

Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Iraq and Afghanistan: 2007-2015

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Introduction

This report provides background information for Congress on the levels of Department of Defense (DOD) troop and contractor personnel deployed in support of prior and ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. For more information on DOD's use of contractor personnel to support military operations, see CRS Report R43074, *Department of Defense's Use of Contractors to Support Military Operations: Background, Analysis, and Issues for Congress*, by (name redacted).

The Role of Contractors in Military Operations

Throughout its history, DOD has relied on contractors to support a wide range of military operations. Operations over the past 30 years have highlighted the critical role that contractors play in supporting U.S. troops—both in terms of the number of contractors and the type of work being performed. Over the last decade in Iraq and Afghanistan, and before that, in the Balkans, contractors frequently averaged 50% or more of the total DOD presence in-country.

As of June 2015, there were almost 29,000 DOD contractor personnel in Afghanistan, compared to 9,060 U.S. troops, with contract personnel representing approximately 76% of the total DOD presence (see **Table 1**) in country.³ Of the 29,000 DOD contractor personnel, approximately 1,800, or about 6%, were private security contractors (see **Table 2**).

DOD ceased publicly reporting numbers of DOD contractor personnel working in Iraq in December 2013, following the conclusion of the U.S. combat mission, and the subsequent drawdown of DOD contractor personnel levels in Iraq. In late 2014, in response in part to

Definitions: Defense Contractors and Operational Contract Support

DOD defines a *defense contractor* as "any individual, firm, corporation, partnership, or other legal non-federal entity that enters into a contract directly with the DOD to furnish services, supplies, or construction¹." *Operational contract support*, or the process of planning for and obtaining goods and services from commercial sources, is the main term used in DOD doctrine to describe the use of defense contractors to support military operations². This report uses *contractor* to describe individual service contractors and subcontractors, hired by prime contractors under DOD-funded contracts. These individuals may provide a wide range of services to the DOD, from transportation, construction, and base support, to intelligence analysis, translation/interpretation, and private security.

developing operations in the region, DOD reinitiated reporting broad estimates of DOD contractor personnel working in Iraq. DOD resumed reporting exact numbers of contractor personnel in Iraq, as well as primary mission categories for those personnel, as the number of DOD contractor personnel in Iraq increased over the first six months of 2015, in June 2015.

As of September 2015, there were 1,349 DOD contractor personnel in Iraq, compared with up to 3,550 U.S. troops primarily deployed as part of a U.S.-led coalition advise-and-assist mission in support of the government of Iraq. Contract personnel thus represented approximately 39% of the

¹See Department of Defense Instruction 3020.41, Operational Contract Support (OCS), December 20, 2011, p. 48, at http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/302041p.pdf.

²See Joint Publication 4-10, Operational Contract Support, July 2014, p. 211, at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/ new_pubs/jp4_10.pdf.

³See Department of Defense (DOD), *Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility to Include Iraq and Afghanistan*, July 2015, at http://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/CENTCOM_reports.html; Boots on the Ground Report, June 2015.

total DOD presence (see **Table 3**) in-country.⁴ Of the 1,349 DOD contractor personnel, nearly 90, or about 6%, were private security contractors (see **Table 4**).

From FY2007 to FY2014, DOD obligations for contracts performed in the greater Iraq and Afghanistan areas of operation were approximately \$215.2 billion in FY2015 dollars (see **Table 5**).⁵

A number of analysts have raised questions about the reliability of the data gathered by DOD regarding the contractors it employs in theater in support of military operations. For a discussion on the reliability of historical data listed below, see CRS Report R40764, *Department of Defense Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

⁴See DOD, *Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility to Include Iraq and Afghanistan*, October 2015; DOD, "Statement from the Department of Defense on Additional U.S. Personnel to Deploy to Iraq," June 10, 2015, at http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/605555.

⁵ Iraqi areas of operation are defined by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) as Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Jordan. Afghani areas of operation are defined by CRS as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

	Troop Levels	Total Contractors	U.S. Nationals Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Sept. 2007	24,500	29,473	3,387	26,086
Dec. 2007	24,600	36,520	5,153	31,367
Mar. 2008	28,800	52,336	4,220	48,116
June 2008	34,000	41,232	4,724	36,508
Sept. 2008	33,500	68,252	5,405	62,847
Dec. 2008	32,500	71,755	5,960	65,795
Mar. 2009	52,300	68,197	9,378	58,819
June 2009	55,107	73,968	10,036	62,932
Sept. 2009	63,950	104,101	9,322	94,779
Dec. 2009	69,000	107,292	10,016	97,276
Mar. 2010	79,100	112,092	16,081	96,011
June 2010	93,800	107,479	19,103	88,376
Sept. 2010	96,600	70,599	20,874	49,725
Dec. 2010	96,900	87,483	19,381	68,102
Mar. 2011	99,800	90,339	20,413	69,926
June 2011	98,900	93,118	23,294	69,824
Sept. 2011	98,200	101,789	23,190	78,599
Dec. 2011	94,100	3,49	25,287	88,204
Mar. 2012	88,200	117,227	34,765	82,462
June 2012	85,600	113,736	30,568	83,168
Sept. 2012	76,500	109,564	31,814	77,750
Dec. 2012	65,800	110,404	33,444	76,960
Mar. 2013	65,700	107,796	33,107	74,689
June 2013	61,300	101,855	32,442	69,413
Sept. 2013	55,800	85,528	27,188	58,340
Dec. 2013	43,300	78,136,	23,763	54,373
Mar. 2014	33,200	61,452	20,865	40,587
June 2014	31,400	51,489	17,404	34,085
Sept. 2014	27,800	45,349	17,477	27,872
Dec. 2014	10,600	39,609	14,222	25,387
Mar. 2015	9,100	30,820	12,033	18,787
June 2015	9,060	28,931	10,019	18,912
Sept. 2015	Not Yet Available	30,211	10,347	19,864

Table I. DOD Troop Levels and Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan

(September 2007-September 2015)

Sources: Contractor levels drawn from U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; troop levels drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

Note: DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in USCENTCOM until the second half of 2007.

	Troop Levels	Total Private Security Contractors ^a	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Private Security Contractors
Sept. 2007	24,500	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Dec. 2007	24,600	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Mar. 2008	28,800	6,982	167	6,815
June 2008	34,000	3,537	5	3,532
Sept. 2008	33,500	3,847	9	3,838
Dec. 2008	32,500	3,689	15	3,674
Mar. 2009	52,300	4,373	17	4,356
June 2009	55,107	5,198	19	5,179
Sept. 2009	63,950	11,423	76	11,347
Dec. 2009	69,000	14,439	114	14,325
Mar. 2010	79,100	16,733	140	16,593
June 2010	93,800	17,932	152	17,780
Sept. 2010	96,600	18,869	197	18,672
Dec. 2010	96,900	18,919	250	18,669
Mar. 2011	99,800	18,971	250	18,721
June 2011	98,900	١5,305	693	14,612
Sept. 2011	98,200	21,544	603	20,941
Dec. 2011	94,100	20,375	570	19,805
Mar. 2012	88,200	26,612	519	26,093
June 2012	85,600	28,686	480	28,206
Sept. 2012	76,500	18,914	2,014	16,850
Dec. 2012	65,800	19,414	2,094	17,320
Mar. 2013	65,700	17,993	1,378	16,615
June 2013	61,300	16,218	873	15,345
Sept. 2013	55,800	14,056	844	13,212
Dec. 2013	43,300	11,332	1,007	10,325
Mar. 2014	33,200	5,591	641	4,950
June 2014	31,400	3,177	424	2,753
Sept. 2014	27,800	2,472	252	2,220
Dec. 2014	10,600	1,511	317	1,194
Mar. 2015	9,100	1,525	398	1,127
June 2015	9,060	١,779	421	1,358
Sept. 2015	Not Yet Available	1,655	312	1,343

Table 2. DOD Troop Levels and Private Security Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan (September 2007-September 2015)

Sources: Contractor levels drawn from USCENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; troop levels drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on private security contractor personnel levels within Afghanistan until March 2008.

a. Includes most subcontractors and service contractors, armed and unarmed, hired by prime contractors under DOD contracts.

	Troop Levels	Total Contractors	U.S. National Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Sept. 2007	169,000	154,825	26,869	127,956
Dec. 2007	165,700	163,591	31,325	132,266
Mar. 2008	160,500	149,378	29,351	120,027
June 2008	153,300	162,428	29,611	132,817
Sept. 2008	146,800	163,446	28,045	135,401
Dec. 2008	148,500	148,050	39,262	108,788
Mar. 2009	141,300	132,610	36,061	96,549
June 2009	34,57	119,706	31,541	88,165
Sept. 2009	130,000	3,73	29,944	83,787
Dec. 2009	114,300	100,035	27,843	72,192
Mar. 2010	95,900	95,461	24,719	70,742
June 2010	88,320	79,621	22,761	56,860
Sept. 2010	48,410	74,106	20,981	53,125
Dec. 2010	47,305	71,142	19,943	51,199
Mar. 2011	45,660	64,253	18,393	45,860
June 2011	46,010	62,689	18,900	43,789
Sept. 2011	44,755	52,637	I 6,054	36,583
Dec. 2011ª	11,445	23,886	11,237	12,649
Mar. 2012ª	_	10,967	3,260	7,707
June 2012ª	_	7,336	2,493	4,843
Sept. 2012 ^a	_	9,000	2,314	6,686
Dec. 2012 ^a	_	8,449	2,356	6,093
Mar. 2013ª	_	7,905	2,125	5,780
June 2013ª	_	7,735	1,898	5,837
Sept. 2013ª	_	6,624	1,626	4,998
Dec. 2013 ^a	_	3,234	820	2,414
No	Data on Contractors Rele	ased by USCENTCOM from	m March 2014-Septem	nber 2014
Dec. 2014	Up to 3,100 ^b	250 (est.) ^c	No Data Available	No Data Available
Mar. 2015	Up to 3,100 ^b	600 (est.) ^d	No Data Available	No Data Available
June 2015	Up to 3,550 ^e	I,349 ^f	1,140	209
Sept. 2015	Up to 3,550 ^e	I,403g	1,098	305

Table 3. DOD Troop Levels and Contractor Personnel in Iraq

(September 2007-December 2013; December 2014-September 2015)

Sources: Troop levels from September 2007-December 2013 are drawn from the DOD's "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress. Total troop levels for December 2014-September 2015 are drawn from the White House's semiannual "War Powers Resolution Report" to Congress. All listed contractor levels are drawn from USCENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in USCENTCOM until the second half of 2007, and initially ceased reporting data on DOD contractor personnel in Iraq in December 2013. Following the conclusion of the U.S. combat mission in Iraq, the "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports ceased providing separate troop

levels for Iraq. However, a residual U.S. force remained in county to provide embassy security and security cooperation assistance. Beginning in June 2014, in response to the military operations of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (also known as ISIS/ISIL), additional U.S. military personnel were deployed to Iraq through Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) to advise and train Iraqi forces, serve as observers, and secure U.S. personnel and facilities. For further discussion of the U.S and its coalition partners' efforts to combat the Islamic State, see CRS Report R43612, *The Islamic State and U.S. Policy*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted) In December 2014, USCENTCOM resumed releasing data on DOD contractor personnel in Iraq—as the "Boots on the Ground" reports do not currently provide OIR troop levels, CRS used the Force Management Levels for Iraq reported by the White House, beginning with the December 2014 "Six Month Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report" to provide an indication of the current number of U.S. forces in Iraq.

- a. USCENTCOM reported that DOD contractors in Iraq from December 2011 through December 2013 were supporting both U.S. Mission Iraq and the Office of Security Cooperation Iraq.
- b. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—Six Month Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report," December 11, 2014, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/11/letter-president-six-month-consolidated-war-powers-resolution-report.
- c. Per the USCENTCOM January 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, these personnel were "primarily performing translator/interpreter, communications, logistics, and maintenance functions."
- d. Per the USCENTCOM April 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, these personnel were "primarily performing translator/interpreter, transportation, logistics, and maintenance functions."
- e. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—Six Month Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report," June 11, 2014, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/11/letter-president-six-month-consolidated-war-powers-resolution-report.
- f. Per the USCENTCOM July 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, these personnel were primarily performing logistics, maintenance, translator/interpreter, transportation, management, and administrative-related functions.
- g. Per the USCENTCOM October 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, these personnel were primarily performing logistics, maintenance, translator/interpreter, base support, management, and administrative-related functions.

	Troop Levels	Total Private Security Contractorsa	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Private Security Contractors
Sept. 2007	169,000	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Dec. 2007	165,700	9,952	830	9,122
Mar. 2008	I 60,500	7,259	515	6,744
June 2008	153,300	7,704	1,540	6,164
Sept. 2008	146,800	10,446	886 ^b	9,560
Dec. 2008	148,500	9,218	727 ^b	8,436
Mar. 2009	141,300	12,942	681	12,261
June 2009	134,571	15,279	802	14,477
Sept. 2009	I 30,000	12,684	670	12,014
Dec. 2009	114,300	I I,095	776	10,319
Mar. 2010	95,900	11,610	1,081	10,529
June 2010	88,320	11,413	1,030	10,383
Sept. 2010	48,410	11,628	1,017	10,611

Table 4. DOD Troop Levels and Private Security Contractors in Iraq (September 2007-September 2013; June-September 2015)

	Troop Levels	Total Private Security Contractorsa	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country Nationa Private Security Contractors	
Dec. 2010	47,305	8,327	791	7,536	
Mar. 2011	45,660	9,207	917	8,290	
June 2011	46,010	10,414	935	9,479	
Sept. 2011	44,755	9,554	844	8,710	
Dec. 2011	11,445	8,995	751	8,244	
Mar. 2012	_	3,577	288	3,289	
June 2012	_	2,407	116	2,291	
Sept. 2012	_	2,116	102	2,014	
Dec. 2012	_	2,281	235	2,046	
Mar. 2013	_	2,359	259	2,100	
June 2013	_	2,148	217	1,931	
Sept. 2013	_	2,409	147	2,262	
Να	Data on Contractors Releas	ed by USCENTCOM fr	om March 2014-Septem	ber 2014	
June 2015	Up to 3,550°	43 ^d	No Data Available	No Data Available	
Sept. 2015	Up to 3,550 ^c	87 e	No Data Available	No Data Available	

Sources: Troop levels from September 2007-December 2013 are drawn from the DOD's "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress. Troop levels for December 2014-September 2015 are drawn from the White House's semiannual "War Powers Resolution Report" to Congress. Contractor levels are drawn from USCENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on private security contractor personnel levels in USCENTCOM until December 2007, and initially ceased reporting data on DOD private security contractor personnel in Iraq in September 2013. See **Table 3** for further discussion of U.S. troop and contractor levels in Iraq since December 2011.

- a. USCENTCOM reported that DOD contractors in Iraq from December 2011 through December 2013 were supporting both U.S. Mission Iraq and the Office of Security Cooperation Iraq.
- b. USCENTCOM Quarterly Census Reports from August 2008 and November 2008 also included Coalition personnel in the reported totals of U.S. private security contractor personnel.
- c. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—Six Month Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report," June 11, 2014, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/11/letter-president-six-month-consolidated-war-powers-resolution-report.
- d. In its June 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, USCENTCOM indicated that 43 contractors fell under a "security" mission category in a summary of contractors in Iraq by mission category distribution.
- e. In its October 2015 Quarterly Contractor Census Report, USCENTCOM indicated that 87 contractors fell under a "security" mission category in a summary of contractors in Iraq by mission category distribution.

						,				
		FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
lraq Theater	Iraq	14,418.98	17,179.22	10,393.93	7,744.93	5,120.48	605.97	526.94	75.86	56,066.31
	Bahrain	578.24	1,273.36	2,152.28	597.90	515.96	331.97	866.74	207.99	6,524.43
	Kuwait	4,892.67	4,712.3	5,718.48	4,955.38	3,905.53	2,562.62	3,078.67	1,766.52	31,592.18
	Qatar	317.59	448.16	870.79	344.83	824.22	854.30	423.78	171.89	4,255.56
	Saudi Arabia	206.78	358.88	971.86	791.27	303.43	559.19	945.21	1,227.08	5,363.7
	Turkey	369.08	184.53	306.28	140.55	182.30	280.90	187.92	180.72	1,832.26
	UAE	256.59	1,266.96	300.38	2,612.06	1,039.10	1,439.83	2,236.88	1,717.46	10,869.26
	Oman	92.57	102.71	83.81	123.51	139.38	210.60	224.34	104.19	1,081.12
	Jordan	82.33	88.15	14.55	13.51	39.22	53.14	173.62	164.42	628.95
	Total Iraq Theater	21,214.83	25,614.28	20,812.37	17,323.94	12,069.61	6,898.51	8,664.1	5,616.13	11,8213.77
Afghanistan Theater	Afghanistan	3,731.7	6,755.71	8,055.86	12,833.67	17,794.75	19,056.94	14,711.26	6,083.85	8,9023.73
	Kazakhstan	5.95	29.47	47.22	65.04	73.80	77.02	91.73	56.20	446.44
	Kyrgyzstan	419.24	19.89	367.86	131.61	889.06	1,951.00	1,983.52	668.58	6,430.76
	Pakistan	73.13	230.18	249.44	176.12	63.81	16.98	-3.58	21.25	827.33
	Tajikistan	—	0.01	1.07	3.72	3.48	8.71	9.07	7.32	33.38
	Turkmenistan	0.44	18.92	9.08	23.76	10.25	4.36	13.69	1.44	81.93
	Uzbekistan	13.69	15.74	9.73	22.30	16.12	23.37	18.72	21.65	141.33
Total	Afghanistan Theater	4,244.15	7,069.92	8,740.25	13,256.23	18,851.26	21,138.38	16,824.42	6,860.3	96,984.91
Total Iraq	and Afghanistan	25,458.98	32,684.2	29,552.62	30,580.17	30,920.88	28,036.88	25,488.52	12,476.43	215,198.6

Table 5. DOD Contract Obligations in Iraq and Afghanistan Theaters of Operation

(FY2007-FY2014; in millions of FY2015 dollars)

Source: Federal Procurement Data System, as of October 2015 for FY2007-FY2014 data; CRS adjustments for inflation using deflators for converting into constant dollars derived from Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense, *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY2015*, "Department of Defense Deflators – TOA By Category 'Total Non-Pay," Table 5-5, p. 56-57, April 2014.

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