



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

APR 17 1972



Dear Mr. Cotter:

In February 1971 we suggested to the Postmaster General that before expenditures were made to combat the rising number of postage stamp thefts, a cost-benefit study be made to evaluate alternative methods for preventing burglaries. Of particular concern to us was the partially completed planned procurement of 38,000 security containers and safes at a cost of \$31 million.

On March 3, 1971, a three-man committee began a feasibility study of alternative burglary protective measures. The study was to provide the Postal Service with objective data for insuring that present and future protective programs will be technically adequate and economical.

In July 1971 the committee completed their study and concluded that

"The measures of any burglary countermeasure is success. While the failure of any of them is immediately discernable and measurable, its success defies measurement - and sometimes notice, - being marked most conspicuously as a lack of failure. Cost-benefit analysis of burglary countermeasures, in the conventional sense, is impracticable.

"In evaluation of any countermeasure the cost-benefit factor should not be permitted to outweigh field expertise and experience, difficult or impossible as it may be to express this experience in conventionally quantifiable terms.

"Each installation must be inspected and surveyed individually to determine its peculiar vulnerabilities and its strong points, prior to any determination of what is needed to make it resistant to burglary."

The committee recommended, among other things, the continued procurement of security containers and safes with a goal of 30,600 units at a cost of \$28 million by the end of fiscal year 1974.

The recommendation to continue the procurement of security safes was made on the basis that they were needed to replace non-security type safes damaged because of burglaries or worn out through normal use and to upgrade security at burglary-vulnerable offices.

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