

Enclosure III: Comments from the Department of Defense



COMPTROLLER

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1100 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1100

09 MAY 2007

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General of the United States
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO-07-699, "MILITARY OPERATIONS: The Department of Defense's Use of Solatia and Condolence Payments in Iraq and Afghanistan," dated April 10, 2007 (GAO Code 350895).

Thank you for the opportunity to review the subject GAO draft report. By providing authority for the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP), Congress has made available an important tool that our commanders are using effectively in Iraq and Afghanistan. We welcome the GAO findings and have implemented the proposed changes to clarify reporting requirements. The following responds to the report's recommendations. Proposed technical changes to the draft will be submitted separately.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) to revise the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) guidance to clarify the definitions as to what is reported in the two CERP categories: (1) condolence payments and (2) battle damage payments.

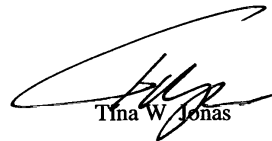
DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with this recommendation and has issued revised guidance which will facilitate accurate reporting from the field.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) to require document reference numbers be provided for payments to allow DoD to determine whether expenditures of Commander's Emergency Response Program funds are appropriately categorized and to permit DoD to obtain detailed information for analysis and reporting, as appropriate.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with this recommendation and the Commander's Emergency Response Program guidance has been altered to reflect this recommendation.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report.

Sincerely,



Tina W. Jonas

cc:

Ms. Sharon Pickup
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
Government Accountability Office