



U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL

1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

The Special Counsel

April 10, 2007

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Re: OSC File Nos. DI-06-0782

Dear Mr. President:

I received disclosures from Richard Conrad, a whistleblower at the Department of the Navy, Naval Air Depot (NADEP), North Island (NI), California. Mr. Conrad, Electronic Mechanic Journeyman, alleged that artisans working on generator conversion units (GCUs) for F/A-18 fighter aircraft did not have the necessary torque tools required to properly torque the screws used to assemble the GCUs. Mr. Conrad further alleged that, although GCU Shop artisans finally received torque tools in July 2005, the GCU screws on hundreds of F/A-18s currently deployed by the U.S. military still have not been properly torqued. Because GCUs provide electrical power to the aircraft, Mr. Conrad contended that GCU failure could have catastrophic consequences. An agency investigation substantiated Mr. Conrad's allegations, and the Navy has taken corrective action to ensure that all GCU Shop artisans are currently using proper torque tools on GCU screws. Nevertheless, the Navy has decided against pursuing disciplinary action against any individuals for the violations. For the reasons discussed in the Analysis of Disclosures, OSC finds that the agency's decision to refrain from disciplining any of the GCU Shop managers is unreasonable. Our military cannot afford to take unnecessary risks with its fleet of F/A-18 fighter jets while we are a nation at war. Thus, it is critical that the Navy hold the individuals who are responsible for this serious lapse in aircraft maintenance accountable.

I required the Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy, to conduct an investigation into the whistleblower's disclosures pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(c) and (d). The Secretary subsequently submitted a report to this office. Mr. Conrad provided comments on the agency report to this office pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(1). As required by law, 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I am now transmitting the report to you.

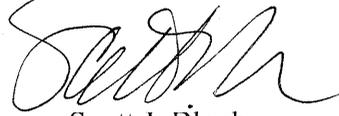
Based on the representations made in the agency report and Mr. Conrad's comments, I have determined that the agency report contains all of the information required by statute; however, I am unable to find that all of the agency's findings are reasonable. Specifically, I find that the agency's decision to refrain from taking disciplinary action against any GCU Shop managers is unreasonable. As required by § 1213(e)(3), I have sent a copy of the report and Mr. Conrad's comments to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Armed

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Services. We have also filed a copy of the report and the whistleblower's comments in our public file and closed the matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bloch', written in a cursive style.

Scott J. Bloch

Enclosures