

Union Wants 'Clarification' of DoD Shift on Insourcing

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The American Federation of Government Employees said it will seek more information on a turnaround in policy by DoD, which now says it will not replace private government contractors with full-time civilian employees.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates in 2009 said he would cut the number of service support contractors by 33,000 over the next five years and replace them with federal employees. However, on Aug. 9 Gates announced that the insourcing efforts had not produced the savings he sought and instead the trimmed contractor positions will not be replaced.

AFGE National President John Gage complained that Gates was too quick to sound a retreat on insourcing. He pointed out that DoD does not even know how many private contractors it employs. Until the department conducts a full inventory of its contractor workforce and integrates those numbers into the budget process, it will be unable to determine the costs and savings from insourcing, Gage said.

"The department's budget is in critical condition because of decades of excessive privatization," Gage said in an Aug. 13 statement. "Surely, we should not give up on the promising but short-lived insourcing effort after just one year."

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