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

DEFENSE DIVISION

JUL 1 1971

B-159451



The Honorable
The Secretary of Defense

Attention: Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Comptroller)

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On August 24, 1970, we submitted to you a draft report on the results of our review of the management of the \$100 million emergency military construction program to expand and upgrade Army and Air Force facilities in Korea (OSD Case No. 3168). In the draft report we stated our belief that the establishment of a central authority in Korea contributed to a more effective and efficient implementation and management of this construction program than the earlier emergency military construction program in Thailand, which we had reviewed previously. We pointed out, however, that we believe there is a need for improvement in controls to ensure compliance with your stated policy that the facilities to be constructed should be uniform in quality and cost among the military Services.

We also stated that the standards and guidelines established by the Department of Defense (DOD) for construction of troop housing in Korea under the 1968 supplemental construction program were vague and, therefore, subject to various interpretations. The DOD standards and guidance issued early in 1968 were stated to be intended to ensure construction of minimum essential facilities on an austere basis and uniformity in quality and costs among the Services. Actually, however, the guidance gave the Commander, U.S. Forces, Korea, and the Services considerable latitude in choosing among three types of troop housing construction--concrete block, relocatable, or tents erected on wood frames with wood or concrete floors--and in deciding on the amount of space to be provided. With respect to the space, the Services were authorized to provide an indefinite amount of gross square feet in the housing so long as a prescribed number of net square feet for the living area of each planned occupant was not exceeded.

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We pointed out in our draft report that, while the standards of construction of troop housing in Korea may not have exceeded the standards intended by DOD, the costs and sizes of troop housing constructed varied significantly between the Army and the Air Force. Troop housing costs for Army officers were about 32 percent higher per man than for Air Force officers, and troop housing costs for Army enlisted men were about 19 percent higher per man than for Air Force enlisted men. These cost variances resulted primarily from construction by the Army of concrete block housing which contained about 52 percent more square feet per officer and about 32 percent more square feet per enlisted man than the relocatable housing constructed by the Air Force.

A comparison of the drawings for the Army enlisted men barracks and for the Air Force airmen dormitories showed that, in addition to areas provided by both Services, the Army provided space for non-commissioned officers' lounges, mailrooms, lobbies, arms rooms, and dressing rooms. Comparing the designs for officers' quarters, we noted that, in addition to areas provided by both Services, the Army provided space for guest toilets, dressing rooms, janitor closets, and vestibules.

We concluded in our draft report that the differences in designs and costs between the Army and Air Force troop housing construction in Korea under the 1968 supplemental construction program demonstrated the need for more clearly defined standards and criteria for use in future emergency construction programs overseas. We also concluded that while revised criteria issued in January 1970 provided some clarification as to the sizes of troop housing to be constructed by specifying the maximum gross living area for officers and maximum gross floor area for enlisted men, the use of these criteria can still result in construction by the military departments of troop housing which is not uniform as to cost and size and in lengthy delays in preparing detailed construction plans.

Therefore, we suggested that the Secretary of Defense establish and promulgate definitive guidance for emergency troop housing construction programs overseas which would include (1) maximum gross living areas to be provided per man for officers and enlisted personnel, and (2) clearly defined space allowances for such areas as lounges, mail rooms, and dressing rooms. We also suggested that consideration be given to preparing and issuing definitive drawings showing the total space, functional layout, and configuration of the rooms to be provided in the housing.

By letter dated October 19, 1970, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Installations and Logistics) furnished comments on our findings and suggestions. We were advised that the lack of uniformity in troop housing between the Services resulted primarily from the difference in the status of the military units of the two Services involved, rather than from a deficiency in guidance.

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It was pointed out by the Deputy Assistant Secretary that, as discussed in our draft report, guidance by your Office set two standards of construction--"temporary" for those military units assigned to Korea on a permanent basis, and "transient" for units assigned to Korea only on a temporary basis. The "temporary" standard authorized concrete block structures or relocatable units. The "transient" standard authorized relocatable units or tents erected on wood frames with wood or concrete floors.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary further stated that the Air Force units requiring troop housing were deployed under a plan which called for the use of the "transient" standard of construction and, therefore, relocatable units were provided. Also, the Army troop housing was required to relocate existing Army cantonments and to replace existing inadequate and deteriorated housing units and, therefore, "temporary" standard construction was utilized for the Army troop housing.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary stated that the criteria issued in January 1970 provided definitive guidance for maximum gross living areas per man as suggested by us. In line with the above comments, however, the Deputy Assistant Secretary indicated that no additional action was contemplated in response to our suggestion regarding improved guidance for future emergency programs.

We believe further consideration should be given to our suggestion for the following reasons:

1. Regarding the Deputy Assistant Secretary's comments attributing the lack of uniformity between Army and Air Force troop housing to a difference in status of the units assigned to Korea, our review indicated that the Air Force decision to use relocatable housing was based primarily on the potential for erecting such housing faster than concrete block housing could be built.

2. The DOD criteria make no distinction between concrete block or relocatable units in specifying space allowances for troop housing. Thus, as regards uniformity of space, it would appear to make little difference whether the housing is provided under the "temporary" standard or the "transient" standard.

3. The Deputy Assistant Secretary was incorrect in stating that the January 1970 criteria already provided guidance for maximum gross living area for both officers and enlisted men, as we had suggested. These criteria did include such a maximum for officers but for enlisted men they specified maximum gross floor area. Floor area includes the

living area plus other areas such as lounges, mail rooms, and utility rooms. As indicated in our draft report, the absence of a limitation on these additional floor areas allows the construction of housing which may be dissimilar in size and cost.

4. We do not agree with the Deputy Assistant Secretary's belief that the limited general criteria provided by DOD's policy statement in 1968 that "only minimum essential facilities on an austere basis are to be provided" are sufficient to regulate the amount of ancillary space (lobbies, vestibules, storage areas, etc.) to be provided in troop housing constructed under emergency construction programs. Unlike normal military construction, no cost-per-man limitations were in effect for the emergency construction program in Korea and no individual line item review and authorization had been made by the Congress.

5. The Deputy Assistant Secretary did not comment on our suggestion that consideration be given to preparing and issuing definitive drawings showing the total space, functional layout, and configuration of the rooms to be provided in the housing. We believe that providing such drawings would assist in achieving DOD's stated objective of constructing minimum essential austere facilities of uniform quality and cost. Further, the use of such drawings could accelerate completion of the designs, thus expediting the execution of emergency construction programs.

Recommendations

As indicated by the Deputy Assistant Secretary, in the Korean emergency construction program the Army had the choice of either concrete block or relocatable structures and the Air Force had the choice of either relocatable structures or tents. To our knowledge no guidelines or criteria have been issued for making such choices. It appears to us that such criteria would be particularly desirable in the case of overseas construction in view of the possibility of the United States losing much of its investment in non-recoverable military facilities in foreign countries when such facilities are no longer needed for United States forces.

Therefore, we recommend that your Office give consideration to the need for, and the feasibility of, issuing policy guidance which will delineate the circumstances under which fixed troop housing will be constructed overseas and those under which relocatable structures will be used.

If DOD is to achieve reasonable uniformity among the Services in emergency construction of troop housing overseas, more specific guidance as to space allowances for living areas and other areas in the structures appears to be needed. Further, the use of definitive drawings prepared in accordance with the space criteria should aid in compliance with such

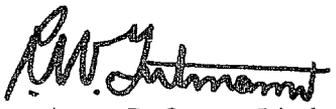
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criteria and facilitate the construction. Therefore, we also recommend that your Office reconsider our proposals that more specific space criteria and definitive drawings be developed for use in planning and carrying out emergency construction of troop housing overseas.

With reference to our recommendations in this report, your attention is invited to Section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 which requires that you submit written statements of the action taken with respect to the recommendations. The statements are to be sent to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of this report, and to the Committees on Appropriations in connection with the first request for appropriations submitted by your Department more than 60 days after the date of this report.

Copies of this letter are being sent today to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and to the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force.

Sincerely yours,


for  Director, Defense Division