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## Government Contracts Group Of The Year: Arnold & Porter

By **Adrian Cruz**

*Law360* (February 6, 2025, 4:04 PM EST) -- Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP played a major role in a successful bid protest of a \$12 billion U.S. Air Force missile support contract for aerospace and defense giant BAE Systems, earning the firm a spot among the 2024 Law360 Government Contracts Groups of the Year.

The firm's government contracts and national security team consists of approximately 25 attorneys mostly based out of Washington, D.C., with one practicing out of Chicago.

Practice chair Kara Daniels said the group includes a number of former government officials whose experience provides a major advantage when clients face difficult matters. She also cited the decision to have dedicated associates who focus on government contracts matters from day one as a factor in the group's success, saying that it gives the group more capacity to handle what can be complicated or sophisticated matters for clients.

"When clients come in, we can give them not only the perspective of practitioners who have been doing this work for decades, but also the perspective of people who have worked in government, understand the processes and know who the right people to speak with are," Daniels said. "From the time an attorney comes in as a junior associate, they are dedicated to our group, and many of them have either served in the Court of Federal Claims or other government experience."

Daniels said that one highlight of the past year is the wide variety of matters the group's attorneys have worked on, ranging from traditional bid protests and litigation work to more novel endeavors, such as an increased amount of cyberfraud concerns and preparing for the potential impact of the proposed Biosecure Act — a bill that the House of Representatives passed last year but that did not become law. It would have prohibited contractors from using biotechnology from Chinese companies.

Partner and former practice chair Craig Holman said that one of the biggest accomplishments for Arnold & Porter's government contracts group over the past year is its work with U.S. government and technology companies related to the CHIPS and Science Act, a 2022 statute introduced by the Biden administration that aimed to encourage domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors by authorizing billions of dollars in funding for companies such as Intel.

"2024 was another great year for our group," Holman said. "We continued to handle leading matters across the government contract space. One of the special things about our group is that we have a very



broad and diverse practice, and we've spent decades handling leading litigation matters, bid protests and counseling matters across the government contracts space."

In June, Arnold & Porter, along with Vinson & Elkins LLP, represented BAE Systems Technology Solutions & Services Inc. in a bid protest challenging the results of a prior bid protest by rival contractor Guidehouse that awarded it a contract previously issued to BAE for five years and \$12 billion to provide systems engineering and integration services for the Air Force's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile organization at Hill Air Force Base in Utah.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office ended up sustaining BAE's bid protest, saying the Air Force didn't properly assess whether Guidehouse's labor plans were realistic. The Air Force canceled the contract in August, but declined to explain the reasons for doing so.

"We were able to show that the Air Force didn't follow the solicitation and how they were going to evaluate cost realism, and ultimately, the protest was sustained and the Air Force decided to cancel the procurement," Daniels said.

Along with the team's bid protest work, Arnold & Porter has been involved in major transactions in the contractor space, most notably global engineering and technology services business Amentum's September acquisition of Jacobs Solutions' critical mission solution and cyber and intelligence businesses.

"This deal was interesting because of all the issues at hand," partner Mike McGill said. "You have a large government contractor and a large part of another contractor being put together, so there was a lot of diligence on both sides, complicated deal terms and intercompany agreements."

McGill said that Arnold & Porter has been working with Amentum since inception, with the firm adding that the combined organization will become a publicly traded company with around \$14 billion in revenue and more than 53,000 employees across 80 countries.

"This deal creates what is now a very important service provider to the U.S. government," McGill said. "Arnold & Porter's government contracts group has had a hand in the creation of Amentum from the very start. We were involved in advising them in connection with the company's formation, and we've advised the company and its ownership group in a number of smaller transactions, as well. While we've played a small part in this as government contract advisers, it's very gratifying to see the company become so successful and grow into what it has over the last few years."

--Editing by Amy French.

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