



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

NOV 16 1976

The Honorable John C. Stennis  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In our December 9, 1975, report to the Congress--Should the GAMA GOAT Be Improved or Replaced?--we recommended that, before the Army undertakes a proposed product improvement program, the vehicle should be tested under simulated combat conditions under the supervision of an independent testing organization to determine whether to proceed with the program or whether to replace the vehicle.

In its report accompanying the Defense Appropriations bill, the House Appropriations Committee stated--"The GAO had recommended that the Army test the GAMA GOAT in a realistic simulated operational environment. The Committee concurs in this recommendation." The Senate Appropriations Committee stated in its report that--"The Committee recommends concurrence in the House direction that the Army test the GAMA GOAT vehicle in a realistic, simulated operational environment and further recommends that no funds be obligated for product improvement kits for the vehicle until the testing is completed."

In our opinion, the Army is not complying with the intent of the Committees. No realistic operational testing is contemplated and the Army is planning to go ahead with some of the improvements. On October 7, 1976, we were told by Army officials that the Army interprets the language in the House and Senate Appropriations Committees' reports as being a recommendation rather than a specific direction.

The Army does not plan to conduct an operational test on the GAMA GOAT because the vehicle has been in inventory for several years and an operational test would only serve to verify the existence of the same problems already disclosed by our report and the Army's follow-up review. We were told that the Army recognizes the GAMA GOAT's deficiencies but accepts the vehicle because it has good cross country mobility. According to Army representatives a recent survey of users indicates that the GAMA GOAT is a satisfactory vehicle. However, one notable exception was the U.S. Army, Europe, which expressed a reluctance to accept the vehicle.

PSAD-77-8

We were also told that the Army has rejected some of the previously planned product improvements on existing vehicles because they are not now considered to be cost effective or because overall improvement could not be obtained. These include noise level reduction, improved suspension springs, more durable universal joints, and an improved air cleaner. The Army does plan to improve the transfer case oil pump, the steering system, the exhaust system, the suspension arms and floatation. Other less costly items have been improved with available operation and maintenance funds. The Army is conducting engineering tests on the improved items and the results of such tests will be reviewed by the Army's Logistics Evaluation Agency. The planned improvements are currently estimated to cost a total of about \$7.5 million.

We still believe that there are serious questions as to whether the vehicle can perform its mission satisfactorily. Since many of the problems noted in our previous report are not to be corrected, we believe that the need for operational testing still exists.

We are also forwarding letters on this matter to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the House Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Homer B. Staats". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Homer" being the most prominent.

Comptroller General  
of the United States