



Commission on Wartime Contracting In Iraq and Afghanistan

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Training of Afghan army and police will be focus of Sept. 24 Wartime Contracting Commission hearing

ARLINGTON, VA, Sept. 21, 2009 – The use and oversight of U.S. contractors in training Afghanistan’s army and national police will be the focus of a Sept. 24 hearing of the federal Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. [Note: This hearing was postponed, as noted in CWC release of 9/22/2009.]

The hearing will include testimony patched in live from Afghanistan by Major General Richard P. Formica, U.S. Army, head of Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A), and his deputy, Brigadier General Anthony R. Ierardi. CSTC-A works with the Afghan government and international forces and organizations to promote security and stability in Afghanistan. William Wechsler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and William McGlynn, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, will also testify.

Training and supporting the Afghan national police and army is complicated by the mountainous terrain and poor road net in much of the country, as well as by its largely rural population, a high illiteracy rate, widespread use of drugs. Afghan force-strength targets are 134,000 army and 87,000 national police by 2011.

“The United States has spent about \$15 billion in the past five years on developing the Afghan national security forces,” said Co-Chair Michael Thibault, “but our investigators, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, and others have raised serious questions about the costs, management, oversight, and effectiveness of the programs.”

Co-Chair Christopher Shays said, “More than half of our total spending on Afghan reconstruction has been devoted to training and equipping the security forces. That growing financial commitment and the growing insurgency in Afghanistan make it essential to look into the effectiveness of Defense and State Department use of contract trainers — and whether military and national-police training should be done completely, partially, or not at all by contractors.”

The hearing, “Military and Contractor Training of Afghan National Security Forces,” will run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Sept. 24, in Room 2203 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, links to the Commission’s June 2009 interim report to Congress, “At What Cost? Contingency Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

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