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NORTH CAROLINA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
CHAIR, HOMELAND SECURITY
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July 16, 2008

The Honorable Silvestre Reyes
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
H-405 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rush Holt
Chairman
Select Intelligence Oversight Panel
Committee on Appropriations
H-218 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reyes and Chairman Holt:

I write to call your attention to activities allegedly carried out by contractors working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that cause me great concern.

As you know, numerous press reports indicate that the CIA, in support of the Bush Administration's broader policies for dealing with detainees suspected of terrorism-related activity, has transferred several such individuals to the custody of foreign nations known to engage in torture and abuse of prisoners. This practice is almost certainly in violation of the United States' commitments under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

It is my understanding that the CIA may have, in part, carried out the alleged extraordinary renditions by using private aviation contractors to physically transport detainees to the countries to which they may have been rendered. I have seen reports identifying several such private contractors, including at least one, Aero Contractors, Inc., from my home state of North Carolina.

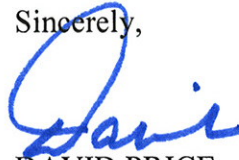
Attorney General Michael Mukasey has testified that the Department of Justice will not investigate anything "done as part of a CIA program[that] at the time that it was done was the subject of a Department of Justice opinion through the Office of Legal Counsel and was found to be permissible under the law as it existed then." (House Judiciary Committee, February 7, 2008) The CIA's alleged extraordinary rendition program reportedly falls into this category, pursuant to a March 19, 2004, Office of Legal Counsel memorandum. In view of the Administration's failure to conduct oversight of its own programs, I am writing to request that your committees examine these issues and take any actions necessary to stop inappropriate activities by the CIA or its contractors.

Specifically, I believe that an investigation should examine:

- Whether the CIA is actively carrying out extraordinary renditions and/or using private contractors to do so;
- Whether such renditions involve the transfer of detainees into the custody or control of governments known to practice torture or abuse of detainees, and whether such renditions would thus violate U.S. obligations under the Convention Against Torture;
- Whether the performance of a contract to transport detainees for the purpose of rendering them into the custody of a foreign government would pose risks to U.S. national security interests or would otherwise be inappropriate;
- Whether Aero Contractors, Inc. and other private contractors have carried out any activities in violation of federal laws and regulations; and
- Whether specific legislative measures are needed to prevent such inappropriate or illegal activities from being carried out in the future.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you, and would be happy to provide more information as necessary. I am grateful for your leadership in working to improve accountability and oversight in the intelligence community, and especially for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress