



**Commission on Wartime Contracting**  
In Iraq and Afghanistan

CWC-NR-32  
Clark Irwin, (703) 696-9362  
clark.irwin@wartimecontracting.gov

## **Wartime Contracting hearing will check progress in bolstering the U.S. contingency acquisition workforce**

ARLINGTON, VA, Sept. 9, 2010 – A Sept. 16 hearing by the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan (CWC) will examine whether the U.S. Department of Defense has made adequate plans and actual progress to improve the federal workforce that oversees billions of dollars in contracting activity.

The Department of Defense (DoD) makes extensive use of contractors to support its contingency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. As of July 2010, DoD contractors in the two countries employed 207,600 people, mostly locals or third-country nationals, according to the Congressional Research Service. Contractor employees outnumbered the 175,000 DoD uniformed personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Contractors perform many vital tasks in dangerous settings,” said commission co-chair Michael Thibault, “but the government needs to plan their use carefully and monitor their performance effectively. Unfortunately, there are long-standing problems with planning, funding, recruitment, training, and retention of the contingency acquisition workforce, both military and civilian. Our hearing on the DoD’s large role in this issue will ask what is and isn’t working, what’s being done, and what still needs to be done to get better results.”

The hearing, “The Contingency Acquisition Workforce: What is Needed and How Do We Get There?,” will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 16, in Room G-50 (ground floor, north side) of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. The hearing is scheduled to run until about 3 p.m.

Thibault said the numbers and capabilities of the federal acquisition workforce—people who establish requirements, award contracts, manage their execution, oversee performance, provide technical expertise, audit accounts, and close out completed contracts—have not kept pace with the contracting workload. (Contingency acquisitions are those made when active-duty U.S. military forces are deployed in operations that may involve combat or in response to a declared national emergency or other provision of federal statute.)

“This isn’t a matter of checking off bureaucratic boxes,” Thibault said. “We estimate that at least \$130 billion of taxpayer money has been committed to contingency-contracting work in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. An effective federal acquisition workforce is essential to avoiding waste, fraud, and abuse as we support the troops and conduct humanitarian and reconstruction missions overseas.”

Commission co-chair Christopher Shays said, “The long involvement in Southwest Asia has revealed not only that we don’t have enough contingency acquisition personnel, but that the schedules of rotation in and out of theater undermine continuity and increase our dependence on long-term contractors for practical knowledge of conditions on the ground. That’s not a good formula for the government to apply effective oversight or to learn lessons for future contingency operations.”

Shays said acquisition-workforce challenges confront Defense, State, and the Agency for International Development: “We see problems with organization, hiring, training, deployment, equipment, computer systems, communications, and interagency coordination. Some improvements have been made, but we are still years away from having an adequate acquisition workforce.”

The Department of Defense is pursuing a plan to add 20,000 people to its acquisition workforce by 2015. “That increase would give DoD about 147,000 acquisition personnel—roughly the equivalent of 10 infantry divisions,” Shays said, “but that total would be just barely greater than the 1998 numbers, before the

Afghanistan and Iraq operations started. We need to ask people from DoD and other Executive Branch agencies how their human-capital strategies are going to fix the chronic shortages of personnel, and how they're planning to improve contract management and oversight on the ground."

One specific objective of the hearing will be to assess the status of recommendations made in a 2007 report, "Urgent Reform Required," by the Army's independent commission on acquisition and program management in expeditionary operations. Dr. Jacques Gansler, the chairman of that commission, will be lead-off witness for the first panel of the hearing.

Senate business permitting, U.S. Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) will appear at the opening of the hearing to offer some remarks on the commission's work. A decorated Marine officer in the Vietnam War and former secretary of the Navy, Senator Webb was a lead sponsor of the commission's authorizing statute.

The commission will hear testimony from two panels of government and academic witnesses.

## WITNESS PANELS

### Panel 1:

- Jacques S. Gansler, Ph.D., Center for Public Policy and Private Enterprise, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland; former chairman of the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations (source of the "Gansler Report" of 2007)
- Charles D. Grimes III, Deputy Associate Director for Employee Services, Office of Personnel Management
- Daniel I. Gordon, Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy
- Kathy Ott, Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy
- James McMichael, Ph.D., acting president, Defense Acquisition University

### Panel 2:

- Charlie E. Williams, Jr., Director, Defense Contract Management Agency
- Patrick J. Fitzgerald, Director, Defense Contract Audit Agency
- Lt. Gen. William N. Phillips, US Army, Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASALT)
- Lt. Gen. Mark Shackelford, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition
- Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, Commanding General, US Army Corps of Engineers
- Jeffrey P. Parsons, Executive Director, Army Contracting Command

Congress created the Commission in 2008 (Public Law 110-181) to examine contingency contracting for reconstruction, logistics, and security functions, and to recommend improvements. Its final report to Congress is due in July 2011. 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](http://www.wartimecontracting.gov).

###