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United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, DC 20548

Logistics and  
Communications  
Division

B-168700

DECEMBER 28, 1978

The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias,  
United States Senate  
The Honorable Gladys Noon Spellman,  
House of Representatives



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This is in response to your letter of July 6, 1978, concerning relocation of the Director, Naval Oceanography and Meteorology from Washington, D.C., to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Areas of concern expressed in your request were (1) costs of the move and its consequence on management and morale, and (2) the alleged improper use of operation and maintenance funds for construction projects.

On May 24, 1976, the Navy approved relocation of the Naval Oceanography and Meteorology office from the Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., to the National Space Technology Laboratories, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The move began July 1, 1976 and was completed by September 1976. At the time of the announcement the office was authorized 25 military and 13 civilian positions, but only 10 military and 13 civilians were authorized for the location at Bay St. Louis. The remaining positions were either transferred to other Navy organizations or eliminated.

About \$476,000 was required to relocate personnel, equipment, and records, provide temporary space, and construct a new building for the Director, Naval Oceanography and Meteorology. Of the total cost, \$273,000 was attributable to the construction project.

The Director, Naval Oceanography and Meteorology is basically a headquarters organization responsible for providing direction, policy and technical guidance to subordinate activities throughout the world. Performance of these types of functions is not affected significantly by geographical location. Since most top management

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personnel transferred with the organization, we believe the move should not impact on mission management.

Fifteen employees--10 military and 5 civilian--moved to Bay St. Louis. The other military personnel were reassigned. The 8 civilian employees who did not relocate were administrative types (secretary, clerk, etc.) and were placed in other jobs in the National Capital Region. We interviewed 7 employees to determine the impact of the move on morale. None of the employees believe their morale is lower as a result of the move; 5 stated that their morale is higher, and 2 stated that no change in their morale has occurred.

On October 1, 1978, the Director, Naval Oceanography and Meteorology was consolidated with the Office of the Oceanographer of the Navy to form the Naval Oceanographic Command. The Naval Oceanographic Office which had also been relocated--starting in mid-1975--from the National Capital Region was also placed under the Naval Oceanographic Command. In November 1975 we reported on the costs and savings of that relocation.1/

In response to a previous Congressional request we are monitoring the Navy's investigation into their violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act at Bay St. Louis. Upon completion of the Navy's investigation and reporting on this matter, we will provide you with the results of our monitoring and a copy of the Navy report.

In accordance with your request, this report will not be available for general distribution until 30 days after issuance to you.

We will be pleased to discuss this report with you or your staff.

Sincerely yours,



R. W. Gutmann  
Director

1/GAO report "The Announced Relocation of the Naval Oceanographic Office," LCD-76-315, dated November 20, 1975