



Wartime Contracting Commission hearing to examine government tools for holding contractors accountable

ARLINGTON, VA, Feb. 23, 2011 – A Feb. 28 hearing of the independent and bipartisan federal Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan will look into the effectiveness of government’s tools to hold contractors accountable for problems with their work.

Congress has obligated at least \$177 billion for contracts and grants related to American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2002. About 200,000 contractor employees are working in the two countries—a number about equal to the U.S. military deployed there.

The commission estimates that tens of billions of dollars spent on contracting have been wasted for reasons including poor planning and specification of work, inadequate competition, weak oversight, insufficient regard for host nations’ ability to sustain projects, and poor execution or misconduct by contractors.

Monday’s hearing, “Ensuring Contractor Accountability: Past Performance and Suspensions and Debarments,” will focus on contractors. Witnesses will testify and take questions on the use of federal systems to capture and use data on contractors’ performance, and on use of procedures to suspend or debar contractors with legal or performance problems from receiving new government contracts. Evidence collected will help the Commission to refine recommendations for improving the use of accountability tools in its reports to Congress.

The hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Feb. 28, in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. The session is open to the public and media.

Commission Co-Chair Michael Thibault said, “Making sure the government is making good use of accountability tools is important for our troops and our taxpayers. Imposing accountability helps government spot contractors whose good work or expertise deserve credit in future awards, and creates consequences for contractors who have proven unreliable, incompetent, or unethical.”

Co-Chair Christopher Shays said, “The government already has some powerful accountability tools, but we’re concerned they’re not being used to full effect. Our research shows that past-performance data aren’t always entered in the federal database or used by officials making award decisions. It also appears that some contractors are avoiding or postponing suspension or debarment by entering into administrative or legal agreements, and can get or keep contracts even if they’ve been indicted. We want to learn more about what works and what doesn’t.”

The hearing features two panels of witnesses:

Panel 1 (approximately 9:30-11:30 a.m.):

- * Rear Admiral Robert J. Gilbeau, U.S. Navy, Commander, Defense Contract Management Agency, International (DCMA-I).
- * Michael Carroll, Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development.
- * Captain Timothy Harrington, U.S. Navy, Commanding Officer, Naval Sea Logistics Center.
- * Scott Amey, General Counsel, Project on Government Oversight, a non-profit organization.

Panel 2 (approximately 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.):

- * Dan Gordon, Director, Office of Federal Procurement Policy.
- * Richard T. Ginman, Deputy Director, Contingency Contracting and Acquisition Policy, Defense Procurement Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense.
- * Corey Rindner, Procurement Executive, Department of State.
- * Maureen Shauket, Chief Acquisition Officer, U.S. Agency for International Development.
- * Dan Blalock, U.S. Navy Counsel, and Chair, Interagency Suspension and Debarment Committee.
- * Uldric L. Fiore, Director, Office of The Judge Advocate General, U.S. Army (pending scheduling)

Congress created the commission in 2008 (Public Law 110-181) to examine contingency contracting for reconstruction, logistics, and security functions, and to recommend improvements. Co-chairs are Michael Thibault and Christopher Shays; other members are Clark Kent Ervin, Grant Green, Robert Henke, Katherine Schinasi, Charles Tiefer, and Dov Zakheim. The Commission's executive director is Robert Dickson; its website is www.wartimecontracting.gov.

The commission has previously filed an interim report and three special reports with Congress. The commission's final report to Congress is due in July 2011.

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