

U.S. to tap military for Aghan civil jobs

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Civilian aid and development workers needed for the U.S. push in Afghanistan may include military reservists who are asked to volunteer, sources say.

U.S. President Barack Obama's commitment to increase the American presence in Afghanistan envisions a big new role for aid workers, who are to come via transfers of employees from civilian U.S. agencies such as the State, Agriculture and Justice departments. But the administration now fears those plans may not be adequate to provide enough people for the task, sources told Thursday's Washington Post.

The newspaper said Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met this week to discuss the possibility of finding military reservists in civilian fields and asking them to volunteer for the jobs, if some conditions could be met.

The Post said State Department officials want the military reservists to dress in civilian clothes and report to a civilian coordinator.

Also citing unnamed sources, The New York Times said the Pentagon has already been asked to find up to 300 military people, probably reservists, who possess expertise needed for the Afghanistan effort.

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