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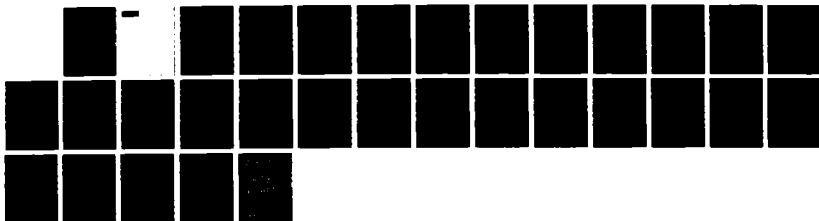
CONGRESS: THE SCHIZOPHRENIC CONSCIENCE OF DEFENSE
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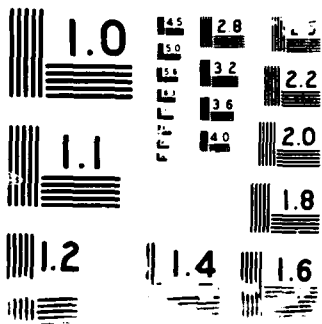
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1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. Congress, on the other hand, has not been widely criticized for its inconsistent behavior with regard to defense acquisition. While the media has repeatedly targeted the military for its inept management, the evolution of Congressional micro-management of defense acquisition programs has tied the hands of military acquisition programs and gone relatively unnoticed. This paper is an attempt to describe the difficulties which Congressional micromanagement has created for the defense acquisition establishment in procuring reliable, maintainable, and supportable weapons for the defense of this nation.

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CONGRESS:
THE SCHIZOPHRENIC CONSCIENCE OF DEFENSE ACQUISITION

An Individual Study Project
Intended for Publication

by

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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ABSTRACT

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↓ Much has been written in recent years regarding the inept practices employed in defense acquisition programs. Beginning in the early 1970s with the notorious cost overruns of the C-5A, it has become increasingly fashionable for Congress and the media to point their respective fingers at the military men and women who are charged with the responsibility of turning tax dollars into weapons. DoD has repeatedly attempted to improve its management of acquisition programs on its own initiative and by implementing Congressional legislation such as the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. Congress, on the other hand, has not been widely criticized for its inconsistent behavior with regard to defense acquisition. While the media has repeatedly targeted the military for its inept management, the evolution of Congressional micromanagement of defense acquisition programs has tied the hands of military acquisition programs and gone relatively unnoticed. This paper is an attempt to describe the difficulties which Congressional micromanagement has created for the defense acquisition establishment in procuring reliable, maintainable, and supportable weapons for the defense of this nation.



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In April of 1983, I was assigned to Air Force Logistics Command's Acquisition Logistics Center (AFALC) at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and thrust, unsuspecting, into the world of defense acquisition. One of the first things I learned was that the legislative branch of our government, the Congress, was the perceived enemy of anyone working in the defense acquisition business. The Congress was blamed for funding cuts, for blowing the whistle on program cost over-runs and the high prices paid by the government for military hardware, for changing the direction of programs, and for a multitude of other less serious acts of bad judgment. Congress was accused of cancelling good defense initiatives and supporting and funding bad ones. Since I was new to the acquisition business, I accepted the basic tenets of the perceived hatred for Congress and soon could be heard slandering it at every opportunity. It wasn't until recently that I began to explore the motives of Congress and examine the relationship that existed between the military and our leaders on Capitol Hill. This paper represents my attempt to analyze what I perceive to be an adversarial relationship.

It is probably wise to caution the reader that as I examined Congressional influence on the defense establishment, I soon realized that the relationship of these two agencies cannot be discussed in isolation. Therefore, there will be frequent digressions which address outside agencies, like the executive branch of our government and the defense industry, which greatly influence Congress and the military and, ultimately, affect their relationship with each other. Similarly, we will find ourselves entering into subindentures of the

Congress and the Department of Defense to examine the sometimes conflicting agendas of the various Congressional committees and the differences in the agendas of the military services and the DoD staff. With regard to Congress, the four major players in the defense budget are the Senate and House Armed Services committees (the SASC and the HASC) and the Senate and House Appropriations Defense subcommittee (the SADS and the HADS). In the case of the defense establishment, I will make every attempt to differentiate, where necessary, between the actions of the DoD staff and the separate services. Differing and frequently conflicting agendas of various congressional elements and of various defense DoD elements are critical to any discussion of defense spending.

The fact that Congress has evolved to a point where it attempts to micromanage defense budgets is no secret. One need only look at the morning headlines or catch the evening network news to discover that Congressional actions are closely related to defense spending. When you dig deeper into the relationship between DoD and the Congress, the real influence of the Congress is not so clear. It may be that the biggest impact that Congress has on defense spending is not so much of a determinant as it is an irritant, which acts to delay DoD in its acquisition process. Regardless of the ultimate value of their efforts, each year Congress modifies from forty to sixty percent of the Pentagon budget line item requests.¹

A critical part of determining the true influence of Congress on defense spending is to trace the evolution of the Congressional processes which resulted in the era of micromanagement which we, as military leaders, face today. In doing so, we will discuss the

internal and external influences which provided the catalysts for the changes. We will then examine the results of the changes in the Congressional budgeting process and cite some examples of their impacts on specific defense programs. In some of these examples, we will see that Congress is not the instigator of specific situations, but that their reaction to the situations have significantly affected the direction of the program.

The world of defense spending is a pluralistic system which involves the private agendas of a wide range of players. In its purist sense, defense spending is a means for acquiring the personnel and materiel required to defend our country and support our national objectives. Yet the various players interpret defense needs in different ways and promote conflicting solutions. When you combine the pluralism of our military and political systems with the presence of numerous interpretations of our defense needs, then throw in the subjectivity involved in determining the "correct" solution, the potential for conflict becomes very great. In recent years, Congress is increasingly at the pivot point in these conflicts.

Defense spending is inherently controversial because a very small portion of the public really understands the intricacies of our defense system. What the public does understand are the high price tags associated with defense acquisition programs. The public is most often made aware of the cost of defense programs when they are told of them by a grandstanding politician. The public seldom thinks to question the private agenda of the politician who is criticizing defense expenditures.

Another problem inherent with defense spending is the fact that

defense contracts financially benefit relatively small pockets of American society. Unlike social programs, which in most cases benefit a cross section of American society, defense spending benefits are restricted to areas where defense contract facilities or military facilities are located.

The trend toward increased congressional changes to DoD line items has caused the entire defense budget process to become time consuming and inefficient. Congress frequently demands justifications for DoD programs, and directs the Pentagon to take specific actions with regard to budget line items. Lengthy floor debates and amendments to DoD defense spending bills occupy an excessive amount of congressional time, both on the part of the members and their staffs. Former Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. John Tower (R-Tex.) stated that, "Our committee spends a large portion of its time trying to fend off competition from other committees and monitoring what other committees are doing."² Similarly, the amount of time that is occupied by DoD agencies in answering congressional concerns and justifying defense programs has become inordinate. There is extensive overlapping and duplication of effort. The various Congressional committees review the same issues and frequently arrive at different conclusions. After Pentagon staffs thoroughly review and approve the line items submitted by the separate services, congressional staffers examine the DoD recommendations and second guess DoD decisions. The inefficiency of the system is exacerbated by the fact that Pentagon staffers and a whole military hierarchy, down to the program manager level, spend thousands of manhours

justifying and rejustifying defense programs. The collective efforts of the various agencies involved in the defense budget process is mind boggling. Although there needs to be a certain degree of checks and balances in any budget process, "changes in the modern Congress have produced an institution that could potentially become bogged down in its own intricate processes."³

James M. Lindsay suggests that the three primary causes in the changes in congressional decision making with regard to defense policy are the "ascent of the annual authorization process," the "increased political volatility of defense policy," and "the congressional reforms of the 1970s."⁴ Robert J. Art takes it a step further, saying that "The advent of annual authorizations was probably the single most important factor in producing more detailed and voluminous reviews by both committee (armed services committee and defense appropriations subcommittee) actors."⁵

The growth of the annual authorization process began in the early 60s. The Russell Amendment, named after Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.) who was the Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman at the time, directed that after 1960, all procurement of aircraft, missiles, and naval vessels had to first have specific authorizations. The Russell Amendment began a trend which resulted in virtually every defense budget line item requiring authorization prior to appropriation.⁶ Senator Russell's motivation was to enhance the power of his committee which, up until that time, had provided lump-sum authorizations for DoD programs. As a result, it was the defense appropriations subcommittees who most directly influenced the defense budget because they had the power to alter the defense

spending. The Russell Amendment also enabled the Armed Services Committees to reduce the discretionary power of the DoD. The committees had become skeptical of the DoD and favored the views of the services.⁷ Art supports this contention when he states that, "annual authorizations had come about both because of the rivalry between Armed Services and Appropriations for control over the defense budget and because of the desire of the former to exert more direct influence over the Defense Department."⁸ Spawned by this committee rivalry, congressional micromanagement of defense spending has grown to the point where it not only impedes the defense process, but is downright wasteful.

Throughout most of the 60s, committee rivalry was the biggest issue regarding the defense budget process. The Armed Services committees became the defenders of the military. And within the committees, powerful chairmen like Russell, Rep. Carl Vinson (D-Ga.) and Rep. L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.Car.) reigned supreme. Committee chairmen made most of the decisions, junior members of the committees accepted an apprenticeship roles, and there was little need for subcommittees since the chairmen could best exercise their will in full committee. During this period, the Armed Services Committees had the upper hand on defense spending because their counterparts in Defense Appropriations were inferior by virtue of their subcommittee status. In the Senate, Sen. Russell chaired both defense committees from 1963 to 1968, effectively exercising total control of defense legislation in the senior chamber. The powerful Armed Services committee chairmen saw themselves as the military's voice on Capitol Hill. It was no accident that many of the defense programs they

sponsored benefited their constituencies as well as the military.

The 1970s was an era of significant congressional reform with the increased power of the subcommittee system as the most notable change. The Congress of the 1970s was a reflection of the free thinking society which was in fashion at the time. An unpopular war was rendering old values obsolete. Congressmen were no longer willing to defer to committee chairmen and were unwilling to serve in apprenticeship roles. There was a trend toward greater turnover in congressional seats and new legislators were eager to influence policy making and win support from their constituencies.⁹

The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 was the first in a series of congressional reforms which stripped the power of committee chairmen and diluted the power of the committees. This Act limited senators to one seat on the Senate's four prestige committees: Appropriations, Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and Finance. A later refinement restricted senators from multiple chairmanship of subcommittees within the same committee. By encouraging committees to hold open hearings and empowering committee members to call meetings, the Reorganization Act broke down the traditional power structure and redistributed that power to a multitude of new players.

In 1974, the Budget and Impoundment Control Act was passed. This Act required the executive branch to expend all appropriated funds, unless rescission or deferral authority was requested and approved by Congress. This legislation was passed in order to reduce presidential discretionary withholding of or reallocation of appropriations. The act also established a congressional capability to review the president's economic forecast, establishing a Budget

Committee in each chamber of Congress to set overall federal budget ceiling guidance.

During the 1970s, disillusionment with our Vietnam involvement created an antidefense movement that further inspired Congress to scrutinize defense spending. The early reports of cost over-runs on major defense programs, like the C-5A transport, made it even more fashionable for Congress to resort to floor activity on defense issues. When our involvement with Vietnam ended, Congressional interest in defense issues diminished. Although the power of the Armed Services Committees was decentralized through this era, they retained their control over defense spending.

Congressional influence during the 1980s has been the emergence of what James Lindsay refers to as the "outside game."¹⁰ "Unlike the preceding decades," writes Lindsay, "much of the congressional activity on defense has taken place in the public arena and, thus, has been highly visible. Second, much activity has bypassed the traditional channels of power within the defense committees."¹¹ We have come to a point where the congressional defense budget process is a free-wheeling sideshow. The dilution of the power of committee chairmen has resulted in eliminated the infrastructure necessary for directing the multiplicity of 535 individual ideas and motivations into an organized, logical plan. The process is reactive to virtually any outside influences from, pork barreling to hostage taking. Confrontation with the executive branch with regard to budget deficits makes the defense budget even more vulnerable. The dispersal of power, while it provides less autocracy in the form of committee chairman, creates the problem of a loss of discipline in

the process.

In general terms, the dispersal of congressional authority over defense policy has created a number of problems which result in inefficiencies and increased cost to the American taxpayer. The growth in congressional staffs is one of the most significant effects of the decentralization. Between 1947 and 1979, the overall congressional staff rose from 2,500 to over 13,000.¹² This trend continues today as more congressional committees and individual congressmen seek the assistance of technically qualified specialists to keep them current on defense issues. The trend toward a younger Congress with decreasing percentages of military experience forces legislators to rely more heavily on the opinions of their staff.¹³ These staffers spend a great deal of their time examining the very minute details of defense programs. The resultant DoD manpower costs to entertain the questions of the staffers and to research, author, and coordinate answers to these questions, places a substantial burden on the Pentagon. In addition to the staffers, the Pentagon must accommodate the scrutiny of other congressional agencies like the Government Accounting Office, the Congressional Research Service, and the Congressional Budget Office. The increase in the number of studies and reports Congress has requested of DoD, from 31 in 1970 to 485 in 1985, testifies to increased time the Pentagon must devote to congressional requests.¹⁴

In facilitating the ability of individual congressmen to be heard on defense issues, the pork barrel factor has increased. There is more incentive for legislators to impress their constituencies by coming on strong in a floor debate than in taking an active roll in

the less conspicuous process of committee action. The increased rate of turnover in Congress has contributed to the volatility of defense issue. In 1971, 20% of the House had been elected to at least ten terms. By 1979, this figure was down to 12.6%.¹⁵ This trend adds to the incentive for members to seek the public attention associated with floor debates. The increase in floor activity further compounds the efforts of the defense committees, whose focus in drawing up legislation must be increasingly directed at solutions which stand the greatest chance of being passed. The preoccupation with avoiding floor debates introduces an increased likelihood of compromise. And compromise suggests that budget items may make bureaucratic sense, but no military sense.

The tendency of the media to attack defense management makes it a fertile area for a publicity-hungry congressman to key on. The media have become increasingly effective in shaping public sentiment and there are very few instances of individual legislators taking stands which are contrary to public sentiment. Perhaps it is unfair to suggest that Congress should do anything other than support public sentiment, but when the media play such a major part in forming public sentiment, it seems that Congress should at least have an equal influence. At a meeting of the Air Force Studies Board in November 1987, General Bernard P. Randolph, Commander, Air Force Systems Command, stated the the legislative micromanagement increases as news coverage on particular weapon systems increases. He blamed "irresponsible journalism" as a prime cause.¹⁶

Once the "open season" was declared on defense policy, it seemed that everyone was willing to jump on the bandwagon. A multitude of

committees attempted to duplicate the responsibilities of the traditional defense committees. The activities of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and in particular those of Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), have had an increasing influence on the volatility of formulating defense policy. As recently as Jan 11, 1988, Rep. Dingell, chairman of the House Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, has created a stir over the alleged Army disposal of "millions of dollars worth of usable construction equipment at firesale prices."¹⁷ Lest there be any question that times have changed, on the same page of the same newspaper, an article appeared in which the current chairman of the HASC, Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) criticized the guidance system of the MX missile.¹⁸ Two weeks later, we find Congressman Dingell criticizing the Air Force's attempts to reorganize in accordance with the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, charging that the Air Force has "severely damaged civilian control."¹⁹ These examples attest to the fact that the proliferation of critics of defense policy has occurred without regard to the traditional committee affiliations or restrictions.

Yet another example of the inefficiency associated with the dispersal of congressional budget control is the failure of Congress to adhere to budget schedules. In his State of the Union Address on Jan. 25, 1988, President Ronald Reagan said that, "The budget process has broken down. It needs a drastic overhaul." As evidence he presented massive congressional budget documents which hit his desk at the eleventh hour prior to the congressional Christmas recess. This way of doing business has become the rule, with Congress rarely

ever completing a defense appropriations bill before the start of the fiscal year. In their last minute efforts to meet schedule, Congress often overlooks the pork barrel legislation which opportunistic congressmen insert into last-minute omnibus bills. In December of 1987, for example, Congressman Charles Wilson (D-Tex.) took revenge on the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) by inserting a provision into a spending bill that cost the DIA equipment and manpower. This was just one of several selfishly motivated provisions which crept into a spending bill amounting to "\$603.9 billion, or nearly two-thirds of the total funding for Federal Government operations in fiscal 1988."²⁰

It is ironic that the extensive congressional scrutiny of defense programs has a particularly damaging impact on defense acquisition programs. The delays in passing DoD appropriations creates an uncertainty in acquisition programs which increases wasteful spending. Cuts in funding not only stretch programs, but cause program managers to renegotiate contracts at increasingly higher prices. So while Congress is spending millions of dollars in the process of seeing to it that the DoD doesn't buy \$2000 coffee pots, defense contractors are placed in favorable bargaining positions because the government can not meet a previously agreed upon schedule. Were it not for the publicity aspects of high priced coffee pots and toilet seats, it is difficult to determine if the effort involved in policing contractor gouging in defense programs is really cost effective. The volume of information required in a defense contract, of any significant magnitude, requires that the program office concentrate on the high dollar items. It is

questionable whether the manpower should be devoted to screen each line item in a procurement contract. By sensationalizing overpricing examples in defense programs, congressional micromanagement has tied the hands of program managers and created an expensive vicious cycle in the name of fiscal constraint. The system of checks and balances needs to be streamlined before it becomes more expensive than gross mismanagement.

To this point we have placed all the blame for Congress's micromanagement of defense spending on Congress itself and the media. This is misleading in that the trend toward micromanagement has been strongly influenced by the executive branch, by DoD, and by the activities of the services.

The vision of the president has always had a strong influence on defense. For the past several years, a hawkish Ronald Reagan has advocated high defense budgets. Aided by public sentiment favorable to the military in the early 1980s, President Reagan was able to get congressional approval of large defense budgets. Anger over the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian hostage situation helped to swing public opinion toward defense. As the 1980s progressed, concern over a growing budget deficit caused the American public to question the wisdom of continuing the pace of defense spending. Divided congressional opinions regarding this issue certainly contributed to much of the floor activity. As a matter of fact, some of the key congressional reforms of the 1970s, such as the Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, were enacted in direct response to presidential actions.

In recent years, the Congress has also reacted in response to

Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger. Weinberger's increasing defense budget demands, which basically supported the Reagan vision, had encountered more and more resistance in the halls of Congress as we moved into the mid 80s. Through the years, the personality of the SECDEF has certainly influenced the Congress.²¹

We can't disregard the impact that the military services have had in shaping their own destiny in Congress. Much has been written of the myopia of the services in their continuing efforts to justify the merits of their own branch over their sister services. Attempts to coordinate and prioritize defense programs at the DoD level never really seem to satisfy Congress. Congressional skepticism is fueled by events such as the resignation of Mr. Richard P. Godwin, who had been hired by Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger to improve the way the Pentagon develops and produces new weapons. Godwin complained that he "couldn't make anything stick" in his position as Undersecretary for Acquisition.

Yet another credibility gap between Congress and the services is threat identification. There is a feeling in Congress that the services are less than objective in identifying threats which can only be solved through the acquisition of some exotic weapon which should be placed in the hands of that particular branch.

Richard A. Stubbing, a long-time employee of the Office of Management and Budget, describes these interrelationships in his book, The Defense Game. Stubbing says-

At the same time that our overall national-defense strategy is being argued at the upper reaches of government, thousands of smaller decisions filter up

through the Pentagon each year involving individual defense programs and policies. Unfortunately, the connection between the declared national strategies and actual program decisions is often tenuous. At stake in our defense program is not only our national security, but also large opportunities for personal and economic success. Congressmen favor programs and facilities in their states and districts regardless of efficiency. Industry officials seek to boost their sales and profits, oftentimes at the expense of the government and the taxpayer. Military officers seek promotion and advancement under accepted standards of performance which often conflict with hard-nosed business practices. And the hierarchies see close working relationships with the other services as not in their interest. Thus, not only is the defense budget the vehicle by which our nation plans how to fight the battles of tomorrow, but it is also the battleground itself, where politicians, corporations, and military officers seek to serve their personal and parochial interests.²²

Having examined some of the history of the congressional influence on the defense budget, we must now look at the impact that Congress has had on defense acquisition. There are those who would argue that, in the long run, Congress has very little influence at all. Stubbing suggests that, "there is a wide gap between the legislators' rhetoric and their willingness to make tough decisions."²³ He goes on to say that, "members of Congress are far more adept at protecting their constituents' financial interests in the defense budget."²⁴

Stubbing's perceptions regarding the long-term congressional influence regarding what defense systems are cut are quite misleading to anyone who has worked in a defense acquisition

program. He is correct in pointing out that it is rarely the Congress that cuts a major defense program. That task is normally performed by the President or within DoD. The real impact of Congressional micromanagement of defense acquisition is in the time factor. In dealing with defense contractors for the procurement of highly sophisticated weapon systems, time is money. Any perturbation in spending profiles or schedule changes, which result from congressional budget cuts, invariably result in increasing the cost of a new weapon.

Time is becoming more of an enemy to the defense program manager because of what I call the acquisition technology gap. As technology advances, its rate of change increases. In the modern age of electronics, one has only to look at the vast improvements in consumer items like video recorders or personal computers to realize how quickly new innovations make yesterday's technology outmoded. In the defense industry, changing technology is a two-headed monster which can render an item obsolete because the enemy has improved his technology or because your own technology has progressed to the point where your own design is outmoded. The time it takes to design, test, produce, and field a weapon can modestly be estimated at about ten years. As technological advances accelerate, there is a greater impact on the design of your weapon in the same period of time than there would have been ten years ago. Consequently, the program manager can never produce the best system that technology would enable him to produce. Instead, he must baseline the configuration of his system and allow the contractor the time to tool up for production. He has some latitude in reducing the

technology gap, but the alternatives involve risks. For example, he can attempt to shorten the technology gap by incorporating systems which push the state of the art. When this approach is taken, it is usually done at the expense of integration testing to insure that the system will work when it is installed on the weapon. The risk is that when you do your integration testing during the production process, there is the chance that the system won't work properly. The problems with the B-1B defensive avionics system is an example of a system which, because of a compressed production schedule, was not sufficiently tested to insure its success.

On the other hand, the program manager can take the conservative approach and allow sufficient time for all phases of design, testing, and production to be done in the proper sequence. Here he runs the risk of cost over-runs due to inflation, repricing, or modifications which have to be incorporated because of the changing technology.

Regardless of the approach, the program manager faces inherent dangers in attempting to bridge the technology gap and the funding delays associated with congressional micromanagement of defense acquisition exacerbate the problem significantly. Yet it is the Congress that is the most vocal critic in identifying problems in defense programs. In the case of the B-1B, Congress included language in the defense authorization bill of November, 17, 1987 saying that the defensive avionics system of the B-1B may never achieve its desired capability to penetrate Soviet air space. With this came a threat of terminating funding for further development. The same bill reduced the anticipated level of funding for research,

development, test, and evaluation of the C-17, which could cause the Air Force to renegotiate its contract with Douglas Aircraft Company. A renegotiation due to schedule change will result in Douglas increasing their price, if for no other reason than the increased length of the program. The interrelationship of factors in an acquisition program causes any perturbation to have a rippling effect throughout the entire program.

The B1-B story provides an interesting study of the relationship between Congress and the military. It provides an example of how the military was able to outwait the Congress and get the weapon system it wanted in spite of strong adversity. In the case of the B-1B, the Air Force built congressional support while it waited for a new administration. After President Carter cancelled the B-1 program in 1977 in favor of the cruise missile, the Air Force and Rockwell International successfully lobbied to obtain funds to explore the use of the B-1 as a carrier for the cruise missile. The funding was sufficient to maintain Rockwell's level of effort to keep the program moving ahead. And while they were at it, Rockwell saw to it that subcontracts for the aircraft were awarded to defense contractors in 47 of the 50 states. By the time Ronald Reagan reinstated the B-1B in 1981, constituent influence allowed the program to pass rather quickly through Congress.

Nick Kotz describes some interesting aspects of B-1B lobbying effort in an article in the January 1988 issue of The Washingtonian magazine. In his article, Mr. Kotz describes the efforts of Air Force Lt. General Earl T. O'Loughlin (USAWC-73) to gain support for the B-1. In June of 1983, while Vice Commander of Air Force

Logistics Command, O'Loughlin addressed the chamber of commerce in his home community near East Tawas, Michigan. He advised his old friends to get their Michigan legislative representatives to support the B-1 program lest Wurtsmith AFB, the largest employer in the area, run the risk of being closed.²⁵ According to Kotz, General O'Loughlin was specifically attempting to counter the efforts of Michigan Senator Carl Levin, a Democrat who was recommending that the Senate cut \$800 million from the B-1s 1984 program. Kotz further alleges that in 1981, the Air Force secretly promised the recently retired chairman of the SASC, Senator John Tower(R-Tex), that the first B-1B base would be Dyess AFB, Texas.²⁶ It was understood that Senator Tower would continue his support of the B-1B program in order for this to happen. Kotz' article describes several other political aspects of the B-1 program and although some of his points may be exaggerated, the article provides a description of some of the more subtle aspects of the relationship between Congress and the services.

There is another side to the congressional constituency issue with regard to acquisition programs. In some cases congressional support is available for programs which have lost service support. The Air Force T-46 flight trainer is a case in point. The T-46 was designed to replace the aging T-37 as the Air Force's primary flight trainer. For whatever reason, the user, Air Training Command (ATC), never really fully supported the T-46. The speculation was that ATC had changed its pilot training philosophy and was more interested in procuring tanker/transport/bomber trainers and going to a dual-track training system (separate tracks for fighter pilots and those

destined for larger, multiple-crew aircraft). At any rate the AIC folks never seemed to have their hearts in the T-46. In spite of this, a source selection was accomplished and Fairchild Republic was selected to produce the T-46. In August of 1985, the Air Force conducted a contractor operations review (COR) of the Fairchild's Farmingdale, Long Island plant. The COR concept is designed to insure that contractors are complying with the terms and conditions of their contracts with the Air Force. Fairchild failed the evaluation badly, receiving unsatisfactory ratings in all eight categories of the inspection.

The unfavorable results of the Fairchild COR, coupled with the with the lack of enthusiastic user support, made the T-46 a prime target for cuts in the Air Force budget. In March of 1986, the Air Force recommended that the T-46 be terminated and that the Cessna T-37 be modified to extend its service life. One would think that Congress would jump at the chance to cut a defense program, but it wasn't so. The program had the support of Rep. Joseph P. Addabbo (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee. Addabbo and his New York congressional colleagues managed to keep the program alive. As late as August of 1986, the House Armed Services Committee voted to add \$151 million to the FY87 defense budget to continue the T-46 program. It was only the untimely death of Rep. Addabbo and the persistent Air Force opposition, that finally allowed the T-46 program to be terminated. It is suspected that the Air Force may have had some behind-the-scenes help from Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) on behalf of his Kansas-based Cessna constituents.

The congressional pressure which delayed the cancellation of the I-46 was an expensive proposition for the Air Force, which was required to man its program office for nearly a year while the political issues were being sorted and resolved.

These examples testify to the fact that defense acquisition has evolved to where, "it has bogged down under the unnecessary load of bureaucracy and congressional micromanagement."²⁷ That was the consensus of the Air Force Studies Board which convened its 25th annual conference in Washington on 16 November 1987. The frustration of trying to operate in the system prompted Thomas Cooper, former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition and Logistics, to say that, "The political environment is now . . . tougher than the technological environment."²⁸

Can our budget continue to tolerate the inefficiencies that result from this dilemma? Perhaps so, if we are willing to accept less hardware for our defense dollar. Today, much of our defense appropriation is being spent by the services and the defense industry to manage around the congressional traps that have been laid down over the last twenty years. Any solution will have to come from inspired congressional leaders who realize that while today's Congress may see itself as the conscience of defense spending, it is perpetuating a spending problem through its own political interests.

By no means am I suggesting that Congress has no place in the defense budget. What I am suggesting is that Congress needs to remove itself from the detailed management of defense budget line items and establish itself in a role of general military policy

oversight. According to Robert J. Art, "General policy oversight means: What are our military requirements and commitments? What size, types, and mix of forces do we require to accomplish the missions we've set and are these missions wise ones?"²⁹ He goes on to say, "To consider how many of a given weapon to buy and whether the program is being managed efficiently, without first considering whether the weapon is needed and how it fits into the larger force structure, is equivalent to managing the details without thinking about where they are taking you."³⁰

The evolutionary process which has led to the congressional micromanagement of defense programs was achieved through legislation of the various laws we've already addressed. To reverse the role of Congress and return it to its rightful task of defense policy oversight would require sweeping new legislation, but it appears that incentives for such legislation are lacking.

Constituency remains the key obstacle. So long as our elected leaders in Congress are elected in regional elections, they will represent regional interests. These regional interests conflict with national defense in that the defense of our nation knows only international boundaries. At the executive level, our DoD staff and military leaders represent an interest group or perhaps interest groups, in the case of military branches. It is difficult to imagine a means of limiting congressional parochialism to a point where the broader interests of our nation always have priority over constituent interests. Such a task would certainly require a major restructuring of our constitution.

The second key obstacle to the elimination of micromanagement

is the lack of a central controlling activity charged with overall congressional oversight of the defense budget. The demise of the powerful committee chairs and the decentralization of congressional influence over defense matters has created 535 military budget experts. Their perceived (and perhaps valid) need to gain face time in floor debates is an incentive to perpetuate the trend away from centralized control. Although Congress was never organized nor designed to manage, it has increasingly attempted to do so. And it is difficult to envision a set of circumstances powerful enough to inspire Congress to legislate itself out of continuing attempts to manage the defense budget.

So what can be said to encourage the military acquisition manager? One note of encouragement lies in the fact that, while Congress has had great success in creating obstacles to the defense acquisition process, they infrequently, if ever, provide the kiss of death to a program. And although the delays caused by budget cuts may be very expensive, it would be unwise to allow defense acquisition to proceed unchecked by another agency. Perhaps a wise Congress will someday take it upon itself to streamline its surveillance of defense acquisition programs and make life easier for acquisition managers. In the meantime, Congress remains a key, though sometimes frustrating, element which defense acquisition managers cannot do without. Though imperfect, our system works.

ENDNOTES

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