



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on June 25, 2010

Xe/Blackwater Wins \$100 Million CIA Contract

The Obama-era CIA has awarded a \$100 million contract to the private mercenary firm Xe Services, the former Blackwater Worldwide, to guard its facilities in Afghanistan, according to the Washington Post for June 24.

Blackwater became infamous over the past seven years for human-rights violations in Iraq so severe that the new Iraqi government expelled the company from the country over Bush and Obama administration pressure.

The Iraqi government also tried to bring several company officials to trial over human-rights violations. Blackwater was accused of murder, torture, indiscriminate shooting of civilians, and bribery of local officials in the Iraqi theater. In the most controversial incident, the [Nisour Square massacre](#), Blackwater officials shot indiscriminately into a Baghdad crowd and killed as many as 17 civilians, including a nine-year-old child.

The CIA contract follows up a [\\$120 million contract](#) for the U.S. State Department awarded for "protective security services" at new U.S. consulates in Afghanistan at Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif.

An anonymous source [told](#) the *Washington Post* that the old Blackwater firm had changed since its trigger-happy days in Iraq under the Bush administration. "They've had to prove to the government that they're a responsible outfit. Having satisfied every legal requirement, they have the right to compete for contracts. They have people who do good work, at times in some very dangerous places. Nobody should forget that, either."

Xe founder and CEO Erik Prince was a little more flippant in a [CNBC interview](#). "After three-and-a-half years of an assault by some of the bureaucracy, a sort of proctology exam brought on by some in Congress, it's time to hang it up."

And he's still evoking those same trigger-happy sentiments that got the firm kicked out of Iraq. "You can't drop a bomb from an airplane in Afghanistan without having a lawyer sign off on it," Prince [complained](#) to CNBC, adding that the Obama administration, "almost allows lawyers to become what political officers were in the Soviet Union — the guys that truly can approve and nix anything battlefield commanders can do."

While President Obama did not promise not stop contracting with Blackwater Worldwide as a candidate for President, he did campaign on the issue of "change." But the change seems to have been to add the





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same mercenary human-rights violators to its foreign policy subsidy line.



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