



## **Commission on Wartime Contracting In Iraq and Afghanistan**

**Statement of Commissioner  
Hon. Robert J. Henke**

### **“Lessons from the Inspector General: Improving Wartime Contracting”**

**The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan  
The Caucus Room, 325 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC  
February 2, 2009**

Mr. Co-Chairman, thank you. I am honored to be a part of this Commission and undertake our nationally important work. I applaud each of the Senators who testified this morning, not only for their thoughtful remarks today, but also for their longstanding public commitment to transparency and ‘good government’, most especially in the area of contracting during wartime in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Each of the Commissioners brings a tremendous professional background and a diversity of views and experiences. What we share in common is that same commitment to transparency, integrity and to carrying out the functions of government both efficiently and effectively. In a short span of time, we have established a bipartisan, deliberate, and rigorous approach to the large task presented to us.

I’m impressed with the quality and broad skills of the professional staff we’ve assembled, and the Chief of Staff, Mr. Robert Dickson, for assembling and leading this team. With these Commissioners and this staff, I have no doubt that we will deliver a product worthy of both our legislative mandate and the attention – and action – of the Congress.

I applaud the SIGIR, Stuart Bowen and his colleagues for the Herculean work and tremendous public service they have done. They have produced over 250 audits and inspections, and opened 370 investigations. Many would consider this prodigious work product to be sufficient. But these professionals have taken the time to think critically about it all, and write it all down, and distill it into what we can do to ensure we don’t make the same mistakes the next time. Their Hard Lessons volume is the culmination of that effort, and it is a compelling, bracing and vitally important read.

As Hard Lessons points out, every president since Harry Truman has had a contingency operation occur on his watch, one that required the intertwining of both military and civilian resources. So, it is a question of not if, but when, our military and diplomatic resources and national will are to be called on again in stability operations, or humanitarian relief, or reconstruction as in Iraq.

Undoubtedly, this future effort will require significant contracted support – whether reconstruction, or logistics, or security. We can and should debate about the appropriate mix of contracted support, or the suitability of contracting some or all functions.

What there is no debate over, however, is that when we contract for necessary functions, we must do so in a way that reflects comprehensive preparation, complete support of operational plans, crisp execution, and interagency processes working to bring all instruments of national power to bear. All this, and with full transparency, economy of effort and great respect for the taxpayer's dollar.

If we do our work well, the Commission will focus what changes we must make now and going forward, so that we get it right this next time.

I welcome the testimony of our witnesses and look forward to their important lessons learned.

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