

October 19, 2006 - Renewal of Shirlington Contract Reveals Continued Corruption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 19, 2006

Renewal of Shirlington Contract Reveals an Administration
Staying the Course on Corruption

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today responded to the Department of Homeland Security's decision to extend the contract of Shirlington Limousine, a Virginia-based company that has been connected to the bribery scandal which ended the career of former California Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham.

"Shirlington is a company that has been linked to one of the most unseemly scandals of this Republican Congress," Rep. Slaughter said. "It had a questionable past even before it worked for DHS, and it may have played a central role in the Duke Cunningham bribery case, a matter still under federal investigation."

"At the very least, the investigation should be allowed to run its course before Homeland Security sends millions of dollars more in Shirlington's direction," Rep. Slaughter continued. "The fact that the Department is instead renewing this contract in the face of everything we now know shows how resistant this Administration is to any effort that would return a sense of responsibility and accountability to Washington."

BACKGROUND: SHIRLINGTON, CUNNINGHAM, AND CORRUPTION

CONVICTED CUNNINGHAM-LINKED DEFENSE CONTRACTOR MITCHEL WADE IMPLICATED FELLOW CO-CONSPIRATOR BRENT WILKES IN LIMOUSINE & PROSTITUTION SCHEME: Mitchell Wade pleaded guilty in February to giving bribes of more than \$1 million to former Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham. Reportedly, Mr. Wade told federal investigators that "arrangements" for a limousine driver and prostitutes being driven to hotel suites in Washington were made by Mr. Brent Wilkes and two employees of Mr. Wilkes company. Mr. Wilkes has been confirmed as "Co-conspirator No. 1" in the federal criminal case involving the bribing of former Congressman Randy "Duke" Cunningham. [Scot J. Paltrow, "Prosecutors May Widen Congressional-Bribe Case," Wall Street Journal, 4/27/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE, A NORTHERN VIRGINIA FIRM, ASSISTED WILKES WITH WATERGATE "ENTERTAINMENT": Shirlington Limousine and Transportation, Inc., a firm based out of Arlington, Virginia, provided limousine services for Brent Wilkes "for whatever entertainment he had in the Watergate." [Dean Calbreth, "Co-conspirator's possible links to prostitutes eyed," San Diego Union Tribune, 4/28/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE WON A \$142,000 HUD CONTRACT: Aside from \$25 million in DHS contracts, Shirlington Limousine has also been awarded a \$142,000 HUD contract, as well as a \$519,823 Federal Highway Administration contract. [Ken Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/3/06]

SHIRLINGTON PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER D. BAKER'S EXTENSIVE CRIMINAL RAP SHEET: Shirlington Limousine's President, Christopher D. Baker, has a 62-page criminal rap sheet that runs from 1979 to 1989. [Ken Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/1/06 and 5/3/06]. Baker's criminal record "includes numerous misdemeanors and two felony convictions." [Babcock and Baker, Washington Post, 5/6/06]

SHIRLINGTON LIMOUSINE'S QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES: Shirlington Limousine reportedly operates in "a deliberately murky way." The firm operates "under at least four different names; in addition, the office addresses listed on its business filings regularly change. A number of those office addresses are actually at residential buildings or business suites, and calls to the listed phone numbers are taken by an answering service." [Ken Silverstein, "More Details on Shirlington Limousine," Harper's Magazine, 5/3/06]. The \$21 million contract from the DHS, referenced above, was challenged based on allegations that Shirlington Limousine "falsely claimed to be located in a poor neighborhood," which was apparently one of the preconditions based upon which that contract was awarded. [Babcock and Baker, Washington Post, 5/6/06]

MAY HAVE USED "FREE SERVICES" OF "PROSTITUTES," "LIMOUSINE AND HOTEL SUITES": "Besides scrutinizing the prostitution scheme for evidence that might implicate contractor Brent Wilkes, investigators are focusing on whether any other members of Congress, or their staffs, may also have used the same free services." [Scot J. Paltrow, Wall Street Journal, 4/27/06]

WILKES HAS ALSO BEEN LINKED TO TWO OTHER SENIOR HOUSE REPUBLICANS, WHO RECEIVED HUGE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS WHILE WILKES WAS AWARDED MULTIMILLION DOLLAR PENTAGON CONTRACTS: Since 1994, Wilkes and his defense firm ADCS "gave \$40,700 in campaign contributions to Rep. Duncan Hunter, a San Diego Republican who now chairs the House Armed Services Committee. Hunter has acknowledged that he joined with Cunningham in 1999 to contact Pentagon officials who reversed a decision and gave ADCS one of its first big contracts, for nearly \$10 million." [Matt Kelley & Jim Drinkard, "Contactor spends big on key lawmakers," USA Today, 11/30/05] Wilkes has also been linked to another California Republican, Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis, who "led panels that ordered the Pentagon to continue programs that aided ADCS when Pentagon officials wanted to cut them." Lewis received \$71,253 from Wilkes and his employees in donations since 1993. They met at "various events." [Kelley & Drinkard, USA Today, 11/30/05]

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