



A senior Senate Democrat said Thursday the Pentagon should consider barring Blackwater from a new \$1 billion deal to train Afghan police because of "serious questions" about the contractor's conduct.

The comments by Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin suggests thinning patience in Congress for the Pentagon's heavy reliance on contractors on the battlefield. U.S. efforts to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan using independent contractors has been a boon for companies like Blackwater and saved money and time for the Defense Department, whose forces are busy in combat.

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