

Joint Statement of
Michael Thibault and Christopher Shays, Co-Chairs
The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan

Hearing:

Recurring Problems in Afghan Construction

Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC
9:30 a.m., Monday, February 14, 2011

[Continued from the Commission's January 24, 2011, hearing. As prepared for delivery.]

Good morning. I am Christopher Shays, co-chairman of chairman of the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is a joint statement on behalf of my fellow co-chair, Michael Thibault, and myself. Co-Chair Thibault and Commissioners Grant Green and Katherine Schinasi could not be with us today. The other Commissioners at the dais are Clark Kent Ervin, Robert Henke, Charles Tiefer, and Dov Zakheim.

Today's hearing is a continuation of our January 24 session on "Recurring Problems in Afghan Construction." We were looking into the planning, management, execution, accountability, and sustainability of contract construction projects in Afghanistan.

There are literally thousands of these projects, ranging from schools and clinics in Afghan villages, to power plants and training centers in Afghan cities, to barracks and dining facilities for U.S. and NATO troops. They're all important and they involve billions of taxpayer dollars, mostly funneled to contractors through the Departments of Defense and of State, or through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

At our January 24 session, we heard from government folks: the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, AID, and witnesses from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment.

We were also *supposed* to hear from the people who are back today. But we got so involved in the first two panels that there wasn't enough time left on our room reservation to do

justice to our guests. We apologize for that, and we thank them for agreeing to return to talk with us and take our questions.

Our witness panel comprises construction contractors who have carried out some major construction in Afghanistan. They are:

* Michael E. McKelvy, President, Government, Environmental & Nuclear Division, CH2M Hill;

* Charles Mouzannar, Executive Vice President, AMEC Earth & Environmental Inc. (AEEI); and

* William Van Dyke, President, Black & Veatch Special Projects Corporation.

Also appearing today is Bruce McCarron, Regional Director, United Nations Office for Project Services, or UNOPS.

UNOPS is USAID's implementing partner for the Ghazi Boys School project. I will note that the United Nations has made Mr. McCarron available to provide information today without prejudice to the status, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by the UN and Mr. McCarron as a UN official.

Again, gentlemen, we thank you for your cooperation with the Commission.

Another witness scheduled to speak on January 24 had prior commitments and could not rejoin us today. He is Larry D. Walker, president of the Louis Berger Group Incorporated. We are making arrangements for Mr. Walker to appear at a future hearing.

We have asked witnesses to offer brief oral summaries of their testimony. The full texts of their written statements were entered into the hearing record last month and posted on the Commission's website. We will also accept any updated versions they may provide. We ask that witnesses submit within 15 business days responses to any questions for the record and any additional information they may offer.

Now, if the witnesses panel will rise and raise their right hand, I will swear them in:

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
you will give in this hearing is the truth, the whole truth,
and nothing but the truth?

Thank you. Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.
Mr. McKelvy, please begin.

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