STUDY PROJECT

PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER (PEO) CONCEPT
--
IS IT FUNCTIONING AS INTENDED?

BY

ARTHUR S. SANTO-DONATO
Department of the Army Civilian

Best Available

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In 1987, the Army implemented the Program Executive Officer Management concept. This new system was forced upon the Army and its sister services by the White House and Congress. It was their response to the American people's perception that acquisition in the services was too costly and not sufficiently managed to provide quality products for the troops. This PEO concept, now four years old, has totally changed the way the services oversee their acquisition programs. The implementation and subsequent transition to the PEO concept was not easy, as I will show by way of interviews with key acquisition personnel and historical information. Traditionally power people and organizations realized they were no longer going to control the acquisition process. Some affected players fought its implementation openly and others tacitly. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the Army's implementation of the PEO concept and to explain why and where it has not performed as intended so we can learn from this experience.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER (PEO) CONCEPT
IS IT FUNCTIONING AS INTENDED?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Arthur S. Santo-Donato, AAC
Department of Army Civilian

Colonel Leonard D. Hardy, Jr.
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania   17013
5 April 1991

# ABSTRACT

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## INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s newspapers sensationalized the high cost
the Department of Defense (DOD) was paying for common items.
They chastised the DOD acquisition system rightly or wrongly for
items like four hundred dollar toilet seats and hammers.
Additional newspaper articles claimed the acquisition system was
fraught with poor quality, cost overruns and schedule slippages
on many large programs. These perceptions triggered the interest
of the Congress and the Executive Branch of government. Both
bodies directed studies and investigations into DOD management
practices to determine if the system was in fact broken and
needed revision.

These studies resulted in changes to the military services
acquisition process. The Secretary of the Army on 30 January
1990 directed the implementation of this new process called the
Program Executive Officer (PEO) concept.[1] This was followed by a
Department of Army memorandum that described the functions and
organizations of this process.[2]

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the Army's
implementation of the PEO concept and to explain why and where it
has not performed as intended so we can learn from this
experience. I will examine those issues that hampered the
development of the Army PEO process. Through interviews with key
acquisition personnel and historical information, I will then
examine and assess six characteristics that were established in
the Packard Commission Study as areas that the Army acquisition

system should emulate.  These are (1) clear command channels;
(2) limited reporting requirements; (3) small, high-quality
staffs; (4) communication with users; (5) program stability; and
(6) better system developments.[3]  In a few cases, issues that
were discussed in the interviews relate directly to these
characteristics and will be addressed again.

## THE PRESSURE FROM ABOVE

As stated previously, the public disclosure of inefficiencies and overpricing in the defense acquisition system resulted in the external involvement by Congress and the President. Both parties were also interested in implementing methods that would shorten the lengthy research, development and acquisition cycle for new equipment. These political leaders were concerned that the Army was not taking advantage of today's technology explosion. By the time a new defense system was fielded, new and better technology was available in the public marketplace.

To address these concerns, the President in July, 1985, appointed David Packard to lead a Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management (commonly referred to as the Packard Commission). A major Commission task was to determine if the implementation of private sector methodologies could improve defense management business practices. Of specific interest were the Commission's recommendations concerning acquisition management. The Packard Commission issued its final report to the President in June, 1986.[4] Its recommendations were implemented by the President in National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 219.[5]

The study also influenced Public Law, 99-433, the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, October, 1986.[6] Both the law and the directive stated that a main intent was to reduce the bureaucratic layering and duplication existing within

the DOD acquisition process, to produce acquisition programs that would better meet cost, schedule and performance criteria.
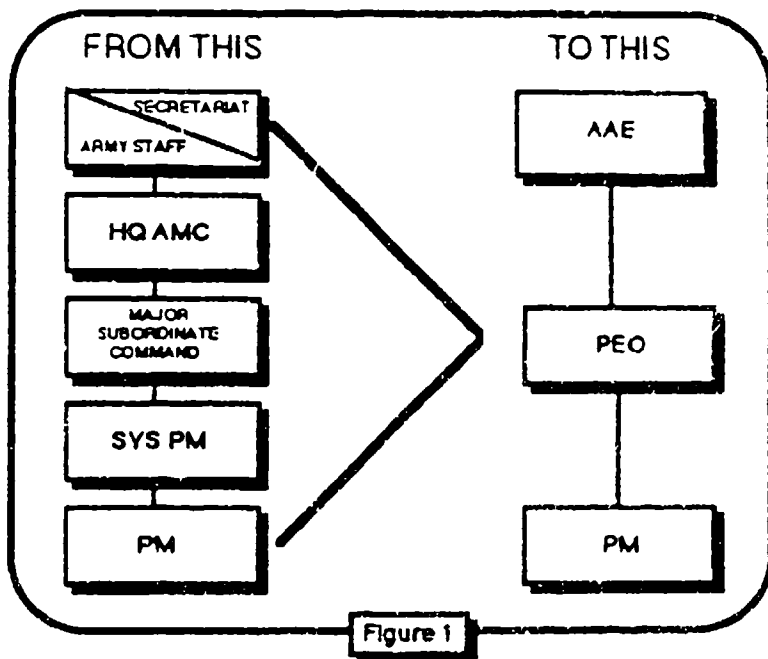
The Packard Commission report recommended the creation, by statute, of the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition. The person appointed would have a strong industrial background and serve as the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE). He would supervise the performance of the entire acquisition system. It further recommended that the services create a new structure, hereafter referred to as the PEO concept, to oversee its major system acquisitions. In its implementation, the Army replaced the Army Materiel Command (AMC), major subordinate commands and system managers in the program manager's chain of command with two new players, the Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) and the Program Executive Officer (PEO) (Figure 1). The AAE was to:

> appoint Program Executive Officers (PEO) who will be responsible for a reasonable and defined number of acquisition programs. Program managers for these programs would be responsible directly to their respective PEO and report only to him on program matters. Thus, no program manager would have more than one level of supervision between himself and his Service Acquisition Executive. . . .[7]



FROM THIS          TO THIS

SECRETARIAT / ARMY STAFF

HQ AMC

MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMAND

SYS PM

PM

AAE

PEO

PM

Figure 1

4

This new acquisition chain would be more representative of program management within private industry.[*]

The old process required the program manager to make iterative reviews to system PMs, the major subordinate commands (MSCs), major commands (MACOMs), and Department of Army staff personnel. These numerous pre-briefs were required prior to any major information or decision brief to key Army acquisition personnel. At various intervals in a program it was not uncommon that a PM spent more time preparing, presenting and changing program briefs than managing his program. This new process provided a shorter, clearly defined chain of command for program matters and put the PM back into the business of program development. The new process provided expedited program decisions by virtually eliminating unnecessary layering within the system. Information could move quickly, unencumbered by bureaucratic influences.

Under the PEO concept a Program Executive Officer's responsibility is similar to a Chief Executive Officer of a subsidiary company in industry. He reports only to one individual at headquarters. For the PEO, this person is the Service Acquisition Executive. PEOs are selected by the Secretary of the Army based on recommendations from his Army Acquisition Executive. Existing PEOs are both civilian and military and manage a staff of approximately 20 to 25 specialized and qualified acquisition personnel. Initially the Army implemented the concept by creating 22 PEOs (Figure 2). Over time the PEOs have been reduced to 11 PEOs (Figure 3).
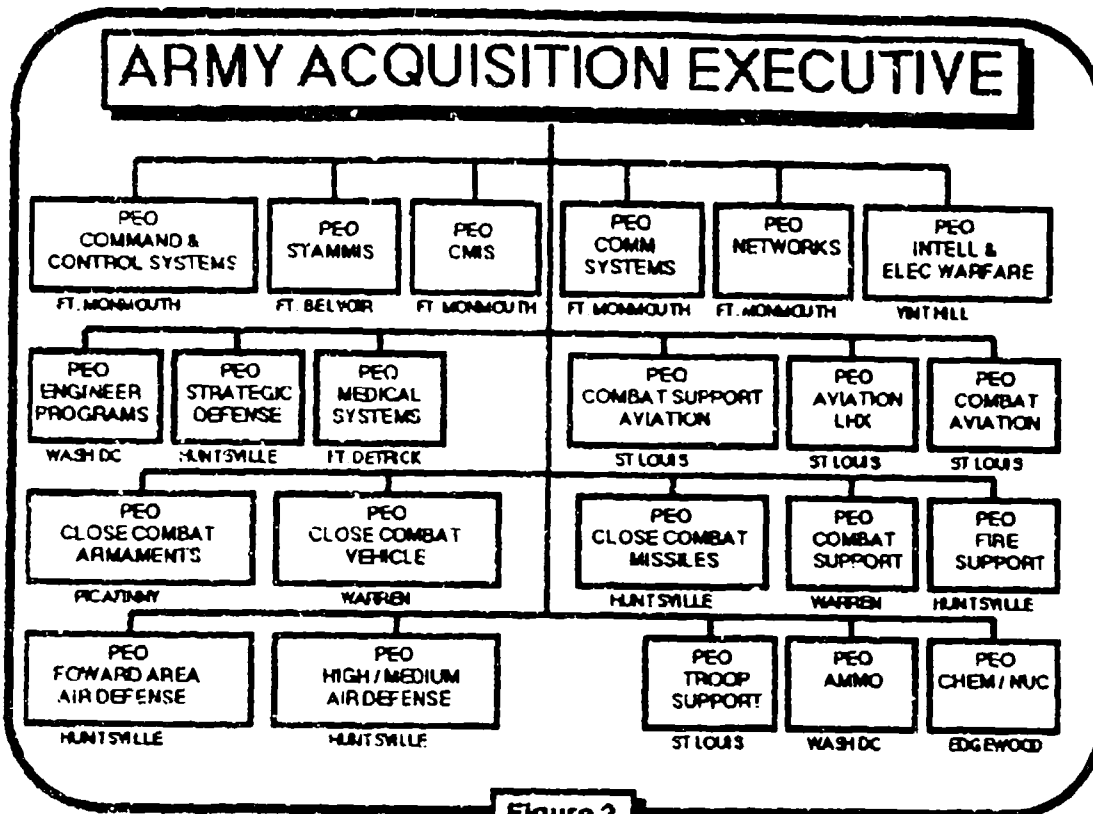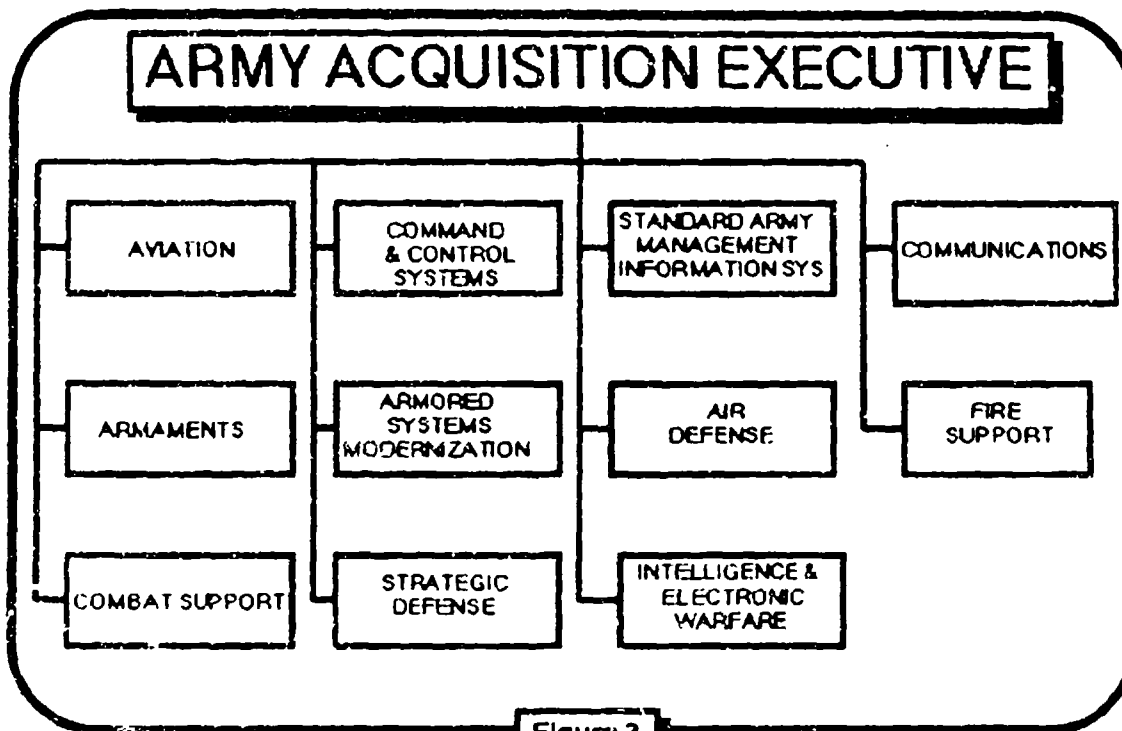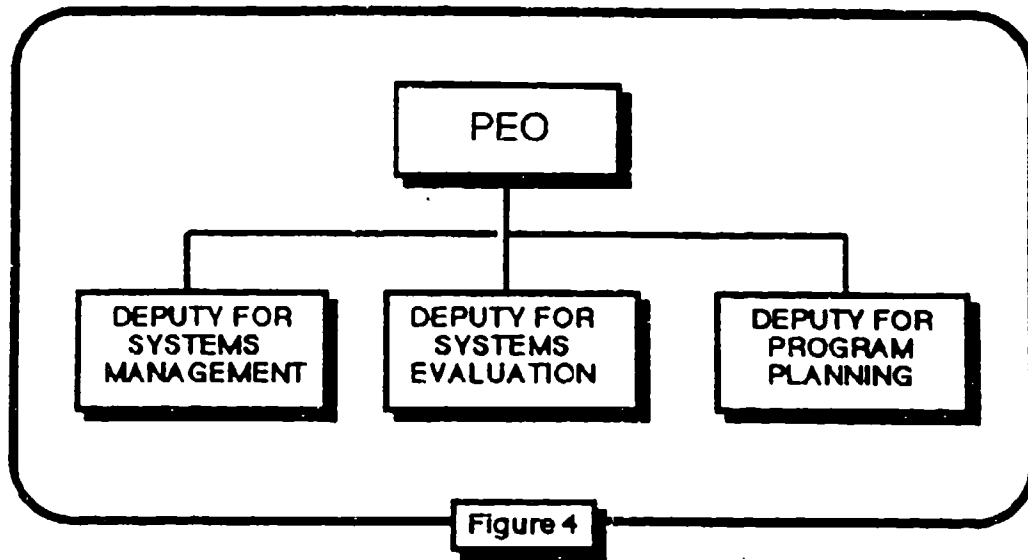
# ARMY ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE

| PEO<br>COMMAND &<br>CONTROL SYSTEMS<br>FT. MONMOUTH | PEO<br>STAMMIS<br>FT. BELVOIR | PEO<br>CMIS<br>FT MONMOUTH | PEO<br>COMM<br>SYSTEMS<br>FT MONMOUTH | PEO<br>NETWORKS<br>FT. MONMOUTH | PEO<br>INTELL &<br>ELEC WARFARE<br>VINT HILL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PEO<br>ENGINEER<br>PROGRAMS<br>WASH DC | PEO<br>STRATEGIC<br>DEFENSE<br>HUNTSVILLE | PEO<br>MEDICAL<br>SYSTEMS<br>FT DETRICK | PEO<br>COMBAT SUPPORT<br>AVIATION<br>ST LOUIS | PEO<br>AVIATION<br>LHX<br>ST LOUIS | PEO<br>COMBAT<br>AVIATION<br>ST LOUIS |
| PEO<br>CLOSE COMBAT<br>ARMAMENTS<br>PICATINNY | PEO<br>CLOSE COMBAT<br>VEHICLE<br>WARREN | | PEO<br>CLOSE COMBAT<br>MISSILES<br>HUNTSVILLE | PEO<br>COMBAT<br>SUPPORT<br>WARREN | PEO<br>FIRE<br>SUPPORT<br>HUNTSVILLE |
| PEO<br>FORWARD AREA<br>AIR DEFENSE<br>HUNTSVILLE | PEO<br>HIGH / MEDIUM<br>AIR DEFENSE<br>HUNTSVILLE | | PEO<br>TROOP<br>SUPPORT<br>ST LOUIS | PEO<br>AMMO<br>WASH DC | PEO<br>CHEM / NUC<br>EDGEWOOD |

**Figure 2**

# ARMY ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE

| AVIATION | COMMAND<br>& CONTROL<br>SYSTEMS | STANDARD ARMY<br>MANAGEMENT<br>INFORMATION SYS | COMMUNICATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| ARMAMENTS | ARMORED<br>SYSTEMS<br>MODERNIZATION | AIR<br>DEFENSE | FIRE<br>SUPPORT |
| COMBAT SUPPORT | STRATEGIC<br>DEFENSE | INTELLIGENCE &<br>ELECTRONIC<br>WARFARE | |

**Figure 3**

Each PEO is functionally structured approximately as below:



Figure 4

    The PEO's project managers each oversee a major acquisition program or a program with special interest. The special interest can be from Congress, the Secretary of Defense, or within the Army itself. These office staffs are similarly structured and monitor progress using cost, schedule and performance criteria tools. They report programmatic information upward only through the program executive office.

    The PEO uses his staff to provide him an objective, analytical program assessment. This, in conjunction with input from his project managers, is the basis for his reporting to the Army Acquisition Executive (AAE). For his major programs, he submits monthly status reports to the AAE. These reports are color coded red, amber and green for each significant programmatic area. Items coded red are trouble items and are intensively manage by all parties.

The Packard Commission felt this structure would allow the senior leadership to manage major acquisitions on a "manage by exception" basis, as is done in the private sector. Further, by eliminating layers in the process, the Commission believed pertinent information would be transmitted quickly and efficiently. However, the Army found that although the concept structure was put in place quickly, it has not operated exactly as intended.[9]

# EVALUATION OF THE PEO CONCEPT

## The PEO Struggle

The Army, like most large bureaucratic entities, did not change easily or quickly. Old ways, rooted in time, and people were extremely difficult to change. In spite of this, the Army quickly put the PEO concept into effect. This was done because legislation directed it. Unlike the other services, the Army created a totally new structure. The Navy and the Air Force tried to mesh the new concept into the way they had been conducting business. In most instances commanders in the other services became dual hatted as PEOs. This was easy to do, and nothing really changed. Secretary Cheney, in his Defense Management Report to the President in June, 1989, stated that the services each implemented the concept differently and none exactly as the Commission intended.[10] It is my contention that the Army tried to fully implement the PEO structure as Packard envisioned, but it failed to change the existing infrastructure. This failure has continued to cause significant problems.

The Packard Commission expected reduction in acquisition personnel within the old infrastructure. However, the Army did not address this issue at implementation, and the old players in the system attempted to continue to work as they had in the past. It became clear very quickly that these extraordinary changes disrupted the programmatic control and power of MACOMS, MSCs and individuals. Another result of the PEO concept implementation was an intended shift that strengthened civilian authority over

military authority[11]  Now the major acquisition decisions rested

primarily with civilian appointees:  the Secretary of Defense,

the Defense Acquisition Executive, the Secretary of the Army and

the Army Acquisition Executive.

In order to examine the implementation process to date, I

interviewed five people directly involved in the PEO concept.

From these interviews five key issues emerged that affected

implementation:

* Number and selection of PEOs

* Responsibilities and functions of the PEO

* Relationship with MACOMs/control of resources

* Bureaucratic layering

* Leadership acceptance

For each of these issues I will discuss the opinions and

historical information provided by those interviewed.  Where

applicable, I will update and provide an assessment on each

issue.

## Number and Selection of PEOs

I asked all interviewees if they could explain how the Army

decided how many PEOs there would be and how they were to be

selected.  Mr. Al Calabrese, formerly PEO Armaments, Picatinny

Arsenal, and now a vice-president for Olin Ordnance, stated that

it was basically decided by the Under Secretary of Army, Mr.

Ambrose.  He tried to establish a PEO for each major proponency

area in the Army.  The decision was made, he said, in a

conference on PEOs held in St. Louis in November, 1986.  Mr.

Calabrese added that he was not sure how it was determined which

PEOs would be civilian. He felt he was chosen because he was already at Picatinny, had program management experience, and was familiar with the programs.[12] Major General Joseph D. Schott (Ret.), formerly PEO Command and Control Systems, stated that he was selected as a PEO even though he had no prior acquisition experience. He did, however, have a field commander's knowledge of what the soldier in the field needed in command and control systems.[13]

Mr. Keith Charles, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Plans and Programs, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research, Development and Acquisition [ASA(RDA)], confirmed Mr. Calabrese's assertion that Mr. Ambrose made the decision. Mr. Charles further conveyed that many wanted the PEO title, and Mr. Ambrose was willing to provide it. However, Mr. Charles said that we began with too many. It created a strain on the system to staff these new offices and in many cases they just duplicated existing functions. He said that PEOs were intended for major programs, but we started with PEOs for almost all programs regardless of size. In addition, Mr. Charles stated that we may see a further reduction from the current structure of eleven PEOs as the system continues to mature and programs are cancelled in this constrained budget environment.[14]

I believe that by starting with 22 PEOs and satisfying nearly everyone's desire for the new title, it implied that business was really continuing as usual. Some of the old power brokers merely had new titles. When it became apparent that the Defense Department expected only key programs to be PEO-managed,

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the Army cancelled some PEOs, which caused additional turbulence to the implementation process.

From the interviews I could not determine if any formal criteria were used to select program executive officers. However, the Army has been working for the past two years to establish a professional acquisition workforce as recommended by the Packard Commission. As the Army was developing its policies for the professional workforce, it was preempted by the 1991 Defense Authorization Act that spelled out policies in excruciating detail for the Defense Acquisition Workforce.[15] Again the services were forced to implement external direction. The services must comply with change, whether or not they agree with all aspects of the law.

The law required various training and experience before anyone could become a PEO, program manager or deputy program manager. In addition, the Act directed that the services must civilianize a large proportion of their military program manager positions. This is another instance where the Congress is forcing more civilians into key service leadership positions and tasking the system to develop these civilian leaders quickly.

Both former PEOs were asked their opinion on a professional acquisition corps. Mr. Calabrese believed it should not become too formalized. He stated we were overloading what was intended to be a streamlined system.[16] MG Schott felt that although you need professional acquisition people in the PMs, you also need operational personnel. He believed the acquisition corps could work for civilians but not the military. MG Schott stated that

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if you reduce the military officer field experience, you will lose the linkage to the users in the field.[17]

Colonel Peter Cuviello, Assistant Deputy Director, Plans, Directorate of Information Systems for Command, Control, Communications and Computers (DISC4), thought that a professional corps should include both the military and the civilian work force and that it was a good concept.[18] Brigadier General Al Mallette, currently the Commanding General at CECOM and formerly the acting DISC4, felt the acquisition corps was too large.[19] Also, he envisioned many problems for career development in the military ranks. BG Mallette said the requirement (see Figure 5) that the military officer enter the acquisition corps at the eighth year and no longer be eligible for command positions would

## ARMY ACQUISITION CORPS
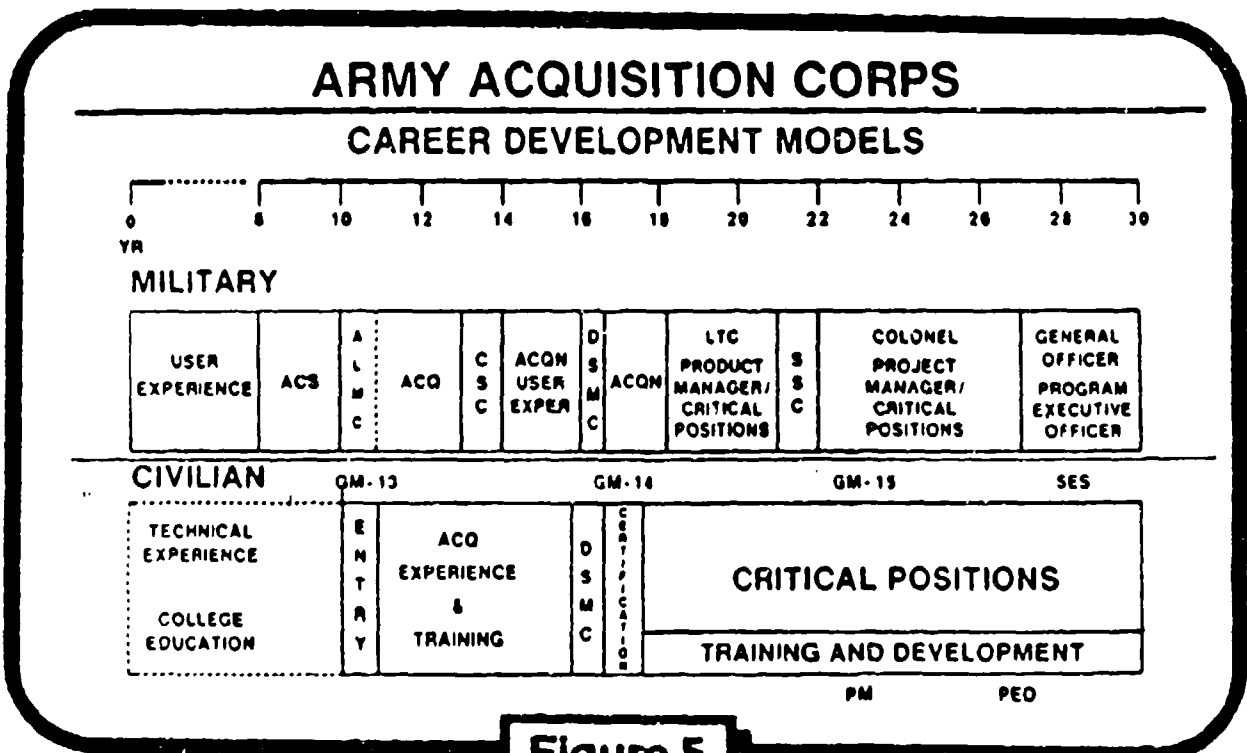### CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODELS



Figure 5

cause problems in career development. He felt the eight-year mark was too early for an officer to decide that he wanted to become a project manager.[20]

Mr. Charles also had problems with the military side of the acquisition corps. His concern was that as the Army reduced in size and military billets were removed from Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) organizations (administration units and not fighting units), the pool of young captains available would not support the number of military acquisitio·     ·al positions needed. He said the Army has not done enough research yet to insure the candidates will be there in the future. Additionally, he saw many problems on the civilian side. The mandatory training and acquisition experience would certainly yield capable acquisition technicians. However, Mr. Charles said that what we need most in PMs and PEOs were leaders. The mandated training and experience, he said, would make for great technicians; however, if leaders did rise, it would only be by luck. Also, the rating of both military and civilians did not sufficiently evaluate leadership skills. He truly worried that if the acquisition corps continues on its current path, it is "an accident waiting to happen."[21]

## Responsibilities and Functions of the PEO

The interview process resulted in somewhat conflicting answers to the question, "Do you think, at the time of implementation, the new PEOs were given a clear idea of what the functions were; and has this changed over time?" Both former PEOs were quite emphatic that they did not know their functions.

Mr. Calabrese stated that the Army leadership was not at all sure what duties were inherent in the PEO job. Additionally, he said that Mr. Ambrose felt that the PEO concept needed to be implemented right away and the missions and functions would evolve as time passed.[22] MG Schott, in a July 1988 letter to the Honorable Michael P. W. Stone, the Under Secretary of the Army, stated, "Guidance in many cases has been conflicting and as a whole has failed to provide for clear and unambiguous lines of authority and definitive mission and functions for the various players."[23]

Mr. Keith Charles was just as assertive in his belief that the PEOs were told and continue to be told clearly what their responsibilities are. However, he said the question that should be asked is, "Did they have the authority to carry out their responsibilities?" To this, Mr. Charles gave an emphatic "No!" He said the bigger issue was that the PEOs had no authority over the program funding or the manpower needed to accomplish their responsibilities. Over time, he stated, this has been changing.[24] (I will discuss this issue thoroughly in the next section.) BG Mallette also believed that the PEOs knew their functions because their duties were spelled out in their PEO charter.[25]

It is interesting to note that those people at the headquarters level believed those in the field, the PEOs, surely knew their duties. Yet the PEOs stated they did not. This conflict alone was sufficient to disrupt the PEO concept implementation.

Mr. Calabrese attempted to put some order to the new system. He held a PEO conference in 1987 at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Its purpose was to hash out PEO problems collectively and formulate some guidelines. Only ten PEO offices, from a total of twenty-two, sent representatives; and only one PEO other than Mr. Calabrese personally attended. He believed that the PEOs were afraid to discuss unrest and problems because the Army hierarchy would perceive them as troublemakers and wave makers.[24] PEOs, unsure of their mission boundaries, tried to cope with organizational problems and turf issues that should have been delineated at the concept's inception. Some PEOs who brought organizational problems forward were sent back to work them out themselves. This contributed to PEOs operating quite differently from each other.

All those interviewed felt that progress has been made. The progress was a result of new written policies and regulations delineating the PEO's role in various aspects of the acquisition process. Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 5000.1, "Defense Acquisition," DOD Instruction 5000.2, "Defense Acquisition Management, Policies and Procedures," DOD Directive 5000.49, "Defense Acquisition Board," and Army Regulation 70-1, "Systems Acquisition Policy and Procedures," have all been rewritten during the last four years to reflect the new PEO concept.

Relationships with MACOM/Control of Resources

All parties interviewed agreed that at the outset a very significant problem existed in the relationship between the MACOMs and the PEOs based on control over resources. During the

summer of 1987 the Army Budget Office (ABO) had tasked the PEOs to negotiate their Operation and Maintenance Appropriation (OMA) resources with the MACOM that their PMs had been previously affiliated. Both the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and the Information Systems Command (ISC) were key players whose responses were quite different. ISC was fairly responsive and negotiated in good faith with the information management related PEOs. AMC, on the other hand, appeared reluctant to sit with the PEO personnel and negotiate resources. Various ABO messages were sent tasking the PEO to sit with the MACOMs, and the PEOs tried unsuccessfully to get AMC to come to the table. AMC tasked their MSCs to do the negotiating. This did not work because the resource levels in the DA data base provided to the PEOs were significantly different than those stated as existing in the MSC databases. Therefore, the PEO and MSC could not even agree on a point to start negotiating. When the PEOs missed their suspenses on supplying negotiated funding levels to the ABO, the ABO told them again to go to MACOMs and negotiate. AMC was not too interested in giving away control of funds and did not do so until the DA staff became directly involved in the process.[27]

Issues over funding had existed throughout the last four years. Lieutenant General Bruce R. Harris, DISC4, in a memorandum dated 18 July 1988, to the Army Budget Office stated,

> I feel that the PEO needs to have visibility
> and control of that portion of the OMA budget
> which directly impacts the programmatic
> baseline such as interim contractor support,
> PEO/Program Manager (PM) salaries, travel and
> office operations, total package fielding
> deprocessing, system specific life cycle

software engineering, and new equipment
training.[28]

To solve the problem, he recommended that the U.S. Army Finance
and Accounting Center establish separate operating agencies for
each PEO. This accounting method would allow the money to flow
directly from the Army to the PEO, bypassing AMC.[29] This
subsequently was accomplished; however, players in the old MACOM
oriented system and the new PEO system are still battling over a
few remaining control-of-funds issues that impact a program
baseline or forecasted program cost.

Mr. Calabrese felt very strongly about his struggle over
resource controls. He said that conflict with AMC was constant
because of the lack of clear guidance and that PEOs had to
actually "wrest" control away from AMC.[30] MG Schott said he
carried the battle for resources almost continuously. In his
July, 1988, memorandum to Mr. Stone, he expressed problems with
the Long Range Research Development and Acquisition process:

> Altering PM/PEO funding requirements for
> AAE approved programs essentially resulted in
> the revision of program plans by an organiza-
> tion outside of the programmatic decision
> chain of command. It is apparent that the
> role of the MACOM went far beyond that of an
> integrator of PEO funding requirements and
> moved into the realm of a programmatic
> authority. As a result, the PM-PEO-AAE chain
> of command for programmatic decision was
> totally circumvented and numerous baseline
> breaches occurred.[31]

Mr. Charles emphasized that previously each MSC treated the
PEOs differently. At the Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM)
relationships and support were good, and this MSC gave the PEO
whatever was necessary. TACOM provided non-program efforts

called "tenant support" free of charge. Examples of tenant support were office space, public utilities, and information management support. On the other hand, the Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM), as late as July 1989 had been attempting to charge for these services. Mr. Charles believes that the current laws in conjunction with Mr. Cheney's guidance on funding and support will resolve most issues of conflict among MSCs and PEOs.[32]

Mr. Charles felt that the control of funds issue is drawing to an end. He said that guidance from Secretary Cheney will insure each PEO receives his funding direct from the Military Department. There will be no intervening layer of bureaucracy. Each PEO will have his own manpower and will be able to pay for both contractor and government personnel for services rendered. Also, Mr. Charles added that new Defense guidance is forthcoming. Under this new guidance, if the MSC could not provide the functional services necessary, the PEO could contract for that support. He stated the PEO will no longer be at the mercy of a Major Subordinate Command holding up contracts, funds and manpower.[33]

Mr. Charles' statement was supported by LTG Cianciolo's assertion at a lecture given to the Army War College on 3 January 1991 that the control of funds problem is almost fixed. He said the decision had been made that PEOs will budget for and pay MSC personnel for all program services rendered.[34] (Cited with special permission from LTG Cianciolo's staff.) This means that those items still in contention fall to the PEO to fund.

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The resource control issue, probably more than any other, made the transition to the PEO concept a struggle. Some people continue to argue that the PEO concept could have worked even with funds and people flowing through the MACOMs. However, the Secretary of Defense has recognized that if he expects the PEO to be responsible for the programmatic success of his projects, he must also have the flexibility that emanates from control of dollars and manpower. In fact, NSDD 219 removed the MACOMs from involvement in programmatic decisions on PEO programs (see Figure 1).

## Bureaucratic Layering

A major intent of the Packard Commission recommendations was to reduce the bureaucratic layering in the acquisition process. As discussed in the section entitled The Pressure from Above I described the physical reduction in layers of bureaucracy when AMC and Major Subordinate Commands were removed from the acquisition process. The PEO was the only layer of management between the program manager and the AAE. I asked the interviewees, "The Packard Commission intended to remove layers and replace them with a chain of AAE/PEO/PM; is this working? How does ASA(RDA) and DISC4 play in this chain of command?" Mr. Charles, Mr. Calabrese and MG Schott all replied similarly to the question. For example, Mr. Calabrese replied that some levels were taken out in terms of approval but you still had to coordinate with everyone, the MSC, AMC and ASA(RDA). He further iterated that it was a very sensitive issue at the three-star level in ASA(RDA), and it was understood that you touched all

bases. "You always had the option to go direct to the AAE," he said, "but you knew if you went too often you put yourself in jeopardy."[35]

MG Schott reiterated, concerning the intent to reduce bureaucratic layering, that it did not remove anything. Additionally, he said before you could go to the Under Secretary for a decision brief, you had to brief CECOM, AMC, TRADOC, the DA Staff and the DISC4. He said also that you had three or four levels of approvals before you got to the Under Secretary. He emphatically declared, "The concept of a direct line . . . was a myth."[36] Keith Charles, however, contended that the chain has been shortened and the number of pre-briefs has been significantly reduced. However, he remarked some decision briefs still result in as many as twenty pre-briefs.[37] Many briefs are now courtesy briefs. The problem has become that the expectation for courtesy briefs is growing, and no one is willing to say no. Therefore, even though legally the chain has been shortened, in actuality it is longer because at least one new player, the PEO, has been added.

BG Mallette felt that the involvement of the DISC4 and ASA(RDA) staff was necessary because the span of control was too great for the AAE.[38] These staffs in essence add two more bureaucratic layers to the PEO process. In my evaluation on how the concept measures up to the Packard Commission intentions, I will discuss the role of these two DA staff elements at length. At this point it is sufficient to understand that bureaucratic layering is still a problem and that the Army leadership should

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address it to preclude its adjustment from some external source
such as Congress.

## Leadership Acceptance

I asked the interviewees if they felt that the PEO concept
was accepted by the Army leadership. Mr. Calabrese, although out
of government, instinctively believes it is becoming more
accepted and tolerated. However, he stated that the key problem
was not leadership acceptance but the lack of leadership
guidance. PEOs were force-fed into existing systems such as
Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System (PPBES) and
the Long Range Research and Development Acquisition Process
(LRRDAP). Their success in these processes was based on their
individual personalities, not their positions as PEOs.[39] MG
Schott was adamant in his belief that there was absolutely
nothing wrong with the PEO concept. However, he added the
concept can work only if the Army leadership wants it to work.
PEOs can get things done quicker and better than they were done
in the past. For it to work, he added, would take people
changes, and "Some of the old timers in the Army and AMC need to
disappear. The younger acquisition personnel in the Army can
make it work and it will work better."[40] The other interviewees,
Mr. Charles, BG Mallette and Colonel Cuviello, still working
within the system, saw the leadership acceptance somewhat
differently. COL Cuviello, formerly of Program Analysis and
Evaluation, and currently working at DISC4, felt the PEO concept
has finally been accepted.[41] CG CECOM, BG Mallette, formerly of
DISC4, feels that the PEO concept has been accepted within the

Pentagon but that the soldier and leaders in the field still are calling the MACOM and MSC for problem resolution on PEO items. During the build-up in the Persian Gulf, he said CECOM received many calls that should have gone to PEOs.[42] Mr. Charles probably stated it best when he said, "Yes, it's accepted, the Secretary of the Army, Mr. Stone, was formerly the AAE, and everyone had better accept the PEO concept."[43] Furthermore, he stated that it is now a statutory process and as such is unlikely to be rescinded.[44]

The PEO struggle for acceptance appears to be coming to an end. With strong support from the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Army and large personnel cuts in the AMC community, everyone realizes that the success of the PEO concept is in everyone's best interest. I believe if the HQ DA leadership had been more forceful, the implementation and acceptance throughout the Army would have been much faster. Change can be accomplished much easier with vocal and demonstrative approval from the top.

## Meeting the Packard Commission's Intentions

On June 12, 1989, Secretary Cheney submitted his report on the Defense Management Review (DMR) to the President and in his cover note stated that he would:

> (I)mplement fully the Packard Commission's recommendations, improve substantially the performance of the defense acquisition system, and manage more effectively the Department of Defense and our defense resources.[45]

Mr. Cheney, recognizing that all had not yet been accomplished, said, "Efforts to date have not produced the tangible results envisioned by the Commission."[46] Further, "The military departments have taken different approaches to implementing the Commission's concept . . . None has fully met the Commission's purposes."[47]

To assess the Army's implementation, we will review how well the new acquisition system emulates Secretary Cheney's list of Packard Commission characteristics.[48] This assessment is based on my analysis of information gathered from the interviews and historical data.

Clear Command Channels - the clear alignment or responsibility and authority, preserved and promoted through short, unambiguous chains of command to the most senior decision makers.[49]

Although the levels of the bureaucracy appear to have been greatly reduced by the Packard Commission (Figure 1), a different layering has taken place. The current structure of AAE to PEO to PM does not consider the impact caused by ASA(RDA) and DISC4 staffs (Figure 6). Both of these organizations have complicated and increased the control channels. Three PEOs, Command and Control Systems, Communications and Standard Army Management Information Systems essentially report to the DISC4, a three-star general. Within the past year and a half the DISC4 has been dual-hatted as a military deputy to Mr. Steve Conver, the AAE. The DISC4 is responsible for managing the research, development, test and evaluation and acquisition of command, control, communication and computer (C4) information management systems.
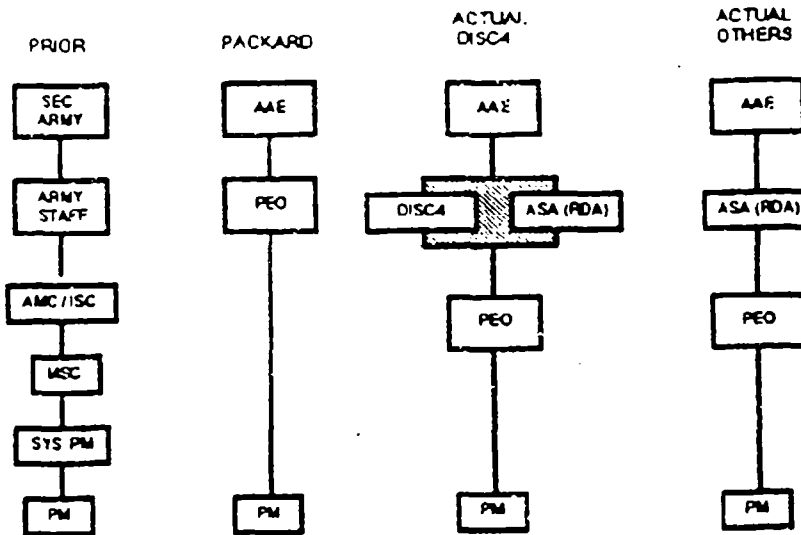
Figure 6

This position is similar to LTG Cianciolo, who is the military deputy for all other Army acquisition systems. Both of these staffs, DISC4 and ASA(RDA), request or require information on an ongoing basis from the PEOs. Pre-briefs that in past time would have gone through the MACOM staff channels now go through either or sometimes both of the military deputy staffs. Not only must the PEO deal directly with both staffs, but also the two staffs must work closely with each other to assure they are not at odds with each other and disseminating conflicting guidance.

The remaining eight PEOs report through the ASA(RDA) staff. Obviously, Mr. Conver, as the AAE, has significant responsibilities and needs staff support. However, this support can expand or contract based on a military deputy's individual management style or sheer size of his staff. There is the potential to stifle the PEO's "direct" line to the AAE. The staff issue has continued to exacerbate the problem that has

existed since the inception of the concept. When should the PEO go directly to the AAE, and when should he work within the staff? He is forced to use the staff because of the current MILDEP structure. Also, the staff may try to resolve issues that should go to the AAE without consulting with him for this same reason. There are many who will argue that these staffs are important elements in the Army acquisition environment. Certainly the AAE uses this staff to collect information that he requires. Notwithstanding this, there is still considerable staff-originated work that is overkill and puts unnecessary bureaucratic requirements on the PEO/PM workforce. External examination of the staff's involvement in the day-to-day management of a program may evoke further involvement from outside the Department of Defense. The Army should relook the roles of the DISC4 and ASA(RDA) staffs to insure compliance with the intent of the Packard Commission and P.L. 99-433. A partial solution might be to have all PEOs report through one organization, the ASA(RDA).

Additionally, there has recently been an inclination to take the PEO Liaison Offices who work directly for and are rated by the PEO and have them rated by the DISC4 or ASA(RDA) and senior rated by the PEO. This clearly complicates the clear command line characteristics and further creates a dual reporting system. If this were to occur, the liaison officer will be answering to two sets of requirements. He would no longer be the eyes and ears of the PEO in the Pentagon but in essence become no more than an ASA(RDA)/DISC4 staff action officer. His ability to

provide the PEO an independent perspective on issues would be
impeded.

Limited Reporting Requirements - adherence to the principle of
"management by exception" and methods of ensuring accountability
that focus on deviations from the agreed baseline.[50]

The PEOs truly try to manage by exception. Their monthly
reports to the AAE narrow the items that they intensively manage.
However, as stated under Clear Command Channels, the PEOs are at
the mercy of some sizeable staffs. These staffs and their
military deputies need to discipline their appetites from a
desire to know everything to a desire to know the essential. If
the monthly reports are sufficient for the AAE, why are they not
sufficient for his staff? I believe they should be. Many times
the request for information is legitimate. Consequently, various
action officers on the DA staff all try to provide the answer.
This results in the PEO and the PM wasting valuable time
reanswering questions. Somehow information needs to be in a
centralized data base where staffs can call it up at a terminal
and not tie up the PEO and PM staffs. The AAE and the PEO need
to fully communicate issues and not become caught in the typical
bureaucracy information well.

Small, High Quality Staffs - reliance on small staffs of
specially trained and highly motivated personnel.[51]

The PEOs are certainly small in number, approximately 25
people. There does not currently exist any move to significantly
reduce or increase their size. With the advent of the
professional acquisition corps, the Army is trying to insure a

future of highly trained and qualified staff. However, as stated previously, those interviewed have voiced some concerns about the acquisition corps. There still is significant fear among many military officers that going into the corps and foregoing command opportunities will be the kiss of death to their careers. Mr. Charles' suggestion (which is beyond the scope of this paper) that there may not be enough captains to resource the corps also needs further evaluation. The requirement for civilians to sign a mobility agreement without any visible monetary incentive to do so will certainly preclude many high achievers from volunteering for the corps. This needs further consideration. A possible alternative would be to compensate the civilian for agreeing to move. Another would be to withdraw the requirement. Additionally, it is not included as part of the legislation on the defense acquisition workforce.[52] The value added to the acquisition community by signing a mobility agreement is negligible at best. Good people will solicit good job opportunities wherever they are.

The legislation on the acquisition workforce decrees that to become a Program Executive Officer, one must first have served as a project or deputy project manager.[53] When the PEO concept was initiated in 1987 many of the best qualified acquisition personnel went to PEO staffs. Many of these senior staff people cannot rise to the PEO position without going back to a project office even though they may have demonstrated the ability to assume a position as PEO. Some thought needs to be given to working with the Congress to amend the law to allow senior PEO

staff to compete directly for the PEO assignments without having
served as a PM or deputy PM. The law does give the Department of
Defense a limited number of exemptions for unique situations.
Consideration should be given to delegating this authority to the
services.

Program Stability - a stable environment of funding and
management, predicted on an agreed baseline for cost, schedule,
and performance.[54]

     The PEO concept, as structured, should improve the program's
stability. Each PEO is now in control of his funding and
manpower. He can clearly oversee his PMs' success in terms of
cost, schedule and performance. Certainly the PEO, like everyone
else, cannot prevent the Congress from cancelling, reducing or
directing program changes, especially in today's budget reduction
environment. However, the PEO managers who perform well will
certainly gain the Army leadership's support for their programs.
Programs that demonstrate considerable progress should survive.
Those poorly managed and not progressing may have to be cancelled
or delayed. The passage of time itself should work as a program
stabilizer.

Communications with Users - sound understanding of user needs
achieved early on and reflecting a proper balance among cost,
schedule and performance consideration.[55]

     The former PEOs interviewed both felt that they had
sufficient dialogue with the user. They said there is
considerable communication among the service schools and the PEO
or his deputies. As prototypes are developed, the users are

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getting their hands on equipment and offering valid suggestions to the PEO and PMs. All parties are exhibiting a willingness to share information to try to achieve the "program balance" among cost, schedule and performance.

Better System Development - including aggressive use of prototyping and testing to identify and remedy problems well before production, investment in a strong technology base that emphasizes lower-cost approaches to building capable weapon systems, greater reliance on commercial products, and increased use of commercial-style competition.[56]

The jury is still out on this characteristic. Four years is not enough time to evaluate the products emanating from the system. Most systems in development were started prior to PEO concept implementation. Until a statistically significant number of PEO-managed systems are fielded, we cannot quantitatively measure if better system development is occurring. However, the PEOs are soliciting greater use of commercial products. For example, PEO Command and Control Systems is acquiring commerical Hewitt Packard equpment for use in at least five of its major programs.[57] The PEOs continue to remain focused on cost, schedule and performance. They are willing to go to presidents of companies when problems are not being resolved at the project level and have been successful in getting corporate support to work system problems. The PEOs are genuinely focused and willing to work to the best of their ability.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After a thorough analysis of the issues and problems brought out in the interviews and an assessment of how well the Army emulates the six Packard Commission characteristics, it is clear that the PEO concept is working. Nevertheless, problem areas still exist. There still exists a cumbersome chain of command (though not officially recognized), as I demonstrated in Figure 6 and in my discussion on clear command channels. MACOMs and MSCs still receive unnecessary courtesy reviews and, if not in the chain, they are certainly clouds surrounding the chain. Certainly, the MACOM and the MSC need information on new programs because they eventually will sustain them. This information does not need to come through PEO and PM briefs. Each PM employs MSC personnel throughout the program's development. These MSC personnel should provide the MSC and MACOM command any necessary information. Problems that are identified can then be resolved at the lowest possible levels in both organizations. Various staffs, at all levels, still subject the PEOs and the PMs to reports that do not aid the PEO or the PM in weapon system development. They further do not help the AAE manage the Army acquisition problems on an exception basis.

Consequently, we are left with a system that has added bureaucracy by creating a new layer, the PEO. As the Army is forced to comply with new initiatives, how can we prevent similar implementation struggles and how can we end up with what Congress or the President intended?

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I believe the answers to these two questions can be found in the lessons learned from the PEO concept implementation and can serve as sound recommendations for the future. Also, it is not too late to apply these lessons learned to the PEO concept and still get the intended result. Firstly, change begins at the top; our leadership must support the changes intended and insure they are supported all the way down the chain. The leadership must accept and promote the change so all will feel compelled to change. If unclear signals are sent, trouble is sure to follow. At the implementation of the PEO concept, mixed signals were sent. Some acquisition personnel in the community got the impression the system would be short lived, others that it was really going to work for the MACOMs, and still others the true sign that it was the way of the future.

Secondly, specific policy and guidance should come at the beginning and not be written after implementation. It is easier to amend new policies as you mature than to start without clear direction. Thirdly, insure that the resources necessary to complete the job come with the responsibility. During the PEO implementation this aspect caused unnecessary work and frustration for DA, PEO, PM, MACOM and MSC personnel. Fourthly, when you add new organizations to the Army, make sure that you remove or have a time-phased plan for removal of the old infrastructure in the MACOMs and MSCs. In addition, you must define the new inter-organizational responsibilities and relationships. If the MSC and MACOM were specifically directed to eliminate certain functions that were previously necessary in

managing acquisitions, many problems experienced could have been avoided. These cuts to the acquisition infrastructure are only now occurring. This also could have precluded the strong involvement of DISC4 and limited ASA(RDA) staff involvement in the PEO management structure.

Finally, change is easier to assimilate when it starts with small pieces. If the Army had started with four or five PEOs, it could have minimized the effect on the Army. Turbulence and change would have been limited. Necessary adjustments could have been more readily implemented since fewer would have been involved. As the system matured, more PEO offices could have been added, benefiting from others' experiences and lessons learned. The Congress and the President continue to press the Secretary of Defense for progress in the defense acquisition system. Furthermore, the Services continue to receive additional legislation that directs how they should conduct business. For example, in the Defense Authorization Act of 1991, the Defense Department is directed to implement the Defense Acquisition Workforce Act, which is a complex set of rules, guidelines and training requirements for acquisition personnel. Lessons learned from the PEO implementation can make the transition to this professional acquisition workforce and other forced changes easier to manage and less painful to implement.

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5. National Security Decision Directive 219, Implementation of the Recommendations of the President's Commission on Defense Management, 1 April 1986 (hereafter referred to as "NSDD 219").

6. U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., Public Law 99-433.

7. President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, A Quest for Excellence, p. 36.

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9. Cheney, Report to the President, p. 9.

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33.    _Ibid_.

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44.  Ibid.

45.  Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense, Letter to the President, 12 June 1989.

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47.  Ibid., p. 9.

48.  Ibid., p. 8.

49.  Ibid.

50.  Ibid.

51.  Ibid.

52.  P.L. 101-510.

53.  Ibid., p. 1649.

54.  Cheney, Report to the President, p. 8.

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