

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2006

Chairman Duncan Hunter
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter:

We are writing you to request that the Committee hold a hearing specifically on the accountability of weapons provided by the U.S. Department of Defense to the Iraqi Security Forces.

As you may know, on October 28, 2006, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released an audit that found that thousands of weapons the United States has provided Iraqi Security Forces cannot be accounted for. The audit also found that spare parts and repair manuals are unavailable for many weapons.

The audit found that \$133 million was used to purchase more than 370,000 weapons. The unstable security situation in Iraq and the threat posed to our military servicemembers makes Congressional oversight of arms transfers incredibly important. As you know, the violence in Iraq is getting worse, not better. We simply cannot afford to have thousands of weapons, some of which could be used against American forces, unaccounted for.

We hope that such a hearing would also include a discussion of the ability of the Iraqi Defense Ministry to assume responsibility for all logistics operations by the end of 2007. A second Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction audit, also released on October 28, 2006, found that "significant challenges remain that put at risk MNF-I's goal to transition a sustainable and maintainable logistics operation" by the end of 2007. This is particularly important as we are spending American tax dollars to provide the Iraqi military with equipment it may well be incapable of distributing to its troops. Now is the time for our Committee to figure out how to get this transition back on track.

Mr. Chairman, we urge you to hold a hearing on this important issue as soon as Congress returns. We have long believed that our Committee must take a more active role in oversight of the war in Iraq. These two IG audits serve as a grim reminder of just a few of the many difficulties we face in Iraq. We cannot afford to abdicate our role in ensuring that we succeed in Iraq and return our brave servicemembers home as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



IKE SKELTON
Member of Congress



ROBERT E. ANDREWS
Member of Congress