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For Immediate Release:

January 23, 2007 Contact: Peter Karafotas
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SCHAKOWSKY LETTER TO GATES QUESTIONS USE OF PRIVATE CONTRACTORS

SEEKS ANSWERS ON NEW DETAINEE ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a Chief Deputy Democratic Whip, today warned that the use of private contractors in interrogations is a violation of the law. Schakowsky is a member of the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

The full text of the letter and a list of signatories is below:

January 23, 2007

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
Office of the Secretary
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155

Dear Secretary Gates:

Congratulations on assuming the responsibility of leading the Department of Defense at this critical time.

As you assume your new duties, we would like to alert you to our concerns about the use of military contractors in interrogations.

We are particularly concerned about the use of contractors to perform the critical task of enemy interrogations.

The FBI's recent disclosures are particularly disturbing because they are similar to the incidents that occurred in the past.

In the wake of the recent FBI report from Guantanamo Bay, we would appreciate a briefing from you regarding the findings and any actions taken.

Why does the Department of Defense rely on contractors to provide interrogation services?

Does the Department of Defense have the resources (personnel, training, funding, supplies, etc.) it needs to conduct interrogations effectively?

What measures are in place to ensure Defense Department control over contractors involved with interrogations?

What laws are contractors subject to when involved in interrogations?

Do contractors have the authority to command active military personnel during the interrogation process?

What rules apply to contractors regarding the prohibitions of disclosure of information obtained through interrogations?

In what other places since September 11th, 2001, beyond Abu Gharib and Guantanamo, has the Department of Defense used contractors for interrogations?

How many contractors, and which companies, are engaged in Department of Defense interrogations and what are their roles?

What type of training do contractors receive?

What actions, if any, have been taken by the Department of Defense against contractors found to have engaged in unauthorized activities?

How can the Department of Defense ensure there will be no future abuses by contractors?

Because of the importance of this issue, we request that this briefing be arranged within the next month.

Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky

Member of Congress

David Price

Member of Congress

George Miller

Member of Congress

Barney Frank

Member of Congress

James McGovern

Betty McCollum

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Keith Ellison

Pete Stark

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey

Tammy Baldwin

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Luis Gutierrez

Danny Davis

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Steven Rothman

Jerrold Nadler

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Steve Cohen

Robert Brady

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Darlene Hooley

Zoe Lofgren

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Elijah Cummings

Raúl Grijalva

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Lynn Woolsey

Dennis Kucinich

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Carolyn Maloney

Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Maurice Hinchey

Gwen Moore

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett

Member of Congress

