

Representative GRIFFITHS. How long do we have to wait for the answer?

Mr. STAATS. We try to make it as short as we can. It is seldom more than 60 days.

Representative GRIFFITHS. You will supply these names, then, completely to this committee?

Mr. STAATS. We will supply the names, if the contractor makes no response to our invitation, or if he does respond, then we include, in addition, his difference with us in our report.

If he agrees with us, we simply make note of that, but if he disagrees with us, then we like to present his view, in all fairness to him. We feel that it is a more valuable document to the Congress, if the Congress knows wherein they disagree with us.

Chairman PROXMIRE. Let's see if we understand this. If he agrees with you, you don't—

Mr. STAATS. We simply take note of that fact.

Chairman PROXMIRE. You simply take note of the fact, but you don't disclose the identity of the—

Mr. STAATS. Yes.

Chairman PROXMIRE. You do?

Mr. STAATS. Oh, yes.

Chairman PROXMIRE. All right, fine. (See further statement of Comptroller General, app. 12, p. 604.)

Representative RUMSFELD. Isn't it correct that this is a new policy on the part of GAO within recent years?

Mr. STAATS. I cannot speak beyond the time when I became Comptroller General, but I am firmly of the view, myself, that an opportunity for comment by the contractor is a valuable thing.

Representative RUMSFELD. Are you suggesting that they have not had an opportunity to comment, during the course of your investigation?

Mr. STAATS. Informally; yes.

Representative RUMSFELD. Of course they have.

Mr. STAATS. Informally, yes, but this might be at different levels within an organization, and I think that that is something quite different than when a company has a draft report before them. Ordinarily, the informal contract with the contractor will be through one of our regional offices, and it may cover only one segment of the problem. The contractor may have other operations in other regional offices where the other segments of the contract operation will be looked at.

These are eventually tied together in a draft report in our organization, and it is forwarded to the top level of the contractor's for comment. In this way, the overall position of the company in regard to the problem is obtained. While we may be satisfied we are absolutely correct—and I think we do have a very good record in this regard—we nevertheless feel that it makes a more valuable document, a more useful document, to everyone concerned, aside from the question of fairness to the contractor.

Representative RUMSFELD. Is it really your testimony that you don't know whether or not this is a new policy for GAO?

Mr. WEITZEL. Mr. Rumsfeld, could I answer that question?

Representative RUMSFELD. Go ahead.