

We did at one time during my visit, and these figures have since been adjusted, but they cited figures out of a hundred and twenty thousand items over there, they had about 45,000 items that were in excess of three times the requisitioning objective.

I said, "Is it fair to say this means they have three times as much as they need with respect to these particular items?"

And he said, "For these items."

Now, of course, there is a war going on. But it is a war that has been pretty much the same level over the last year and a half or so.

As you say, you have had literally hundreds of officials going over to try and remedy the situation and improve it. And this seems to be—represent quite a shocking waste—to think that in a very large proportion of all these items, they have three times as much as they need.

Mr. MORRIS. Sir, to us this really suggests the opposite. Our troops have not once "been restricted in their operations against the enemy for want of essential supplies," to quote General Westmoreland.

Chairman PROXMIRE. That is the most important. I would agree. But, nevertheless, there is a terrific area of excess.

Mr. MORRIS. In hindsight, we know how this happened. We knowingly let it happen because we wanted them to be fully supplied. I think the important thing is that the data were given Mr. Fasick by people on the ground. They had found this out. They were correcting these problems. They were not waiting for GAO to find them. We are greatly encouraged—Mr. Brooks and I—by the vigor and intelligence with which General Westmoreland, General Abrams, General Palmer, General Scott, and the top logistics people, are approaching these problems in the midst of a war. They don't have to be told to do it. They are doing it because they want to prudently manage the effort over there.

PHYSICAL INVENTORIES AT ARMY DEPOTS

Chairman PROXMIRE. Well, I am still left with the feeling that we are wasting an enormous amount of money in this area. And especially when we have reports such as the report we have from the Comptroller General that 55 percent of the Army depots had had no physical inventory, and 45 percent had not even had a simple inventory over a recent 18-month period.

Mr. MORRIS. I have checked into this, sir. It is true that—

Chairman PROXMIRE. And that is in this country.

Mr. MORRIS. The Army Materiel Command did suspend its regular inventory program during the buildup. They have reinstituted the program, including the sample inventory techniques.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I make this point—not only from the fact that you cannot manage an inventory, you are bound to have excess, waste, shortages, if you don't know what you have. But also from the standpoint of recognizing if we are going to provide the most prompt and efficient kind of service to Vietnam, you have to have an inventory where you know where things are.

DISCREPANCIES IN INVENTORIES

Mr. MORRIS. And we do, really.

The report of the GAO deals with the little discrepancies that show up in a 4-million-item inventory. Their report shows that the net