

CONDI MUST BE PREPARING A DOG AND A PONY

There are a number of clues that reveal how panicked the State Department—and Condi and those parts of the Administration not trying to undercut Condi at every turn—is about the threats to Blackwater’s continued presence in Iraq. For the first time as Secretary of State, Condi is making the rounds of Congressional committees, even deigning to visit her arch-nemesis Henry Waxman. The State Department has issued new guidelines for Blackwater—basically giving our contractors babysitters to make sure they don’t do more harm than good. And then issued still more guidelines—basically teaching those thugs how to act like guests in someone else’s country. And somehow, on the night before Condi testifies before Waxman’s committee, the Assistant Secretary of State who was a jerk when he testified before the committee unexpectedly, um, resigns. We have not had such a concerted effort—at anything beyond propaganda—since the start of this Administration.

And then consider this factoid. Turkey is starting a low intensity war against Kurdistan, which pits the US’ most reliable allies in Iraq (in the most stable area of the country) against a member of NATO. But before visiting Turkey and trying to bribe them not to start the regional war we’ve all been fearing, Condi is first doing her rounds in Congress.

Yet still, Iraq has raised the threat that Blackwater will have to withdraw by stripping contractors of the immunity that Paul Bremer so kindly gave them.

I’m increasingly convinced that the Iraqi restrictions on the contractors may do what Democrats have failed to do—force Bush to withdraw significant troops from the country. Or at least cede it to DOD entirely, in which case

it'll become nothing more than the launching
ground for Dick Cheney's next war.