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[John Ashcroft](#) has been hired to work as an independent ethics advisor for Xe Services, the military contractor that used to be Blackwater Worldwide, the company announced Wednesday.

Ashcroft, who became a controversial figure while serving as George W. Bush's attorney general from 2001 to 2005, will head the company's subcommittee on governance, which "will focus on the company's efforts to maximize governance, compliance and accountability, continuing to build and promote the highest degrees of ethics and professionalism within the private security industry."

Employees of the company — then known as [Blackwater](#) — were found to have killed civilians and committed other crimes while working for the U.S. government during the Iraq war.

After changing its name in the face of the bad publicity, Xe was acquired in December by a group of investors organized as USTC Holdings, LLC. When the group made the acquisition, it promised to tighten internal oversight in light of a string of scandals, including a 2007 shooting in Baghdad that killed 17 Iraqi civilians. A judge threw out the case after determining that prosecutors mishandled evidence, but the [U.S. Court of Appeals ruled last month](#) that the judge had misinterpreted the law.

In a company statement, the chairman of the Xe's board, Red McCombs, said Ashcroft's "experience, unparalleled reputation for integrity and personal commitment to ethics, transparency, and excellence" made him a good pick for the job, bringing big-name legal clout to the company.

“I’m delighted to be involved in USTC’s next phase of ownership and growth, particularly in helping to oversee its commitment to professionalism, compliance and accountability within the security industry,” Ashcroft said in a statement. “This is a company with a strong history of service to its country, and a reputation of best-in-class offerings to its public and private customers. I look forward to helping USTC enhance its governance and oversight capabilities as the company moves forward.”

Ashcroft served two terms as Missouri governor and one term in the Senate before losing a re-election race and being nominated as attorney general.