

Obama's ISIS War: Profit for Military Contractors

Avoiding accountability and boots on the ground

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Earlier this week [Stars and Stripes](#), the Pentagon-run newspaper and website, posted an article calling for contractors to fight ISIS and provide other services in Iraq.

The U.S. Army Contracting Command posted a notice last month seeking contractors willing to work on an initial 12-month contract, who should be “cognizant of the goals of reducing tensions between Arabs and Kurds, and Sunni and Shias.”

According to the Pentagon periodical, merc and contractor duties will “fall within the existing mission” and will “focus on administration, force development, procurement and acquisition, contracting, training management, public affairs, logistics, personnel management, professional development, communications, planning and operations, infrastructure management, intelligence and executive development, the notice stated.”

As of February, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#), there were more than 5,000 specialists working in the country.

“Hundreds of contractors working for America’s biggest defense companies are taking on a broader role in helping Iraq’s military learn to use new weapons in a growing battle against Islamist insurgents,” Dion Nissenbaum writes. “Across Iraq, military specialists are helping the Iraqi military maintain its growing number of surveillance drones, attack helicopters and powerful missiles. Thousands more support the U.S. government as security guards, analysts, drivers and cooks.”

“The military task has, in fact, been outsourced in Iraq,” analyst [Steven Schooner](#), a professor at George Washington University Law School, told the Journal.

The Pentagon has converted Iraq with its violent sectarian rivalries into a lucrative business opportunity for a burgeoning mercenary and contractor industry that has blossomed in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Obama’s ISIS war arrives at an opportune time for contractors. From 2008 to 2013, according to data provided to the Securities and Exchange Commission, the five largest U.S. defense contractors have experienced a 14 percent drop in employees. Lockheed Martin Corporation, the biggest defense contractor in the world, cut its workforce by 20 percent, [International Business Times](#) reported in August. The ISIS war now gearing up will undoubtedly restore lost revenue and provide for lost jobs.

Contractor Track Record: Murder and Mischief

The reputation of contractors in Iraq was tarnished in 2007 when Blackwater employees shot and killed 17 civilians in Baghdad's Nisour Square. Blackwater lost its license to operate in the country after the killings. Earlier this month, a [jury in Washington](#) began deliberations on whether four contractors are guilty of murder.

In 2010 the "Iraq war logs" made public by Wikileaks revealed several dozen instances of military contractors — primarily Blackwater and the British outfit Erinys — engaged in "escalation of force" incidents and other mischief.

"Quite possibly, there were many more incidents in which civilians were injured, or even killed, which were never reported. Some of the reports may have been altered before they were entered into the military system. But given the other records that I found, at the very least, Wikileaks has revealed that Blackwater and other private security companies are guilty of many more injuries and killings than the media have previously reported," writes [Pratap Chatterjee](#).

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