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United States
General Accounting Office

National Security and
International Affairs Division

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April 26, 1993

General Colin Powell
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Joint Staff
Washington, DC 20318



Dear General Powell:

We recently initiated a study of military occupational specialty training to determine if the Department of Defense (DOD) could save money by increasing its use of consolidated interservice training. Due to DOD's ongoing initiative to review its military training structure and the leadership role that the Joint Staff has taken, we are suspending further work on this assignment. During our survey, however, we identified two opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of the training structure review that may warrant your consideration.

The first opportunity pertains to options available to finance training consolidations. Under the Military Training Structure Review, initiated in January 1993 under the direction of the Joint Staff, the Interservice Training Review Organization (ITRO) plans to review all military occupational specialties for consolidated interservice training potential over the next 3 years. However, our survey indicated that the lack of "up-front" money could negate or at least seriously delay cost savings associated with some training consolidations. For example, ITRO recently recommended consolidating service explosive ordnance disposal schools to save about \$5 million annually. According to service officials, \$14 million in construction funds would be needed to accomplish the consolidation and realize these savings, but the funding is not expected to be available until fiscal year 1996. Consequently, DOD may need to pursue funding alternatives, such as reprogramming

NSIAD-93-177R Consolidated Interservice Training

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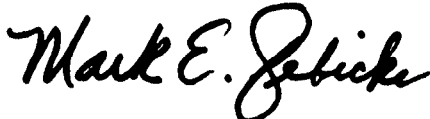
appropriated money or working with the Congress to establish a separate appropriation for construction money needed to accomplish consolidations.

The second opportunity pertains to DOD's initiative to reduce training costs by using alternatives to service-operated schools that provide initial skill training. The Air Force, for example, in a 1990 study identified 52 initial skill training courses that could be taught at local community colleges. Our survey indicated that the Military Training Structure Review process could provide an excellent opportunity to expeditiously identify which military skills could be taught less expensively using alternative training strategies. We found that many of the people involved in the training structure review are also involved in the review of alternative training strategies. While ITRO members and service subject matter experts are working together to consolidate service training, they could also identify and document occupations having potential for alternative training strategies. This should not slow the training structure review process, but it could save time in reviewing occupations for alternative training strategies.

We are sending copies of this letter to the Secretary of Defense and to the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Copies will also be made available to other interested parties upon request.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning matters discussed in this letter, please call me at (202) 512-5140.

Sincerely yours,



Mark E. Gebicke
Director
Military Operations and Capabilities Issues

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