

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 4, 2011

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
B350A Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Issa:

On CBS' "Face the Nation" you recently stated a desire to identify \$200 billion in wasteful spending.¹ But as I read your stated oversight intentions, a glaring omission is apparent. You have seemingly ignored one of the biggest sources of potential waste, fraud and abuse – the Department of Defense budget, which consumes half of our discretionary spending, and the expanding wars.

In 2001, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld admitted that the United States could not track DOD transactions costing taxpayers as much as, according to GAO estimates, \$2.3 trillion.² Since that time, we have been engaged in two costly wars that have been plagued with corruption and waste. We have seen dozens of reports of corruption, lost money and unaccountable transactions in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have seen reports of billions of taxpayer dollars shipped in shrink-wrapped packages sent to Iraq for unsupervised distribution.³ We have seen the millions of dollars flow into Afghanistan, and we have seen millions of dollars flow out again into the hands of the family of President Hamid Karzai for purposes such as building luxury villas in Dubai.⁴

To meet your stated purpose of protecting American taxpayers from waste, fraud and abuse, it is essential that you examine the Department of Defense and money wasted during unnecessary wars. As the Constitutionally granted bearer of the purse, Congress has the responsibility to conduct oversight. In your new role as Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, you now have the authority and the responsibility to provide that oversight.

¹ Statement by Congressman Darrell Issa, *CBS' Face the Nation*, January 2, 2011

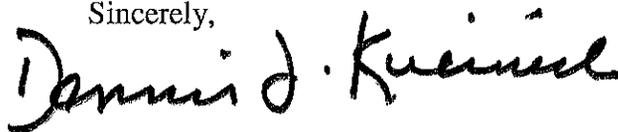
² 'The War on Waste', *CBS Evening News*, January 29, 2002

³ Pallister, David. 'How the US sent \$12 bn in cash to Iraq. And watched it vanish', *The Guardian*, February 8, 2007

⁴ Byrne, John. 'US taxpayers' Afghan aid money buys rich Afghans' Dubai villas', *The Raw Story*, July 6, 2010

I look forward to working with you in this matter of great importance to the American taxpayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis J. Kucinich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a distinct "K".

Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress