



## **Hearing will examine non-governmental organizations' lessons for contingencies**

ARLINGTON, VA, April 6, 2011 – An April 11 hearing of the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan will focus on lessons from non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) development work in Afghanistan that might lead to more effective and less costly federal contracting.

The hearing will begin at 9:30 a.m. Monday, April 11, in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. Its title, "NGOs and PRTs: Contracting and the Future of Development in Contingency Operations," contrasts the operations of NGOs with those of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), U.S. or allied military-led teams in Afghanistan that include military, diplomatic, development, and subject-matter-expert personnel. The hearing is open to the public and news organizations.

The four NGOs represented at the hearing were among the group that issued a 2010 white paper, "Being Smart about Development in Afghanistan." That paper stressed community-driven efforts, accountability, impartiality, and local sustainability as keys to development work.

The U.S. Department of Defense, Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other federal agencies use federal employees and contractors to carry out development projects such as building schools and clinics, assisting farmers and small-business owners, and promoting good-governance and rule-of-law initiatives. Unlike some of the U.S. government's development work via PRTs, the NGOs' programs do not link development to political objectives or to counter-insurgency strategy.

"The Commission is interested in whether the NGOs' development contracting offers useful lessons for U.S. government contracting," said Commission Co-Chair Michael Thibault. "In particular, the NGOs' emphasis on project sustainability and accountability for contractors ties into our concerns about many U.S. government-funded reconstruction and development projects."

Co-Chair Christopher Shays said, "Examining the NGOs' experiences in Afghanistan may also help us learn whether they have developed techniques for improving local engagement in development projects and reducing waste, fraud, and abuse that can improve government contracting."

Scheduled witnesses for the single-panel hearing are:

- Matthew McGarry, Country Manager, Catholic Relief Services
- Sue Dwyer, Vice President, International Rescue Committee

- Michael Bowers, Regional Program Director for South Asia, Mercy Corps
- Michael Klosson, Vice President, Save the Children
- Beth Cole, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Institute of Peace

The April 11 hearing will be the twenty-third held by the Commission. More will follow. The hearings generate information that will shape findings and recommendations for the Commission's final report to Congress. Hearing testimony and written responses to follow-on questions will augment information collected in commissioner and staff trips to Iraq and Afghanistan, research, and reports from staffers at full-time offices in Baghdad and Kabul.

In February 2011, the Commission proposed 32 legislative, policy, and regulatory reforms in a second interim report to Congress. That report, "At What Risk? Correcting Over-Reliance on Contractors in Contingency Operations," estimated that the United States has wasted tens of billions of dollars in contracting for Iraq and Afghanistan. It recommended growing the federal government's in-house capability to perform critical functions, strengthening enforcement tools to hold contractors and government personnel accountable, increasing competition among contractors to promote cost savings, among other ideas. The report is posted at the commission's website, [www.wartimecontracting.gov](http://www.wartimecontracting.gov).

Congress created the Commission on Wartime Contracting in 2008 (Public Law 110-181), directing it to research federal contracting for reconstruction, logistical support, and security functions, and to recommend improvements. The eight commissioners are: Michael Thibault and Christopher Shays, co-chairs; and Clark Kent Ervin, Grant Green, Robert Henke, Katherine Schinasi, Charles Tiefer, and Dov Zakheim. Executive Director Robert B. Dickson manages the work of the commission staff.

The commission filed its first interim report to Congress in June 2009 and has issued a second interim and four special reports. The commission's final report to Congress is due in July 2011.

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