



Commission on Wartime Contracting
In Iraq and Afghanistan

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Wartime contracting concerns to be aired at June 10 House hearing

ARLINGTON, VA, June 5, 2009 – The co-chairs of the federal Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan will testify before a U.S. House panel June 10 on concerns raised during their initial investigations of the nation’s heavy reliance on contractors.

Commission Co-Chairs Michael J. Thibault and Christopher Shays will appear before the House Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, chaired by Rep. John F. Tierney (D-MA); ranking member is Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ). The hearing, “Commission on Wartime Contracting: Interim Findings and Path Forward,” will run from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Building.

The co-chairs’ testimony will center on the Commission’s interim report to Congress that will be formally filed and publicly released on Wednesday, June 10.

The federal law that created the Commission in 2008 required an interim report this year and a final report in 2010. The interim report, more than 100 pages long, describes the Commission’s work in areas of contractor management and accountability, logistics, reconstruction, security, and policy and process. It also highlights several “issues of immediate concern” for Congress and the Executive branch that need attention as operations increasingly shift from Iraq to the Afghan theater.

More than 240,000 contractor employees, about 80 percent of them foreign nationals, are working in Iraq and Afghanistan to support operations and projects of the U.S. military, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Contractor employees outnumber U.S. troops in the region. While contractors provide vital services, the Commission believes their use has also entailed billions of dollars lost to waste, fraud, and abuse due to inadequate planning, poor contract drafting, limited competition, understaffed oversight functions, and other problems.

The Commission co-chairs will discuss the preliminary observations in the interim report, highlight the importance of the issues of immediate concern, and describe the broad range of issues on the agenda for investigation and analysis before the final report is issued.

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The Commission's work since the start of full-scale operations in late 2008 has included dozens of meetings with federal officials, contractors, academics, think tanks, and others involved with the conduct or study of wartime contracting; two investigative trips to the theaters of operations; reviews of existing research and recommendations; new studies and interviews; and two public hearings. Details appear on the Commission's website, www.wartimecontracting.gov.

The Commission co-chairs, like the other six commissioners, were appointed by federal officials. Co-chair Thibault, appointed by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, is a former deputy director of the Defense Contract Audit Agency. Co-Chair Shays, appointed by House Minority Leader John Boehner, represented Connecticut's Fourth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987 to 2009.

The other six commissioners are Clark Kent Ervin, Grant S. Green, Linda J. Gustitus, Robert J. Henke, Charles Tiefer, and Dov S. Zakheim. The commissioners have a wide range of experience in government, law, military, education, and business.

Commissioners Tiefer and Green will accompany Co-Chairs Thibault and Shays to the hearing and serve as subject-matter experts. Tiefer is a professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law. He has served as legal counsel in both the House and Senate, and has written several books, including a text on government contracts. Green is a former Under Secretary of State for Management and Assistant Secretary of Defense. A retired Army colonel, he has also served in corporate-executive and director positions.

Additional information appears at the Commission's Web site, www.wartimecontracting.gov.