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NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE SUPPORT FOR F–4 AIRCRAFT, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

The General Accounting Office estimated, on the basis of review work performed in 1965, that the Department of the Navy could have maintained the equivalent of 23 additional F–4 aircraft in serviceable condition during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1964, if certain improvements had been effected in supply and maintenance support. We so advised the Navy.

During 1966 we made a limited followup review of these matters and found that many of the same management problems affecting the readiness position of F–4 aircraft continued to exist, although aircraft availability had increased.

We identified the following problems in the management of supplies by the Navy's Aviation Supply Office, which led to shortages of spare parts and components for F–4 aircraft.

1. Loss of control over inventory of certain parts.
2. Failure to promptly purchase needed parts.
3. Lack of prompt repositioning of stocks to areas where needed.
4. Lack of timely repair of unserviceable components.

We identified also some administrative problems in scheduling F–4 aircraft for repair and rework.

We brought these matters to the attention of the Department of Defense by letter dated July 13, 1966, proposing that the Navy establish a weapons system management team for each type of first-line aircraft for as long as the aircraft is so classified.

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management), in his reply dated December 7, 1966, stated that the Navy agreed there should be a weapons system management team as long as would be necessary to cope with major difficulties in research, design, development, production, and logistics support peculiar to the system.

It was stated, however, that such a team for every first-line aircraft would require a substantial organization of technical, maintenance, and supply personnel. The Navy stated also that the establishment of a weapons system management team would not, in itself, insure improvement of the conditions which our review noted. The Navy advised that, to insure improvement, the aircraft supply support structure had been reorganized and several new management disciplines had been instituted.

We believe that these actions will contribute to improved maintenance and supply support for all weapons systems and, therefore, should improve the readiness posture of the F–4 aircraft. We plan to evaluate the implementation and adequacy of the Navy's actions in our continuing reviews of its supply and maintenance activities.