

Calls New State Dept-DOD Agreement an "Important First Step"

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) was interviewed yesterday on WUNC-North Carolina Public Radio about a new agreement by the State Department and the Department of Defense to more closely monitor and manage the activities of private security contractors in Iraq.

That interview can be found [here](#) .

Price is a leading voice in Congress on bringing transparency and accountability to the controversial practice of private security contracting in the war zone. Congress has acted on his legislation to rein in abuses committed by rogue contractors through better management and by subjecting contractors to legal accountability for criminal behavior.

In a statement released late Wednesday after the State and Defense Department deal was announced, Price said:

"The Memorandum of Agreement between the Departments of Defense and State is an important step toward improving transparency, management, and accountability in security contracting. There is no question that it comes in response to significant Congressional pressure -- in fact, the MOA would take a number of steps I called for in legislation I introduced a year ago and that are included in this year's defense authorization bill -- but the agencies deserve credit for reading the writing on the wall and taking substantive steps to deal with a clear and critical problem.

"I am encouraged that the MOA includes several of my proposals: unified rules of engagement, a contractor activity coordination mechanism, standards for authorizing the use of weapons and carrying out background checks, and a clear mandate that evidence of misconduct be investigated and referred to prosecuting authorities. Of course, as the MOA itself acknowledges, this is only a first step, and more work needs to be done to clarify standards, improve criminal jurisdiction, and expand this oversight to all contractors in all war zones. But it is an important first step, and I applaud Secretaries Negroponte and England for their attention to this issue."

PRICE DISCUSSES IRAQ SECURITY CONTRACTORS ON WUNC

December 07, 2007

###