

**April 12, 2006**

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON BUSH TO EXPLAIN HOW PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTORS ARE BEING HELD ACCOUNTABLE**

**BUSH HAS NOW HIRED 25,000 CONTRACTORS, SPENT \$50 BILLION ON THEIR SERVICES IN IRAQ**

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky today sent a letter to President Bush calling on him to explain how his administration is holding private military contractors accountable. In an event at Johns Hopkins on April 10, President Bush was unable to explain what laws governed the actions of private military contractors.

The full text of the letter is below:

Dear President Bush,

I am writing in response to remarks made at your visit to the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, on April 10, 2006. As you know, during the question and answer session, a student asked you the following question regarding private military contractors hired by the United States to perform services in Iraq:

"My question is in regards to private military contractors. Uniform Code of Military Justice does not apply to these contractors in Iraq. I asked your Secretary of Defense a couple months ago what law governs their actions... Mr. Rumsfeld answered that Iraq has its own domestic laws which he assumed applied to those private military contractors. However, Iraq is clearly not currently capable of enforcing its laws, much less against -- over our American military contractors. I would submit to you that in this case, this is one case that privatization is not a solution. And, Mr. President, how do you propose to bring private military contractors under a system of law?"

Unfortunately, Mr. President, you were unable or unwilling to answer the question in a substantive way. At a time when there are 25,000 private military contractors in Iraq, comprising the second largest force in the region other than the United States Armed Forces, 6000 of whom are armed, it is imperative that the Commander-in-Chief be fully aware of the rules that govern their activities, the major role that they are playing, the enormous costs they bring, and the impact they have on our military operations and morale. It is fair to ask that you personally make clear to the American people and to the contractors that contractors will be held

responsible if they do not adhere to the goals and ideals critical to our nation.

As you may know, U.S. contractors in Iraq have already overcharged the U.S. for services, with no consequence and our contractors in other parts of the world have been implicated in drug smuggling, human trafficking and unprovoked civilian deaths. The rules that govern their operations should be strict, they should be clear, and they should be enforced. And, at a minimum, they should be of demonstrated importance to the President of the United States.

Therefore Mr. President, I respectfully ask that you provide a proper explanation as to the regulations that apply to private contractors that accompany our military forces. I would like to know to which individuals, organizations, and laws private contractors are accountable. Are they ultimately accountable to their CEO or to a U.S. military commander? Must they follow the laws of their host country, or the U.S. government? What rules apply to foreign nationals that work for those contractors and their subcontractors? I would also like to know how the U.S. government monitors private contractors to ensure that they are performing in compliance with their contracts.

What is the total number of private contractors and sub-contractors that the U.S. government has hired in Iraq? What responsibilities and assignments have they been given?

Furthermore, it is my understanding that the Department of Defense does not have an official count of how many contractor casualties there have been in Iraq. How many have there been?

I understand that on October 3, 2005, the Defense Department issued instruction Number 3020.41 which outlines rules that apply to "Contractor Personnel Authorized to Accompany the U.S. Armed Forces." However, there is no evidence that this rule was ever enacted on a broad scale or if its implementation has been monitored.

I believe the accountability black hole that envelops private military contractors allows those contractors to engage in waste, fraud, and abuse and threatens the integrity our military operations abroad. The questioner at Johns Hopkins was speaking for many Americans who want some clear answers from their Commander-in-Chief.

Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress