

JUL 2 1955

Dear Commissioner Abersfeller:

The Department of State has been advised that your Agency proposes to establish a single awards contract for security cabinets currently available under the multiple awards contract.

The fact that pre-production models of security cabinets are tested by the Bureau of Standards to meet the requirements of the General Services Administration and the Interagency Advisory Committee on Security Equipment has given this Department the assurance that we are utilizing the best possible safe storage equipment for the protection of classified material; and, further, the fact that we have had the prerogative to procure cabinets that best suit our varied requirements raises a doubt on our part as to the feasibility and practicability of a single awards contract.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the Department of State has the full responsibility for maintaining all safe storage equipment, not only for State but for other U. S. agencies as well that are officed in our overseas posts.

On many occasions our Security engineers and technicians have found inherent weaknesses in security cabinets, vault doors, and locks which were in effect security hazards to our operations both abroad and domestically. In order to correct these deficiencies the Department placed a moratorium on further purchase of the defective equipment until the weaknesses were corrected. Because of the multiple-award contract provisions being available, the Department was able to purchase other approved security equipment during the period corrective measures were being taken.

Matters of particular interest to this agency, notwithstanding the above, are:

1. Flexibility:

The Honorable

E. A. Abersfeller

Commissioner, Federal Supply Service

General Services Administration

18th and "F" Streets, N. W.,

Washington, D. C.

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1. Flexibility:

Should a manufacturer's security cabinet or lock develop an inherent weakness, or if from field use it is found that we are having continued maintenance problems, we now have the flexibility to purchase--under the existing multiple awards contract--another manufacturer's cabinet at the same price, to insure this agency of its continued protection of classified material.

2. Compromise:

As a result of the flexibility of procurement of security cabinets, under the existing multiple awards contract, one manufacturer's cabinet may be compromised due to advanced technological methods developed by the opposition. A moratorium on the particular security cabinet could then be placed in effect pending necessary countermeasure action. In the meantime, if necessary, procurement of other cabinets from other sources could be effected. Under a single awards contract, if the manufacturer's cabinet is compromised due to advanced technological methods, compromise of all of similar cabinets wherever they may be located would occur.

3. Parts Requirement:

In our overseas establishments we have an estimated 893 Mosier (Class 3) security cabinets and 2,000 Diebold and Herring-Hall-Marvin (Class 2) security cabinets which belong to the Department of State. In addition, there are an estimated 1,000 Mosier security cabinets as well as many other types belonging to other U. S. agencies, for which the Department of State must provide maintenance. It is reasonable to assume that if the proposed single awards contract is implemented, other manufacturers of security cabinets would most likely not continue to have replacement parts readily available. Replacement parts required would then have to be special ordered at excessive costs.

Another factor that must be considered in the instance of a single awards contract for security cabinets, is the possibility that the contractor obtaining the single awards contract may shut down his factory due to a strike, fire, or any other problem that may hamper their production of security cabinets. What avenue of approach can then be taken to procure

Security cabinets

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security cabinets for the storage of classified material should an emergency arise and the single awards contractor is temporarily or permanently out of business?

In closing, I would like to say that the proposal by your Agency to establish a single awards contract for security cabinets could adversely affect our ability to implement Section 6 (a) of Executive Order 10501, which states, in part: "Custodians of classified defense material shall be responsible for providing the best possible protection and accountability for such material at all times...." It is hoped that your Agency will consider the foregoing and continue the multiple awards contract for security cabinets.

Sincerely,

G. Marvin Gentile  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Security.

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