

MAY 4, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON PRESIDENT BUSH TO SUSPEND CONTRACTS
WITH PRIVATE MILITARY FIRMS INVOLVED IN SUPERVISION,
SECURITY AND INTERROGATION
OF IRAQI PRISONERS**

**CONTRACTORS REMAIN ON THE JOB EVEN
AFTER BEING IMPLICATED IN ARMY REPORT
WITH ABUSING IRAQI PRISONERS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Following reports that private civilian contractors remain on the job even after being involved in the illegal abuse of Iraqi detainees, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a Chief Deputy Whip, called on President Bush to immediately suspend all contracts with private military firms involved in the supervision, security or interrogation of Iraqi prisoners. □ □

In a letter to President Bush, Schakowsky wrote that *"pending a thorough investigation and appropriate action, including, but not limited to, the dismissal and prosecution of those involved, all contracts with civilian firms for functions involving security, supervision and interrogation of prisoners, should be suspended."*

Schakowsky, who is a longtime critic of the use of private military contractors, demanded that, in addition to suspending the contracts, President Bush *"make clear your Administration's policy on the laws governing the conduct of contractors in Iraq."* □ □

She continued: *"The sadistic abuses of Iraqis at a U.S. military prison raise serious questions about the accountability of U.S.-hired private military contractors who are involved in illegal activity. What is your plan for prosecuting those who violate international human rights laws and the laws of war as stipulated under the Geneva Convention? [i]f you believe the United States currently lacks statutory authority to prosecute illegal actions of contractors under U.S. hire in Iraq, I urge you to ask the Congress for that authority."*

Schakowsky concluded, *".the use of private military contractors .is a misguided policy*

that impedes the ability of the Congress to conduct appropriate oversight and keeps the American public in the dark."

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Below is Schakowsky's letter to President Bush:

May 4, 2004□

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

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Dear President Bush:□

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□□□□□□□□□□ I am writing out of concern over recent news of abuse of prisoners being held by the United States at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.□ In particular, I have questions about the role of civilian contractors in these abuses, the investigation into the abuses, and rules of accountability for U.S. civilian contractors operating in Iraq.□ As you may know, I wrote to Ambassador Bremer in February about those concerns over the mistreatment Iraqi detainees, including juveniles.□ This is yet another example of questionable adherence to international human rights laws by United States forces in Iraq.□□□

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□□□□□□□□□□ It has been reported that, more than two months after a classified Army report found that contract workers were implicated in the illegal abuse of Iraqis, the companies that employ them (CACI International Inc. and Titan Corp.) say that they have heard nothing from the Pentagon and that they have not removed any employees from Iraq.□□

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□□□□□□□□□□ The sadistic abuses of Iraqis at a U.S. military prison raise serious questions about the accountability of U.S.-hired private military contractors who are involved in illegal activity.□ It has been widely reported that civilian contractors are not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Conduct and that the Department of Justice is reluctant to get involved in this issue.□□

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□□□□□□□□□□ The images and stories of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison, a prison notorious for abuse under the former regime, have serious implications for the United States, for the success of our mission in Iraq, for the safety of U.S. personnel, and for our efforts to combat terror in general.□□

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□□□□□□□□□□ I have long held that the use of civilian contractors to carry out military functions on behalf of the United States is a dangerous policy, in large part because of the lack of accountability and oversight that exists when contractors are used.□ In particular, I do not believe that private companies should be trusted with interrogation of Iraqi prisoners.□□

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I believe that pending a thorough investigation and appropriate action, including but not limited to the dismissal and prosecution of those involved, all contracts with civilian firms for functions involving security, supervision and interrogation of prisoners, should be suspended. Please provide me information detailing all instances in which U.S. contractors are in positions of authority over U.S. personnel.

Furthermore, I would like to know the policy of your Administration regarding the directives, rules and laws governing contractors that operate on behalf of the United States in Iraq. It is my hope that the individuals named in recent press reports were not ordered to conduct such atrocious activities by U.S. personnel. However, that is something your Administration should unequivocally address.

Moreover, you should make clear your Administration's policy on the laws governing the conduct of contractors in Iraq. What is your plan for prosecuting those who are alleged to have violated international human rights laws and the laws of war as stipulated under the Geneva Convention? Please share with me the guidance you have provided to the Defense, Justice and State Departments on this issue. And please tell me how you plan to ensure that those who have committed these unacceptable violations of human rights in the named of the United States will be brought to justice.

If your Administration holds that civilian contractors are not accountable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, even if they are hired by the Defense Department, please tell me which laws will direct the prosecution of these individuals. And please share your justification for hiring individuals to carry out sensitive work on behalf of the United States absent accountability to our nation's reputation, our military personnel, or to the Iraqi people.

It has been reported that the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (the Act), passed in 2000, may provide "some basis" for the Justice Department to investigate and prosecute private military contractors who engage in illegal activity. Please tell me if your Administration directed the Justice Department to take such action under the Act. Finally, if you believe the United States currently lacks statutory authority to prosecute illegal actions of contractors under U.S. hire in Iraq, I urge you to ask the Congress for that authority.

Pending a full investigation and answers to all of these serious questions, I again urge you to suspend all contracts with private firms conducting services on behalf of the United States in Iraqi prisons. In addition, I would like a copy of all such contracts and a copy of the classified report prepared by Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba in February on abuse at the (Abu Ghraib) prison.

I maintain that the use of private military contractors by the United States is a misguided policy the American people untold amounts, in terms of dollars, U.S. lives and is damaging our reputation with the international community. It also impedes the

ability of the Congress to conduct appropriate oversight and keeps the American public in the dark.[] []

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Sincerely,[]

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Jan Schakowsky[]

Member of Congress