A DoD Statement on the NRC Report

STATUS OF THIS MEMO

    This RFC reproduces a letter from the Assistant Secretary of Defense
    for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (ASDC3I) to
    the Director of the Defense Communications Agency (DCA). This letter
    is distributed for information only. Distribution of this memo is
    unlimited.

CONTEXT

    In December 1978, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for
    Research and Engineering, Gerald P. Dinneen, USDR&E, issued a
    memorandum mandating the use of TCP/IP for all packet-oriented data
    networks where there is potential for host-to-host connectivity
    across network or subnetwork boundaries, and designating the Defense
    Communications Agency as the DoD Executive Agent for computer
    communications protocols (see IEN-152).

    In April 1980, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Communications,
    Command, Control, and Intelligence, Gerald P. Dinneen, ASDC3I, issued
    a memorandum reaffirming the requirement of TCP/IP, confirming the
    role of DCA as the Executive Agent, and approving a plan for the
    organization and activities of the Executive Agent (see IEN-152).

    In March 1982, Richard D. DeLauer, ASDC3I, issued a memorandum
    reaffirming the requirement for the use of TCP/IP, and reaffirming
    the role of DCA as Executive Agent (see IEN-207).

    However, there is also a DoD policy of long standing to use non-DoD
    standards when such standards are available and meet the military
    requirements. This policy is cited in DeLauer's memorandum.

    Because questions were raised about the DoD use of TCP/IP as a
    protocol standard, while the ISO is developing an differing set of
    standards, and the NBS is working toward establishing the ISO
    standards as FIPS, in May 1983 the National Research Council (NRC)
    was asked jointly by DoD and NBS to study the issues and recommend a
    course of action. The final report of the NRC committee was
    published in February 1985 (see RFC-942).

    The enclosed letter is from Donald C. Latham (ASDC3I) to DCA
    transmitting the NRC report and requesting specific actions relative
    to the recommendations of the report.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE   April 1985
                              Assistant Secretary of Defense
                              Washington, D.C., 20301-3040
Command, Control,
Communications
       and
Intelligence

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

SUBJECT: National Research Council Report on Transport Protocols for
           DoD Data Networks

       Attached is the final report on "Transport Protocols for Department
of Defense Data Networks" from the National Research Council (Board on
Telecommunications and Computer Applications, Commission on Engineering
and Technical Systems). The report recommends that DoD immediately
adopt the International Standards Organization Transport Protocol (TP-4)
and Internetwork Protocol (IP) as a DoD co-standard to the current DoD
standard Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and IP and move ultimately
toward exclusive use of TP-4.

       Whenever international standards are available and can be used to
support military requirements, they will be implemented as rapidly as
possible to obtain maximum economic and interoperability benefits.
However, TP as a proven commercial offering is not available at this
time. The progress of TP will be monitored carefully and once
commercially available, TP will be tested and evaluated for use in
military application.

       In order to insure that DoD is in a posture to evaluate TP once it
is in wider use in the commercial sector, request you initiate the
following actions:

   (1)   develop the DoD military requirement specification for TP to
         insure that industry is aware of DoD needs as TP is commercially
         implemented.

   (2)   insure that appropriate advisory representation is provided to
         commercial standards working groups that are currently refining
         TP under the auspices of the National Bureau of Standards.

   (3)   insure that the DCA protocol test facility can accommodate TP
         testing as required when commercial implementations are
         available.

   (4)   develop a transition strategy for Option 2 of the report to
         include estimated resource requirements.

   (5)   evaluate the detailed recommendations presented in the Report
         (pages 61-64) as they apply to Option 2.

                                                       Donald C. Latham