

for him to carry out the directives that emanate from the Army Materiel Command pertaining to supply, pertaining to maintenance, and pertaining to individual items of equipment.

I think that we should recognize this, because there is a certain feeling and it has been stated, and I would like to state it directly, that command prerogatives interfere with supply.

Sir, it is not the Army position. To the contrary, if command prerogatives, if we call it that, interfere with supply, they would be done away with. We do not think command prerogatives interfere with supply. We think that supply is a system based upon a structure which places responsibility at various levels of command, and it is through the coordination of these levels that this job is done.

Now as time goes on, and as we see that through centralization we can do a better job, because of the times, because of the tools, because of improved communications, improved ADP, et cetera, there is no hesitancy on the part of the U.S. Army to centralize.

However, sir, and this is my own statement, we are not going to centralize for centralization's sake.

For example, we can get into this more fully, but we are testing today, and it is in the statement, and I am kind of messing up this whole statement, but we are testing today the extension of ownership of certain particular items anywhere in the U.S. Army depot level and above, overseas included.

This is called AMC ownership plan test. This is now in operation. It began May 1. It covers some 1,700, at the last count almost 1,800, I think, items. These are being transferred from overseas commanders' ownership accounts to the responsibility and accountability of the commanding general of the Army Materiel Command.

This is going to be evaluated and, based upon this evaluation, several things can happen.

First of all, the number of items can be extended, depending upon what we find the capability of AMC to handle it. Of course it can be narrowed too, depending upon that same result, based upon the evaluation.

Further, there is a question of ownership versus visibility. We are in this test testing ownership, whether ownership is necessary or whether visibility is necessary is a question that will come out of this evaluation.

Mr. ROBACK. The visibility means that there is an accurate and known identification, let us say, of stocks, in an overseas theater?

If you know where it is and how much and of what type, then you have visibility?

General HEISER. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROBACK. And the question is whether, having that visibility, you can persuade a reluctant theater commander to let go of some of it, if you need it somewhere else?

General HEISER. Sir, there is more than persuasion involved.

Mr. ROBACK. I mean if you had control, that is if the Army Materiel Command had control, they could say "move it," and if they did not have control they would say, "You have too much of it. I hope you would see fit to move some of it to this other theater"?

General HEISER. Sir, you are using language that is not necessary today. I would like to talk to this point particularly.