

Washington, D.C. - Today, the House of Representatives approved H.R. 5136, the National Defense Authorization Act, which included an amendment sponsored by Representative David Price (D-NC). The amendment would extend existing oversight requirements for private security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan to additional areas in which there is a significant security contractor presence. The reforms would build on the FY 2008 defense authorization bill, which included a number of contractor oversight provisions drawn from Rep. Price's Transparency and Accountability in Security Contracting Act (H.R. 369).

"These reforms have already improved both the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and Congress's ability to conduct effective oversight of private security contractors," Rep. Price said. "This amendment is a critical step toward ensuring that today's oversight capabilities keep pace with tomorrow's emerging threats."

Rep. Price has been a leading advocate of efforts to promote transparency and accountability in private security contracting, particularly in areas where the military is operating. High profile incidents of contractor abuses have punctuated the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Under the Price amendment, which was cosponsored by Rep. John Spratt (SC), the Department of Defense (DoD), in coordination with the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), would be required to extend certain existing contractor regulations to Yemen, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, Haiti, and any other area in which the U.S. Armed Forces engage in significant military operations. Among other things, these regulations would:

- Register personnel performing private security functions;

- Register equipment for private security functions, including weapons, armored vehicles, and helicopters;

- Require contractors to report incidents in which a weapon is discharged, a person is killed or injured or property is destroyed as a result of conduct by contractor personnel, and subject these reports to independent review;

- Verify the qualifications of contractor personnel through proof of training and background checks.

Contractors would also be subject to rules governing the use of force and several other requirements designed to improve coordination between contractors and government agencies. The Price-Spratt amendment was adopted by voice vote and included in the final version of H.R. 5136, which now awaits consideration by the Senate.

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