



FROM THE DESK OF ALICE FISHER

Update From Alice S. Fisher, Chair of the National Procurement Fraud Task Force:

I want to thank all of the members of the National Procurement Fraud Task Force and our regional working group partners for your participation in our second meeting on January 25, 2007. We were pleased to have over 100 individuals in attendance including, among others, Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty and numerous Inspectors General and U.S. Attorneys. We discussed the latest accomplishments and activities of the Task Force and heard reports from the Chairs of our working committees on Iraq/International, Intelligence, Private Sector Outreach, Legislation, Information Sharing, Grant Fraud and Training. I was very impressed by the progress of each committee.

The next Task Force meeting will be on April 12, 2007, from 2-3:30 pm Eastern Time. The toll-free call-in number for teleconference participants is 1-800-521-6079. The passcode is 4324#. Please use the # sign after the passcode. Local callers should use 202-353-0880. We will send you an agenda in the near future.

Here is an update of some of the latest Task Force developments and a request that you help implement new procedures to track procurement cases relating to the Global War on Terror.

Procurement Fraud Cases

Since the announcement of the National Procurement Fraud Initiative, over 120 procurement fraud cases have resulted in either criminal charges or civil settlements. The press releases from these cases are included on our website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/npftf/>. I encourage each member of the Task Force to take some time to review the impressive results achieved by you and your colleagues around the country.

New Intake Procedure for Contracting Fraud Cases Associated with GWOT

One goal of the Task Force is to establish a unified and coordinated approach for prosecuting procurement fraud cases associated with contracting in Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq, and the global war on terror ("GWOT Cases"). As of today, the Department has charged 25 individuals criminally for fraud associated with government contracting in support of the GWOT. Sixteen of these individuals have been convicted. The other nine individuals have charges pending either through indictments or criminal complaints. Many other investigations are ongoing. The Department is proud of this record and anticipates continued success in the future.

As expected, there is great interest in these cases within the Department, on the Hill and in the media. In order to track existing cases, the Task Force has asked DOJ components to identify all pending GWOT Cases and to regularly report regarding the progress of each case. In February, the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys sent out a request to all the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for information on the Department's efforts to investigate and prosecute cases of contracting abuse in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other GWOT Cases. These requests were made so that the Task Force could respond to Congressional inquiries about these cases, to ensure that cases are progressing appropriately, and to gauge which cases need special attention or greater resources.

In order to assist the Task Force in tracking and prosecuting these cases in the future, I am requesting that each agency handling GWOT Cases contact either Steve Linick, the Director of the Task Force or Bill Welch, the Chief in the Public Integrity Section, at the time that the agent wishes to present the case to the Criminal Division for prosecution or even earlier to discuss case strategy. Steve and Bill will make sure that these cases are appropriately staffed, taking into consideration, among other things, the availability and expertise of the individuals who have a history of prosecuting these cases. Additionally, Steve and Bill will make every effort to include other DOJ components such as the Civil Division in the intake process to ensure that all of our remedies are effectively utilized to combating procurement fraud.

To the extent that agencies bring GWOT Cases to U.S. Attorneys' Offices or another component of DOJ other than the Criminal Division, I am requesting that each agency handling GWOT Cases notify Steve Linick about any GWOT Case before or at the time the case is referred for potential prosecution. At the time of notification, please provide: (1) the names of the subjects and/or targets of the investigation; (2) a summary of the alleged misconduct, (3) the U.S. Attorney's office or DOJ Component to which the case will be presented, and, if known, (4) the AUSA/trial attorney who will handle the case. This process will ensure that the Task Force has accurate information and records regarding new cases. This process will assist the Task Force's efforts to prioritize and expedite appropriate cases, and help us respond to future Hill inquiries.

Working Committees:

The working committees have been meeting regularly to advance the goals set forth in their strategic plans. I would encourage you to participate or assign someone from your office to participate on these committees. In an effort to keep our Task Force members informed about the activities and accomplishments of the committees, we are posting the committee meeting notes on both LEO and on the Task Force website at www.usdoj.gov/criminal/npftf/. In the near future, we intend to post the committee's strategic plans on both sites as well. In order to ensure that only task force members have access to the meeting minutes, they will be contained in a password protected file on the website. In order to obtain the password, please contact Sarah Breen by email at sarah.breen@GSA.gov. and she will provide you with it. In order to access the meeting minutes on LEO, you must be registered for LEO.

Regional Working Groups:

To date there are 27 U.S. Attorneys' Offices that are either leading, or participating in, a regional procurement fraud working group. A list containing the contact information for the regional working group coordinators is posted on the NPFTF website. Your support of these groups is critical to the success of the initiative. Steve Linick and Brian Miller have been traveling to various U.S. Attorneys' offices to help kick-off their regional working group meetings and I am impressed by the regional working groups' progress to date.

Keep up the good work and please let me know if I can be of assistance in any way.