



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D C 20548

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PROCUREMENT AND SYSTEMS  
ACQUISITION DIVISION

MAR 13 1979

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The Honorable Harold Brown  
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr Secretary

In September 1978 we reported to the Congress on the major issues of the Army's <sup>ARMY</sup> Ballistic Missile Defense Program <sup>ID</sup> 1/ In that report, we recommended that you suspend efforts for the defense of the Mobile MX Ballistic Missile until a need for its defense has been established

In early 1979 we reported to the Congress that much uncertainty existed about the mobile MX program 2/ We pointed out that several mobile MX basing concepts had been studied but a decision on the best basing concept to pursue in engineering development had not been reached The Air Force is currently restudying the air mobile basing concepts and is continuing efforts to define other basing options

As a part of our current survey of the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Advanced Technology Program, we have followed up on our recommendation regarding the <sup>DLG-03322</sup> suspension of mobile MX defense efforts We found that the Army is continuing this work

We could not readily identify the magnitude and cost of the Army's effort because program documents available to us do not identify the MX defense work as a separate element Officials of the Ballistic Missile Defense Systems Command said they are unable to provide an estimate of the magnitude and cost of this effort because the technologies being pursued can be applied to a number of ballistic missile defense concepts

1/ "Ballistic Missile Defense Some Work Should be Stopped and the Remaining Effort Evaluated," PSAD-78-109, Sept 1, 1978

2/ "Indecision and Uncertainty Exist in Development of an Advanced ICBM Weapon System," PSAD-79-40, Feb 8, 1979.



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However, contracts issued after our September 1978 report state that MX defense work, including system definition and conceptual design, is being done as a part of the low altitude defense and layered defense programs. Fiscal year 1979 funding for these programs is \$7.2 million and \$5.3 million, respectively. The Army's fiscal year 1980 budget includes another \$7 million for the low altitude defense program and \$6.1 million for the layered defense program.

In view of the uncertainty associated with the MX program, particularly the basing concept, we believe that the Army's efforts on a defense for MX are premature. If an air mobile concept is selected, the value of a prepositioned missile defense force is questionable. On the other hand, if a land based mobile concept is selected, the need for an active defense force must be considered in view of the survivability inherent in the basing mode.

Accordingly, we recommend that you


- direct the Army to stop work until the MX program uncertainty is eliminated and the need for an active MX defense is established and
- include consideration of the need for an active MX defense during the up-coming Defense System Acquisition Review Council's review of the MX program, currently scheduled for March 27, 1979.

As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires that the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report. We would appreciate receiving a copy of your statement when it is provided to the congressional committees.

Copies of this letter are being sent to the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations, the House Committee on Government Operations, the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, and the Secretaries of the Army and Air Force.

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Sincerely yours,



J. H. Stolarow  
Director