

Problems with private contractors are not a new phenomenon. In December, a Blackwater employee killed one of the Iraqi Vice President's guards but was never charged under Iraqi or American law because private contractors enjoy immunity, thanks to a law imposed by the United States.

On July 12, 2005, I delivered a floor statement after Iraqis cheered the brutal death of four Blackwater contractors in Fallujah. I pointed out that those soldiers of fortune are not bound by the same values of duty and honor like those brave young men and women serving in our regular forces, and those contracted forces are paid astronomically more than our regular forces.

There aren't just problems in theater. There are problems right here in Washington, like the opaque and often unfair process of awarding no-bid contracts. In fact, Blackwater has won over \$505 million in publicly identifiable contracts since 2000 and in 2003 was awarded a \$21 million no-bid contract to guard the Director of the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, Mr. Bremer. Why aren't our regular forces doing that?

I have raised questions before about these contractors and their behavior in Iraq and Afghanistan, but to no avail, in a Congress still not focused on upholding the great traditions of the U.S. military, and that means regular force, not mercenary force, not contracted force.

Mr. Speaker, the private contractors in Iraq all too often are rogue elephants, operating beyond the command and control system of our U.S. military. It is time to restore the time-heralded tradition of regular forces of this U.S. military, committed to duty, honor and country, not bounty.

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF MEMBER OF THE HONORABLE JOHN R. "RANDY" KUHL, JR., MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Colleen Banik, District Office Coordinator, Office of the Honorable John R. "Randy" Kuhl, Jr., Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, September 7, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House that I have been served with a trial subpoena for testimony in a criminal case issued by the Bath Village Court of Steuben County in the State of New York.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

COLLEEN BANIK,  
District Office Coordinator

OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what a great opportunity it is to come back to the floor of the House as the designee of the minority leader, the Republican leader, and bring some issues hopefully into a little greater perspective.

We come here often and try to shed a little light as a group that we call the Official Truth Squad. The Official Truth Squad is a group that got started a little over 2 years ago, because, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, when folks tend to speak on the floor of the House, sometimes they exaggerate a little bit. I know that is hard to believe, but in fact that is the case. In fact, what we just heard, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is a bit of an exaggeration, and maybe a distortion of the facts.

What we would like to do tonight is to talk about a number of issues, primarily monetary issues, taxing and spending and those kinds of things. But before we get started, we want to bring a couple of issues together that have as their common core and their common theme truth.

Our desire is to try to bring into perspective some of those areas that oftentimes don't have the light of day given to them, if you will, Mr. Speaker. We have a favorite phrase or quote that we use in the Official Truth Squad, and it comes from a gentleman who was revered in this Capitol, and truly across this Nation, a former Senator from New York, Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He is quoted, and a number of folks have said something like this, but he has my favorite quote that crystallizes this issue, and that is that everyone is entitled to their opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

Before I begin and talk about some of the fiscal matters, the monetary matters, that we have confronting us in this Nation and that this Congress has already dealt with in ways that I think would benefit from a little light, and certainly issues that we will be dealing with further as we go on into this fall and winter, I want to talk about two very specific issues that have come to this Congress within the last week.

The first is something that the American people are well aware of, and that is that General Petraeus, who was the commanding officer of the coalition forces in Iraq, came last week after much fanfare in the media to present to Congress his perspective on what was going on in Iraq, and only in Iraq. Leading up to that, we had a remarkable display by Members of the other side of the aisle, the majority party, that did their best, their dead level best, to discredit this incredible hero and this incredible patriot and this incredible man of service to this Nation.

All the while you hear them say over and over and over, "we support the troops." "We don't like the war, but we support the troops." Well, nobody likes the war. But some people back up their statement that they indeed support the troops with action, and the action that occurred leading up to last week's presentation before a joint committee in the House and a committee in the Senate by General Petraeus, a true hero and a true patriot, the action that led up to that by Members of the majority party, the Democrat majority party, I found to be disconcerting. When I was home last week for our extended recess, folks at home found it to be disconcerting.

But then what we heard after a remarkable ad was taken out by a left-wing advocacy group that questioned the patriotism and that questioned the honor and that questioned the veracity of what General Petraeus was going to present to the committee, what we heard from the other side after that was remarkable silence, a remarkable silence.

So when you hear Members on the other side of the aisle, as we just did within the last 15 minutes, say, Mr. Speaker, I support the troops, but I don't support the mission, well, it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that you can't do that and be true to our men and women on the ground. You can't do that. Because what we heard after the ad that was put in The New York Times, at a discount rate, I might add, the ad that was put in The New York Times, when it questioned the honesty of one of our bravest heroes, military heroes, what we heard from the other side was virtually nothing, which put it all into perspective.

That is the truth that Senator Moynihan was talking about. You can have your opinion, but you can't have your own facts. And the fact of the matter is in that instance, when there was an attack on one of our leaders in the military, one of our heroes, when there was an attack, where were the Americans in the majority party, who represent the majority party? Where were they?

I know where their constituents were, because I represent many of them, and they were as disgusted as I with the actions of MoveOn.org. They were as disgusted as I with the remarkable, remarkable betrayal of the public trust that anybody in the public arena has. And it was distressing. I found it distressing and saddening that in fact we heard virtually nothing from folks on the other side of the aisle.

So that is a bit of truth that the American people are paying attention to. When I go home, that is what I hear. I hear folks ask me all the time, why is it that our Congress, the majority party now in our Congress, cannot stand up proudly and say that they match their words with action when it comes to our brave men and women in the military? So that is a bit of truth that I wanted to highlight, to bring a little light to in this House of Representatives.