

TESTIMONY OF EUGENE L. DODARO
TO BE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins and Members of the Committee.

Good afternoon. I am pleased to be here today to discuss my nomination to become Comptroller General of the United States. I greatly value the trust and support provided by the ten member bi-cameral bi-partisan Congressional Commission in forwarding my name to President Obama and by the President in nominating me for this important position. I also would like to take this unique opportunity to thank the thousands of people at GAO I have worked with over the years and to recognize that without their dedicated and talented support, I would not be before you today.

If confirmed, I pledge to continue to faithfully and diligently lead GAO in accomplishing its mission to support Congress in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of government for the benefit of the American people. At this juncture, our Nation's elected leaders face an array of complex domestic and international challenges which need to be successfully addressed to ensure the well-being of our citizens and the security and prosperity of our country. GAO can help the Congress by providing high quality, objective and timely analysis of government programs, operations and finances – information that the Congress needs to make policy choices, ensure transparency and accountability, and protect the taxpayer. In short, there are tremendous challenges ahead, and I would be honored to lead GAO during this important period in our Nation's history.

While I have already provided the Committee information on my background and views on the responsibilities of the Comptroller General as well as GAO's role and operations, there are a few points that merit emphasizing today. As a start, I want to underscore that, if confirmed, my overall approach to leading GAO would be to build on its solid foundation as a steadfast non-partisan watchdog for the American people, a trusted advisor to the Congress, and a leading force in promoting more effective and efficient management across government.

This vision for GAO includes sustaining and enhancing its core functions, while continuing to evolve GAO in ways that can better serve the Congress and the Nation in a first rate manner, now and in the future. I would work to continuously enhance GAO's capabilities to provide timely and quality service to committees throughout the Congress to address current and emerging challenges. This assistance spans the breadth of government

activities and interests, ranging from homeland and national security challenges to health care, education, and retirement concerns, natural resources, environmental and infrastructure issues, as well regulatory reforms related to financial institutions and the housing sector, including efforts to resolve the status of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Within this context of broad based assistance to the institution of the Congress, I would also provide even greater emphasis on identifying high risk issues across government and in working collaboratively with the Congress, agency leaders and OMB to resolve them. Making greater progress in solving high risk areas that are in need of broad-based transformation or are vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement would significantly contribute to ensuring a more efficient and effective government. Areas currently on the high risk list cover critical sectors of the government and the economy, such as improving weapons systems' acquisition and DOD business operations, transforming the Department of Homeland Security, providing more effective tax administration and curtailing fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Beyond the high risk areas, it is critical for GAO to provide insights into the government's financial condition and outlook and to seek ways to contribute to a more efficient and fiscally sustainable government. This includes working to help agencies identify and reduce billions of dollars in improper payments; identifying areas of duplication, overlap and fragmentation, as well as other opportunities to save money and enhance revenue; and helping promote more effective financial, information technology, acquisition, and performance management practices that can lead to eliminating wasteful approaches, provide greater efficiency, and ensure better accountability of taxpayer dollars. I would also continue to enhance GAO's forensic audit capabilities to help ferret out fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement.

Addressing all of these goals and aspirations for GAO requires that it always have a first rate, multi-disciplinary workforce. I have, and would continue to, if confirmed, devote significant effort to ensure that GAO always has the managerial and technical skills needed to consistently produce high quality work and meet congressional interests. Currently, GAO has a highly skilled multi-disciplinary workforce, comprised of subject area and technical expertise from a range of disciplines, including public policy analysts, financial auditors, economists, attorneys, social science analysts, information technology specialists, civil engineers, statisticians and physical scientists. If confirmed, I would plan to continue to enhance GAO's workforce to meet evolving needs, especially in the areas of technology, science and engineering.

In addition to having the right skills, GAO should always have the best possible respectful, inclusive and inviting working environment. While GAO has consistently been ranked among the best places to work in the federal government, attention to continuous improvement is necessary to make a great agency even better. I am committed to maintaining constructive relationships with our union, all of GAO's employee groups, and our people. Of paramount importance to me is ensuring that GAO always has a motivated, high performing, diverse workforce where people feel represented, valued and treated fairly.

I also want to take today's opportunity to thank this Committee for its strong support of GAO, including its unwavering commitment to our high risk program. Additionally, I very much appreciate the Committee's unanimous action reporting S. 2991, the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act of 2010, out of committee. The bill, if enacted, would reaffirm GAO's authority to enforce its statutory access rights, providing a legislative remedy for the federal district court's decision in *Walker v. Cheney*, and confirm GAO's statutory access rights in several respects. While the changes made by the bill are relatively modest, they are very important in enhancing GAO's ability to achieve prompt resolutions of access problems.

It is very important that GAO obtains the information it needs to do its work. GAO generally receives good cooperation from most departments and agencies in obtaining access to information and it is fairly rare for an agency to deny GAO access to information and rarer still that an agency will not work toward an accommodation that allows GAO to do its work. However, GAO does in certain cases experience access difficulties. For example, as you know, GAO has faced challenges in obtaining access to information from agencies in the intelligence community, even when the activities under review involve basic human capital and management functions. The recent Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 requires the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), in consultation with the Comptroller General, to issue a new directive governing GAO's access to information in the possession of an element of the intelligence community, and GAO has started engaging with DNI staff on this directive.

In closing, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve the Congress and our country as Comptroller General of the United States. I am committed to public service and would always lead GAO in a manner faithful to its core values of accountability, integrity and reliability. It would be my honor and distinct privilege to lead GAO's talented and dedicated workforce in providing high quality professional and objective analyses and advice to help address the many challenges facing our nation. I would always do my very best to serve the Congress and help improve government for the benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee, this concludes my opening remarks. Thank you all for your time and attention. I would be pleased to answer your questions.