

Some members of Congress raising questions about DynCorp

April 26th, 2003

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CBS Evening News

ANTHONY MASON, anchor:

Some members of Congress are raising questions about DynCorp, one of the companies picked to help in the reconstruction of Iraq. Jim Stewart tells us the lawmakers have some new questions about the security firm which has a controversial past.

JIM STEWART reporting:

The 80,000-strong Iraqi police force stuck around about as long as the Iraqi army did when US forces entered Baghdad, which is to say it didn't stick around at all. Only a few have trickled back since, and the question now is: Who will train Iraq's new policemen in the ways of law and order? The State Department recently decided that the job could best be done by a private company, and analysts weren't surprised.

Mr. PETER SINGER (Author, "Corporate Warriors"): Essentially there's a growing belief that a private company can inherently do something better than government.

STEWART: What did surprise and concern some in Congress, however, was the company chosen, DynCorp, which has handled a multitude of nasty jobs for the government recently, all the way from providing bodyguards for often-targeted Afghan President Hamid Karzai to helping end the war on drugs in South America to setting up a police force in Bosnia. It was there that two DynCorp employees, including Ben Johnston charged that DynCorp supervisors were out of control and engaging in behavior ranging from buying illegal weapons to buying sex from women as well.

Mr. BEN JOHNSTON (Former DynCorp Employee): I noticed older men with--I mean, you would s--what--what looks to be a 50-year-old man or 60-year-old man with a 12-, 15-year-old girl.

And it's just--it's just grotesque. It--it--it just makes you feel--I mean, it just makes all Americans look so poor.

STEWART: Critics say this scandal goes to the heart of hiring civilians to do what should be a government chore.

Mr. SINGER: So you have this odd situation where someone who's not sworn an oath of office, is not held accountable under American law, is still our representative on the ground. And that's kind of disturbing.

STEWART: Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky says the Pentagon can't even tell her how many subcontractors are working overseas. She and others on the Hill want some answers.

Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY (Democrat, Illinois): Supposedly, they're carrying out our--our mission. That would be the expectation, but in terms of real serious scrutiny of their work, right now that really isn't happening.

STEWART: DynCorp will hire retired or former US policemen to act as its trainers in Iraq and said it will screen the group to meet tougher standards, and its defenders say companies like DynCorp are now a necessary part of US strategy.

Mr. DOUG BROOKS (International Peace Operations Association): Well, basically, they do this sort of work faster, better and cheaper than the military can.

STEWART: But when the military fouls up, there's always Congress to call hearings and demand answers. Accountability for private firms seems far less clear. Jim Stewart, CBS News, Washington.