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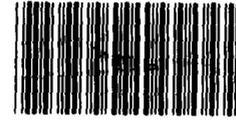
UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

MISSION ANALYSIS AND
SYSTEMS ACQUISITION DIVISION

B-199334

MARCH 23, 1981

The Honorable Henry M. Jackson
United States Senate



114682

Dear Senator Jackson:

Subject: [Status of Army Efforts Concerning
A Rotary Wing Escape System] (MASAD-81-23)

In accordance with your letter of February 26, 1981, we have determined the actions the Army has taken concerning a rotary wing escape system since we last reported on the subject in July 1980.

In its response to our recommendations, the Department of Defense agreed that a cost and operational effectiveness study of an escape system was needed. In December 1980 a Joint Services Working Group was established to oversee the study under the auspices of the Office of the Principal Deputy, Under Secretary of Defense Research and Engineering (Research and Advanced Technology). At its first meeting in January 1981, the group decided that the study would be done within the Department of Defense rather than under contract outside the Government. It was also decided that the Army's Training and Doctrine Command would be the appropriate agency to do the study. The command was selected because of its role in formulating tactical doctrine and because the Army was (1) the prime user of the Cobra helicopter and (2) to be the only user of the Stand-Off Target Acquisition System which utilizes the Black Hawk helicopter.

On February 6, 1981, Army Headquarters directed the Training and Doctrine Command to prepare an outline of the study for review by the Office of the Secretary of Defense by March 20, 1981. The study was to address the questions we raised in our report concerning cost effectiveness, feasibility, and mission effectiveness. The command's report was to be ready by September 1, 1981.

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One week later the Training and Doctrine Command asked to be relieved of this responsibility saying that, due to other planned priority tasks, it could not begin such a study until the third quarter of fiscal year 1982, about a year from now. On March 11, 1981, Army Headquarters agreed to the request and told the command to schedule the study as early as possible in its fiscal year 1982 program. That is where the matter now rests.

We hope this information will be useful to you and would be pleased to provide any additional information as it occurs.

Sincerely yours,



W. H. Sheley, Jr.
Director