



Contractors in Iraq Have Become U.S. Crutch

Walter Pincus
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When years from now historians and government officials reexamine precedents set by the U.S. experience in Iraq, they will find a mix of successes and failures. One still playing out is the extraordinarily wide use of private contractors. A Congressional Research Service report released last week says that the use of contractors in Iraq has become a "crutch" for the U.S. military and intelligence agencies.

Only estimates are available for the total employment by contractors in Iraq that perform "functions once performed by the military." The report says that the U.S. military and intelligence agencies have hired contractors in Iraq, but the tasks and the funds involved are not always clear.

Surge or no surge, the work that contractors do there remains highly dangerous. The study reports that private contractors in Iraq are often the most visible and the most vulnerable. It quotes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data that show "an increasing proportion of registered supply contracts are awarded to private contractors."

While U.S. contractors have provided personal security to officials in other conflict zones, those in Iraq are often the most visible and the most vulnerable. The study reports that private contractors in Iraq are often the most visible and the most vulnerable. It quotes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers data that show "an increasing proportion of registered supply contracts are awarded to private contractors."

But the expanded contractor use has evoked new attention to a 1995 criticism of the practice. According to a report by the General Accounting Office, the use of contractors in Iraq has become a "crutch" for the U.S. military and intelligence agencies.

An advertisement last week on IntelligenceCareers.com illustrates part of the problem. It seeks an "Intellectual Property Analyst" with a "minimum of 5 years of experience in the intelligence community." The ad lists a variety of duties, including "conducting research and analysis of intelligence information," "developing and maintaining intelligence databases," and "providing technical support to intelligence analysts." The ad also mentions "a minimum of 5 years of experience in the intelligence community."

The capabilities required for the job include "CI Analysis, related Intelligence Analysis experience, or sim

MacB analysts also support other major U.S. military outfits in Iraq, the ad says, analyzing captured doc

MacB is needed now because the military did not foresee the need to do this work itself 12 years ago.