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Thomas C. Bruneau. *Patriots for Profit: Contractors and the Military in U.S. National Security.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. 288 pp. $70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-7548-9; $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8047-7549-6.

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The Unneutered Dogs of War

Private military contractors present a paradox to both the historian and the policymaker. Contractors have been a long-standing option for American leaders, a fact recognized in the U.S. Constitution's reference to "Letters of Marque and Reprisal" in Article I. However, in the recent past, particularly after the fall of Soviet communism, contractors have multiplied as agents of American foreign affairs at a rate that has far outpaced policy's ability to control them. The 2007 massacre in Nisoor Square punctuated contractors' lengthy and troubled existence within the realm of American power. Scholarship regarding private security companies is also problematic. Contemporary writers tend to conflate the term *contractor* with *mercenary*, a process that recalls Renaissance-era *condottieri* at a time when private security has evolved into a corporate, twenty-first century form.

Thomas C. Bruneau's book *Patriots for Profit* is a strong attempt at challenging both our academic assumptions about contractors and ongoing official efforts to integrate them into U.S. military strategy. The work takes the reader through fundamental concepts applied to civil-military relations in the United States, articulates organizational principles affecting the creation and execution of policy pertaining to military contractors, and examines in detail the case study of contractors in Iraq following the 2003 invasion.

The author starts by challenging Samuel P. Huntington's seminal theory on civil-military relations. Now more than a half-century old, Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) still dominates much of the discourse regarding the epistemology of military policy. However, as Bruneau rightly points out, Huntington's focus on civilian control over soldiers is far too narrow, tautological, and misses the basic point that civilian leadership is as culpable as the military institution for crafting and executing effective policy.

Bruneau's alternative to the Huntington thesis is to look at the "three dimensions of civil-military relations" (p. 30). The author argues that the most important measurements of this relationship are: democratic civilian leadership as expressed in the institutions that control the military, the overall effectiveness of security forces in meeting their missions, and their ability to efficiently use resources allocated to these missions. In this manner, Bruneau offers a model that adds greater depth and breadth to the current scholarship on the topic.

A great deal of *Patriots for Profit* is dedicated to illustrating the complex bureaucratic and legal mechanisms that govern U.S. military policy. Readily apparent in the narrative is a sense that although civilian control is strongly grounded in law and American tradition, institutional inertia has proven to a resilient obstacle to reform. Whether speaking about the National Security Act of 1947 or the Goldwater-Nichols Act passed almost four decades later, the Pentagon's "change resistant culture" has proven to be its "greatest organizational weakness," according to Bruneau (p. 58).

In practice, reforms dedicated to greater efficacy have appeared, buttressed by multiple overlapping layers of legislative and executive oversight. Bruneau very adeptly catalogs the thousands of pages produced by House and Senate committees, agencies such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and a host of think tanks and nongovernmental organizations. The real problem has been that all of these various layers of review have appeared after the fact, advocating changes that rarely appear at the ground level where policy becomes reality. The system as constructed is better at identifying failure when it is already too late instead of effectively developing prescriptions for causes of failure.

Using private military contractors as his case study, Bruneau points to two possible reasons for this fundamental flaw in American military policy. The first is conceptual. Even as the United States privatizes mili-

tary functions that were historically state monopolies, a process the author traces back through much of the late twentieth century, military contractors remain largely absent from any strategic discourse or planning. Contractors have been and continue to be poorly integrated into standard military doctrine. This has especially been true with respect to postconflict operations, where civilian and military contractors proved essential to restore basic infrastructure and security. In the case of the Iraq War, where contractors roughly equaled conventional military forces in 2008, this inattention resulted in an enormous blind spot that hindered operations throughout the country and contributed to waste and abuse.

The second failure is practical in nature. Most if not all of the reports addressing the problems of military contracting tend to come after the fact, when damage to innocent lives or the U.S. treasury has already occurred. Between 2003 and 2009, for example, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction published 20 quarterly reports, 135 audits, and 141 inspections (p. 127). However, missing after this initial step was a consistent and productive approach to reasserting official control over contractors. Civilian and military officials within the Pentagon who are responsible for acquisitions and contract management remain poorly trained, small in number, and wholly inadequate to the task of guiding private military corporations in most functions. This is particularly evident with respect to private contractor personnel ("strategic human capital," according to the GAO), whose specializations are more difficult to categorize and regulate than weapons systems or materiel necessary for military logistics (p. 131). During Operation Iraqi Freedom, and many other American military missions, both the particularities of "human capital" and the operational tempo have clearly outpaced the defense establishment's ability to cope.

Consequently, by any bureaucratic or institutional measurement, the defense establishment and private contractors are badly out of synch. Military forces and contractors are deployed together on real-world military missions, yet they often work in conflict despite years, if not decades, of practical experience. As was the case in Iraq, American military effectiveness has suffered as a result.

Patriots for Profit is an important entry into a growing body of work. Christopher Kinsey's 2009 *Private Contractors and the Reconstruction of Iraq* offers additional details on the travails of private contracting during the war. More broadly, a number of authors, such as Elke Krahmann and Sabelo Gumedze, have examined other countries' efforts to define and effectively regulate private military corporations. Future comparative studies of Germany and South Africa will clearly benefit the field. Similarly, scholars may also want to consider how China has introduced private contractors into its growing portfolio of international responsibilities.

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