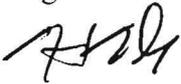




SEP 19 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: M/PRI – Susan Curley, Acting

FROM: OIG – Harold W. Geisel 

SUBJECT: Support for Department Employees Serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan (ISP-I-12-49)

Executive Summary

On April 27, 2012, the Bureau of Human Resources briefed the Office of Inspector General team on issues concerning families of employees serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan (AIP). In the course of analyzing those issues, OIG inspectors noted two areas for improvement for the program: there are no guidelines directed to post management on standard post support responsibilities to safe-havened families and guidance for AIP bidders and their families is excellent, but is not easily available to potential bidders early enough in the bid process. This memorandum report recommends that clear guidelines be disseminated to post management on support for AIP families and that information provided to potential AIP bidders and their families be sent earlier in the bidding process.

Summary of Findings

On a recent inspection trip, inspectors observed dissimilar treatment of AIP families at different posts. One embassy offered excellent support, and the result was several volunteers for AIP posts in the last bidding cycle. By contrast, one Ambassador openly opposed families of AIP volunteers staying at post. Only when the Bureau of Human Resources and the Under Secretary for Management provided direct instructions to the Ambassador did he relent, although he insisted for a while that the families move to a designated compound. The episode highlighted the lack of clear guidance on standard mission support for safe-havened families and the resulting possibility for inequitable treatment. Although there are recommended guidelines on hosting safe-havened families, there are no instructions directed to post management on Department expectations.

Recommendation 1: The Office of the Under Secretary for Management, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, should publish an annual worldwide cable, prior to the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan bid season, strongly encouraging missions to support potential bidders and referencing existing guidance on

Department expectations of post support, including information on reimbursement to post for services rendered to families of successful bidders. (Action: M/PRI, in coordination with NEA and SCA)

The excellent guidance on AIP assignments would be more useful to potential bidders if summary information were distributed earlier in the process. The Human Resources Decision Tree for employees and their families (attached) states that the 12-month temporary duty option must be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and that the employee should contact the post and the bureau. The letter from the Bureau of Human Resources to clients on finalizing an Afghanistan assignment states that “while the Department will strive to accommodate your preferences, it will remain up to the Department to choose whether to send you PCS or TDY.” A sample decision memorandum for the deputy chief of mission at post (attached) asks whether the host government will object to the family remaining at post; grant the family derivative diplomatic status; allow double-encumbering of the position; and support the logistical requirements of the family remaining at post. However, the memorandum raises these questions for employees who have already accepted a handshake for a position in an AIP country, which is late in the assignment process. Making comprehensive information available to potential AIP bidders prior to the AIP bid season will allow employees to thoroughly research and weigh their options earlier. Empowering employees to form realistic expectations with regard to their status and that of their families will further incentivize volunteers for AIP posts.

Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Human Resources, in coordination with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, should publish an annual cable prior to the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan bid season that informs employees of all options that will allow the employee to better plan before actually bidding on an Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan post. (Action: DGHR, in coordination with NEA and SCA)

Attachments:

1. AIP ASRP cable 11 State 52039
2. AIP Decision Tree
3. AIP Afghanistan Client letter – 2012 Cycle
4. AIP memo for DCM

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TAGS: APER, AMGT

SUBJECT: 2012 AFGHANISTAN SERVICE RECOGNITION PACKAGE (ASRP)

REF: (A) 10 STATE 64860 B) 09 STATE 062642

FOR MANAGEMENT OFFICERS: THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF ALL FULL-TIME STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES AND SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ALDAC ANNOUNCING THE SPECIAL IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN ASSIGNMENT CYCLE FOR 2012.

1. SUMMARY: The provisions of the Afghanistan Service Recognition Package (ASRP) as described below will apply to employees who bid on and are assigned/detailed to Afghanistan positions advertised in the 2012 assignment cycle. It is designed to recognize exceptional factors involved in service in Afghanistan and to assure fair and just compensation for that service as well as to provide for periodic relief from the stressful conditions of life and work in Afghanistan. The ASRP has been reviewed and revised as of the date of this cable.

Unless otherwise stated, State Department Foreign Service (FS) and Civil Service (CS) employees on limited non-career appointments (LNAs) to the Foreign Service and either assigned or detailed to Afghanistan in extended temporary duty status (TDY) from a post overseas or Washington are eligible for the benefits described below, as applicable.

The benefits for personnel hired on temporary appointments under 5 USC 3161 are summarized elsewhere (for information, contact NEA-SCA/EX/FS Assignments at AfghanAssignments@state.gov).

END SUMMARY.

2. FAMILIES:

A. If an employee serving overseas volunteers for a one-year detail to Afghanistan, whether at the end of a current tour that will be extended to facilitate the Afghanistan assignment or while still assigned to another post, he/she may be permitted to have family members who travel on the employee's orders remain at the current post of assignment during said service (available for one year only). The post/Department will

make every effort to ensure that family members who wish to exercise this option may do so, including by seeking agreement from the host country to permit family members to remain at post with existing Diplomatic, Consular or Administrative and Technical (A&T) status as appropriate.

B. If and only if the host mission is successful in obtaining agreement with the host government that the family members may remain at post with the same status they had before (i.e., Diplomatic, Consular or Administrative & Technical staff family members, as appropriate), may such families remain at the current post of assignment. In such cases, the family will not be eligible for Separate Maintenance Allowance(SMA) but will retain housing, a reduced COLA (i.e., minus the employee's portion), education allowance, R&R travel where eligible under current post entitlement, and EFM employment eligibility. While serving in Afghanistan, an employee will be eligible for benefits as described below. An employee considering this option should contact post management at the current post, his/her CDA Assignments Officer, and NEA-SCA/EX's Afghanistan Assignments Office. Employees must have approval from both the bureau and post from which they would be sent TDY.

C. Alternately, if an employee serving overseas volunteers for a one-year assignment to Afghanistan, the employee can elect to have family members who travel on the employee's official orders return to the United States (or travel to an approved foreign location on a cost construct basis) and be eligible for Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (ISMA), provided the family members meet the eligibility requirements for SMA.

D. Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowance (TSMA):

Two categories of Transitional SMA (TSMA), detailed in Standardized Regulations (DSSR) Chapter 262.3, are available to assist family members who are required to temporarily occupy commercial quarters at their official Involuntary SMA (ISMA) location in connection with unaccompanied assignments: Category 1 - TSMA may be granted for a period of up to sixty calendar days after the family members arrive at the authorized ISMA location following their departure from an accompanied foreign post, when the employee is transferring to an unaccompanied post. (DSSR 262.3d)
Category 2 - TSMA may be granted for a period of up to ten calendar days prior to the family members' departure from the ISMA point to join the employee at his/her new foreign or domestic post of assignment as long as the employee has not yet departed the unaccompanied post on transfer orders. (DSSR 262.3e)

For both of these categories, there is language in the DSSR disallowing TSMA payments for days for which the employee receives per diem on behalf of the same family members.

E. Family Member Employment:

If an employee proceeding on assignment to Embassy Kabul has an Eligible Family Member (EFM) (not including children) who is interested in accompanying the employee to Afghanistan in an EFM capacity, the Department is prepared to give every consideration to such a request. The interested employee/EFM should contact Jamie L. Armstrong, HRO Kabul or Melanie Richards, NEA-SCA/EX to obtain information on the post's AEFM employment program. EFMs are also encouraged to review information on EFM positions for the 2012 Afghanistan Assignment Cycle on the Department's Intranet at "Assignment... Afghanistan - Finding a Job in Afghanistan", and register with NEA-SCA/EX any interest in positions for which they feel qualified.

As an EFM travels to post on the employee's travel orders, the employee must be assigned to Afghanistan on permanent change of station (PCS) orders in order for his/her family member to accompany him/her to post; EFMs cannot travel on TDY orders.

3. EERS/PERFORMANCE MEMOS:

The Embassy Human Resources Office will ensure that all employees assigned or detailed to Afghanistan receive formal EERs, as with any other overseas assignment. Those who are on extended TDYs of 120 days or more will receive formal EERs in accordance with HR/PE or HR/CSP guidance, as applicable. Those on TDY assignments of less than 120 days will receive TDY Memoranda or Supplementary Comments on Performance to be included in their Official Performance Files.

4. PROMOTIONS:

Performance is and will remain key to promotion. As it has with instructions to previous Selection Boards, the Department will propose to include language in the Procedural Precepts to the 2012 and 2013 Selection Boards regarding service in Afghanistan. The Department will again propose the following language: "In demonstration of a commitment to Service needs, creditable performance under unusually difficult or dangerous circumstances is particularly relevant. Boards are encouraged to weigh positively creditable and exemplary performance at hardship and danger posts because of the unique and challenging work environment, including service in areas of widespread warfare with U.S. combat troops involvement and with a danger pay designation such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Boards should particularly credit performance in field positions outside the capital cities in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan which the President and Secretary of State have determined to be of the highest priority. These jobs are among the most challenging and dangerous in the world, and are vital to the U.S. national security."

5. EXTENSION OF TIME-IN-CLASS (TIC)/TIME-IN-SERVICE (TIS):

A. Up to two years' extension of TIC/TIS will be available only to Senior Foreign Service members in class FE-OC and generalist or specialist members in Class FS-01. Qualifying employees could serve up to two years in a qualifying position in exchange for the equivalent amount of time added to their TIC/TIS calculations. Note that the Director General has determined that, for FS-01s and FE-OCs, all positions in Afghanistan are qualifying positions. Employees compete for promotions and, if applicable, performance pay and presidential awards. This constitutes Department policy on TIC/TIS for these employees and will be incorporated in forthcoming FAM revisions.

B. Several important provisions governing TIC/TIS extensions:

(1) To benefit from this provision, members who are facing final Selection Board reviews must actually be serving in the qualifying position by September 1 of the year the member's TIC expires.

(2) A TIC/TIS extension will be available only prospectively. It will not be available retroactively to those already serving in difficult-to-staff positions or to those who have already entered their "grace year." However, those ineligible because of these provisions, but interested in working in Afghanistan after separation, should contact the NEA-SCA/EX Afghanistan Assignments Office. If you are interested in working in Afghanistan during your grace year, please contact your CDO.

(3) Senior Foreign Service members at the FE-OC level who receive a TIC extension under this provision and are subsequently promoted to FE-MC will not be able to apply the TIC extension to the combined OC/MC 14 year TIC.

(4) As is presently the case for other categories of TIC/TIS extension, any FS-01 whose Senior Threshold Window was open and whose TIC/TIS extension under this proposal conferred entitlement to one or more additional selection board reviews would have his or her Senior Threshold Window extended.

6. FAIR SHARE:

The service obligation in Afghanistan for Fair Share credit is a minimum of ten months.

7. FIVE/EIGHT RULE:

A one-year assignment or detail to Afghanistan meets Foreign Service five/eight rule obligations. Only those

who complete at least 10 months of a one-year assignment or detail to Afghanistan, or who are curtailed short of that goal for service need will be eligible.

8. ONWARD ASSIGNMENT:

The Department is offering a "linked assignment" incentive to all bidders on non-DS Afghanistan positions advertised in the 2012 cycle. This incentive does not apply to Entry-Level personnel bidding on another entry-level assignment. Details on the 2012 linked assignment program are provided in septel.

9. EXTENSION OF CURRENT ASSIGNMENT:

A. An employee who accepts a one-year detail during, but not at the end of an overseas assignment, may seek to return to the post of current assignment at the end of the detail and have his/her tour extended by one year, unless the position he/she left is a language designated position where a successor has already been assigned, i.e., where the position has already been backfilled.

B. An employee so electing must notify CDA at the time of bidding so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

10. REST & RECUPERATION (R&R) TRAVEL:

A. Employees assigned or detailed to Afghanistan for at least one year (including FS officers, specialists, and Civil Service employees on FS Limited Non-career Appointments (LNAs)) are eligible to choose between either (a) two R&R trips and three Regional Rest Breaks (RRB) or (b) three R&R trips and no RRBs during a 1-year period. Employees detailed from another overseas post may elect to return to their post of assignment for R&R.

B. Foreign Service and Civil Service employees on temporary duty for six months or more but less than one year will be eligible for one R&R trip back to the United States or to the employee's post of assignment after 90 days of service in Afghanistan.

C. U.S. Mission Kabul has a post policy on the maximum duration of R&R and RRB trips. Please see the Kabul intranet home page for further information on post policy.

11. REGIONAL REST BREAKS (RRB):

Due to the extraordinary circumstances associated with service in Afghanistan, the Department will fund employee travel for RRBs as follows: (1) one RRB of five working days during a six-month TDY; or (2) two RRBs of five working days each during a nine-month or more TDY. All employees on a one-year assignment or detail will be

eligible. Civil Service employees assigned to Afghanistan on FS LNAs are eligible for RRBs according to the same length of assignment requirements described above. As noted above, those employees who elect to take three R&R trips during a one-year assignment or detail will not be entitled to any RRBs.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE:

All employees serving for six months or more in Afghanistan may be authorized a limited amount of administrative leave to be used during R&Rs and RRBs. For those employees on one-year assignments or details, administrative leave may be authorized not to exceed a total of 20 work days per year (1 year = any 365 consecutive days) and not to exceed 5 workdays per RRB or 10 workdays per R&R trip. For shorter-term assignments, administrative leave may be authorized not to exceed a total of 10 workdays for six-month TDYs, or a total of 15 workdays for nine-month TDYs (NTE 5 workdays per RRB or 10 workdays per R&R trip). Note that administrative leave is discretionary, must be approved by Mission Afghanistan, and is not an employee entitlement.

13. TRAVEL TO/FROM POST:

Please review the January 25, 2008 Department Notice on OMB-Mandated Changes on Business Class Travel Policy and Department Notice dated February 28, 2008, FAQs About Business Class Travel Policy Changes in connection with assignment or long term TDY/detail to Afghanistan. (http://mmsweb.a.state.gov/asp/notices/dn_temp.asp?Notice_Id=8941) Business Class Air Travel is no longer authorized for personnel assigned or on a long-term TDY/detail (six months or more) to Afghanistan.

14. COMPENSATION:

A. Danger Pay:

Danger Pay for Afghanistan is 35 percent of basic pay (base salary plus comparability pay). Danger Pay begins on the day of arrival in Afghanistan and ceases on the day of departure (permanent or temporary departure from post). The employee must be in country for a minimum of four hours to receive Danger Pay.

B. Post (Hardship) Differential

The Post Differential for Afghanistan is 35 percent of basic pay (base salary pay plus comparability pay).

1) For employees assigned to Afghanistan, post differential starts on the first day they arrive in Afghanistan.

2) For employees on detail or TDY to Afghanistan, post differential is retroactive to the beginning of the day of arrival once the employee has spent 42 consecutive

days at post.

3) For further details on Post Hardship Differential see Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) Section 500.

C. Special Differential:

Commissioned Foreign Service (FS) officers in classes FS-04 to FS-01, assigned to Afghanistan or serving extended details of 180 days or more, receive a 20 percent Special Differential to compensate for substantial amounts of extra work performed. (Special differential is calculated from an employee's basic pay, i.e., base salary plus comparability pay.) These employees are not eligible to receive premium compensation (overtime pay, compensatory time off, Sunday Pay, Holiday Pay, and Night Differential) under Title 5. Special Differential will be suspended or forfeited when the eligible employee is absent: in a non-duty status for more than 21 consecutive calendar days, on temporary duty to another position that is not covered for more than 21 consecutive calendar days, or the day after an employee's permanent departure from post.

D. Premium Pay

Foreign Service Specialists, non-commissioned FS officers, employees on Limited Non-Career Appointments (LNAs) to the Foreign Service, and Civil Service employees on duty in Afghanistan are entitled to Title 5 premium compensation, and thus, may earn overtime compensation and/or compensatory time off up to the annual premium pay cap of 230,700 USD (subject to the caveats noted in paragraph F below).

NOTE: Employees who receive Law Enforcement Availability Pay (LEAP) may not also earn regular compensatory time off. Regular comp time is only earned for irregular and unscheduled overtime hours. For those receiving LEAP, all irregular and unscheduled overtime hours must be credited towards their LEAP hours. U.S. Mission Afghanistan has a premium pay policy and guidance on how overtime work must be authorized and reported.

E. Language Incentive Pay (LIP):

Members of the Foreign Service who are assigned to or on extended detail or TDY for more than 30 days to Afghanistan and possess Dari or Pushto language skills at certain levels are eligible to receive LIP or Asymmetric Language Incentive Pay (ASLIP) in accordance with the procedures outlined in 3 FAM 3910. Employees sent TDY from a current post of assignment where they are receiving LIP will not be eligible for that LIP while TDY in Afghanistan.

F. Pay Caps and Rollover Provisions:

The Department's ability to offer certain incentives depends

on continued extension of existing legislative authorization for those incentives. Pay regulations are subject to Congressional action and are subject to change. In early 2012, new pay regulations affecting Afghanistan will be published.

1). PREMIUM PAY CAPS:

For employees eligible for Title 5 premium pay (e.g., Civil Service employees, untenured FS generalists, FS specialists, and certain employees on LNAs) who are assigned or TDY'd to an Afghanistan duty station, and who spend at least 42 consecutive days in Afghanistan, both the biweekly and annual premium pay caps on the total of basic and premium pay earnings have been waived up to \$230,700 for 2011.

2). ANNUAL AGGREGATE PAY CAP:

Employees granted a waiver of the 2011 premium pay caps (5 U.S.C. 5307) up to 230,700 USD (see paragraph 15F(1) above) are not subject to the annual aggregate pay cap for the same calendar year as the premium pay cap waiver. Employees who are not eligible to receive premium pay (e.g., tenured Foreign Service officers and senior employees) are also ineligible for the premium pay cap waiver and, therefore, remain subject to the annual aggregate pay cap. The 2011 aggregate pay cap for GS-15/FS-01 and below is \$199,700 and includes base pay, allowances, and differentials. The senior aggregate limitation on pay for 2011 is \$230,700.

3). ROLLOVER PROVISION:

Employees whose pay is capped by the annual aggregate pay cap of EX-I or 199,700 USD will have their post differential and danger pay that exceeds the annual aggregate pay cap rolled over to the following year. For those employees whose pay is capped by the annual aggregate pay cap, payroll will project at the beginning of 2012 the post differential and danger pay earnings for each employee to the end of the pay year. If payroll projects the employee's pay in the current assignment will NOT exceed the pay cap, all or part of the "rollover" money will be paid. If payroll projects that the employee's pay will meet or exceed the pay cap in 2012, the "rollover" money will be held back until the employee's pay is no longer expected to exceed the annual aggregate pay cap. (See 11 State 11822.)

F. Student Loan Repayment Program:

Employees serving in Afghanistan who have qualifying outstanding student loans are eligible for the Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). (For details see 11 State 18290.)

G. Special Differential for Second Year:

The Department will continue the program to encourage employees to seek two-year tours of duty in Afghanistan. Under this program, an employee (commissioned FO-04 to FO-01 Generalists only) who extends his/her tour of duty in Afghanistan by twelve months will be eligible to receive an additional 15 percent special differential during the second year of service in Afghanistan. This special differential is to compensate for additional work performed in the second year in substantial excess of normal requirements. Employees who are assigned to Afghanistan TDY from an overseas post may request an extension but will not be permitted to remain TDY from the overseas post during the second year -- they will either have to be assigned to Afghanistan or TDY from Washington. Similarly, employees who break a linked assignment to extend for a second year will not be eligible for another linked assignment but will be eligible to accept an early handshake. The Department approved a non-repayment policy for this second-year special differential, i.e., employees who curtail their tour of duty during the second year will not be required to repay any special differential already received for their service beyond one year.

15. ASSIGNMENT STATUS & CONTINUITY TOURS

A. Assignment Status: At the present time, employees who accept Afghanistan positions advertised in the 2012 assignments cycle may be either assigned to post or TDY'd to post from Washington or from their current overseas post of assignment.

This Afghanistan Service Recognition Package will apply to those employees assigned to continuity tours. Only those employees who serve in Afghanistan during the second year of their continuity tour (May 2013-May 2014) will be eligible to seek a linked assignment. These tours are not available to entry-level personnel.

16. RESTORATION OF ANNUAL LEAVE:

The Department has designated employees serving in Afghanistan as performing "national emergency" work. Therefore, any leave forfeited by an employee because he or she is currently serving, or has served, in Afghanistan for a period of at least 30 calendar days during the leave year will be restored to the employee at the beginning of the next leave year (08 State 13189). Employees should apply for leave restoration through the Embassy Kabul Human Resources Office (HRO) or through their home post timekeeper.

17. HOME LEAVE/TRANSITION LEAVE:

A. All Foreign Service employees who arrived at post on/after May 1, 2008, and who complete 12 months of continuous service abroad in Afghanistan on assignment or TDY will accrue and are required to take home leave following the assignment.

B. Similarly, all Civil Service employees on LNAs who complete 12 months of continuous service in Afghanistan followed by another overseas assignment must also take home leave. Civil Service employees on an LNA appointment who return to an assignment in the United States are currently required to take 15 days of transition leave to resettle back into the United States.

C. While the intent of this requirement is to promote employees' well-being, the Department realizes that this may be a burden on some employees. Accordingly, the Director General may consider an employee's request for delayed or deferred home leave, or a home leave waiver if such home leave would impose undue hardship on the employee. Requests should be sent to the appropriate HR Assignments Officer for the gaining bureau or post.

D. For more details and guidance on this subject, employees should refer to 08 State 012506 and 08 State 103506.

E. Employees and their family members who are eligible for home leave based on their prior post abroad but are unable to take it because the needs of the Department require the employee to report to duty in Afghanistan directly from the prior post may delay home leave until after the employee completes service in Afghanistan, unless this would cause the employee's period of continuous service abroad to exceed 42 months. In such circumstances, the Department will pay travel expenses for eligible family members to take home leave with the employee, regardless of whether the family members are receiving SMA and are residing abroad or in the U.S. Family members will not receive SMA on any days that they receive per diem for home leave travel.

18. UAB, HHE, AND CONSUMABLE SHIPMENTS:

The following shipments are authorized for all personnel serving a one year tour in Kabul, the RCs, and the Consulates:

- UAB consisting of 250 pounds gross weight
- 2000 pounds of HHE by air
- 1000 pounds of consumables.

Personnel assigned to field positions are authorized 3 suitcases at 50lbs each for inbound travel. Outbound allowances remain 2000 net lbs HHE and 250 gross lbs UAB for all locations with the added option of a third bag in lieu of UAB for field positions. Information on what

to bring to post can be found on the Orientation and In-
Processing Center site
<http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/OIP/Afghanistan/Topics/default.aspx>

19. SUNSET REVIEW: The Department's ability to offer certain incentives depends on continued extension of existing legislative authorization for those incentives, and is subject to the availability of appropriated funds. The provisions of the Afghanistan Service Recognition Package (ASRP) may change over time to reflect changing conditions at post, just as post allowances and differentials are subject to change. The ASRP is scheduled for quarterly comprehensive reviews as necessary.

20. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
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A Decision Tree

*A guide to help you
decide where to live
during an
Unaccompanied Tour*



A Decision Tree

To Help You Decide Where to Live During an Unaccompanied Tour

The following chart outlines the allowances and other benefits/consequences of choosing one location over an other for your family to live during your unaccompanied tour. After studying these factors, you may still wonder whether it would be better to be in the US (Location A) or abroad (Location B). To help you decide, we have developed the following list of questions. Assign “weights” to each of the following questions, taking into consideration the degree of importance you place on each (0 = N/A; 1 = little support to 5 = great support). For instance, you might have distant family in location A (=2) but close friends and neighbors in location B (=3). Once you have decided between domestic or foreign location, you can repeat the process to choose between two stateside locations (i.e. a DC residence or home leave address or somewhere in the country).

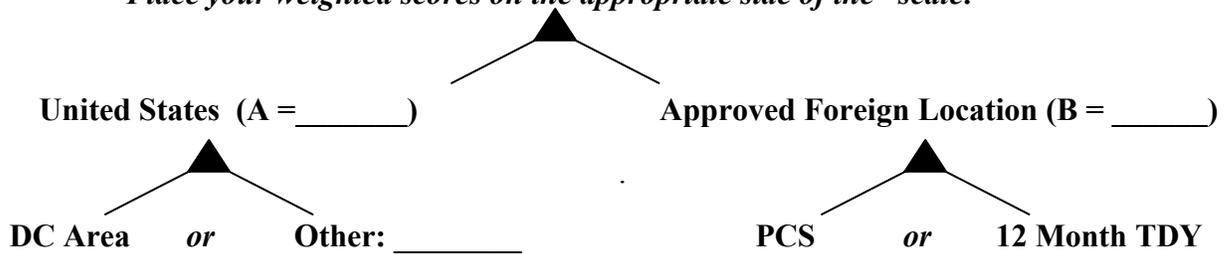
Factor	Score	
	Location A	Location B
Where is my support network?		
Personal: Family, Friends, Neighbors	_____	_____
Physical health providers	_____	_____
Mental health providers	_____	_____
Spiritual mentors	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____
Where is my comfort zone?:		
Where am I competent, confident, and comfortable with the culture?	_____	_____
Where am I fluent in the language?	_____	_____
Where would I have the best job or career opportunities?	_____	_____
Where would I have the best educational opportunities?	_____	_____
Where could I pursue my hobbies, avocations?	_____	_____
How difficult would it be to move?		
Will this assignment require time for training?	_____	_____
For Parents:		
Where would our children have the best support network (friends, extended family)?	_____	_____
Where would our children feel most comfortable?	_____	_____
Where do they have access to the most activities that interest them?	_____	_____
Where would our children have the best educational options and support?	_____	_____
Do our children have health issues to consider?	_____	_____
Where can our children get medical, or mental health support (as needed)?	_____	_____

These acronyms are used on the following pages:

<p>COM Chief of Mission</p> <p>DOS Department of State</p> <p>EFM Eligible Family Member</p> <p>HHE Household Effects</p> <p>ISMA Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance</p> <p>PCS Permanent Change of Station</p> <p>POV Privately Owned Vehicle</p>	<p>PRT Provincial Reconstruction Team</p> <p>SMA Separate Maintenance Allowance (18% lower than ISMA)</p> <p>TDY Temporary Duty</p> <p>TSMA Transitional SMA</p> <p>UAB Unaccompanied Air Baggage</p> <p>UT Unaccompanied Tour</p> <p>P & I Privileges and Immunities</p>
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The Decision Tree below shows the various support services, allowances, and other benefits/ consequences of choosing different locations for TDY or PCS Unaccompanied Tours.

Place your weighted scores on the appropriate side of the “scale:”



- Easier access to DoS for FLO, FSI, MED and other support services.
- Family travel paid to DC

- Must rely on internet and other long distance methods to contact DoS.
- Family travel paid to ISMA location.

Note: Information is for a PCS assignment. See box below for TDY notes.

If coming from a foreign post after a sufficient amount of time, EFMs may travel to HL address first, if it is different.

TSMA can be paid for up to 60 days of commercial lodging while awaiting HHE at ISMA point.

HHE & UAB, and possibly POV transported. HHE may be put into or taken from storage. Overall weight must be within allowable limit.

Children are assumed to be in public school but could have away-from-post education allowance for the remainder of a school year if they started the school year in a foreign boarding school at previous post. For single parents who are entrusting their child(ren) to a non-parent guardian in the US, the away-from-post education allowance may be used to cover enrollment fees at public or private day school, and some living expenses can be reimbursed to guardian if there is no parent (legal or step) also in the U.S.

Family, HHE, UAB, POV etc. will be moved to next assignment. Family may stay in commercial quarters for up to ten (10) days on TSMA after pack out, if they will be traveling to an onward foreign assignment from the ISMA location.

These allowances are current but are subject to change.

Please Note: Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA, ISMA, and TSMA) is tax free.

- No support from Mission, i.e. must arrange visas, work permits, housing etc. on own. No APO/ pouch, Health Unit, Commissary, GSO, or P & I's.
- Family may be eligible for ISMA and at-post Education Allowance for location. Must designate a “virtual” ISMA location in CONUS. EFMs, HHE, UAB and possibly POV sent on cost constructed basis from last post to ‘virtual’ location. Travel to next post also cost constructed.
- Employee’s travel on R&R’s cost constructed to EFMs’ location based on designated R&R for his/her post (e.g. London for Iraq).
- May use Travel of Children of Separated Families for visiting in a third location (cost constructed from ‘virtual’ ISMA address). Does not apply for college or boarding school students (their travel would have to be within their Education or Educational Travel Allowance).

- Family under COM continues with house, job, school, Embassy access, pouch/APO, Health Unit, and P&Is as before.
- No ISMA, but if post has COLA it continues, minus the employee’s portion. If status of family has not been changed previously, may opt to leave post (e.g., after school ends) and go on voluntary SMA.
- Employee's R&Rs may be to US or post.
- Not eligible for Travel of Children of Separated Families (except for children who do not regularly reside with the employee and do not receive an education allowance or educational travel).

Note: The 12-month TDY option is limited to certain posts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan assignments, and must be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the post and the bureau.

Total

Summary of Allowances and Benefits For U.S Government Civilians Under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR)

Reference: <http://aoprals.a.state.gov> (as of March 16, 2008)

The Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) governs allowances and benefits available to U.S. Government civilians assigned to foreign areas. Note that because individual agencies may draft their own implementing regulations, which can be more restrictive than the DSSR, you may not be eligible for all of the allowances listed below. Employees should check both the DSSR and their agency's implementing

- The Office of Allowances *internet* website: <http://aoprals.state.gov/>
- The FAM and FAH can be found on the *internet* at: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/>
- The Office of Allowances *intranet* website: <http://aoprals.a.state.gov>
- The FAM and the FAH can be found on the *intranet* at: <http://arpsdir.a.state.gov>

regulations for guidance on a specific allowance. Employees of the four Foreign Affairs Agencies (State, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, and USAID) should refer to volumes 3 and 14 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) and volume 3 of the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH) for more guidance.

Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA)

SMA is designed to help an employee who is compelled by reasons of dangerous, notably unhealthful or excessively adverse living conditions at the foreign post of assignment, or for convenience of the Government, or because of family considerations, to defray the additional expense of maintaining family members at another location.

There are three types of SMA: Involuntary, Voluntary and Transitional. **Involuntary SMA** is paid when family members are prohibited from residing at the foreign post. Children are eligible for Involuntary SMA until they reach 21 years of age. **Voluntary SMA** is paid when family members may go to a foreign post but opt not to for personal reasons. Children lose eligibility for voluntary SMA when they turn 18, unless they are still in secondary school (e.g., high school). Voluntary and involuntary SMA are paid at the following annual rates:

SMA Rate Table						
Type of SMA	1 Child Only	2 or More Children	1 Adult Only	1 Adult and 1 Additional Family Member	1 Adult and 2 or 3 Additional Family Members	1 Adult and 4 or More Additional Family Members
Voluntary	\$5,300	\$8,800	\$10,100	\$13,600	\$15,400	\$18,000
Involuntary	\$6,800	\$11,300	\$12,900	\$17,400	\$19,7000	\$23,000

A "child" is a family member who is unmarried and under 21 years of age as defined in DSSR 040m(2) and

(4). An "adult" for the purposes of the above SMA table includes the employee's spouse and any of the relatives defined in DSSR 040m and 261.1b as family members who are 21 years of age or older.

Transitional SMA may be paid for reasons following the termination of an evacuation (a) through (c) or in connection with commencement/termination of an unaccompanied tour of duty (d) and (e):

- (a) following termination of an evacuation and conversion of a post to an unaccompanied status;
- (b) following termination of an evacuation and reversion of post to accompanied status, to allow a child in the final semester of the current school year to complete that school year;
- (c) following termination of an evacuation and reversion of post to accompanied status but an employee and/or family members cannot return to post for reason(s) beyond the employee's control;
- (d) when family members must depart from an accompanied foreign post because the employee's next foreign post is unaccompanied; or
- (e) when family members on ISMA prepare to depart the ISMA point for the employee's next foreign post (accompanied).

Transitional SMA is paid at the following **continental US (CONUS)** daily rates (Note that these rates are based on family units and not on individuals):

Family Size	Day 1-30	Day 31-60	Day 61-90
1-2 Eligible family members:	100%of standard CONUS	75% CONUS	50%CONUS
3 or more eligible family members:	100% CONUS +\$20	75% CONUS +\$20	50%CONUS +\$20

Please see DSSR 260 for details on each type of SMA. Note carefully the limits on some types of SMA, particularly the 90-day separation requirement, the one-change-of-election provision and separation/divorce and legal-custody-of-child provisions.

Education Allowance

The purpose of the education allowance is to assist an employee in defraying those costs necessary to obtain educational services (grades K-12) that would normally be free of charge in the U.S. The allowance is based on the least expensive "adequate" school at post. A school is deemed adequate if, upon completion of a grade at the school, a child of normal ability could enter the next higher grade at a public school in the United States. When a school is adequate, the rates for attending a school "at post" and attending a school "away from post" will be the same. The "away-from-post" education allowance can be used to pay for tuition, room and board, unaccompanied air baggage and periodic transportation between the post and the designated boarding school, **not to exceed the away from post allowance.**

The regulations also provide a "special-needs" allowance in lieu of the "at-post" or "away-from-post" education allowances, as well as additional funds for supplementary instruction. Children who are home-schooled are also eligible for some education allowance funding. DOD employees come under separate

authority for education benefits. Note: the transportation portion of the “away-from-post” rate should not be confused with the separate benefit of educational travel described below. See Section 270 of the DSSR for more information on the education allowance.

Educational Travel:

This allowance permits one round trip annually between a school attended and the foreign post of assignment. This benefit is primarily intended to reunite a full-time post-secondary student attending college (including the post-baccalaureate level), technical or vocational school with the employee/parent serving the U.S. government in the foreign area. However, educational travel may be paid for a child in secondary school (grades 9 through 12) instead of the education allowance described above.

Educational travel cannot be paid at the same time as the education allowance and should not be confused with the transportation component of the “away-from-post” education allowance. Educational travel can commence from either the school or the post, but only one round trip between school and post is allowed annually. Based on a change in law, the DSSR changed effective July 22, 2007 eliminating the restriction that the school attended full-time had to be in the United States. The educational travel benefit ceases once the student dependent reaches the age of 23, except for in limited cases when the child's education is delayed by military service (see DSSR 284 for further information).

For more information or questions about Unaccompanied Tours please contact:

Unaccompanied Tours Support Office

Family Liaison Office - DGHR/FLO
U.S. Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building, Room 1239
Washington, DC 20520
Telephone 202.647.1076; 1-800-440-0397
FAX 202.647.1670

Internet: www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14521.htm

Intranet: http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Benefits_Compensation/Family_Services/Pages/UnaccompaniedTours.aspx

Email: FLOaskUT@state.gov



Information for AIP posts

<http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/OIP/default.aspx> intranet site

EFM employment

Afghanistan:

http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/Shared%20Documents/Kabul_EFM_Instructions.pdf intranet site

Iraq:

http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/Shared%20Documents/Baghdad_EFM_Instructions.pdf intranet site

Pakistan:

http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/Shared%20Documents/Pakistan_EFM_Instructions.pdf intranet site

Questions and application for ISMA (on the intranet)

General questions: Wendy Brayer in Room 4253 Tel 202-647-2824 at Main State
or your Human Resources Officer at post.

Iraq: Terri Diggs, DiggsTP@state.gov or (202) 647-5966.

Pakistan: Jennie Huei Wen H Chow ChowHH@state.gov or (202) 647-4629

Africa: Yuien A Stites (Alison) StitesYA@state.gov or (202) 647-2776

Kosovo: William a Womack WomackWA@state.gov or (202)647-7794

Monterrey: Alisa Coleman Brown coleman-browna@state.gov or 202 736 7015

ISMA Directions

Complete SF 1190, b) Certification of Circumstances, c) Confirmation of Understanding of “One Change” rule documents, d) Copy of your OF-126 Dependent Report, and e) Copy of your Travel Authorization—all forms & info found at:

[http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/PMO/Hot%20Topics/Forms/
AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsites%2fex%2fPMO%2fHot%20Topics
%2fSMA%20Application&FolderCTID=&View=
%7bF657FB95%2dB433%2d4EA3%2d8C9F%2d09419B56FF13%7d](http://nea.p.state.sbu/sites/ex/PMO/Hot%20Topics/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsites%2fex%2fPMO%2fHot%20Topics%2fSMA%20Application&FolderCTID=&View=%7bF657FB95%2dB433%2d4EA3%2d8C9F%2d09419B56FF13%7d)

The Bureau, Post and Charleston will approve and coordinate submission.

Dear Client,

Please read the below message carefully as it presents important details on the information that we'll need from you in order to finalize your 2012 Afghanistan assignment. The below also reminds you on how to proceed if you are seeking a linked assignment.

Finalizing Your Afghanistan Assignment

As you may know, per the 2012 Afghanistan Service Recognition Package, employees who bid on Afghanistan assignments during the 2012 assignments cycle **may be assigned to Afghanistan (PCS), assigned to Washington and TDY to Afghanistan, or TDY from their current post.** Please review the following three assignment possibilities carefully and let Erin Carroll (SCA) and Meri-Kay Katterson (HR/CDA/AD) know which option you would prefer. **Please remember, however, that while the Department will strive to accommodate your preferences, it will remain up to the Department to choose whether to send you PCS or TDY:**

1. Assignment to the position in Afghanistan (PCS): Employees who are assigned to Afghanistan and travel on PCS (also known as Post Assignment Travel or PAT) orders are eligible for [Involuntary & Separate Maintenance Allowance](#) (ISMA) for families and receive per diem while in Washington for training (if coming from an overseas assignment). Orders will be processed by HR/EX.

If an EFM travels to post on the employee's travel orders, the employee must be assigned on permanent change of station (PCS) orders in order for his/her family member to accompany him/her to post. EFM's cannot travel on TDY orders.

2. Assignment to Washington (NEA/SA/IAD – Afghanistan Staff) and TDY to Afghanistan: At the present time, employees who accept Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan positions advertised in the 2012 assignments cycle may TDY to post from Washington.

Employees who TDY to Afghanistan from Washington are not eligible for ISMA or SMA; nor are they eligible for per diem while in Washington for training. However, employees who TDY from Washington are eligible for Washington locality pay (24.22%), and for the Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) if transferring from an overseas assignment. Employees who are assigned to Washington and TDY to Afghanistan will **not** be eligible for per diem during any training associated with their onward assignment from Afghanistan.

Employees who are currently overseas and who will TDY to Afghanistan from Washington will receive two sets of orders. The first set of orders is prepared by HR/EX and funds PCS orders transferring employees out of post and assigning them to Washington. The second set of orders is prepared by the Office of Orientation and In-Processing (OIP) and will allow long-term storage, training, and travel. Please note: The Foreign Service Act has **no** provision to cover storage of HHE for employees who are assigned domestically using HR/EX funds.

3. TDY from your current post: This option is only available to employees with EFM's on their orders. If approved, these employees will be able to leave their families at post, retaining diplomatic status while they TDY to Afghanistan. Employees who TDY to Afghanistan from their current post **must have "losing" post written approval as well as agreement by the host country to extend diplomatic status to remaining family members**. OIP will issue employees' training and travel orders.

Employees assigned to Afghanistan during the 2012 cycle with an ETA of 2013 via one year of language training may be assigned via options 1 or 2 above: assignment to Afghanistan (PCS) or assignment to Washington and TDY to Afghanistan. Please be advised that if an employee is coming from overseas and selects the Washington assignment with the TDY to Afghanistan, he/she will not be eligible for per diem during language training. As mentioned above, employees who are assigned to Washington and TDY to Afghanistan will also not be eligible to collect per diem in training for their follow-on assignment.

DS agents should contact their CDO and/or DS assignments officer for more detailed information on how the above assignment mechanisms might apply to them. Entry-Level Generalists and Specialists being assigned to Afghanistan on their first tour will be assigned to Afghanistan (PCS) and are not eligible for either TDY option.

For more information, please refer to the "**Assignment....Afghanistan**" website which is accessible under "Employee Resources" on the State Department's Home Intranet page. It is important to look at this site on a frequent basis as any changes to assignments in Afghanistan will be posted.

Please notify Erin Carroll (SCA) and Meri-Kay Katterson which option you would prefer as soon as possible. Once you have notified us of your preferred option, the appropriate HR/CDA/AD Assignments Officer will contact you to discuss the next steps. Employees who prefer the TDY from post option must still notify the above people even though all the final details at post may not have been worked out.

The Orientation and In-Processing Center (OIP) is the central Post in-processing point for USG employees of all agencies deploying to Afghanistan. The level of support is directly related to the employee's assignment status (TDY or PCS). OIP will send each traveler a Deployment Guide which they are urged to read in order to understand deployment actions and the assistance provided by the OIP Center. The deployment guide and other useful information can also be found at: [Afghanistan Orientation and In-processing Center \(OIP\)](#)

REMEMBER! It is your responsibility to state your preference depending on your personal situation. **Once you have chosen and begun travel, your PCS or TDY status cannot be changed.**

Important Reminder for those Eligible for Linked Assignments:

LINKED ASSIGNMENTS: If you submitted your 2012 Afghanistan bid by July 29 and are seeking a linked assignment for 2013, send an e-mail to your CDO, and NEA/EX, so

that they are able to track your interest and progress. If you haven't done so already, please also send an e-mail to AfghanistanLinkedAssignments@state.gov to formally register your interest. This e-mail should include the following information: (1) Your name, (2) your grade, (3) your cone, (4) the Afghanistan position(s) on which you bid or accepted a handshake, (5) the date that you submitted your Afghanistan bids, and (6) the bureaus, posts and/or positions to which you hope to link (if you have focused your search). Once a position is posted on a regular cycle, the position will no longer be available for a linked assignment.

As noted in the ALDAC announcing linked assignments for the 2012 cycle, the number of links will be capped at 170. Links will be finalized on a first-come, first-served basis.

Thank you very much and congratulations once again on your assignment to Afghanistan.

Meri-Kay



United States Department of State
Bureau of Human Resources
Washington, D.C. 20520

Date:

UNCLASSIFIED
DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: DCM (name)

FROM: HR/CDA/AD - Meri-Kay Katterson

SUBJECT: Request for (employee's name) family to reside at post while TDY to (AIP country where employee will be) from (date) to (date)

The above named employee has accepted a handshake for a position in (AIP country). Before HR/CDA can take this employee to Assignment Panel we must have written approval from his/her current post that the host government approves the following:

- Will host government give permission for, or have no objection to, the family member(s) remaining at post without the sponsor? Yes _____ No _____
- Is the family member(s) a U.S. citizen(s) with a diplomatic passport(s)? Yes _____ No _____
- If not a U.S. citizen without diplomatic passport, will the host government grant derivative diplomatic status without raising any questions as they do in some other countries?
Yes _____ No _____
- Will host government allow, or not object to, the position being double-encumbered for a year, i.e., the employee retains diplomatic status in country during the year away so the family member may maintain derivative status? Yes _____ No _____
- Can post support the logistical requirements (housing, ICASS service provision, etc.) of the family remaining at post during this time? Yes _____ No _____

Decision

Based on the answers to the above questions, please approve or disapprove the safe-havening of (employee's name) family in (POST name) during the one-year TDY to (AIP country where employee will be) from (date) to (date).

Approve _____ Disapprove _____ Date _____

Signature and Title of Approver _____