

PRIORITY SYSTEM

Mr. HOLIFIELD. When a high priority is assigned to an item, does that mean that it has access to the most expensive form of transportation?

Mr. FASICK. Usually it does, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. In other words, rather than being shipped by boat, let us say, it will be shipped by air?

Mr. FASICK. That is right.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. If it was given this high priority?

Mr. FASICK. In most instances.

Mr. HORTON. Isn't there some sort of review system of those priorities? That is not established by the unit commander, is it?

Mr. FASICK. Well, the criteria are established by the commands and by the Department of the Army and by the Department of Defense.

However, the implementation of the criteria is a responsibility in the Army of the unit commanders. They are not challenged at this point.

Mr. HORTON. Do you say something in here about the question of challenging?

Mr. FASICK. Yes, sir; we do. We believe there should be some sort of a challenge system with respect to high-priority requisitions.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. I had some informal information given me a few years ago by a person working in a clerical capacity in Army supply, and this person told me that the whole system of priorities should be examined. She told me once of the assignment of high-priority classification to items that were being sent by air to a base in Greenland, where the items themselves would not be needed until next spring or a matter of months and where the ships could have very well taken the rather bulky commodities that required a lot of air transportation.

Mr. FASICK. This is precisely the effect that we are referring to when we speak of abusing high-priority requisitions. That is, the overextensive use of them, causes the use of higher priority transportation and possibly more of it. We have no way of estimating to what extent this occurs, but it certainly has an effect.

Mr. HORTON. Coming back to this question of challenge, is there no challenge at a higher level in the Army with regard to the establishment of priorities. Is that the condition that exists now?

Mr. FASICK. With the requisitions there is no challenge system in terms of the priority designator. There is a challenge system as to the method of transportation. Once it gets to the port, they make a decision whether to ship it by air or not. Where possible, because of the volume of high-priority cargo some of it may not be shipped by air.

Mr. HOLIFIELD. But that is after the material is transported to the point of departure?

Mr. FASICK. The port of embarkation; yes, sir.

Mr. DAHLIN. When was that system set up?

Mr. FASICK. This has been in effect, I suppose, for several years.

Mr. DAHLIN. The challenge system?

Mr. FASICK. For air transportation. This doesn't mean, however, that some items which are noncombat essential still wouldn't go by air. This is a little bit out of our area, but in the air transportation