

lieve, removed any distrust of the responsiveness of our supply systems. In any event, when problems of allocating limited critical assets arise, they are being resolved by higher military command levels, not by inventory managers.

2. Should the automated inventory management systems of the service be identical, or at least more uniform?

This also has been a matter of discussion and action by the Materiel Assistant Secretaries during the past several months.

As service witnesses have discussed with the committee, each has now or is in the process of implementing a comprehensive plan of standardized computer systems for (1) its inventory control points, (2) its wholesale stock points, and (3) its large base level users, both in the United States and overseas. When these plans are fully implemented in the early 1970's, each service will have achieved intraservice standardization of supply systems in terms of computer hardware, and computer programs (software).

During the past several years when these systems were in the design stage, the role of my office was one of monitorship to assure that specifications were adequate before acquisition of hardware was undertaken, and to apply economic acquisition policies; that is, obtaining full competition from eligible computer suppliers, and purchasing rather than leasing equipment when this is the most economical to the Government. Concurrently we supervised the development of standard requisitioning, transportation, and accounting procedures so that the services and DSA can communicate with each other efficiently. We have not endeavored—nor do I feel it would have been prudent—to standardize such internal service supply procedures under DOD-wide rules. The reason for this is that supply systems are not independent of other departmental management functions; they must be related, for example, to equipment maintenance and weapon systems; and they must produce financial and other reports tailored to the needs of managers and commanders. Had we insisted on standardized internal supply procedures among all services, we would have stifled the creative developments which each service has now pioneered to meet its specific needs.

With this phase of our planning now largely accomplished, the materiel secretaries agreed last May to establish a joint staff under the supervision of my office, manned by a highly competent systems/ADP specialist from each service and DSA. The mission of the staff—and I quote from the letter of agreement with the services—is to review “the features of each of our major automated systems now in operation or planned for the future and develop compatible procedures and system milestones for all of us to follow over the next 5 years.” This staff is now being formed, and we are planning a conference next month of top service logisticians to discuss the status of system planning in each service and to lay out a work program for our joint staff. The work of the staff, and its recommendations, will be reported to the materiel secretaries, as a body, to aid them in defining future DOD-wide policies and concepts.

It is important to stress, in discussing this issue, that we can afford major changes in automated system at intervals of only 3–5 years. Thus, the planning which we shall engage in during coming months will lay the foundation for improvements in the time frame of the