

House Dems Seek Gates Briefing

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The Hill

January 24, 2007

WASHINGTON-Several House Democrats plan to grill Secretary of Defense Robert Gates on the Pentagon's use of private contractors in interrogations at the military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Chief Deputy Democratic Whip Jan Schakowsky (Ill.) and 26 other members wrote to Gates Tuesday asking for a briefing on interrogation practice after the FBI revealed allegations this month of torture by contractors at Guantanamo.

All interpreters and half of all jail workers at Abu Ghraib were private contractors, according to Schakowsky, a member of the intelligence committee.

Reps. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), David Price (D-N.C.) and George Miller (D-Calif.) also signed the letter demanding a briefing.

"As you assume your new duties, we would like to alert you to our concerns about the use of military contractors," they wrote. "The lack of proper oversight of military contractors results in wasted funds and frustrated missions. It also sends a message to contractors that they will not be held accountable for squandering taxpayer dollars at the expense of supporting our service

members."