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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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DEFENSE DIVISION

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

The General Accounting Office has completed a survey of the management of civilian career programs in the Department of Defense, during which we specifically considered those program elements dealing with trainees or interns. We consulted with program managers in your office and in the headquarters offices of the military departments, as well as with responsible personnel at several major commands in the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Definitive directives, providing for the establishment, coordination, and operation of civilian career programs, were issued by the Department of Defense as early as 1955. We noted, however, that there is considerable difference in the degree of progress that each of the military services has made since then in developing its programs. Development of career programs in the Air Force has been a relatively recent activity, when compared with the actions taken by the Army and Navy. Moreover, the approaches taken by the services also have differed with regard to the determination of training requirements, recruiting, development of training methods, program evaluation, and funding. In the program management area, the highly structured, centrally controlled formal program at the Army Materiel Command contrasts sharply with the more decentralized programs we found in the Navy and Air Force. The services do not maintain sufficient data to readily permit a cost/benefit evaluation of these programs.

In view of requirements in the governing directives regarding the development of Defense-wide civilian career programs, which facilitate interservice use of experienced career personnel, we believe that a greater degree of coordination and cooperation among the services is warranted. We recognize that the military departments have been pre-occupied with other priorities during the past few years. We believe, however, that now would be an appropriate time to review efforts toward coordination in this area, to avoid unnecessary duplication in the development and implementation of civilian career programs, and accordingly, we so recommend.

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We plan no further work in this area, at this time. We will be happy to meet with you to discuss the observations made during this survey if you desire.

This report is subject to the provisions of section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. We will appreciate receiving copies of the statements you furnish the specified committees in accordance with these provisions.

Copies of this letter are being sent to the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and to the Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government Operations Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

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Sincerely yours,

*for* *W. J. Luttmann*  
Director

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