

March 29, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20520

VIA FACSIMILE

cc: His Excellency Raymond Joseph, Haiti's Ambassador to the United States
U.S. Under Secretary for Political Affairs William J. Burns
U.S. Assistant Secretary Arturo Valenzuela
USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah
USAID Haiti Task Team Coordinator Paul Weisenfeld

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We write you in advance of the March 31st United Nations donors conference for Haiti to urge that funds pledged by the United States and other members of the international community, be directed towards rebuilding Haiti, not to international private security contractors. We believe you were right to support a ban on private security contractors as a member of the U.S. Senate in 2008, stating in a speech at George Washington University, "Their behavior and lack of supervision and accountability have often eroded our credibility." The same concerns apply in the Haitian context.

We were therefore alarmed by the conference regarding Haiti on March 9-10, 2010 that was organized by the trade association representing many private security companies, the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA).¹ A number of IPOA member companies have troubling track records. Some examples:

- In July 2006, two former employees of Triple Canopy filed a lawsuit for their wrongful termination after blowing the whistle against a shift leader, alleging that he deliberately fired at unarmed civilians after stating that it was his last day in Iraq and he was "going to kill someone today."²
- In 2007, the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs reported that most of \$1.2 billion the US government paid to DynCorp to train Iraqi police was unaccounted for and that the lack of contract oversight had "created an environment vulnerable to waste and fraud."³
- Whistleblower Ben Johnston testified that DynCorp personnel participated in the trafficking of child sex slaves and human trafficking in forced prostitution and labor.⁴

¹ Event information available at <http://www.hdpsummit.org/summit/haiti/index.htm>.

² C.J. Chievers, *Contractor's Boss in Iraq Shot at Civilians, Workers' Suit Say*, NYTimes, Nov. 16, 2006, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/17/world/middleeast/17contractors.html?_r=3.

³ See *Report: Most of \$1.2 billion to train Iraqi police unaccounted for*, CNN, October 23, 2007, available at <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/10/22/dyncorp.spending/index.html>

⁴ See *US-Iraqi contract 'in disarray'*, BBC News, Oct. 23, 2007, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7057629.stm>; by Kelly Patricia O'Meara, *Insight Magazine, US DynCorp Disgrace*, Insight Magazine, Jan. 14, 2002, available at <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=11119>.

- In September 2009, the Project on Government Oversight sent a letter of complaint to your office regarding ArmorGroup that alleged misconduct, engagement in deviant hazing rituals and other kinds of “humiliation.”⁵
- Personnel from Unity Resources Group killed two unarmed women in a vehicle in Iraq.⁶

Contractors’ arguments that they should be granted immunity or that lawsuits brought against them are somehow improper have thwarted various efforts to hold contractors accountable. IPOA often points to its “code of conduct” to diminish serious concerns over contractor oversight and accountability. However, in all of its years and despite the track record of the companies mentioned above, no company has ever been forced out of the IPOA for human rights abuse or fraud. In fact, all member companies receive an IPOA “seal of approval.”⁷

IPOA members have routinely been implicated in accusations of financial mismanagement. The problem of poor oversight has directly led to what Congress’s own Commission on Wartime Contracting has called “fiscal hemorrhaging”

Haiti does not need this poorly-regulated system of security contracting. Over-militarization of aid has already traumatized an already suffering people and prevented life saving aid from reaching earthquake victims in time.

We respectfully request that you continue to support “smart” aid that creates jobs for Haitians, provides direct investment in the public sector, builds local infrastructure and ensures that reconstruction efforts operate with transparency and follow a rights-based approach. We urge that U.S. or international community funds pledged at the UN donor conference be directed at rebuilding Haiti, not private security contractors. Finally, we request that you reiterate your support for the Stop Outsourcing Security Act that was reintroduced in February 2010 by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL) in the House and Sen. Bernie Sanders (VT) in the Senate. The U.S. has only begun to rebuild its image in the world; we should not turn our backs on this progress now.

Sincerely,

American Jewish World Service
 American Friends Service Committee
 Bagay Dwol Haiti Relief Fund
 Beyond Borders
 Center for Constitutional Rights
 Environmental Justice Initiative for Haiti
 Foreign Policy In Focus
 Gender Action
 GlobalHood
 Grassroots International
 Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
 Lambi Fund
 Nouvelle Vie Haiti
 Other Worlds
 Quixote Center
 TransAfrica Forum
 Bill Fletcher, Black Commentator
 Mark Weisbrot, Center for Economic and Policy Research

⁵ Letter available at <http://www.pogo.org/pogo-files/letters/contract-oversight/co-gp-20090901.html>.

⁶ Andrew E. Kramer, *2 Killed in Shooting Mourned Far Beyond Iraq*, NYTime, Oct. 10, 2007, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin.

⁷ IPOA Member Companies, <http://www.ipoaworld.org/eng/ipoamembers.html>.