

Yesterday, on November 27, the Comptroller General of the United States, made the following statement:

The Army is not yet in a position to know within a reasonable degree of confidence what stocks are on hand and what stocks are actually excess to their needs.

Could you comment on these two seemingly contradictory statements, since you are appearing here in behalf of DOD, and DOD and GAO both work for the same Government.

Mr. MORRIS. I would be pleased to, sir. There is no lack of understanding between us and GAO. We have had several conferences on this. Mr. Brooks and I spent 3 days in Vietnam, last week, looking into this specific matter.

My statement does attempt to trace some of the background, but let me summarize it quickly.

In the early days of the buildup, as we deployed units, we had no choice but to fully equip those units with packages of supplies estimated to be everything that each unit might possibly need. We had no demand—no usage experience.

Mr. RUMSFELD. You have already traced that. GAO even commented on the difficulty of the assignment I am talking about today.

Mr. MORRIS. Yes, sir. Let me come to today.

Starting in March of this year, with the buildup reaching this virtual completion point, we sent 500 people out to the Army units—some 1,900 units. We have now pulled back from those units, to the three major depot levels, the materials we find they do not need. This is what GAO is addressing. We have those materials that came back into our depots, along about August or September, now awaiting counting and full identification, so that they can be put on the master depot inventory records. This is the area of lack of completeness and lack of accuracy, which they are referring to and which we are referring to.

Mr. RUMSFELD. Then you are saying that GAO is referring to a situation in which, as you have just described it, all excess supplies have been pulled back and are now in storage depots. The only job remaining is the compilation of an inventory list?

Mr. MORRIS. Or the entry upon our proper stock and inventory records of the actual quantities of the items which are now in depot possession—the purpose being to, (a) redistribute those stocks within Vietnam, that are not required by individual units, and (b) to pull back out of Vietnam, those that will not be required in the country at all, and make use of them elsewhere in the world.

Mr. RUMSFELD. That was not my initial impression of what GAO said. But, now that I reread the statement, it is possible that is what they meant when they said that DOD is aware of the problem and that there are various projects or programs being undertaken or planned.

Mr. MORRIS. I am sure we are quite clear among ourselves on this.

Mr. RUMSFELD. Are there any plans beyond what you have described?

I notice GAO says either undertaken or planned. Is there anything planned beyond this?