officer level. In any policy review, we believe OSD and the services should objectively respond to questions such as:

- Should senior officers be reassigned after completing a prescribed tour of duty, or should they be reassigned only in response to specific job requirements?
- If periodic rotation at this level is necessary, how long should senior officers remain in an assignment to make a maximum contribution to the organization, reduce the discontinuity of frequent leadership changes, and sustain the highest unit readiness?
- Should tour length requirements for senior officers be based on time in an assignment rather than time in an area?
- How many senior officers need to have experience in command positions to assure that top leadership positions will be filled with the best?

Formal quantitative analyses should result in policies that can be justified as supporting overall personnel system objectives most cost effectively. After detailed analyses, Defense may also consider establishing for senior officers special reassignment policies that recognize the importance of reducing turbulence at this level.

NEED FOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF SENIORMILITARY OFFICER REASSIGNMENTS

We analyzed the total picture of turbulence and measured it through the three types of personnel reassignments:

- Shortened tours, the failure to complete the normally prescribed tours.
- Service in multiple organizations within a tour.
- Specific job assignment changes at a single station on a tour.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the services should find ways to measure acceptable levels of turbulence and develop controls over these levels.

OBJECTIVE CRITERIA ON TOTAL PICTURE  
OF TURBULENCE LACKING

OSD and the services lack adequate criteria and measures of turbulence. The following definition in Defense Directive 1315.7 distinguishes permanent changes of station turbulence from personnel turnover:

- "PCS Turbulence: that degree of personnel movement which exceeds the minimum turnover required by terms of service and standard tour policy; and
- "Personnel Turnover: the number of moves normally required to maintain authorized strength levels under a stable force structure as defined in the Planning and Programming Guidance Memorandum and established assignment, rotation, and career development policies."

This definition does not include all aspects of turbulence, narrowly describing turbulence as excessive personnel movement. Defense's current criteria measure this in only one way--through shortened tours marked by a PCS. It does not measure other types of personnel reassignments which may not involve a PCS, such as service in more than one organization within a tour and job assignment changes while at one station. Defense criteria do not measure the negative consequences of turbulence or set acceptable levels.

TURBULENCE FROM SHORTENED TOURS

Statistics indicate a need for reassignment controls at the general and flag officer level. Our analysis shows a need for better management controls of service practices and requirements. The following table shows statistics on shortened tours and mean time on station for the four services.

The Services' Curtailed Tour and Time  
on Station Statistics (note a)

	Army			Air Force			Navy			Marine Corps		
	0-5	0-6	0-7+	0-5	0-6	0-7+	0-5	0-6	0-7+	0-5	0-6	0-7+
Total number in sample	104	101	132	100	99	100	100	103	77	103	100	24
Average time on station for sample (months)	38	34	25	36	33	27	29	33	26	26	15	29
Percent who curtailed tours	6	25	39	20	7	20	27	30	32	17	20	21
Average length of curtailed tours (months)	14	18	9	10	13	11	14	14	11	11	10	6
Average time on station for those who curtailed tours (months)	18	20	15	25	23	13	21	21	23	11	10	6

a/Because each service's policies, practices, and requirements are unique, we do not believe statistics on shortened tours are comparable. The Navy and Army appear to have a high overall percentage of curtailed tours. However, both have had more rigid policies, with Navy specifying all senior officer tour lengths by career fields and Army requiring 3 years on station for 0-5s and 0-6s. The Air Force appears to have low percentages of shortened tours but a more flexible tour length policy compared to the other services. The Air Force is the only service with a 2-year time on station rule for all non-OSD or other prescribed tours.

Reassignment controls needed at  
general and flag officer level

Statistics indicate that each service's general and flag officers shorten their tours more often than 0-5s and 0-6s. Curtailing general and flag officers' tours can negatively affect operational continuity, accountability for decisions, unit readiness, and job performance.

Promotions account for 62 percent of general and flag officers' curtailed tours. All the services believe a general and flag officer should be reassigned after being promoted.

Service practices and requirements  
causing curtailed tour

Various service practices and requirements cause shortened tours, primarily overseas requirements, command opportunity assignments, and senior service schools.

The need to meet specific overseas requirements shortened tours in each service. However, curtailments for this reason occurred most in the Marine Corps where about 15 percent of the personnel serve in overseas unaccompanied positions. To systematically and equitably fill these billets, the Marine Corps established a queuing system. The queue was structured so each billet is filled by the officer with the most time since previous unaccompanied duty. As a result, 41 percent of O-5, 10 percent of O-6, and 20 percent of O-7 and above tour curtailments were made so the officers could fill the unaccompanied Western Pacific billets.

Curtailments to provide command opportunities were most pronounced in the Navy and Army, both of which recognize these opportunities as valid exceptions to tour policy. In the Navy, 28 percent of flag officer curtailments were for command or higher billet opportunities. Over half of the O-6 tour curtailments were caused by command opportunity or a higher priority billet. This happened even at the O-5 level. In the Army, 28 percent of O-6 and 8 percent of general officer tour curtailments were made to provide command opportunity experience.

Assignments of officers to senior service school also can shorten tours. However, due to the Army's liberal policy requirements and practices, more tours are curtailed for this reason than in the other services. Army policy requires officers to be on station only 2 years before being reassigned to senior service school. This permits a senior officer to reduce a 3-year tour by 1 year. Army considers this legitimate. As a result, Army believes that only 5 percent of the shortened tours we identified are legitimate deviations from policy.

We believe that all senior officers who cut short prescribed tours to attend senior services school should be counted. Therefore, the extent of tour curtailments for this reason is much higher than OSD and Army recognizes. We found that 11 percent of senior officers curtailed their prescribed tours to attend senior service school.

Tours are shortened for other reasons, including

- requirements for a critical or needed skill, such as communications, cryptology, intelligence, data automation, and procurement;
- requirements changes, such as job downgrading, billet deletions, and unit reorganizations; and
- requests by a higher command or external authority.

OSD AND THE SERVICES LACK MANAGEMENT  
PROCEDURES FOR CONTROLLING ORGANIZATIONAL  
AND JOB TURBULENCE

Although OSD and the services recognize the negative effects of shortened tours, they fail to recognize the effects of organizational and job turbulence. We believe this has occurred in reaction to OSD and congressional concern over PCS costs. OSD does not establish an acceptable level of turbulence resulting from organizational or job assignment changes. The services have policies which directly conflict with increased stability objectives. The Air Force, for example, liberally waives Washington area low-cost or no-cost moves because of cost savings. The Army and Air Force permit tour proration overseas. These policies allow officers working within an area to change organizations with little or no PCS cost impact. However, at the senior officer level, stability should be a major consideration. Analysis of organizational and job turbulence is essential in developing a rational reassignment policy for senior officers.

Organizational turbulence

Organizational turbulence may result when senior officers serve in numerous organizations within an area. Management procedures are needed to control the moves senior officers make to organizations in one area. The time a senior officer spends or fails to spend in an organization is of concern at this level due to possible loss of organizational continuity, accountability, and performance.

The following chart indicates the extent of organizational turbulence.

Area Tour Statistics

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>
Number of officers with multiple organizational changes in the same area	40	43	28	17
Average months in area	38	45	48	47
Average number of organizations	2.1	2.3	2	2.3
Average months on station per organization	18	20	21	21

We also observed that at least 136 other senior officers had more than 1 organizational change on their current tour. Since these officers did not leave the area at the time of our review, we could not develop statistics similar to those above.

Job turbulence

Job turbulence may occur when senior officers serve in numerous jobs on a station. Management procedures may be needed to control excessive job changes on a station. This is true for all services and grades even though we examined only Air Force 0-5s.

Some Air Force 0-5s served at one base but had several jobs. For example, one 0-5 served 45 months on station but served as an operations officer for 10 months, as a commander for 2 months, as an operations officer for 15 months, and as a commander again for 18 months. Further examination revealed the officer served as a commander initially as a temporary assignment. Another officer served six assignments during a 45-month period on the same station. Air Force officials stated these assignments were for career development. We believe the services should be attentive to job stability at the senior officer level because excessive job turbulence may result in a loss of decisionmaking accountability and poor job performance.

NEED TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT CONTROL  
PROCEDURES BY EFFECTIVELY USING  
PRESENT OSD SYSTEM

OSD's present system requires the services to report to OSD quarterly any exceptions to tour length policy. However, we believe the system is merely a statistical collection of quarterly exception reports. For example, OSD's system fails to:

- Identify the total picture of turbulence. It identifies only tour length curtailments.
- Measure acceptable turbulence levels.
- Highlight senior officers as a separate concern.
- Adequately measure turbulence from shortened tours. Certain curtailments are not reported.
- Direct the quarterly exception reports to an authority level which takes corrective action when indicated.

OSD can better manage turbulence at the senior officer level by more effectively using its present system. OSD can, then, focus on the total picture of reassignments rather than just one type of reassignment.

CONCLUSION

We believe OSD and the services need to establish ways to measure acceptable levels of turbulence and develop control procedures to achieve these levels. When doing so, policymakers and managers should consider the total picture of turbulence, not just one element. They should at least consider the three types of personnel reassignments: shortened tours, service in several organizations in one area, and specific job changes. Several questions should be considered.

- Can turbulence at the general and flag officer levels be better managed through longer prescribed tours and better controls of promotions and retirements?
- Can turbulence at the senior military officer level be reduced by reexamining service practices and requirements?

- Should tours be curtailed for command assignment opportunity, senior service school, or to fill the Marine Corps queue or can these requirements be met without curtailed tours?
- What is the extent of organizational and job assignment turbulence at the senior officer level and what current practices encourage this turbulence?
- How many jobs on a given tour will produce ideal career development and what is the ideal time that should be served on an assignment?

We believe OSD can better manage turbulence at the senior officer level by effectively using its current system for establishing procedures and monitoring.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the services to establish:

- Criteria for measuring the total picture of turbulence, taking into account permanent changes of station and other types of personnel reassignments such as organizational and job assignment changes.
- Criteria setting acceptable levels of turbulence.

We also recommend that the Secretary of Defense strengthen the current system for controlling turbulence by:

- Developing better control procedures to achieve acceptable turbulence levels.
- Developing reporting procedures which realistically measure the true extent of turbulence and the services' success at achieving turbulence levels.
- Directing the quarterly exception reports to an authority level which takes corrective action when indicated.
- Using the system to monitor turbulence at the senior officer level and to provide the services quick feedback on OSD observations.

SCOPE

We examined policies and procedures followed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the military services in managing senior military officer reassignments and reviewed several studies and reports on the subject. We discussed officer reassignment policies and practices with officials in each service and talked to officials of selected multinational corporations about their executive reassignment policies and practices. We also reviewed surveys on corporation transfer benefits.

We developed assignment histories of randomly selected senior officers. We selected 1,143 senior officers making permanent change of station moves between October 1, 1976, and July 31, 1977. There were 333 general and flag officers (O-7 and above), 403 colonels and captains (O-6), and 407 lieutenant colonels and commanders (O-5). We reviewed personnel files and computer runs containing pertinent data on their assignments and talked to assignment officers to determine reasons for reassignment. We did not verify the accuracy of the data provided by OSD and the services nor examine the validity of the reasons causing the movement of these officers, since this would entail a lengthy, large-scale effort.

We also attempted to identify and analyze turbulence caused by reassignments; however, we could not measure the acceptable levels of turbulence because no measuring criteria exist. We did evaluate three types of turbulence:

- Shortened tours.
- Service in several organizations within a tour.
- Specific job assignment changes at a single station.

Turbulence from shortened tours was measured against each service's compliance with tour length policies in effect during our review. To analyze organizational and job assignment turbulence, we determined the number of organizations and jobs the senior officer served at on one tour in an area. We analyzed job assignment turbulence only for lieutenant colonels in the Air Force.

We worked at OSD, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps headquarters and at the Air Force's Military Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

JAMES R. CALLOWAY  
 CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR

April 21, 1977

The Honorable Elmer Staats  
 Comptroller General of the United States  
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Staats:

The Committee on Appropriations has had a continuing interest in the permanent change of station travel programs in the Department of Defense. We have continually urged the Department to take actions to reduce the frequent rotations of military personnel, which is the driving factor in the high cost of the permanent change of station travel program.

The military departments frequently cite the need to rotate senior personnel throughout the United States and the world on the basis of providing career enhancing and career broadening experience. The Committee believes that this is probably similar in many ways to the policies of international corporations who rotate their personnel.

The Committee requests that you undertake a study of the above issue. This study should include a comparison of the personnel rotation policies of large national and international corporations and foreign military services with the policies of our military departments. At this time, the Committee suggests that the study be limited to senior military officers (O-5 and above) and corporate executives.

The Committee would like this study done in two phases. Phase one would include a comparison of the rotation policies for senior military officers with those of private industry and foreign military services. We believe this phase could be accomplished in a relatively short time period (less than six months). The second phase would be a review of the actual practices being followed by the military services versus the stated policies with the objective of determining (1) the potential for adopting new rotation policies that would reduce costs

and (2) the extent to which controls may be needed to see that there is compliance with policies by those making permanent change of station decisions.

As in the past, the aim of the Committee is to reduce the high costs of permanent change of station moves while, at the same time, not reducing military effectiveness. In fact, it could well be that an increase in tour lengths might have a favorable effect on military morale and readiness.

Periodically, as the work on this study progresses, please keep the Committee staff informed.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

  
John L. McClellan  
Chairman

JLM:ljm