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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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November 3, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the United States House of Representatives, with jurisdiction over "any matter." Under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee is conducting an investigation into the government's use of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the oversight of subcontractors in those countries.

Specifically, the Committee is concerned that subcontractors performing Reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan lack the transparency and oversight necessary to ensure that projects funded by the United States are being carried out effectively, efficiently, and in the best interest of the government. It has recently been reported that there are nearly 226,500 contractor personnel working for the Department of Defense, Department of State, and United States Agency for International Development in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> According to the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, about 70 percent of the work being performed in Afghanistan and Iraq is being performed by subcontractors, with very little visibility into the subcontractors operations.<sup>2</sup> I am troubled by this finding.

<sup>1</sup> GAO, *Contingency Contracting: DOD, State, and USAID Continue to Face Challenges in Tracking Contractor Personnel and Contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan*, GAO-10-01, October 2009

<sup>2</sup> Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, *At What Cost?: Contingency Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Interim Report. June 2009

Even more alarming is the fact that 80 percent of the personnel working on Department of Defense contracts are foreign nationals that may not be accountable to the United States government.<sup>3</sup> Although I understand the importance of having foreign national firms and individuals working to rebuild their countries, it is imperative that the procuring agencies establish effective internal controls and oversight mechanisms to ensure that resources are being spent appropriately, and are not flowing into the hands of corrupt individuals or companies that could compromise national security and/or the safety and security of our soldiers and citizens.

To assist the Committee in its investigation into the government's use of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Committee requests that you provide a list of all current Department of Defense contracts that have been awarded for work being performed in Iraq and Afghanistan. This list should include the contract number, the amount of contract obligation, the firm name and DUNS number (if applicable) for each prime contractor awarded the contract and/or task order, and the name and DUNS number (if applicable) for each subcontractor performing work for the prime contractor. Furthermore, please provide the Committee with copies of your internal control procedures for ensuring that subcontractors performing work are meeting the Department's mission, goals, and objectives.

Please deliver the requested records to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, room 2157 Rayburn House Office Building, no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 30, 2009. To facilitate delivery and review, we prefer that the requested records be provided in digital format.

Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me directly or have your staff contact John Arlington or Craig Fischer of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



Edolphus Towns  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid