



A CIA decision to hire contractors from Blackwater USA for a covert assassination program was part of a broader constellation of connections between the agency and the widely criticized security firm.

The 2004 contract cemented what was then a burgeoning relationship with Blackwater, setting the stage for a series of departures by senior CIA officials who took high-level positions with the North Carolina company. The revolving door helped fuel a backlash against what many inside the agency and on Capitol Hill came to regard as an overuse of outside firms, many of which made millions of dollars after filling their staffs with former CIA employees.

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