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Budget Analysis of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command (MSFSC) Civilian Mariner (CIVMAR) Hotel Contracts

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Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

EMBA PROJECT REPORT

**Budget Analysis of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command
(MSFSC) Civilian Mariner (CIVMAR) Hotel Contracts**

Date: 25 May 2011

Client: Robert Quick, Budget and Analysis Business Director
Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, Norfolk

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Budget Analysis of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command (MSFSC) Civilian Mariner (CIVMAR) Hotel Contracts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this project was to conduct research on the current method MSFSC uses to budget for its CIVMAR Support Unit (CSU) hotel contracts, how they are receipted throughout the course of the fiscal year, and finally how they are closed out at the end of the contract period. The client suspected that there were flaws in the current process and was interested in hearing any recommendations to improve the procedures in place to help alleviate the problem of over obligating the CIVMAR Pipeline Budget.

Through in-person and telephone interviews, the current process for developing the Hotel Contract portion of the budget as well as the contract award, monitoring, and receipting portion were discovered. Additionally, historical hotel usage rates and historical financial data were analyzed to help determine if there were corrective actions that could be taken.

In the end, it was discovered that there was a thorough process in place for awarding, monitoring, and receipting the CIVMAR Hotel Contracts and that this process was currently working as it was designed. The true cause of the problem that the client was witnessing was due to the fact that the budget for the CIVMAR Pipeline, and therefore the CIVMAR Hotel Contracts that fall into this budget, was solely based on historical performance rather than future requirements. Using this method to establish the budget does not take into account changes in the out years and creates a budget that is not in line with the goals of MSFSC.

The researchers recommend that MSFSC develop a budget for Expense Type 25812 Hotel Contracts that is reflective of the future goals of MSFSC by taking into account future manning levels and what impact those levels have on the size of the CIVMAR Support Units and the hotel contract requirement that goes along with the CSUs.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command (MSFSC) crews, trains, equips, and maintains more than 40 government-owned/government-operated (GOGO) ships of Military Sealift Command (MSC). These ships are manned by civil service mariners (CIVMARS) and are responsible for conducting specialized missions and providing support to US Navy ships worldwide. Additionally, the mission of MSFSC is to support other MSC assets as directed by Commander Military Sealift Command (COMSC) by:

- Providing GOGO Ships Ready for Tasking (GRFT) at the right time, place, and cost...every time.
- Delivering world class service on time today and tomorrow.
- Managing resources to meet and exceed ships' mission readiness.¹

In order to carry out this mission, MSFSC employs over 5,500 CIVMARS. Those who are not assigned to ships make up the Pipeline, which represents approximately 25% of the total CIVMARS at MSFSC. The Pipeline encompasses CIVMARS who are in a leave status, AWOL, transfers, illnesses, training, and those clearing a "not fit for duty" issue. Shore-side CIVMARS who are not in a leave status or assigned to one of the training centers are required to report to a CIVMAR Support Unit (CSU), also known as the "pool," until they receive their next assignment. Two CSUs were established to accommodate CIVMARS on both the East and West coasts: CSU East located in Norfolk, VA and CSU West located in San Diego, CA. The length of time spent in the pool varies based on position and individual status; some transition through in a few days, while others may be there for months. Ship schedules, phase-up requirements, and flight schedules also play a role in determining the length of time spent in the pool. Appendix A shows the categories of CIVMARS that make up the pool and the average number of days spent there. This project examines

¹ Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariner Handbook (February 2010)

budget formulation and execution concerns related to the housing of the CIVMARS in the East and West CSUs.

B. Background

Of the 5,591 CIVMARS currently employed by MSFSC, 1,503 make up the Pipeline, with approximately 400 of those reporting to the CSUs. Those assigned to the CSUs who do not reside locally are housed in two contracted hotels on the East and West coasts, currently the Doubletree in Norfolk and Holiday Inn National City (t/a Jet Investment Inc.) in San Diego. The hotel contracts are negotiated based on a block of rooms per night for a period of five years with renewal options each year. The current problem that MSFSC is experiencing is an over commitment of funds during the year of execution within the CIVMAR Pipeline budget, which is the budget that provides funding for the hotel contracts. The client suspects that the hotel contracts are the cause of this over commitment of funds and has requested that this project investigate the budget formulation, execution, and contracting process for the CSU CIVMAR hotels. The client also suspects that these contracts are not being properly expensed during the year resulting in large discrepancies between budgeted amounts, commitments, and expenses.

MSFSC operates as a Navy Working Capital Fund, which is based on a customer-provider relationship between operating units and support organizations. Revenue generated through customer orders is used to finance the fund's continuing operations and capital investments without limitation to fiscal year (FY). The use of stabilized rates allows for total cost visibility and full cost recovery of providing goods and services to customers. The rates are set based on actual and projected cost estimates and workloads; therefore, it is critical that all costs are captured and allocated as accurately as possible. Civilian mariner costs are part of the direct costs financed by the MSFSC Navy Working Capital Fund. These costs include CIVMAR base pay, pipeline, overtime, fringe benefits, travel, and training. The hotel contracts that are the focus of this research are funded within the CIVMAR Pipeline budget.

C. Objectives

As discussed during the initial client meeting on April 5, 2011, with Robert Quick, Budget and Analysis Business Director of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command in Norfolk, VA the objectives for this project are to:

1. Determine how MSFSC can better estimate budgets for the CSU hotel contracts, improve the receipting process during the year, and execute final closeout.
2. Propose an alternate process to allow for proper documentation and to allow for a best business accounting practice for the CSU hotel contracts.

The project objectives were achieved by analyzing the answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the current procedure for developing budget estimates for hotel contracts? What information/data is used to project these estimates?
2. Of the budget estimates, how much is committed during the year and how much is actually expensed?
3. What is the impact to the CIVMAR Pipeline budget of over committing funds for the hotel contracts?
4. What is the justification for the requested annual increases in funding for hotel contracts if historical data shows funds are under-executed?
5. How is the hotel contract negotiated at the beginning of each fiscal year? What criteria are used when certifying funds for hotel contracts?
6. What are the occupancy rates or percentage of rooms that are actually used on a monthly basis?
7. What is the process for receipting and payment of hotel contract bills?
8. What are the end-of-year procedures for closing out hotel contracts?

D. Scope

The scope of this research and analysis was limited to the hotel contracts for CIVMARS assigned to the East and West coast CSUs within MSFSC. These contracts fall within a broader project number and task that is comprised of various expenditure categories that make up the overall Pipeline budget. Upon collecting and analyzing data, it was found that other expenditure categories also contributed to the over commitment of funds within the Pipeline budget during the year of execution. However, the expenditure category for the hotel contracts represented the largest percentage of this over commitment. Analysis was limited to the expenditure category 25810 Subsistence and Support. This expenditure category is further divided into two expenditure types: 25811 - Subsistence and Quarters (S&Q) and 25812 - Hotel Contracts. During the data collection phase, it was also discovered that there are other hotel contracts within the 25812 expenditure type not related to the East and West CSUs, but are for the purpose of providing CIVMAR lodging at training sites.

E. Methodology

1. In-person interviews were conducted with the following departments, MSFSC Human Resources and Manpower Department (N1), Contracting Department (N10), and Comptroller Department (N8) located in Norfolk, VA to determine the current contracting and budgeting processes for the CSU CIVMAR hotel contracts.

2. A phone interview was conducted with a key stakeholder from MSC Headquarters Comptroller Department (N8) to determine the budget submission process for expenditure category 25810 within the MSFSC Pipeline budget.

3. Analyses were conducted of historical and current budget estimates, commitments, and actual expenses for the CSU hotel contracts. This data was collected from the following accounting systems at MSFSC: Financial Management System (FMS) Project Status Inquiry, FMS Discover Report 12,

Electronic Document Access (EDA), and Tool for Oracle Application Developers (TOADS) from MSC Headquarters.

4. Analysis of historical hotel usage rates was conducted to determine if seasonal trends existed that could be useful when budgeting. Hotel occupancy data was provided by the Customer Surveillance Representative in N1 in the form of manual entries into Excel spreadsheets that contained a daily log of the number of CIVMARS that signed in to the hotels from FY07 through FY11.

5. Average CIVMAR manning figures were obtained from monthly Human Resource Office (HRO) Reports from FY08 through FY11 and compared against historical hotel room usage to see if any correlation existed.

II. RESULTS

A. Current Processes

To help better understand the function of the CSU CIVMAR hotel contracting process and address research questions 1,4,5,7 and 8, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. During the interviews, it was discovered that the cost estimation method for the hotel contracts entailed an assessment of room occupancy rates in the previous year. Historically, the procedure has been to increase this number based on an assumption of how many rooms would be used in the upcoming year; this number appeared to be arbitrary and not tied to any future manning levels. The total number of rooms estimated for the year was then multiplied by the hotel room rate to get the total cost of the contract. Yearly increases to room rates are the result of mandatory requirements in labor rate adjustments as defined by the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act² that are built into the contract.

A process flow chart for the CSU CIVMAR hotel contracts is provided in Appendix B. The process begins with the development of a Statement of Work (SOW) by the Contract Surveillance Representative (CSR). N10 receives the

² McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act of 1965, Public Law 89-286, as amended, 41 U.S.C. 351-358

SOW from the CSR when a new contract is up for bid, puts together the bid, and then sends it out for solicitation. Once the packages are received from potential vendors, an awards board is convened to rate each vendor's submission and evaluate how well they meet all the criteria in the SOW.

After the contract is awarded, N1 generates a funding requisition in the MSFSC financial system, forwards to N10 who enters in the contract, which is then forwarded to N8 for funds certification. N8 is responsible for verifying that funds are available to obligate the hotel contracts and also monitors funds to make sure they are on track and make adjustments accordingly during the fiscal year. The contracts are committed up front for the full amount covering a period of performance for the base year and then each subsequent renewal year option. They are then expensed as invoices are received from the vendor.

Both the CSU East and CSU West hotels submit weekly invoices to MSFSC N8 for payment. Before payment is made, N8 forwards the invoices to the CSR to verify for accuracy. This is accomplished by having the CIVMARS sign an attendance log at the pool. The pool then reconciles this log with the hotel's invoice for completeness. After confirming that the invoices are accurate, the CSR receipts the amount of the invoice in FMS on a weekly basis and forwards back to N8 for payment. Appendix C shows the amounts receipted each month for the Doubletree Hotel and Jet Investment Inc. over the course of the contracts. This data shows that the invoices are being properly receipted throughout the year. Excess funds on the contract are deobligated, or if there is a shortfall, additional funds are added once the final invoice is received. The end result is that obligated amounts match expensed amounts at the end of the fiscal year. The hotel contract is closed out by N10; however, this is not accomplished after each option year, but at the end of the contract as a whole (base year and option years).

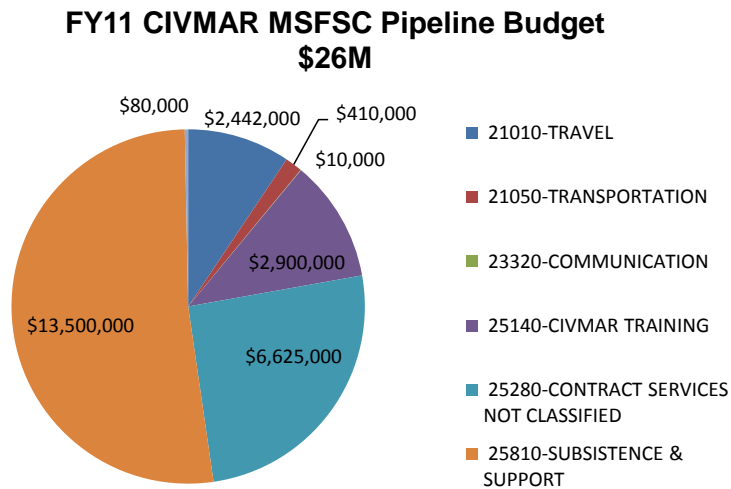
In summary, an examination of the current processes reveals that thorough procedures are in place for the overall administration of the hotel contracts. Contract performance is monitored throughout the year to ensure that all criteria in the SOW are being met. Additionally, proper procedures have been

established for verifying the accuracy of hotel invoices prior to payment. A complete documentation of CIVMAR sign in sheets at the pool allows for reconciliation of invoices, which are receipted and paid in a timely manner. The one area of weakness revealed in the process was the method for cost estimation of the contracts. While a meticulous and sufficient documentation process exists to track historical room usage, this input could be combined with manning projections tied to ship activation/deactivation schedules in an effort to better align funding with future requirements.

B. Current Budget Status

The FY11 MSFSC CIVMAR Pipeline Budget was examined to provide answers to research questions 2 and 3. This budget totals approximately \$26M and is comprised of seven different expenditure categories as displayed in Figure 1. The CSU East and West hotel contracts fall within the Subsistence and Support category, 25810, which makes up over 50% of the Pipeline budget.

Figure 1



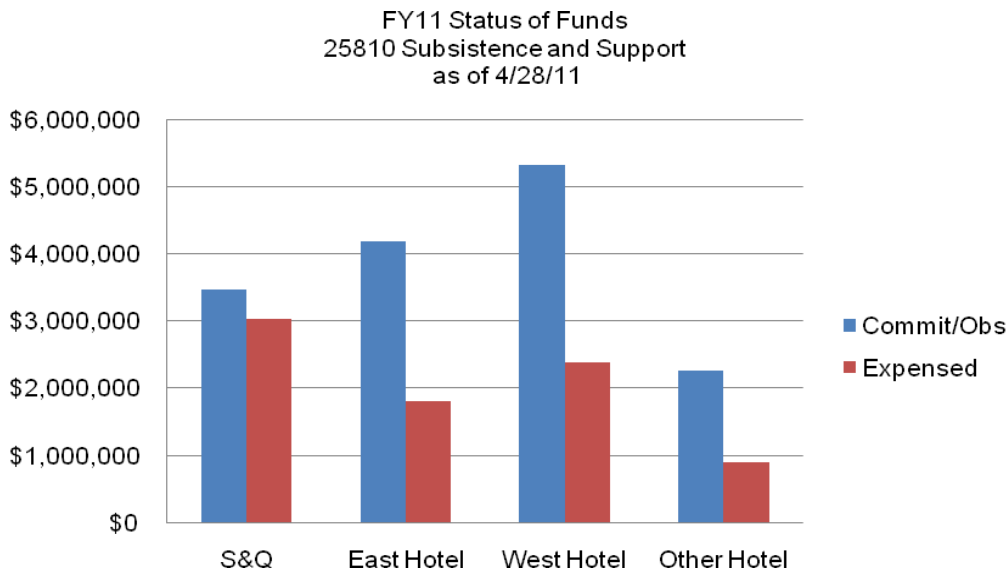
The 25810 Subsistence and Support category is further divided into two expenditure types as follows:

Expenditure Type	Title	Description
25811	Subsistence and Quarters	Subsistence allowance for ashore CIVMARS living in contract quarters
25812	CIVMAR Contract Quarters	Contract lodging for ashore CIVMARS

It is important to note that although the recording of expenses is broken down by these two expenditure types, currently there is no budget distinction between them; the budget is distributed to the broader expenditure category 25810 Subsistence and Support only. The current method for establishing the budget for Subsistence and Support is based on a review of historical expenses.

Current execution data as of April 28, 2011, shows that of the \$13.5M budget provided for Subsistence and Support, \$15.25M has been committed/obligated causing available funds to be exceeded by over \$1.75M. The hotel contracts make up the largest portion of the commitments/obligations as displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2



	Commit/Obs	Expensed	% Expensed	% FY Elapsed
S&Q	3,470,161	3,031,263	87%	58%
East Hotel	4,187,791	1,814,517	43%	58%
West Hotel	5,332,721	2,378,471	45%	58%
Other Hotel	2,263,000	902,336	40%	58%
Total				
Commitments/Obligations	15,253,673			
FY11 Budget	13,500,000			
Available Balance	(1,753,673)			

In summary, a variety of categories and expenditure types exist within the Pipeline budget to allow for the proper recording of expenses. A review of the data reveals that the budget provided for the hotel contracts along with S&Q is over obligated by 13%. The large discrepancies between obligated and expensed amounts are a result of the contracts being fully obligated up front at the beginning of each option year. Of the total obligations for the CSU hotel contracts, 44% has been expensed with 58% of the year elapsed. As a consequence of this under execution, it is likely that the full amounts will not expense resulting in a deobligation of funds at the end of the year. This data confirms the problem as stated by the client.

C. Analysis of Historical Data

1. Historical Usage

The following analysis provides answers to research question 6. In addition to review and analysis of historical financial data, the average monthly historical room usage of the two current hotel contracts was analyzed to determine if there was a noticeable and perhaps predictable trend. If so, this could be used to better estimate the usage rate for a coming year or period. It could then be used to create an obligation plan for the hotel contracts to reflect the way that the funds in expenditure type 25810 would be executed, rather than obligating the full amount up front. As shown on Figures 3 and 4, there are dips in usage in December and in the summer, most likely caused by increased leave usage. However, the degree of these dips is not consistent from year to year and would therefore not be accurate enough to use as a predictive tool.

Figure 3

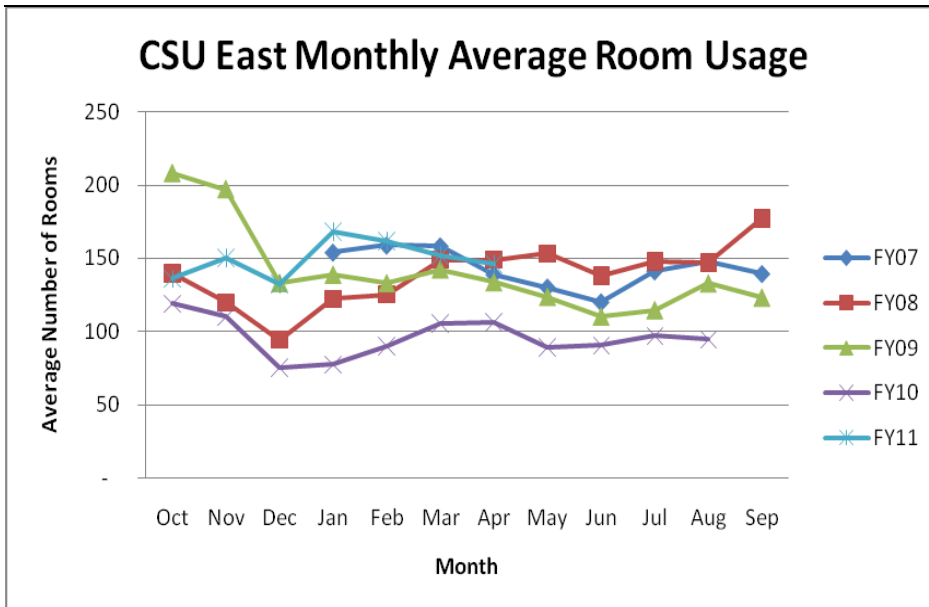
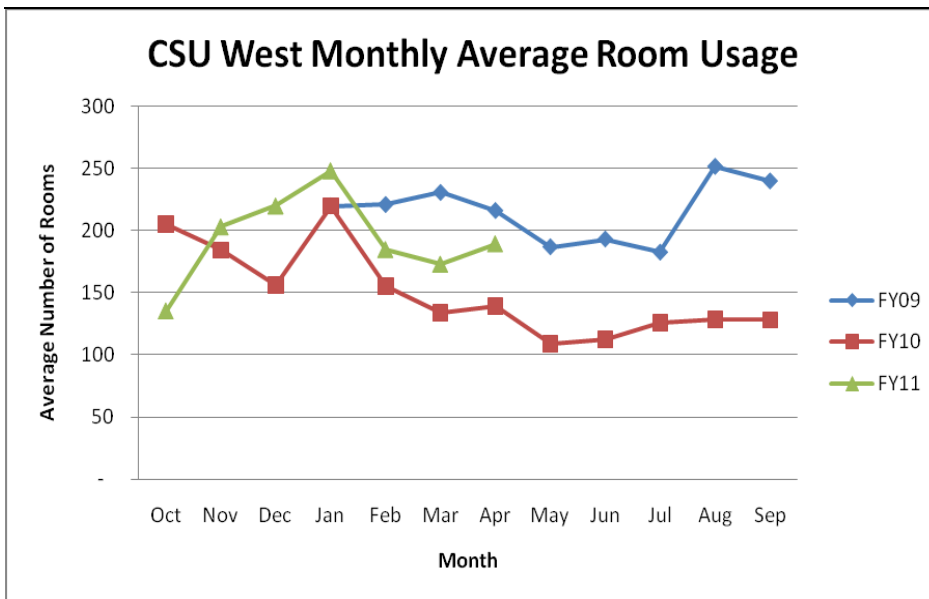


Figure 4



Additionally, the average number of CIVMARS using the hotel rooms as part of the CSU Pool was analyzed to determine if there was a definable historical benchmark that could be used to help budget for this expenditure category. As shown in Figure 5, there was some degree of variation from year to year. FY09 had the highest usage rate, but that was most likely the result of

accelerated hiring to reach a significantly greater target CIVMAR end strength number in FY10. The FY10 and FY11 ratio would be a more accurate benchmark, but given the limited amount of historical data available, it may be worth continued study before deciding on using them as the standard. See Appendix D for CIVMAR End Strength targets.

Figure 5

Month	FY07 Average Number of CIVMARS	FY08 Average Number of CIVMARS	FY09 Average Number of CIVMARS	FY10 Average Number of CIVMARS	FY11 Average Number of CIVMARS
Oct	-	140	208	324	271
Nov	-	120	197	294	353
Dec	-	94	133	232	352
Jan	154	122	359	297	417
Feb	159	125	354	246	346
Mar	158	149	373	239	325
Apr	139	149	350	245	336
May	130	153	311	198	-
Jun	120	138	303	203	-
Jul	141	148	297	223	-
Aug	147	147	384	223	-
Sep	139	177	363	238	-
AVG	107	139	303	247	200
Average ES	Data Unavailable	5207	5168	5137	5511
Usage to Average ES	N/A	2.7%	5.9%	4.8%	3.6%

2. Historical Financial Analysis

A review of the financial performance of the CIVMAR hotel contracts currently in place provided answers to research questions 2 and 3. The data revealed that in virtually every fiscal year funds that were initially obligated throughout the year in agreement with the terms of the contract were then deobligated at the end or after the close of the fiscal year. This is clearly displayed on the following Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6

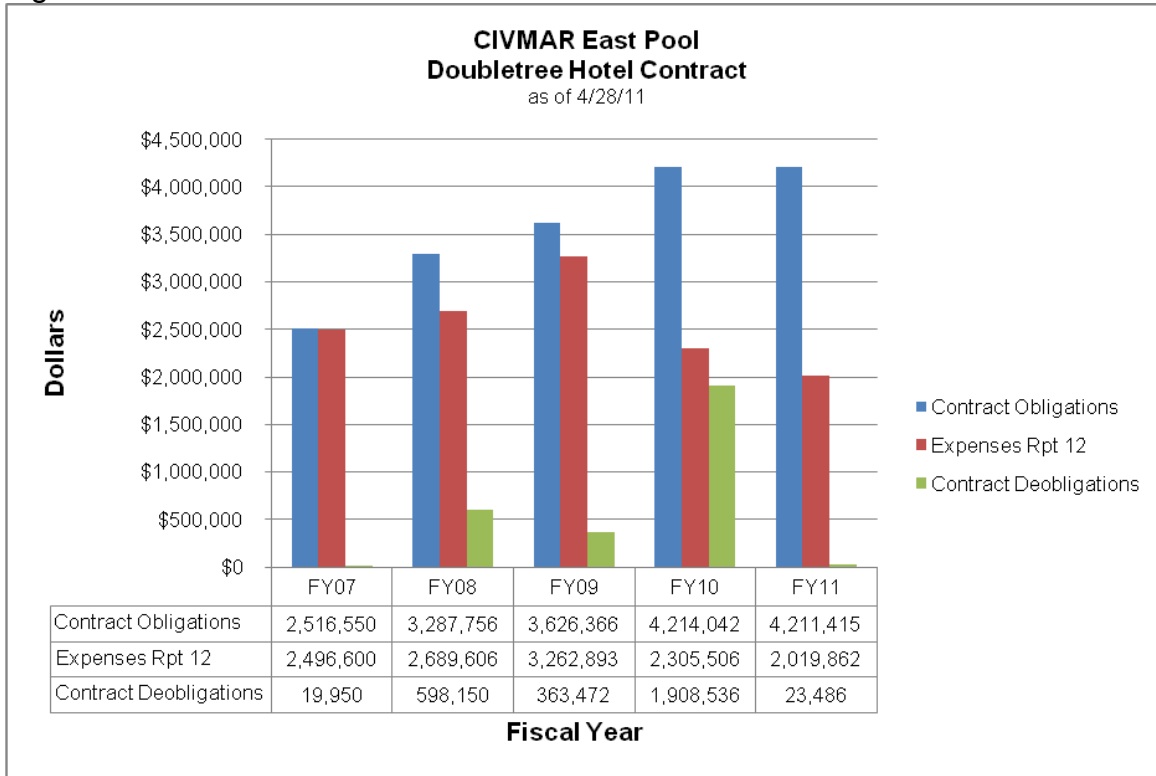
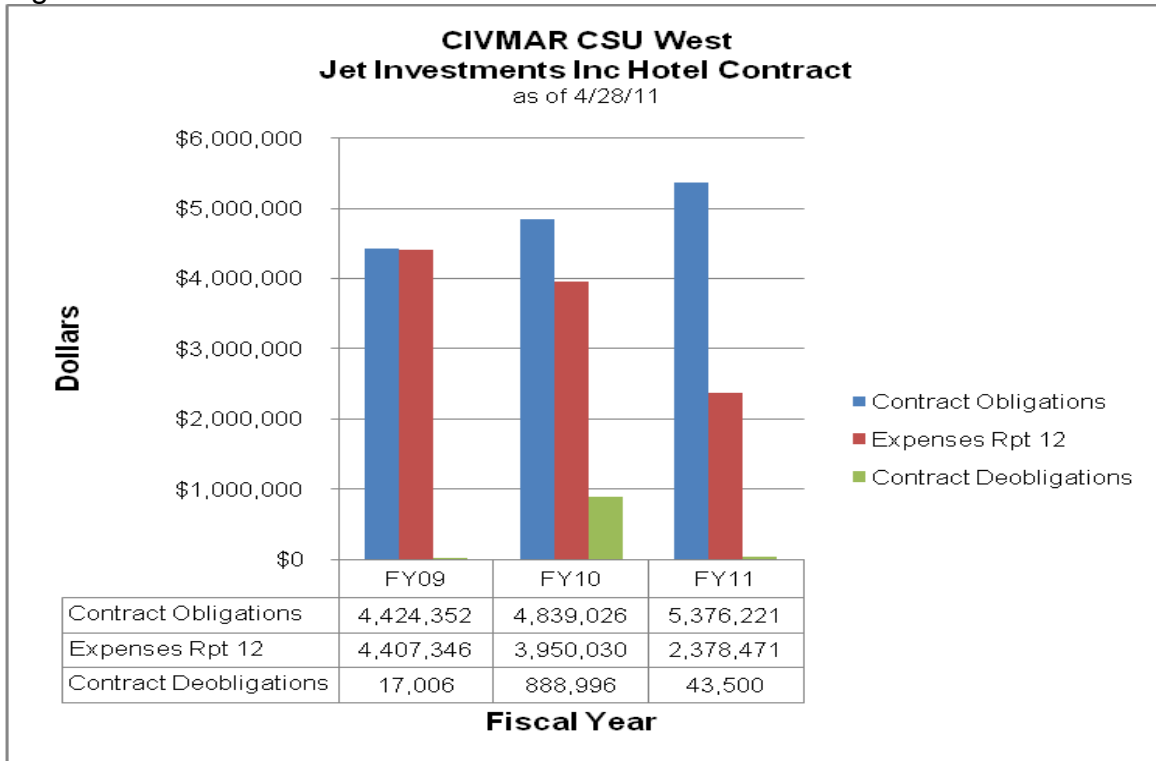


Figure 7



In conclusion, these two figures show that the maximum cost allotted under the terms of the contracts was never met; and therefore, if the contracts were properly budgeted for, it would not be possible for them to drive expenditure category 25810 to over commit. This would reflect a more realistic picture of the true costs for the CIVMAR Pipeline and free up valuable funds for use by other projects at MSFSC.

D. Analysis of Alternatives

After discussions with the key stakeholders involved in the process for budgeting for the CIVMAR hotel contracts and analysis of historical usage rates and financial data, there are three alternatives that present themselves. The following alternatives address the options available to MSFSC to correct the problem of over committing the Pipeline budget and discuss strengths and weaknesses of each.

1. Continue operating in the same manner, knowing that this expenditure category will always be over committed. In an environment of limited resources, this alternative unnecessarily ties up funds that could be used during the year for other high priority or emergent requirements. This is the least preferable of the alternatives available to MSFSC. It is not accurate and continues to perpetuate the problem of over committing the CIVMAR Pipeline budget, as stated by the client.
2. Having been made aware of the issue, MSFSC can continue to budget in the same way for expenditure category 25810, but make a one-time adjustment to the baseline that will bring the budget closer to historical actual expenses, thereby eliminating or minimizing the over commitment of the CIVMAR Pipeline budget. While better than inaction and less time consuming than option 3, this is still not a preferable alternative because it only solves the problem of committing funds in excess of the budget by increasing the budget. The funds will still be tied up and unavailable for

use elsewhere until deobligations are made at the end of the contract year. This method lacks the rigor of true analysis and may land MSFSC in the same situation just a few years down the road.

3. The last option would be to begin developing an actual budget based on future manning levels and requirements, rather than past performance, for this and the other expenditure categories that comprise the CIVMAR Pipeline budget. Doing this will allow for a more accurate and executable budget going into out years and bring transparency to the costs associated with expenditure category 25810. Further, having developed a budget and knowing what costs comprise that budget, MSFSC will eliminate any doubts in the future as to the cause of over commitments as they will now be easily identifiable, that is assuming this does not completely resolve the problem entirely. Also, the original commitment will be much closer to the true cost of the contract and not tie up funds that could be used for other projects within MSFSC. This will require a larger time investment than is currently being spent, but in the long run should prove worthwhile.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

This study provided a better understanding of the Military Sealift Fleet Support Command budget formulation, budget execution, and contract administration process for the CSU CIVMAR hotel contracts. Through interviews and data analysis, the underlying cause for the problem of over committing the CIVMAR Pipeline budget was determined to be the lack of a clear budgeting method for the true costs of these contracts. Additionally, this problem further compounds within the 25810 expenditure category because not only are the hotel contracts not properly budgeted for, but neither is the Subsistence and Quarters cost. As a result of not budgeting for specific requirements at each

expenditure type level, the entire Pipeline budget is committed in excess of available funds during the year of execution. The study also provided evidence that there are appropriate procedures in place for administration of the contracts; therefore, this was not a contributing factor to the problem. Finally, the study revealed that MSFSC is receipting the hotel invoices in a timely manner; this process seems sufficient and should continue.

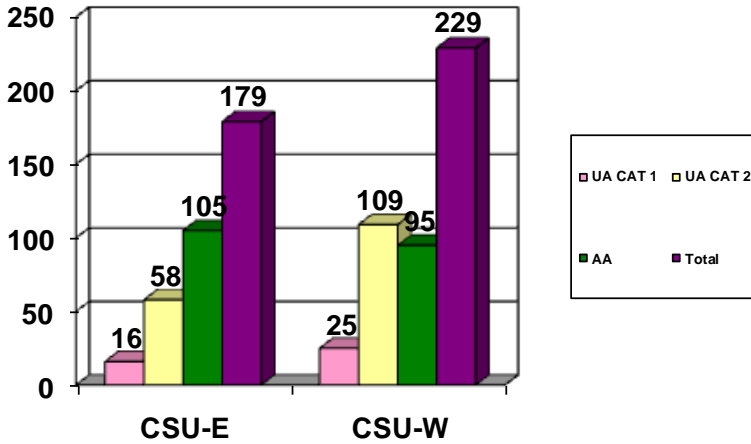
B. Recommendations

1. MSFSC should begin to properly budget for CIVMAR hotel contracts in expenditure type 25812. This should be relatively easy to implement as the contracts span five years, so MSFSC is aware what the full cost will be each option year if the full amount of the contract is executed. This may prove more difficult when it is time to re-solicit the contract; however, since manning is planned in advance, and it has been noted that the hotel usage averages approximately 3.5% - 5% of the average total CIVMAR manning, it would still be possible to estimate what the contract cost will be in future years. As time goes on, a more reliable historical benchmark can be tracked and applied.

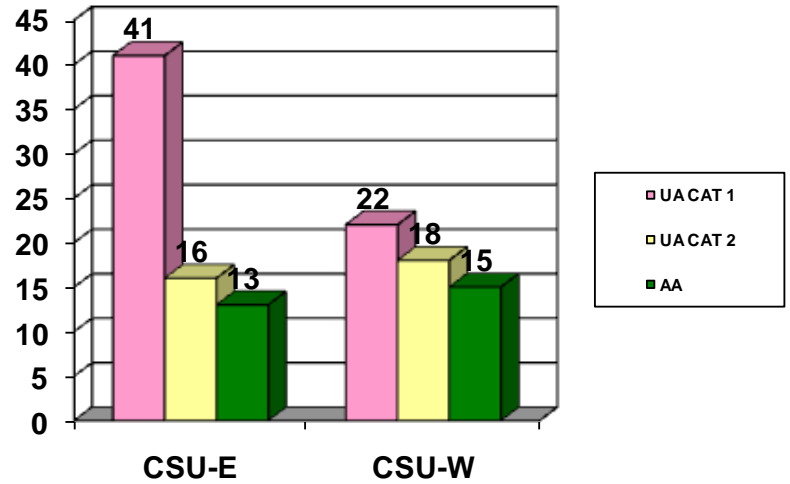
2. While not covered within the scope of this project, since Subsistence and Quarters, expenditure type 25811, still falls in the same expenditure category as the hotel contracts these costs should also be budgeted for more accurately. The same manning and usage averages can be applied to future manning to give an estimated cost.

APPENDIX A: MSFSC N1 Pool Status

Pool Numbers



Pool Average Days



Available for Assignment

(131) Pending Ship Inport
(70) Pending Assignment

Unavailable for Assignment (UA) Categories:

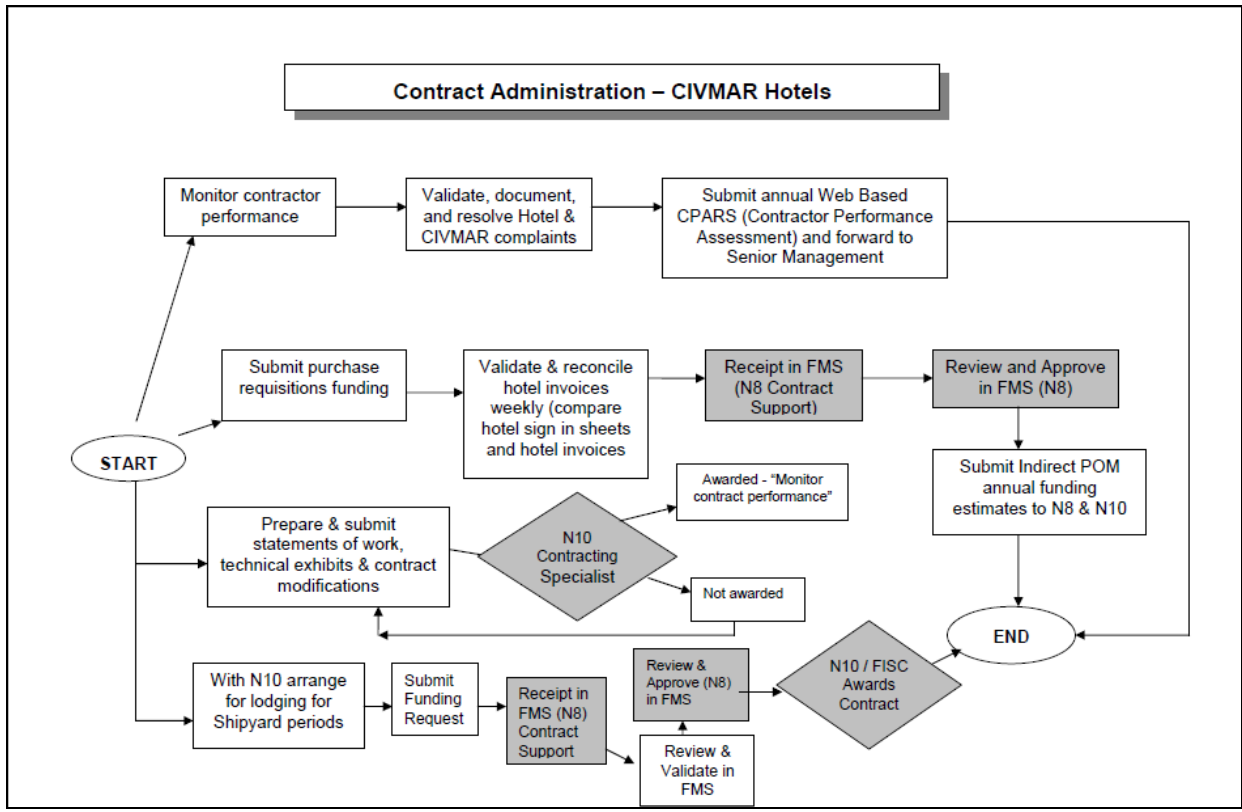
CAT 1 (No leeway)

(22) MED – Medical
(07) PDA – Pending Discipline
(06) SEC – Security Issues
(07) LIC – License/Documents
(01) OPV – Official Passport/Visa
(0) TAD – Temporary Duty

CAT 2 (Possibly assign)

PDT – Pending Training
TAD – Temp assignment
OTH – Other

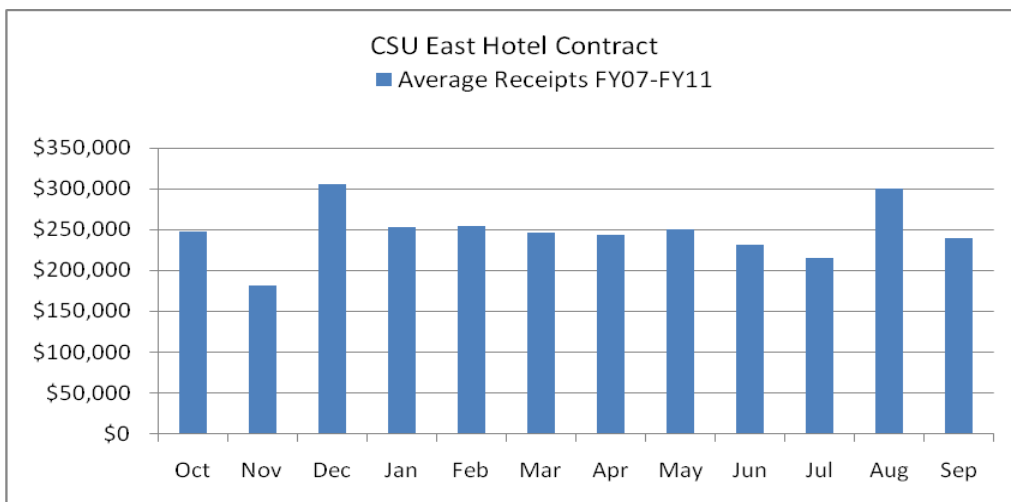
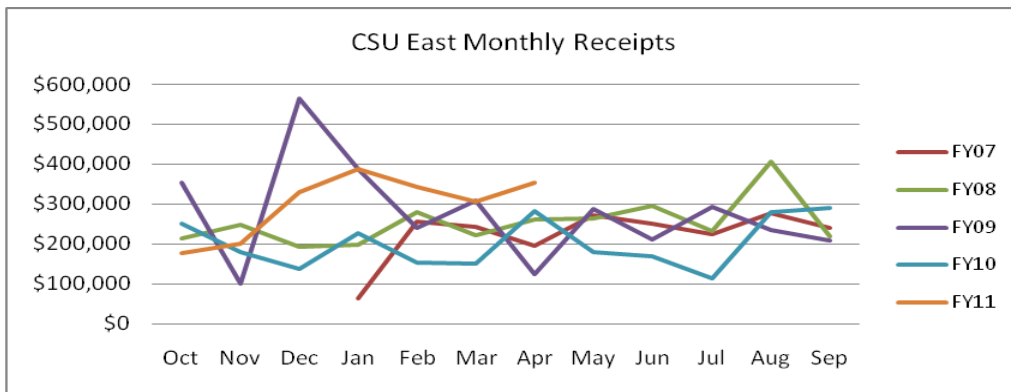
APPENDIX B:



APPENDIX C:

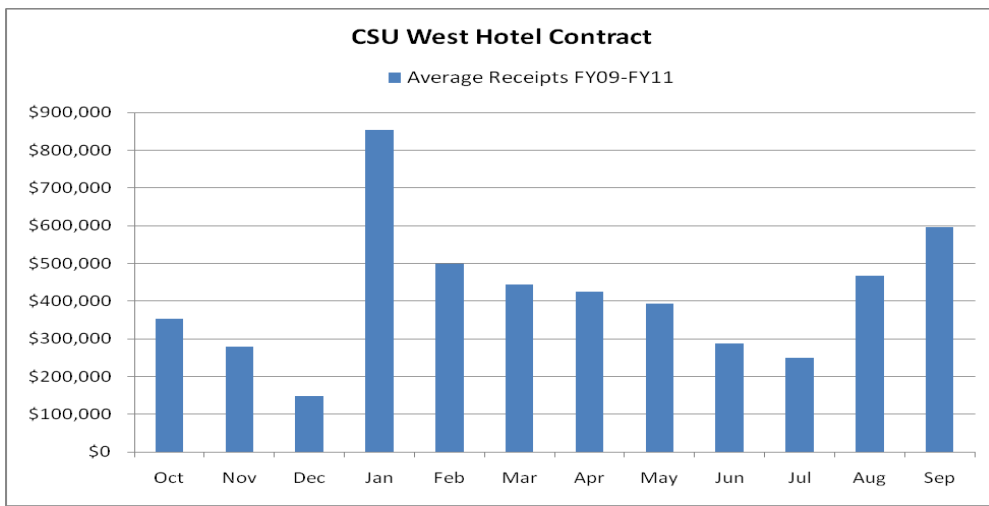
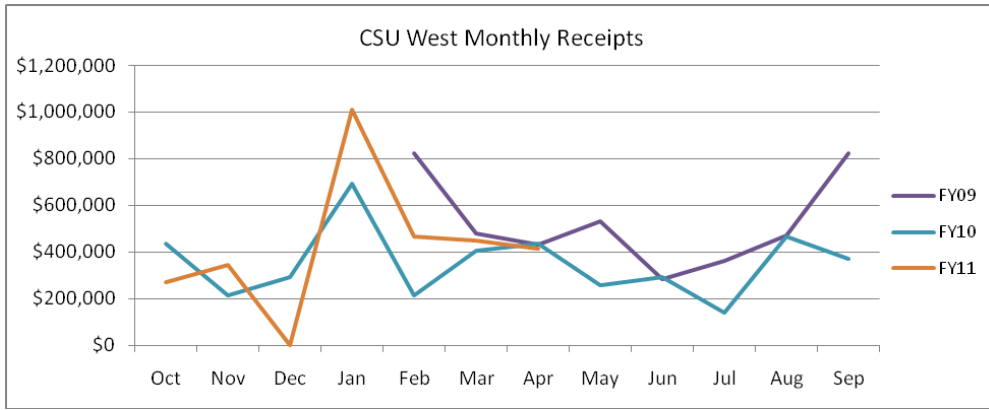
CSU East Hotel Contract Receipts

<u>Month</u>	<u>FY07</u>	<u>FY08</u>	<u>FY09</u>	<u>FY10</u>	<u>FY11</u>	<u>Average Receipts FY07-FY11</u>
Oct		212,838	353,540	249,475	175,701	247,888
Nov		246,810	101,188	178,717	201,833	182,137
Dec		191,577	564,286	137,305	330,718	305,971
Jan	64,011	197,623	388,805	226,827	387,126	252,878
Feb	255,759	280,629	241,358	152,216	342,960	254,584
Mar	241,509	222,812	308,376	149,643	305,864	245,641
Apr	195,054	260,224	125,369	283,186	354,642	243,695
May	271,605	263,413	286,488	179,404		250,227
Jun	250,572	295,751	210,388	167,787		231,125
Jul	223,611	232,301	291,578	114,673		215,541
Aug	277,248	406,880	235,192	279,557		299,720
Sep	240,141	218,381	209,257	289,256		239,259



CSU West Hotel Contract Receipts

<u>Month</u>	<u>FY09</u>	<u>FY10</u>	<u>FY11</u>	<u>Average Receipts FY09-FY11</u>
Oct		435,015	269,489	352,252
Nov		215,408	343,911	279,660
Dec		292,776	2,000	147,388
Jan		694,144	1,012,178	853,161
Feb	821,113	211,650	465,100	499,288
Mar	479,142	404,019	450,225	444,462
Apr	429,035	434,816	413,825	425,892
May	529,614	255,616		392,615
Jun	281,613	291,599		286,606
Jul	362,000	138,393		250,197
Aug	468,309	466,881		467,595
Sep	823,143	368,664		595,904

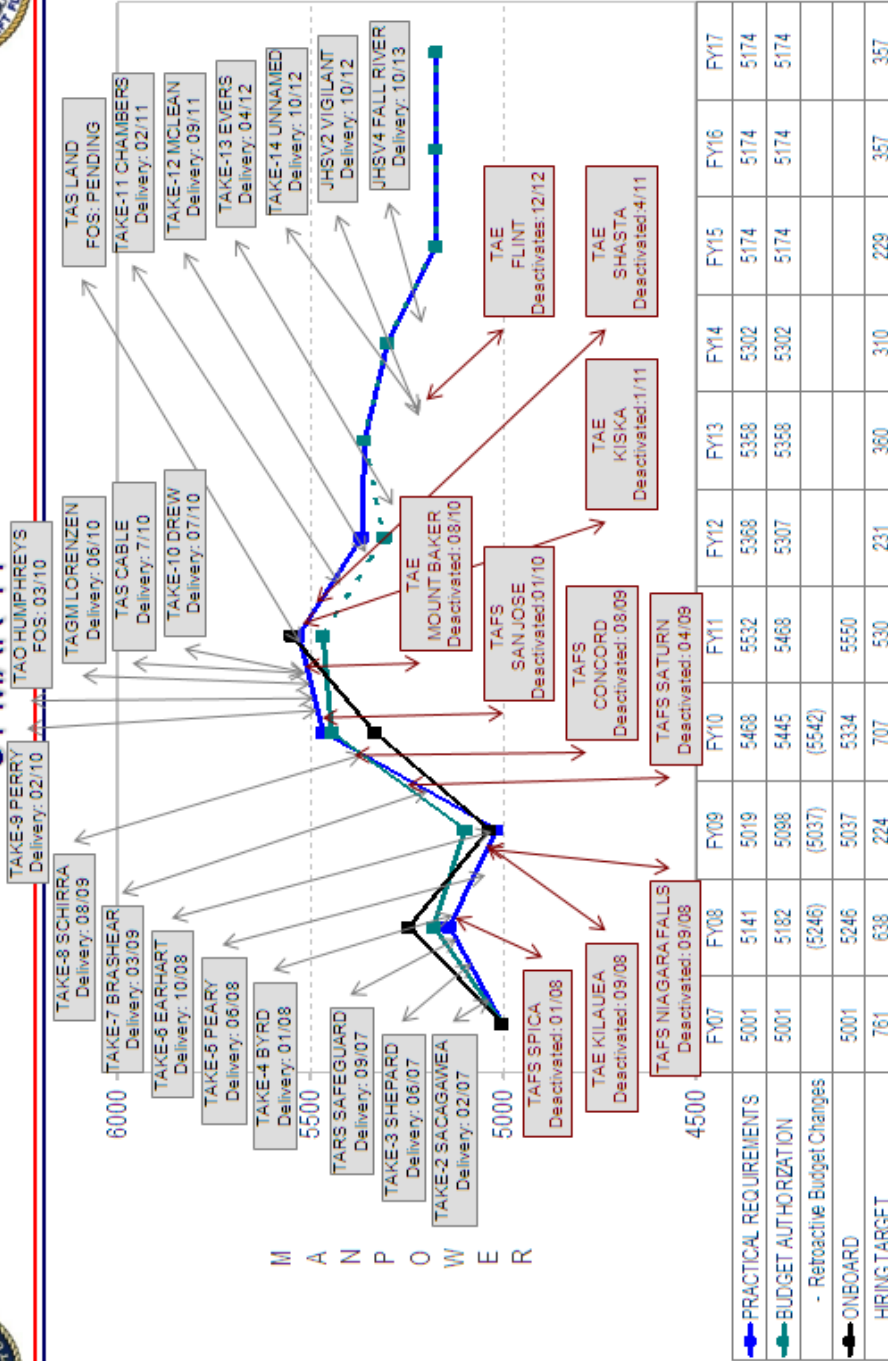


APPENDIX D:



CIVMAR GROWTH COMPARISON

31 MAR 11



Practical Requirements (MFSFC MI): Budget Authorization modified to reflect emergent manning changes
 Budget Authorization (MFSFC HQ): Manning authorization established in the FY13 MSC Budget Enhancement Submission (BES) dtd 4/2/11
 Hiring Target: FY11 (CSWP calculations); FY12-FY17 (delta between fiscal year requirements plus projected Attrition (currently 6.9% based on a 5-year average))

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