



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON 25

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Honorable John B. Hollister
Director, International Cooperation Administration

Dear Mr. Hollister:

107-3 . PL 267

Reference is made to your letter of December 26, 1956, transmitting a copy of a letter dated December 20, 1956, from the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, requesting an advance of funds from your Administration under authority of section 1314 of the Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1954, 67 Stat. 438, to defray the official expenses of a visit to Guatemala by members and staff of that Committee. You state that since the Committee on Foreign Affairs is the authorizing committee in the House of Representatives that reviews your program annually and passes on the amounts authorized to be appropriated each year, it is your opinion that it is one of the committees referred to in section 1314 in the phrase "the standing committees concerned," and our advice is requested as to whether this interpretation is correct.

It is explained in the Chairman's letter that a special study mission of the Committee is preparing to visit Guatemala to investigate certain matters pertaining to the operations of the Mutual Security Program in that country and the question of funds which may be required for further implementation of the program there.

Section 1314 of the cited act provides:

"Funds made available in this or any other Act shall hereafter be available for examination of estimates of appropriations in the field and the use of such funds for such purpose shall be subject only to regulations of the standing committees concerned."

The use of appropriations for the traveling expenses of committees of Congress is authorized, under the terms of section 1314, when the expenses are incurred incident to the examination of estimates of appropriations in the field. Somewhat similar language for identical purposes has been used in various of the appropriation acts for a number of years, and has been recognized by our Office as authorizing the use of appropriations in which inserted for traveling expenses of the committees of Congress. See 23 Comp. Dec. 493. Under the former authorizations payment has not been questioned when the vouchers

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presented show that the expenses were incident to examination of estimates in the field. Section 1314 differs from the former authorizations only in that it is permanent authority and provides that the use of such funds shall be subject to regulations of the "standing committee concerned." The language is not restrictive to any particular committee, nor is there any indication in the legislative history that such was the intent of Congress. The power to report legislation authorizing appropriations in the field of foreign affairs rests in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the request of the Committee indicates that an investigation of the operations of the Mutual Security Program and the question of funds required for further implementation of the program, has been deemed necessary. Since the Committee's request was made under the provisions of section 1314, it is presumed that an examination of estimates of appropriations is essential to that investigation.

In the circumstances, there appears sufficient basis for your interpretation of section 1314.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Campbell

Comptroller General
of the United States