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COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

COMPUTERS AND U.S. MILITARY
READINESS IN EUROPE
Department of Defense

D I G E S T

To meet their peacetime and wartime operational needs, U.S. Forces stationed in Europe rely on automatic data processing systems. (See p. 1.)

Therefore the Secretary of Defense should direct the military services to identify what is needed to achieve the desired automatic data processing readiness posture and the costs of meeting these needs. How the services establish overall wartime computer readiness depends on how they assess the need for automatic data processing wartime support and the risk of losing this, compared to the cost of providing adequate automatic data processing wartime readiness process. (See p. 11.)

When GAO made its audit in 1975, the U.S. European Command; the U.S. Army, Europe; and the U.S. Air Force in Europe operated 142 general-purpose computer systems to support command and control, intelligence, logistics, personnel accounting, financial accounting, and base-level operations. (See p. 1.)

The services depend on automatic data processing to carry out effectively those activities vital to wartime operations. For many functions, parallel manual operations do not exist for meeting data requirements. This is particularly the case in command and control, personnel, and large-supply operations. (See p. 5.)

The services have studies in various stages of development to increase operational readiness. But unless the following matters are considered fully in present and future plans, automatic data processing wartime readiness will not be improved materially.

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Improved automatic data processing wartime readiness would require

- clearly defining automatic data processing wartime missions (see p. 7),
- designating secure backup facilities or making computers as transportable and as survivable as the principal activities which they support (see p. 8),
- periodic field testing to insure that van-mounted computers can operate in field environments and that adequate power supplies and transportation support are available (see p. 8), and
- adequate plans for providing continuity of automatic data processing support when individual systems are destroyed in wartime. (See p. 9.)

The Assistant Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, agreed that automatic data processing should be as survivable as the activity it supports and that the military services' reliance on automatic data processing is increasing. He also said that the Department of Defense would begin reviewing plans and policies for automatic data processing continuity of operations.

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