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There's no business like security business By David Isenberg

As they say in show business, you ain't seen nothing yet. If you thought Afghanistan was noteworthy for the use of private military companies (PMCs) after the fighting was over, stay tuned. The roles and opportunities for PMCs have just gotten much bigger and more lucrative. On April 18, Computer Sciences Corp (CSC) announced that DynCorp International, a company it acquired this year, has been awarded a contract from the US State Department to provide up to 1,000 civilian advisors to help the government of Iraq organize effective civilian law enforcement and judicial and correctional agencies. The advisors will not do law-enforcement work themselves, but are to work within existing Iraqi structures to stand up, advise and train an Iraqi police force.

The tax-exempt salaries being offered range from US\$63,000-\$74,000 a year, with the State Department paying for housing and food. The estimated value of the contract to CSC could be as high as \$50 million for the first year, depending on assessment of Iraqi capabilities and needs by initial advisors. The assessment team, which will ultimately include 26 law-enforcement specialists, is to form the administrative core of a much larger US police mission. They will answer to retired General Jay Garner's new Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, who has been appointed by the administration of US President George W Bush to oversee Iraq's civil administration pending the creation of an Iraqi interim authority. Garner formerly worked for L-3 Communications, which a few years ago bought up MPRI, a well-known PMC, also headquartered in Virginia.

Officials have asked Congress to fund the \$25 million law-enforcement project and plan to seek more money - perhaps up to \$250 million - to support the effort. Some of the \$25 million will be diverted from an anti-drug program for Afghanistan. An aide to Republican congressman Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, recently received assurances from Paul Simon, a senior State Department official, that the anti-drug funds would be quickly replenished and that DynCorp's operations in Iraq would be closely monitored.

DynCorp, a government contractor based in Reston, Virginia, was just one of a handful of US companies asked to bid on the contract. It has already been given the task of recruiting an initial group of 150 former police officers that could be quickly deployed in Iraq. The State Department recently informed Hyde that it had decided to pay DynCorp \$22 million to recruit that contingent. The pay for those jobs will range from \$46,000-\$96,000 per year, with danger and hardship pay added as warranted. Bonuses will be paid at the end of service.

Such business is not new to the company. Iraq will be the fifth foreign destination to which DynCorp has dispatched police trainers since 1994, after missions to Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and East Timor. In Colombia, DynCorp has held for years a Pentagon contract, along with Northrop Grumman and Florida-based Airscan, to provide intelligence, train Colombian troops and spray coca crops in an attempt to reduce the supply of cocaine. DynCorp handles its international police program recruiting from Fort Worth, Texas.

One former DynCorp employee who worked in Bosnia and who was interviewed for National Public Radio's Marketplace program said, "The initial inspiration was the money. You know, that's a pretty lucrative deal for someone that's in the law-enforcement community to make, you know, \$90,000-plus for 12 months." The company said it would recruit advisors from the ranks of current and retired US law-enforcement officers. The ad doesn't say anything about speaking Arabic or familiarity with Iraqi customs, but qualifying candidates must be US citizens with a total of 10 years of general law-enforcement experience and two years of specialized experience, must speak English, and must have a driver's license and a valid US passport, according to DynCorp ads.

Physical requirements for the job include running an obstacle course, dragging an 84-kilogram dummy 24 meters in one minute, climbing a six-meter ladder while holding a shotgun in one hand, and running 400m and up and down two flights of stairs in two minutes and 10 seconds. DynCorp was founded after World War II by former military officers, and before CSC purchased it, it was the United States' 13th-largest military contractor, with about 23,000 employees and \$2.3 billion in revenue. The combined company is among the top 10 government contractors, with nearly \$14 billion in annual revenues.

It supplies bodyguards for Afghan President Hamid Karzai and has recruited personnel for United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti, East Timor and the Balkan region. But despite its experience, DynCorp has become a lightning rod for criticism. In Bosnia, its British subsidiary met its greatest controversy in a scandal for allegedly hiring poorly qualified officers, failing to discipline wrongdoers and ignoring employee involvement in sexual misconduct. Although DynCorp fired those employees and subsequently tightened its recruiting procedures, it suffered bad publicity, partly because the scandal was first revealed by other DynCorp employees who were fired when they first brought it to light.

In 2001, a Nebraska policewoman named Kathryn Bokovac, a former Omaha police officer, filed a whistle-blower suit in Britain, where she had been recruited by DynCorp for a UN-administered international police task force that played the same advisory role in Bosnia now being envisaged for Iraq. Bokovac claimed that she was demoted within days of sending e-mails disclosing that some UN police trainers were "buying" prostitutes as sex slaves. She blamed her firing six months later on her disclosures. DynCorp said Bokovac was dismissed over discrepancies in time sheets that she had submitted, an allegation she denied. In November, a British employment tribunal ruled in Bokovac's favor, ordering DynCorp to pay her the equivalent of \$165,000. DynCorp is appealing the judgment.

But in the meantime, hoping to avoid any similar incidents in the future, US law-enforcement personnel recruited to help reorganize Iraq's shattered police forces must acknowledge in writing that human trafficking and involvement with prostitution "are considered illegal by the international community and are immoral, unethical and strictly

prohibited". The new acknowledgment was instituted in February by DynCorp. One expert, Pete Singer of the Brookings Institution, author of the newly-published book *Corporate Wars*, said on the Marketplace program, "Often the law isn't sufficient to deal with them. They're operating in zones where, for example, American law doesn't apply. And often the local legal system isn't sufficiently developed enough to deal with potential crimes that these employees commit. So, for example, of the reported crimes in the Balkans, these, you know, fairly vicious sex crimes, in some cases, involving rape or child prostitution, none of the DynCorp employees were ever criminally prosecuted for them."

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/ED30Ak03.html