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What Are the Capabilities of the Selective Service System?
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The role of the Selective Service System is to maintain a system capable of drafting people into the armed services, to operate a program of alternative service for persons not required to perform military service, and to determine the availability of standby reservists. During peacetime, the military departments rely on volunteers for needed manpower; however, after mobilization the Selective Service System will draft manpower. Findings/Conclusions: Selective Service indicated that it had the capability to meet the Department of Defense's (DOD's) previous manpower requirements with its fiscal year 1977 budget of \$6.3 million. DOD has since imposed stricter requirements, and the Service now says that it could not deliver the necessary manpower with a budget the size of that for fiscal year 1977. In addition, the current administration cut the fiscal year 1979 budget proposal of \$15.4 million to about \$9.5 million. DOD says that it would need 100,000 people within 60 days of mobilization, but the Service feels that it would take 125 days to provide that many people. The key to a shorter delivery time lies in having a list of eligible people to be drafted in case of mobilization. The Selective Service has considered alternate ways to develop a list of draft-eligible people, but some information will not be available because of possible violations of the Privacy Act. To attain a shorter delivery time, the Selective Service should request an exception to the Privacy Act. (RR3)

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

8636

What Are The Capabilities Of The Selective Service System?

In the event of war or other national emergency, the Selective Service System must draft the people needed by the Department of Defense. The Service says it cannot provide the number of people within the required time frame. Since the All Volunteer Force was established, the Selective Service System has undergone major budget reductions. The impact of these reductions on the Service's capabilities has not been evaluated by the executive branch. Such evaluations are crucial to U.S. national defense objectives since the Selective Service maintains its role for inducting people during mobilization.

This report recommends necessary changes to the system which would help the Service do a better and quicker job of drafting people, if necessary.





COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-162111

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report discusses the problems the Selective Service System has in meeting the manpower delivery requirements of the Department of Defense and recommends alternatives to improve the Service's capabilities.

We discussed the report with the Director, Selective Service System and considered his comments in the report. We did not request written comments.

Our review was made pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-510).

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Director, Selective Service System; the Secretary of Defense; and other interested parties.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James B. Stacks".

Comptroller General
of the United States

D I G E S T

Selective Service is responsible for drafting people into military service, in the case of mobilization, even though the Department of Defense has relied on the All Volunteer Force since 1973 to fill its manpower needs.

In 1973, Selective Service was budgeted at \$83.5 million and it had a staff of approximately 5,200 people. Since that time the Selective Service System's budget and the number of full-time employees have been reduced to \$6.3 million (for fiscal year 1978) and 100 employees. The Congress passed a 1979 budget of \$7.04 million for the Selective Service System.

The Department of Defense says that it would need 100,000 people within 60 days after mobilization, but Selective Service says that under the current plans and budget it would take 125 days to provide that many people. Had Selective Service not aggressively pursued improvements to its procedures, its earliest completed delivery of 100,000 people would have been at 150 days.

In GAO's opinion, the key to a shorter delivery time lies in having a list of eligible people to be drafted in the case of mobilization. Such a list could be developed and maintained if the Nation returned to some form of national registration. This is currently the focus of congressional debate.

Regardless of the resolution of the debate, Selective Service will continue to be responsible for drafting the number of people the Department of Defense says it needs. GAO recognizes that Selective Service considered alternative ways to develop a list of draft-eligible people but was advised by the sources of the needed information that the data could not be made available because of possible violations of the Privacy Act.

To attain a shorter delivery time and greater efficiency, the Selective Service System should request an exception to the Privacy Act. If this is not granted the agency should as a fallback position obtain advance approval within the executive branch to request relief to be effective at the same time that authority to induct is requested. Further, it should choose the most effective alternative and make arrangements now with the selected agency for access to the data after mobilization.

Selective Service's ability to meet the Department of Defense's needs has not been formally evaluated by the executive branch. As the Selective Service System's mission is so crucial to national security objectives, the Congress should require periodic executive branch evaluations and reports independent of the Selective Service System on the ability of the service to draft people within the time required by the Department of Defense.

The President's Reorganization Study Group is studying the organization, management and processes of the Selective Service System; the preliminary results have not been made available to GAO. GAO excluded organizational placement as a subject for audit. However, GAO's limited information indicates that the pros and cons of merging the Selective Service System with another agency are not critical to the agency's capability to draft people.

In October 1978, Selective Service, for the first time, took part in a Department of Defense mobilization exercise. However, the procedures tested were those needed to induct 100,000 people in 125 instead of 60 days. GAO applauds the inclusion of Selective Service in this exercise but believes the procedures that were tested should have been those needed to meet the 60-day requirement.

The Selective Service System also intends to rely on about 715 National Guard and Reserve officers to implement the system upon mobilization. Selective Service has improved its capability for using these personnel. However, the Service had neither determined the specific offices in which these officers will work nor had it made assurances that adequate supplies and equipment are available at these locations when the need arises. Selective Service should make these changes.

The Director, Selective Service System, reviewed a draft of this report. His oral comments were considered and incorporated into the report. He did not see the need for written comments, and was in full agreement with GAO's conclusions and recommendations.

The Congressional Budget Office recently issued a report on the Selective Service System. GAO coordinated with the Budget Office to assure that there was no unnecessary duplication or overlap in the two study approaches. Conclusions reached in this report are similar to those reached by the Congressional Budget Office.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AVF	All Volunteer Force
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
M	mobilization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the All Volunteer Force (AVF), the draft was the primary source of acquiring manpower for the military, and the Selective Service System was the agency responsible for drafting individuals into the Armed Forces. Since 1973 the Armed Forces have relied on volunteers to fill requirements; however, the Selective Service System remains an important ingredient to our national security. The Selective Service (draft system) remains as the primary method by which people will be brought into the military if mobilization occurs and large numbers of personnel are needed immediately for the military.

Because the above stated mission has not changed, our Nation must have a system capable of delivering, on a timely basis, the types and numbers of personnel needed to fight an extended war (over 6 months). To assure this, a system should exist which has the capability to (1) register, classify, and induct individuals who can serve in the military, (2) provide a program of alternate service for those who cannot serve in the military, and (3) determine the eligibility of standby reservists.

The Selective Service System was legislatively established by the Selective Service Act of 1948. Just prior to moving to an All Volunteer Force, the Congress, in 1971, included a standby draft requirement in the act which said:

"The Selective Service System * * * shall * * * be maintained as an active standby organization, with (1) a complete registration and classification structure capable of immediate operation in the event of a national emergency, and (2) personnel adequate to reinstitute immediately the full operation of the System * * *"

Although the Selective Service System was not fully operational, the Congress maintained the System in an active standby capacity after the advent of the AVF. Since the AVF or end of large scale inductions was initiated, funds for the Selective Service System have generally been reduced each fiscal year.

Currently (fiscal year 1979) the Selective Service System is budgeted at \$7.04 million while last year's budget was \$6.3 million with 100 compensated personnel. During fiscal year 1973 (the last year the draft existed) the Selective Service System was budgeted \$83.5 million and had approximately 5,200 personnel. When the draft ended, the Selective Service System ceased inductions and physical examinations, but was still required to stand ready to induct people should the volunteer system prove unsuccessful. Subsequently, in 1976 when it appeared to the administration that the AVF was successful, additional changes to the Selective Service System occurred, such as

- terminating classification,
- suspending registration,
- terminating administrative support to local draft boards, and
- initiating development of an annual registration procedure and a process to test it (a planned test was canceled).

As a result of these changes the function of Selective Service shifted to maintaining a system (through planning and training) in a deep standby posture with the same responsibility to meet the mobilization-manpower requirements of the Department of Defense (DOD).

SCOPE OF REVIEW

We reviewed pertinent background material to assess the role of the Selective Service System in a peacetime volunteer environment and a wartime mobilization period. Our effort was concentrated on Selective Service's capabilities to respond, within scheduled delivery dates, to the DOD manpower requirements. We reviewed the organizational framework, plans, and programs developed to respond to DOD needs. We assessed the impacts that the reduced budgetary levels have had on Selective Service's ability to deliver manpower resources in the required time frames.

We worked at Selective Service headquarters and observed a training exercise in Richmond, Virginia. We did not concentrate efforts on the organizational placement of Selective Service functions since the President's reorganization work group is reviewing several alternatives along these lines. Our preliminary work indicated that organizational placements were not the most critical factor in the capability to draft

people. Our main concern was whether the Selective Service System could perform its mission. Also, we did not concentrate efforts on the Selective Service System's role of determining the availability of Standby reservists since this function is an appellate process for those standby reservists who indicate reasons for not being mobilized.

CHAPTER 2

DOD REQUIREMENTS AND

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM CAPABILITIES

Selective Service said that it had the capability to meet the Department of Defense's previous manpower requirements with its fiscal year 77 budget of \$6.3 million. DOD has since imposed stricter requirements--similar numbers of people within shortened time frames--and the Service now says it could not deliver the necessary manpower with a budget the size of 1977's. The current administration cut the Service's fiscal year 79 budget proposal of \$15.4 million to about \$9.5 million. The Congress approved a budget of \$7.04 million for fiscal year 1979. Even after making internal procedural changes to improve delivery capability, the Service says it cannot meet DOD's demands at the \$7 million level.

ROLE OF THE SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

The role of Selective Service is to (1) maintain a system capable of drafting people into the armed services, (2) operate a program of alternative service for persons not required to perform military service, and (3) determine the availability of standby reservists. During peacetime, the military departments rely on volunteers for needed manpower; however, after mobilization the Selective Service System will draft manpower.

The Service is responsible for meeting the manpower requirements as determined by DOD. Hence, it is a source of military recruits for DOD. However, since the Service is an independent agency, DOD has no formal authority to evaluate the agency's operations or to assess the adequacy of its plans, and it has not done so.

MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS LEVIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

In October 1977, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics) issued a memorandum for the Director, Selective Service. The Assistant Secretary stated that wartime requirements were being reevaluated and that interim studies had shown the need for more people earlier than had previously been indicated. According to the memo, the first inductees are needed at mobilization (M) plus 30 days, 100,000 inductees at M plus 60 days,

and 650,000 inductees at M plus 180 days. DOD's earlier requirements were for Selective Service to provide the first inductee by M+110 days, 100,000 by M+150 days, and 480,000 by M+230 days.

NUMBER OF INDUCTION ORDERS
NEEDED TO DRAFT 100,000

To insure the delivery of 100,000 inductees to DOD, Selective Service estimates it will need to issue approximately 600,000 induction orders.

Induction Orders for 100,000

Induction orders issued		600,000
Claims for deferment	98,400	
Claims for emergency postponement	23,400	
Statutory student post- ponement (If mobilization occurs during the school term)	208,200	
Fail to report	<u>70,000</u>	
Total unavailable		(<u>400,000</u>)
Reporting for induction		<u>200,000</u>
Rejections:		
Physical	20,000	
Mental	50,000	
Moral	<u>30,000</u>	
Total rejections		(<u>100,000</u>)
Total inductees		<u>100,000</u>

Note: () Indicates Subtraction

Rates for deferment claims, postponements, failures to report, and rejections are based on Selective Service historical data. Student postponements are based on Census Bureau statistics. It should be noted that any changes regarding deferments or postponements would increase or decrease the number of eligible inductees.

SELECTIVE SERVICE PLANS TO MEET DOD REQUIREMENTS

During fiscal years 1977 and 1978, Selective Service operated under a deep standby posture and was responsible for developing a manpower procurement system. Based on its organizational structure and plans, Selective Service stated it had the capabilities in fiscal year 1977 to meet the earlier requirements levied by DOD as follows:

- First inductee (M+110).
- 100,000 inductees (M+150).
- 480,000 inductees (M+230).

During fiscal year 1978, Selective Service made several operational changes in the system which should improve its capabilities. First, the time interval between issuance of induction orders and the induction reporting date was reduced from 30 to 10 days. Second, by modifying registrant processing procedures, Selective Service can increase the number of registrants processed each day. And, third, the Reserve and Guard personnel involved in implementing the system are now required to report to active duty within 3 days of mobilization instead of the 30 days previously scheduled. Selective Service officials stated that, with these operational changes the system can provide the following:

- First inductee (M+85).
- 100,000 inductees (M+125).
- 480,000 inductees (M+205).

Although these changes represent an improvement, the service is still not capable of meeting current DOD requirements.

In the fiscal year 1979 budget request, the President requested \$9.5 million for Selective Service. Selective Service stated that the increased budget was "necessary to fund the improved posture and readiness of the System and will permit the System to achieve an improved capability to meet the new manpower requirement." With the \$9.5 million budget, Selective Service stated that it intended to accomplish some activities before M-day, shorten the time to do some post M-day functions, and better meet DOD's requirements. The increased budget was to be used primarily for

- the recruitment and training of local and appeal board members before M-day,
- the expansion of the Reserve and Guard forces assigned to Selective Service and the realignment of their mobilization assignment, and
- an improved automated data processing system.

Selective Service stated it could have met DOD's current requirements with the increased budget and the planned operational changes.

However, the Selective Service System did not receive the requested \$9.5 million. The House Subcommittee on HUD and independent agencies recommended a funding level of \$7.045 million (fiscal year 1978 budget plus an inflation factor) which was endorsed by the House Appropriations Committee and later approved by the entire House. In its report, the House Appropriations Committee stated

"* * * it is very doubtful that the budget request would allow the Selective Service System to meet the revised Department of Defense manpower requirements--particularly without some form of registration. Also, the President's Reorganization Project is currently undertaking a study of the Selective Service System's organization, management and processes. The results of that study are not scheduled to be available until the fall of 1978. After the study is completed and the results are submitted to Congress, the Committee could consider a revised budget estimate."

The Senate Appropriations Committee also endorsed the \$7.045 budget proposal and forwarded this recommendation to the full Senate. When the vote went before the full Senate, this recommendation was overturned and the Senate approved the \$9.5 million request. The Conference Committee, however, endorsed the \$7.045 level and the full Congress approved this amount.

Selective Service said that with the \$7.045 million for fiscal year 1979, it will maintain its fiscal year 1978 structure and operational capabilities and, as discussed previously, will not be able to meet the DOD requirements in the prescribed time frame.

TRAINING OF NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE UNITS

Reserve and National Guard units are scheduled to play an integral part in reestablishing the Selective Service System in the event of an emergency. These units (comprised of about 715 officers) train in Selective Service operations during their monthly weekend drills and annual 2-week training exercises. These officers are responsible for preparing and revising the States' reconstitution and registration plans with guidance from Selective Service headquarters and for implementing those plans upon mobilization. On a quarterly basis Selective Service provides the units with individual lesson plans on subject matters to be covered while in training. Particular subjects covered include reconstitution, registration, and classification procedures. These lesson plans are designed to provide these officers with the necessary working knowledge of the operations and procedures for implementing the system.

The Service, at the time of this review, was in a state of uncertainty as to the funding level it would receive. As a result the training encompassed more than one set of procedures. This was to ensure that these officers would know the procedures to be implemented in time of national emergency.

Officers are tested on their working knowledge of the operations through classroom exercises and are given simulation training (mobilization readiness exercises) on various aspects of the system. The results are used to evaluate the officers' performance in light of what is required if a draft system were implemented.

The officers are trained and tested on individual aspects of the system, but there were no tests or simulation covering all aspects of the system and how each component is inter-related. Also, officers expressed concern about not visiting locations (area office) where plans call for reconstituting the system and knowing if adequate facilities and administrative support, such as clerical staff, telephones, and forms existed there.

We believe these officers should be tested on their ability to perform collectively in implementing the entire system. In addition the Service should determine the specific offices where these officers will work and make assurances that the officers will have the needed support at these locations.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT HAPPENED TO REGISTRATION?

The need for the Selective Service System to conduct a registration program to ensure timely delivery of inductees in the event of national emergency is being debated in the Congress. Registration is not conducted, although Selective Service plans for its initiation at mobilization. Without a list of eligibles from which to draft, the Selective Service cannot meet mobilization requirements. Pending resolution of the congressional debate, Selective Service should analyze alternative sources to devise a list. After selecting a source, the service should design its procedures accordingly. Unless such action is taken, it is questionable whether Selective Service meets its statutory responsibilities.

STATUTORY MANDATE AND SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM RESPONSE

As mentioned in Chapter 1 the Congress incorporated Public Law 92-129 (Section 10(h)) in the Selective Service Act. This required that the Selective Service be maintained as an active standby system with a registration and classification structure capable of immediate operation in a national emergency.

When inductions ceased in 1973, the Selective Service System established several concepts for operating a standby draft. These concepts included

- maintaining a system and supporting organization to ensure that facilities existed for the registration of male citizens and certain aliens during the year in which they became of age;
- maintaining a system of classification following registration not to include preinduction physicals;
- retaining a local board structure to perform necessary classification;
- holding an annual lottery for (1) notifying registrants of their vulnerability should induction be resumed and (2) establishing the systems clerical work load;
- retaining some National Guard and Reserve personnel for the mobilization augmentation force as prescribed by law; and

--retaining adequate personnel, organizational elements, and necessary procedures to insure the capability of immediate operation in a national emergency.

On March 29, 1975, the administration through Presidential Proclamation 4360 suspended registration. The Proclamation stated, "In order to evaluate an annual registration system, existing procedures are being terminated and will be replaced by new procedures which will provide for periodic registration." As a result, the Service no longer registered and classified individuals. In addition, there was termination of administrative support for local draft boards. The Service also began developing a test of annual registration; however, the effort was canceled before completion. Moreover, there has not been periodic registration.

Currently, the Selective Service System has procedures for beginning to register people when (1) mobilization occurs and (2) inductions resume during peacetime. Delivery schedules under its mobilization procedures correlate to response times of 100,000 inductees at M+125 days but not the M+60 days as required by DOD.

In a report relating to the Department of Defense Appropriations Authorization Act of 1979, the House Armed Services Committee stated that upon reviewing manpower mobilization potential it became obvious that the Selective Service System cannot meet manpower mobilization requirements in an acceptable time frame. The Committee report said that to overcome that deficiency the Selective Service System must return to registration and classification. The Committee recommended an increased budget (\$17 million versus its current \$6 million) to provide for registration and classification. In addition, the Committee directed the Selective Service to formulate plans for national registration and classification and to report its plans to the Committee no later than at the termination of the 95th Congress.

General David C. Jones, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated on the November 19, 1978, program FACE THE NATION that he also favored reinstating registration and classification. He stated

"* * *I would advocate a restoration of registration for the draft, and I would seriously consider classification of people; and that probably would be wise. This would help us in our mobilization. Today it takes us about 110 days before the first recruit comes aboard in a crisis. And also, it would be

available in case we had to have some sort of national service to meet our reserve needs."

Congressional concern exists over the current delivery capabilities of the Selective Service System and the adverse impact its current status has on national security. Current procedures and time frames do not meet DOD manpower needs. An active registration and classification program will improve readiness capability, through shorter time frames for delivering inductees. However, even if registration is not resumed, it appears most critical that a list of draft eligible people exist. Several types of data exist that could be used to make lists of eligible individuals, such as information on social security account number holders, drivers license holders, high school graduates, and registered voters.

We were advised that Selective Service System had considered various sources for designing a temporary list but had been denied access to the data by agencies who cited the Privacy Act as the basis for their denial. In our opinion, the Service should have pursued the matter and formally requested access to the data. If again denied, the Service should then request a waiver of the statute since having a list from which to begin the process is so critical to the Service's capability to meet DOD's manpower needs.

Selective Service stated that with the existing budgetary level and current organization, it will take M+60 days just to implement the registration process, although DOD says it needs 100,000 people in this time frame. The debate on reinstating the registration process is taking place in the Congress but, in our opinion, the Service cannot afford to await its resolution without planning, and implementing if needed, an alternate mechanism, pending mobilization. After mobilization the authority to register individuals will be granted, and registration will replace the alternate mechanism for devising a list of draft eligible individuals.

According to Selective Service, it has recognized the need for an alternate source to use as an initial pool of manpower, pending implementation of the registration process after mobilization.

The Service had not decided to request statutory relief from the Privacy Act. We urge that the Service, as quickly as possible, make a formal decision as to the applicability of the act. If it does apply, the Service should then request congressional relief from the restrictions for this specific purpose.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATIONS OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

SYSTEM CAPABILITIES

Although several groups, including the Department of Defense, the Selective Service System, the Office of Management and Budget, the National Security Council, and the Office of Emergency Planning, have evaluated and reaffirmed the need for a standby draft mechanism, there does not appear to exist an evaluation, by this administration or previous administrations, of the effect of budgetary reductions on standby draft capabilities and its impact on national defense posture. For example, when the Selective Service System budget was reduced to \$6 million and the system was categorized as a "deep" standby, no formal evaluation was made to ensure that the Service could meet DOD's delivery schedule. Moreover, there has been no evaluation of the impact of the decision to cancel the tests of periodic registration although this was one of the key factors included in the decision to stop registering individuals.

In October 1978, DOD conducted a mobilization exercise (Nifty Nugget) to test our national defense mobilization capabilities. A portion of this exercise measured the capabilities of the Selective Service System. Although this was a worthwhile exercise, the Selective Service System included was the one designed to meet DOD's past, but not present, requirements. Therefore, the results of the test do not present a clear picture of Selective Service's capabilities in relation to DOD's needs of 100,000 inductees at M+60.

Because the Selective Service System is an essential part of our national defense capabilities, there appears to be a need for a systematic executive branch evaluation of the System's capabilities which should be incorporated into the Service's periodic reports to Congress.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGENCY COMMENTS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Selective Service System, under its current procedures, does not have the capability to respond to the Department of Defense's needs. Since the All Volunteer Force, the Service has undergone major budget reductions. The impact of these reductions on the Service's capabilities has not been evaluated by the executive branch. Such evaluations are critical to our national defense objectives since the Selective Service System maintains its role for inducting people during mobilization.

In our opinion, the key to a shorter delivery time lies in having an existing list of eligibles to be drafted in the case of mobilization. Such a list could be derived if the Nation returned to some form of national registration. This is currently the focus of congressional debate. However, this debate does not relieve the Selective Service of its responsibilities.

We recognize that Selective Service considered alternate ways to develop a list of draft-eligible people but was advised by the sources of the needed information that the data could not be made available because of possible violations of the Privacy Act. We recommend that the Service request an exception to the Privacy Act. If this is not granted the Selective Service should as a fallback position obtain advance approval within the executive branch to request relief to be effective at the time that authority to induct is requested. Further, it should choose the most effective alternative and make arrangements now with the selected agency for access to the data after mobilization.

The executive branch has not formally evaluated the Selective Service System's ability to meet DOD's needs. As the Selective Service System's mission is so crucial to our national security objectives, the Congress should require periodic executive branch evaluations and reports independent of the Selective Service System on the ability of the Service to draft people within the time frame required by DOD.

In October 1978, Selective Service, for the first time, took part in a DOD mobilization exercise. However, the procedures tested were those needed to induct 100,000 people in 125 instead of 60 days. It would have been more appropriate to test the procedures needed to meet the 60-day requirement.

The Selective Service System also intends to rely on about 715 National Guard and Reserve officers to implement the system upon mobilization. The Selective Service System has improved its capability for using these personnel. However, we believe that the Service should (1) determine the specific offices where these officers will work and (2) make assurances that supplies and equipment are available at these locations, when the need arises. We recommend that Selective Service make those changes.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Director, Selective Service System, was given an opportunity to study the draft report, verify the accuracy of the information presented, and orally comment to us. Generally, the Director stated the report accurately reflects the current capabilities of the Selective Service System. His oral comments were considered and incorporated into the report. He did not see the need for written comments, and was in full agreement with our conclusions and recommendations.

(965013)