

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today introduced a bill to enhance oversight of intelligence community contractors and prohibit the use of such contractors in prisoner detention operations, including such sensitive and controversial areas as interrogation and international prisoner transport. This is the latest effort by Price and lead cosponsor U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky to restrict the use of private contractors for sensitive national security-related activities.

Specifically, the Price-Schakowsky bill would prohibit the intelligence agencies from outsourcing activities relating to arrest, interrogation, detention, transfer, and rendition. The bill would also require the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to furnish Congress with an annual census of the number of contractors involved in intelligence work, the activities they are asked to perform, the cost associated with their work, and an account of Administration efforts to hold contractors accountable for possible misconduct, including violations of the law. And the contractor companies themselves would have to provide the government with more detailed information on their hiring and training processes, for example, in order for the agencies to exercise stronger oversight.

"The contracting of sensitive intelligence operations to private companies proliferated under the Bush Administration, with a glaring lack of oversight to ensure effective management and accountability," Price said. "These intelligence functions are vitally important for our national security and, in many cases, how America is viewed in hostile areas of the world – making sure they are done correctly is not optional, and they shouldn't be left in the hands of for-profit contractors."

Similar legislation authored by Reps. Price and Schakowsky was passed by the House in July 2008 as part of a larger bill to authorize the functions of the intelligence community. The Senate did not complete work on an intelligence authorization last year. The Representatives hope to attach the new bill to the intelligence authorization legislation expected later this year.

The House passed a similar prohibition on interrogation for Defense Department contractors as part of the Defense Authorization bill in May 2008. Price offered that amendment as well.

The North Carolina congressman has been at the forefront of efforts to rein in the use of contractors for sensitive national security functions. He is the author of legislation that passed

PRICE BILL WOULD REIN IN INTEL CONTRACTORS

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the House in October 2007, which would enhance the government's prosecution of abusive actions by rogue security contractors in the war zone. Price warns that lawless and unaccountable behavior by contractors endangers U.S. troops and their overall mission.

The legislation introduced today would also require an annual census of the number of contractors involved in intelligence work, the activities they are asked to perform, the cost associated with their work, and an account of Administration efforts to hold contractors accountable for possible misconduct, including violations of the law.

Additionally, it would require the Director of National Intelligence to assess the appropriateness of using contractors for especially sensitive activities, including intelligence collection, intelligence analysis, and the interrogation, detention, and rendition of detainees.

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