



## Commission on Wartime Contracting In Iraq and Afghanistan

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# State Department oversight and contractor-employee misconduct to be probed at Wartime Contracting hearing

ARLINGTON, VA, Sept. 4, 2009 – The U.S. State Department’s selection, management, and oversight of security and other contractors will be the focus of a Sept. 14 hearing by the independent federal Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The hearing complements the Commission’s mandate to study matters including the widespread use of private security contractors, and was spurred by recent allegations of misconduct among employees of the State Department’s contractor Armour Group North America. Armour Group, a unit of Wackenhut Services, Inc., has a contract to protect the U.S. embassy and personnel in Kabul, Afghanistan. The company attracted intense media scrutiny recently when a watchdog group released photos purporting to show Armour Group employees engaging in alcohol-laced incidents of nudity, sexual misconduct, and degradation of junior employees. The State Department has announced that eight of the guards have now been fired.

“The conduct that’s been featured in the news speaks for itself,” said Commission Co-Chair Michael Thibault. “We don’t intend to dwell solely on that. We also want to get at the underlying questions of what the State Department contracts require of contract-employee conduct, how thorough its contractor-selection process is, how contract performance is monitored, and how shortcomings are addressed.”

Co-Chair Christopher Shays said, “Behavior like this is completely unacceptable and destructive to America’s image around the world. We need to make sure that federal departments engaging contractors are doing thorough vetting, ensuring training and compliance with codes of conduct, and enforcing contract terms that represent the high ideals of America.”

The Sept. 14 hearing, “State Department Oversight and Contractor-Employee Conduct,” is scheduled to run from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Room 2247 of the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Congress created the Commission in 2008 (Public Law 110-181) and directed it to research federal contracting for reconstruction, logistical support, and security functions, and to recommend improvements. The eight Commissioners are: Michael Thibault and Christopher Shays, co-chairs; and Clark Kent Ervin, Grant Green, Robert Henke, Linda Gustitus, Charles Tiefer, and Dov Zakheim. They are supported by 40 staff members.

The Commission’s Web site, [www.wartimecontracting.gov](http://www.wartimecontracting.gov), includes a link to an electronic copy of the Commission’s June 2009 interim report to Congress, “At What Cost? Contingency Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.” That report cited management of the Iraq drawdown and Afghan buildup among eight “issues of immediate concern”; others included weaknesses in contractors’ business systems, shortages of federal contract-management professionals, and limited accountability for the use of subcontractors.

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