9. Conclusions

This section presents conclusions from our research and analysis of alternative officer career management systems. The Congress and the DoD identified a number of issues to consider in this study. We begin the section with our conclusions about these issues. Next, we present overarching observations and conclusions by the study team, based on our analysis, which, in some cases, transcend those issues identified for study. Efforts to design the ideal future officer career management system should take the full range of conclusions and observations into account.

Congressional and DoD Issues

The issues raised by Congress and the DoD generally group into two categories: officer requirements and career management systems.

Officer Requirements

We examined the effect of the post–Cold War officer strength reductions and other military-related changes on future requirements for officers. Congress indicated that a basic objective of officer career management was to satisfy validated officer grade and skill requirements of the military services, including greater use of warrant officers. We also examined distinct skill groups that could be managed differently from each other and would result in a less inclusive “line” officer grouping than now exists. We identified several requirements options by analyzing the effect of alternative futures on grade, skill, and experience needs for officers in each service. These requirements options represent a reasonable range of possible future environments. Our concluding observations about future officer requirements are as follows:

Satisfying Validated Grade/Skill Requirements. Since valid requirements by grade and skill for the future do not exist, we determined six different future officer requirements options and four skill groups as a basis for examining alternative officer career systems. Within the six officer requirements options, we varied skill group mix, streamlined and reengineered grade structures, and changed the size and experience needs of each service. In our evaluation, we
forced all alternative career management systems to achieve the grade and skill requirements of each option.

Our analysis shows that, in the aggregate, any of the combinations of career flow structures and personnel functions, such as promotion, can satisfy requirements for grades and skills. Within relatively broad parameters, a career management system can be changed as needed to match requirements. This conclusion is not particularly surprising because the services have often changed their career management systems, sometimes dramatically, to meet needs. For example, in the most recent drawdown, officers of all grades and years of service were separated.

Of more interest analytically are the subsidiary changes that distinguish alternatives and suggest that the alternatives do not perform uniformly when considering aspects other than meeting requirements. For example, requirements do not change uniformly by service. Changes in requirements create different needs for military experience by skill group. One evaluation criterion measured the ability of a career system to provide the needed experience, and some of the alternative career systems evaluated, especially Lateral Entry, were unable to satisfy military experience requirements in all skills. An in-and-out career structure provides less military experience on average. However, this type of structure has proved itself in war when many officers were needed to support rapid expansion. An up-or-out structure with longer maximum careers will provide more experience than in-and-out on average but not as much as an up-and-stay structure.

Turning to the issue of grade requirements, we see no reason why the desired grade structure has to be a pyramid as it is now. The career structure and personnel functions can meet any structure of needed grades. For example, the British Army grade structure looks like an aircraft carrier, not a pyramid. The junior grades are below decks; the O-4 grade is bulge of the carrier deck; and the higher grades are the narrower superstructure. Some have suggested that the shape of grade requirements in the future should resemble an hourglass,¹ and such a structure could be satisfied. However, promotion timing and opportunity would be less certain than they are now, and their importance might also diminish. Research on commitment and satisfaction indicates that both are possible without high levels of promotions.

Greater Use of Warrant Officers. Another difference is the varied service use of warrant officers. In Appendix H, we offer an illustration of how the use of warrant officers could be expanded in skills where commissioned officers and warrant officer requirements currently coexist. While uniformity among the services seems to be a meritorious objective, a full appreciation of the differences in service cultures must accompany any review of the use of warrant officers. In the case of the Air Force, the earlier decision to place warrant officer requirements into the senior noncommissioned officer ranks may remain a sound practice in future requirements environments. However, those positions primarily requiring the exercise of technical skills that do not follow future officer career patterns but need the recognition and incentives offered in ranks higher than enlisted appear well suited for warrant officer requirements. DoD should decide the importance of uniform and expanded use of warrant officers among the services and determine the standard for grading position requirements accordingly. Service requirements reviews based upon these position grading standards would determine the number of warrant officer positions. Lastly, cost will be an important consideration in deciding the extent to which warrant officer requirements are used in lieu of either officer or enlisted positions.

Less Inclusive Line. To address this issue, we developed four categories of skills—line, specialist, support, and professional, a technique that allowed us to investigate the issue of separate career management systems for distinct skill groups. A less inclusive line implies that non-line officers can be managed differently. If they are, rather than uniformity in careers for all services, one might expect to have uniformity in careers within skill groups with overall service careers different to the extent that service skill composition is different. Historically, skill groups have fought to be included in the line because that represented the most prestigious category and was typically viewed as the most direct route to the top. Most skills in the Army, Air Force, and Marines (fewer in the Navy) are now included in the line category for competitive management even though some skill groups have traditionally achieved greater promotions and higher positions. However, if specialist and support officers were as apt as line officers to achieve the highest positions and were considered central to the profession, then a less inclusive line might not matter.

Our analysis shows that skill groups can be created, that they can be managed differently from other skill groups, and that grade and skill needs can be met. Certainly the present system manages two skill groups—line and professionals—in fundamentally different ways, and there is conceptually no reason that this
cannot be extended to more than two skill groups. Analysis cannot say whether being a Naval officer or an Air Force officer is more important than being a pilot, engineer, or logistician. However, if the military is a profession, then officers should want to be in it regardless of their skill.

The amount of desired military experience differs by skill group. The line requires predominantly military experience; specialist skills as we defined them need both military experience and technological expertise; the support skill group needs experience in those skills tempered by adequate military experience; and the professions require only limited military experience to complement professional knowledge.

**Alternative Officer Career Management Systems**

We used concepts that emerged from our research as the basis for designing alternative officer career management systems that addressed the congressional and DoD concerns. We were charged to consider some specific features in our alternative career management systems and consider some specific issues. These were

- different regulation of flows into, within, and out of the officer corps
- greater use of lateral entry
- rules that provide for less turnover and greater stability
- stable career advancement patterns that encourage longer careers
- longer careers as the rule rather than the exception; up-or-out features of DOPMA adjusted accordingly
- the adequacy of the existing grade tables\(^2\)
- expected length of officer careers
- timing and opportunities for promotion.

**Different Regulation of Flows Into, Within, and Out of the Officer Corps; Greater Use of Lateral Entry.** We examined four different career flow structures, and each has different strengths and weaknesses. An in-and-out structure offers

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\(^2\)Congress included this as a study issue after we began. Section 402 of the FY 94 National Defense Authorization Act (Report 103-357) provides temporary variation in end-strength limitations for Marine Corps majors and lieutenant colonels for two years. The conferees (p. 667, Report 103-357) state their expectation “that the Department of Defense will address the adequacy of the existing grade tables as part of the report on officer personnel management systems required by section 502 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993. The conferees intend to consider permanent adjustments to the grade tables after the report has been received.”
tremendous flexibility if the force has to grow quickly and appears a natural structure for a total force concept. However, except for limited peacetime use for certain skill groups and perhaps in wartime, an in-and-out structure appears to have less utility as the basis for the overall design of a future career system. Its drawbacks relate to military experience of the resulting officer corps, to career satisfaction, and to the professional aspects of officership. Perhaps it could be used more in certain skills than others or to gain greater use of reservists but not as an overall career structure.

Up-or-out and up-and-stay structures also have benefits and deficiencies. The benefits of up-or-out have been stated as providing a young and vigorous officer corps and providing promotions. However, up-or-out affords less career opportunity and does not mesh well with current views of careers, because it tends to eliminate groups of people, in part at least, on the basis of age. Although up-or-out creates turnover, which increases numbers of accessions and promotions, the promotions are directly the result of forced separation of other officers. Up-and-stay produces more experienced officers and allows longer careers. However, it does not require enough accessions to support the accession institutions as currently structured or the reserve need for junior officers.

**Longer Careers as the Rule.** Our research shows that there is no maximum retirement age that must apply to all officers. Individual officers could be measured against their own abilities for continued service. That said, it appears reasonable to expect the officers in the grades of O-4 to O-6 to retire between ages 55 and 57. Foreign militaries, federal law enforcement officers, and state and local public safety occupations tend to retire people at about these ages. So does the U.S. military for general/flag officers, where a 35 year career length brings a 20 or 22 year old entrant to retirement by age 55–57. The current mandatory retirement age for officers is 62.

Career flow structures affect career length. The effect of longer maximum careers depends heavily on the career flow structure that the career system uses. For example, a maximum career length of 35 years (or to about age 55) has a different outcome in each career flow structure. Most entrants who elect to stay in an up-and-stay structure can serve for 35 years; only a minority of initial entrants in an up-or-out structure can have a full career; those in an in-and-out structure may or may not have full careers; and most entrants who survive an initial career decision point and then elect to stay in a mixed structure of the type we designed for the career selection alternative can remain until the 35th year. The point we would make is that increasing maximum career length without adjusting up-or-out only provides longer careers to those who have not already been forced from the career system. If one wants longer careers on average for all who enter, then
the career flow structure for the field grades has to be something different from up-or-out.

Longer careers do not appear to cost significantly more or less than shorter careers. There are trade-offs between increased pay and retirement costs and decreased accession and training costs. These trade-offs suggest that it is possible to design a future officer career system on effectiveness considerations because cost of different concepts are roughly comparable. Cost, however, is expected to be an important determinant of future choices especially as it relates to choice among requirements options.

**Up-or-Out Features of DOPMA Adjusted Accordingly.** In our view, the organizational objectives are key to adjusting the up-or-out features of DOPMA. Up-or-out was instituted in 1947 to obtain a youthful and vigorous officer corps. Up-or-out in DOPMA had an additional objective of increasing promotions. Adjustments to the up-or-out features should be based on objectives for forcing attrition.

For the future, forced attrition of groups of officers to achieve a youthful and vigorous officer corps, if that is still desired, appears to run counter to national policy related to age and congressional direction to the DoD to use individual standards to determine fitness in specific skills. Moreover, forcing attrition of some officers to increase promotions for others may not be the best management philosophy.

One possible objective for forced attrition could be to increase turnover of active officers reasonably early in careers to make pools of officers with prior active experience available to the reserves. Another objective could be to allow only limited numbers of well qualified officers with desired skills, knowledge, and abilities to enter into long service careers. Other objectives are possible. Our point is that forced attrition implies an organizational objective. Once the objective is stated, the mechanism can be determined.

**Recognize Need for Stable Career Advancement Patterns That Encourage Longer Careers.** A way that DoD could provide more stability in advancement while also providing more variance in time in service in each grade is to combine long promotion zone intervals with fast-track promotions. With one-year promotion zone intervals, chance of advancement ends precipitously. If the chance of future promotion provides motivation, then the one-year zone system ends it abruptly since officers are unlikely to be selected in their last one-year look if they were not selected in the earlier one. Longer zones (we used five years) mean lowered opportunity from the larger resulting group in the zone, but the same number of promotions do result each year. Of those promoted, the
variance by time in grade is greater and exists over the length of the zone. More people stay eligible for longer periods, which provides a continuing incentive. Additionally, those selecting for promotion have a larger pool from which to choose if needs for officers with particular qualifications change over time.

Fast-track promotions are also useful in that some officers should advance more quickly because they develop more quickly. We did not evaluate a pure merit promotion system, which is one in which seniority does not play a role. We used merit and seniority in combination. As a result, there is an age/grade/years of service relationship, but it is different from the one that now exists. We do not know if this relationship is actually needed; we observe that it is traditional in most militaries. Allowing some to be advanced more quickly than others and allowing for promotion selection from a pool that is nonhomogeneous by age and experience results in less of an age/grade/length of service relationship. Said another way, the career flow structure and promoting function could allow for a broader span of ages in a particular grade. The determination would be on how long it takes to be developed to have the ability to discharge the responsibilities of that grade.

Combining changed promotions with a career flow structure that is based on selecting well-qualified officers for careers has additional ramifications for advancement. If the basis for the career is skill and experience qualification, then promotions need only go to those who are needed for higher levels of management responsibility. Promotions are no longer needed as the basis for keeping people.

**Manage Under Rules That Provide for Less Turnover and Greater Stability.**

Our analysis suggests that turnover should be tailored to accomplish institutional goals and that seeking uniform turnover rates across all grades may not be wise. It is possible to provide turnover at the point it is needed and stability in the ranges where it is needed. High turnover early in a career system could accomplish multiple objectives such as preserving accession institutions, meeting grade-experience requirements, and providing flow to the reserves. Thus, relatively high turnover early in the career path should be part of the system. Turnover between 3 and 7 years of service is useful in line skills because it recoups the investment in initial training and provides officers most useful to the reserve component; turnover at about 10 years of service is useful in the specialized skills where greater training investment has been made. An expanded in-and-out system could work well for support and professional skills in which less military experience and acculturation is needed. However, in all of these skills, once career status is gained, there could be much greater stability than is now the case. Use of an up-and-stay structure once an officer achieves
career status would allow greater turnover early and more stability later and may serve the requirements of the military services and the needs of officers.

**Adequacy of the Existing Grade Tables.** A grade table as an external, policy monitoring device\(^3\) is but one way to control officer systems. A sliding-scale grade table has been used to control officer inventory directly because manpower requirements are not generally believed, and thus the officer inventory must be evaluated and constrained by an external performance standard. If officer requirements were accepted, an external mechanism like a grade table would not be needed to control the entire officer career management system. Flexibility would be less of an issue in that, without external constraints, the career management system could adapt more readily as needs for numbers of officers, in their several grades and diverse skills, changed. There would be only enough officers to fill positions at the correct grades.

More closely controlling grade requirements for officers rather than constraining officer grade inventory may allow more management flexibility while controlling grade creep. For example, the National Performance Review suggests standards for the ratio of senior to subordinate, and requirements could be made to meet such performance standards.\(^4\) Many organizations are reengineering to accomplish this. Additionally, one should not focus on control at only one point in time. A dynamic context is needed to have flexibility to accommodate changing officer strengths over time. In practice, this means that if one believes the steady state is the least likely set of conditions to occur, then compromise—flexibility—between relative grade sizes at a point in time (the grade table) and consistency of promotion opportunity and timing should be designed into the officer career management system and not left to chance or later argument.

We suggest four alternative approaches to the existing sliding scale grade table:

1. **Requirements and the Requirements Process Dominate.** To the extent that requirements are valid, promotions are vacancy based and number of officers are as needed to man forces and organizations. Opportunity and timing cannot be promised in advance but only measured after the fact. The system operates more

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\(^3\)Policy monitoring allows policy superordinates to achieve control even though agents have greater knowledge about the exact nature of the policy process and the nature of the policy outputs. It prevents agents from “misleading their principals.” Richard W. Waterman and B. Dan Wood, “Policy Monitoring and Policy Analysis,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 12, 1993, pp. 685–699. If one believes that any system can be gamed to the benefit of those who operate it, an arbitrary, inflexible control has great utility. Moreover, a constraining grade table forces more uniform outcomes because it standardizes grade levels by service and by skill if all skills are controlled.

like a rank-in-job system even though it remains one of rank-in-person. Theoretically, this is how the system operates now, but because the requirements constraint is not binding, an external constraint of a grade table is used. Grade requirements could be the result of a bottom-up process that determines or validates grade needs or could be the result of a top-down process by which a performance standard for senior to subordinate is set in advance. Variations could allow rigid requirements control at certain grades, e.g., O-6, and not at all field grades as now. The practice seen in the private sector of rigid control at the executive/nonexecutive boundary is useful. In the military, this boundary appears to be at the grade of O-6. Requirements for this grade might be precisely determined by the services and controlled by the Congress.

2. Careers Dominate. Promotion opportunity and timing are set in advance in recognition that the system is one of rank-in-person. Variations could control the overage and shortage problem in that opportunity and timing could be allowed to vary by service and skill or even by size of entry cohort (dynamic controls). Opportunity and timing can be promised in advance to all or to each cohort at entry. (Inconsistency and nonuniformity in promotion opportunity and timing by skill, service, and cohort could result but this would be known in advance.) If one accepts the design of the personnel function dealing with promotion, then one should be willing to accept the outcomes. The outcomes represent the end result of the policy process dealing with careers in general and promotions in particular. Currently, the DoD reports expected future five-year promotion opportunity and timing to the Congress,\(^5\) and this could be used more directly in control.

3. Let Both Operate. Let a fixed, external grade distribution control dollars available for pay at any particular force size, but let requirements or career considerations control actual grades that a service might use at a point in time. This creates a trade-off between the number of officers a service might have (which has been set annually in the authorization process) and the grades of those officers (which are now limited by Title 10). For example, within the fixed budget, one service might choose more officers of lower grades than would have been allowed; another service might choose fewer officers than would have been allowed but of higher grades. If the concept of user demands, resulting in costs borne by the user, eventually works its way into manpower requirements, then the ultimate users of forces could also more directly affect the grades of the officers they are receiving.\(^6\)

\(^6\)For example, Section 333 of the FY 1994 National Defense Authorization Act (Report 103-357) discusses recovering the full costs of the use of military personnel in provision of certain goods and services.
4. Modify the Existing Method. The existing sliding-scale grade table, which must not be exceeded at the end of each year, could be modified to take effect over a longer period of time. For example, lagging the grade table (basing its effect on a prior year’s officer strength rather than the current year’s) provides more flexibility in drawdown and more of a constraint in growth. In periods of stability there is no change from the existing effect of the grade table.7

What Congress Should Directly Control. These options also raise subsidiary questions relative to the nature and amount of congressional involvement. For example, Congress might determine the overall design of the career structure and personnel functions and set them in law but then not control the outcomes that result in any particular year from the design. Congress might determine the overall design and also control outcomes through annual authority to achieve projected five-year grade or promotion objectives. These could also differ by service and skill. Congress might determine the overall design and also specify a rigid control in statute as well.

Expected Length of Officer Careers. The overall average lengths of careers are determined by the career flow structure and by elements of career satisfaction including the vesting-annuity workings of the retirement system. Career length is partly determined by engendering commitment to careers through professional satisfaction, job challenges, compensation, and by addressing family considerations. Officers must want to stay for career length comparisons to be meaningful. Committed officers whom the military needs by dint of their grade, skill, and experience must also be afforded the opportunity to stay by the officer career management system. Career lengths depend more heavily on the workings of the career flow structure than on any fixing of a maximum career length. For example, extending the maximum career by five years but keeping up-or-out for the field grades extends the expected career length by only one year. Changing from up-or-out to up-and-stay and increasing maximum careers by five years extends expected career length by more than five years. Longer average career lengths appear beneficial because they increase the experience levels of the officer corps in the grades of O-4 to O-6.

Timing and Opportunities for Promotion. In two alternatives, we used a promotion function that incorporated some fast-tracking through the structure: longer promotion zones in which the numerical emphasis of promotion objectives would be reduced and in which requirements for grades could play a

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7Our 1993 report (The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980) addressed the need for flexibility in the existing grade table during the drawdown years. We proposed a method (pp. 64–68) to gain flexibility that would also offer greater control in a period of expansion, and we believe that this proposal continues to have merit if the grade tables are continued in their present form.
greater role. A promotion function such as this produced somewhat different results from the other alternatives.

A rank-in-person career system tied to numerical promotion objectives for timing and opportunity in a steady-state system with defined promotion zones will produce desired promotion outcomes independent of requirements for grades. Either the requirements system adjusts to the level of grades produced, promotion timing and/or opportunity have to change to reflect grade requirements, or external constraints in numbers are placed on the workings of the career system (a grade table) to limit inventory of officers in certain grades.

None of these is preferable. What is preferable is to provide “enough and only enough officers to meet mission-based requirements in each of the officer grades.” A career system that selects officers after initial service for careers who are the best qualified by their skills and experiences and then continues them without forced attrition reduces the amount of promotion. However, a longer promotion zone can be used to continue opportunity for promotion over longer periods. Promotions would occur for valid needs for managers and leaders and not because promotion must occur for officers to stay in the profession.

**Study Team Observations and Conclusions**

Most recently, concern has been on transitioning from a large force for the global conflict to a smaller one for the new international security environment. In general, the dominant effect of the post–Cold War officer strength reduction and other changes in the security environment is that officer career management is shifting from mass production of a limited number of kinds of officers to more numerous but smaller batches of customized kinds of officers. Designing a future officer career management system using concepts such as those suggested below will best achieve the purpose and objectives of officer career management as this shift occurs in the near term and will be able to more easily accommodate other, more future changes as they occur.

Our analysis of the different career management systems suggests that the benefits of uniformity need to be balanced by a capacity for flexibility. We raise this as a central issue because of the long congressional interest in having uniform management across the services. Certainly broad personnel policy for the services ought to be uniform. But in the more specific issues of policy implementation, it is unclear that uniformity is possible or that it is desirable.

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even if possible. For example, because requirements do not change uniformly by service, future uniformity in career management is problematical. Making the career system uniform across services and requirements means that not all grade and skill requirements can be met. Uniformity of policy, though desirable, does not necessarily guarantee uniformity of outcome.

A career system with inherent flexibility seems more suited for the still uncertain future that all services face. An insight we gained during the course of our evaluation was that the best features of all career flow structures can be used at different points in a career system. For example, forced attrition appears useful both to provide sufficient junior officers to the reserves and to limit the numbers of officers who serve in long careers. If these are the correct objectives, then using career selection at about the 5 and 10 year points (as used in the Career Selection alternative) has merit. One might keep those with existing skills that are needed in the future and choose others with organizational experience and who are ingrained in the organizational culture and redevelop them. Those not selected for careers would transition from active service. However, the career stability provided by natural attrition after selection for a career thereafter also has merit. Officership is a profession, and thus entry at the beginning of a career is best. However, there remains room for some lateral entry, especially from reserves, or from those with prior military service, or early in line careers or even later in support and professional skill groups.

Combined career structures (as used in the Career Selection alternative) can create any level of desired military experience. In general, the past professed need of the services for military experience has been for large numbers of officers with limited experience and fewer with lots of experience. This should change in the future as officers are expected to need more military experience to be properly developed at each grade. Additionally, the national military strategy may require more experienced officers.

We offer the following observations about the four personnel functions based either on our research or on our evaluation.

**Accessing.** Officers might come from many sources including from enlisted service. Acculturation prior to entry is needed and useful. Some foreign militaries provide more and some less than the United States; we have no basis for suggesting what is the proper amount, but it can vary by skill group as it does now. Acculturation through enlisted service is as useful as academy or ROTC experience. Accessing those with the potential for higher positions has been the central feature for this personnel function for many years, and we have no basis for suggesting other designs. Some requirements options and some career
management concepts will lead to different organization of the means of entry because the limited accessions needed may make the institutions of accession as currently structured not viable.

**Developing.** The military should have the best qualified officers. Officer careers should be based on meeting the requirements of the national military strategy as seen by the users of officers in the multiple commands, agencies, and departments. In the future, qualifications might be more related to needed, diverse skills and experiences than to ability to be promoted. Additionally, there needs to be greater recognition that all officers do not develop at the same rate nor can they be given the same development opportunities. Separate career paths for skilled individuals not on command tracks might be needed. Lateral moves to varied duties and responsibilities could keep work interesting and motivating for those who have reached advancement plateaus. Flexibility against future skill and not just grade needs should be the objective. Developing will be heavily emphasized in the future in the military as in the private sector. Experienced, but flexible, workforces will be the objective because user needs for certain officers will change more frequently.

**Promoting.** Fast tracks are useful in career management. Less numerical emphasis on promotion also appears useful in the future. Both can be accommodated by varying promotion zones. A design for a promotion function should incorporate a role for service grade requirements and individual pace of development, some fast-tracking through the system, and longer promotion zones in which the numerical emphasis of promotion objectives would be reduced. A design such as this lessens the relationship between age, grade, and length of service because it allows for merit to play a greater role in promoting and seniority a lesser role.

**Transitioning.** Longer careers appear to have merit for both the institution and the individual officer and should be part of a future system. Officers who commit to careers ought not to have to seek another career at midlife solely because of the career system. On the other hand, there is no reason that immediate annuities have to be paid to those who choose to leave. Transitioning should use many mechanisms to guide behaviors of officers. Vesting seems to be useful in allowing for needed behaviors to occur. Additionally, outplacement services and transition incentives to be used as needed for force management purposes should be continued because they promote flexibility by facilitating reductions throughout years-of-service profiles. Vesting could also induce voluntarily separation after limited service careers after causing junior officers to remain for a period beyond entry commitments. Greater stability in longer
careers with annuities payable at the 30 to 35 year-of-service point could accomplish the desired continuations of committed officers into careers.

Next Steps

The conclusions reached in this study were based on a broad method of analysis designed to provide analytical information about changes that could be made in the officer career management system. We set forth alternative future systems whose designs form a “tool box” from which needed policies can be selected to address DoD and service objectives for officer careers. The “tools” range from different types of basic career structures through designs for personnel functions such as accession and promotion. We also suggested criteria for measuring how well the systems meet the purpose and objectives of officer career management described in this report. We did not attempt to design or model the future officer career management system.

This research is the foundation for a process that should include the following steps:

- For both DoD and the military services, develop explicit objectives for officer career management and rank those objectives according to their importance.
- Select career flow structures and personnel functions that best achieve the stated objectives.
- Combine these structures and functions into a career management system.
- Design an implementation plan that includes a transition phase from the old to the new system.

Senior officials in the DoD and the military services should guide and participate in this follow-on effort, particularly to ensure that the objectives of the new management system are clearly and precisely defined. Those objectives will determine the nature of future careers for U.S. military officers.