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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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August 26, 2010

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The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the United States House of Representatives, with jurisdiction over "any matter." Under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee is investigating the government's use of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. As such, I am concerned with an agreement the State Department has reached with a security firm that has a history of violations and impropriety.

According to a recent New York Times article, the State Department has reached an agreement with the private security company Xe Services, formerly known as Blackwater Worldwide. According to the article, the company will pay \$42 million in fines for hundreds of violations of U.S. export control regulations. By paying fines as opposed to facing criminal charges, the company minimizes its risk of debarment for future State Department as well as other federal government contracts.

Xe Services, a.k.a. Blackwater, has a long history of contract violations and reckless behavior, which has already resulted in the company being banned from Iraq. This is worse than poor performance. This kind of behavior undermines the U.S. mission in Iraq and Afghanistan.

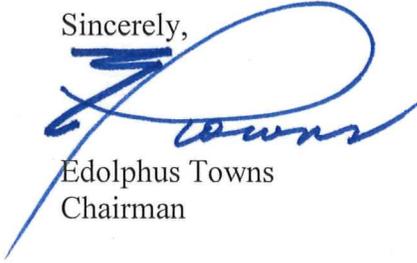
The State Department has a major role in providing security and stabilization in both Iraq and Afghanistan and it is essential that it carefully consider a variety of factors when issuing contracts for carrying out those services. As such, I encourage the Department to adhere to Federal Acquisition Regulations and use past performance as an important element of every evaluation and contract award.

Please provide the Committee with a copy of the settlement agreement made with Xe Services, no later than September 3, 2010.

The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton  
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Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Craig Fischer of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edolphus Towns", with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Edolphus Towns  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Darrell Issa, Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform