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Malta 'is Blackwater's operational base' – MEP report

by NOEL GRIMA

A European Parliament working document drawn up by Giovanni Claudio Fava has claimed "Malta is the operational base of Blackwater, the organiser of private military militia which are increasingly taking on more and more roles which used to be undertaken by US forces in Iraq and elsewhere".

American left-wing and anti-war media are in full cry about the underhand and subtle changes, which have made Blackwater the new symbol of American claimed supremacy, carried out by forces other than the regular military.

California Democratic Senator Henry Waxman has been holding a number of hearings on the spread of Blackwater but even they, the more anti-war media claims, have held back from seeing the whole wide picture.

Thus the four-hour interrogation of Blackwater director Eric Prince got lost in details, even discovering for instance a December 2006 "arrangement" negotiated by the State Department as compensation for an Iraqi policeman killed by a Blackwater employee.

But it was only Republican Darrell Issa from California who documented the intimate links between Prince and the Bush administration. On the eve of the hearings, Oliver North, the former colonel who had been condemned for exchanging arms with cocaine in the fight against communism in Nicaragua, accused Senator Waxman of a huge "witch-hunt".

Dennis Kucinich, a Democrat from Ohio, argued that since the military functions had been privatised, it was in Blackwater's interest to prolong the war, rather than end it.

An article on Salon.com carried the charges by Jeremy Scahill that the Christian fundamentalists behind Blackwater were the hard core in favour of the war of George Bush and Dick Cheney and their "patron", former Secretary of State George Schultz.

Eric Prince's parents, Edgar Prince and his wife Elsa Prince Broekhuizen, through their foundation finance the Council for National Policy, an ultra-secret society which met in Salt Lake City on 28 September to hear Dick Cheney argue the case for an attack on Iran.

Prince Senior is one of the pillars of Christian Coalition of Gary Bauer and of the Family Research Council of James Dobson.

Eric Prince, through his own foundation, the Freiheit Foundation, finances Christendom College, the Institute for World Politics, Crisis Magazine and the Prison Fellowship of Chuck Colson. Prince also finances the Legionnaires du Christ and Christian Freedom International.

When still 27 years old, Eric Prince founded Blackwater USA. He and those who soon joined him have profited from the more than \$1,000 million they have taken as contracts from 2000 to 2006.

In 2004, Cofer Black passed from CIA to the State Department and thence became Blackwater's vice-president. While still in the CIA, Black was in charge of the "special extraditions" organising the secret transfer of prisoners from Iraq or Afghanistan to countries less rigid against the practice of torture, such as Poland, Romania, Egypt, and so on.

These planes, which travelled between Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and Afghanistan often made stopovers in many European countries such as the UK, Italy, France, Germany and Malta many times without the countries themselves being informed what was going on.

Now the Swiss procurator Dick Marty has sent documents regarding the "CIA's flying prisons" to the European Parliament and names two Blackwater subsidiaries – Presidential Airways and

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Aviation Worldwide Services.

The Giovanni Claudio Fava document on behalf of the European Parliament says the two companies used CASA C-212 planes, usually used to transport paratroops and big cargoes and also able to land on improvised landing spots.

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