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C1 Dear Mr. Chairman:

The General Accounting Office has continued its review of the Army's Base Operating Information System (BASOPS) to provide you with information on the Army's actions and progress since our last report of August 1971.

BACKGROUND

BASOPS is a base-level automated management information system which was initiated in 1965 to achieve system standardization throughout the Continental United States Armies. BASOPS, as configured today, has three basic subsystems: finance, supply, and personnel. BASOPS is intended to improve the readiness posture of the Army units, to be responsive to the informational requirements of all unit commanders, and to provide commands with accurate and timely data.

In August 1971 we issued a report (B-163074) to the Secretary of Defense that pointed out numerous deficiencies in BASOPS and the inability of the Army to correct them on a timely basis. This report suggested that further extension of BASOPS be deferred until the known deficiencies had been corrected and until BASOPS had demonstrated that it would function effectively.

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Further extension of BASOPS was deferred in compliance with your Committee's recommendation. Also the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) was charged with the responsibility to ensure that improvements would be made. OSD advised us that the Army would not resume extension until the problems addressed in our report had been resolved. OSD's official response to the report stated:

"When these improvements have been incorporated in the BASOPS subsystems, extension should resume under the utmost caution with the full understanding that recurrence of past difficulties or validation of new deficiencies will necessitate an immediate termination of development and extension pending demonstrated correction."

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As of February 1, 1972, 24 installations had implemented the personnel, supply, and finance subsystems and four others had implemented the personnel subsystem only. The Army tentatively plans to seek approval to extend the supply and financial subsystems to the four installations now partially on BASOPS and to extend BASOPS to the five remaining continental United States (CONUS) installations in fiscal year 1973. Also the Army intends to subsequently extend BASOPS to additional installations; to develop and extend follow-on applications in the personnel, supply, and financial subsystems; and to add other subsystems in such areas as maintenance, transportation, and hospital management.

STATUS OF BASOPS

At the time we concluded our fieldwork, there were still a large number of operating problems to be resolved in BASOPS. The Army, however, does not regard any of them as critical to the operational status of BASOPS. The Army is continuing to correct deficiencies and to make improvements. Several recent changes have been sent to field installations, and the Army feels that these changes will correct many prior deficiencies. Not enough time has passed to evaluate the impact that these changes will have on BASOPS.

A great deal of command emphasis and high-level attention is being brought to bear on BASOPS to ensure that problems will be corrected and that BASOPS will fulfill the operational needs of the Army. In February 1972 a joint review committee was formed to determine the action required to resolve continuing problems. This committee includes representatives from the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, the Comptroller of the Army, and the Computer Systems Command. Also OSD intends to monitor the actions taken on BASOPS through visits to Army installations; periodic status reports; and meetings with representatives having responsibility in the supply, financial, and personnel areas.

By letter dated March 7, 1972, OSD advised the Army that additional modifications to BASOPS were necessary before it could be extended further. After OSD has reviewed these further changes, approval for extension will be requested from your Committee. OSD then will closely monitor progress at each installation to ensure that significant problems, if any, will be resolved on a timely basis.

B-163074

CONCLUSION

Many of the corrective actions taken by the Army are too recent to permit us to evaluate their effect on the system. We are impressed, however, with the degree of high-level attention being given to BASOPS. If this attention is continued and when the Committee is assured by the Army and OSD that the problems have been resolved, we believe that further extension could be permitted.

We plan to make no further distribution of this report unless copies are specifically requested, and then we shall make distribution only after your agreement has been obtained or public announcement has been made by you concerning the contents of the report.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

The Honorable George H. Mahon
Chairman, Committee on
Appropriations HSE 00300
House of Representatives