

Statement for the Record

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Before the

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House Armed Services Committee**

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Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member Hunter, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Department of Commerce's participation in sending Commerce employees on extended details to Iraq.

The Department of Commerce has paid the salaries and benefits of all Commerce staff that have served in Iraq. We are currently working with the State Department on a Memorandum of Understanding for reimbursable pay for future detail positions.

Commerce staff receives the benefits package outlined in the State Department's Iraq Service Recognition Package. No Commerce employee has been killed or seriously injured while on assignment in Iraq. According to officials from our International Trade Administration, when asked, most Commerce employees who have volunteered to serve in Iraq have identified the mission, the challenge, and the compensation package as their motivations for doing so.

Pursuant to the request of the President, the National Security Council, and the Department of State, in May 2007, Commerce Secretary Gutierrez issued a call for DOC

volunteers to assist with the staffing of the State Department-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq. A diverse array of DOC professionals submitted applications, and we have forwarded the most qualified candidates' professional information to the Department of State. The State Department is reviewing this information and is selecting candidates for PRTs from its wide pool of applicants. Commerce staff selected for these positions will serve on a reimbursable detail to the State Department and will receive the benefits outlined in the State Department's Iraq Service Recognition Package.