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Congress of the United States
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December 9, 2014

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

As you know, President Obama's supplemental spending request in support of Operation Inherent Resolve included \$1.6 billion for the "Iraq Train and Equip Fund" to "provide assistance to military and other security forces of, or associated with, the Government of Iraq, including Kurdish and tribal security forces." I am writing to advocate for the inclusion of language in the FY15 omnibus appropriations bill that prohibits U.S. taxpayer funds from being used for the Government of Iraq in support of their security forces.

Last week during Rules Committee debate on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY15, I testified in support of an amendment I introduced which would prohibit funds from being used to either pay the salaries or to provide weapons or equipment to the Iraqi security forces. As an Iraq war veteran, I support the U.S. funding for Iraqi Kurdish fighters and Iraqi Sunni Arab militias to fight ISIS. However, I cannot support any additional U.S. tax dollars going to pay for Iraqi Security Forces given the fact that Iraq is an oil rich nation and it is entirely capable of providing for the weapons, equipment and personnel necessary to defend their country.

My point is further reinforced by an admission by the new Iraqi Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi, that the Iraqi army - an institution that the United States has spent billions on equipping and arming - has been paying salaries to at least 50,000 "ghost" soldiers who do not exist. Whether this can be attributed to corruption or to gross incompetence is uncertain but what is clear is that this funding is offensive to the U.S. taxpayer who is asked to pay for the defense of an oil rich country.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this issue was never debated by the House Armed Services Committee when negotiating the NDAA earlier this year. As such, I do plan on offering my amendment to the Rules Committee in anticipation of debate on the FY15 appropriations package and respectfully request your support for a structured rule that would allow my amendment to be heard on the Floor. I thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me or my staff directly should you require any additional information related to this request.

Sincerely



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress

cc. The Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman
House Committee on Rules
H-312 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305 The Capitol
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