

Price: Rogue Security Contractors Must Be Held Accountable

Washington, D.C. - Sunday's Washington Post featured a detailed account of two shooting incidents involving private security contractors operating in Iraq.

Some witnesses are alleging that the shootings were reckless, unnecessary and obvious violations of the law. However, the article further reports that no investigation into the shootings was ever initiated by the Pentagon or the Justice Department, and in fact, "not a single case has [ever] been brought against a security contractor [in Iraq]." The article can be found at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/14/AR2007041401490_pf.html

Today, Congressman David Price (D-NC) is again calling upon Congress to take up his legislation aimed at establishing legal accountability for private security contractors operating in the war zone. Price's bill, the Transparency and Accountability in Security Contracting Act (H.R. 369), would clarify that all private security workers operating under contract (or subcontract) by a government agency in the war zone are subject to the Military Extraterritorial Justice Act (MEJA), which is to be enforced by the Department of Justice. His bill would also establish field investigative units that would gather reports of abuse and misconduct, investigate, and bring charges when violations of the law are evident.

Price released the following statement today regarding the newspaper's report:

"Yesterday's Washington Post report on shooting incidents involving private security contractors in Iraq highlights the need for Congress to introduce some accountability into the lawless environment in which battlefield contractors operate. The motto of the contractor personnel featured in the story, 'what happens here today, stays here today,' is a sad but telling sign of the problem. The fog of war is no excuse for overlooking allegations of serious misconduct by private citizens operating under the direction of the federal government. Congress should take up my bill to enhance transparency in security contracts and establish a clear legal framework to prosecute abuses. In addition, the Administration should immediately open a probe into the shootings highlighted by the Washington Post, as well as the various other such incidents that have been reported in the past."

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