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APR 13 1973

The Honorable Melvin Price
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Price:

This is in response to your inquiry of December 5, 1972, about the General Services Administration (GSA) assumption of the Telpak functions of the Defense Commercial Communications Office (DECCO).

GSA initially took over the Telpak functions on October 18, 1972, to test the Automated Telpak Management System (ATMS) it had developed. The system was to provide significant savings by automating management functions and to integrate operations under a single system for the Federal Government. Previously both DECCO and GSA had independently managed the functions for their own allocated portions of the Telpak circuits, DECCO on a semiautomated basis and GSA on a manual basis.

"Telpak" is a grouping of leased communication circuits between two points procured under a pricing arrangement (tariff) that effects substantial savings over procuring circuits on an individual basis. Currently, the interstate tariff offers two types of Telpak services--type C with a 60-voice circuit capacity and type D with a 240-voice circuit capacity. The customer has the management prerogative for grouping and routing its communications circuits through Telpak in a manner which will maximize circuit use and minimize the cost.

Several problems in the circuit routings under the automated system indicated that the Government would probably incur additional costs rather than gain the savings projected through automation. Consequently, the test was stopped on January 15, 1973, and the functions were turned over to a joint DECCO/GSA group, which uses the DECCO's semiautomated system. GSA has not determined what their future plans will be for the ATMS program.

We found that neither DECCO nor GSA had made any changes to their staffing authorizations because of the transfer of functions, although some reductions had been envisioned if the ATMS test had been proved successful. Neither agency has

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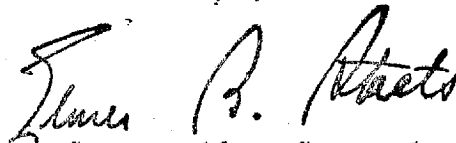
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reduced its staff, although three people in the DECCO operations had requested and were granted transfers from the Telpak area before the test. These positions have not yet been filled. A major staff change emanating from the attempt to automate is the shifting of five GSA personnel, for operational control, to the joint management group headed by DECCO. There may be some future reductions in the number of personnel authorized at DECCO under the joint operation due to eliminating the interagency coordination efforts previously required under the dual operations. A DECCO official stated, however, that this would not affect current personnel. Currently there are several positions vacant in DECCO's staffing level.

We trust that the foregoing information will be helpful in replying to your constituent.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James B. Aerts".

Comptroller General
of the United States