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before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS
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on

DEPLOYED FEDERAL CIVILIANS: ADVANCING SECURITY AND
OPPORTUNITY ABROAD

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THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY & GOV'T AFFAIRS**

Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, I would like to thank you for inviting the Department of Defense (DoD) to appear at this hearing today to discuss the Department's efforts to build an improved and reliable capability within the DoD civilian workforce that is ready, trained, and cleared to support DoD operations, contingencies, emergencies, humanitarian missions, stability and reconstruction operations and combat operations.

First, let me emphasize, the Department of Defense has a long and proud history of civilians supporting our U.S. Armed Forces in military operations around the world. The structure of the Armed Forces is based on the Total Force concept, which recognizes all elements of the structure—active duty military personnel, reservists, defense contractors, host nation military and civilian personnel, and DoD Federal civilian employees—contribute to national defense.

From the end of the Revolutionary War where civilians were responsible for supplying the military, to recent engagements in Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, and to the more immediate engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department has relied upon its civilian personnel to support a range of essential missions, including intelligence collection, criminal investigations, weapon systems acquisition and maintenance, stability and reconstruction, vehicle and equipment maintenance, strategic communication and public affairs, disaster relief, financial management, and human resources management – to name a few.

However, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a seminal event for the Department, and prompted the Department to begin a significant transformation of the DoD civilian workforce, including the institution of a greater expeditionary capability in our civilian workforce. Today, that expeditionary capability is known as the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW).

My testimony, today, will focus on (1) the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) capability, (2) the Department's initiatives to effectively train and prepare civilians for expeditionary missions in Afghanistan, (3) the support provided to our civilians in Afghanistan, (4) proposed legislation to codify and

standardize benefits for Federal civilian employees while serving in a designated zone of armed conflict, and (5) the Department's actions to address the Government Accountability Office recommendations.

SETTING UP THE CIVILIAN EXPEDITIONARY WORKFORCE

In the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as current armed conflicts and natural and manmade disasters that pose threats to regional and international peace, we have learned effective responses require the blend of military power and civilian capabilities. These situations require multi-dimensional operations composed of security, intelligence, humanitarian, economic development, ministerial support, and other complex contingency operations. Military forces can quickly affect the dynamics of a contingency operation and may create the conditions necessary to make significant progress in mitigating or resolving underlying conflict or dispute. However, we have also learned many of these complex operations require civilian involvement, referred to as smart power.

The economic and diplomatic tenets of smart power are in many ways the extension of past U.S. foreign programs such as the Marshall Plan. Secretary Gates outlined the Department's new approach in a speech in 2008, stating: "We cannot kill or capture our way to victory." He said the biggest threats to U.S. security "emanate from fractured or failed states," and to combat them the Pentagon needs to engage these countries in a way "that reduces the need for direct U.S. military intervention." In his message, the Secretary conveyed our country must strengthen other important elements of national power both institutionally and financially, and create the capability to integrate and apply all of the elements of national power to problems and challenges abroad. He stated: "I am here to make the case for strengthening our capacity to use "soft power" and for better integrating it with "hard power." Most recently, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Michael Mullen, stated in a speech that Secretary Gates has called for more funding and more emphasis on our smart power. Admiral Mullen said: "Should we choose to exert American influence solely through our troops, we should expect to see that influence diminish in time."

The stakes in Afghanistan are high. President Obama's strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda and prevent their return to Afghanistan has laid out a clear path of what we must do. In March 2009, President Obama stated, "Our troops have fought bravely against a ruthless enemy and our civilians have made such great sacrifices. Now we must make a commitment that can accomplish our goals." Accomplishing the mission laid out by the President demands a strong emphasis on operations where civilian expertise and skill-sets are fully integrated with military plans. By leveraging the Total Force capability in Afghanistan, we are focusing on improving operational effectiveness and reducing the tempo of operations, helping to reduce the stress on our military personnel – a top Department priority, integrating civilian talent to support non-war fighting requirements, and developing a reach back capability for current and future requirements.

These challenges require significant organizational structural changes to embed a civilian capability that is ready, trained, and prepared to participate in and support military operations swiftly and competently, and one that provides for competent and compassionate continuum of support and care for our deployed civilians.

In response to these expeditionary missions, the Department developed a new framework through which an appropriately sized subset of the DoD civilian workforce is pre-identified to be organized, trained, and equipped in a manner that facilitates the use of their capabilities for operational requirements. These requirements are typically away from the normal work locations of DoD civilians, or in situations where other civilians may be evacuated to assist military forces where the use of DoD civilians is appropriate. These employees are collectively known as the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW).

DoD civilian employees are also an integral part of the Global Force Management Allocation system, which consists of two specific supporting processes: rotational force allocation in support of Combatant command annual force needs, and emergent force allocation in support of Combatant Command emerging or crisis-based requests for capabilities and forces. CEW personnel are included in both the DoD Global Force Management process and Global Force

Management Board recommendations and decisions. Global Force Allocation Management Plans use CEW personnel as the preferred sourcing solution whenever possible and appropriate.

The CEW consists of positions designated as Emergency-Essential and Non-Combat Essential, and employee capabilities are referred to as, “capability-based” DoD employee volunteers, or CBV, who are organized, trained, and equipped for rapid response and quick assimilation in support of DoD operations. The model also provides for the maintenance of a resume bank of individuals outside government, including former DoD employees, to serve expeditionary requirements or to fill backfill requirements while employees are deployed. The Department has standardized its personnel policies for such areas as designation of positions, pre- and post-deployment physicals and psychological health assessments, job return rights, benefits, and incentives. Those whose positions are designated will receive orientation training, annual refresher training, and just-in-time pre- and post -deployment (theater-specific) training, and training for supervisors and managers on recognizing stress-related conditions that may result from serving expeditionary requirements.

DOD CIVILIAN ENGAGEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

In March 2009, at the conclusion of the strategic review of Afghanistan, President Obama recommended a dramatic increase in U.S. and International civilian efforts in Afghanistan. Accomplishing the mission laid out by the President has demanded a strong emphasis on operations where civilian expertise and skill-sets are fully integrated with military plans. DOD civilian employees are playing an integral role in supporting this mission. Over 8,000 DoD civilians have deployed to Afghanistan since 2001. Currently, nearly 1,600 civilians are serving in Afghanistan.

To further emphasize the need to utilize DoD’s internal civilian capability in Afghanistan, the Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum on May 11, 2009, to provide guidance to DoD Components to work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD (P&R)) to identify civilian employees capable of deploying to Afghanistan in support of U.S. Government (USG)

initiatives and resulting DoD requirements. This action was intended to identify a standing pool of DoD civilians ready to deploy rapidly in response to civilian capacity shortfalls in Afghanistan.

DoD civilians are also participating in the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands (AFPAKH) program. In June 2009, the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS) stood up the AFPAKH Program, a cadre of personnel who receive regional language, culture, and counter insurgency (COIN) training who are deployed to key billets in Afghanistan or Pakistan. The Chairman requested CEW representatives participate in the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands Management Element (AME) the organization residing at the Joint Staff Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell (PACC) responsible for managing the Program. Military and civilian personnel in the AFPAKH program will be placed in positions where they will engage directly with Afghan and Pakistani officials on development, stabilization, and reconstruction activities. Upon completion of their deployment, they will be assigned to an out-of-theater billet where their in-country experience will be applied by working Afghanistan or Pakistan issues.

DoD civilians are also participating in the management of the Ministry of Defense Advisors (MoDA) Program in Afghanistan, which is designed to assist international partners to improve Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior level competencies such as personnel and readiness, strategy and policy, and financial management. The CEW has helped developed the 7 week training course for the MoDA program that will begin on May 10, 2010, and will include 10 days at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

CUTTING EDGE TRAINING FOR DOD CIVILIANS SERVING IN AFGHANISTAN

The Department recognizes preparation is essential to effectively transition civilians from desk to deployment and to be a productive and contributing member of the team “on day one.” The Department implemented a joint, pre-deployment training program in January 2010 at the Indiana National Guard Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, and Muscatatuck Urban Training Center for employees deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. The 10-day training is a one-stop, fully integrated training and pre-deployment platform. The training consists of an

intense mix of classroom and field exercises, providing a learning environment where the austere setting simulates the conditions of deployment and helps strengthen emotional and mental resilience.

Instructors are leaders in their field from organizations such as the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State (DoS), the National Defense University (NDU), the Indiana Regional Training Institute (RTI), and U.S. active duty military and DoD civilian experts.

The curriculum and field exercises are specifically designed and timed to develop capabilities around four themes: Know Yourself, Know Your Organization, Know Your Environment, and Know Your Response. Every day, the students apply what is learned in the classroom with closing practical exercises building on the previous day. The course has applicability for a wide audience from Mine Resistant Ambush Protecting Vehicle (MRAP) mechanics to Senior Policy Analysts, and is open to non-DoD Federal employees.

THE CURRICULUM

This section describes in some detail the training that is provided. What is described here is a typical 10-day curriculum aimed at those who have not previously deployed or been trained. The curriculum was designed to be scalable, and an abbreviated 5-day course is provided to those who have deployed multiple times to a theater of operation. The following is a brief description of the learning modules, by each of the four learning themes:

THEME: Know Yourself. The stage is set with an individual assessment of each student's capability to build an effective team and to be a productive member of a team. Students learn how to best leverage their own talents and differences as well as those of others to form a cohesive team. Throughout the training, students continuously hone these skills in simulation and other practical exercises. Students are introduced to the "real life" challenges and experiences of deployments from the testimonies of other civilians who have previously deployed. A Secure Video Teleconference (SVTC) with our Chief, Human

Resource Advisor in Afghanistan establishes the first real “friendship” in theater for our students. Our Advisor acquaints students with the living and working conditions and, importantly, personalizes the support deployed civilians can expect to receive while in theater. Students also are introduced to techniques to effectively understand and deal with the stress that is often exacerbated by extended working hours, the austere environment, and the extended absences from family and friends. Experts from the Defense Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), to specifically address Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) prevention. Other experts discuss emotional resiliency, physical fitness and wellness, and sustaining effective relationships with family, colleagues and friends. Students learn to use SKYPE as a means of staying connected to their family and friends. Students are provided extensive information about their benefits and incentives while deployed and provided tools for calculating their salaries.

THEME: Know Your Environment. Simply put, people will generally not perform effectively unless they know and feel safe in their environment. Civilians who deploy are no exception. While many factors in our work environment determine whether we work efficiently and in a manner that promotes good health and safety, the focus of this module is on building familiarity with national security, military strategy, interagency partnership, counter-insurgency (COIN) strategy, stabilization and reconstruction; the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ); language, culture, using interpreters effectively; counter-surveillance, military communications; and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) familiarization. Students are issued equipment and instructed on how to properly wear, care for, and use their equipment in emergencies; receive hands-on exercises on how to perform various types of first aid depending on the wound; how to transport a casualty; and how to request Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) assistance. Students learn vehicle and weapons familiarization by experiencing a simulated High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMV) rollover and fire a variety of weapons on the range. This module is taught in a degraded living environment, where students move from their “college dorm-like housing” to a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and living conditions are austere. Students must adjust to limited running water, communal housing, portable outhouses, Meals Ready to Eat (MRE), and a very limited food selection in the dining facility. This transition is designed to build adaptability and resilience to the settings encountered in theater.

THEME: Know your Organization. This module is built on a fundamental principle that the effective contributions of an individual are dependent upon leveraging organizational resources and knowing the right people. Because the organizations and people in theater are unfamiliar to many of the civilians deployed, this module builds an understanding of the in-theater organizations, their roles and relationships, and their organizational cultures and structures. The learning helps guide students towards productive and contributing behaviors “on day one.”

While still at the FOB, students learn about the U.S. organizations in theater, military and civilians operations at the Platoon, Brigade, Regimental and Combatant Command levels, Civilian-Military (CIV-MIL) integration, the policy and field operations of the DoS, USAID, the U.S. military and decision making structures of coalition partners. Afghan role players help students understand the Afghan local and governmental structures.

THEME: Know Your Response. In theater, every interaction requires one be prepared to respond quickly to the unique demands of the environment and have the best decision support available. This module helps give students the best chance to respond quickly and get it right the first time. Students learn adaptability training; effective work practices in fluid environments; how to monitor and evaluate progress using benchmarks related to theater operations; Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape (SERE); conflict assessment and management; effective communication training with an interpreter; Afghan culture, customs and etiquette; cross-cultural problem solving; how to engage the local population; traditional value systems; methodology and tools for making effective decisions in uncertain, chaotic environments; improved conflict resolution techniques; and how to interact and solve problems across different cultures, ethnic groups, languages and governments—both national and local.

The training culminates with six vignettes where “real life” situations encountered in theater are simulated and students are asked to apply the knowledge they have gained throughout the course. Students travel by convoy and helicopter to meetings with Afghan counterparts played by Afghans, and role-play various scenarios. These scenarios are filmed and studied later to provide

students with an opportunity for self-reflection and feedback. Instructors serve as mentors and coaches and help the students ameliorate any shortcomings. The scenarios require students to work through interpreters to collect information, build relationships, and navigate sensitive situations with Afghan authorities, officials, religious leaders and villagers. Students are taught convoy security training and jointly plan their missions with the Indiana National Guard, providing hands-on Civ-Mil experience for both parties. Graduation is held in a ravaged building where students dine on the floor, are served a traditional Afghan dinner prepared by their Afghan role players and enjoy traditional Afghan entertainment.

The curriculum is at the cutting edge of several new approaches for training our personnel for deployment. The lessons learned here will help formulate policy across the Department. Trend lines are showing the Department will look to the CEW to make greater contributions in the future, and that a trained and ready civilian force is force multiplier for current and future operations.

Centralized Deployment Center. The Department has a long-standing challenge in providing consistent, pre- and post-deployment processing and reintegration preparation. In Indiana, we are also piloting pre- and post-deployment mobilization for civilians where students process through various stations that provide pre-deployment medical, psychological, and dental assessments; immunizations; wills and Powers of Attorney; guidance on family care plans; overseas Geneva Convention Common Access Cards (CAC); dog tags; and assistance in filing insurance and beneficiary forms. Students also are issued the appropriate equipment and can deploy to theater right from Indianapolis. The Centralized Deployment Center is expected to be fully operational by the April training session.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT DEPLOYED FEDERAL CIVILIANS

Thanks to you and other Members of Congress, we have been able to offer critical incentives and benefits to our Federal civilian employees serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. This year, we hope to obtain the most far-reaching and comprehensive benefits package for Federal civilians to date. The Department, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Department of State, and the

Department of Labor have worked in partnership to develop this important legislative proposal which will provide more uniformity and transparency to the pay and benefits for deployed civilian employees. Although many of the requested authorities will be permissive, the legislation will provide for the issuance of regulations that would help ensure the uniform treatment of civilian employees across agencies. These new benefits would be in addition to those currently provided to deployed civilians assigned to Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, in Iraq and Afghanistan, civilian employees under the Department of State's standardized regulations are eligible for a hardship differential and danger pay, each equal to 35 percent of basic pay. Together, these two payments service as a recognition of the extraordinary commitment and service of deployed civilians under dangerous and stressful conditions.

Our legislative proposal would codify in title 5 the benefits Federal civilian employees are eligible to receive while serving in a designated zone of armed conflict. In doing so, the proposal would amend section 102 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980(22 U.S.C. 3902) by adding a new definition of "designated zone of armed conflict." The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, would designate areas where there are exceptional levels of armed violence. This would serve as the basis for triggering certain pay and benefits allowable for Federal civilian employees working in a designated zone of armed conflict.

The draft proposal would add a new subchapter to chapter 59 of title 5, United States Code. The new subchapter would establish a central authority for the various benefits agencies could provide to their employees who serve in a designated zone of armed conflict. Many of these authorities currently exist in the form of legislative provisions that must be renewed each year and are not found in a single legislative authority.

In addition, the proposal would amend other parts of title 5 to enhance current benefits. For example, the draft proposal would establish special travel and leave benefits for deployed civilian employees. This includes a proposal for recuperation leave to provide employees a respite from working in a designated zone of armed conflict and readjustment leave after a deployment assignment has

been completed to provide employees time to rest and attend to personal matters before returning to work. The following is a list of the specific proposals:

- Establishment of a pre- and post-deployment health assessment program at each agency deploying civilians, consistent with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State, as determined by mission requirements;
- Permanent authority to provide certain Foreign Service benefits such as travel for home leave and a death gratuity equal to level II of the Executive Schedule (\$179,700 for 2010);
- A new leave category called recuperation leave, up to 20 workdays for any 12 consecutive months, to be used in conjunction with R&R travel, alleviating the use of administrative leave for such trips. Our DoD civilians singled out the authorized R&R breaks as particularly critical to maintaining a personal momentum, motivation, and level of effectiveness during deployments;
- A new leave category called readjustment leave, up to 15 workdays for any 12 consecutive months, to provide employees a period of paid time off following deployment to rest and attend to personal and family matters;
- Permanent authority to increase the limitation on premium pay earnings to the Vice President's salary (\$230,700 for 2010). This premium pay cap authority has been implemented in Iraq and Afghanistan and proven to be an important incentive to DoD employees who perform work outside of normal duty hours;
- Permanent removal of the aggregate limitation on pay (\$199,700 for most employees in 2010) so employees in zones of armed conflict are paid in the calendar year in which they work. This incentive alone permits deployed civilians to maximize their earning power in the year in which they serving. In these economic times, this incentive is most valued and appreciated;
- A standard locality pay entitlement for all civilians equal to the greater of the employee's home station or the Washington D.C. locality rate. Currently, employees on Temporary Change of Station (TCS) orders are not eligible for locality pay, and those that are eligible may receive different locality rates depending on their home

station location. The proposal would ensure that employees in zones of armed conflict receive no less than the Washington, DC locality rate;

- Special payments for senior level employees who work extended hours. Certain employees, such as members of the Senior Executive Service are otherwise barred from receiving premium pay.
- Danger pay and other overseas allowances and differentials to Highly Qualified Experts (HQE) who were previously denied such benefits.
- Payment for a traumatic injury similar to what Service Members receive;
- Amend the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) to provide for Continuation of Pay benefits (continuation of salary paid by an agency) for employees who suffer a traumatic injury or occupational illness in a zone of armed conflict for up to 135 days. FECA currently provides for continuation of pay for a maximum of 45 days and is limited to cases involving traumatic injuries.

This legislative proposal gives us a solid framework to protect and provide for our deployed civilians. The Interagency Working Group will reconvene to address additional issues that don't require legislation and are of importance to the GAO, Congress and all Federal agencies.

Additionally, DoD employees serving in Iraq and Afghanistan for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days are eligible for the Secretary of Defense Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) medal. This medal is a campaign medal and was created to recognize and honor the contributions of our DoD civilians in direct support of the Department's contingency operations. Those who pay the ultimate sacrifice and are injured or killed in theater may be eligible to receive the Defense of Freedom medal. This medal is the civilian equivalent of the military's Purple Heart. The Secretary of Defense has authority to approve this medal for service by non-DoD civilians.

SUPPORT FOR DOD CIVILIANS IN AFGHANISTAN

DoD civilians are cared for and supported by a Centralized CEW Human Resource Office staffed by two Senior Human Resource Advisors in Afghanistan that advise civilians during pre-deployment training, and provide advisory and support services to civilians in coordination with human resource personnel from other DoD agencies that deploy a large number of civilians, such as Army Material Command and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition, DoD has a financial management team staffed by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) civilian pay liaisons who provide support with pay, leave and other financial issues. This team has reach-back to a dedicated staff in Indianapolis: the DFAS Expeditionary Support Organization (DESO) that specifically handles deployment-related pay and leave issues.

Centralized CEW Human Resource Offices in theater have three reach-back capabilities and work in coordination with the CEW Readiness Cell, the CEW Senior Human Resource Advisor in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy (DUSD(CPP)), which provide additional assistance on matters related to compensation, benefits, medical care, and entitlements.

Currently three organizations play a vital role in DoD's Ombudsman program for deployed civilians. The CEW Readiness Cell is charged with the central management, coordination, and execution of all DoD civilian expeditionary requirements, including medical care. The CEW Readiness Cell assigns a case manager to each DoD civilian. Each case manager is responsible for approximately 22 deployed civilians. The number of deployed civilians assigned to each case manager varies based on the number of civilians deployed overseas at any given time. Case managers guide and direct all deployed civilians to available resources, provide intervention in problem claims, and work with the Service component's Injury Compensation Program Administrators' (ICPA) to help injured employees navigate the Department of Labor's (DoL) Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) claims process. The responsibilities and requirements of the CEW Readiness Cell's case managers were established in DoD Directive 1404.10, enacted on January 23, 2009.

Service component ICPAs are specifically trained to provide outreach and support to all injured or ill civilians, help them meet their burden of proof, and ensure they receive benefits for which they are entitled. DoD's Injury and Unemployment Compensation Division, also under the DUSD(CPP), works with the CEW and provides liaison services to ICPAs. The primary role of the Injury Compensation Liaison is to open communications and foster strong working relationships between the DoD and DoL OWCP. By implementing the team approach, liaisons assist in meeting case management goals and resolving problems as quickly as possible.

To ensure deployed civilians obtain accurate information and receive such compensation and medical benefits in a timely manner, the DoD CEW Readiness Cell established a 24 hour toll-free number to provide all deployed DoD civilians, including those injured or wounded, a one-stop mechanism to obtain information and assistance on the compensation and benefits. This phone number is personally staffed from 7am - 6pm, Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, and offers a voice message service for weekend and after hours follow-up. This toll-free number is posted on the CEW website at www.cpms.osd.mil/expeditionary. The goal is to answer all calls or inquires within 24 business hours.

MEDICAL SCREENING AND CARE FOR DEPLOYED CIVILIANS

The Department takes seriously its obligation to protect the health of deployed civilian employees. The Department has established medical treatment policies that ensure civilians who become ill, contract diseases, or who are injured or wounded while deployed in support of U.S. military forces engaged in hostilities, receive medical evacuation and health care treatment and services in military treatment facilities (MTFs) at no cost and at the same level and scope provided to military personnel.

Prior to deploying, DoD civilian employees are required to obtain a physical examination. The purpose of this examination is to determine the presence of any non-deployable medical conditions. Combatant Commands identify non-deployable medical conditions for deployment operations, along with required immunizations. These employee records are reviewed as part of our civilian employee's pre-deployment processing. If any non-deployable medical

condition is identified during this review, then an individualized assessment of the employee's medical condition and the essential functions of the position in question is conducted, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, before deciding whether the employee can deploy.

Further, all DoD civilians are required to have a pre-deployment health assessment within 60 days prior to departure. These records provide a baseline for the medical screening conducted upon the employee's return from deployment. Upon return from the deployment, DoD civilians are required to have a post-health assessment within 30 to 60 days following their return, and a health reassessment between 90 and 180 days of return from the deployment in accordance with DoDI 6490.03, "Deployment Health," August 11, 2006. The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) is the central repository for receiving, reviewing and reporting of health issues during and post deployment.

The Department recently established the DoD Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury. The centers are designed to focus on quality programs and advanced medical technology to provide unprecedented expertise in psychological health and traumatic brain injuries. The goal is to assure military and civilians who have deployed are supported with lifelong standardized and comprehensive screening, diagnosis, and care for all levels of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. The Centers assess, validate, oversee, and facilitate prevention, resilience, identification, treatment, outreach, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs for psychological health and traumatic brain injury to ensure the Department meets the needs of those who have served and their families.

Deployed DoD civilian employees who were treated in theater continue to be eligible for treatment in an MTF or civilian medical facility for compensable illnesses, diseases, wounds, or injuries under the DOL OWCP upon their return at no cost to the employee. DoD civilians who deployed and are subsequently determined to have compensable illnesses, diseases, wounds, or injuries under the DOL OWCP programs also are eligible for treatment in an MTF or civilian medical facility at no cost to the employee.

Since 2004 DoD has been providing DoD civilians the capability of filing Traumatic Injury (CA-1) or Occupational Disease (CA-2) claims electronically. One feature of the electronic filing process is employees who file traumatic injury claims obtain immediate written information and instructions regarding the medical evidence needed in a FECA claim. This information can be immediately made available to treating physicians and other health care providers. Establishing the appropriate evidentiary documentation early on is a critical step in expediting the review and processing of the injury claims.

The Department also has worked with our DoL colleagues to improve and streamline service. DoL instituted a special series of case file numbers for the claims of deployed civilians, and has assigned these cases to an office dedicated to reviewing, adjudicating, and processing DOL OWCP civilian injury claims for Iraq and Afghanistan. The Department recognizes that the DoL OWCP is the primary source of coverage for medical treatment of Federal civilian employees who become wounded, ill, contract disease or are injured in a combat zone. The Department strongly believes the adjudication of the cases should be handled by claims staff trained to handle these types of cases, and is pleased that the OWCP instituted streamlined processes and has assigned the review, adjudication, and processing of these cases to a dedicated group at their Cleveland office.

Combat zones present a myriad of challenges in collecting the medical documentation necessary to file a DoL OWCP claim. To address this issue, on September 23, 2008, the DOL's OWCP signed a letter agreeing to certain principles regarding the processing of deployed civilian workers' compensation claims. Under this agreement, DOL acknowledges that DoD employees injured in war zones may experience difficulties in obtaining necessary evidence and corresponding with OWCP. To that end, it agreed that prior to issuing a denial to any DoD employee injured in a war zone they will notify the DoD Civilian Personnel Management Services (CPMS) Injury & Unemployment Compensation Division if evidence is not sufficient. This special handling has resulted in faster and better responses to employees. In such instances, DoD has an opportunity to assist the employee in obtaining medical evidence about the nature and cause of the illness, disease or injury for submission to OWCP.

In addition, the DoL's OWCP worked with the interagency working group (DoD, OPM, and DoS), that developed the legislative package that is being proposed to provide more equitable benefits for deployed civilians. In this effort they have supported several initiatives including: the extension of Continuation of Pay for occupational diseases or illnesses, posting information on its website specific to the needs of deployed civilian employees, and releasing a letter to all their employees who handle deployment-related cases to further instruct them of the special handling of deployment-related cases.

TREATMENT OF NON-DoD FEDERAL PERSONNEL IN MILITARY TREATMENT FACILITIES

The Department also realizes it may be the only in-theater provider of emergency medical care for non-DoD civilians, perhaps with the exception of the Department State who may have some medical capabilities in some zones of Armed Conflict. The Department clarified its policy on access to military treatment facilities (MTFs) for non-DoD federal civilians both while in theater and then following deployment. Simply stated:

1. We can provide emergency care in theater, MEDEVAC outside the theater, and care at an MTF until the non-DoD federal employee is stabilized and discharged.
2. As the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), I can grant permission, under certain circumstances, to provide continuing care in our MTFs, past the point of medical stabilization. Like our DoD employees, however, other Federal employees must have an approved DoL OWCP claim for the specific deployment-related illness, disease, or injury to be eligible for continuing care in an MTF. Other factors that I consider include whether the MTF provides a special or unique expertise in treating the injury, disease, or illness of the employee and if the MTF has the capability and capacity to treat the employee's specific needs. The determination is made on a case-by-case basis.

The Department recently released a report to the HASC and SASC, as well as a letter to each Federal agency that deploys civilians, on medical care for DoD

and non-DoD Federal civilian employees who become ill, contract diseases, or are injured or wounded while forward deployed in support of contingency operations.

To prepare, inform, and advise non-DoD civilians and their respective agencies, the Department has also posted a Power Point training aid explaining DoD's policies governing medical care for non-DoD civilians during deployment, and the procedures for requesting access to a military MTF after their deployment; posted Frequently Asked Questions that provide further clarity on DoD's policies; and provided a "Contact Us" feature to submit questions about DoD's policies and practices on medical care and receive a response within two business days. Employees from Federal agencies deployed through DoD will be required to complete this training during their pre-deployment training.

Finally, the Department is expanding its existing DoD Civilian Health Working Group to examine the medical care for civilian employees serving in a contingency operation with representatives from other Federal agencies and Departments, employee unions, and other organizations that provide medical care and service to the Federal civilians. In consultation with the OSD Director for Administration and Management, we are taking the necessary steps to establish the working group at the earliest opportunity. The working group, as envisioned by Congress, will conform to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972, and the membership, once appointed by the Secretary of Defense, will provide independent advice and recommendations on this critical issue. We anticipate the working group will be established no later than May 2010.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

DoD families play an integral role in the Total Force and support DoD's missions from the home front. The Department continues to strengthen its capacity to serve the families of DoD civilians and build family readiness. We require family care plans to ensure families are aware of and understand the benefits and entitlements provided to them through their spouses' employment. Employees are given instructions on how to build a comprehensive family care plan during pre-deployment. In addition, the CEW Readiness Cell, in coordination with Services, has developed and posted on its website, specific

guidance on family care programs for DoD civilians that is customized to serve the individuals unique geographical location and family requirements. This guidance alerts families of the outreach and assistance DoD offers during deployments and ensures a full continuum of care is provided.

There are an array of benefits and services available to the families of deployed civilians including child care and development, casualty assistance, stress management, counseling, education for family members, housing and moving support, legal assistance, personal financial management, special needs support, spouse employment, suicide prevention, transition assistance, and much more. Several programs also provide resources for families with young children experiencing the effects of deployment or changes to a parent due to a combat-related injury. Information on these resources and support services is readily available at MilitaryHOMEFRONT (<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>), the Department of Defense Web site for official information, policy and guidance designed to help DoD civilians and their families.

Deployed civilians and their families also have access to Military OneSource which provides resources and support to DoD civilians and their families anywhere in the world. Military OneSource (<http://www.militaryonesource.com>) services include a 24-hour call center staffed with master's-level consultants to answer questions and provide resources and referrals on everyday issues like finding child care, dealing with stress, helping children deal with a parent's deployment, reunion and reintegration, moving, creating a budget, personalized health coaching, caring for older relatives, making large-scale consumer purchases, and finding services in the local and military communities. It also offers specialized consultations by phone in the areas of special-needs family members, personal finances, and education. Specialty consultants have focused training in their consultation areas. Face-to-face counseling sessions in the user's community are designed to address short-term, non-medical needs. Counseling sessions are also available online or by phone.

DoD is working to provide additional curriculum and training to prepare and help families cope with deployments and deepen their understanding of deployment requirements, benefits and entitlements, as well as issues likely to be faced by the employee during and following a deployment. A key part of the post-

deployment training will involve effective ways to reintegrate the employee with their family.

**ACTIONS TAKEN ADDRESS THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF GAO
REPORT 09-562**

In response to the GAO report, the Department has taken the following actions:

1. Clarified DoD's policy on access to military treatment facilities (MTFs) for DoD and non-DoD federal civilians following deployment and posted the policy and procedures on the CEW website: <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/expeditionary>.
2. Developed a standard form for requesting approval to use a military medical treatment facility (MTF), which can be submitted both electronically on the CEW website and through the mail;
3. Developed and posted on the CEW website, a Power Point training aid that specifically addresses the medical eligibility of non-DoD Federal civilian employees at DoD medical facilities. Non-DoD Federal employees deploying through DoD will be required to take this training prior to their deployment;
4. Developed and posted Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQs) on the CEW website, with a "Contact Us" feature to submit questions and receive a response within two business days;
5. Released a report to the HASC and SASC entitled, "Medical care for DoD and non-DoD Federal Civilian Employees injured or wounded in support of Contingency Operations";
6. Established a 24 hour toll-free number to provide all deployed DoD civilians, including those injured or wounded, a one-stop mechanism to obtain information and assistance on the compensation and benefits.
7. Developed a letter to all Federal agencies notifying them of DoD's policies governing medical care during and after deployment, the procedures for requesting approval to access a military MTF, the online training available, FAQs, and how to contact DoD for further questions.

8. Clarified that data provided in accordance to DoD Directive 1401.10 “DoD Civilian Expeditionary Workforce” provides accurate information on all deployed civilians in theater. Civilian deployment personnel data is compiled from Services’ systems at the OSD level. Work is in progress to incorporate this capability into Joint Personnel Statistics (JPERSTAT).

CONCLUSION

The Department is proud of the contributions of the Total Force—active duty military personnel, reservists, DoD and Federal civilian employees, defense contractors, host nation military—who contribute each and every day to strengthening our national defense and making incalculable sacrifices to preserve freedom and the democratic principles that underpin a peaceful, productive, and dignified society. Their distinguished service is an inspiration to nations around the world. Some of our brave and dedicated employees and their families have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country while serving our DoD missions. For these brave injured and fallen civilians, for all their colleagues who have answered the call to serve, and for all those who will answer in the future, the Department is committed to ensuring these employees have the highest level of support and care as may be needed to serve our noble mission. Their courageous, enduring service and sacrifice deserve no less.

Thank you again for your continued interest in our deployed civilians and the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be pleased to respond to your questions.