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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548Subject Card

B-155327

January 16, 1973

The Honorable
The Secretary of Defense

Attention: Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Comptroller)

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you know, we have for many years followed the policy of affording the Department of Defense an opportunity to comment on the results of our reviews prior to issuing our reports. This has been beneficial from our standpoint in that it assures us that we have considered all the available facts and are accurately stating the Department's viewpoints. It has been beneficial from the Department's standpoint also in that more prompt corrective action can be initiated where necessary. The recipients of our reports receive the benefit of both our viewpoints and can make informed judgments where differences prevail.

This policy does delay our reporting somewhat, although there has been a marked reduction in the response time in recent months. To further accelerate this process, I suggest that we adopt the practice, on our major reports, of briefing the key individuals in the concerned services, as well as those in OSD, on our findings at the time the draft reports are delivered. This would tend to assure a thorough understanding of our position at the outset and establish a liaison point for swift resolution of any subsequent questions. Further, I suggest that additional meetings be held periodically, perhaps monthly, to discuss reports that are soon to be issued. I am asking Mr. Tom Morris, Assistant Comptroller General, to contact you to make the arrangements for such briefings and meetings.

When we perform work for a specific congressional committee or an individual member of the Congress, we also obtain the Department's comments in every possible case. Upon occasion, however, we are requested to report directly without obtaining the Department's comments. In those cases we will advise the officials concerned at the time the report is released.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED) ELMER B. STAATS

Comptroller General
of the United States