

**Washington, D.C.** - U.S. Rep. David Price (NC-04) took the lead today in calling attention to a "major shift in the way our intelligence community operates." The North Carolina Democrat offered an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization bill to examine the extent to which private companies are conducting sensitive intelligence work for the government. The amendment passed the House by a unanimous voice vote.

"The last few years have seen fundamental changes in our intelligence agencies," Price said. "Some reports estimate that approximately half of the intelligence community's budget is now spent through contracts awarded to private sector firms. This is not an inconsequential matter, and it requires the immediate attention of Congress."

Experts both within and outside the Intelligence Community have warned that the expanded use of private contractors is raising several challenges. According to a March 20, 2006 article in the Washington Post, the Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, has recently expressed concern about the issue. Price said the contracts reach into several billion dollars each year.

"It is our constitutional duty to faithfully exercise oversight of the agencies of the federal government, so I am pleased that my colleagues have supported my attempt to shed some light on the outsourcing of intelligence activities," Price said.

The Price Amendment would require the Director of National Intelligence to report to Congress on the extent of private contracting of intelligence work, the rules governing the practice, and how it may be affecting employee recruitment and retention in the agencies. Last year, Price introduced related legislation to enhance the transparency and accountability of contracts awarded to private military firms, who are providing security for most State Department and reconstruction projects in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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