A RAND NOTE

Project AIR FORCE Analysis of the Air War in the Gulf

The Air Force Rapid Response Process: Streamlined Acquisition During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

Michael G. Anderson

RAND

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PREFACE

This Note describes the Air Force Rapid Response Process implemented during Operation Desert Storm to acquire systems to meet the theater-specific wartime needs of the United States Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF). The Rapid Response Process can be viewed as a streamlined acquisition model that can be implemented to satisfy the time-urgent needs of a theater commander during force mobilization, deployment, and employment. This study examines the Rapid Response Process characteristics, actors, and decision points; evaluates the effectiveness of the process during the Gulf War; and discusses factors affecting the success of the process.

This Note is part of RAND's documentation of Project AIR FORCE's Analysis of the Air War in the Gulf. The Operation Desert Storm air campaign study objectives are to describe and assess: (1) the effectiveness of Desert Storm air missions at both the strategic and tactical levels in terms of the initial and evolving campaign objectives, (2) the use of air power as a major instrument to achieve the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, (3) the doctrine for planning and executing Desert Storm in terms of the doctrine for joint United States and allied operations, and (4) the implications for future Air Force doctrine, missions, systems, acquisition, logistics, force modernization, and research and development. This Note was completed in support of the study's fourth objective and should be of use to those interested in both the wartime acquisition processes that support an air campaign and the implications for streamlining the peacetime acquisition processes.

Other air campaign studies deal with the joint forces air component commander and air campaign planning; the master attack plan and target list; command, control, communications and intelligence; logistics; strategic bombing to include Strategic Air Command (SAC) bomber and tanker operations; air attacks against the Iraqi army in the Kuwaiti theater of operations; close air support and battlefield air interdiction; composite wing operations; F–117A operations; and intelligence support for battle damage assessment and targeting.

The Project AIR FORCE Analysis of the Air War in the Gulf began in March 1991 and was sponsored by the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff. The research for this Note was performed under the auspices of the Theater Force Employment Program of Project AIR FORCE, a federally funded research and development center.

SUMMARY

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the United States Air Force realized that the peacetime requirements approval and acquisition process could not meet the time-urgent mission needs in the theater of operations. As a result, the Air Force instituted the Rapid Response Process (RRP), streamlining the process to acquire predominantly smaller systems and subsystems, including theater-specific capabilities in munitions, communications, computers, avionics, and the increased stock of mission-essential items. This tailored approach submitted, assessed, approved, and funded a validated Combat Mission Need Statement (C-MNS) within 24 days, and it implemented procedures to field the desired capability in less than six months. The RRP did not try to replace normal acquisition procedures; rather, it sought to expeditiously field capabilities that were validated combat needs. The RRP incorporated three steps: (1) documenting the need, (2) assessing the feasibility of meeting the need, and (3) obtaining approval for fielding the capability that met the need.

Once identified, a need was documented in a C-MNS. The C-MNS described the mission area in which the operational deficiency existed, stated the mission deficiency in operational terms, identified a desired operational capability date, and assessed potential impacts on applicable areas. The submitter was also asked to identify known initiatives or on-going program efforts that might meet their need. The major commands (MAJCOMs) validated the C-MNS within four days and, after coordination with the United States Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) Director of Combat Plans, submitted it to the Air Force Directorate of Operational Requirements (AF/XOR). The C-MNS was reviewed at three levels: by a Special Action Team (SAT), by a General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC), and by the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff (AF/CV).

The feasibility assessment began when the SAT received copies of the C-MNS. Chaired by AF/XOR, the SAT included action officers from the Air Force Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Logistics and Engineering (AF/LE), for Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (AF/SC), for Intelligence (AF/IN), and for Programs and Resources (AF/PR). Additionally, SAT members included action officers from the Offices of the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ), for Financial Management and Comptroller (SAF/FM), and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting (SAF/AQC). Using criteria set by the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations (AF/XO), the SAT evaluated the proposal, then reviewed alternatives to satisfy the C-MNS with

support from Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) and/or Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC). Proposed solutions had to be affordable; have acceptable technical risk, support, and training; and be achievable within six months from AF/CV approval.

Proposal funding was initially intended to come from an anticipated "pot" of investment dollars. When this proved unworkable, the Air Staff obtained funds using below-threshold reprogramming to support the RRP, often cutting programs to provide funds. Here, MAJCOMs identified potential funding sources when they submitted their C-MNS. If unable to identify funding, the MAJCOM worked with SAF/AQ and AF/LE to find a source within the same MAJCOM appropriation. If still unable to locate a funding source, the group compared the RRP proposal with other unfunded requirements from within the Air Force's total obligation authority (TOA).

After coordinating its recommended approach with the responsible MAJCOM, the SAT began the approval process with a decision briefing to the GOSC that reviewed the SAT's abbreviated acquisition strategy, draft program management direction (PMD), and funding documents. Chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management Policy and Program Integration (SAF/AQX), the GOSC included representatives from AF/XOR, the Air Force Directorate of Logistics Concepts and Integration (AF/LEX), and Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Budget (SAF/FMB). When their respective areas of interest were affected, representatives from AF/SC and AF/IN were included in the GOSC. If the GOSC agreed the effort should proceed, they forwarded the RRP Case Summary to the AF/CV.

Finally, the AF/CV reviewed and approved the RRP Case Summary, and the Air Force issued a PMD within 24 hours. When issued, the PMD was executed by implementing commands (normally AFSC and/or AFLC) using contracting procedures that were authorized for "urgent and compelling needs" and their own internally developed, streamlined process.

The Air Staff used two objectives to measure RRP performance: (1) keeping the time interval from mission need identification to PMD issuance to 24 days or less, and (2) deploying the desired capability in six months or less. Without visibility into each of the operator MAJCOM's requirement to validate mission needs in four days and submit a C-MNS, this Note used only the Air Staff's performance in processing a C-MNS within 20 days. Of 33 cases reviewed (as of 28 February 1991), 82 percent of the cases were processed within 20 days. By the time the RRP was terminated, the Air Staff C-MNS processing averaged 13 days and ranged between 1 and 43 days.

When a PMD was issued, the implementing commands were expected to field the capability within six months. Of 33 cases reviewed (as of 28 February 1991), 32 were actually met or were projected to meet the six-month requirement. By the time RRP was

terminated, the time to field the 23 projects that deployed to the Gulf averaged 1.8 months and ranged between .5 and 4 months.

Several RRP lessons learned were documented as observations by the process participants. These lessons are important because of their contribution to the relative success of the RRP, particularly in future implementation of a similar process. First, the RRP should be established by a senior Air Force official (such as AF/CV). Second, SAT membership should be limited to those needed to process and monitor the RRP projects. In this regard, points of contact from other Services are needed to find and employ options available through their channels.

Active communication, close coordination, and frequent contact between the SAT, RRP Coordinator, MAJCOM action officers, and the theater representatives are required to provide the project visibility and prioritization needed to meet RRP timelines. At the same time, the offices involved and the SAT need the flexibility to determine when a project is ready to present to the GOSC with only the 20-day deadline as a constraint.

How and from where funds will be obtained should be studied before the RRP is initiated. If possible, a fund without the appropriation boundaries set aside for RRP projects would be most effective, even if this requires approval by the four affected Congressional committees. If this is not possible, users must not expect payback or supplemental funding to pay for RRP projects. Instead, they should be prepared to identify a commensurate decrease in the current budget to pay for RRP efforts.

Finally, AFSC (now Air Force Material Command or AFMC) should establish a forum to allow industry to submit ideas and concepts to meet RRP needs and suggest capabilities the theater commander may find useful. Significantly, nothing should proceed beyond the discussion stage until the theater commander says there is a requirement.

At the end of the program and in light of its success, the Air Force revised Air Force Regulation (AFR) 57-1 to permit reinstatement of the RRP (called "Fast Track") if needed and to incorporate policies needed to accelerate peacetime acquisition procedures based on need and funding availability.

The RRP successfully met its wartime objectives. Given the changing peacetime acquisition environment, an interesting policy issue is whether the RRP provides lessons that can be translated from wartime priorities to peacetime acquisition. A closer examination of the RRP model might provide insight into the development of policy options to shorten the peacetime acquisition cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author acknowledges and greatly appreciates the support of Lieutenant Colonel (retired) John Mitchel, a former Air Force Research Fellow at RAND, for being the genesis of this research, for reviewing earlier drafts, and for providing the guidance to complete it. The author is also greatly indebted to Major Glenn Taylor from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Special Projects Division (SAF/AQLZ) at the Pentagon, for providing the data used in the study, as well as for his extensive review of the earlier drafts.

Without question, others who lent their eyes and efforts to review and edit this Note are also crucial to its credibility and accuracy. The author thanks Jeff Drezner, Ted Parker, Natalie Crawford, and Billie Fenton at RAND; Lieutenant Colonel Stan Bishop at the former Air Force Systems Command; and Lieutenant General Buster C. Glosson, the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, for their time and expertise.

Any remaining errors of omission are solely the responsibility of the author.

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GLOSSARY

AF	Air Force
AFLC	Air Force Logistics Command
AFMC	Air Force Material Command
AFR	Air Force Regulation
AFSC	Air Force Systems Command
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AQ	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Acquisition
AQC	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Contracting
AQL	Directorate of Electronic and Special Programs
AQLZ	Special Projects Division, Directorate of Electronic and Special Programs
AQX	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management Policy and Program Integration
CENTAF	United States Central Command Air Forces
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CC	Commander
C-MNS	Combat Mission Need Statement
CV	Vice Chief of Staff
DoD	Department of Defense
ESC	Electronic Security Command
FM	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller
FMB	Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Budget
GOSC	General Officer Steering Committee
HQ	Headquarters
IN	Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence
INX	Directorate of Intelligence Plans and Requirements
LE	Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics and Engineering
LEX	Directorate of Logistics Concepts and Integration
MAC	Military Airlift Command
MAJCOM	Major Command
MNS	Mission Need Statement
NBC	Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PMD	Program Management Direction
POC	Point of Contact
PR	Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Resources
R&D	Research and Development
RDT&E	Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation
RRP	Rapid Response Process
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SAT	Special Action Team

SC	Deputy Chief of Staff for Command, Control, Communications, and Computers
SCM	Directorate of C4 Mission Systems
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TOA	Total Obligation Authority
XO	Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations
XOR	Directorate of Operational Requirements

1. INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

When U.S. forces mobilize and deploy, the effective employment of these forces may require an aggressive acquisition policy to support time-urgent needs of the theater commander. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, each service expedited their acquisition methods to field these mission-essential needs identified by the United States Central Command (CENTCOM). The Army sped up its procurement of a modified Patriot air defense system with an enhanced Scud defense capability. The Marine Corps quickened the procurement of countermine-counterobstacle equipment. The Navy rapidly acquired 291 Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles to employ in the campaign.[1]

The Air Force initiated the Rapid Response Process (RRP), recognizing that the current requirements approval and acquisition processes were geared to a peacetime pace. The RRP streamlined procedures and quickened the pace to meet the theater commander's time-urgent mission needs.

This Note's objective is to document the RRP as a model for streamlined acquisition implemented in times of force mobilization, deployment, and employment. It describes the RRP, evaluates the program's results and effectiveness, and highlights some lessons learned that were documented by affected Air Force agencies.

This study is intentionally limited to a descriptive scope of the Air Staff's effort in the RRP. While information was not gathered at the Major Commands (MAJCOMs) or implementing commands, the tremendous effort by the professionals at these levels is both recognized and appreciated.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

Section 2 traces the process inception, describes program specifics and evaluation criteria, and discusses RRP project funding. Section 3 reviews the program's overall results, evaluates the effectiveness of the process, and highlights some of the lessons that were learned by the Air Force.

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[1]*Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: An Interim Report to Congress,* Department of Defense, July 1991.

COMPARISON BETWEEN RRP AND PEACETIME ACQUISITION

Before beginning, it is important to set the stage with short, comparative pictures of the RRP and the normal peacetime acquisition process. The RRP was an adaptive, ad hoc approach resulting in an initial request-to-funding cycle averaging 13 days, rather than the normal 12 months required in the peacetime acquisition process.[2] The 35 RRP projects were predominantly smaller systems and subsystems including theater-specific capabilities in munitions, communications, computers, avionics, and the increased stock of mission-essential items.[3] Generally, projects could be categorized as modifications to existing capabilities found in fielded systems or as systems in development. Significantly, the boost found in the national support of the war's objectives increased the priority of reviewing, approving, funding, and fielding rapid acquisition efforts. All together, the process was tailored to a management and procurement effort conducive to quickly fielding a CENTAF-identified combat mission need.

On the other hand, the normal peacetime acquisition is regulated by an event-driven strategy linking major contractual goals and milestone decisions with development, testing, and the initial system operational capability.[4] Usually, peacetime systems acquisition is a large-scale, more costly effort geared to long-term force modernization to counter a future threat. By their nature, these programs require larger management efforts and more oversight, and they are dependent on the nation's annual requirements prioritization and budget processes.

With this comparison now in mind, the next section describes the RRP in more detail.

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[2]*Questions and Answers, Desert Shield/Storm Rapid Response Process,* SAF/AQL Staff Summary Sheet, 25 September 1990.

[3]Ibid.

[4]"Keeping the Edge: Understanding the Importance of Acquisition," Major Charles R. Nelson, USAF, *Program Manager*, January-February 1992, p. 37.

2. THE RAPID RESPONSE PROCESS

As noted in the introduction, peacetime acquisition processes provide major weapon systems with basic capabilities to meet mission requirements. However, modifications are sometimes required to ensure these weapon systems' capabilities are compatible with combat mission needs specific to a particular theater of operations. This section describes the RRP program that was developed and implemented to meet this purpose during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

CONCEPT

After nearly two months of air operations during Operation Desert Shield, the Air Force recognized that the normal peacetime requirements approval and acquisition process was too bulky and slow to meet their theater needs. These processes had to be streamlined to quickly field capabilities and systems needed to prosecute what could be a long-term, war-fighting commitment in the CENTCOM theater.

On 25 September 1990, Major General Robert D. Eaglet, SAF/AQX, forwarded a proposal staffed through SAF/FMB, SAF/AQ, AF/XO, Air Force Directorate of Intelligence Plans and Requirements (AF/INX), Air Force Directorate of C4 Mission Systems (AF/SCM), AFSC/CC, and AFLC/CC, to General John Michael Loh, AF/CV, for approval.[1] The proposal, called the "Rapid Response Process," streamlined the requirements validation and feasibility assessments and expedited contracting actions through existing procedures.[2] As a result, it established a channel between the battlefield commander and the development community to field needed capabilities.

On 28 September, General Loh approved the RRP and established a small team of action officers and general officers to review each requirement, select the most effective and timely solution, identify funding, and issue direction. The AF/CV retained final review and approval on all RRP projects.[3]

The RRP did not replace normal acquisition procedures; it expedited the process for validated combat needs for certain types of items. To be successful, the program sought to

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[1]Department of the Air Force office symbols are used throughout this Note. If necessary, their "translation" can be found in the Glossary.

[2]*Desert Shield Rapid Response Process (RRP) and Team,* SAF/AQL Staff Summary Sheet, 25 September 1990.

[3]*Questions and Answers, Desert Shield/Storm Rapid Response Process,* SAF/AQLZ Point Paper, 7 March 1991.

complete this process within 24 days from mission need identification to issuing program management direction (PMD), and deploy the resulting capability within six months.[4] In guidance released on 9 October, Major General Charles A. May, Jr., the Assistant AF/XO, limited RRP projects to "urgent mission needs and requirements that directly affect a command's ability to conduct its assigned [Desert Shield or Desert Storm] mission, impact personnel training, welfare, and safety, or could materially improve the efficiency, operation, maintenance, or support of in-theater weapon systems or equipment."[5] General May anticipated that most solutions forwarded for consideration would result in short-term safety modifications or modifications designed to improve system reliability. Additionally, he expected the procurement of commercial off-the-shelf items, the purchase of non-developmental items, limited research and development, or the use of other service or coalition forces capabilities and equipment to meet mission needs processed by the RRP.[6]

PROCESS

There are three important steps in processing individual RRP projects: (1) documenting the need, (2) assessing the feasibility of meeting the need, and (3) obtaining approval for project go-ahead. Through the RRP, the need was documented in a Combat Mission Need Statement (C-MNS), the feasibility assessment completed by the Special Action Team (SAT), and approval granted when the AF/CV signed the PMD (see Figure 2.1). The streamlined decision-making process within each of these steps helped the RRP meet its goal of accelerated acquisition of needed capabilities.

Documenting the Need

A majority of mission needs were identified by CENTAF.[7] In turn, in-theater units, agencies, and commands, or HQ USAF and other operating, implementing, and supporting commands were required to document their and CENTAF-identified requirements derived from Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm in a shortened mission need statement. The C-MNS was an abbreviated version of the MNS found in DOD 5000.2-M, "Defense

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[4]*Point Paper on the Desert Shield Rapid Response Process (RRP),* SAF/AQLZ, 30 November 1990.

[5]*Desert Shield Rapid Response Process,* AF/XO message 091500Z, December 1990.

[6]Ibid.

[7]From comments received from Lieutenant General Buster C. Glosson, AF/XO, then the Deputy Commander, Middle East Task Force and director of the "Black Hole," a special planning and operational action team that worked the Air Tasking Order during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

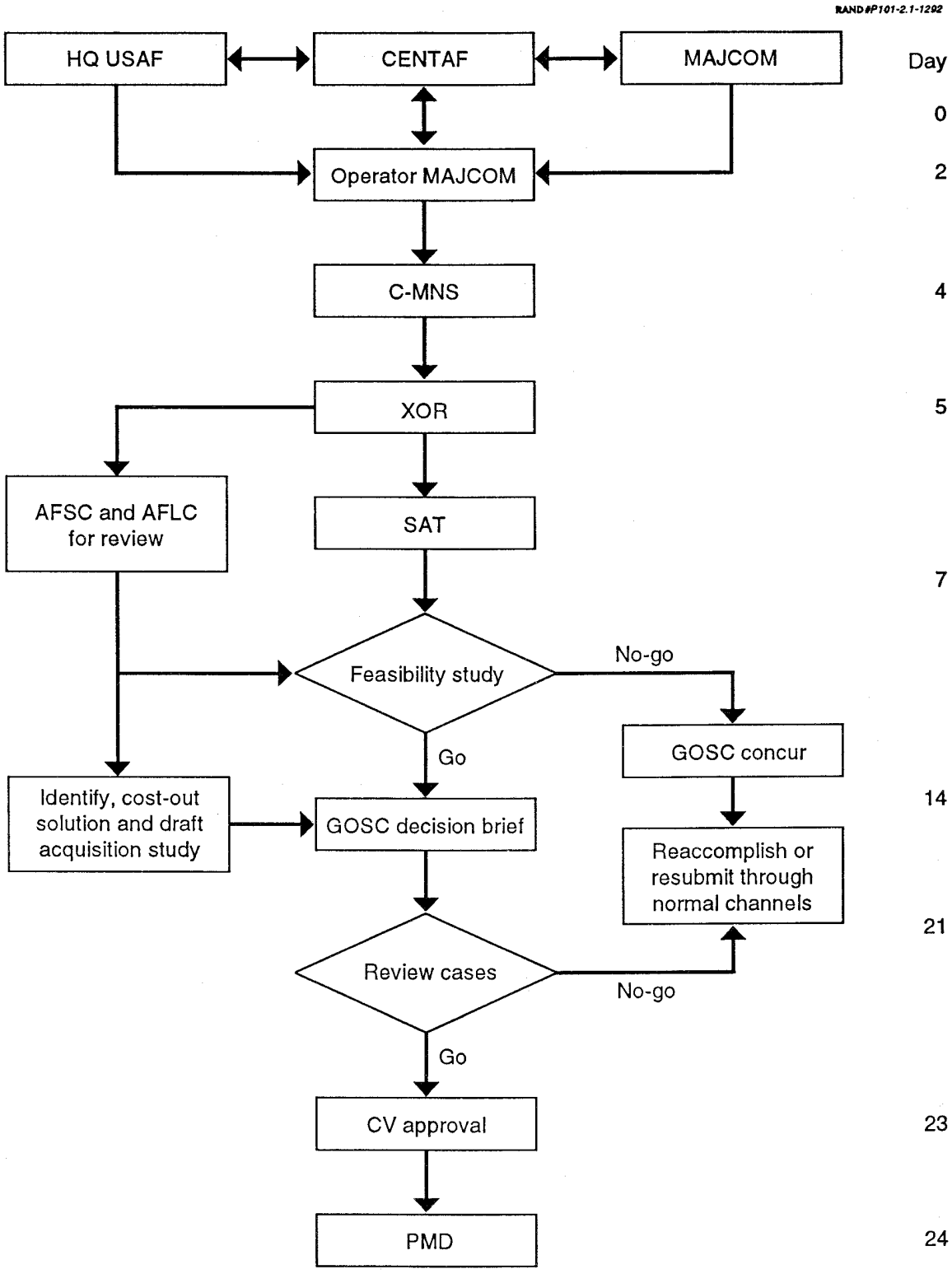

Figure 2.1—Desert Shield Rapid Response Process

Acquisition Management: Documentation Reports," and was coordinated with the CENTAF Director of Combat Plans through AF/XOR or CENTAF Rear prior to submission.

A C-MNS was submitted for certain requirements arising out of Desert Shield and Desert Storm except "when direction to perform the tasking exists under current direction, when funding is available from within the program element line number, and when use of that funding does not cause a disconnect in a program baseline or affect executability of that program."[8] The C-MNS described the mission area in which the operational deficiency existed (e.g., electronic combat, aircrew training, weapons certification, etc.), identified the mission deficiency in operational terms, stated a desired initial operational capability date, and assessed potential impacts on safety, survivability, personnel, training, logistics, communications, and other applicable areas. The submitter was asked to identify known initiatives or ongoing program efforts to meet the needed capability.

Feasibility Assessment

The feasibility assessment was the first level of review and began when members of the SAT received copies of the C-MNS. Chaired by SAF/AQL, the SAT included action officers (and an alternate) from AF/LE, AF/SC, AF/IN, AF/PR, SAF/AQ, SAF/FM, and SAF/AQC. An AFSC representative participated in all SAT meetings. Depending on the project being evaluated, the SAT was augmented by personnel with the technical and operational expertise pertaining to that particular project. Using criteria set by AF/XO, the SAT evaluated the proposal, then reviewed alternatives to satisfy the C-MNS with support from AFSC and/or AFLC. Proposed solutions had to be affordable; have acceptable technical risk,[9] support, and training; and be fielded within six months from when the AF/CV approved the C-MNS and issued a PMD.[10]

The SAT also analyzed acquisition strategies and program plans and discussed how to swiftly process the C-MNS through the Air Staff. The result was a decision briefing which the SAT prepared after coordination with CENTAF and the MAJCOMs. On the other hand, if the SAT believed the project did not meet the RRP criteria, they informed the General

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[8]*Desert Shield Rapid Response Process (RRP),* AF/LEX message 121759Z, December 1990.

[9]In their review, the SAT made a qualitative technical risk assessment of each C-MNS using adjective ratings of "low" (ideal level of risk), "medium" (acceptable level of risk), or "high" (unacceptable level of risk). Based on data from *The USAF Desert Shield / Storm Rapid Response Process (RRP): Briefing to the Middle East Aerospace and Defense Conference* by Major General Robert D. Eaglet, SAF/AQL, 27 February 1991, of the 35 cases processed through the RRP, 21 were assessed as low risk, 12 as medium risk, and two as high risk. While it is not clear how this risk assessment was made, it is clear that it was an important part of the overall feasibility assessment.

[10]*Desert Shield Rapid Response Process,* AF/XO message 091500Z, December 1990.

Office Steering Committee (GOSC). If the GOSC concurred with the SAT assessment, the originator was informed of their C-MNS disposition.

To fund RRP proposals, initially SAF/AQ and AF/LE were to set aside a "pot" of investment dollars. This, however, presented an unknown appropriation need. To resolve this, the affected Air Staff appropriation managers obtained funds using below-threshold reprogramming to support RRP requirements. In other words, one program (or many) were cut to provide RRP project funds. While solving one problem, these cuts presented a need to balance reprogramming funds away from existing projects to support CENTAF needs.[11]

To help make informed decisions that accounted for the MAJCOM's priorities, MAJCOMs were asked in mid-December to identify potential sources of funding when submitting each C-MNS. If they were unable to identify a funding source, the MAJCOM's RRP action officer worked with SAF/AQ and AF/LE to find a source within the same MAJCOM appropriation. If still unable to identify funding sources, the group compared the RRP proposal with other unfunded requirements from elsewhere in the Air Force's total obligation authority (TOA) for possible funding.

Approval Process

Once prepared, the SAT provided a decision briefing to the GOSC which included general officers from AF/XOR, AF/LEX, SAF/AQX, and SAF/ FMB. When their areas of interest were affected, AF/SC and AF/IN also participated. Supported by AFSC and/or AFLC, the SAT described an abbreviated acquisition strategy, then presented the coordinated draft PMD and funding documents for review. After review and approval, the GOSC forwarded their project recommendation in the form of an RRP Case Summary to the AF/CV for his review and approval.

When an RRP proposal was approved by AF/CV, the responsible Air Force directorate issued a PMD within 24 hours. Once issued, the implementing commands used internally developed, streamlined contracting procedures that were authorized for "urgent and compelling needs" to execute the PMD direction for RRP projects. To foster success, the implementing commands sought and sustained priority support from industry, government labs, and the nation's transportation assets.

SUMMARY

The process can be summarized as follows (see Figure 2.2): first, operator MAJCOMs validated the needs identified within four days of receipt from a submitter. Once they

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[11]*Desert Shield Rapid Response Process (RRP),* AF/LEX message 121759Z, December 1990.

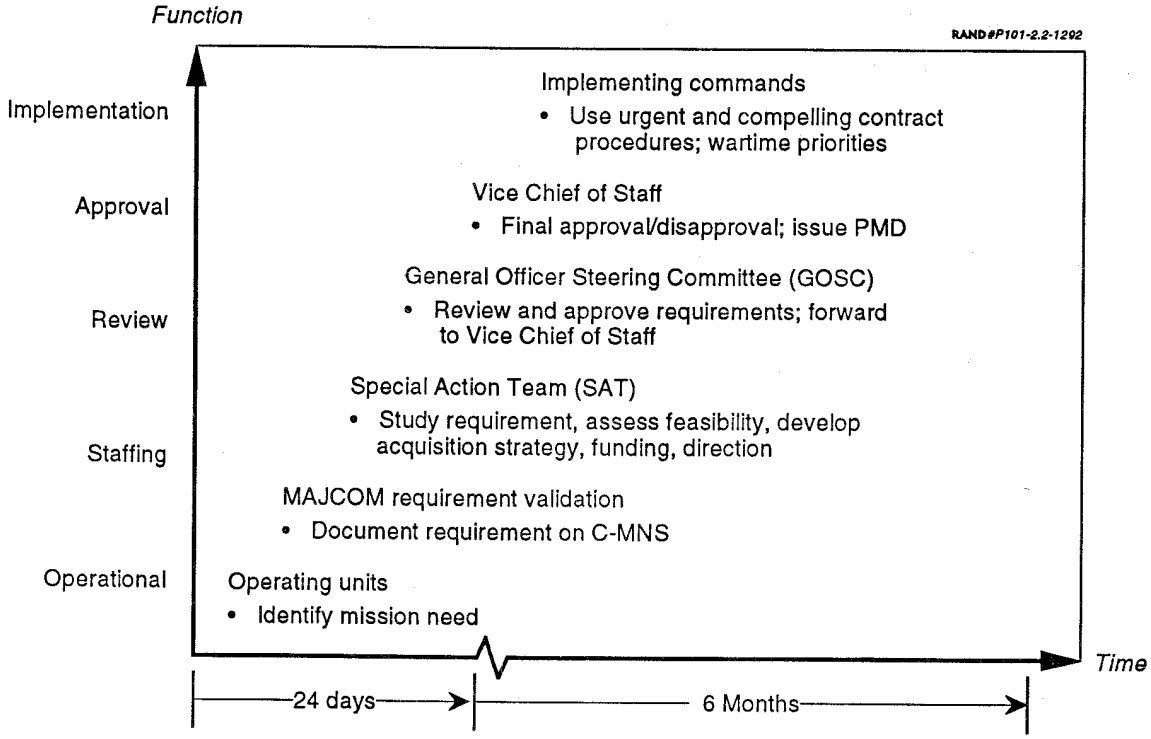

Figure 2.2—RRP Accelerated Timeline

validated the need and coordinated their response with CENTAF, the MAJCOMs submitted the requirement as a C-MNS. The Air Staff then processed the C-MNS within 20 days. In this period, the Air Staff assessed whether the proposed approach met general RRP criteria, reviewed alternatives and approaches to meet the mission need, and prepared an abbreviated acquisition strategy in coordination with AFSC and AFLC. The Air Staff also identified funding for the project, obtained an Air Force corporate approval for the project, and issued a PMD. The Air Staff then monitored the progress of the project executed by AFSC and/or AFLC, who used prioritized handling and high-level management oversight to field the capability.

3. RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The RRP met its two objectives, and this section reviews its effectiveness by examining RRP performance in achieving those two objectives. This section also highlights the lessons learned that were derived and documented from the experience of the RRP participants during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Finally, this section concludes with relevant observations linking the RRP model with the potential for improving the peacetime acquisition process.

On March 14, 1991, General Loh terminated the RRP in a message declaring:

> . . . the RRP was a resounding success. Urgent requirements were submitted by more than 10 separate commands or agencies [see Table 3.1]. All received CENTAF coordination before they were considered. A total of 30 projects were approved in response to these validated combat mission needs. Twenty-three of these 30 approved projects were fielded in time to support combat operations at a dollar cost of just under $100M [see Table 3.2]. Of the unfielded projects, we are directing two to be terminated, two be returned to the normal acquisition process, two be partially completed, and the remaining be completed under normal, non-expedited procedures. . . . RRP projects supported a wide variety of mission areas including search and rescue, munitions, navigation, C^3I, mission planning, NBC defense, electronic combat, explosive ordnance disposal, weather forecasting, aeromedical evacuation, and improvements to our night-fighting capabilities. All of this was accomplished within a five-month time span.[1]

Table 3.1

RRP Submissions by Organization

Organization	Number Submitted
TAC	15
MAC	4
AFSOC	4
SAC	3
Air Staff	2
ESC	1
CENTAF	1
Other/Special	5

SOURCE: The USAF Desert Shield/Storm Rapid Response Process (RRP): Briefing to the Middle East Aerospace and Defense Conference, Major General Robert D. Eaglet, SAF/AQL, 27 February 1991.

[1]*Desert Shield / Storm Rapid Response Process,* AF/CV message 141131Z March 1990.

Table 3.2

RRP Funding

Type	Amount
RDT&E	$14M
Production	$71M
O&M	$13M
Total	$98M

SOURCE: *The USAF Desert Shield / Storm Rapid Response Process (RRP): Briefing to the Middle East Aerospace and Defense Conference,* Major General Robert D. Eaglet, SAF/AQL, 27 February 1991.

Expeditiously fielding capabilities needed into the theater was the "bottom line" in measuring RRP performance during the Gulf War. To review the RRP's effectiveness as a "process," this report uses the two RRP objectives established by AF/XO: (1) keeping the time interval from identification of a mission need and PMD issuance to 24 days or less, and (2) deploying the desired capability within six months .

STAFFING TIME INTERVAL

The operator MAJCOMs were required to validate an identified mission need within four days of receipt and submit a C-MNS to AF/XOR (this study did not seek visibility into the MAJCOM's performance in this area). Once the C-MNS was submitted to AF/XOR, the SAT tracked the C-MNS to AF/CV approval and PMD issuance. The Air Staff's charter was to accomplish C-MNS processing within 20 days. Of 33 cases processed by 28 February 1991, 27 were processed within 20 days (see Figure 3.1). By the end of the war, actual C-MNS processing averaged 13 days and ranged from one to 43 days.[2]

FIELDING THE CAPABILITIES

Implementing commands (usually AFSC or AFLC) used their own streamlined procedures to field the PMD-mandated capability within six months. Of 33 cases tracked as of 28 February 1991, 32 were actually fielded or planned to be fielded within six months (see Figure 3.2). By RRP termination, the actual time to field the 23 projects deployed to the Gulf averaged 1.8 months and ranged from .5 to 4 months.[3]

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[2]*The USAF Desert Shield / Storm Rapid Response Process (RRP): Briefing to the Middle East Aerospace and Defense Conference,* Major General Robert D. Eaglet, SAF/AQL, 27 February 1991.

[3]Ibid.

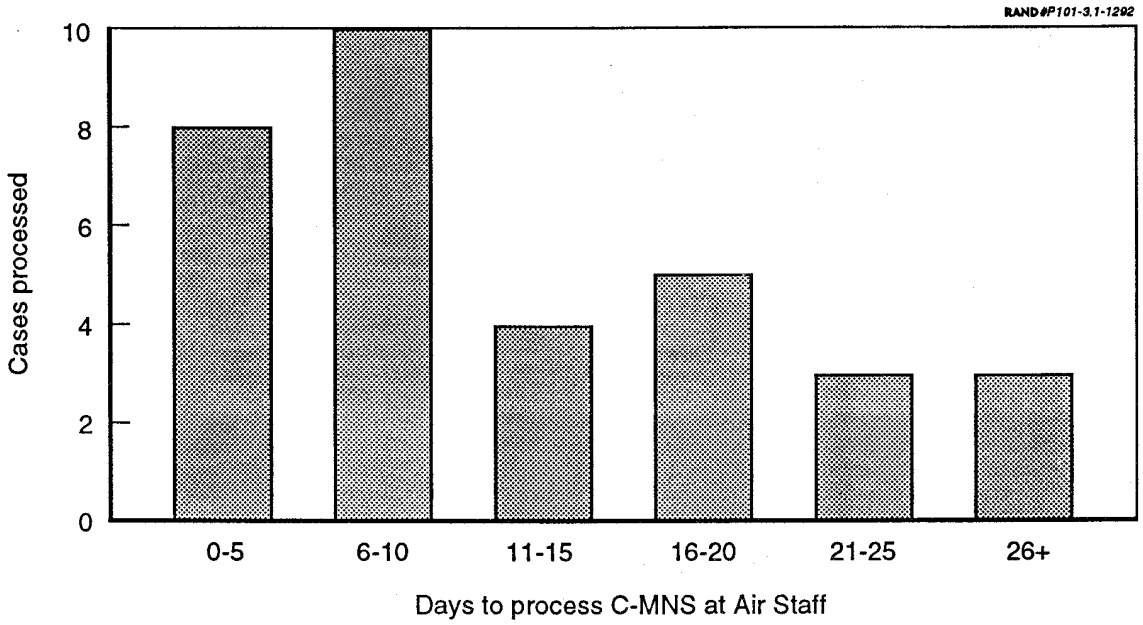

Figure 3.1—Air Staff Performance

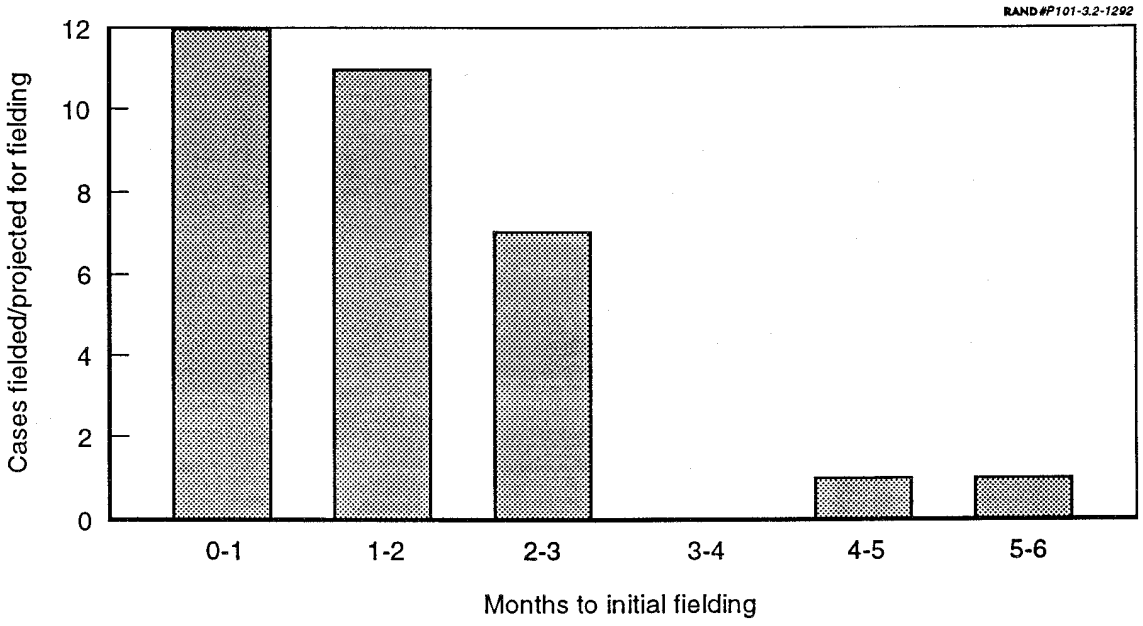

Figure 3.2—Implementing Command Performance

LESSONS LEARNED

> The Rapid Response Program . . . greatly accelerated the development and fielding of a host of weapon systems, including a 40-mm antiarmor round for guns used on AC-130 gunships, proximity rounds for 105-mm shells, [and] integration of the GBU-15 guidance kit with the I-2000 hardened-target bomb. . . . Normally, the acquisition system is quite complicated and can take years [to yield a product] under some circumstances. One of the interesting things that came out of the Rapid Response Program is the folks in Washington, D.C., recognized that they could accelerate the process. . . . It was a positive lesson."[4]

At the conclusion of the Rapid Response Process, the action officers who staffed RRP projects consolidated a "Lessons Learned" document to record what should be done if a similar process is needed to support future contingencies.[5] This section highlights and paraphrases comments from this document. Of these lessons learned, those dealing with formal establishment, SAT membership, close coordination, and flexibility were factors that contributed to the success of the RRP. Lessons involving funding and an industry forum are suggestions that would enhance the future implementation of an RRP-like system.

Finally, this section concludes with observations linking the RRP model for wartime acquisition to the current system for peacetime acquisition.

Formal Establishment

The RRP should be established by a senior Air Force official (like AF/CV) to delineate the scope and authority of the SAT and GOSC, ensure that Air Force organizations recognize the urgency and priority of the process, and carry that urgency into the development and test cycles of RRP projects.

SAT Membership

SAT membership should be limited to those needed to process and monitor the project. Formally assigned by the appropriate leadership, these individuals should be knowledgeable in acquisition, funding, and operations, and capable of making real-time decisions that meet scrutiny by the GOSC and AF/CV. Additionally, points of contact (POCs) from other Services should be established to find and utilize options available through their respective programs.

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[4]Statement by Colonel Allen Koester, Assistant Vice Commander, Aeronautical Systems Division, "Aerospace World," *Air Force Magazine,* July 1991, p. 17.

[5]*Lessons Learned: Rapid Response Process (RRP),* Air Staff Document, undated.

Close Coordination

Active communication, close coordination, and frequent contact between the SAT, RRP Coordinator, MAJCOM action officers, and the theater representatives are required to expedite actions and provide the project visibility and prioritization needed to meet RRP timelines. A staff POC is needed at the operational organization actually engaged in combat to track identified needs and communicate potential needs to the RRP Coordinator. Additionally, the staff POC would receive updates from the RRP Coordinator, provide feedback on the effectiveness of fielded RRP projects, and keep their battle staff informed of RRP efforts to meet the command's needs.

Flexibility

The SAT should have the flexibility to determine when a project is ready to present to the GOSC using interim timelines (other than the 20-day deadline) as guidelines.

Funding

How and from where funds will be obtained should be studied before the RRP is initiated. If possible, a fund without the appropriation boundaries (i.e., 3010, 3080, 3600, etc.) set aside for RRP projects would be the most effective means, even if this requires approval by the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, and Senate and House Appropriations Committees. If this is not possible, users must not expect payback or supplemental funding to pay for RRP projects. Then, MAJCOMs must identify commensurate decreases in their current budget to pay for RRP efforts. Supplemental requests to Congress should be submitted as one request for each appropriation, with a brief summary explaining all projects funded with that appropriation. If submitted separately, the projects show up as individual, below-threshold reprogrammings and will be cut by OSD.

Industry Forum

Finally, AFSC (now AFMC) should establish a forum allowing industry or government laboratories to submit ideas and concepts to meet needs identified by the RRP, permitting industry to suggest capabilities the theater commander may find useful within RRP constraints. Significantly, nothing should proceed beyond the discussion stage until the theater commander says there is a requirement.

REGULATION UPDATE

At the end of the program, and in view of the success of the RRP, the Air Force revised AFR 57-1 to provide for an RRP-like program called "Fast Track." This program permits the

acceleration of peacetime acquisition procedures based on the immediacy of need and availability of offset funding.[6]

OBSERVATIONS

The new defense acquisition policy emphasizes increased R&D efforts, prototyping, and some low-rate production. Smaller systems procurement and modernization programs are forecast in response to the reality of decreasing defense procurement budgets.

The RRP results demonstrated that the combat-mission-needs identification, validation, assessment, and acquisition processes can be streamlined to expeditiously field capabilities needed by the theater commander. From a weapons system perspective, these were relatively small, incremental changes in baseline capabilities that, in most cases, applied off-the-shelf technologies.

Given the changing acquisition environment, an interesting policy issue is whether the RRP provides lessons that can be translated from wartime priorities to peacetime acquisition. Are there means found within the RRP model that may decrease the costs and time associated with the peacetime acquisition of small, incremental changes in capability? In light of the new national military strategy, is there a need to develop and perhaps exercise a means to quickly tailor existing forces with capabilities specific to crisis response or regional contingencies?

A closer examination of the RRP model might provide insight into the development of policy options to shorten the peacetime acquisition cycle.

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[6]*Desert Shield/Storm Rapid Response Process,* AF/CV message 141131A, March 1990.