

Spies Like Us: Pentagon Taps Private Intel Contractors to Fight ISIS in Syria

By [RT](#)

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A no-bid \$10 million contract announced in late July is possibly the first instance in which the Pentagon has publicly acknowledged using private military contractors alongside American special operations forces fighting Islamic State in Syria.

In a [public announcement](#) on July 27, the Department of Defense said it awarded an intelligence analysis contract to private contractor Six3 Intelligence Solutions, a cyber and signals intelligence and surveillance firm that is a [subsidiary](#) of CACI International Inc. The contract will require Six3 to assist US forces working against Islamic State (IS, formerly known as ISIS or ISIL) within Syria.

Wow....a first. US military contractors now working inside Syria.
<https://t.co/xOyLQI5Frc> pic.twitter.com/XC3hxPg1K9

— Micah Zenko (@MicahZenko) [July 27, 2016](#)

Six3's work pursuant to the contract will occur over the next year in Syria, as well as Germany and Italy, the Pentagon said. The DOD and CACI would not expand on the "intelligence analysis services" involved in the contract, The Daily Beast [reported](#). "This is no ordinary contractor," Sean McFate, a former private contractor and author of Shadow War, told the Beast. "Six3 Intelligence Solutions is a private intelligence company, and the fact that we outsource a good portion of our intelligence analysis creates a strategic dependency on the private sector to perform vital wartime operations."

It's not just U.S. troops battling ISIS. Now Army is sinking millions of dollars into private contractors for fight <https://t.co/KI0mF0cryR>

— Earthman Journalist (@Intprofessor) [August 10, 2016](#)

According to US officials, there are about [300 US military](#) special operations soldiers in Syria to "advise and assist" US allies fighting Islamic State, the militant group that holds territory in Iraq and Syria. In November, the Pentagon first announced that 50 US troops would operate in Syria. In April, the Obama administration said that around 250 more troops would be sent in "advisory" roles. The CIA [has long operated](#) and armed militants in Syria.

While the Six3 contract is likely the first public acknowledgment of private contractors

assisting the US in Syria, experts suggest it is probably not the only contractor involved.

"I've long said, the military looks at professional services contractors like the old American Express commercial, i.e., they dare not leave home without them," David Isenberg, a private security contractor analyst, told the Beast.

Four weeks prior to the Syria contract announcement, the [Pentagon revealed](#) that it had awarded Six3 a \$28.61 million contract to provide intelligence services to US forces in Afghanistan.

CACI, the parent company of Six3, has been one of the top 30 [contractors](#) for the US government by amount of contract funds awarded in fiscal years 2012 through 2015. According to US military investigators, CACI employees were [involved in](#) interrogation and torture of prisoners held at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, more than a decade ago. Images of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib were released in 2004, becoming one of the biggest scandals associated with the US invasion and occupation of Iraq beginning in 2003.

Operation Inherent Resolve is the name given to military's [operation](#) to combat IS in Iraq, Syria, and beyond. As of July 27, the US-led operation had conducted a total of 14,093 airstrikes against IS targets in Iraq and Syria. Of that total, the US conducted 10,826 of the strikes, [according](#) to the Pentagon.

From August 8, 2014, when airstrikes targeting the terrorist group began, to July 15, 2016, the operation has cost a total of \$8.4 billion, or an average of \$11.9 million a day.

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