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When Is Development Not Development?

The largest single source of funds in this country for scientific work is the Defense Department, but government officials and private citizens alike can easily fail to appreciate just how large this source is. In the President's fiscal 1958 budget, the \$1.7 billion request for research and development does not include the expensive late development stage, which is financed instead by funds from the procurement and production appropriation. For example, it is largely this second category that covers the ballistic missile program, which is now spending money considerably faster than did the atomic bomb project during World War II. Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) W. J. McNeil estimates that the funds from procurement and production *plus* the amount budgeted directly to research and development *plus* certain other items, such as salaries for military personnel, may equal \$5.3 billion.

Several questions come to mind. Is the Defense Department's present accounting system the best one from the viewpoint of administering the funds? If not, does it serve some special purpose?

Granted, the task of categorizing even the simplest of items can be made difficult by unusual circumstances. In *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice was unable to decide whether the handsome article encircling Humpty Dumpty's ample form was a cravat or a belt. "If I only knew," she thought to herself, "which was neck and which was waist." In the same way, the late development stage can be grouped with procurement and production, because a limited number of prototype weapons systems must be purchased for testing and evaluation. But the late development stage can *also* be grouped with research and development, because the mere acquisition of prototypes is not procurement and production in the basic sense of obtaining inventory quantities of the wherewithal to fight a war.

The present riddle, however, is something more than an exercise in logic. On the one hand, with the early and late development stages in separate appropriations, there is evidence that some officials in the Defense Department have difficulty in determining in detail how the three military departments are actually spending money. To this extent, the Defense Department cannot fulfill its function of assuring that our scientific resources are being used to best advantage.

On the other hand, there is the argument that the late development stage should remain under procurement and production because it is easier to get funds for that category. In illustration, the following exchange took place, during the House Military Appropriations hearings, between Chairman George H. Mahon (D Tex.) and Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald A. Quarles. *Mahon*: ". . . from a psychological or strategic point of view, [do] you think it would be more difficult for the Defense Department to get the Congress and Congress to get acquiescence from the public for such a vast sum as \$6 billion for research and development?" *Quarles*: "I would think so. That is my sense of the situation, for what it is worth." *Mahon*: "I agree."

Is the latter argument to be taken as overriding? Is development not development when it is a question of seeking appropriations from Congress? Or is it possible that public acceptance of the place of science in our welfare and security has been underestimated?—J. T.