



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 20, 2010

Iraq “Withdrawal”: Building Hillary Clinton an Army

The much ballyhooed withdrawal of “combat troops” from Iraq by the Obama administration has revealed another uncomfortable truth: The U.S. Army soldiers and Marines that are being sent home from Iraq in August (less the 50,000 “non-combat” soldiers that will remain behind) are being replaced by a new U.S. “civilian” contract army under the control of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.



Even the liberal *New York Times* has taken note of this new army, [declaring](#) in the lead of an August 19 story that “as the United States military prepares to leave Iraq by the end of 2011, the Obama administration is planning a remarkable civilian effort, buttressed by a small army of contractors, to fill the void.”

Hillary Clinton’s new army will take over many tasks previously carried out by the U.S. military, the *New York Times* [confirmed](#):

One American official said that more than 1,200 specific tasks carried out by the American military in Iraq had been identified to be handed over to the civilians, transferred to the Iraqis or phased out.

To move around Iraq without United States troops, the State Department plans to acquire 60 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles, called MRAPs, from the Pentagon; expand its inventory of armored cars to 1,320; and create a mini-air fleet by buying three planes to add to its lone aircraft. Its helicopter fleet, which will be piloted by contractors, will grow to 29 choppers from 17.

The State Department will have new MRAPs and attack helicopters, but Obama administration officials are still claiming that U.S. “combat” operations have ended. Of course, if U.S. combat operations had ended, there would be no need for the State Department to acquire such heavy-duty combat firepower. The *New York Times* pointed out that the State Department has never before fielded its own army, and estimated that Hillary Clinton’s new army of private contractors would amount to more than 7,000 persons. This would supplement the army of U.S.-financed mercenary contractors already in Iraq that are [estimated to number about 10,000](#).

President Obama’s [very public announcement on August 18](#) that he had ended “combat operations” in Iraq provoked a predictable left-wing media response to the Iraqi troop shell game. The strongly Democratic NBC/MSNBC devoted a whole day to the story and had been given exclusive embedding opportunities by the Obama administration prior to the “withdrawal.” Steve Krakauer of Mediaite.com [noted](#): “But this fantastic coverage also showed a cooperation at least on some level between NBC (and MSNBC) and elements in the Obama administration.... Some elements within the military, so by



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extension the Obama administration, clearly worked with NBC (and MSNBC) to let them have this exclusive."

Tim Graham, director of media analysis for the conservative Media Research Center, dryly [noted](#) that political nature of NBC's coverage that took Obama's announcement at face value. "I would certainly think politics are involved in their 'flooding the zone' to suggest that 'Lookie here, the Obama people doing what they said they were going to do.'"

Of course, President Obama had made [multiple campaign promises in 2007 and 2008](#) with different timetables for withdrawal from Iraq, and the timeline for withdrawal grew as the presidency neared. Obama most often promised during the campaign to withdraw all combat troops within 16 months of becoming President, which would have been in May 2010, a promise he didn't keep.

Photo of Hillary Clinton: AP Images



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