

New rules for U.S. security firms in Iraq

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice approved 19 new rules governing private security contractors in Baghdad after a deadly Baghdad incident last month. The changes will affect how Blackwater USA operates as it protects diplomats and embassy employees, the Washington Post reported Wednesday. On Sept. 16, Blackwater employees claimed a motorcade had come under enemy fire, and they returned fire. At least 17 Iraqi civilians were killed, prompting investigations by the Iraqi government, U.S. State Department and FBI. Rice also appointed a panel to review policy, which recommended a committee investigate and judge all contractor incidents "involving the use of deadly force," the report said. Contractors will also be required to undergo new training on diplomatic and military procedures and Iraqi culture, and armed Diplomatic Security Service agents will ride along as the "officer in charge" with every contractor convoy. Most of Blackwater's employees are former U.S. special forces soldiers, such as Navy Seals.

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