Beat: News

Blackwater threatened to kill U.S. investigator before Iraq shooting

-, 30.06.2014, 19:20 Time

USPA News - The top manager in Iraq of notorious private security firm Blackwater threatened to kill a U.S. State Department investigator in 2007 for investigating the company`s performance, just weeks before guards killed 17 civilians in the Iraqi capital, the New York Times reported on Monday. The investigation by the U.S. State Department came to a halt after Daniel Carroll, Blackwater`s top manager in Iraq at the time, told the State Department`s lead investigator, Jean Richter, "that he could kill me at that very moment and no one could or would do anything about it as we were in Iraq," according to a State Department memo written by Richter.

The memo and other documents were made public by the New York Times on Monday. The previously unreleased documents show that U.S. Embassy officials in Baghdad sided with Blackwater instead of the State Department`s investigators due to controversy surrounding the department`s investigation. The officials informed investigators that they had grown "unsustainably disruptive to day-to-day operations and created an unnecessarily hostile environment for a number of contract personnel," according to an email by Ricardo Colon, the acting regional security officer at the embassy at the time. The investigators were then ordered to leave the country immediately. But after returning to Washington, D.C., Richter delivered a searing report to State Department officials, documenting alleged wrongdoing by Blackwater employees and cautioning the company that it had created "an environment full of liability and negligence." "The management structures in place to manage and monitor our contracts in Iraq have become subservient to the contractors themselves," Richter wrote in an August 31, 2007, memo to State Department officials. "Blackwater contractors saw themselves as above the law." He warned that the company`s management had resulted in a set of circumstances in which "the contractors, instead of Department officials, are in command and in control." A fellow State Department investigator who witnessed the exchange between Carroll and Richter confirmed Richter`s report in a separate statement. "I took Mr Carroll`s threat seriously. We were in a combat zone where things can happen quite unexpectedly, especially when issues involve potentially negative impacts on a lucrative security contract," wrote Richter. Richter`s memo and other newly released State Department documents reveal that the department was notified of serious issues involving Blackwater and its government supervisors well in advance of the Nisour Square massacre in Baghdad, which happened just weeks later on September 16, 2007. In that incident, Blackwater guards clearing the way for a State Department convoy opened fire on Iraqi civilians at Nisour Square, killing 17 people and injuring 20 others. The security firm claimed the convoy had been ambushed, but an Iraqi investigation found the killings were unprovoked and expulsed the company from the country. Blackwater, which renamed itself to Academi after it was bought by a private investment group in December 2010, refused to comment on Monday`s report, saying it no longer had ties to employees who worked for the firm at the time. The U.S. State Department said it could not comment because the case was still open. Four former Blackwater employees are currently on trial in Washington, D.C. on charges resulting from the Nisour Square shooting. This is the U.S. government`s second attempt to prosecute the case in an American court after previous charges against five guards were dismissed in 2009. The fatal shootings in 2007 were regarded as an example of the license taken by private security firms on the U.S. payroll in Iraq and aggravated Iraqi resentment toward the U.S. But Blackwater - while successful in the industry - had already accumulated a long list of criminal investigations, lawsuits and expulsions from several countries due to its practices. Blackwater was renamed to Xe Services in 2009 in an attempt to get rid of its bad image, but the company is still referred to as Blackwater by the press. Xe Services eventually changed its name to Academi in 2011 after it was acquired by a private investment group that replaced the firm`s senior management.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2379/blackwater-threatened-to-kill-us-investigator-before-iraq-shooting.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:

The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619