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http://www.salon.com/2014/05/28/exclusive_new_document_details_americas_war_machine_and_secret_mass_of_contractors_in_afghanistan/

Exclusive: New document details America's war machine — and secret mass of contractors in Afghanistan

What is a huge army of private contractors secretly doing in Afghanistan? A leaked PowerPoint presentation explains

5/28/2014

On Tuesday, following his surprise Memorial Day visit to Bagram Air Force Base outside Kabul, President Obama announced that the United States plans to keep at least 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan until 2016, further delaying the end of what he calls “America’s longest war.”

But in his remarks at the White House, the president didn’t say that the nearly 10,000 U.S. troops he’s asking to remain in an “advisory role” will be augmented by a huge army of private contractors. As they have in Iraq, contractors will vastly outnumber the U.S. uniformed forces training Afghan troops as well as the special operations forces providing counterterrorism operations against what the president called “the remnants of al-Qaida.”

The role of contractors in the Afghanistan war is spelled out in a document obtained by Salon from SAIC, one of the nation’s largest military and intelligence contractors. The document, an unclassified PowerPoint presentation, shows exactly how contractors have been used in that war since 2009, when Obama endorsed a surge of 33,000 troops and a counterinsurgency strategy in

the war against the Taliban. Those policies increased the U.S. presence in Afghanistan to more than 100,000 troops.

One of the PowerPoint slides defines the four “mission areas” of the company’s five-year, \$400 million contract with the U.S. Army Research Laboratory, which provides contracted services to other combat commands, special forces and other parts of the U.S. military. They are “Expeditionary Warfare; Irregular Warfare; Special Operations; Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations.”

There, in black and white, is proof positive of how deeply contractors have penetrated the U.S. war machine.

“We’ve already taken public functions and privatized them,” said Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired U.S. Army colonel who was the chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell during the Bush administration, in a recent interview with Salon. “But this is an example of privatizing the ultimate public function, war.”

The PowerPoint was created by SAIC to help its subcontractors understand the Army’s needs in the contract, which was signed in 2010. The ARL, which is based in Adelphi, Maryland, just outside of Washington, provides the “underpinning science, technology, and analysis that enable full-spectrum operations” by the U.S. military, its website says.