

# WEEP FOR THE SPURNED BILLION DOLLAR MERCENARY!

In what is sure to be some interesting book publicity, Erik Prince has gone sobbing to the WSJ about the shoddy treatment the government that paid him billions treated him. In the piece, he continues to reveal new details about some of the operations CIA paid him to do, including the kill team training first revealed in 2009.

A chief target of Mr. Prince's ire is Mr. Panetta, who in 2009 shut down the covert training operation for CIA "hit teams" that former Blackwater officials said took place on Mr. Prince's Virginia property.

The CIA had been sending officers for training at Blackwater's North Carolina training facility. But it wanted something closer to its Langley, Va., headquarters, former company officials said. So they asked Mr. Prince to build a small shooting range on his rural Virginia land.

"They needed a place that was only 35 minutes away from work," said Gary Jackson, the former Blackwater president. "Erik was OK with that, and he has the property, and we had the money." The trainings, including live-fire exercises, drew some complaints over the years from neighbors, Mr. Jackson said.

[snip]

When that information became public in 2009, right after Mr. Panetta canceled the Blackwater hit-team training, the CIA director ended the company's role in maintaining the drones.

Mr. Prince said he is convinced that Mr. Panetta outed him as a CIA “asset” at a closed congressional hearing that year, adding that it was unthinkable for a CIA director to reveal the real name of a covert operative to lawmakers.

[snip]

“No one was out to scapegoat anyone in the relationship with Blackwater, but there were some issues that arose that prompted a serious look at contracts with the company,” said one former CIA official involved in the discussions. “There was a perception that they were trying to run some of their own operations untethered from agency oversight.” [my emphasis]

Only the last bit is really new (though it is suggested in a profile of the mafia hitman involved in the program).

But remember this real point is not that Panetta outed Prince to the House Intelligence Committee, it’s that he briefed these “programs” at all. According to Jan Schakowsky, under Cheney Blackwater had been working directly with the White House on counterterrorism policy (which makes sense since Cofer Black came up with that policy in the first place).

I reminded, by the way, that Barb Milkulski told John Brennan that Panetta was the only CIA Director who didn’t “jerk around” the intelligence committees.

Imagine how sad Prince must be that his mercenary company beginning to do its own operations got cut off when Congress actually learned about it!