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R.C. 10/18/78

**DECISION**



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

**OCT 18 1978**

**FILE: B-191985**

**DATE:**

**MATTER OF: Availability of Air Force Appropriations  
to Pay Publication Fees**

**DIGEST:** Air force is not authorized to expend appropriated funds to defray cost of publishing data generated by Air Force research and development activities in scientific journals and magazines, since Air Force lacks express or implied authority to disseminate data generally and it has not been administratively determined and demonstrated that such dissemination is necessary to accomplish some other purpose authorized by law.

This decision to the Secretary of the Air Force is in response to an inquiry from Colonel Frank G. Gallo, Deputy Director, Plans and Systems, Air Force Accounting and Finance Center as to whether Air Force appropriations are available to pay publishing charges in the circumstances described below. The inquiry states:

"In carrying out research projects, the Air Force may produce data of widespread interest to the entire scientific and engineering community. One established and recognized method of disseminating such information is, of course, by publication in applicable scientific or technical trade journals or magazines. While some of these may provide a no-charge service for publishing articles, it is very common for them to require payment of a voluntary publishing page charge. This charge is intended to defray a part of the cost of printing the articles."

We have reviewed the Department of Defense Appropriation Act, 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-111 (September 21, 1977), 91 Stat. 886, and have found nothing which would provide funds to the Air Force for the express purpose of paying for disseminating research data.

However, we note that when an appropriation is available for a particular purpose, it is also available to pay for expenses which are necessary or incident to the proper execution of that purpose, unless there is another appropriation which more specifically provides for the expenditures or unless they are otherwise prohibited by law. See, e.g., 50 Comp. Gen. 524 (1971). Thus where there is express statutory authority to disseminate data or where the publication of such data is administratively determined and demonstrated to be necessary to effectuate some other agency function or purpose authorized by law, then expenditure for publication of such data would be permissible absent some express statutory prohibition. See, e.g., 35 Comp. Gen. 687 (1956), in which we held that the Salaries and Expenses appropriation of the National Railroad Adjustment Board could be used for the printing and publication of dissenting and concurring opinions in awards made by the Board, if it was administratively determined that such printing and publication was "necessary" in carrying out the Board's objectives and purposes. See also B-166506, November 15, 1974.

While 44 U.S.C. § 501 (1970) requires that all printing for Government agencies be performed at the Government Printing Office or designated field printing plants (and elsewhere only when authorized by the Joint Committee on Printing), it is well established that where the entire cost of printing is not borne by the United States or where printing is not done exclusively for the Government, 44 U.S.C. § 501 is inapplicable. See 32 Comp. Gen. 487 (1953); 3 id. 785 (1924).

We are unaware of any provision of law which specifically prohibits the payment in question here. However, we are equally unaware of any provision of law authorizing the Air Force to disseminate research data for the purpose of enhancing the knowledge of the scientific community. Furthermore, the Air Force has not administratively determined and demonstrated that such publication is necessary to accomplish some authorized purpose or function. Consequently, it is our opinion that payment of such expenses in these circumstances would be unauthorized.

REPLY

Comptroller General  
of the United States