



SPOTLIGHT

# Government team taken to next level

How the recent growth of our government and national security team is helping us deliver an even more distinctive client experience.



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## Government team taken to next level

**T**he Firm is now unrivalled in its ability to help clients with matters related to the United States government and national security, thanks to the recent building out of the team and adoption of a new industry-focused strategy.

Partner Melissa Taylormoore joined White & Case in June. She brings a huge depth of government contracts expertise that will help the Firm take a more holistic view of the sector.

Melissa says: "Government contracts represent an exceptionally large opportunity for us. The federal government spent upwards of US\$700 billion on contract and financial awards last year.

"There are United States government contractors and award recipients in every industry covering every practice area but, as a Firm, we've previously not serviced client needs in this space as collectively or consistently as we might.

"We want to be more strategic and thoughtful in our approach, so we can help our current clients and tap into other opportunities and potential clients in this sector."

Speaking of the importance of Melissa's appointment, fellow Washington, D.C. Partner and national security expert Farhad Jalinous says: "We already pride ourselves on our top-of-market national security service but, until now, we've often sub contracted government contracts work to other firms. Hiring Melissa will mean we can provide a more complete, integrated, focused and efficient service.

"You cannot have a well-rounded D.C., service offering if you don't have government contracts as part of the package – it's an absolute must have."

Partner Tara Lee adds: "We already had expertise in foreign direct investments, sanctions and export control and data protection and do a lot of litigation related to government contractors, but adding Melissa is key to retaining this reputation and enhancing our bench strength on the most complex government contract issues.


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MELISSA TAYLORMOORE,  
PARTNER, WASHINGTON, D.C.





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WASHINGTON, D.C.

"Melissa will provide priceless leadership and will pull everything together as a government contracting specialist. For instance, I was on a call recently where Melissa brought lawyers together to discuss a technical government contracting issue. As a result, we discovered that this issue was relevant for work we are doing in five practice areas and five different clients.

"Our improved insight and collaboration can only help us provide a better service to our clients and help us meet a wider range of their needs."

Since Melissa joined the Firm, she and the team have identified several initial priorities to grow the practice. She says: "Priority number one has been identifying with my fellow partners all the opportunities we've previously sub-contracted, including M&A deals and legal matters related to infrastructure and grants.

"By doing this work ourselves, we can increase the amount of connectivity we have with clients in new areas, so we can extend our relationships and become even more of a trusted partner and be seen as a one-stop-shop."

Tara says: "Another short-term target is to marshal the resources and get the word out about Melissa's expertise.

"Looking further ahead, we have big plans to grow, so we can become one of the most prominent government contracting offices in Washington, D.C. The potential of this platform is virtually unlimited."


Melissa was attracted to join the Firm both by the people and the entrepreneurial spirit. She says: "Tara, Farhad and Partner Greg Spak were three big reasons I joined because I think the people you work with are so important to having an enjoyable career. I'm excited at what they've been able to achieve.

"I also wanted to join a firm where a government contracts practice wasn't well established, so I could work with colleagues to build and shape it myself.

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TARA LEE, PARTNER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

“The potential is massive. With a fully integrated Washington, D.C. offering combined with the international footprint of the Firm and its reputation for character and integrity (which is so important in this industry), we have an unrivalled and compelling offering.

“We’re incredibly well placed to help our clients on the most highly complex, cross-border and cross-practice problems.”

As a former general counsel at government defense contractor Constellis, Melissa appreciates the importance of a legal partner that understands the industry and can offer a full range of advice.

She says: “I know from experience that government contractors and award recipients often have to go to several legal firms depending on the issues they are facing. Now, White & Case can help these clients with all their problems.

Even better, we understand the language of their business, including the government contracting aspect of the work they do. I can’t think of another firm that’s able to do that on the geographical scale we can.”

Melissa sees several notable trends in the government contracts space that the Firm could look to assist its clients in the coming months.

She says: “The number of false claims cases and related whistleblowing allegations, audits and investigations have increased three-fold in the last five years.

“We’ve also seen an increase in the number of CFIUS (Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States) filings as the world becomes more global and foreign investors increasingly invest in US government contractors.

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FARHAD JALINOUS, PARTNER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

“In addition, infrastructure is expected to continue booming, with the government’s infrastructure act offering billions of dollars to private companies who have to comply with government regulatory requirements. We’re perfectly placed to help them with those issues.”

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PARTNER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Having greatly strengthened White & Case’s offering for clients on government contract matters, Farhad, Tara and Melissa see the challenge of maximizing this advantage as very much a Firm-wide team effort.

Farhad says: “The real challenge is to make sure our colleagues understand what Melissa does so, when they talk to their clients, they can identify areas where Melissa or we might help and make those connections.

“For instance, if your client is going through some sort of restructuring and a federal agency is involved there may be a lot of regulatory issues the client will need advice on.

“The same would be true in an M&A deal where a target company has any significant contracts with the US government or states. You absolutely need to ask Melissa for advice.”

Tara adds: “If you have a client or potential client who is doing business with the US government in any way, you should make an introduction to Melissa and get a full understanding of the types of services we can provide, because there is almost certainly something else we can be doing with that client.”

Melissa concludes: “We’d encourage all our lawyers and associates to get in touch. It’s an important way in which we can offer a distinctive client experience to our clients.”

