

I've always been confused by Mr. Assad's role(s) within the Department of Defense. At different points, he's been a mediator (between DCAA and DCMA), a policy-maker, a builder of empires, and an industry antagonist. And those are just off the top of my head.

Let's be clear here: I've never met Mr. Assad (unlike some of my industry peers) and I do not know him personally. What I know of the man, I know through public information: the ineligible healthcare dependent position, the CAS 412/413 position, the redefinition of "adequate price competition" decision, the Performance-Based Payments cash flow tool, various DFARS Class Deviations, and other similar issues that have come from his office over the past nine years. A keyword search identifies that we have written about Mr. Assad and his directives 49 times since 2010; this article marks the 50th instance. A quick scan of those articles reinforces our opinion. Based on the public information available to us:

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And now Mr. Assad is moving on.

We already knew that Mr. Assad was departing his role as Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting and we alluded to it in mid-December. We didn't know where he was going or what he was going to be doing, but we knew he was moving on. Now comes word, via [a report](#) by Marcus Weisgerber at DefenseOne, that Mr. Assad is being reassigned to a DCMA office in Boston. His exact role is unclear, but it is being described as a lateral move. The exact report is as follows—"in the coming weeks, Assad will be moved from his position as director of defense pricing and contracting initiatives to a lateral position within the Defense Contract Management Agency in the Boston area. ..." It's tough to imagine what "lateral position" DCMA might offer him in terms of policy-making impact, but it's likely that "lateral" refers to pay band and not roles and responsibilities.

An interesting aspect of Mr. Assad's compensation was a negotiated agreement to permit him to maintain a primary residence in the Boston area while commuting to Washington, D.C., for his job at the Pentagon. Unlike almost every civilian and military employee of DoD, he was not required to relocate to accept a new position. Indeed, the taxpayers paid for his commuting

Shay Assad Moves On

Written by Nick Sanders

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expenses (though we suspect it was reported as taxable income to him). The DefenseOne article stated—

Assad had a special arrangement that allowed him to live in the Boston area and commute regularly to Washington, current and former defense officials said. Neither Ash Carter, then the Pentagon's acquisition chief, nor his successor Frank Kendall objected to this arrangement, because they viewed Assad as unusually good at saving taxpayers' money.

According to the article, taxpayers spent \$503,000 on Assad's travel during the past seven years. Is that a lot? Not really. But it is unusual, isn't it?

Although the travel reimbursement may be an interesting aspect of Mr. Assad's compensation, it is not why he is being reassigned, according to the report. Two other reasons were given: the first was the recent proposed rule on contract financing payments, about which we have written fairly extensively. (Note: not fans.) The second reason had to do with Mr. Assad's character. Although he was seen as a shrewd and tough negotiator, "some current and former officials also describe him as a bully who needed to be monitored by his superiors out of fear he would overstep his authorities."

When one combines the travel reimbursement with the political backlash from the contract financing rule, and then combines those with the perception that he was a maverick that needed watching, it seems that Mr. Assad's liabilities outweighed his benefits, at least in the minds of his bosses.

Thus: Mr. Assad's return to a permanent work location in the Boston area, one near his home and family, at what we assume to be a commensurate salary.

A soft landing indeed.