



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
COORDINATOR FOR DRUG ENFORCEMENT
POLICY AND SUPPORT

1510 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20301-1510

APR 28 1997



MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Army Drug Testing Programs

For the past 12 months my staff has been working with the Army staff to achieve some valuable cost efficiencies in the DoD drug testing program (attached), and the required OMB A-76 cost comparisons are now underway within the Army. When completed, we anticipate being able to achieve a considerable net cost savings for the Department by conducting Military Entrance Program Station (MEPS) and Army National Guard (ANG) drug testing at existing military drug testing laboratories versus using commercial contractors.

While this process was ongoing, we received an Army memorandum (attached) that further complicated the situation by recommending additional contract drug testing--suggesting that the Army should contracting-out all Army active duty military drug testing, and close both Army drug testing laboratories.

We consider commercial contract drug testing for Army active duty members to be a mistake from a personnel and readiness perspective. The unequaled forensic integrity of the military drug testing laboratories is crucial given the career-ending consequence of a positive illegal drug test. In this context, only the highest standards can be acceptable, unless we are willing to impose on our active duty members the continuing concerns of false positives and uncertain forensic integrity. Although of high quality, the commercial sector simply does not have the same rigorous administrative procedures that are exercised by our military laboratories. Consequently, regardless of the result of the OMB A-76 study for MEPS and ANG testing, from a policy perspective, we do not agree with a course of action that would result in active duty military drug testing being contracted to commercial drug testing laboratories.

Moreover, since drug abuse impairs the abilities of users and endangers their co-workers, such abuse impacts directly the ability of the Department to field ready and capable forces. Consequently, we consider the DoD active duty military drug testing program to be a military readiness program.

As with all of the Department's counterdrug policy, funding, and billets, the DoD Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support is responsible for the drug testing program. Funds for these activities are appropriated directly to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Counterdrug Central Transfer Account), and subsequently released to the Services/Defense Agencies for execution under this office's program and policy guidance. Counterdrug billets are also special, being allocated to the counterdrug program and then provided to the Services/Defense Agencies--over and above their normal ceiling. In this context, no unilateral action should be taken by the Army with respect to military drug testing without the appropriate policy and funding approval of the office of the DoD Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support.



In summary, it is our objective to ensure that the Department's military drug testing program is executed efficiently and with the requisite concern both for resources and the impact on our Service men and women. To this end, the ongoing Army OMB A-76 comparisons will provide us options for MEPS and ANG testing, and we request that the results of these objective OMB A-76 comparisons be completed with sufficient time for us to make deliberate decisions regarding FY 1998 program commitments and execution.

My point of contact is Mr. Lennard Wolfson, Director, Demand Reduction and Systems, who may be contacted at 693-1917.



Brian E. Sheridan
Principal Deputy

Attachments:
As stated