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**Government Business
Operations Issue Area**

Active Assignments

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Foreword

This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's Government Business Operations issue area. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of August 17, 1998, and presents a brief background statement and a list of key questions to be answered on each assignment. The report will be issued quarterly.

This report was compiled from information available in GAO's internal management information systems. Because the information was downloaded from computerized data bases intended for internal use, some information may appear in abbreviated form.

If you have questions or would like additional information about assignments listed, please contact Bernard Ungar, Director, on (202) 512-4232.

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The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the war. It is followed by a detailed account of the military operations in the West, including the Battle of Arras and the Battle of Cambrai. The report also discusses the state of the British Empire and the efforts of the Allies to bring about a final victory.

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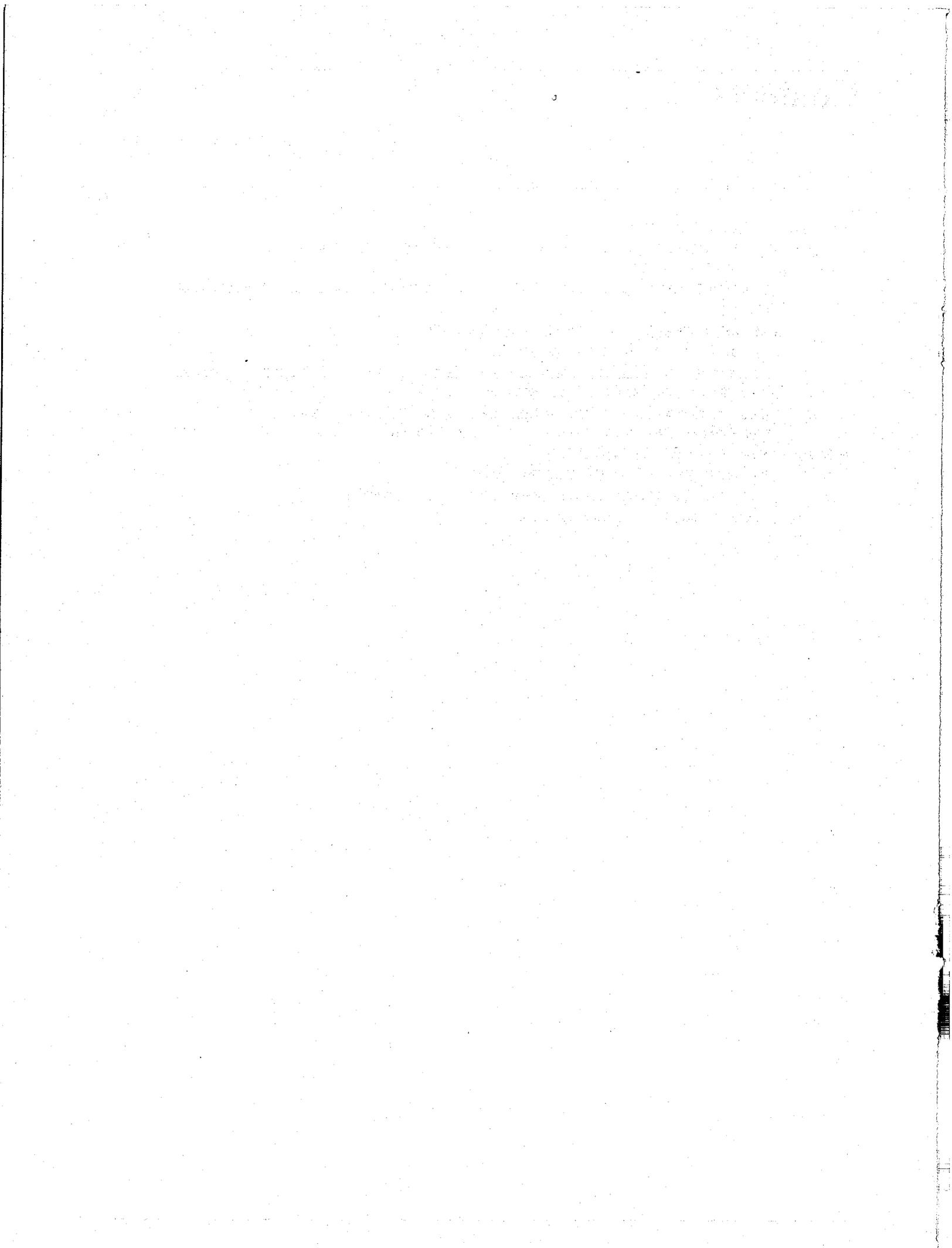
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Government Business Operations

ASSET MAINTENANCE AND USE

TITLE: FOR THE RECORD RESPONSES TO FEDERAL BUILDING SECURITY HEARING QUESTIONS (240310)

KEY QUESTIONS : The requester asked that we respond to questions in writing for the hearing record following our June 4, 1998, testimony on security in federal buildings.

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT

TITLE: IMPACT OF GSA'S INTENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE CURRENT SHORTFALL PROBLEM ON THE FUTURE OF THE FBF (240262)

KEY QUESTIONS : To remedy the \$847 million shortfall in the Federal Buildings Fund (FBF), the General Services Administration (GSA) has proposed to delay planned work in FY 1997. What, if any, costs will be incurred by the FBF or other agencies as a result of the delays in undertaking FY 1997 work? What, if any, impact will GSA's intended solutions to the current shortfall problem have on FBF funding in the future?

TITLE: U.S. POSTAL SERVICE: REVIEW OF NEW POSTAL PRODUCTS (240272)

KEY QUESTIONS : The requester asked us to review the Postal Service's process for developing new electronic postal products. The objectives were to: (1) provide information on the statutory and regulatory authorities and constraints governing the Postal Service's ability to market all new products, (2) describe the Service's processes for developing, testing, approving, and marketing new electronic products and determine, for three new products (First-Class phone cards, REMITCO (a remittance processing service), and electronic postmark), how closely those processes were followed, and (3) develop an inventory of new electronic products marketed during the last 3 years--including associated costs and revenues.

TITLE: USPS DIVERSITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PLANS (240288)

KEY QUESTIONS : According to a 1997 study of the U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) diversity practices, the percentage of women and minorities in higher level postal management jobs is not proportional to their representation in the civilian labor force. The requester wants to know more about the Postal Service's efforts in this area. (1) What actions has USPS taken to place women and minorities in higher level management positions, particularly the Executive and Administrative Schedule (EAS) 17 level and higher? (2) Has a practical and achievable plan been developed to resolve the existing conditions?

TITLE: REVIEW OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) TRAINING FOR POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES AND SELECTED EEO COMPLAINT DATA (240299)

KEY QUESTIONS : In November 1997, at Postal Service hearings, the requester expressed concern about the continued existence of various labor-management relations problems in the Postal Service. The requester asked for assistance in identifying the Postal Service's efforts to provide its employees with training in sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity (EEO) matters. Also, the requester asked us to provide selected statistical information on postal employees' pending EEO complaints.

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TITLE: PBS STAFF TIME AND RESOURCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRAVEL, SEMINARS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, AND OTHER EVENTS ATTRIBUTED TO TRAINING (240304)

KEY QUESTIONS : The requesters asked for an audit of the General Services Administration's (GSA) Public Buildings Service (PBS) travel & training budget & expenditures for GSA employees for the period June 1993 through December 1997. The requesters believe that PBS invests a large amount of staff time & resources for the purposes of travel, training, seminars, meetings, conferences, & other events attributed to training. The requesters are concerned about the use of resources for these purposes at a time when the Federal Buildings Fund has had a significant revenue shortfall requiring deferment of construction & repair & alteration projects. What were PBS' budgets for travel & training for fiscal years 1992 through 1998? How much was actually spent for these purposes during this time frame?

ASSET & SUPPORT SERVICES ACQUISITION

TITLE: PROCUREMENT OF DISTINCTIVE CURRENCY PAPER (240251)

KEY QUESTIONS : For over 117 years, the Department of Treasury and Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) have purchased paper used to print the nation's currency from a single supplier. The lack of competitive bids has raised questions about the ability of BEP to obtain a fair and reasonable price and the possible disruption in the supply of currency paper because of potential catastrophic events or if the current supplier refused to provide the currency paper. (1) Does BEP have an effective process to encourage competition for procuring currency paper? (2) How does BEP ensure the fairness and reasonableness of prices paid and the quality of goods/services received? (3) What is the potential for disruptions in the supply of currency paper and is BEP prepared to handle such disruptions?

TITLE: COMPARING FPI'S PRODUCT AND SERVICE PRICES WITH MARKET PRICES (240266)

KEY QUESTIONS : Federal Prison Industries (FPI), which is managed by the Bureau of Prisons, was created by Congress in 1934 to serve as a means for managing, training, and rehabilitating inmates. FPI is a mandatory source of supply for products purchased by federal agencies and agencies are encouraged to purchase services from FPI. The requesters are concerned that FPI's prices are on the high end of market prices resulting in federal agencies paying more than they should for products and services. The requesters want us to answer the following questions: (1) What policies and practices FPI uses when setting prices for its products and services? (2) Where do FPI's prices fall within the market range for selected products and services? (3) How did FPI establish prices for selected products and services.

TITLE: GSA OUTSOURCING OF REALTY SERVICES (240302)

KEY QUESTIONS : The requesters have long been concerned about the General Services Administration's (GSA) downsizing, reorganizations, and contracting practices as they relate to outsourcing of the Public Buildings Service (PBS) realty activities. (1) Did GSA/PBS do an A-76 analysis as required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before contracting out PBS functions? (2) Does OMB and/or GSA have data on the number and types of contractor employees working for GSA? (3) Does GSA have the resources needed to monitor the PBS contracts? (4) How much were GSA's budgets in fiscal years 1993, 1995, and 1997, for contracts associated with management studies and outsourcing of realty services?

