

**The Private Military Industry: Implications for Efforts to Enhance the Cross-Cultural
Competence (3C) Mission-Critical Capabilities of the U.S. Military
With Special Reference to AFRICOM**

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Abstract

Private Military Companies (PMCs) have developed 3C capabilities that rival those of the U.S. military and are increasingly in competition with traditional militaries in providing security and related services. As a result, the author suggests that the U.S. military must broaden its approach to developing its own 3C mission readiness strategies in order to create a strategic advantage in the marketplace for security, peacekeeping, and humanitarian support. The author recommends that the Africa Command (AFRICOM) be used as a pilot effort to develop multidisciplinary approaches to enhancing human dynamics capabilities and 3C, as both PMCs and the Chinese government have made headway implementing 3C on the African continent. It is argued that using AFRICOM as a pilot will require some revamping of its current strategies. A comprehensive review of how PMCs affect U.S. foreign policy and efforts to leverage human dynamics capabilities—3C in particular—is also recommended.

Opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the U.S. military services, or the Department of Defense.

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Little did I realize when I first proposed a quarter of a century ago that the military was shifting from an institution to an occupation (I/O thesis) that private profit-making companies would one day actually do military jobs. Where the I/O thesis originally posited a shift within the structure of the military organization, what we are now witnessing is the function of the military being performed by completely civilian structures – not just in homeland defense, but in overseas and war-related missions. (Moskos, 2003, pp. 6-7)

Introduction

The transformation in the basic characteristics of the military and its relationship to the private sector described by Moskos (2003) has major implications for current efforts within the Department of Defense (DOD) to better leverage cross-cultural competence (3C) in support of mission execution. DOD's activities stem, in part, from lessons learned from the expanding and evolving demands faced by U. S. forces in overseas theaters, especially Iraq and Afghanistan. The symposium entitled "The Role of Cross-Cultural Competence in Organizational & Mission Success," held between June 30 and July 1, 2009, at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), is emblematic of the intensified exploration of the role of 3C as a strategic asset. One of the symposium's stated objectives was the exploration of "how best 3C may be institutionalized across the DoD as a mission-critical capability" (Ripple, 2009). In pursuing this objective the symposium focused primarily on the need for collaboration among internal DOD stakeholders—an undeniably critical outcome for developing critical synergies. At the same time, however, external stakeholders, i.e. private military companies (PMCs) increasingly operate in the same theaters as the U.S. military and have the capacity to affect mission success through their interactions with foreign governments and citizens. Moreover,

many of these PMCs have developed 3C capabilities that rival, and in some cases exceed, those of the DOD. As the nature of warfare continues to evolve, PMCs are increasingly in competition with traditional militaries in providing security and related services. In effect, the U.S. military is a latecomer entering the global market for security. To be successful the U.S. military must understand the structure of the marketplace for security, peacekeeping, and humanitarian support. In addition, it must be knowledgeable of the capabilities of its competitors, be able to adapt their constructs, and implement 3C in a way that creates a strategic advantage. In short, the U.S. military must broaden its approach to developing its own 3C mission readiness strategies. This need is particularly acute as the DOD advances its plan to expand its activities in Africa via the Africa Command (AFRICOM), because both PMCs and the Chinese government are especially active in this region of the world.

These issues are examined in more detail in the remainder of the report. The second section provides an overview of the evolution of PMCs and the current range of their activities. The general 3C capabilities of selected PMCs are then discussed, followed by an examination of the activities of selected individual firms. Current efforts within the DOD to cultivate enhanced human dynamics capabilities and 3C are then reviewed. The current activities and future plans of AFRICOM are then discussed as a case study of the issues confronting the development and effective utilization of human dynamics capabilities and 3C. Recommendations for further research and policy review are presented in the concluding section.

The Private Military Industry: An Overview

The globalization of warfare and terrorism has fueled the emergence of a large number of PMCs and the demand for their services continues to grow. As noted by Kinsey (2006), “today, PMCs undertake a range of activities that hitherto would have been the responsibility of state

militaries. Such activities can be divided into military operational support, military advice, logistical support, security services, and crime prevention services” (pp. 2-3). While this description is generally accurate, PMCs are also increasingly engaged in humanitarian and reconstruction activities that require significant cross-cultural competence. Just as foreign governments have increasing choices between governmental and private military services in combat theaters, similar choices arise vis-à-vis non-kinetic missions. The engagement of PMCs in non-combat operations requires some degree of cross-cultural competence, akin to that which the U.S. military seeks to enhance. However, because goals of private companies may not be aligned with U.S. interests, the expanding activities of PMCs pose a potential risk to U.S. strategic interests. Describing the potential divergence between U.S. interests and those of PMCs, Singer (2008) suggests: “In many of the ongoing wars around the globe . . . the profit motive has become a central motivator, equal or greater to that of political, ideological, or religious inspirations” (p. 64).

Avant (2008) warns that the emergence and expansion of a global “market for force has undermined states’ collective ability to monopolize violence in the international system” and that this development has “opened the way for changes in the roles states and other actors play in controlling force on the world stage” (p. 264). In a similar vein, Singer (2008) avers that “the marketization of military services means that international security is complicated by potential market dynamism and disruptions” (p. 169). As a consequence, the relevant powers in conflict situations “are no longer exclusively sovereign states, but also include ‘interdependent players caught in a network of transnational transactions” (Singer, 2008, p. 169).

The growth of the private military industry is closely tied to the downsizing of standing armies following the end of the Cold War, and the general global trend toward privatization of

services previously provided by governments. As Avant (2008) observes, “military downsizing led to a flood of experienced personnel available for contracting” (pp. 30-31). In the case of the former Soviet Union, for example, O’Brien (2007) reports that between 1990 and 1999 over 12,000 private security firms registered formally with the Russian government (p. 31). With respect to the effects of the global trend toward privatization, Kinsey (2006) observes:

In the post-Cold War era, the enthusiasm for outsourcing government services has spread rapidly around the world. Linking it to efficiency and effectiveness, privatization has been portrayed as a major step forward, its purported benefits contrasting sharply with the failures of over-centralised bureaucracies. This approval for private-sector performance has resulted in many countries adopting this management system in virtually every conceivable sector, including the most fundamental of government functions: the provision of security. (p. 3)

Avant (2008) suggests that “in the US, outsourcing advice and training yields some short run benefits, but opens many possibilities for tension and change” (p. 142). She cautions:

The use of PSCs opens the possibility that American forces will not contain the capacity for key functional tasks. Outsourcing training also opens the way for changes in the hold of public institutions on the development of military norms, changes in the value attached to military service, and changes in policy resulting from a different policy process.

(Avant, 2008, p. 142)

In the case of Iraq, O’Brien (2007) indicates that “at the end of 2003, PMC personnel ranked second numerically—after the US contingent and before the British—in terms of armed personnel in Iraq” (p. 32).

The September 16, 2007 incident during which guards employed by Blackwater Worldwide shot and killed 17 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad provides a clear example of the potential problems created by PMCs operating in the same theater as U.S. military personnel. The Blackwater Personal Security Detail in question was escorting a convoy of U.S. State Department vehicles to a meeting with officials of the United States Agency for International Development. In the aftermath of the incident, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates testified before Congress that the Pentagon had sufficient legal authority to control its contractors, but commanders lacked sufficient means and resources to exercise adequate oversight. The Iraqi government demanded an apology, compensation for the victims and/or families, and for the perpetrators to be held accountable. Blackwater's license to operate in Iraq was presumably revoked a day following the incident. However, Singer (2008) argues that Blackwater "had no license with the Iraqi Interior Ministry for them to revoke . . . and kicking out the company would [have left] the U.S. State Department in Iraq without security in the middle of a war zone" (p. 253).

Several senior military officials had expressed concerns about the activities of PMCs in Iraq well prior to the Blackwater incident. In 2005, Brigadier General Karl Horst, then deputy commander of the U.S. Third Infantry Division, complained about the activities of PMCs:

These guys run loose in this country and do stupid stuff. There's no authority over them so you can't come down on them hard when they escalate force. They shoot people, and someone else has to deal with the aftermath. (Singer, 2008, p. 254)

Subsequently, "in June 2006, the Government Accountability Office reported that "private security providers continue to enter the battle space without coordinating with the U.S. military, putting both the military and security providers at a greater risk of injury" (Singer,

2008, p. 254). Isenberg (2007) complains “PMC personnel in Iraq have shot their weapons in hundreds of incidents but to date not a single contractor has been prosecuted . . . Effective public accountability, despite the increase in the number of new laws and regulations on the books that at least theoretically apply to PMCs is still lacking” (p. 93).

In a partial defense of contractors in Iraq, Carafano (2008) counters that most were not engaged in activities in which armed conflicts were likely to arise and maintains that “support firms providing logistics and other services comprised the overwhelming bulk of contractor support in Iraq” (p. 139). He claims further that critiques such as those advanced by Avant and Singer tend to lump all types of PMCs together inappropriately. Krahmman (2007) offers an even broader defense of the activities of PMCs, insisting “the majority of private military and security contractors are professional and efficient.” From his vantage point, “Private contractors have developed considerable expertise in security sector reform, and they have demonstrated their commitment and reliability in many countries” (p. 111). At the same time, Krahmman (2007) acknowledges the shortcomings of contractors:

PMCs have a number of inherent disadvantages compared to the use of uniformed personnel [in that they] do not have the same direct linkages with other government and international agencies which are necessary for a wholistic [*sic*] approach to security sector that involves organizational as well as political transformation; they do not have the same authority and legitimacy to direct and implement reforms; and they fail to establish direct military-to-military relations between the donor and the recipient states. (pp. 111-112)

Singer (2008) characterizes PMCs as hierarchically organized and vertically integrated businesses that are sometimes part of a larger multinational corporation (p. 40, 45). PMCs are

linked to their employers by contracts and are nominally regulated in many cases by laws in their home countries covering registration, reporting requirements, and licensing of foreign contracts (Singer, 2008, 46). According to Singer (2008), “Although governments and their militaries remain the obvious employers of the industry, the clientele of the military service industry also is growing to include: multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and the UN and other regional and international organizations” (p. 80).

The classification scheme offered by Singer (2008) subdivides the industry into three broad sectors: Military Provider Firms, Military Consultant Firms, and Military Support Firms. He allows, however, that there are various defensible ways to classify PMCs. For example, companies that engage in combat operations or seize territory are sometimes categorized as “active,” while those that defend territory or provide training are referred to as “passive” (Singer, 2008, p. 89). Another classifying feature sometimes used is whether employees are armed or unarmed—a distinction sometimes used to separate private military companies from private security firms. However, Singer (2008) insists that “many firms that describe themselves as ‘security’ companies often perform military roles with military consequences” (p. 90).

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the complexities involved in classifying PMCs. Figure 1, adapted from Avant (2008), illustrates the activities of PMCs in relationship to proximity to combat operations. Parallel types of activities are indicated distinctly for PMCs directly involved in military operations and those involved in policing/security activities. Avant’s schema focuses primarily on the kinetic activities of PMCs. Figure 2, drawn from Kinsey (2006), takes a broader approach at classifying the entire range of activities undertaken by PMCs. The criteria used to classify PMCs are the extent to which violence is used to conduct a given operation and the nature of the entity that is protected (i.e., is it a private or public asset).

Kinsey's framework highlights a number of complexities that arise as the range of activities engaged in by PMCs expands.

Focusing first on the left-most quadrants of Figure 2, Singer (2008) discusses what he describes as "the real risk to investment located in the developing world . . . from violence directed at their employees or facilities" facing multinational corporations (p. 80). Singer (2008) argues that for multinational corporations "high political-risk areas are among the last frontiers of market expansion; as such, the best business opportunities are often in the unenticing places" (p. 81). These threats provide the motivation for the increasing use of PMCs by multinationals to protect business assets and employees. However, these activities blur the distinction between business activity and political governance. As noted by Avant (2008), "when private organizations step into financing violence, they become de facto part of the governance process, and simultaneously open themselves to claims about the results of their actions that make it hard to maintain an apolitical or 'neutral' status" (p. 192). Expanding on this thesis, Singer (2008) maintains:

A number of multinational corporations have already created bastions within weak states or situations of internal conflict, protected by their own armed forces hired from military provider firms. Unfortunately, the interests of such empowered corporations are often not in line with those of the local society or government. (p. 188)

Moreover, as argued by Singer (2008), "Privatizing security potentially hurts the poor disproportionately, worsening already deep social cleavages . . . [and] determining who garners protection and who does not, is not just an economic move but carries an underlying political action" (p. 227). Elaborating on this theme, Singer (2008) insists, "Creating closed-off 'enclaves' involves the setting of internal boundaries. Such privatized enclaves are in a sense an

abandonment of the public realm in security. They represent a ‘secession of the successful’ from the rest of society” (p. 277). Clearly these types of activities would pose significant challenges to the U.S. military’s 3C capabilities if called on to provide support in theaters in which private companies have established strong footholds.

Moving along the horizontal axis of Figure 2, similar concerns arise in relation to contracts between PMCs and foreign governments. Singer (2008) cautions, “Even when PMFs are directly in the pay of a state (including even a superpower), the locus of judgment on how the military operations are carried out in the field is now outside state control” (p. 170). One consequence, according to Singer (2008) could well be “a transformed relationship and, often, a much different outcome than with the standard use of public resources of power” (p. 170).

Neither Figure 1 nor Figure 2 are adequate to examine one of the growing areas of activity of PMCs most directly connected to concerns about effective deployment of 3C capabilities, that is, support for peacekeeping operations and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Singer (2008) outlines the issue:

The intervention choices of both the UN and regional groups are normally limited by the weaknesses of their member states, in terms of both material capabilities and willingness to deploy forces. Now the hire of private firms of both the military provider and support sectors can fill in client and institutional shortfalls and allow these organizations to undertake operations that they would not be able to otherwise. (p. 182)

There are three potential options available for the use of PMCs to support peacekeeping operations: (a) provision of active protection for humanitarian workers and operational assets; (b) deployment of a rapid reaction force within a peacekeeping operation; or (c) privatization of entire peacekeeping operation. Privatization is clearly the most problematic, however problems

exist with the others as well, in part because “military provider firm employees are often untrained in the culture of peacekeeping, tending to come from elite forces fundamentally about combat, rather than peacekeeping” (Singer, 2008, p. 187).

In the case of NGOs, PMFs can provide “a cost-effective means of reducing their security risks” (Singer, 2008, p. 82). Kinsey (2006) reports, “In relation to development networks, we are already witnessing interaction between military and security actors with international organizations and NGOs” (p. 128). In fact, Kinsey (2006) describes what he terms “strategic complexes” that consist of networks composed of “governments, international organizations, charities, military establishments, PMCs, PSCs and the business sector” (p. 55). According to Kinsey (2006):

The purpose of strategic complexes is to promote global peace by providing stability and security in an increasingly hostile world. To achieve this, strategic complexes follow a radical programme of social change. Instead of being concerned solely with development the programme is also concerned with security, while the programme has privatized and militarized the activities of the participants . . . strategic complexes have opened up a space for private military force. The security skills of PMCs and PSCs are rapidly becoming an essential component of strategic complexes. (p. 55)

One of the principal challenges facing the U.S. military as it attempts to deploy its 3C capability is how to navigate and manage these types of strategic complexes.

Cross-Cultural Competence in the Private Military Industry:

Selected Case Studies

The successful functioning of the types of strategic complexes described by Kinsey (2006) requires a significant degree of cross-cultural competence on the part of participating

PMCs. PMCs involved in such collaborations clearly do not want their comfortable and profitable positions jeopardized by negative cross-cultural interaction incidents. In fact, there are significant international efforts at self-regulation. As an example, on its website, the firm AEGIS touts its standing as a supporter of Regulation of the Private Security Company Industry and is a founder member of the British Association of Private Security Companies (BAPSC), which lobbies for regulation in the private sector in the UK (<http://www.aegisworld.com>). The BAPSC has developed, together with its members, a comprehensive Code of Conduct (<http://www.bapsc.org.uk>). AEGIS is also involved in efforts by the ICRC, and the International Institute of Law and Justice at New York University to regularize the status of PSCs under International Law.

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights is another example of efforts to regulate the activities of PMCs. According to its website, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights are a “unique tripartite, multi-stakeholder initiative established in 2000 that introduced a set of principles to guide extractive companies in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (*Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*, 2009). The Voluntary Principles address three main areas: risk assessment, interactions between companies and public security, and interactions between companies and private security. The Principles explicitly recognize that governments are primarily responsible to promote and protect human rights, but acknowledge that companies have a responsibility to act “in a manner consistent with the laws of the countries within which they are present, to be mindful of the highest applicable international standards, and to promote the observance of the highest applicable law enforcement standards,” and specifically “with regard to the use of force” in efforts to safeguard the integrity

of company personnel and property. Notably, in the context of the blurring of private and public actions discussed previously, the Principles note:

Although governments have the primary role of maintaining law and order, security and respect for human rights, Companies have an interest in ensuring that actions taken by governments, particularly the actions of public security providers, are consistent with the protection and promotion of human rights. (*Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*, 2009)

The Principles also require companies to use their influence to promote several principles regarding public security:

(a) individuals credibly implicated in human rights abuses should not provide security services for Companies; (b) force should be used only when strictly necessary and to an extent proportional to the threat; and (c) the rights of individuals should not be violated while exercising the right to exercise freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the right to engage in collective bargaining, or other related rights of Company employees as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (*Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*, 2009).

To the extent that PMCs engaged in strategic complexes follow these guidelines, a precedent is established that creates a high standard for U.S. military personnel to achieve in cross-cultural interactions.

Several PMCs actively promote their engagement in strategic complexes on their websites. Examples include G4S Risk Management, which characterizes its specialty as providing “support to stabilization and reconstruction programmes across the world” (*G4S Risk*

Management, 2009). Specific areas of expertise claimed by the firm include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); election security; and humanitarian support services. With respect to humanitarian support services, G4S claims to be able to deliver “a comprehensive range of support services to international peace and security organizations allowing them to carry out sustainable and effective humanitarian and peacekeeping programmes in hostile regions around the world.”

In a similar vein, Hart Security indicates that its clients include “governments, corporations, humanitarian and non-governmental organisations” (*Hart*, 2009). In discussing its involvement with the United Nations World Food Programme, it references “multi-layered security risk assessment programmes” that have been conducted in many different countries. The client base of L-3 MPRI, which has a checkered history, now consists of “international security, military, and law enforcement customers” and the firm markets itself as enabling “nation-building and reform” and providing “expertise in civil-military functions within the framework of emerging democracies” (*L-3 MPRI*, 2009). It boasts a multi-disciplinary group of employees that includes “strategists, planners, trainers, educators, logisticians, foreign area specialists, former police, and highly skilled and experienced foreign service officers.” In describing its work with NGOs, L-3 MPRI’s website asserts:

Through programs aimed at increasing stakeholder participation to educational programs aimed at increasing understanding of NGOs and their many roles in society, MPRI broadens the space for civil society to shape public policy, inform citizens, carry out effective public dialogues, advocate for rights, and build constituencies capable of shaping the nature of transition and development. (*L-3 MPRI*, 2009)

In assessing the implications of strategic complexes for the successful operationalization of 3C mission-critical capabilities by the U.S. military, it is useful to note that such complexes are also operative in North America. To illustrate, ATCO is a Canadian-based company that “focuses on delivery of site support services to various clients active in the resource, defence, and telecommunications sectors.” ATCO claims that it has successfully partnered and built long-term relationships with aboriginal [*sic*] communities throughout the North since 1988. The firm’s website insists that “these relationships with our Aboriginal [*sic*] partners are founded on mutual trust, respect, and commitment,” and that “these alliances are created in a way that delivers capacity building solutions to the groups with whom we partner and provides sustainability to the communities in which we operate.” According to the website, these alliances “have resulted in unique business opportunities and furthered regional economic development for various communities across Canada [and] the United States” (*ATCO Structures & Logistics*, 2009). Focusing on the U.S., the activities of the Olive Group in response to Hurricane Katrina are noteworthy. The firm’s website declares, “In response to Hurricane Katrina . . . we immediately deployed security teams to secure temporary housing sites such that within 48 hours we had 75 former law enforcement personnel in place” (*Olive Group*, 2009).

The operational capabilities of PMCs involved in strategic complexes are often backstopped by extensive research and intelligence capabilities. As an example, the firm Pistris, Inc. claims that its resources in support of training and capacity building include an “extensive library of quality, proven, multilingual and proprietary curricula and instructional materials . . . [that] have evolved over the years to the point where they are truly unmatched by any curricula available from either the public or private sector” (*Pistris, Inc.*, 2009). The firm SAIC provides cultural assessments and analyses through what is described as a cultural research program

“designed to assist government clients in acquiring the cultural intelligence and contextual knowledge needed to design and execute successful programs, operations, and communication strategies in diverse areas around the world” (*SAIC: From Science to Solutions*, 2009). SAIC’s website indicates that it employs a “social constructivist approach” to cultural identity conceptualized as a “dynamic construct formed through reiterative social interaction.” SAIC’s advertised services include “products that can answer questions such as how a specific cultural group ascribes meaning to operationally significant concepts such as the nation-state, authority, legitimacy, religion, security, and warfare.” According to their website, “this research is used to produce a wide variety of tools for clients such as ‘culture smart cards,’ cultural field guides, military culture guides, cultural intelligence studies, and analytic documentaries using video ethnography.” SAIC also claims to provide guidance on norms, customs and behavior for those interacting with local populations.

The firm Control Risks describes itself as “an independent, specialist risk consultancy with 27 offices on five continents” and touts its production of “daily political and security analyses of more than 200 countries” (*Control Risks*, 2009).

The Behavioural Dynamics Institute (BDI), founded in 1990, provides an example of what some might characterize as questionable uses of cross-cultural competence capabilities. According to the firm’s website, BDI is “an academic institute that specialises in understanding influence and persuasion in order to change audiences’ attitudes and behaviour” (*What is BDi*, 2009). Furthermore, the firm then “[applies] its methodology to military and political campaigns, where the audiences are hostile or friendly, national or international.” BDI then “develops the most powerful psychological approach . . . to produce a programme of communication and ‘perceptions,’ which will be the most likely to engineer the desired result

from the Target Audience.” From this description it is clear that the activities of BDI go beyond the traditional understanding of cross-cultural competence into perception modification to promote the acceptance of the activities of clients within the host country. Similar activities undertaken by the U.S. military would likely draw virulent criticism including charges of distributing propaganda and potential misrepresentation.

Emerging Approaches to 3C within the DOD

As a starting point for undertaking a comparative assessment of the 3C capabilities of the U.S. military it is useful to introduce the Marine Corps’ conception of the “three block war.” Specifically, Szepesy (2005) observes: “In the Three Block War, there can be a mixture of intense combat and peace keeping operations simultaneously taking place within the confines of three city blocks, escalating and de-escalating in a fluid and dynamic manner” (p. 3). The framework is designed to account for the complexities associated with warfare in an urban environment as well as the emergence of new types of adversaries. As described by General Charles Krulak in his speech dated 1997, “In one moment in time, our service members will be feeding and clothing displaced refugees; the next moment, they will be holding two warring tribes apart; and finally, they will be fighting a highly lethal mid-intensity battles – all on the same day, all within three city blocks.” At the minimum, a significant degree of cross-cultural competence would be required for mission success with respect to the humanitarian activities described as well as in the management of disputes between groups. Figure 3 illustrates the dimensions of three block warfare (Range of Military Operations, 1997). The role of 3C in successful mission completion is implicitly set forth in the description of the scenarios reflected in the diagram:

Operations other than war can involve simultaneous actions within an area of responsibility. These actions may or may not involve the use of force at times; part of the theater could also be in a wartime state. In such situations, geographic combatant commanders should pay particular attention to integrating and coordinating the effects and activities of forces toward a common purpose that supports attaining theater, national and multinational strategic objectives. (Range of Military Operations, 1997, p. 610)

The perspectives on the challenges facing the U.S. military in the 21st century implied in the construct of the three block war were reiterated in the *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Understanding Human Dynamics*. The Task Force employs the construct of “full-spectrum operations” as a counterpart to the three block war. According to the report, full-spectrum operations will require simultaneous combination of “offense, defense, and stability operations, often in extended proximity to populations. Coordination and collaboration between U.S. departments and agencies, multinational partners and civil authorities will be critical to success” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 9). The report goes on to predict:

Non-kinetic military operations based on engagement will increase in importance . . . future conflict should not be expected to be resolved by military forces alone, but will require the coordination of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic efforts that are constructive and non-lethal. (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 10)

Continuing, the report indicates that these non-lethal initiatives “will involve important elements of long-term risk mitigation, such as capacity building, humanitarian assistance, expansion of regional frameworks to improve governance, cooperation to enforce the rule of law, and training and support of indigenous forces” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 10).

Consistent with the focus of the three block war, the report anticipates that military operations “will more frequently be conducted among populations . . . [and] transitions between lethal and non-lethal actions will be expected of small teams operating within these populations” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 10). The implication drawn from this expectation is that “the ability of all U.S. echelons to distinguish between—and appropriately engage with—adversaries, competitors, neutrals, and friends will require varying degrees of cross-cultural awareness, competence and astuteness” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 10). In addition, the report insists:

Civil-military cooperation will increase in importance [and that] the civil situation, including civil scrutiny and civil control, restoration of essential services, support to governance, and support to economic and infrastructure development, will be considered along with offensive and defensive operations. (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 10)

In essence, what the Task Force envisions is the creation of military-centered strategic networks paralleling those described in the previous sections.

Given this objective, the critical question is: how can the U.S. military develop these capabilities? As one would expect from the focus of the report, an improved understanding of human dynamics is presented as the foundation for achieving the desired objectives. As conceptualized in the report, “the term ‘human dynamics’ comprises the actions and interactions of personal, interpersonal, and social/contextual factors and their effects on behavioral outcomes” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. vii). Human dynamics are said to be influenced by various factors including “economics, religion, politics, and culture,” with culture defined as “the particular norms and beliefs held by every human, that impacts how individuals, groups and societies perceive, behave and interact” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. vii). The Task Force’s perspective on understanding human dynamics entails several dimensions other than cross-

cultural competence: “At the most technical level, [understanding human dynamics] encompasses the actual or potential applications of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and potentially cognitive sciences, neuroscience, computer science, and other such fields. It also requires knowledge of ‘culture’” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 1).

Although this description seems to subordinate cross-cultural competence to other realms of knowledge, at various places in the report there is recognition of the critical role of cross-cultural competence for achieving mission success. For example, the report observes that “culturally-rooted disputes can lead to the outbreak of hostilities, which may require the commitment of American forces where none were present before” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 6). In addition, the report acknowledges:

Cultural insensitivity is militarily dysfunctional, especially when coupled with indiscriminate violence directed at noncombatants [such that] military training should persistently stress discretion in the use of force . . . with a clear recognition of the tensions between this discretion and effectiveness of combat power. (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xii)

With regard to peacetime operations, it is noted that “if American forces are present in a foreign country during peacetime, culturally insensitive actions or words by even one individual can engender hostility and violence” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 6).

In assessing the current state of affairs vis-à-vis understanding human dynamics and applying that knowledge effectively, the report insists that the U.S. military has “made recent progress in training and sensitizing deployed U.S. forces to the importance of understanding human dynamics in dealing with individuals, groups, and societies” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. vii). Furthermore, according to the report, “There has been a high payoff for some of

the simplest, common sense interactions with indigenous populations [because] mutual respect and courtesy do not take a lot of foreign-cultural training” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xii).

The report maintains that long term success will require “more coherence in [DOD’s] efforts to enhance human dynamics awareness,” and that “capability must be expanded beyond the focus of current armed conflicts so that the Department and military services have the flexibility to adjust rapidly to events in other places in the world” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. viii). Recommendations offered to accelerate efforts to develop a more robust understanding of human dynamics include establishment of “an interagency training center for preparing teams of government and NGO representatives for stability operations, such as Provincial Reconstruction Teams.” The report claims that such a facility, “would contribute much to preparation for future engagements . . . [by providing] both socio-cultural knowledge and human dynamics astuteness” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xiii).

This and other recommendations are proposed to address various weaknesses identified by the Task Force. As an example, the report observes that “DoD personnel that provide socio-cultural expertise, such as Foreign Area Officers (FAOs), are currently spread too thin to assure adequate consideration of these matters in planning and execution.” Furthermore, the report cites a number of difficulties with regards to the use of advisors, including “outdated and insufficient training of military personnel and key advisors in the area of human dynamics, particularly with respect to cultural studies.” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xiv).

Consistent with the earlier discussion of the 3C capabilities of PMCs, the report notes that “Academia, NGOs, and commercial operations have considerable expertise in human dynamics and are strongly motivated to continuously improve their expertise, as they seek to help and/or sell to all, friend and foe alike” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. 14). The report

complains that “[DOD] does not currently optimize use of these capabilities, which could augment military capabilities during operations and offer greater depth of human dynamics during operations and offer greater depth of human dynamics understanding” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xiv). Notably, one of the recommendations contained in the report is to “review commercial approaches to human dynamics information collection and analysis to assess relevance to the U.S. government” (Department of Defense, 2009, p. xi).

**AFRICOM: An Operational Challenge for
U.S. Human Dynamics Capabilities and Effective Use of 3C**

In many respects, the creation and operation of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) will constitute a significant challenge to the 3C of the U.S. military. The mission statement of AFRICOM states:

United States Africa Command, in concert with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations, as directed to promote a stable and secure environment in support of U.S. foreign policy. (U.S. Africa Command, 2008, 4)

The Command Brief readily acknowledges significant challenges including piracy, irregular militaries, terrorism, ethnic strife, and areas with limited governance (U.S. Africa Command, 2008, 3).

The announcement of the establishment of AFRICOM on February 6, 2007 by then President Bush and Defense Secretary Robert Gates is one manifestation of a renewed interest in Africa exhibited by industrialized countries, newly industrializing countries, and PMCs.

McIntyre (2007) suggests that the many opportunities and challenges associated with the African continent are generating competition for influence:

With the increasingly globalized nature of warfare, terrorism, and human security, the persistent instability of mineral-rich states in Africa is already becoming more and more 'relevant' to the conflicts that industrialized nations are deeply invested in, both financially and militarily. With African militaries generally on the decline, underpaid, and facing other crises of decimation such as the AIDS epidemic and the refusal of the United States to provide military funding to states that refuse to exempt American soldiers from the International Criminal Court, PMCs are the continent's most efficient and perhaps soon to become only effective accessible fighting force. (p. 81)

AFRICOM is the first U.S. military command designed to constitute the type of strategic network discussed previously. It includes significant management and staff representation of the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other U.S. government agencies involved in Africa. The website indicates that AFRICOM will also attempt to incorporate partner nations and humanitarian organizations, from Africa and elsewhere, in collaborative ventures. Notably, PMCs are not listed among the potential partners.

The AFRICOM website touts a wide range of activities that it has been engaged in since its creation. In addition to various anti-terrorism and military capacity-building initiatives, other ventures include support for peacekeeping efforts, support for humanitarian assistance interventions, and efforts to counter extremist ideologies. The challenges facing AFRICOM are exemplified by the fact that no African country has so far been willing to allow the establishment of a headquarters within its boundaries. AFRICOM is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany and

has various officers deployed across the continent. The only U.S. military base on the continent is located in Djibouti, and its presence preceded the formation of AFRICOM. This historical limited presence is a significant impediment to AFRICOM's efforts to create a new strategic network because PMCs have a much longer history of engagement with African countries. As an example, the website of Control Risks indicates: "since the 1970s we have had a dedicated team of multi-disciplinary Africa analysts and consultants with wide experience . . . [working] out of our London head office, regional offices in Lagos and Algiers, and South Africa" (*Control Risks*, 2009).

Some of the most trenchant critiques of the activities of PMCs focus on involvements in various African countries in the early 1990s. The firm Executive Outcomes (EO) is often presented as a poster child for disruptive activities by PMCs in Africa. EO was founded in 1989 by a former member of the South African Defence Force. Its first major operation, conducted in Angola beginning in 1993, involved capture and defense of key oil assets. EO was subsequently involved in the civil war in Sierra Leone in 1995 and 1996. EO played an important role including enabling the Sierra Leonian army to defeat insurgents and regain control of the country's diamond fields. Another major PMC, Sandline, founded in 1996, was also subsequently involved in the civil war in Sierra Leone.

More recently, however, several PMCs have played critical roles in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. To illustrate, The International Charter Incorporated of Oregon (ICI) was deployed for two years in Liberia (1996-97) and its website indicates:

From the early period of 'total war' to the expanding deployments of the peace-making force, and finally through the early stages of the post-conflict government, ICI was able

to provide the Department of State, ECOMOG and various NGO's an appropriate level of aviation and security services.

It is further noted that "As the Liberian civil war drew to a close, ICI was tasked with planning and executing a logistics plan for the distribution of ballots, election workers and observes across Liberia for the election of July 1997" (*International Charter Incorporated of Oregon*, 2009). The website claims "The logistics element of staging this historic election was a critical component of ensuring the process was deemed fair and transparent."

The established role of PMCs in Africa is only one of the formidable challenges to realizing AFRICOM's ambitious plans to create a strategic network. Creating harmonious relationships with other U.S. government agencies remains problematic. A report released on August 10, 2009 by the State Department Inspector General strongly criticizes the operations of the Bureau of African Affairs (Dilanian, 2009). Criticisms leveled at the Bureau include the lack of travel money to oversee peacekeeping activities and insufficient attention to government corruption as an impediment to trade, development, and investment. In addition, the report observes that AFRICOM is "stepping into a void created by a lack of resources for traditional development" (Dilanian, 2009).

Critics outside the government have also raised a variety of concerns about AFRICOM. Volman and Minter (2009) argue that rather than providing a cost-effective way for "supporting African governments in humanitarian as well as necessary security operations," AFRICOM "represents the institutionalization and increased funding for a model of bilateral military ties—a replay of the mistakes of the Cold War." In addition, Volman and Minter (2009) describe how AFRICOM is saddled with the consequences of recent antiterrorist initiatives including the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and its ventures in Somalia and Operation Enduring

Freedom Trans Sahara. Volman and Minter (2009) contend that the evolving program of AFRICOM “risks drawing the United States more deeply into conflicts, reinforcing links with repressive regimes, excusing human rights abuses, and frustrating rather than fostering sustainable multilateral peacemaking and peacekeeping.”

Formal opposition to AFRICOM includes “Resist AFRICOM,” a campaign composed of concerned U.S. and Africa-based organizations and individuals opposed to AFRICOM (*Resist AFRICOM*, 2009). The organization’s website claims:

With the establishment of AFRICOM, the Pentagon attempts to increase access to Africa’s oil and to wage a new front in the Global War on Terror without regard for the needs or desires of African people. Enabled by oil companies and private military contractors, AFRICOM serves as the latest frontier in military expansionism, violating the human rights and civil liberties of Africans who have voiced a strong ‘no’ to U.S. military presence.

Irrespective of the merits of criticisms levied against AFRICOM, it does not appear that the planned strategic network will be capable of supplanting those currently in place that are centered on PMCs. Moreover, it appears that AFRICOM currently lacks the human understanding capabilities envisioned by the Defense Science Board Task Force. These shortcomings are problematic, in part because, in many respects, AFRICOM is positioned as a possible alternative for providing security and peacekeeping support for governments and NGOs. However, as noted previously, increasingly both governments and NGOs have various options in selecting providers. As noted by Singer (2008), “The interest of nonstate actors (including multinational corporations and humanitarian groups) in working closer with PMFs is likely to grow as they face increasingly messy operational environments” (p. 231).

To the extent that AFRICOM is successful in developing critical human dynamics capabilities, it runs the risk of losing key personnel to its PMC competitors. Singer (2008) notes that “employees of PMFs tend to be paid anywhere from 2 to 10 times as much as in the official military and police. Thus many of the public force’s best and brightest are lured away” (p. 74). Elaborating on this theme, Caparini (2007) describes a “‘revolving door’ between the defence industrial and services sector and government,” as indicated by “the presence of numerous high-ranking former military and government officials on the boards and in the management of US firms selling commercial defence services” (p. 176). Caparini (2007) suggests that this pattern is indicative of “an entrenched symbiotic relationship between state and private sector” (p. 176). As a consequence, AFRICOM should incorporate expectations in its mission planning for contingencies created by the operation of PMCs in African theaters. In the words of Singer (2008):

Just as militaries recently had to develop a system for working with NGOs and aid groups, so too they should begin to consider how they will deal with PMFs during operations, as they will increasingly encounter them in the field. (p. 234)

Beyond issues of internal capabilities and competition with PMCs, AFRICOM’s (and the State Department’s) greatest challenge may be countering the human dynamics and cross-cultural competence capabilities of China. In many respects China is exhibiting a greater degree of cross-cultural competence in its activities in Africa than the U.S. As noted by Melville and Owen (2005), China “used its own legacy of colonial aggression and experience of liberation to forge links with the African nation-states emerging from colonial rule” (p. 1). They observe further that although, “China in the 1960s lacked the resources of the cold-war superpowers . . . it still invested significant energies in support of independent Africa” (Melville and Owen, 2005,

p. 1). In fact, throughout the 1990s, “China increased its aid to African governments and resumed its earlier rhetoric of ‘mutual respect’ and ‘concern for diversity’ – a discourse that resounded strongly in a continent highly attuned to the perceived neo-colonial reflexes of the former ruling powers” (Melville and Owen, 2005, p. 2). More recently:

China has subsequently been well in advance of the G8 by cancelling \$10 billion of the debt it is owed by African states; at the second Sino-Africa Business conference in December 2003, China offered further debt relief to thirty-one African countries, as well as opening the prospect of zero-tariff trade. (Melville and Owen, 2005, p. 2)

Conservative groups have been especially vocal regarding the negative strategic implications of China’s engagement with Africa for U.S. foreign policy interests. Brookes and Chin (2006) insist “The People’s Republic of China (PRC) aids and abets oppressive and destitute African dictatorships by legitimizing their misguided policies and praising their development models as suited to individual national conditions” (p. 1).

Focusing on specific activities, Brookes and Chin (2006) report:

Chinese government firms have invested billions of dollars in foreign exchange and have used Chinese engineering and construction resources on infrastructure for developing oil, gas, mineral, and other natural resources in dozens of African countries, including Algeria, Angola, Gabon, Nigeria, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. (p. 2)

In addition:

China has also offered aid to its African partners, ranging from building infrastructure to treating infectious diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS . . . Chinese-sponsored roads and railways are under construction in Kenya, Rwanda, and Nigeria, and a mobile telephone network is being build in Tunisia. (Brookes and Chin, 2006, p. 6)

Clearly AFRICOM must be able to offer comparable levels of support and engagement if it is to achieve significant success in creating an alternative strategic network.

Conclusion

As the DOD continues to develop strategies to enhance its human dynamics and 3C capabilities, it would be well served to use AFRICOM as an opportunity to explore the type of network building and multi-disciplinary approaches advocated by the Defense Science Board Task Force. Such an inductive, experimental approach could effectively complement the deductive and/or theory based strategies that currently dominate the Task Force's and the DOD's approach to capacity building. This will require some revamping of the current approach to building AFRICOM and embracing some unfamiliar designs. For example, Volman and Minter (2009) declare that "U.S. policy toward each region of the continent . . . must feature cooperation and dialogue on a wide range of issues affecting human security rather than prioritizing military-to-military relationships." They suggest the innovative approach of "draw[ing] on the insights and contributions of the large community of recent African immigrants to the U.S., many of whom are engaged in family and community projects to help their countries."

There is also a need for a broader review of how PMCs affect U.S. foreign policy in general, and efforts to leverage human dynamics capabilities and 3C in particular. Avant (2008) argues cogently that "the private provision of security services . . . causes the foreign policy process to work differently, enhances the power of the executive over the legislative branch and opens new avenues for PSCs to affect foreign policy regulatory standards" (p. 176). She further asserts:

The close relationship between the PSCs and the government and an acceptance of private participation in defense lead to a situation where regulation appears to work

relatively well, but the export of military services allows the government to pursue policies that it would not if it had to send American troops, and creates opportunities for PSCs to influence foreign policy. (Avant, 2008, p. 176)

In a similar vein, Singer (2008) warns that “Military consulting firms also offer the possibility of providing military assistance to allies with negative images, which would otherwise [be] unable to garner Congressional approval” (p. 210). To that end, such arrangements would “[circumvent] time-tested congressional and public reviews that are integral to the democratic system of checks and balances in government” (Singer, 2008, pp. 212-213).

The proposed review would put U.S. policymakers in a more informed position to participate in the various entities that are attempting to regulate PMCs including the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. Overall, the type of comprehensive approach advocated here could significantly advance DOD goals of more effectively leveraging human dynamics and 3C capabilities in a world beset with expanding security risks.

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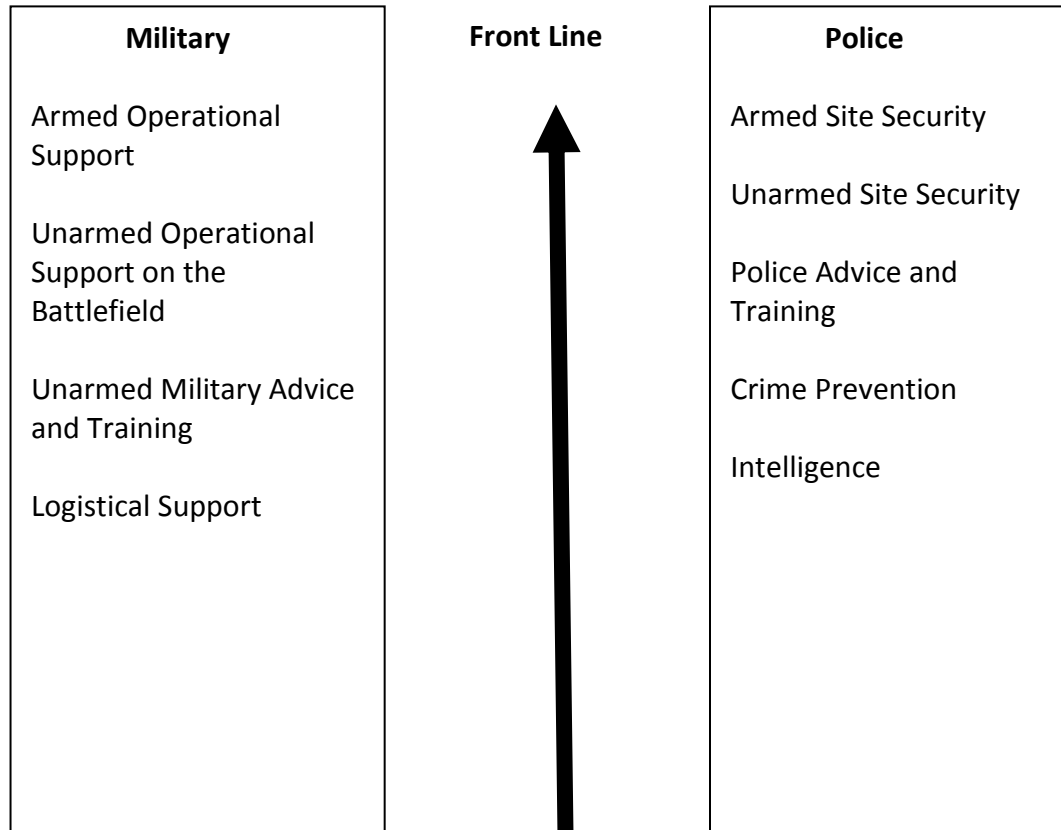


Figure 1. Activities of private military firms relative to proximity to combat operations. Adapted from *The market for force: The consequences of privatizing security* (p. 17), by D. D. Avant, 2008, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Copyright 2005 by Deborah D. Avant.

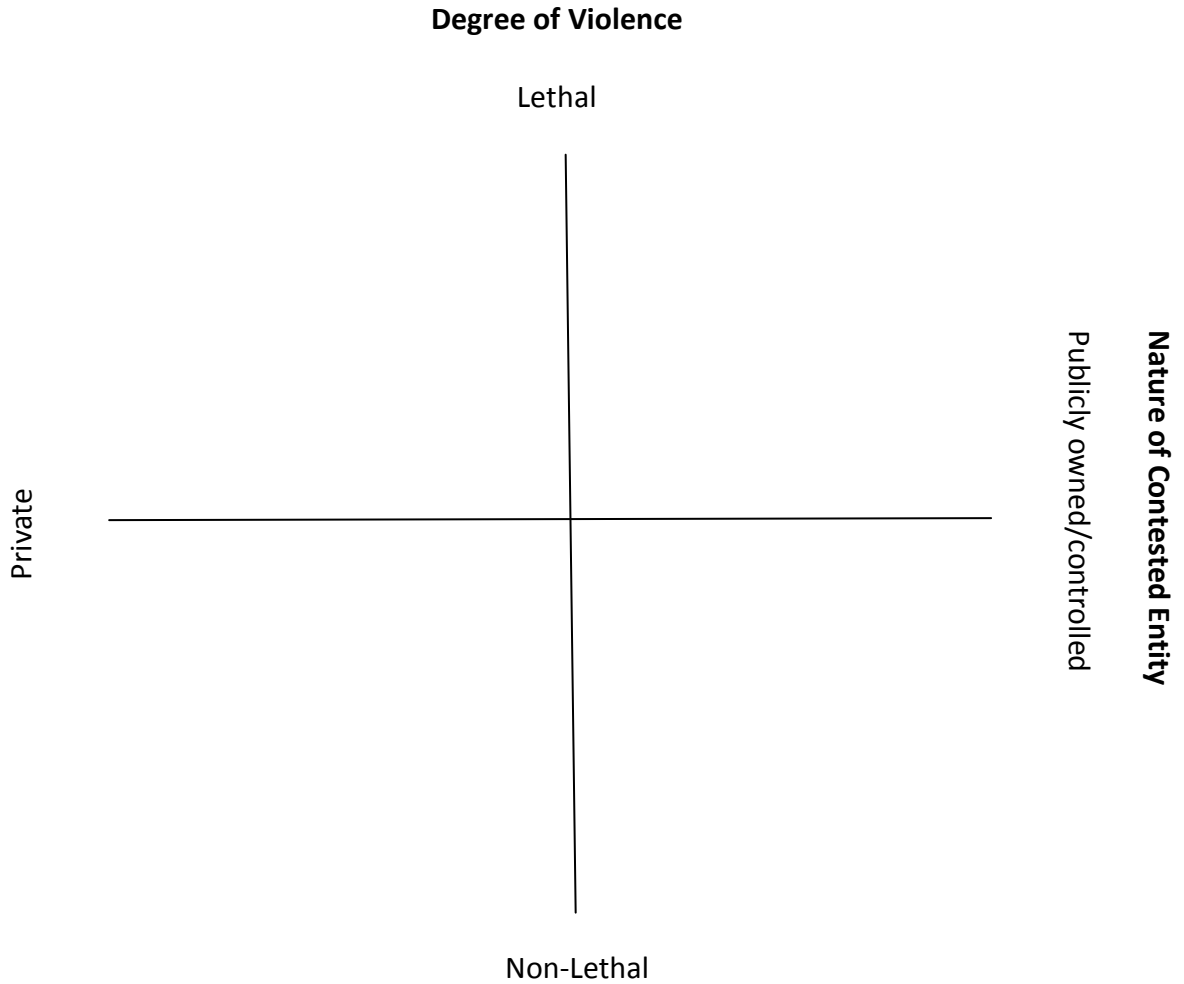


Figure 2. Graphical framework for classifying activities of private military firms based on means and objectives. Adapted from *Corporate soldiers and international security* (p. 10), by C. Kinsey, 2006, New York, NY: Routledge. Copyright 2006 by Christopher Kinsey.

Military Operations		General U.S. Goal	Examples
C O M B A T	War	Fight & Win	Large-scale Combat Operations: Attack/Defend/Blockade
	N O N C O M B A T	Operations Other Than War	Deter War & Resolve Conflict
		Promote Peace	Antiterrorism/Disaster Relief Peacebuilding Nation Assistance Civil Support/Counterdrug NEO

Figure 3. Range of military operations. Adapted from The Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia (p. 609), by Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997.