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SCHAKOWSKY RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR CROCKER'S COMMENT

Washington, D.C.--U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), a founding member of the Iraq War Veterans Caucus, said today that the Bush Administration's decision to renew Blackwater's contract is "absolutely essential" for the U.S. military in Iraq.

Last Friday, Ambassador Crocker said that private military contractors "like Blackwater are absolutely essential" for the U.S. military in Iraq.

But was it "absolutely essential" for Blackwater to gun down 17 innocent Iraqis?

Was it "absolutely essential" for a Blackwater employee to kill a guard to the Vice President's residence?

Was it "absolutely essential" for a Blackwater helicopter to drop CS gas on a traffic jam in Baghdad?

It's been months and in some cases years since these incidents and we still don't have the answers.

Instead our government has ignored those abuses and renewed Blackwater's contract and the U.S. military's dependence on private contractors.

What kind of country do we live in where it is acceptable for the U.S. government to praise private contractors for their actions?

The only thing that is "absolutely essential" is that we end the State Department's dependence on private contractors.

