

According to new Pentagon statistics, in the second quarter of this year, there has been a 23% increase in the number of private security contractors working for the Pentagon in Iraq and a 29% hike in Afghanistan. In fact, outside contractors now make up approximately half of our forces fighting in the two countries. "This means," according to Jeremy Scahill, author of the book, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*, "**there are a whopping 242,647 contractors working on these two U.S. wars.**"

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