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Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2018

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SUMMARY

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Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2018

Throughout its history, the Department of Defense (DOD) has relied on contractors to support a wide range of military operations. Operations over the last thirty 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. During recent U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, contractors often accounted for 50% or more of the total DOD presence in-country.

For the fourth quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2018, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) reported 49,451 contractor personnel working for DOD within its area of responsibility, which included 28,189 individuals located in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. From FY2009 to FY2018, obligations for all DOD-funded contracts performed within the Iraq and Afghanistan areas of operation totaled approximately $208 billion in FY2019 dollars.

In late 2017, the DOD stopped reporting the number of U.S. military personnel deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria as part of its quarterly manpower reports and in other official releases. These data remain withheld.

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Introduction

This report provides background information for Congress on the levels of Department of Defense (DOD) military servicemembers 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, see CRS In Focus IF10600, *Defense Primer: Department of Defense Contractors*, by Heidi M. Peters and Moshe Schwartz and CRS Report R43074, *Department of Defense's Use of Contractors to Support Military Operations: Background, Analysis, and Issues for Congress*, by Moshe Schwartz.

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. military servicemembers, both in terms of the number of contractors and the type of work being performed. During recent U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, contractors frequently averaged 50% or more of the total DOD presence in-country.

Tracking Contractors During Contingency Operations

Since 2008, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has published quarterly contractor census reports that provide aggregated data – including elements such as mission category and nationality – on contractors employed through DOD-funded contracts who are physically located within the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

Analysts and observers have previously raised questions about the reliability of the data gathered by DOD regarding the number of contractors it employs in theater in support of military operations.[2] DOD officials, however, have stated that since 2009, the DOD has implemented a variety of mechanisms to improve the reliability of contractor data it gathers, including modifications to information technology systems, such as data collection systems like the joint Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) database;

Definition: Defense Contractors

The Code of Federal Regulations 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 construction."[1]

Within the defense policy community, the term *contractor* is commonly used in two different contexts. The word can describe the private companies with which DOD contracts to obtain goods and services. It can also describe individuals hired by DOD – usually through private companies, which are also considered contractors in the previous context – to perform specific tasks. The term *contractor* does not refer to military servicemembers, civilian DOD career employees, or civilian political appointees.

This report uses *contractor* to describe individual contractors hired through 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 support.

[1] See 32 C.F.R. 158.3, "Definitions;" see also DOD Instruction 3020.41, *Operational Contract Support (OCS)*, August 31, 2018, p. 48, at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/302041p.pdf.

[2] See, for example, U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Iraq and Afghanistan: DOD, State and USAID Face Continued Challenges in Tracking Contracts, Assistance Instruments, and Associated Personnel*, GAO-11-1, October 1, 2010. For further discussions of efforts to improve DOD contractor management and oversight, see CRS Report R40764, *Department of Defense Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis*, by Moshe Schwartz and Joyprada Swain.

updates and changes to related departmental policies; and changes in "leadership emphasis" within DOD and the combatant commands.[3]

For the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, CENTCOM reported 49,451 contractor personnel working for DOD within its area of responsibility, which included 28,189 individuals located in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**).

From FY2009 to FY2018, obligations for all DOD-funded contracts performed within the Iraq and Afghanistan areas of operation totaled approximately $208 billion in FY2019 dollars (see **Table 5**).[4]

Force Management Levels for Deployed U.S. Armed Forces

Force management levels, sometimes also described as troop caps, troop ceilings, or force manning levels, have historically been used by the United States to establish bounds on the number of military personnel that may be deployed in a country or region.

The executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government have used force management levels to guide the execution of certain overseas U.S. military operations, as well as the associated presence of DOD personnel. During the 1980s, for example, Congress used provisions within annual appropriations legislation to establish force management levels limiting the number of active duty U.S. military personnel stationed ashore in Europe.[5] The Obama Administration used force management levels to manage its drawdown of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, and to manage the U.S. military presence in Iraq and Syria under Operation Inherent Resolve.[6]

[3] Email correspondence with DOD official, received by CRS on September 7, 2016.

[4] Iraq areas of operation are defined by CRS as Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Jordan. Afghanistan areas of operation are defined by CRS as Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 2008, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) published a report (CBO, Contractors' Support of U.S. Operations in Iraq, August 2008) that tracked the U.S. government's obligations in the Iraqi theater from FY2005-FY2007 using Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) data that considered most countries bordering Iraq, with the exception of Iran, to be part of the Iraqi area of operations. CRS replicated CBO's methodology for defining the Iraq areas of operation for the purposes of this data analysis, and used a similar methodology in determining the approximate value of annual contract obligations in the Afghanistan areas of operation. The data used by CRS allocates place of performance based on the principal contract place of performance as identified by FPDS. Because FPDS only allows for one country to be listed as the place of performance, contracts listed as being performed in one country can also involve substantial performance in other countries. As such, activities undertaken primarily in other countries excluded from these definitions in support of U.S. operations in the Afghanistan and Iraq areas of operation (such as contracted activities undertaken at CENTCOM's headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida in support of U.S. operations within CENTCOM's area of responsibility) would not be included in this analysis. See also Appendix A, "FPDS Background, Accuracy Issues, and Future Plans" to CRS Report R44010, *Defense Acquisitions: How and Where DOD Spends Its Contracting Dollars*, by Moshe Schwartz, John F. Sargent Jr., and Christopher T. Mann, for an overview of known issues associated with FPDS data, including accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the contract award data.

[5] See for example Section 799A of P.L. 97-377, enacted December 21, 1982. This provision was enacted in the larger context of congressional debate at the time regarding the perception that the United States' NATO allies should assume a greater percentage of the mutual defense investment burden.

[6] Established force management levels may be adjusted in response to operational needs or changing circumstances within a country or region, such as the Obama Administration's decision in July 2016 to maintain approximately 8,400 troops in Afghanistan through January 2017. See White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Statement by the President on Afghanistan," July 6, 2016, available at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/06/statement-president-afghanistan.

The Trump Administration has reportedly delegated the authority to establish force management levels for Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria to the Secretary of Defense.[7]

In August 2017, the DOD announced that it was revising its force management level accounting and reporting practices for Afghanistan to also include U.S. Armed Forces personnel in-country for short-duration missions, personnel in a temporary duty status, personnel assigned to combat support agencies, and forces assigned to the material recovery element and the Resolute Support sustainment brigade in reported totals.[8]

In late 2017, the Defense Department stopped reporting the number of U.S. military personnel deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria as part of its quarterly manpower reports and in other official releases. These data remain withheld, leading to criticism from some observers and Members of Congress.[9]

DOD Usage of Contractors During Ongoing Military Operations

Some observers and experts argued that external "resource limits" of force management levels may have increased DOD's "reliance on…contractor and temporary duty personnel" to effectively execute ongoing military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.[10] In February 2017, U.S. Army General John Nicholson, then Commander of the NATO Resolute Support Mission and United States Forces–Afghanistan, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that DOD had to "substitute contractors for soldiers in order to meet the force manning levels" in Afghanistan.[11] While the drawdown of U.S. forces contributed to a demonstrable increase in the ratio of contractors to uniformed servicemembers in Afghanistan between 2012 and 2017, it is difficult to assess if the increased ratio supported General Nicholson's assertion.

The House-passed version of the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, H.R. 2810) contained a provision (Section 923) that would have expressed the sense of Congress that the DOD should discourage the practice of substituting contractor personnel for available

[7] See Luis Martinez, "Trump Gives Pentagon Authority to Set Troop Levels in Syria and Iraq," *ABC News*, April 26, 2017; Jim Garamone, "President Gives Mattis Authority to Set U.S. Troop Strength in Afghanistan," Defense Media Activity, June 14, 2017; and U.S. Department of Defense Press Release, "Statement by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis on Afghanistan Troop Levels," June 14, 2017. In a March 30, 2017 *Los Angeles Times* article, a DOD spokesperson reportedly noted that "[i]n order to maintain tactical surprise, ensure operational security and force protection, the coalition will not routinely announce or confirm information about the capabilities, force numbers, locations, or movement of forces in or out of Iraq and Syria."

[8] See U.S. Department of Defense, Press Operations, "Department of Defense Afghanistan Force Management Level Accounting and Reporting Practices Briefing by Pentagon Chief Spokesperson White and Joint Staff Director Lieutenant General McKenzie in the Pentagon Briefing Room," transcript, August 30, 2017.

[9] CRS October 26, 2018 correspondence with DOD officials; David Welna, "Pentagon Questioned over Blackout on War Zone Troop Numbers," *NPR*, July 3, 2018; and Tara Copp, "Pentagon strips Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria troop numbers from web," *Military Times*, April 9, 2018.

[10] See for example the statement as delivered and the prepared statement of Cary Russell, Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, GAO, "Overseas Contingency Operations: Observations on the Use of Force Management Levels in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria," before the U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Force Management Levels in Iraq and Afghanistan: Readiness and Strategic Considerations*, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., December 1, 2016.

[11] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Situation in Afghanistan*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., February 9, 2017. This concern was also echoed in a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in December 2016, and in a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Readiness on March 8, 2017.

members of the Armed Forces when a unit deploys overseas. This section also would have required the Secretary of Defense to provide a related briefing to the congressional defense committees. A similar provision was not included in the Senate amendment to H.R. 2810. While the House receded in conference, the conferees directed the Secretary of Defense to provide a briefing detailing steps taken by DOD to revise deployment guidelines to ensure readiness, unit cohesion, and maintenance were prioritized, as well as the Secretary of Defense's plan to establish a policy to avoid the practice of directly substituting contractor personnel for U.S. military personnel when practicable in the future.

Concern about DOD's use of contractors in contingency operations predates the recent usage of force management levels. For example, the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, in its 2011 final report to Congress, expressed its view that operations in Iraq and Afghanistan between FY2002 and FY2011 had led to an "unhealthy over-reliance" on contractors by DOD, Department of State, and USAID.[12]

Private Security Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq

In Iraq and Afghanistan, armed and unarmed private security contractors have been employed to provide services such as protecting fixed locations; guarding traveling convoys; providing security escorts; and training police and military personnel. The number of private security contractor employees working for DOD in Iraq and Afghanistan has fluctuated significantly over time, and is dependent on a variety of factors, including current force management levels in-country and U.S. operational needs.

The presence of private security contractors peaked in Afghanistan in 2012 at more than 28,000 individuals and in Iraq in 2009 at more than 15,000 individuals. For the fourth quarter of FY2018, DOD reported 4,172 private security contractors in Afghanistan, with 2,397 categorized as armed private security contractors (see **Table 2**). DOD reported 418 security contractor personnel in Iraq and Syria during the same period, none of whom were identified as armed private security contractors (see **Table 4**).

[12] Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, "Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks," final report of the Commission to Congress, August 2011, pp. 18-21. Available at https://cybercemetery.unt.edu/archive/cwc/20110929213922/http://www.wartimecontracting.gov/docs/CWC_FinalReport-highres.pdf.

U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan

As of the fourth quarter of FY2018, 25,239 DOD contractor personnel were located in Afghanistan (see **Table 1**).[13] Approximately 44% of DOD's reported individual contractors were U.S. citizens (10,989), approximately 42% were third-country nationals (10,628), and roughly 14% were local nationals (3,622). Of the 25,239 DOD contractor personnel, about 9% were armed private security contractors (2,397).

As of May 2019, observers and analysts estimated the number of U.S. Armed Forces personnel in Afghanistan to be between 14,000 and 15,000.[14] Reports in early 2019 indicate the Trump Administration may be contemplating withdrawing some portion of in-country U.S. forces (a subject of ongoing U.S.-Taliban negotiations). U.S. officials have stated that no final policy decision has been made.[15]

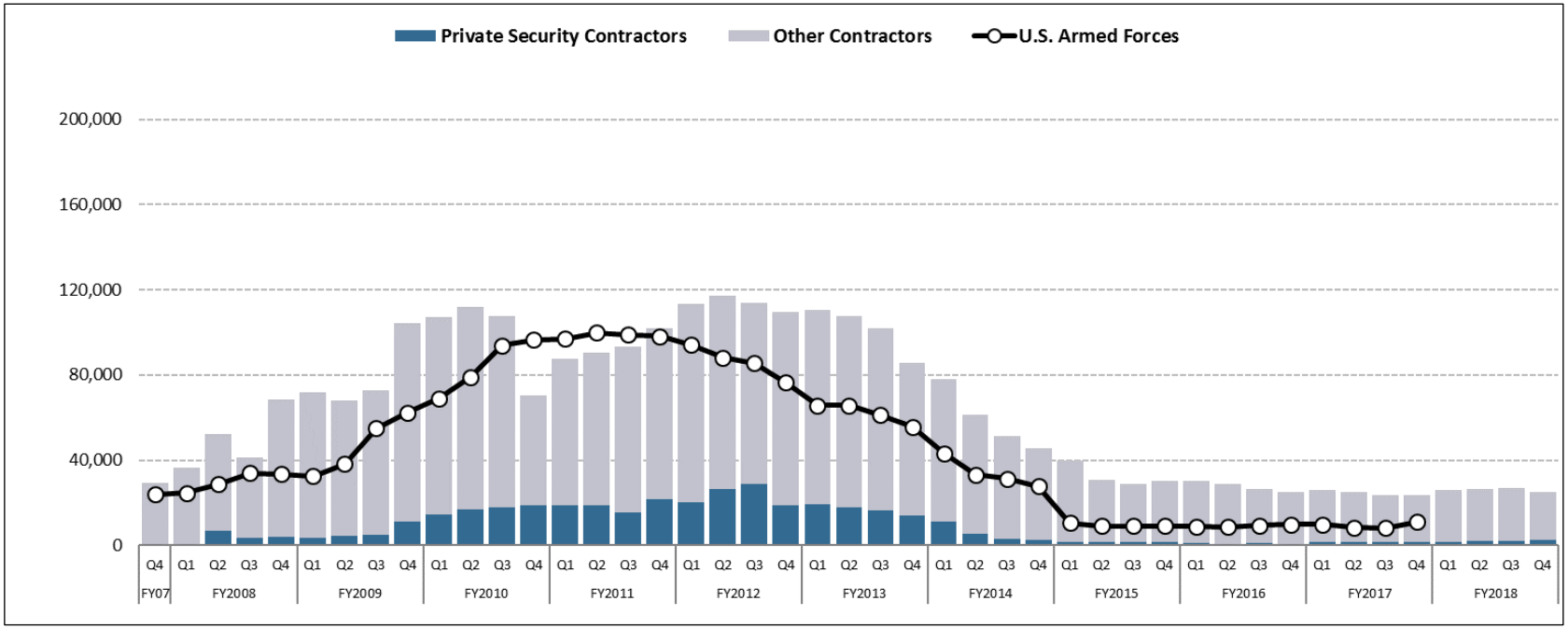
[13] See Department of Defense, *Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility*, October 2018, at https://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/.CENTCOM_reports.html/5A_October_2018.pdf.

[14] See for example Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Mujib Mashal, "U.S. to Withdraw about 7,000 Troops from Afghanistan, Officials Say," *The New York Times*, December 20, 2018; Gordon Lubold and Jessica Donati, "Trump Orders Big Troop Reduction in Afghanistan," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 20, 2018; and Dan Lamothe and Josh Dawsey, "New Plans for Afghanistan Would Have Trump Withdrawing Fewer Troops," *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2019.

[15] For further discussion of U.S. operations in Afghanistan under Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS), which includes the NATO-led Resolute Support mission, see CRS Report R45122, *Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy In Brief*, by Clayton Thomas.

Figure 1. U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan

Q4 FY2007-Q4 FY2018



Source: Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels through Q4 FY2017 drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in CENTCOM until Q4 FY2007. U.S. Armed Forces levels include all active and reserve component personnel.

Table 1. U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan

(Q4 FY2007-Q4 FY2018)

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. Nationals Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q4 FY2007	24,056	29,473	3,387	26,086
Q1 FY2008	24,780	36,520	5,153	31,367
Q2 FY2008	28,650	52,336	4,220	48,116
Q3 FY2008	33,902	41,232	4,724	36,508
Q4 FY2008	33,450	68,252	5,405	62,847
Q1 FY2009	32,500	71,755	5,960	65,795
Q2 FY2009	38,350	68,197	9,378	58,819
Q3 FY2009	55,100	73,968	10,036	62,932
Q4 FY2009	62,300	104,101	9,322	94,779
Q1 FY2010	69,000	107,292	10,016	97,276
Q2 FY2010	79,100	112,092	16,081	96,011
Q3 FY2010	93,800	107,479	19,103	88,376
Q4 FY2010	96,600	70,599	20,874	49,725
Q1 FY2011	96,900	87,483	19,381	68,102
Q2 FY2011	99,800	90,339	20,413	69,926
Q3 FY2011	98,900	93,118	23,294	69,824
Q4 FY2011	98,200	101,789	23,190	78,599
Q1 FY2012	94,100	113,491	25,287	88,204
Q2 FY2012	88,200	117,227	34,765	82,462
Q3 FY2012	85,600	113,736	30,568	83,168
Q4 FY2012	76,500	109,564	31,814	77,750
Q1 FY2013	65,800	110,404	33,444	76,960
Q2 FY2013	65,700	107,796	33,107	74,689
Q3 FY2013	61,300	101,855	32,442	69,413
Q4 FY2013	55,800	85,528	27,188	58,340
Q1 FY2014	43,300	78,136,	23,763	54,373
Q2 FY2014	33,200	61,452	20,865	40,587
Q3 FY2014	31,400	51,489	17,404	34,085
Q4 FY2014	27,800	45,349	17,477	27,872
Q1 FY2015	10,600	39,609	14,222	25,387
Q2 FY2015	9,100	30,820	12,033	18,787
Q3 FY2015	9,060	28,931	10,019	18,912
Q4 FY2015	9,100	30,211	10,347	19,864
Q1 FY2016	8,930	30,455	10,151	20,304

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. Nationals Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q2 FY2016	8,730	28,626	9,640	18,986
Q3 FY2016	9,365	26,435	8,837	17,598
Q4 FY2016	9,800	25,197	9,142	16,055
Q1 FY2017	9,200	26,022	9,474	16,548
Q2 FY2017	8,400	24,900	9,522	15,378
Q3 FY2017	8,300	23,525	9,436	14,089
Q4 FY2017	11,100[a]	23,659	9,418	14,241
Q1 FY2018	Not Available	26,043	10,189	15,854
Q2 FY2018	Not Available	26,647	10,891	15,756
Q3 FY2018	Not Available	26,922	10,128	16,794
Q4 FY2018	Not Available	25,239	10,989	14,250

Sources: Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels through Q4 FY2017 drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

Note: DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in CENTCOM until Q4 FY2007. U.S. Armed Forces levels include all active and reserve component personnel.

a. In August 2017, DOD revised its force management level accounting and reporting practices for Afghanistan to include U.S. Armed Forces personnel in-country for short-duration missions, personnel in a temporary duty status, personnel assigned to combat support agencies, and forces assigned to the material recovery element and the Resolute Support sustainment brigade in reported totals. See U.S. Department of Defense, Press Operations, "Department of Defense Afghanistan Force Management Level Accounting and Reporting Practices Briefing by Pentagon Chief Spokesperson White and Joint Staff Director Lieutenant General McKenzie in the Pentagon Briefing Room," transcript, August 30, 2017.

Table 2. U.S. Armed Forces and Private Security Contractor Personnel in Afghanistan

(Q2 FY2008-Q4 FY2018)

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Private Security Contractors[a]	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Private Security Contractors
Q2 FY2008	28,650	6,982	167	6,815
Q3 FY2008	33,902	3,537	5	3,532
Q4 FY2008	33,450	3,847	9	3,838
Q1 FY2009	32,500	3,689	15	3,674
Q2 FY2009	38,350	4,373	17	4,356
Q3 FY2009	55,100	5,198	19	5,179
Q4 FY2009	62,300	11,423	76	11,347
Q1 FY2010	69,000	14,439	114	14,325
Q2 FY2010	79,100	16,733	140	16,593
Q3 FY2010	93,800	17,932	152	17,780
Q4 FY2010	96,600	18,869	197	18,672
Q1 FY2011	96,900	18,919	250	18,669
Q2 FY2011	99,800	18,971	250	18,721
Q3 FY2011	98,900	15,305	693	14,612
Q4 FY2011	98,200	21,544	603	20,941
Q1 FY2012	94,100	20,375	570	19,805
Q2 FY2012	88,200	26,612	519	26,093
Q3 FY2012	85,600	28,686	480	28,206
Q4 FY2012	76,500	18,914	2,014	16,850
Q1 FY2013	65,800	19,414	2,094	17,320
Q2 FY2013	65,700	17,993	1,378	16,615
Q3 FY2013	61,300	16,218	873	15,345
Q4 FY2013	55,800	14,056	844	13,212
Q1 FY2014	43,300	11,332	1,007	10,325
Q2 FY2014	33,200	5,591	641	4,950
Q3 FY2014	31,400	3,177	424	2,753
Q4 FY2014	27,800	2,472	252	2,220
Q1 FY2015	10,600	1,511	317	1,194
Q2 FY2015	9,100	1,525	398	1,127
Q3 FY2015	9,060	1,779	421	1,358
Q4 FY2015	9,100	1,655	312	1,343
Q1 FY2016	8,930	1,083	176	907
Q2 FY2016	8,730	872	125	747

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Private Security Contractors[a]	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Private Security Contractors
Q3 FY2016	9,365	1,022	174	848
Q4 FY2016	9,800	813	145	668
Q1 FY2017	9,200	1,722	473	1,249
Q2 FY2017	8,400	1,816	436	1,380
Q3 FY2017	8,300	1,695	449	1,246
Q4 FY2017	11,100	1,829	493	1,336
Q1 FY2018	Not Available	1,867	426	1,441
Q2 FY2018	Not Available	1,932	416	1,516
Q3 FY2018	Not Available	2,002	746	1,256
Q4 FY2018	Not Available	2,397	364	2,033

Sources: Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels through Q4 FY2017 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 Q2 FY2008. U.S. Armed Forces personnel levels include all active and reserve component personnel.

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

U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Iraq

DOD ceased publicly reporting numbers of DOD contractor personnel working in Iraq in December 2013, following the conclusion of the U.S. combat mission in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn), and the subsequent drawdown of DOD contractor personnel levels in Iraq.

In late 2014, in response in part to developing operations in the region, DOD reinitiated reporting broad estimates of DOD contractor personnel deployed in Iraq in support of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). As the number of DOD contractor personnel in Iraq increased over the first six months of 2015, DOD resumed reporting exact numbers and primary mission categories of OIR contractor personnel in June 2015. In the second quarter of FY2018, DOD began reporting a combined total of contractor personnel physically located in Iraq and Syria.

As of the fourth quarter of FY2018, there were 6,318 DOD contractor personnel in Iraq and Syria (see **Table 3**). Approximately 49% of DOD's reported individual contractors were U.S. citizens (3,086), approximately 38% were third-country nationals (2,405); and roughly 13% were local/host-country nationals.[16] As of FY2018, CENTCOM has not resumed reporting data on DOD-funded private security personnel in Iraq.

In December 2017, DOD indicated the number of U.S. Armed Forces personnel in Iraq was roughly 5,200, and indicated the number of U.S. Armed Forces personnel in Syria was approximately 2,000.[17] In December 2018, President Donald J. Trump announced that U.S. forces had defeated the Islamic State and would leave Syria; however, in February 2019, the White House indicated that several hundred U.S. troops would remain in Syria.[18]

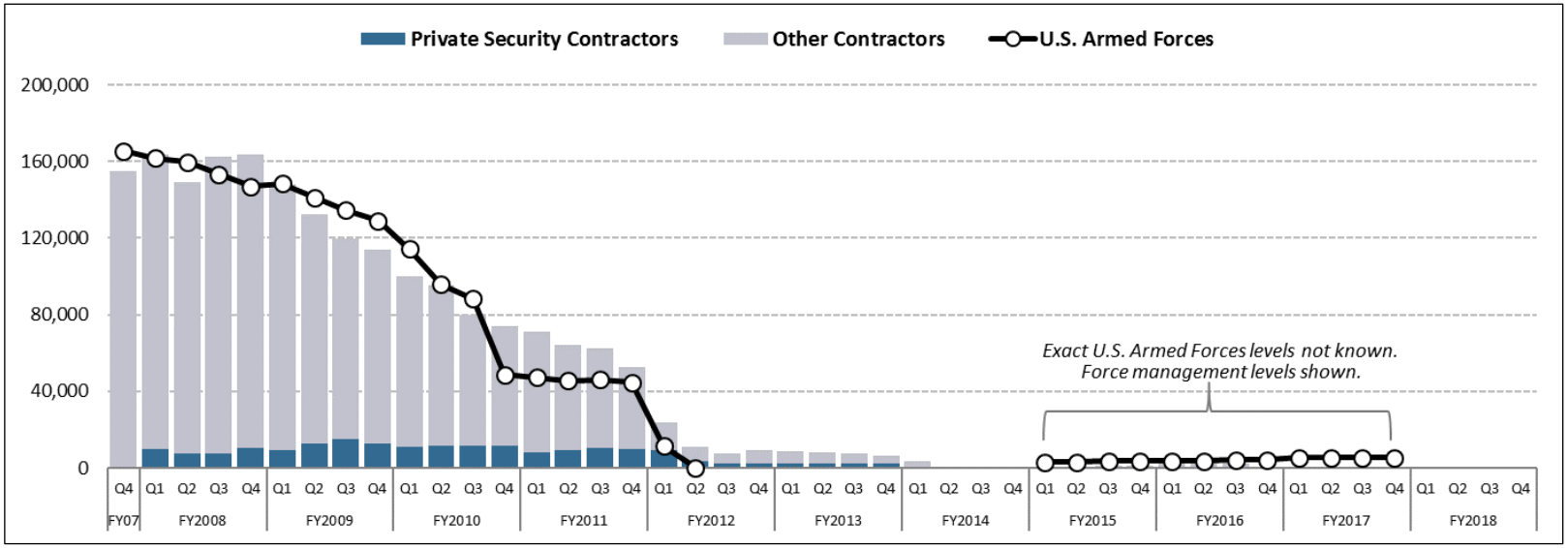
[16] See Department of Defense, Contractor Support of U.S. Operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility, October 2018, at https://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/.CENTCOM_reports.html/5A_October_2018.pdf.

[17] Jim Garamone, "Pentagon Announces Troop Levels in Iraq, Syria," *Defense Media Activity*, December 6, 2017. DOD has not released updated troop levels for Iraq or Syria; observers and analysts have typically referenced the December 2017 figures in subsequent discussions of U.S. Armed Forces levels in Iraq and Syria—see for example Tamer El-Ghobashy, "Trump's Decision on Syria is Worrying Allies in Iraq and Emboldening Opponents," *The Washington Post*, December 20, 2018 and Dion Nissenbaum, Nancy A. Youssef, and Vivian Salama, "In Shift, Trump Orders U.S. Troops Out of Syria," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 19, 2018. For further discussion of the U.S. and its coalition partners' efforts to combat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria under OIR, see CRS Report R43612, *The Islamic State and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard and Carla E. Humud.

[18] CRS Report RL33487, *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response*, coordinated by Carla E. Humud.

Figure 2. U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Iraq

(Q4 F72007-Q1 FY2014; Q1 FY2015-Q4 FY2018)



Source: Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels from Q4 FY2007-Q1 FY2012 drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress. U.S. Armed Forces levels for Q1 FY2015-Q4 FY2017 drawn from White House semiannual "War Powers Resolution Report" to Congress.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on DOD-funded private security contractor personnel in CENTCOM until Q1 FY2008, and ceased reporting data on DOD-funded private security contractor personnel in Iraq in Q4 FY2013. As of Q4 FY2018, CENTCOM has not resumed reporting data on DOD-funded private security personnel in Iraq. U.S. force levels for Q4 FY2007-Q1 FY2012 include all active and reserve component personnel. See **Table 3** for further discussion of recent U.S. Armed Forces and contractor levels in Iraq. As of Q2 FY2018, CENTCOM reports a combined total of contractor personnel physically located in Iraq and Syria.

Table 3. U.S. Armed Forces and Contractor Personnel in Iraq

(Q4 F72007-Q1 FY2014; Q1 FY2015-Q4 FY2018)

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. National Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q4 FY2007	165,607	154,825	26,869	127,956
Q1 FY2008	161,783	163,591	31,325	132,266
Q2 FY2008	159,700	149,378	29,351	120,027
Q3 FY2008	153,300	162,428	29,611	132,817
Q4 FY2008	146,900	163,446	28,045	135,401
Q1 FY2009	148,500	148,050	39,262	108,788
Q2 FY2009	141,300	132,610	36,061	96,549
Q3 FY2009	134,500	119,706	31,541	88,165
Q4 FY2009	129,200	113,731	29,944	83,787
Q1 FY2010	114,300	100,035	27,843	72,192
Q2 FY2010	95,900	95,461	24,719	70,742
Q3 FY2010	88,320	79,621	22,761	56,860
Q4 FY2010	48,410	74,106	20,981	53,125
Q1 FY2011	47,305	71,142	19,943	51,199
Q2 FY2011	45,660	64,253	18,393	45,860
Q3 FY2011	46,010	62,689	18,900	43,789
Q4 FY2011	44,755	52,637	16,054	36,583
Q1 FY2012	11,445	23,886[a]	11,237	12,649
Q2 FY2012	—	10,967[a]	3,260	7,707
Q3 FY2012	—	7,336[a]	2,493	4,843
Q4 FY2012	—	9,000[a]	2,314	6,686
Q1 FY2013	—	8,449[a]	2,356	6,093
Q2 FY2013	—	7,905[a]	2,125	5,780
Q3 FY2013	—	7,735[a]	1,898	5,837
Q4 FY2013	—	6,624[a]	1,626	4,998
Q1 FY2014	—	3,234[a]	820	2,414
No Data on Contractors Released by CENTCOM from Q2 FY2014-Q4 FY2014				
Q1 FY2015	Up to 3,100[b]	250 (est.)	No Data Available	No Data Available
Q2 FY2015	Up to 3,100[b]	600 (est.)	No Data Available	No Data Available
Q3 FY2015	Up to 3,550[c]	1,349	1,140	209
Q4 FY2015	Up to 3,550[c]	1,403	1,098	305
Q1 FY2016	Up to 3,550[d]	2,028	1,392	636

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. National Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q2 FY2016	Up to 3,550[d]	2,619	1,564	1,055
Q3 FY2016	Up to 4,087[e]	2,485	1,605	880
Q4 FY2016	Up to 4,087[e]	2,992	1,823	1,169
Q1 FY2017	Up to 5,262[f]	3,592	2,035	1,557
Q2 FY2017	Up to 5,262[f]	3,795	2,149	1,206
Q3 FY2017	Up to 5,262[g]	4,485	2,424	2,061
Q4 FY2017	Up to 5,262[g]	4,609	2,644	1,965
Q1 FY2018	Not Available[h]	4,927	2,767	2,160
Contractor Personnel in Iraq and Syria				
Q2 FY2018	Not Available	5,508	2,869	2,639
Q3 FY2018	Not Available	5,323	2,651	2,672
Q4 FY2018	Not Available	6,318	3,086	3,232

Sources: U.S. Armed Forces levels from Q4 FY2007-Q1 FY2012 are drawn from the DOD's "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress, and include all active and reserve component personnel. Force levels for Q1 FY2015-Q4 FY2017 are drawn from the White House's semiannual "War Powers Resolution Report" to Congress. All listed contractor levels are drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in CENTCOM 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" reports ceased providing separate force 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 support of U.S. military operations against the Islamic State, additional U.S. military personnel were deployed to Iraq through OIR to advise and train Iraqi forces, serve as observers, and secure U.S. personnel and facilities.

In Q1 FY2015, CENTCOM resumed releasing data on DOD contractor personnel in Iraq. As the "Boots on the Ground" reports do not provide OIR force levels, CRS used the force management levels for Iraq reported biannually by the White House between December 2014 and June 2017, beginning with the December 2014 "Six Month Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report" and ending with the June 2017 "Supplemental Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report," to provide an indication of the number of U.S. forces estimated to be in Iraq during that period. As of December 2017, the "Supplemental Consolidated War Powers Resolution Report" no longer provides current force management levels for Iraq or Syria.

As of Q2 FY2018, CENTCOM reported a combined total of contractor personnel physically located in Iraq and Syria.

a. CENTCOM reported that DOD contractors in Iraq from Q1FY2012 through Q1FY2014 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.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/11/letter-president-six-month-consolidated-war-powers-resolution-report.

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, 2015, at https://www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/11/letter-president-six-month-consolidated-war-powers-resolution-report.

d. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by the White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—War Powers Resolution," December 11, 2015, at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/11/letter-president-war-powers-resolution.

e. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by the White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—War Powers Resolution," June 13, 2016, at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/13/letter-president-war-powers-resolution.

f. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by the White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Letter from the President—Supplemental 6-month War Powers Letter," December 5, 2016, at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/05/letter-president-supplemental-6-month-war-powers-letter.

g. Force Management Level for Iraq, as reported by the White House, "Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate," June 6, 2017, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-letter-president-speaker-house-representatives-president-pro-tempore-senate/.

h. Beginning in December 2017, the "Supplemental Consolidated War Powers Resolution Reports" no longer provide current force management levels for Iraq or Syria. See for example "Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate," December 11, 2017, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-letter-president-speaker-house-representatives-president-pro-tempore-senate-2/.

Table 4. U.S. Armed Forces and Private Security Contractors in Iraq
(Q1 FY2008-Q4 FY2013)

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Private Security Contractors[a]	U.S. National Private Security Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Private Security Contractors
Q1 FY2008	161,783	9,952	830	9,122
Q2 FY2008	159,700	7,259	515	6,744
Q3 FY2008	153,300	7,704	1,540	6,164
Q4 FY2008	146,900	10,446	886[b]	9,560
Q1 FY2009	148,500	9,218	727[b]	8,436
Q2 FY2009	141,300	12,942	681	12,261
Q3 FY2009	134,500	15,279	802	14,477
Q4 FY2009	129,200	12,684	670	12,014
Q1 FY2010	114,300	11,095	776	10,319
Q2 FY2010	95,900	11,610	1,081	10,529
Q3 FY2010	88,320	11,413	1,030	10,383
Q4 FY2010	48,410	11,628	1,017	10,611
Q1 FY2011	47,305	8,327	791	7,536
Q2 FY2011	45,660	9,207	917	8,290
Q3 FY2011	46,010	10,414	935	9,479
Q4 FY2011	44,755	9,554	844	8,710
Q1 FY2012	11,445	8,995	751	8,244
Q2 FY2012	—	3,577	288	3,289
Q3 FY2012	—	2,407	116	2,291
Q4 FY2012	—	2,116	102	2,014
Q1 FY2013	—	2,281	235	2,046
Q2 FY2013	—	2,359	259	2,100
Q3 FY2013	—	2,148	217	1,931
Q4 FY2013	—	2,409	147	2,262

Sources: Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels from Q1 FY2008-Q1 FY2012 drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

Notes: DOD did not begin releasing data on DOD-funded private security contractor personnel levels in CENTCOM until Q1 FY2008, and ceased reporting data on DOD-funded private security contractor personnel in Iraq in Q4 FY2013. As of Q4 FY2018, CENTCOM has not resumed reporting data on DOD-funded private security personnel in Iraq. See **Table 3** for further discussion of recent U.S. Armed Forces and contractor levels in Iraq.

a. CENTCOM 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. CENTCOM Quarterly Census Reports from Q4 FY2008 and Q1 FY2009 also included NATO coalition personnel in the reported totals of U.S. private security contractor personnel.

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

(FY2009-FY2018; in millions of FY2019 dollars)

	Country	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	Total
Iraq Theater	Iraq	$10,958	$8,159	$5,320	$438	$563	$80	$259	$718	$1,181	$1,320	$28,996
	Bahrain	$2,265	$628	$539	$346	$914	$218	$579	$708	$416	$370	$6,983
	Kuwait	$6,026	$5,230	$4,127	$2,707	$3,254	$1,867	$2,077	$1,879	$2,146	$2,355	$31,668
	Qatar	$917	$368	$871	$902	$448	$182	$341	$266	$507	$1,086	$5,888
	Saudi Arabia	$1,024	$835	$321	$590	$997	$1,300	$2,160	$1,072	$1,002	$920	$10,221
	Turkey	$323	$148	$193	$297	$199	$192	$211	$253	$199	$191	$2,205
	UAE	$316	$2,756	$1,101	$1,521	$2,363	$1,820	$1,362	$1,500	$1,361	$1,408	$15,508
	Oman	$88	$130	$148	$222	$237	$111	$129	$128	$73	$5	$1,272
	Jordan	$15	$12	$41	$56	$183	$174	$211	$195	$153	$196	$1,238
	Total, Iraq Theater	**$21,933**	**$18,267**	**$12,661**	**$7,079**	**$9,156**	**$5,944**	**$7,330**	**$6,720**	**$7,039**	**$7,852**	**$103,980**
Afghanistan Theater	Afghanistan	$8,483	$13,560	$18,892	$20,294	$15,583	$6,489	$3,420	$2,250	$3,212	$3,844	$96,026
	Kazakhstan	$50	$69	$78	$81	$97	$60	$81	$37	$34	$44	$630
	Kyrgyzstan	$388	$139	$939	$2,059	$2,095	$709	-$2	-$7	-$5	$1	$6,315
	Pakistan	$263	$186	$67	$16	-$4	$25	$108	$55	$59	$46	$822
	Tajikistan	$1	$4	$4	$9	$10	$8	$7	$0	$6	$2	$51
	Turkmenistan	$10	$28	$11	$5	$14	$2	$0	$0	-$1	$0	$68
	Uzbekistan	$10	$24	$17	$25	$20	$23	$33	$11	$9	$0	$172
	Total, Afghanistan Theater	**$9,204**	**$14,009**	**$20,008**	**$22,489**	**$17,814**	**$7,314**	**$3,648**	**$2,346**	**$3,314**	**$3,938**	**$104,084**
	Total, Iraq and Afghanistan Theaters	**$31,137**	**$32,276**	**$32,669**	**$29,568**	**$26,970**	**$13,258**	**$10,978**	**$9,066**	**$10,353**	**$11,789**	**$208,063**

Sources: Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), as of January 9, 2018 for FY2009-FY2018 data; CRS adjustments for inflation using deflators for converting into FY2019 dollars derived from Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense, *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2019*, "Department of Defense Deflators–TOA By Category 'Total Non-Pay,'" Table 5-5, pp. 60-61, April 2018.

Notes: Numbers may not add due to rounding. FPDS tracks the net amount of funds obligated or deobligated (i.e., a downward adjustment of reported contract obligations) by a contract transaction. If the net amount of a transaction is a deobligation, the transaction will be represented as a negative amount in FPDS.

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