

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CORRESPONDENCE ACTION REPORT

Complete this form and forward to WHS/ESD/Correspondence Control Division, Attention: Suspense Desk, Pentagon Room 3C843, Phone (703) 697-9287, Fax (703) 693-7028, Email: [SuspenseDesk@whs.mil](mailto:SuspenseDesk@whs.mil), Classified Email: [suspensedesk@whs.pentagon.smil.mil](mailto:suspensedesk@whs.pentagon.smil.mil)

TASKED AGENCY PA  
SUSPENSE DATE (MMDDYYYY) 09/30/2009

1. REQUESTED ACTION

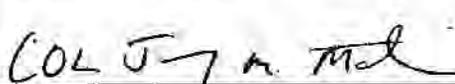
- a. ACTION COMPLETED  COPY ATTACHED and/or  SEE JUSTIFICATION BELOW
- b. REQUEST EXTENSION OF SUSPENSE DATE (MMDDYYYY) TO \_\_\_\_\_ (Justify below)
- c. INTERIM REPLY SENT (Attach copy); EXTEND SUSPENSE DATE (MMDDYYYY) TO \_\_\_\_\_ (Justify below)
- d. REQUEST CANCELLATION (Justify below)
- e. REQUEST TRANSFER TO \_\_\_\_\_ JCS \_\_\_\_\_ (Justify below, include POC name and telephone number)
- f. REQUEST DOWNGRADE TO \_\_\_\_\_ (Justify below)

2. JUSTIFICATION

All the information requested on this action will have to be provided from the Combatant commands in theatre and then through JCS. Request a transfer to JCS.

3. TASKED AGENCY

a. AGENCY NAME PA	b. ACTION OFFICER NAME COL Jeremy M. Martin	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER (b)(6)
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d. DATE (MMDDYYYY) SEP 23 2009	e. AGENCY APPROVING AUTHORITY SIGNATURE (Service Secretary/Under Secretary/ASD Military/Executive Assistant Level) 
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4. ACTION TAKEN (For ExecSec/Executive Support Office and Correspondence Control Division Use Only)

- a. ACTION COMPLETED  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED
- b. EXTENSION  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED
- c. CANCELLATION  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED
- d. TRANSFER  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED
- e. DOWNGRADE  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED
- f. OTHER (Specify below)  APPROVED  DISAPPROVED

6. OSD CONTROL NUMBER

OSD-10582-09

g. DATE SIGNED (MMDDYYYY)	h. SIGNATURE
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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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September 17, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

On August 24, 2009, *Stars and Stripes* newspaper reported that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) had hired an outside consultant, the Rendon Group, to profile journalists who requested to embed with American troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The paper alleged that one of its own journalists was denied an embed slot in Iraq on the basis of his Rendon Group profile. An Air Force spokeswoman in Kabul initially denied that the military screens journalists before embeds, but three days later a Pentagon spokesperson acknowledged that DOD was looking into the allegations. Several days later, news sources reported that DOD had terminated its contract with the Rendon Group, saying that the controversy surrounding the contract was distracting from the military's missions overseas. Following the cancellation of its contract, the Rendon Group issued a press release disputing much of the recent reporting and denying any role in screening journalists for military embeds.

As this history makes apparent, the facts surrounding the Rendon Group contract and the role that the Rendon Group played in screening journalists is far from clear. These reports raise serious concerns, particularly in light of past efforts by elements within the Pentagon to "sell" the war in Iraq to the American people. For example, I have been working closely with the Inspector General for the Department of Defense to reinstate an investigation into the actions of the Public Affairs Office and its use of Retired Military Analysts to promote DOD policies in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay.

The allegations by *Stars and Stripes* and DOD's subsequent acknowledgement of the contract with the Rendon Group contribute to a worrying pattern in the Pentagon's communication with the American people. While recognizing that DOD has a right to communicate its activities to the public, the prescreening of journalists suggests that the



goal at some point may have moved beyond straight-forward communication to manipulation of the news.

In order to conduct proper oversight, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs will need information on this contract and the related circumstances. As such, please provide the Subcommittee with the following:

1. All documents related to DOD's contract with the Rendon Group, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Documents related to the decision to hire an outside consultant for these purposes;
  - b. The reports produced by the Rendon Group;
  - c. Documents that demonstrate how these reports were used;
  - d. Communications between DOD and the Rendon Group; and
  - e. Documents related to the decision to terminate the Rendon Group's contract.

Please note that the attached document request instruction sheet provides a definition of "documents" that includes, *inter alia*, memoranda, notes, letters, interoffice and intra-office communications, and email. In order for the Subcommittee to conduct oversight in a timely manner, **please produce the requested documents by October 19, 2009.**

2. The names of all personnel who fall into the following categories:
  - a. Those who made the decision to hire an outside consultant for these purposes;
  - b. The contracting officer(s) and their immediate supervisors;
  - c. All recipients of the Rendon Group reports;
  - d. Those responsible for approving embed requests; and
  - e. Any other personnel who are relevant to this inquiry.

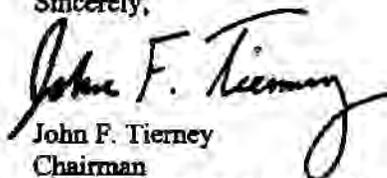
The Subcommittee staff intends to interview relevant personnel. In order for the Subcommittee to conduct oversight in a timely manner, **please provide this list by September 30, 2009.**

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X. Pursuant to Committee Rule 8(a)(5), the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs has jurisdiction encompassing oversight of national security, homeland security, and foreign affairs. In order for the Subcommittee to conduct appropriate and constructive oversight of these matters, it is important that we receive the requested documents and be able to conduct the requested interviews.

Please contact Talia Dubovi or Andy Wright of the Subcommittee staff at (202) 225-2548 to coordinate the document production and to provide the list of personnel.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,



John F. Tierney  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security  
and Foreign Affairs

cc: Rep. Edolphus Towns  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform

Rep. Darrell Issa  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform

Rep. Jeff Flake  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security  
and Foreign Affairs

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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1 of 1 Priority 1  
Envelopes

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Hot / Status - IN ESD

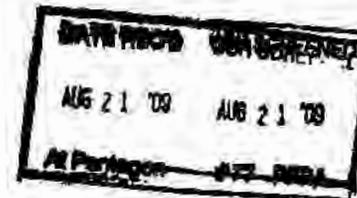
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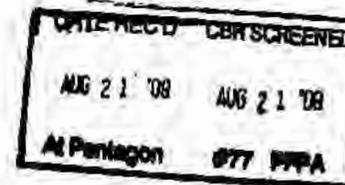


355852

Pentagon Docmaster Office  
703-693-3423 or 703-692-4083



Secretary Robert M. Gates  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301



**Congressional**

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CORRESPONDENCE ROUTING SLIP**

Action Agency: ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

Action Required: REPLY DIRECT - COMPONENT HEAD MUST SIGN

Coordinate With: LA

References:

Remarks:

Document Type: INCOMING

Special Instructions: FORWARD COPY OF REPLY TO CCD, ROOM 3C843

Subject: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON RENDON GROUP CONTRACT TO PROFILE JOURNALISTS FOR  
EMBED SLOTS

Suspense Date: September 30 2009

Routing Date: September 22 2009

CONTROL #: OSD 10582-09

**INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION**

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GENERAL COUNSEL  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS)  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

**THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS MAY CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFORMATION TO INCLUDE  
PRIVACY ACT MATERIAL - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY**

OSD 10582-09



(b)(6)

**From:** (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2009 1:59 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** osd# 10582-09  
**Attachments:** INCOMING.tif  
**Signed By:** (b)(6)

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