

SHOULD THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE CONTINUE TO USE PRIVATE
SECURITY CONTRACTORS TO PROTECT U.S. DIPLOMATS?

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

DEREK DELA-CRUZ, SPECIAL AGENT, DOS
B.S., United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 1994

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Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Ted A. Thomas, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Bud Meador, M.A.

_____, Member
Billy Miller, M.A.

Accepted this 13th day of June 2008 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

SHOULD THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE CONTINUE TO USE PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS TO PROTECT U.S. DIPLOMATS? Special Agent Derek Dela-Cruz, 140 pages

On September 16, 2007 in Baghdad, Iraq, members of an American protective security detail, composed of private security contractors (PSCs), engaged in a shooting incident while protecting U.S. Department of State (DOS) personnel. Seventeen Iraqi civilians died.

The idea of U.S. Foreign Service personnel being protected by armed American private contractor personnel raised many questions. The purpose of this study is to provide answers to the primary question of “Should DOS continue the use of PSCs to provide protection for U.S. diplomats?” and three secondary research questions: (1) How effectively do PSCs perform their protection function for DOS? (2) What alternatives exist besides using PSCs? (3) How can DOS use PSCs more effectively?

I answered the above questions with a qualitative analysis of the existing body of literature complemented with personal interviews with key DOS leadership, and solicited comments from Diplomatic Security Service Agents, U.S. Foreign Service Officers, and PSC detail members.

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ACRONYMS

AIC	Agent-in-Charge
COE	Contemporary Operating Environment
COM	Chief of Mission
DOD	The United State Department of Defense
DOS	United States Department of State.
DSS	Diplomatic Security Service
EOF	Exercise of Force
IC	Independent Contractor
PRS	Term used by the Diplomatic Security Service to describe the field of personal and executive protection
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSC	Private Security Company
PSD	Protective Security Detail
PSS	Protective Security Specialist
TTPs	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide research as a means to shape future relationships between the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and private security companies (PSCs). There have already been many articles, books, and papers published on the field of privatized security. Respected academics such as P.W. Singer, Jeremy Scahill, Robert Young Pelton, and Deborah D. Avant offer an authoritative back-drop by which this burgeoning enterprise may be analyzed. I complemented what they have already done by presenting a perspective that heretofore did not exist. This thesis offers a unique analysis from the standpoint of a DOS employee, a Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) agent, and international security professional. I also synthesized the comments and recommendations taken from experienced DSS agents – all of whom have served, or are currently serving in high-threat U.S. Embassy locations. Each of these gentlemen have more experience working in dangerous locations than the rest of the agents in my agency. Finally, I took my analysis just one-step further by trying to account for the personal perspective of the customer: the DOS Foreign Service Officer (FSO).

Why Study PSCs?

Since the 1980s, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) has relied on private security companies (PSCs) to augment existing DOS personnel in such functions as executive protection and administrative staffing. Critics argue the use of such entities to perform security and protection duties is detrimental to the overall goals of the State

Department. The use of PSCs has fallen under heightened criticism with the September 16, 2007 incident with a protective detail composed of personnel from Blackwater, one of the largest PSCs on contract with DOS. Analyses and opinions vary over what actually transpired. Members of the PSC detail allege that, while protecting a U.S. diplomat, they were ambushed and were justified in returning fire. However, media reports claim they discharged their weapons indiscriminately into the on-going vehicle and foot traffic causing the deaths of at least seventeen Iraqi civilians. As of May 23, 2008, the date of which this thesis' completion, an official investigation behind what the Blackwater contractors claim to have been a coordinated ambush is still underway. In the meantime, the Iraqi government is demanding all foreign security contractors in their country be accountable to Iraqi law. As an instrument used by a government agency, whose purpose is to foster peace and stability through peaceful diplomatic relations, the use of PSCs warrants further analysis. More importantly, a balance must be achieved between providing the necessary personal protection to American diplomats serving in hazardous regions and effectively providing U.S. diplomatic representation to critically unstable and developing nations.

This topic has a direct impact on me as an international security professional. I am a Special Agent for the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), which is a sub-agency to the U.S. Department of State. We are U.S. federal law enforcement agents handling all physical security, counter-intelligence, and criminal investigative matters for the U.S. Foreign Service. I protected the U.S. Secretary of State and other American diplomats during high-profile visits to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, the West Bank, and Monrovia, Liberia. In my past assignments, I deployed overseas for various security

missions on a regular basis. With only 1,450 agents worldwide, DSS is incapable of providing the necessary *long-term* protective missions necessary for American diplomats assigned to such high-threat locations as the U.S. Embassies in Baghdad, Iraq, Kabul, Afghanistan, or Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel. For this reason, DOS turned to “outsourcing” this role as a means to supplement the mission of DSS. A representative, usually a senior DSS agent, oversees this “outsourced” relationship and ensures the terms of the contract are enforced.

Despite severe criticism, a balanced analysis indicates there have been instances where PSCs have clearly demonstrated their utility. In some cases, they proved to have a distinct advantage over U.S. government agencies and assets. In early October 2007, insurgents attacked the Polish Ambassador to Iraq while he was traveling in his motorcade within Baghdad city limits. The U.S. Embassy’s Regional Security Office (RSO) attempted to coordinate a rescue using U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) resources. However, it would have taken them more than an hour to assemble while several staffers and security personnel from the Polish Ambassador’s motorcade lay dead and wounded at an unsecured attack site. In search of other options, DSS agents in the RSO office contacted Blackwater, which has several helicopters as a part of its contingent in Iraq. Just seven minutes after notification, Blackwater helicopter teams rescued the Polish Ambassador and the surviving personnel in his motorcade. Clearly, there is some benefit to the DOS use of PSCs, albeit not mentioned in the media.

Primary Research Question: “Should DOS Continue The Use of PSCs to Provide Protection for U.S. Diplomats?”

The primary research question for this thesis is supported by three secondary research questions. The first question is “How effectively do PSCs perform their protection function for DOS?” In order to answer this question, an assessment of the DOS use of PSCs and its impact on the function of diplomatic security is necessary. The second of the three secondary research questions is “What alternatives exist besides using PSCs?” This question explores the three main options of using U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) military personnel, a massive expansion of the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) which is the law-enforcement and security entity within DOS, or using host-nation police or security personnel as a cost-saving measure. The third and final secondary research question is “How can DOS use PSCs more effectively?” during which this thesis will discuss DSS oversight and supervision over PSCs.

1st Secondary Research Question: “How Effectively Do PSCs Perform Their Protection Function for DOS?”

The question of “How effectively do PSCs perform their protection function for DOS?” is necessary to determine a base measure of the current situation in the DOS use of PSCs and their impact on the function of diplomatic security. This question also serves as a preliminary step to the subsequent secondary research questions that may be addressed. By assessing the effectiveness of the PSC ability to provide diplomatic protection, we have the basis to research and develop recommendations for change and improvement. The analysis for this question is presented in terms of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of diplomatic security. Chapter 3 provides definitions for these three levels and the methodology for answering this question.

2nd Secondary Research Question: “What Alternatives To PSCs Exist?”

Analyzing the alternative options to PSCs and their feasibility explains why DOS is using PSCs in the first place. In the 1st secondary research question, I assessed the current state of the use of PSCs. With this 2nd question, we analyzed how we arrived at the current state by identifying the alternatives and describing how they are, or are not, feasible. Media reports publicize the alleged wrongdoings of PSC personnel performing protective duties in accordance with DOS contracts. Pundits and social analysts seem quick to point out the disadvantages of using PSCs and why this practice needs to end. However, they have yet to prescribe any potential alternatives. The answer to this question identifies and describes the feasibility of the three alternatives considered by DOS.

3rd Secondary Research Question: “How Can DOS Use PSCs More Effectively?”

As long as the U.S. Department of State continues to maintain its presence in unstable war-ravaged countries, the need for high-threat diplomatic security will continue to be a necessity. Unless the alternatives identified in the analysis of the 2nd secondary research question are implemented, the use of PSCs will most likely continue. This final secondary research question explores how DOS and its sub-entity, DSS, can most effectively utilize the PSCs in the future. More importantly, the research and analysis of this question lays the groundwork for this thesis’ recommendations.

My research on this topic, from start to finish, was about six months. The constraints were the ten-month time duration of the U.S. Army’s Command and General Staff College and, of course, the competing demands, both personal and professional, that accompany being an academic student.

Also, the preponderance of contemporary articles and publications on the use of PSCs are centered on the U.S. government in Iraq. The literature offers little distinction in the significance of a PSC's contract with DOD or DOS. To the outside observer, not all U.S. government contracts may need differentiation. However, to a member of DOD, DOS, or DSS, this factor holds significance. The U.S. government agency for which a particular PSC detail is contracted indicates which of the U.S. instruments of power the protectee represents. The parent agency also signifies which role within the conflict the protectee may be associated. For example, a PSC detail protecting the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq has a different role in Operation Iraqi Freedom than a DOD-contracted team of PSC personnel conducting security at a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) outpost. This thesis' focus is strictly on the use of PSCs performing high-threat personal protection for DOS embassy personnel in any of the three countries covered by the DSS Worldwide Personal Protection Services (WPPS) contract. Therefore, these PSC details represent the U.S. *diplomatic* instrument of power. The DSS agent who oversees the WPPS contract, the contract itself, and the countries to which it applies will be discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 4.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide research as a means to shape future relationships between the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and all private security companies (PSCs).

Chapter 2 Organization

To begin this chapter, I will present the most salient points made by the most influential authors in the field of privatized security industry. This will comprise the preponderance of the literature review. After a brief summary of each of their arguments, I will present the most significant government documents related to this thesis such as official findings of the congressional investigation on the September 16, 2007 Blackwater shooting incident. This investigation, complete with recommendations to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, is commonly referred to as the “Kennedy Report.” I will then introduce some of the other significant documents affecting the DOS relationship and use of PSCs

Influential Authors

I will begin with presenting P.W. Singer’s comments on the U.S. government’s use of PSCs. In my assessment, he represents the first and foremost expert in the field. Interestingly, the other three authors cited Singer’s work many times, as he established the analytical foundation for studying the privatized security industry. Deborah D. Avant, a political science professor at George Washington University, explains her

perspective on the PSC industry based on where the functional control of violence rests between the state and the private entities. Jeremy Scahill focused his book specifically on Blackwater and its success because of the U.S. involvement in Iraq. Robert Young Pelton, unlike any of the previous three authors, actually went to Iraq and spent a month with a crew of Blackwater contractors.

Peter Warren (P.W.) Singer

Peter W. Singer published the two most relevant works to my thesis which are his 2003 book Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and a policy paper entitled “Can’t Win With ‘Em, Can’t Go To War Without ‘Em: Private Military Contractors and Counterinsurgency.” One of the foremost analysts of the privatization of government functions, he is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, a foreign policy think tank located in Washington, D.C.¹

Singer’s policy paper entitled “Can’t Win With ‘Em, Can’t Go To War Without ‘Em: Private Military Contractors and Counterinsurgency” provides succinct conclusions on his argument against the use of PSCs by the U.S. government at all. While senior DS and DOS leadership are deciding how best to utilize PSCs to accomplish the diplomatic DOS mission, Singer refers back to the basic question of “whether it made sense to have civilians in this role in the first place.”² He considers this the “heart of the matter” in his book Corporate Warriors and questions whether or not private entities should “be involved in protecting the most precious assets of states and their citizens.”³ He acknowledged the successes some private military firms have achieved in bringing some well-known conflicts to a rapid end, but reminds us the bottom line in business remains; and for PSCs, that bottom line is to “fulfill the contract” and “to be seen as effective.”⁴

He did not mention this example, but the deaths of four Blackwater contractors in Fallujah on March 31, 2004, illustrated this point. In an effort to win a lucrative long-term contract with a major Middle Eastern corporation, Blackwater assigned escorts to operate under circumstances contrary to their own written agreements with each independent contractor. Specifically, the terms required them to travel in armored SUVs and with at least three contractors in each car. Instead, two vehicles, each carrying two contractors departed Taji for Camp Ridgeway in a hastily prepared security mission. The purpose of this mission was to escort a convoy of trucks shuttling kitchen equipment. While travelling through Fallujah, the operators of the escort vehicles became disoriented and became separated from the convoy. An enraged group of local protestors, still seething after American soldiers killed seventeen civilians in the city just days earlier, surrounded the two vehicles. In a short time, the crowd of Iraqis besieged the vehicles with small-arms fire killing all four contractors and proceeded to beat and drag their bodies to celebrate their deaths. They eventually hung their burning bodies in effigy on a bridge over the Euphrates River. Singer asserts Blackwater violated its contractual standards with its own contractors to demonstrate it “could rise to the challenge of such a tight schedule, and it seems management was under intense pressure to get men on the job.”⁵

In the Brookings Institution policy paper, Singer makes a series of key points, but the most relevant points to my thesis are:

- *Private Contractors are hurting the overall counter-insurgency effort:* Typical PSC protective details tend to polarize the indigenous opinion *against* the American diplomatic mission. He points out the example of one contractor

actually saying, “Our mission is to protect the principal at all costs. If that means pissing off the Iraqis, too bad.”⁶

- *Loyalty*: Do PSCs just work for the highest bidding customer? In this point, Singer suggests there is a difference between services rendered voluntarily, out of patriotism and desire to serve versus a transactional business contract. Singer said, “Insert ‘private’ in front of military and we must, in turn, substitute such honored concepts as ‘service’ and ‘mission’ with profit-oriented words like ‘job’ and ‘contract.’”⁷
- *PSCs are degrading U.S. stability efforts*: PSC practices run counter to stability- and reconstruction-type operations typifying the DOS-centric portion of any U.S.-involved conflict where the development of essential social institutions such as a solid judicial system and “Rule of Law” must be established. Singer asserts that the PSCs, as instruments of the U.S. Government, cannot undermine the very Iraqi Government functions that DOS is trying to create. An Iraqi soldier described the common perception of Blackwater’s protective detail practices: “They are more powerful than the government. No one can try them. Where is the government in this?”⁸

Singer suggests the outsourcing of governmental functions, specifically the “armed escort of U.S. government officials, assets, and convoys in a warzone” is ultimately detrimental to the over-arching U.S. military strategy.⁹ In U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s speech on “Transformational Diplomacy” to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service on January 18, 2006, she stated interagency coordination and cooperation will be one of the tenets of future diplomatic success. She even offered the

recent creation of the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization and role of “POLADS” (DOS FSO political advisors to Military Forces) as recent examples.¹⁰ In other words, if the use of PSCs hinders the success of the U.S. military’s strategy in Iraq or Afghanistan, then it may also, by virtue of the interagency “jointness” espoused by Secretary Rice, hinder the success of DOS. Or, in the words of P.W. Singer, “If we judge by what has happened in Iraq, when it comes to private military contractors and counterinsurgency, the U.S. has locked its national security endeavors into a vicious cycle. It can’t win with them, but can’t go to war without them.”¹¹

In his book, Corporate Warriors, Singer began with describing the use of mercenary armies in ancient history, their metamorphosis into modern-day corporate structures, and the key decisions and series of events leading to the DOS extensive use of PSCs. In regard to the military planning for the invasion, Singer asserts the Bush administration put a great deal of emphasis on the invasion phase of Iraq with inadequate attention to the aftermath. Consequently, an inadequate number of troops deployed. Once realized, President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld faced the following “politically unpalatable” choices:

- *Focus on Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.* Singer argues the U.S. could have focused efforts and resources on Afghanistan-based Al Qaeda rather than splitting its GWOT deployment effort two ways. The Bush Administration influenced public opinion for Operation Iraqi Freedom with the “calculated misuse of intelligence reports.”¹²
- *Send more than 135,000 troops.* Deploying more than the initially planned number would have forced the Bush administration to admit fallibility and stretched thin the U.S. military worldwide.¹³

- *The Abrams Doctrine would be too unpopular.* With the 2004 presidential election looming, it would have been too risky to augment the 135,000 OIF-dedicated active duty soldiers with a call-up of reserve and National Guard personnel.¹⁴
- *UN/NATO contributions meant unacceptable compromises.* Having fellow alliance nations contribute soldiers to OIF was never a potential option for the Bush administration. Although it may have created a larger troop presence, it also opened up the potential of having U.S. troops falling under the command of the U.N. or NATO leadership.¹⁵

To avoid having to choose from any of these options, the Bush administration chose to outsource key logistical functions traditionally reserved for the U.S. military.

In the final chapter of Corporate Warriors and in a separate article entitled “Banned in Baghdad: Reactions to the Blackwater License Being Pulled,” Singer describes the September 16, 2007 controversial Blackwater shooting incident in the Mansour district of Baghdad. This incident occurred after a Blackwater employee had shot and killed a bodyguard for the Iraqi vice president after a drunken argument in December 2006. Both incidents enraged the Iraqi populous and the developing Iraqi government.¹⁶ The Iraqi government revoked Blackwater’s license to operate its business within their sovereign territory thereby bringing to light the dilemma of two key problems surrounding the use of PSCs. First, Blackwater never properly applied for the appropriate business license to work in Iraq. Singer states this indicates the sense of lawlessness that existed, and arguably has been fostered, in order for PSCs to not just function, but *thrive*, in Post-invasion Iraq. Secondly, the incident’s aftermath pointed out the very fact the U.S. State Department simply cannot function nor maintain its presence in Iraq without PSCs. DOS’ Diplomatic Security Service was “hollowed out at the same

time the need for it expanded.”¹⁷ Consequently, no feasible “back-up plan” existed. Within hours of the Government of Iraq’s (GOI) announcement that Blackwater would be forced to leave, Secretary of State Rice made a personal phone call to Iraq’s prime minister to make a personal request that the Blackwater firm remain in Iraq.¹⁸

A final point that Singer made in Corporate Warriors was private military and security entities have a tendency to “thrive in areas of weak governance.”¹⁹ He presented two different types of hypothetical examples. Either a weak state government seeks to defend itself from external threat or it simply lacks the central control to properly and effectively maintain order within sovereign boundaries. He provides a multitude of examples. Kellogg, Brown, and Root (KBR) provided extensive logistical support to U.S. forces stationed in Kosovo in the late 1990s.²⁰ Military Resources Professional Incorporated (MPRI) had a significant influence in training and equipping the Croat military in their conflict with Serb-Muslims just a few years earlier in the same conflict.²¹ The government of Sierra Leone contracted the England-based company Executive Outcomes to help substantially in the eventual defeat of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel force.²² More recently, Blackwater, DynCorp, and Triple-Canopy earned high-dollar contracts to protect U.S. diplomats working to rebuild the infrastructure of post-invasion Iraq. Interestingly, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) is indeed a special example because it contributed to a literal explosion of PSC use by multiple nations maintaining a presence in Iraq. Singer stated, “It was as if the industry of private military service, already thriving at the time *Corporate Warriors* was first published, was put on steroids.”²³

As a DSS agent, I was pleased to see Singer acknowledging that DOS-internal security capabilities exist. Rather than building DSS up to accommodate the Iraq mission, DOS leadership decided to create a \$1 billion contract to outsource the long-term high-threat protection functions within Iraq and other locations. This contract was with a “consortium of companies led by Blackwater” and proved the decision to not privatize the function of diplomatic security was not “due to a lack of money.”²⁴ In an interview with Robert Young Pelton, Singer further articulated this point: “It’s not about cost savings; it’s about political cost savings. When things go wrong, you simply blame the company.”²⁵

In a recent article entitled “Blackwater: The Roger Clemens of War,” published on April 4, 2008, Singer draws a contemporary parallel between the professional athletes’ addiction to performance enhancing drugs and the USG’s heavy reliance on the use of PSCs to enhance its own functions and ability to operate overseas. He states “injecting 160,000 private military contractors into Iraq” created short-term enhancement complete with all the unwanted side-effects. Similar to the steroidal side effects “that range from acne and heart damage to even death,” PSC use led to its own set of side effects such as “billions of dollars missing in taxpayer funds, soldiers poached from a stretched thin military,” and contractors’ abuse of authority.²⁶

Deborah D. Avant

Deborah D. Avant published The Market for Force in 2005. It presents an abstract focus on the much broader concepts surrounding the privatization of the military and security function by a nation-state entity. She does not focus on any particular nation, PSC, or conflict but rather presents historic examples for her analysis. Each

example revolves around a central question of how the controlled use of violence by a nation-state entity is enhanced or limited with PSCs.²⁷ In regard to the U.S. State Department and my thesis; I find three noteworthy points. From an objective perspective, she presents her assessment of the U.S. government's use of PSCs in terms of its advantages, its disadvantages, and the overall influence on the PSC market by U.S. State Department.

Advantages to PSCs according to Avant

According to Avant, the U.S.' use of privatized security does have its advantages, particularly in the short term. For instance, it offers an alternative to projecting American influence into areas of conflict without having to deploy military troops.²⁸ This presents political leaders an alternative method to supplement troop numbers of American service men and women deployed overseas without necessarily garnering public and Congressional support beforehand. As in the case of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), for example, by September 2007, there are more civilian contractors in Iraq performing security and other support functions than uniformed military personnel.²⁹ Therefore, the true measure of American involvement and influence on the nascent Iraqi government can be misrepresented by examining strictly the numbers of military troops deployed to OIF. According to a separate article for the Washington Post, Avant goes to explain OIF is currently "the largest deployment of contractors in history."³⁰

Unfortunately, the post-Cold War reduction in force made the U.S. Department of Defense ill-equipped to handle the multi-polar threats created by the contemporary operating environment (COE). However, private contract companies made themselves available to assist. Many logistical military functions were eventually outsourced to

private contractors to save costs. Kellogg, Brown, and Root (KBR), a subsidiary of Halliburton, established a firm foothold in the market providing support for the U.S. military in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia. As the “new engagements” manifested themselves causing U.S. influence to project itself to such locations as Afghanistan and Iraq, KBR has further expanded its contracts to meet the need.³¹ In the words of late Colonel Kevin Cunningham, the former dean of the U.S. Army War College, “...the U.S. cannot go to war without contractors.”³²

Private contractors eventually took on more direct-action-type “trigger-pulling” functions as the need presented itself, thereby morphing into true PSCs. At the time this book was published in 2005, Avant theorized this use of PSCs may create an opportunity for the U.S. military to withdraw from Iraq gracefully.³³ We know now if Blackwater or DynCorp can create that opportunity, the moment has yet to come.

Finally, Avant explains the PSC market is highly lucrative and alluring for the individual contractor. Therefore, it may have the indirect effect of benefiting the United States Armed Forces in terms of recruitment and reenlistment statistics over time. The profession of being a private security contractor is extremely lucrative as some contracts can earn the individual as much as \$33,000 in a single month.³⁴ If this market trend continues, Avant predicts the pool of potential military recruits and, in particular, applicants for U.S. Special Operations forces where the most desirable skill sets and experience can be accrued, will only increase as a simple matter of supply and demand.³⁵

Disadvantages to PSCs according to Avant

Without citing any of the well-publicized examples, Avant stated the PSCs abuse of power is only the first of a few problems with their utilization.³⁶ About two years after

publishing this book, the controversial September 17, 2007 Blackwater shooting incident occurred bringing heavy scrutiny to the overall use of PSCs by the U.S. government. Aside from the international outcry against American involvement in Iraq, this matter begs the question, “How can the U.S. State Department continue to use PSCs to further its diplomatic agenda after such incidents have occurred?”

Another negative impact with any government’s use of PSCs refers back to Avant’s central question on the state’s controlled use of violence. The U.S. Department of State, as an entity of the U.S. government, maintains contractual and budgetary control and the ability to choose between PSCs in the market based on its own selection criteria. However, lower level assessment, recruiting, training, and performance incentives are determined by the internal culture, policies, and goals of each individual service provider. Therefore, in the particular case of personal protection in an extremely dangerous COE, the exercise of deadly force in extremis may not conform to the DOS overarching goals. Avant specifically states, “...the authorized use of violence slips into the hands of the firm rather than being in the hands of the state.”³⁷

Avant describes the initial short-term use of PSCs by the U.S. government has evolved into a reliance on them. Because certain key functions can always be passed off on to private companies, the U.S. military has no need to return to being self-sufficient as it once was nor does it have the need to evolve because there will always be pool of retired military personnel willing perform the key functions. For example, in the 1980s, the U.S. government hired DynCorp to perform an international civilian police function in Haiti. Political leaders, fearing they would convey the appearance of a unilateral military response, decided against sending U.S. troops. Avant states, this use of PSCs

prevented the U.S. government from developing a greater capability to project this function today.³⁸ She argues there will always be PSCs capable of performing this role quickly, at a less expensive price. Politically and economically, the use of PSCs represents an obstacle to the U.S. military's ability to evolve to meet the demands of COE.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel, the most highly trained soldiers in the U.S. military, will leave the military for more lucrative job offers before retirement.³⁹ This will affect the experience levels of soldiers currently serving in "high-end" units, which are already suffering from high-casualty rates endured from sustained combat. Although it may be cheaper for the U.S. Department of Defense to contract certain functions to former SOF personnel, a huge portion of the DOD budget went into training these same individuals thereby creating a recruiting pool for PSCs to begin with. So basically, the U.S. government is paying for these services twice; first, to fund the training programs which create individuals to perform the functions, and second, to pay the private company that recruited the individual and is paying him four times his military salary in order to keep him.

The Link between the U.S. State Department and the PSC Market

Avant also described how the U.S. military was significantly downsized in the 1990s, "but not reorganized to meet the demands of new engagements."⁴⁰ This opened the way for PSCs to assert themselves as a viable option. Since then, the commercial market for PSCs has evolved into a worldwide arena. American-based PSCs are competing with multiple foreign firms such as Executive Outcomes or Aegis. It only stands to reason, therefore, American-based PSCs will tend to be more responsive to the

changing specific needs of the U.S. government and its foreign policy in order to maintain its main customer.⁴¹ Referring back to the economic laws of supply and demand, the U.S. government represents the largest demand and has the ability to pay for the supply to meet this demand. Therefore, it behooves PSCs, in search of the greatest profit, to meet these demands. Thus, we see how the U.S. government has the upper hand in the ability to manipulate many of the variables and conditions in contracting PSCs to perform specific functions.

Pre-existing PSC Regulatory Mechanisms

As PSCs have worldwide competitors commercially, so does the United States diplomatically, militarily, politically, socially, and economically. U.S. State Departments International Transfer of Arms Regulations (ITAR) provide the legislative framework by which the U.S. government can ensure that domestic-based PSCs do not provide functions, services, or materiel to other governments that could eventually be detrimental to U.S. interests.⁴² Using the abstract concepts Avant prefers, these regulations are nation-state laws to maintain some degree of functional control over the use of violence to be exported for profit by an American-based private entity. The initial purpose behind these regulations was to govern the type of training offered to foreign customers receiving technologically complex weapons systems manufactured by U.S. companies. Eventually, they became a pre-established set of rules to address PSC security service exports.⁴³ Avant explained the State Department's Office of Defense Trade Controls is the governmental entity providing oversight with the use of the ITAR by licensing specific services to be exported. In January 2003, it reorganized and took on the new title of Directorate of Defense Trade Control (DDTC).⁴⁴ DDTC will solicit comment from

the appropriate entity within DOS for consideration prior to approving license for a certain country or customer. Avant stated that if “...a country with no restrictions wants to buy non-lethal training, the license should be readily approved.”⁴⁵ However, if the country or customer is listed on the State Department Embargo chart, a license may not be issued or may be revoked if services are in the process of being rendered. MPRI, for example, was forced to stop its licensed training in Angola when an “informal policy hold” was diplomatically placed on that country.⁴⁶

Jeremy Scahill

Jeremy Scahill offers significant insight into the free-market-style PSC profiteering that has become common in Iraq and other war-zones. As the title suggests, Scahill focuses particularly upon Blackwater USA and its founder and CEO, Erik Prince. This book contributes to my thesis in describing how the market for security contractors, in general, came to flourish. Specifically, he makes three particular points of relevance. First, Ambassador Paul Bremer made a series of decisions while head of the Iraqi Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) contributing to the huge influx of PSCs into Iraq. Secondly, Bremer himself was protected by a detail composed of Blackwater operators. These first two points created conditions making possible the third point, which is Blackwater’s receiving the nod for the U.S. State Department’s Worldwide Protective Services (WPPS) contract which makes it the U.S. government’s preferred private protective security company.⁴⁷

Ambassador Paul Bremer issued three controversial orders affecting the function of PSCs in Iraq. Under CPA Orders 1 and 2, Bremer made the controversial decisions of disbanding the Iraqi military and firing thousands of other Iraqis whose professions

represented key infrastructural “pillars of society” such as schoolteachers, doctors, and nurses.⁴⁸ With a huge pool of angry unemployed armed Iraqi soldiers and educated professionals, Bremer heightened the instability and lawlessness of Iraq, thereby creating the optimal conditions by which the need for additional security elements – public or private – was unavoidable.⁴⁹ Finally, as a part of his last official act before departing Iraq, Bremer issued CPA Order 17, which stated any PSC “shall be immune from Iraqi legal processes with respect to acts performed by them pursuant to the terms and condition of a Contract or any sub-contract thereto.”⁵⁰ As long as they were acting in accordance with their contracted duties, PSCs were relieved from legal accountability to the host nation government for any exercise of force. In effect, with CPA Order 17 in place PSC contractors had the “green light” to exercise deadly force with minimal concern they may eventually have to justify their decision. Scahill quoted Robert Fisk, the Middle East journalist for *The Independent*, as saying “Blackwater’s thugs now push and punch Iraqis who get in their way... They have become, for ordinary Iraqis, the image of everything that is wrong with the West.”⁵¹

Obviously, by virtue of finishing his tour as the head of the CPA, Bremer benefited from the personal protection provided by Blackwater operators.⁵² Blackwater’s survival depended upon him as well. With a literal jihadist bounty placed upon his head, Bremer depended upon Blackwater to keep him alive. As Scahill puts it, “Bremer banked on the laws of a free-market economy for his own survival.”⁵³ However, Erik Prince realized the Bremer detail represented a “make-or-break” opportunity for his company. To lose him would be disastrous to the success of his company. At the same time, to be known as the PSC that successfully protected the “most wanted man in Iraq” would speak

volumes about Blackwater's credibility and effectiveness.⁵⁴ The responsibility of covering Bremer and his successor, John Negroponte, set the stage for what would become Blackwater's most significant business opportunity of all.

In June 2004, Blackwater was awarded the US State Department's Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract. Besides being incredibly lucrative, it was the most prestigious contract earned by any PSC at the time.⁵⁵ Having already protected Ambassadors Bremer and Negroponte, Blackwater pre-positioned itself for success.

Robert Young Pelton

Robert Young Pelton, in writing his book Licensed to Kill, distinguished himself from the rest of authors by taking the time to personally meet, interview, and basically live with various sets of private security contractors. In particular, he lived with a Blackwater protective detail in Baghdad for more than a month. By so doing, he was able to describe the high-stress operating environment under which PSCs operate at the lowest levels as well as the personalities of a protective security detail team. On a personal level, I credit Pelton with humanizing the average PSC independent contractor (IC) so the reader can understand the series of choices and life events leading up to a person's decision to work for Blackwater, DynCorp, or other PSCs.

There are three important points I draw upon from my reading of Pelton. He provides a historical example describing how PSCs have the power to change the leadership of foreign governments using Haiti as a recent example. He also provided other lesser-known examples of contractor abuses derived from personal interviews. Finally, he describes what I believe is an incorrect relationship and interface between all PSCs and the Diplomatic Security Service.

In 1998, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide contracted the Steele Foundation to provide physical security for him after deeming his own country's police and security capabilities inadequate. The U.S. State Department blessed this business transaction as the United States, at the time, was committed to keeping Aristide in power.⁵⁶ By 2004, however, after the exiled return of Guy Philippe, a former police commissioner, and a series of coup attempts, Aristide "had been so marginalized he no longer served the needs of the United States."⁵⁷ In fact, Aristide was surprised when U.S. Ambassador James Foley telephoned him from the U.S. embassy in Port-Au-Prince at 0500 hrs on February 28, 2004 to tell him the U.S. embassy would be announcing his resignation. Publically, the U.S. claimed it had a moral opportunity to end the civil strife, violence, and the killing of thousands of Haitians by encouraging Aristide's swift departure.⁵⁸ A short time after Ambassador Foley's phone call, a member of Aristide's detail, composed of Steele Foundation's independent contractors, notified him his presence was requested at the U.S. embassy. Assuming Ambassador Foley wanted to meet with him personally, he departed home with his motorcade and protection detail, but was shocked when he arrived at the airport rather than the embassy. At the airport, he and his entire detail, to include the wives and families of his detail members boarded the airplane and flew to Miami. He eventually flew to the Central African Republic where he was welcomed by President Francois Bozize as an exile from Haiti.⁵⁹ Aristide accused the U.S. of kidnapping him. However, the U.S. government officially claimed Bertrand's allegations were 'nonsense.' Then Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, "He was not kidnapped. We did not force him on the airplane. He went on the plane willingly."⁶⁰

The CEO of the Steele Foundation, Ken Kurtz, refused comment. Hart Brown, one of the contractors that escorted Aristide on the plane, stated, “At the end we all knew that there might be a conflict of interest. When the State Department asked Aristide to step down, he refused and was flown to Miami...it was a decision taken at the corporate level in order to keep further contracts.”⁶¹

The Aristide example demonstrates how the United States, rather than being perceived as supplanting a weaker nation’s leader with one it prefers, can use the forced withdrawal of PSCs as an American export as a means to project foreign policy. In this way, the resultant change in the political landscape of the international community was only a ‘corporate decision’ driven by economics rather than a unilateral effort to impose American will upon a smaller, weaker nation. Pelton states it even more succinctly when he says PSCs allow the U.S. government to outsource not just key military functions, but to “outsource fault” as well.⁶²

Pelton described PSCs in Iraq as adding to the tense, volatile situation by bringing in an influx of “well armed, non-military men.”⁶³ Besides the well-publicized controversial shooting incidents involving Blackwater, Pelton brought up two other examples of contractor abuse. In a personal interview, one contractor explained he witnessed a fellow contractor, driving a Ford F-250 in a protective motorcade; literally roll over the top of an Iraqi family riding in a smaller car while reacting to a perceived attack. No one ever confirmed if the family survived the incident and to his knowledge, it has not been investigated, nor was it ever reported to the U.S. embassy or to the firm’s leadership. The contractor who witnessed the incident was afraid to report it himself for fear of losing his job.⁶⁴

I do take exception to Pelton's description of the relationship between the Diplomatic Security Service and private security contractors when he states "a great deal of animosity" exists between them.⁶⁵ By saying that DSS considers contractors "overpaid cowboys" and the contractors see DSS as "bureaucratic losers," he is oversimplifying the problem and thereby misleading the reader into thinking the DSS/PSC relationship is disruptive and unsalvageable. In my experience, the average DSS special agent and the average independent contractor see eye-to-eye at the tactical level. Generally, a PSC security detail and its respective DSS agent share collegial relationships based on mutual respect stemming from very similar backgrounds.

Government Documents

Report of the Secretary of State's Panel on Personal Protective Services in Iraq

Commonly referred to as simply the "Kennedy Report" within DSS, this report is a compilation of findings and recommendations made by a panel of outside experts specifically tasked by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to review the DOS security and protection procedures in Iraq. Secretary Rice initiated this investigation subsequent to the shooting incident that occurred on September 16, 2007, involving the Blackwater private security firm, which resulted in the deaths of 17 Iraqi civilians.⁶⁶ This investigative panel consisting of Ambassador Eric J. Boswell, former Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, General (retired) George A. Joulwan, Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy, and Undersecretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy, spent two weeks in Baghdad conducting interviews with key members to the U.S. embassy, the U.S. military, and the Iraqi government.⁶⁷

This twenty four page report produced several key findings relevant to my research:

- CPA Order 17 and CPA Memorandum 17, the controversial law put in place by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer immunizing PSC personnel from legal accountability of their actions, needs “to be updated or replaced.”⁶⁸
- The notion of having the U.S. Military leadership in Iraq assume responsibility for high-threat protection of U.S. diplomatic personnel is both infeasible and undesirable.⁶⁹
- The DOS demand for high-threat personal security personnel will only increase as the U.S. military units gradually redeploy from Iraq thus reducing military presence.⁷⁰
- DSS has insufficient personnel to meet both worldwide diplomatic security requirements and Iraq personal protection duties.⁷¹
- Regarding all deadly force incidents, the U.S. embassy lacks the proper investigative procedure and infrastructure to hold either civilian security and DOD personnel accountable for their actions. This includes a fact-finding investigative element and a policy review board determining “good shoots” from “bad.”⁷²

Several significant recommendations coming out of the “Kennedy Report” address these key findings:

- The panel recommended the DOS “engage” the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Management and Budget, and Government of Iraq (GOI) to establish a clear and distinct legal framework.⁷³
- In order to accompany each PSC protective movement, the Regional Security Office (RSO) must increase its number of personnel. Each detail should be provided at least one Assistant Regional Security Officer (ARSO) as a supervisor.⁷⁴
- Under the DSS Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract, insert additional training modules within the existing DOS security orientation program.

The panel recommended an emphasis on “cultural awareness,” “diplomatic structures and procedures,” and a familiarization with “Multi-National Force-I tactics, techniques, and procedures.”⁷⁵

- In order to address each specific shooting incident, the panel recommended the creation of a multi-agency “Go Team” to objectively investigate the scene and the series of events leading up to the use of deadly force. These teams will also have a liaison relationship with the GOI.⁷⁶
- Establish a Embassy “Joint Incident Review Board” to review all incidents resulting in death, injury, or property damage, this board should provide the U.S. ambassador with its findings and recommend whether the exercise of force was justified by the circumstances.⁷⁷
- In keeping with the U.S.’ overall COIN effort, the panel recommended the U.S. Embassy “actively seek out the families of those innocent Iraqi civilians killed or seriously injured, or those whose property has been damaged” by PSC personnel. Further, the Embassy should work with the appropriate personnel in GOI to “promptly offer appropriate condolences and compensation.”⁷⁸

CRS Report for Congress: Private Security Contractors in Iraq: Background, Legal Status, and Other Issues

This government document offers a specific focus on the U.S. government’s use of private security contract firms in Iraq. Jennifer K. Elsea, Legislative Attorney for the American Law Division, and Nina M. Serafino, Specialist in International Security Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, published this report to summarize all knowledge on the contracted security personnel operating with the U.S. Department of Defense or Department of State prior to July 2007. More importantly, the CRS Report delineates key implications for U.S. foreign policy. Elsea and Serafino categorize these

implications under four categories: Accountability, Human Rights Concerns, and Perception of State Authority and Commitment.

Accountability. Elsea and Serafino expressed concern over incidents involving the abuse, or perceived abuse, of contractors on Iraqi citizen's neither being properly investigated nor addressed by the U.S. embassy, the U.S. government, or the GOI. Additionally, a coherent legal framework needs to be established guiding security contractors' actions and behavior during the course of their duties.⁷⁹

Human Rights Concerns: Possible Employment of Human Rights Violators and Alleged Mistreatment of Third-Country Private Security Contractors. The private employment of non-American, third-country personnel serving in what the United States considers oppressive regimes undermines the legitimacy of U.S. foreign policy. For example, DOS contracted PSCs in Iraq have employed former Chilean soldiers who served during periods of a repressive military dictatorship. Another example is the employment and use of former South African soldiers who served under apartheid to protect U.S. diplomats.⁸⁰

Within various firms, there were allegations of mistreatment of third-country nationals working as private security contractors. The United Nations Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries recorded complaints from personnel employed from such countries as Peru, Honduras, Fiji, Ecuador, and Chile, regarding "contractual irregularities, poor working conditions, partial or non-payment of salaries, and neglect of basic needs such as access to medical services."⁸¹ While the Working Group has yet to disclose whether these issues involve U.S.-based PSCs, the CRS Report warns "such allegations can damage perceptions of the United States."⁸²

Perception of U.S. Authority and Commitment. The third implication for U.S. policy is the issue of relinquishing the functional control of the use of force on behalf of U.S. interests to a private non-state entity. The CRS Report states, “On a symbolic level, the use of private companies instead of national military forces may be perceived by some observers as signaling a lesser U.S. commitment.”⁸³

Other Sources

During my research, I found a number of sources with indirect linkages to topic and my research questions, which are definitely worth mentioning in this thesis. They will be presented into the following main categories:

- articles regarding the September 16th Blackwater Shooting,
- articles on the private security industry in general,
- PSC and PSC-related websites.
- Other websites of notable significance

The Blackwater September 16th shooting incident articles (chronologically)

September 16th was a catalytic event leading to the scrutiny of the privatized security industry by the U.S. government, political scholars, and the international community. A number of published articles facilitated this scrutiny. Following the incident, CNN.com published an article describing the U.S. Embassy’s reaction to the incident by suspending all diplomatic motorcades for an undetermined period.⁸⁴ Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) from the embassy were unable to visit and engage their host nation counterparts in person during this period. As a result of this incident the security practices executed at the lower-levels., seem to compromise the diplomatic mission’s higher-level goals.

On September 26th, CNN.com reported Secretary of Defense Robert Gates sent an investigative team to Iraq to review Department of Defense contractor procedures. This article also mentions the Iraqi government's disgruntlement over the PSC's immunity to Iraqi law. It also fails to specify which U.S. government agency, between DOS or DOD, contracted the Blackwater contractors in the incident. Most importantly, this article indicates that neither the international community, nor the Iraqi people make any differentiation as to which U.S. government agencies hired these PSCs. PSCs protecting Americans represent the United States of America. If improperly utilized, their actions can be terribly detrimental to the U.S. diplomatic efforts.⁸⁵

The next day, September 27th, *The New York Times* described the alleged details of the shooting incident in an article entitled "Scene of Blackwater Shooting was Chaotic." This article frames the controversial shooting incident with a general description of what had transpired. It also gave a detailed description of the incident. Apparently, the Blackwater team dropped off their protectee at the meeting site when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) exploded "a few hundred yards away." The Blackwater team reported taking small arms fire, but some witnesses claim it may have actually been the gunfire by Iraqi security personnel posted on nearby towers. Regardless, the Blackwater team returned to the US embassy with their protectee but dismounted in the area of Nisour Square to find covered and concealed positions. The details are unclear as to what occurred next. However, the article did state a Blackwater contractor fired into a sedan-type vehicle killing its occupants which were a man, woman, and infant. Afterwards, the contractor fired "a type of grenade or flare" into the sedan thereby engulfing it in flames. The article also mentioned that some sort of "cease-fire"

had been called within the Blackwater team, but one particular individual failed to stop firing his rifle. Consequently, another contractor, presumably the team leader, angrily redressed him and “supposedly pointed a weapon” to get him to cease-fire.⁸⁶

On September 28th, CNN.com printed an article describing the four person investigative team serving as an “outside panel of experts” led by Ambassador Patrick F. Kennedy. This panel spent two weeks, in Iraq, interviewing key personnel from the DOS and DOD regarding security and protection practices and the September 16th shooting. The results culminated in what has been referred to as the “Kennedy Report” described earlier in this chapter.⁸⁷

On October 2, 2007, a short article appeared on Globalsecurity.org announcing that Congress was preparing to hear testimony from Erik Prince, Blackwater CEO. It also announced a special team of investigators from the FBI would be going to Iraq to investigate the September 16th shooting.⁸⁸

To establish a legal framework by which PSC personnel could be held accountable for their actions in war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan, CNN.com described a bill presented by Congress to subject USG-contracted PSC personnel to the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) on October 3, 2007. This would give American courts jurisdiction to prosecute crimes committed in war zones. However, a White House spokesman said, “... the measure would overburden the military, overstretch the FBI, intrude on prosecutorial decisions and extend federal jurisdiction overseas in ways that would be ‘impossible or unwise.’”⁸⁹

On October 4th, CNN.com posted an article entitled “Blackwater most often shoots first, congressional report says.” It stated that an investigation showed that most

of Blackwater's shooting incidents involved them shooting first in a pre-emptive capacity. This was reported as a "negative" statistic. After serving in law-enforcement agencies since 1997 and in high-threat protection for the last six years, it is not unreasonable to exercise deadly force to protect either yourself or others as a pre-emptive measure provided the *proper* circumstances exist and can thus be articulated. A truer metric to determine if any PSC is as "irresponsibly trigger-happy" as this article seems to imply is an evaluation of the circumstances surrounding each use of lethal force incident. This is a much more difficult criterion to assess.⁹⁰

On October 5th, *The New York Times* announced some of the recommendations put forth in the Kennedy Report. Among them was the decision to deploy additional DSS agents to U.S. Embassy Baghdad. This supports the Kennedy Report's recommendation to have at least one DSS agent each of the multiple Blackwater motorcade details throughout Iraq. In practice, this means a DSS agent is sitting in the front right seat of the protectee's designated vehicle while the PSC team occupies the SUVs following behind in the motorcade.⁹¹ This policy is currently in effect at the time of the writing of this thesis. Also, diplomatic personal protection is a primary responsibility for DSS agents – just as personal protection of the President of the United States is to the U.S. Secret Service. However, DSS agents and PSC personnel are now working together during DOS protective operations more extensively than ever before. From a tactical level, this created an evolved high-threat protection "doctrine." The DSS protection tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), taught by personnel with a largely civilian background, are meshing with those TTPs practiced by PSC personnel, who generally come from a predominantly "military" background. Consequently, DSS agents serving

as detail supervisors are selected based on their military and/or law enforcement backgrounds as well.

Reflecting Iraqi anger over the Blackwater shooting incident, Iraqi government spokesman, Ali al-Dabbagh, announced the Iraqi government's desire to have the Blackwater contractors tried for murder in an Iraqi court.⁹² CNN.com reported this in an article on October 8th.

On October 9th, a British media news outlet described Government of Iraq's request to have the Blackwater security firm to pay the families of each of the 17 dead civilians resulting from the controversial September 16, 2007 shooting incident.⁹³ CNN.com, on October 13th, published some comments made by the survivors of the shooting incident. These Iraqi interviewees gave their versions of the incident telephonically to CNN journalists subsequent to their interviews with FBI agents who came to Iraq to investigate the actions of Blackwater personnel. One of the victims described how he was shot while simply driving through the Nisour traffic circle.⁹⁴

BBC reported on October 14th that Blackwater CEO and former Navy SEAL Erik Prince welcomed the FBI investigation. He stated his vehicle had "pock marks" after the shooting incident indicated his Blackwater team had taken fire.⁹⁵

The Boston Globe reported the 19 recommendations put forth in the State Department's investigation for changes in security protocol on October 23rd.⁹⁶

In an interesting turn of events, on November 14, 2007, CNN.com reported Howard Krongrad of the U.S. State Department's Inspector General Office had removed himself from the Blackwater investigation after admitting his brother had been advising the company. "I had not been aware of that, and I want to state on the record right now

that I hereby recuse myself from any matters having to do with Blackwater," Krongard told the committee.⁹⁷

General Articles on the Privatized Military/Security Industry

CNN.com published an article on September 27, 2007 that describes a report by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee regarding the tragic deaths of four Blackwater contractors who died in Fallujah on March 31, 2004. This article details how the four contractors were sent on the protection mission with inadequate support for the mission from the Blackwater corporate headquarters. It also has a quote from former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte who said, "...Blackwater guards had fired their weapons on 56 of the 1,873 escort missions they have conducted in Iraq in 2007, and each such incident is reviewed by management officials to ensure that procedures were followed. I personally was grateful for the presence of my Blackwater security detail, largely comprised of ex-Special Forces and other military, when I served as ambassador to Iraq. Their alert and controlled posture kept me safe -- to get my job done."⁹⁸

On October 4, 2007, CNN.com reported the FBI asked Erik Prince to not discuss the details behind the September 16th shooting as it was still the subject of an FBI investigation. Consequently, Sen. Harry Waxman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee could only ask Prince about other Blackwater related incidents.⁹⁹

On May 8, 2006, *The Nation* published an article written by Jeremy Scahill in May 2006. At this point in time, Americans could associate Blackwater with deaths of the four contractors killed in Fallujah on March 31, 2004. In this article, Scahill explains

the background behind how the four contractors were sent on an improperly planned and inadequately supported mission. In a “precedent-setting” case, the families of these four contractors filed a lawsuit against Blackwater. The significance of this case is it may affect all PSCs operating anywhere in the world. It also brought public scrutiny to Blackwater’s internal procedures and ability to operate in an underdeveloped country with little to no accountability.¹⁰⁰

Esquire published an article entitled in its June 2007 issue. This is a lengthy article by Tom Junod on a man named William E. Clark. Clark, at the time of the article, had served as an independent contractor for Blackwater for a number of years. Junod, in great detail, describes some of Clark’s exploits in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, and El Salvador. It is an interesting second-person account on the type of person attracted to privatized security work.¹⁰¹

The Nation published an article on March 15, 2007, that summarizes the key points put forth in Jeremy Scahill’s book, Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army. It is an opinionated article, but Scahill also provides strong justification for his stance against the governmental use of PSCs. His position is that key members of the Bush administration advocated PSCs as a politically cost-effective alternative to initiate the Iraq invasion.¹⁰²

The Washington Post published an article on December 5, 2006, describing the sheer numbers of contract personnel in Iraq. This article presents the idea the American war effort in Iraq simply could not happen without contracted civilian support.¹⁰³

On April 27, 2008, the official website for *Democracy Now!*, a syndicated radio and television independent talk show, published an article detailing an interview with

Jeremy Scahill. The program's host, Amy Goodman, asked Scahill to provide his perspective on the U.S. State Department's decision to renew the Blackwater contract in Iraq. Scahill stated the U.S. Department of Defense, for the first time since 1968, is charging a private security contractor with crimes and abuses that occurred during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). However, the irony is the contractor is an Iraqi interpreter holding dual citizenship with Canada. Scahill finds it ironic that the first contractor to be officially charged is Iraqi. After all, American Blackwater contractors have been involved in the shooting death of an Iraqi vice presidential bodyguard, a controversial shootout at Nisour square leading to the deaths of 17 Iraqi civilians, and a host of other lesser-known alleged atrocities.¹⁰⁴

On April 8, 2008, the DOS Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, Ambassador Greg Starr, gave a special media briefing regarding the recent decision to renew the Blackwater contract. During the briefing, he stated Blackwater's services have been renewed for the period of only one year and could be terminated before the end of that year if necessary. He stated continuation of Blackwater's contracted use by the State Department depends largely on the outcome of the FBI investigation and will be re-assessed regardless of when it concludes. The transcript of this briefing can be found on the U.S. State Department Bureau of Diplomatic Security's website for "Testimonies, Speeches and Remarks."¹⁰⁵

Websites

An interesting website entitled <http://www.blackwaterfacts.com/> offers a significant amount of information on Blackwater.¹⁰⁶ One article from this site provides five examples of "superior and heroic" contractor performance while supporting US

government contracts overseas. For instance, after a U.S. military motorcade was struck by an IED and immobilized, PSC air assets landed nearby and pulled security for the soldiers as the PSC medics provided quick medical aid and triage. According to the article, the lives of five military personnel were saved as a result of their actions.¹⁰⁷

This website www.privateforces.com was created specifically for those employed in the privatized security and military industry.¹⁰⁸ It is also indicative of how much the world of independent contractor has matured. This page has links to articles on topics directly affecting the industry such as the State Department's decision to renew the Blackwater contract.¹⁰⁹ On April 23, 2008, the site posted an interesting article describing an insurgent propaganda piece entitled *Bloody Contracts*. It is an information operations instrument reflecting the insurgency's willingness to capitalize upon the controversy surrounding PSC past actions and behavior to sway Iraqis and other Arab people. Specifically, it shows "that security contractors are not being targeted just as an extension of targeting US forces but rather as a direct target," says Ben Venzke, the CEO of IntelCenter, which meticulously tracks insurgent and jihadist propaganda."¹¹⁰

There is an organization known as the Private Security Association of Iraq (PSCAI). Its official website, www.psc.ai.org, states PSCAI is "a non-profit organization formed and maintained to discuss and address matters of mutual of interest and concern to the industry conducting operations in Iraq. The PSCAI seeks to work closely with the Iraqi Government and foster a relationship of truth and understanding."¹¹¹ According to the website, PSCAI conducts a meeting every three weeks and is attended by representatives from 40 different PSCs in Iraq, key DOS personnel from the U.S. Embassy, and representatives from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.

A website entitled www.blackwaterwatch.com has an infinite number of various Blackwater articles.¹¹² One article entitled “Two Congresswoman to Rice: No Blackwater Contract” describes how Representatives Ginny Brown-Waite, R-Fla, and Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., urged Secretary of State Rice against renewing Blackwater’s contract in April 2008.¹¹³

The United States Department of State’s link to its Under-Secretary for Management’s homepage, www.state.gov/m/, leads to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security home page and Anti-terrorism Assistance (ATA) home page. The ATA program employs independent contractors to teach law-enforcement and security personnel of developing nations essential tasks such as bomb-disposal, high-threat warrant service, and marksmanship skills. The ATA program utilizes PSCs to teach, rather than conduct a protection operation. My experience indicates an individual independent contractor may easily find himself doing both.¹¹⁴

The Brookings Institution’s site, <http://www.brookings.edu/about/research.aspx>, contains P.W. Singer’s most recent articles and blog entries. More importantly, Brookings has a multitude of scholars on its staff providing in-depth coverage of international current events. According to the website Brookings, itself, is a “private non-profit organization devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions. For more than 90 years, Brookings has analyzed current and emerging issues and produced new ideas that matter - for the nation and the world.”¹¹⁵

Congressional Testimony and Governmental Legislation

Robert Greenwald is a filmmaker who created the film Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers. He offered an interesting perspective during his testimony in May 2007 to the

House Appropriations Committee, Sub-Committee on war profiteering. He opened his remarks by saying “I spent a year researching the experiences of soldiers, truck drivers and families affected by the presence of private military contractors in Iraq. They shared with us their harrowing experiences of how military privatization and war profiteering have affected their lives, and in some cases taken the life of a loved one. It is their personal stories that compel me to testify today. I am not a lawyer or a financial specialist or a government expert, but I can tell you from my extensive first-hand experience with these folks that something is seriously wrong. We are hurting our country and the many patriots who serve in the military. Our taxpayer dollars are being spent, abused, mis-used, and wasted on profiteers. It is a true tragedy, and it is costing the lives of Americans and Iraqis.”¹¹⁶

Jeremy Scahill testified before the Senate Democratic Committee on September 21, 2007. This was a week after the well-publicized shooting incident at Nisour Square on September 17th. Regarding the incident, Scahill said, “is part of a deadly pattern, not just of Blackwater USA's conduct, but of the army of mercenaries that descended on Iraq over the past four years. They acted like cowboys, running Iraqis off the road, firing indiscriminately at vehicles and, in some cases, private forces have appeared on tape seemingly using Iraqis for target practice. They have shown little regard for Iraqi lives and have fueled the violence in that country, not just against the people of Iraq but also against the official soldiers of the United States military in the form of blowback and revenge attacks stemming from contractor misconduct. These private forces have operated in a climate where impunity and immunity have gone hand in hand.”¹¹⁷

Ambassador Richard J. Griffin, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on October 2, 2007. During his testimony, Ambassador Griffin explained the DOS use of PSCs began in the 1980s after the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut and in conjunction with the Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986. It continues today under the second iteration of the Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract, which was created in recognition of “a consistent and sustained need” for PSC services to accomplish the overall DOS diplomacy mission. WPPS represents “a proactive effort by the Department to pre-plan, organize, deploy, and oversee PSS contractors for the protection of U.S. and/or certain foreign government officials.” Griffin went on to offer a financial breakdown of each of the PSCs in Iraq within the total cost of \$519, 938,634.¹¹⁸

Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Gregory B. Starr provided a statement before the House Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations on the topic of “Private Security Firms” on June 13, 2006. During his comments, A/S Starr described briefly the history of the U.S. Embassy Baghdad security program, “The Department of State Diplomatic Mission in Iraq was reestablished in July 2004. Diplomatic Security crafted a comprehensive set of security programs to meet the very high level of threat in this theater of operation. The programs are a combination of physical and technical security upgrades at our facilities, procedural security regulations, and close personal protection operations for off-compound requirements. Staffing for security programs in Iraq includes Diplomatic Security Special Agents, Marine Security Guards, third-country national local guards,

hundreds of U.S. and Coalition troops protecting the International Zone and Regional Embassy Offices, and highly trained contract personal security specialists. The security specialists in this latter category, referred to in the GAO report as Private Security Providers, have been critical to our efforts to create a secure environment for our U.S. mission personnel.”¹¹⁹ He also took the time to recognize the deaths of security personnel that occurred up until June 13, 2006. “This effort has not been without great cost and personal tragedy. We are all aware of the number of U.S military personnel who have lost their lives or those seriously injured in this effort, and we honor their memory. In connection with programs conducted by U.S. agencies under Chief of Mission operations, we have lost 119 civilians, including direct-hire employees and contractors. Diplomatic Security has lost two Special Agents and 23 contract personal security specialists killed in action in Iraq since July 2004. Six other contract personal security specialists have lost their lives in our service in Afghanistan and the Gaza. These men and women and their families have paid the highest price in support of our efforts.”¹²⁰

Erik Prince, the Chairman and CEO for Blackwater, briefly described the U.S. history’s little known history regarding the use of private contractors dating back to the revolutionary war during his October 2, 2007 testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. He mentioned how the use of contractors has evolved in conjunction with the changes in the contemporary operating environment (COE). More importantly, he stated the use of PSCs enables the U.S. military to allocate its resources to fighting to combat rather than security and protection. He said, “The areas of Iraq in which we operate are particularly dangerous and challenging. Blackwater personnel are subject to regular attacks by terrorists and other nefarious forces within Iraq. We are the

targets of the same ruthless enemies, which killed more than 3,800 American military personnel and thousands of innocent Iraqis. Any incident where Americans are attacked serves as a reminder of the hostile environment in which our professionals work to keep American officials and dignitaries safe, including visiting Members of Congress. In doing so, more American service members are available to fight the enemy.”¹²¹

Conclusion

My literature review identified the four most influential authors that have published books and policy papers on the United States’ governmental use of contracted private security firms. Each contributed to the analysis surrounding the use of PSCs. P.W. Singer provided an extensive history on the evolution of the privatized military industry from ancient history up to the U.S. involvement in Iraq. His central question asks whether it is appropriate for private civilian contractors to execute traditional government functions to begin with. He also drew an interesting parallel between some professional athletes’ addiction to the use of performance enhancing drugs and the U.S. government’s heavy reliance upon PSCs to achieve its foreign policy goals. Deborah D. Avant’s analysis centered on the state’s functional control over the exercise of violence. She sees PSCs as non-state actors with the potential of usurping this control opening up the possibility for negative consequences. Jeremy Scahill focused specifically on Blackwater and the links between this particular PSC’s successes to the protection of Ambassador L. Paul Bremer as the director of the Iraqi Coalition Provision Authority. Robert Young Pelton took the time to travel to Iraq and actually live with the members of a high-threat protection detail for over a month. His book offers a first-hand account of the challenges faced by security personnel throughout the course of their duties.

Besides the most influential authors, I also described two relevant documents: The Kennedy Report and the CRS Report for Congress on Private Security Contractors. The Kennedy Report summarized the findings and recommendations of a panel of outside experts, composed of career DOS and DOD senior personnel, who conducted a two-week investigation in the aftermath of the Blackwater shooting incident on September 16, 2007. The CRS Report for Congress delineated key implications for U.S. foreign policy stemming from the DOS use of PSCs in Iraq. It categorized these implications in terms of accountability, human rights concerns, and the perception of U.S. authority and commitment to the nation of Iraq.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology will contain my efforts to contribute to this existing body of literature by soliciting comments from experienced DSS special agents that have served in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other high-threat locations involving the extensive and routine use of PSCs.

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¹²¹ U.S. Congress. House. *Transcript of Statement by Erik D. Prince, Chairman and CEO of Blackwater*, 110th Congress, October 2, 2007, <http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20071003153621.pdf> [accessed May 1, 2008].

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide research as a means to shape future relationships between the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and all private security companies (PSCs).

Chapter 3 Organization

In the Chapter 2, I presented the existing body of literature that exists on privatized security. This chapter will describe how I supplemented my literature review by personally interviewing and including the perspectives of numerous Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) agents, Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), and PSC detail members. The secondary research questions first presented in Chapter 1 are:

1. How effectively do PSCs perform their protection function for DOS?
2. What alternatives exist besides using PSCs?
3. How can DOS use PSCs more effectively?

My research methodology included the use of a number of anonymous survey comments I solicited by email from individuals directly involved in the DOS use of PSCs. The first group is composed of twelve DSS agents. Each agent served at a high threat post in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Israel in a TDY or permanent-status capacity. Their duties, while at these posts, involved close interface with PSC personnel such as direct supervision or contract management. The second group consists of five FSOs that served at one of the three high-threat embassies using PSCs. The third group consists of three

independent contractors previously or currently employed by one of the three PSCs under the WPPS contract. No systematic or empirical methods were taken in selecting them as contributors to this thesis. Their anonymous comments in no way represent the policies or positions of the U.S. Department of State, the Diplomatic Security Service, or any of the Private Security Companies under the WPPS contract. All of those interviewed received the same set of questions. Figure 1 is blank version of what each surveyed contributor received and completed. Only the title changed for each group. Appendices A, B, and C contains DS Agent, FSO, and PSC Survey Forms respectively.

DS Agent/FSO/PSC Survey Form

(Note: Your responses will be assimilated with others. Your identity need not, and, therefore, will not be revealed in this study.)

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, DynCorp, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

Why or why not? Please explain.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?
3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?
4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?
5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

Thank you.

Figure 1. DSS Agent/FSO/PSC Survey Form

All personal interviewees have been identified using their name and position within the DSS leadership hierarchy. I reserved the privilege of anonymity for only those completing the emailed surveys. Without offering this assurance, I would not have

received an adequate number of responses for a worthwhile analysis. In fact, I am fortunate to have received the responses that I did. Of all the surveys, I sent out, eighteen of them went unanswered. In Chapter IV, I will support the analysis of each research question with contributions from *DSS agents #1 to #11*, *FSO's #1 to #5*, and *Security Contractors #1 to #3*.

The Research Questions

How Effectively Do PSCs Perform Their Protection Function?

I synthesized an assessment of PSCs based on the information I found in the literature, in interviews, and in surveys. The literature, described in Chapter 2, represents an academic perspective from the prominent social and political minds on this topic. I balanced this academic perspective with that of high-level DSS leadership through personal interviews done in Washington, D.C. To further round out a practical and realistic perspective, I added the input of the lower-level personnel *directly* involved with the use of PSCs. I solicited, by email, the anonymous comments of DSS agents, Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and PSC personnel.

In order to provide a cogent analysis, I will describe an overall assessment of the DOS use of PSCs with the same terminology used to describe the operational levels of war in the C202 block of the Strategic Studies Course of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. In the same way military theorists describe the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, I will also describe, in Chapter 4, an assessment of the DOS use of PSCs within the framework of these three levels as they apply to diplomatic security.

The Three Levels of Assessment for Diplomatic Security		
<u>Levels</u>	<u>Purpose / Definition</u>	<u>Method</u>
Strategic-level of Diplomatic Security	Facilitates the national instrument of diplomacy, embodied by the U.S. Department of State, to contribute to the overall goal of accomplishing national objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Interview with the Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security ✓ Political and Social Scientists / Authors
Operational –level of Diplomatic Security	The link between the over-arching strategic diplomatic security goals and the goals at the lower tactical levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The WPPS Contract ➤ Interview with Special Agent Paul Isaac ➤ Interview with Special Agent Mike Zupan
Tactical-level of Diplomatic Security	The supervision, employment, and use of PSC details at the local embassy level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with Former RSOs from Baghdad and Kabul ▪ Anonymous DSS agents, FSOs, and PSC detail members

Figure 2. Methodology of PSC Assessment

It is necessary for me to explain how I am defining these three levels of diplomatic security. The *Strategic* level facilitates the national instrument of diplomacy, embodied by the U.S. Department of State, to contribute to the overall goal of accomplishing national objectives. As a sub-entity to DOS, DSS has never before had the scrutiny on its support of strategic diplomatic goals as it has had since September 2007. My analysis will describe how the Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security perceives the strategic implications surrounding the continued use of PSCs.

The *Operational* level of diplomatic security is the link between the over-arching strategic diplomatic security goals and those at the lower tactical level. In Chapter 4, my operational-level focus will center on the administration of Worldwide Personal Protection Service (WPPS) contract by Special Agent Paul Isaac, the chief of the DSS Overseas Protection Operations (OPO) office. By the nature of his job, he must maintain a “theater-level” perspective as the contract covers three countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel.

The *Tactical* level of diplomatic security is the supervision, employment, and use of PSC details at the local level. I interviewed former RSOs from Baghdad, Kabul, and Tel Aviv to obtain this perspective. The RSO of any U.S. embassy administers all security and protection matters for the mission personnel assigned to that post. On the diplomatic side, they have the added liaison responsibility with host nation police and security personnel. At high-threat locations requiring enhanced personal protection, the PSC program becomes a vital asset to successful support the overall ability to travel and engage host-nation officials.

What Alternatives To PSCs Exist?

This secondary research question is necessary to illustrate why there is such an extensive reliance upon PSCs by the State Department. Clearly, the perceived misbehavior and alleged atrocities of U.S. government-contracted PSCs in Iraq has generated outcries, domestic and international, against any further utilization of private security services. However, three other subordinate questions naturally follow:

(1) Should the Department of Defense assume the role of protecting Department of State diplomats in the aftermath of a highly anticipated military withdrawal?

(2) Can the State Department's pool of direct-hire Diplomatic Security Service special agents be expanded and specially trained to assume the role of PSCs?

(3) Can we use host-nation personnel to fulfill the role of PSCs to save money and have Iraqis enforcing their own laws?

My analysis, based on the literary research combined with personal interviews and surveys, will explore the answers to each of these subordinate questions.

How Can DOS Use PSCs More Effectively?

This question implies that no alternative solutions to PSCs exist and, at least in the short term, the U.S. State Department has no choice but to continue its extensive use of private security contracting companies as delineated in the Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract. This is underscored by the national strategy espoused in the State Department's Strategic Planning document in which the need to maintain and develop diplomatic representation with underdeveloped nations is a cornerstone of U.S foreign policy. I included this question in each of my personal interviews with high-level DSS leadership and in the emailed surveys described earlier in this chapter. I would also argue it is the most important of the three secondary research questions because it creates the framework for a series of recommendations I will present in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the methodology behind how I obtained the answers to my primary and secondary research questions. In short, I answered each of them with a synthesis of three sources of input beginning with

academic theory put forth by political and social scientists who authored literary sources pertaining to my research. I added to this, with my own efforts, in obtaining the realistic and practical perspectives from senior DSS personnel as complemented with several anonymous comments from tactical-level DSS agents, FSOs, and PSC personnel. Chapter 4 presents this synthesis by summarizing the key points of my personal interviews and their linkages to the key points of my literature review.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide research as a means to shape future relationships between the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and all private security companies (PSCs).

Chapter 4 Organization

This chapter will present my analysis of each of the research questions beginning with the primary question. I will describe each answer to these questions in terms of the comments provided by key Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) leadership during formal interviews.

The research questions are as follows:

Primary Question: Should the U.S. Department of State (DOS) continue to use Private Security Contractors (PSCs) to protect U.S. diplomats?

1st Secondary Question: How Effectively Do PSCs Perform Their Protection Duties?

2nd Secondary Question: What alternatives To PSCs Exist?

3rd Secondary Question: How Can DOS Use PSCs More Effectively?

My analysis of each research question will contain references from the literature review, personal interviews with DSS leadership, and comments in the email survey. As I mentioned in Chapter III, I will identify DSS leaders by name. They agreed to the personal interviews with me, and it was necessary to identify their position title to lend

credibility to their perspective. Those who contributed by emailed survey, however, will remain anonymous and will only be referred to as *DSS Agent #1 to 14*, *FSO #1 to 4*, or *Security Contractor #1 to 3*.

Primary Research Question: “Should The U.S. State Department Continue To Use Private Security Contractors To Provide Protection To U.S. Diplomats?”

The U.S. government (USG) has intertwined its military, diplomatic, and political instruments of power to meet the challenges of the contemporary operating environment (COE). To attain the broad overarching goals of U.S. diplomacy American Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), like never before, will be exposed to increased danger. In the U.S. Foreign Service of tomorrow, they may easily find themselves speeding down a Mosul street in the back seat of an armored Chevrolet Suburban wearing Kevlar body armor, avoiding roadside bombs and small-arms fire, en-route to a diplomatic engagement. As a consequence of such evolving diplomatic measures, Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) leadership has recognized that its 1,450 DSS agents had to be augmented quickly. DSS is composed of special agents serving as security officers at all embassies throughout the world. With only 1,450 agents, it is impossible to maintain the necessary security posture at all U.S. diplomatic facilities worldwide and still provide the required U.S. Foreign Service presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, DOS turned to the use of PSCs to sustain the extraordinary requirements associated with providing diplomatic representation in such high-threat areas.

To explore why this contractual relationship must or must not continue, we must answer the secondary research questions. First, we must obtain a general assessment as to the operational effectiveness of PSCs to date. We must explore why DOS and DSS

have turned to the use of PSCs as opposed to other alternatives. Then, we will determine how best to manage the use of PSCs in the future to ensure that this practice is consistent with the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. State Department.

Secondary Research Questions

1. How Effectively Do PSCs Perform Their Protection Function?

Mirroring the levels of war as described in the U.S. Army Field Manual 3-0 *Operations*, a general assessment of PSCs may be presented on three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. The strategic assessment describes how the USG, at the national level, decided to use PSCs to assist in accomplishing foreign policy goals. The U.S. State Department's Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Greg Starr offered his perspective at this level. To describe the use of PSCs at the operational level, I spoke with DSS Special Agent Paul Isaac, the director of the DSS International Programs Overseas Protection Office (OPO) and DSS Special Agent Greg Hays, the Director of the Office of Mobile Security Deployments (MSD). OPO oversees the execution of the Worldwide Personal Protection Services (WPPS) contract between DSS and three main PSCs. MSD is a small office that provides teams of specially-trained DSS agents to conduct short-term high-threat protection missions. In the case of Iraq, MSD agents have been supervising PSC protection details since September 2007. To accurately assess the use of PSCs at the tactical level, I interviewed the ranking DSS agents, given the title of Regional Security Officer (RSO), at the U.S. embassies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Comments from the Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security

According to Assistant Secretary (A/S) Starr, it is imperative that a functional security program be in place to facilitate the State Department's nation-building role in such war zones as Iraq. He gave me a short history of how DOS actually inherited the contractual use of PSCs with the dissolution of the DOD-run Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Since Blackwater had a pre-established contract to protect former Director of the CPA, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, DOS let them continue their services as the CPA transitioned to a sovereign Government of Iraq (GOI). DOS negotiated with DOD to assist DSS in providing facility security and personal protection at U.S. Embassy Baghdad, the Regional Embassy Offices (REOs), Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and USAID facilities and personnel. Starr said DOD had no choice to decline because "they wanted war-fighters for war-fighting."¹ He stated that in late 2003 and early 2004, there was this "heady optimism" that Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was going to be short-lived because "we won, we were going to change things and create a new democratic government."² However, as the anti-coalition insurgencies set-in and took on momentum in mid- to late-2004, there was a new realization. Starr explained that "We didn't build fast enough and the insurgency grew. Once we broke it, we own it. We have the moral, ethical, and political obligation to fix it. We just can't let it turn into a disaster."³ In short, A/S Starr believes that it is the State Department's responsibility to be handling as much of the nation-building role as it can accommodate. Implied in this is his notion that "there has to be a functional security program."⁴ Hence, we currently have the DOS extensive use of PSCs.

I relate A/S Starr's comments to a point made by author P.W. Singer, whose works I described in this thesis' literature review. Singer, in his policy paper entitled "*Can't Win With 'Em, Can't Go To War Without 'Em: Private Military Contractors and Counterinsurgency,*" poses a fundamental question of "whether it made sense to have civilians in this role in the first place."⁵ A/S Starr takes Singer's basic question further by asking a series of other questions: "Should we even be conducting diplomacy and reconstruction in a war zone?" If so, then "Do we want the 'face' of the U.S. nation-building effort to be done by a uniformed DOD person?" If not, then it needs to eventually transfer to the State Department and the wealth of experience held by the personnel in the U.S. Foreign Service. Starr insists that U.S. State Department efforts need to be complemented with an effective security element.

The WPPS Contract

At the operational level, Special Agent Paul Isaac, of the Diplomatic Security Service's Overseas Protection Office (OPO), oversees the execution of the WPPS contract which delineates all services provided to DSS by three main PSCs: Blackwater, DynCorp, and Triple Canopy. In our interview, Isaac explained that the terms dictated by DSS are based on guidance he receives from DSS leadership. OPO only serves as an enforcement mechanism for those items delineated in the contract. More importantly, Isaac described the list of considerations that take place prior to creation of any PSC contract. First, when a particular need for protection is identified by an embassy, DSS headquarters considers input from that particular post in deciding how it will be staffed. The general preference is that it be handled with resources from the post's RSO office such as with a junior DSS special agent serving as an assistant regional security officer

(ARSO) and any security or police personnel supplied by the host nation. The next option is to provide DSS agents taken from criminal investigative field offices within the domestic United States. These “field agents” serve in a TDY status for as long as the need exists. In special circumstances, MSD agents with a more tactical skill set and equipment may deploy. The last and final option, when all others have been exhausted, is to create an actual contract for long term PSC services.⁶ Simply put, the option of using PSCs is only exercised as a last resort when the dedication of internal resources is deemed infeasible.

According to Special Agent Isaac, the WPPS represents a “Tier One” program meaning it addresses the first-level contracts between DSS and the three main PSCs. Geographically, it covers three countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel. Isaac explained the contract may be defined in two parts. There is the Base Order portion which dictates broad and overarching standards and requirements of what each company must provide in terms of personnel, services, and logistical support. It also covers standards of conduct and minimum skill levels of each independent contractor (IC). The other portion is the Task Order. Task orders typically represent a geographic region. In the case of Iraq, there are four separate Task Orders covering Northern Iraq, Baghdad, Al-Hillah, and Southern Iraq. Afghanistan and Israel, because they are smaller in scope, each have one Task Order. For a total of \$550 million each year, the WPPS contract calls for approximately 1650-1700 personnel to be provided by PSCs collectively. The four Iraq Task Orders require about 1450 personnel leaving 200-250 personnel in Afghanistan and Israel.⁷

WPPS and Afghanistan

Former Deputy Regional Security Officer (DRSO) at the U.S. Embassy Kabul, Mike Zupan, stated that PSCs were heavily involved in the early stages of providing personal protection for President Hamid Karzai. Over time, this eventually evolved into turning this function over to Afghan bodyguards so that the protective detail could have an “Afghan-face.” This was possible because contracted former military and police personnel had been performing the equivalent to a Military Transition Team function for the Karzai Protective Detail (KPD). According to Zupan, the State Department provided experienced training, personnel, specializing in firearms, explosives detection, K-9 handling and other similar skill sets under the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program. Under ATA, contracted personnel provide training and instruction only. This is an independent contract from WPPS which dictates the terms of providing active protection.⁸

WPPS and Bosnia

Although the contracted presence of PSC personnel at the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia, ended two weeks prior to our interview, its history adds some relevance to this thesis. U.S. Embassy Sarajevo began its portion of the WPPS contract in 1994 with the opening of U.S Embassy Sarajevo. At that time, the RSO section had insufficient personnel allocated by DSS, which at that pre-9/11 time was much smaller, to provide protective services. Therefore, DSS contracted this function out. As time passed, post received the necessary personnel and resources to fulfill this function. When the contract ended in April 2008, there were 15 PSC detail members devoted to only two designated protectees. In S/A Paul Isaac’s mind, Bosnia’s example offers a general

template on how we would like current WPPS-covered posts to evolve and eventually divorce themselves from the contractual coverage. However, the case of Israel is an exception to this template.

WPPS and Israel

Special Agent Zupan explained that the use of PSCs in Israel is based on a uniquely sensitive international situation. The Palestinian Authority (PA) has made its position clear on allowing armed Israeli security bodyguards in close proximity to its leadership in Ramallah. Similarly, there is no way the Israeli government will allow armed PA security personnel anywhere outside of the West Bank or Gaza Strip. It is therefore necessary that the United States provide for the personal security of its diplomats travelling throughout the area. As this is considered a long-term security mission, the WPPS contract covers the use of PSCs operationally assigned to the RSO offices at U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv and the U.S. Consulate Jerusalem.⁹

The Guys on the Ground

To obtain this perspective of the DOS use of PSCs, I spoke with TDY and permanent party personnel from the RSO offices in the U.S. embassies in Iraq and Afghanistan. I interviewed Special Agent Bill Miller who had the enormous responsibility of being the first to manage the security program at U.S. Embassy Baghdad. Within DSS, Miller is referred to as the one who “unlocked the gate” as the very first RSO Baghdad. In essence, he created the template by which all subsequent RSOs have abided by. Special Agent Ed Brennan offered a unique perspective because he served as RSO Kabul between July 2006 and September 2007. He currently manages

the high-threat protection training program at the DSS Diplomatic Security Training Center (DSTC) and is able to inculcate his RSO experience into the tactical training given to all DSS agents.

Miller and Brennan, though managing the security programs in two different embassies covered by the WPPS contract, both felt that appreciating a fundamental difference in mentality between DSS agents and PSC contractors is a huge consideration. For example, Brennan explained that the typical PSC detail member working for any PSC was usually a successful Soldier or Marine. A U.S. Army Vietnam War veteran himself, he is no stranger to their background and the fundamental discipline that is absolutely necessary at the individual level for a military unit to function cohesively and effectively. However, he also said that outside of the military, this discipline leads to “a tendency to be linear-thinking” which is not necessarily what is needed in doing para-military high-threat protection duties.¹⁰ If left unchecked, this fundamental difference in mentality can be problematic when applied to DSS-style protection operations where doctrine does not dictate that you “assault through an ambush,” but rather get the protectee out of danger very quickly.¹¹ Brennan stated each of the PSC detail members received a 170-hour training and indoctrination program upon arrival at post before they are placed on operational status. However, in the case of those PSC detail members that have already spent a career in the military, he said, “no matter what you do, you’ll never compensate for 20 years of military experience.”¹² S/A Miller, a former U.S. Marine Force Recon officer, felt this is a fundamental difference in doctrine. He found that former U.S. Navy SEALs working for PSCs during his time in Iraq, had an engrained mindset to “fight and destroy the enemy” during an ambush rather than “get off the X” as is taught to new DSS

special agents in the Basic Special Agent Course (BSAC). He said, “Our [DSS] mission is to protect, not to stand and fight.”¹³

Special Agent Bill Miller, who served as RSO Baghdad beginning in late 2003 to late 2004, also addressed two other points that bear mentioning. He felt PSCs, in general, did a “phenomenal job” while he was there. Despite being lambasted in the media for mistakes and poor decisions, his assessment at the tactical level is PSCs were the only entities willing and able to perform this new function. He stated no other organization had the “surge” capacity to perform the high-threat security function necessary to maintain a DOS civilian presence in Iraq. He told me, “I applaud them. They protected us when no one, to include the military, would.”¹⁴ Miller indicated that during this phase of the war, the military, under General Ricardo Sanchez, was desperately trying to withdraw and leave while DOS was seeking the security infrastructure that would allow them to stay and carry out their diplomatic function. Therefore, there was an underlying sense of conflict between DOS and DOD based on contrasting strategic purposes.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I referred to Jeremy Scahill’s description of Ambassador Bremer’s controversial CPA Order 17. This order granted PSC details immunity from Iraqi law as long as they were acting in accordance with contractual terms delineated in the WPPS contract. Miller told me that this law was established only to provide them the same level of diplomatic immunity given to DSS agents representing the U.S. embassy.¹⁵

2. What Alternatives To PSCs Exist?

My research indicated three additional alternatives to PSCs were also considered. In the first option, DOS considered using its own resources, but there simply are not

enough special agents within DSS to fill this role. The second option was to use DOD personnel to protect U.S. diplomats, but DOD denied DOS' formal request. The third and final option was to either employ or contract the use of host nation security or police personnel as is done in other nations. In the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, we are a long way from even considering this option.

The DSS Option: "Why Don't We Just Hire More DSS Agents?"

A/S Starr told me Congresswoman Janet Schakowsky (D-IL) insisted the role of PSCs should be "federalized," or absorbed by DSS, in the wake of the September 16th Blackwater shooting. He explained to me that this simply is not realistic. It would require a DSS, comprised of 1,450 people, to undergo a recruiting surge to 3,000 new agents in three years to assume the role and function of PSC personnel. The DSS human resources hiring infrastructure and training program can barely accommodate the hiring of 200 additional DSS agents per year.¹⁶ Personally, I was hired in the post-9/11 hiring surge, which affected all U.S. government law enforcement agencies and is an indicator to the problems associated with an over-strained indoctrination process. Secondly, A/S Starr explained the entire U.S. Department of State is composed of less than 10,000 personnel. The potential hiring of 3,000 more DSS agents would make DSS the largest sub-entity within DOS and potentially affect its organizational culture and identity. Furthermore, he pointed out that if, and when we draw down from Iraq, DSS agents will represent a surplus of personnel that cannot be simply released from government service.¹⁷

FSO #4 supported A/S Starr's point by saying, "DSS should increase its resources to manage PSCs, not replace them. The PSC has a specialty that serves diplomats

overseas very well and we must not make a hasty decision to abandon that specialty in an effort to appear responsive to the concerns expressed over a single incident.”

Similarly, *Security Contractor #1* predicted that, “The need for this type of high-threat security work will not last...at least not at this magnitude. You cannot hire and train over a thousand DSS agents and then kick them loose once the need is no longer there.”¹⁸

As a DSS agent, I was pleased to see Singer acknowledge that DOS-internal security capabilities exist. Rather than expanding DSS to accommodate the Iraq mission, DOS leadership decided to create a \$1 billion contract to outsource the long-term high-threat protection functions within Iraq and other locations. This contract was with a “consortium of companies led by Blackwater” and proved the decision to privatize the function of diplomatic security was not “due to a lack of money.”¹⁹ In an interview with Robert Young Pelton, Singer further articulated this point: “It’s not about cost savings; it’s about political cost savings. When things go wrong, you simply blame the company.”²⁰

The DOD Option: “Shouldn’t The Military Protect U.S. Diplomats?”

Special Agent Miller and A/S Starr explained that this option was denied fairly early in the process of standing up U.S. Embassy Baghdad. In A/S Starr’s terms, they wanted the “war-fighters” to do the “war-fighting.”²¹ He did, however, make a point to tell me, “If DOD was willing to fill this role, we [DSS] could work with DOD to properly make this happen. I’d let them do it with our input. If not, as is the case, then we got to the current situation.”²² S/A Miller explained that, under the leadership of General Ricardo Sanchez, the military elements in Iraq during his tour would not assist in

protecting U.S. diplomatic personnel on several occasions.²³ Consequently, he saw the Blackwater operation grow and evolve to fill this immense security need when the main nation-building role transitioned from the DOD to DOS. However, he did caveat his comments by saying this was the first time the U.S. military had to deal so closely with Foreign Service personnel on so many levels so quickly after kinetic combat operations.²⁴ Under such difficult circumstances, hindsight is always 20/20.

Special Agent Mark Hunter, who served as RSO Baghdad from summer 2005 to summer 2006, stated, at the tactical level, the U.S. military worked with him quite frequently to ensure there were no gaps in security. He said, even though DOD refused to formally provide close personal protection to U.S. diplomats, U.S. Army field artillery units provided perimeter and facility security to the embassy and greatly enhanced his security measures. Additionally, while diplomatic motorcade movements may not have been accompanied by military vehicles, these supporting DOD elements routinely designated a stand-by quick reaction force (QRF) element in case of emergency for many protective details.²⁵

Most U.S. embassies abroad have a contingent of Marine Security Guards (MSGs) providing facility protection. Specifically, they control the access to the chancery building, which is the main structure of any U.S. diplomatic compound. The management of all diplomatic activities and embassy functions primarily occurs within a U.S. embassy's chancery. Hand-selected based on their previous performance from their previous units elsewhere in the U.S. Marine Corps, these young non-commissioned officers spend several challenging weeks at the MSG School in Quantico Marine Base, Virginia. They receive specialized training in firearms, close-quarter battle, hand-to-hand

combatives, and cultural awareness to prepare them for their role as “uniformed diplomats.” Therefore, the option of using them to fulfill the current role of PSCs for U.S. diplomats in high-threat locations is often considered. S/A Zupan explained a formal memorandum of agreement (MOA) between DOS and the U.S. Marine Corps has already been signed directing that RSOs use MSGs for chancery protection only. “They are not to leave or operate outside Chancery compounds. They may, in an emergency, conduct operations at the COM [Chief of Mission, i.e. the Ambassador] residence, if the residence is not co-located with the Chancery. The MSG program does not have enough Marines now, so there is no chance they would agree to expand to take on a very different role.”²⁶

The Host-Nation Option: “Can We Use Iraqi Bodyguards To Save Money?”

Special Agent Paul Isaac brought up a third option of *eventually* having host-nation security or police personnel protect American diplomats as a political and cost saving measure. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, for example, has a detail led and supervised by an ARSO, but is composed of a mixture of Islamabad police officers and embassy drivers. U.S. embassies in several South American countries have been using local police officers to protect American personnel for decades. The political benefit is that it allows the sovereign government to perform its host nation responsibilities of protecting international diplomatic representatives to that country. It also would provide a measure of relief from the unrelenting public relations and media pressure the U.S. State Department has endured since September 16th. Also, the WPPS contract is extremely expensive. Economically, the savings associated with this option would be substantial. Neither the embassy’s local accounts nor the U.S. State Department’s

funding accounts in Washington, D.C. would have to fund this option.²⁷ Personally, I liken Isaac's point to a concept introduced by political scientist Deborah D. Avant in Chapter 2. Avant's analysis focused on the retention of the authority to exercise violence by any sovereign government.²⁸ The clearest advantage with this option is that it would naturally facilitate the restoration of this authority to the host nation government. For now, however, it is understood that developing governments such as Iraq and Afghanistan are a long way from being entrusted with the safety and security of any foreign diplomat.

3. How Can DOS Use PSCs More Effectively?

*"It is my opinion that the average DS agent is not considered to be qualified to work here by the contractors that they are in charge of. DS has reinforced this perception. I have been at meetings where the head of the High Threat Office stated that, 'You (Blackwater) are the experts. You are the best in the world. We are here to learn from you.'"*²⁹ - DSS Agent #4, former ARSO, U.S. Mission to Iraq

The above quote illustrates what I assess to be the greatest problem regarding DSS past use of PSCs. However, I am happy to report this is being rectified. This subject was a common thread in each formal interview and in practically every anonymous email survey.

Special Agents Brennan and Miller both believed a strong leadership presence from the RSO office was the key. Brennan stated "DSS agents are not linear-thinkers, but they can be if necessary."³⁰ Currently, in Iraq, a DSS agent assigned to the embassy as an ARSO personally supervises each PSC protective detail. Miller likened the relationship between ARSO and each PSC team to that of a young military officer and a

platoon of well-seasoned soldiers.³¹ The PSC personnel may collectively have more experience and training, but ultimately, the ARSO is responsible for their safety, success, and failure. Additionally, both Brennan and Miller seemed to agree that aggressiveness, at times, was absolutely necessary. However, it was up to the assigned supervisory ARSO to find the balance between exercising appropriate force and still maintaining good relationships with the host nation populous. Otherwise, the consequences could be disastrous. *FSO #1* also described this delicate balance when he stated, “I have served in a number of high-threat locations, both at Embassies and in PRTs, and there have been times when traveling with a lower profile would have seemed much safer. Overly-defensive security posture in some cases not only prevents me from executing my duties – it creates a perception among the local population of an Embassy under siege, and gives credibility to insurgents, terrorists, etc., who take credit for the heightened force protection.”³²

Security Contractor #2, as a PSC independent contractor, also referenced the importance of strong RSO leadership. He suggested more scrutiny be applied in determining which DSS agents are placed in charge of PSC details. He strongly advised against using supervisors who may be less tactically-minded who may “...end up supervising a bunch of ‘alpha’ males that have their own idea of what PSD [Protective Service Detail] is and make up their own SOP’s without following what DSS has approved.”³³ Without going into further detail, he implied that he has seen the consequences of a weak ARSO that had lost the control, and therefore, the respect of his PSC detail.

The importance of training and selecting qualified ARSO supervisors from the 1,450 person pool of DSS agents is not lost on *DSS Agent #4* either. He wrote, “We are going to put ourselves out of business because ‘we’ are not qualified to run our PSD operations in high threat environments. It is funny to have PSC program managers demand to be able to review the qualifications of agents assigned to ‘its’ PSD operations.”³⁴ *DSS Agent #4* went further to say that, in some cases, problems with PSC management is due to the fault of DSS. Subsequent to completing the email survey, *DSS Agent #4* stated to me in a phone conversation that when he was in Iraq, the senior DSS agent responsible for managing all PSC issues seemed unwilling to take proper control of the program. On several occasions, this senior DSS agent failed to immediately address the natural tendency of PSCs to seek more latitude with which to execute their duties. *DSS Agent #4* felt the failure in this key position fostered a sense of unaccountability and ultimately led to the events at Nisour Square on September 16, 2007.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present a synthesized analysis of the literature on the use of PSCs combined with my personal interviews and anonymous surveys with DSS personnel from the strategic to the tactical ends of the operational spectrum. Each research question provided a scope and direction for the analysis, and these will collectively provide a final conclusion and recommendations regarding whether or not the Department of State should continue the contractual use of PSCs.

Based on the analysis of the research, we found the U.S. State Department has little choice but to continue to use PSCs to protect U.S. diplomats into the near future. Assessments of their effectiveness from strategic down to the tactical levels indicated that

they are suitable short-term solution to providing the necessary level of high-threat security and protection. At this time, there are no realistic alternatives to PSCs. The U.S. Department of Defense will not allocate its personnel to protecting U.S. diplomats because it is already well-engaged in conflicts. The other option of expanding the Diplomatic Security Service would take several years and was therefore, not considered. A final alternative of using host-nation police and security personnel to protect U.S. embassy personnel is far from feasible because there is no way to guarantee loyalty and security. Finally, in consideration of how DOS should manage the use of PSCs into the future, the analysis proves that DSS agents from the Diplomatic Security Service must exercise the proper supervision and oversight over PSC protective details. This is necessary to ensure that tactical-level goals remain in alignment with strategic-level goals. Chapter V will further describe these conclusions derived in greater detail.

¹ Gregory B. Starr, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ P.W. Singer, *Can't Win With 'Em. Can't Go To War Without 'Em: Private Military Contractors and Counterinsurgency*, Foreign Policy at Brookings. Policy Paper Number 4, September 2007.

⁶ Paul Isaac, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mike Zupan, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ed Brennan, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 29, 2008.

- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Bill Miller, interview by author, Arlington, VA, April 29, 2008.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Gregory B. Starr, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Security Contractor #1 Survey Form
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Robert Young Pelton, *Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in the War on Terror*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007) p. 107.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Bill Miller, interview by author, Arlington, VA, April 29, 2008.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Mark Hunter, Dunn Loring, VA, April, 29, 2008.
- ²⁶ Mike Zupan, e-mail message to author, May 5, 2008.
- ²⁷ Paul Isaac, interview by author, April 30, 2008.
- ²⁸ Deborah D. Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2005). p. 3.
- ²⁹ DSS Agent #4 Survey Form
- ³⁰ Ed Brennan, interview by author, April 29, 2008.
- ³¹ Bill Miller, interview by author, April 29, 2008.
- ³² Foreign Service Officer #1 Survey Form
- ³³ Security Contractor #1 Survey Form

³⁴ DSS Agent #4 Survey Form

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to provide research as a means to shape future relationships between the U.S. Department of State (DOS) and all private security companies (PSCs).

Chapter 5 Organization

This chapter is divided into two main sections: Conclusions and Recommendations. The first section contains the conclusions to the primary and secondary research questions. The second section offers some recommendations for further study as the DOS use of PSCs continues to stir controversy and scrutiny.

The Conclusions of the Secondary Research Questions

1st Secondary Research Question:

How Effectively Do PSCs Perform Their Protection Function For DOS?

Conclusion #1: *The Goals At The Tactical Level Must Be Aligned With Those At The Strategic Level.*

There is very little argument as to whether or not PSCs are able to do the specific task of providing effective personal protection. Former RSO Baghdad Mark Hunter said, “Without them [PSCs], the U.S. embassy in Iraq simply would not be possible.”¹ The analysis indicates there are differing goals at the tactical level versus the overall strategic level goals of the U.S. Department of State. *DSS Agent #12* stated, “Too often, PSC contractors see themselves as separate to the diplomatic process, instead thinking of themselves as merely hired ‘gunslingers,’ and this is a very dangerous misperception to

carry where diplomacy is concerned.”² *DSS agent#7* explained a recent policy that defines a successful protective motorcade movement not in terms of whether or not the protectee or members of the PSC detail returned to the embassy safely – but whether or not the members of the motorcade maintained good relationships with the Iraqi populous during the course of the movement.³ This appears to be an effort to re-align tactical and strategic goals. Another DSS agent that just returned from Baghdad noticed the U.S. embassy security detail seems to be actively reducing its “footprint.” During the conversation, he provided an example of a routine diplomatic engagement to one of the host nation ministry buildings. In the past, U.S. security details would impose their will by forcing all other security entities on the same floor of the building onto a different floor; thereby implying the security of the U.S. diplomat took precedence of all others. Now, U.S. details are instructed to make efforts to diplomatically co-exist and to stop forcing other security personnel off the same floor..

Furthermore, the economic savings of using PSCs may not compensate for the political costs. In light of the intense media scrutiny of post-September 16th PSC use, we know now PSCs are no longer an escape from political and international blame. The indigenous populations of those countries covered by the WPPS contract now perceive PSC personnel as an extension of the U.S. diplomacy and presence. Therefore, when PSC actions run counter to the political reform and values espoused by the U.S. Government, we create a “double-standard.” We are, in effect, telling the Government of Iraq, to enforce the rule of law on its people as a stable, self-sustaining democratic nation should – except when it comes to the actions of U.S. diplomatic security personnel. Such mixed messages do not go unnoticed by members of the international community who,

for the most part, were already against extensive U.S. military involvement in Iraq. Our actions also enrage the Iraqi citizens who live in constant intimidation of American PSC personnel while travelling within their own country. Such circumstances drastically inhibit U.S. diplomatic efforts both within Iraq and without. *FSO #3* wrote “A single act of undisciplined firing by contractors can undercut years of diplomatic engagement...”⁴ If PSCs continue to operate with neither DSS oversight nor accountability, there are no political or economic savings – but very high costs.

Secondary Research Question #2: What Alternatives To PSCs Exist?

Conclusion #2: There Are No Other Feasible Alternatives To PSCs.

In his Senate testimony in September 2007, Ambassador Crocker said, “The reality is, for example, on the security function, much of our security –most of our security is provided by contractors. It is overseen by diplomatic security officers— Foreign Service Officers, but there is simply no way at all that the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security could ever have enough full-time personnel to staff the security functions in Iraq. There is no alternative except through contracts.”⁵ Accordingly, the analysis indicates there are no feasible or realistic options that fit the criteria for what is needed to properly secure U.S. Embassy Baghdad. According to A/S Starr, the two main options were the use of DOD elements and a rapid expansion of DSS and neither was possible.⁶ DOD declined the request to provide personal protection for U.S. diplomats. It is no secret the military is currently overburdened with combat rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan. Taking on the additional responsibility of providing high-threat protection for DOS was not feasible so DOD’s reluctance is understandable. The other main option of expanding DSS would require, according to A/S Starr, the

hiring of 3,000 additional DSS agents and support personnel within two years.⁷ The DSS hiring infrastructure, composed of training facilities, the human resources personnel, and the Basic Special Agent Course is designed to hire a mere 200 agents per year, much less 3,000. Additionally, the ramifications of such a change would have tremendous ramifications on DSS, DOS, the U.S. government, and, quite possibly, the execution of U.S. foreign policy which I will re-address in Recommendation #1. Also according to A/S Starr, prior to Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF), DSS agents and FSOs were not training and preparing for deployment from several main military bases located within the U.S.⁸ DSS agents and FSOs are already “forward-deployed” serving in various embassies throughout the world. Were it not for the availability of PSCs, the DOS would have little recourse but to re-allocate DSS personnel to Iraq and Afghanistan, thereby compromising security measures in other U.S. embassies elsewhere in the world. Finally, A/S Starr said, “We have these guys that have the skills and willingness to perform this unique function. Why not use them?”⁹

Secondary Research Question #3: How Can DOS Use PSCs More Effectively?

Conclusion #3: DSS Must Provide The Proper Supervision And Oversight Of PSCs At The Tactical Level.

Another common theme from my research was that the Diplomatic Security Service, as the law-enforcement and security arm of the U.S. State Department, must provide the proper supervision and oversight to make the contractual use of PSCs a “critical capability” rather than a “critical vulnerability.” I concluded this supervision is absolutely essential in two areas: during the indoctrination phase of a PSC detail member and in the application of leadership while supervising each PSC detail.

Prior to the September 16th Blackwater shooting incident, DSS management simply gave the DSS high-threat protection training curriculum to PSC program management. In the post-September 16th analysis, DSS leadership discovered the changes had been implemented in the basic PSC indoctrination course. This is a 170 hour course received by any incoming PSC detail member upon arriving in Baghdad or Kabul. These changes were not authorized by the high-threat protection cadre at the DSS Diplomatic Security Training Center. The contractors trained themselves on DSS tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Since DSS contracted the inspection of these indoctrination programs, the contractors teaching the DSS curriculum were “checked off” by other contracted personnel. In addition to outsourcing the high-threat protection function, DSS also outsourced its ability to inspect the function.¹⁰ Eventually, minor changes in the PSC training curriculum, though tactically sound, became broader deviations from the DSS TTP manuals. Adding to this was another DSS tendency to send junior, inexperienced agents TDY to such posts as Iraq or Afghanistan. The inability to provide confident, directive leadership to “reign-in” differing PSC practices at the tactical level only made it worse.

Special Agents Miller, Hunter, and Brennan all believed the supervision and direction provided by the ARSO leading each PSC protective detail was absolutely necessary. Brennan even remarked, “I didn’t want to see my ARSOs wearing Blackwater t-shirts and hats.” He was concerned the junior DSS agents serving as ARSOs were affording the contractors more status than appropriate. Understanding the importance of their role with the details, he endorsed their authority by supporting his ARSOs more often than not when quarrels and conflicts developed within each team.¹¹ Recent

correspondence with supervisory DSS agents in Iraq indicates that other improvements are well underway. By the end of summer 2008, each PSC detail will be under the supervision of qualified and high-threat experienced DSS agents. Furthermore, the new RSO beginning in summer 2008 and his Deputy RSOs (DRSOs) “hand-selected” the 2008 group of incoming ARSOs will serve each Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and Regional Embassy Office (REO).¹²

The Final Conclusion

The primary research question to this thesis is: Should the U.S. Department of State continue to use Private Security Contractors to protect U.S. diplomats?

This analysis using each of the three main secondary research questions indicates the answer is “Yes.” Assessments of PSC effectiveness from the strategic to the tactical level showed they performed their duties professionally. With U.S. Embassy Baghdad, they filled a security vacuum no other U.S. government entity was willing or capable to fill during OIF. Although, PSC detail members were successfully achieving tactical level goals in keeping their protectees alive, they were not contributing to overall DOS diplomatic goals. At the time of the WPPS contract’s creation, there were no feasible alternatives to PSCs because the U.S. military was heavily engaged elsewhere in Iraq and Afghanistan. The option of expanding DSS was considered briefly but quickly eliminated because DOS security needs required too many personnel in too short of a time period for DSS to accommodate. Finally, the research indicates the DSS recognized its error in failing to properly supervise and oversee the implementation of PSCs. The single most important factor in the use of PSCs seems to be the interface between the embassy’s RSO office and the PSC detail members. The ARSO assigned to a PSC detail

as a supervisor serves as the crucial link between the two entities. He or she must represent the interests of both sides while still exercising confident and competent leadership at the team level.

My Recommendations For Further Study

Recommendation #1: What Will Be The Impact Of Expanding The Diplomatic Security Service On The U.S. State Department?

In terms of the Department of State, the U.S. government will eventually have to make a strategic level decision as to what kind of diplomatic engagement entity it should possess. During his interview, A/S Starr said, “I don’t think the President or Secretary of State wants almost half of the Foreign Service to be DSS agents.”¹³ Though equipped with DSS as a security element, the overarching DOS purpose is to provide diplomatic liaison and representation. DSS only facilitates this. If the need for high-threat protection continues, then DSS will no longer have the luxury of using PSCs as the “short-term fix” because they will be far too expensive to maintain over the course of twenty years or longer. For long-term security needs, expanding DSS, as some have suggested in Chapter IV, would be the most cost effective option. Or, to borrow a term from Dr. Thomas Barnett, the development of a “leviathan” DSS entity will be necessary to meet the changing needs of “Transformational Diplomacy” as espoused by Secretary of State Rice.

A global repositioning of U.S. diplomats all across the world is one of the major tenets of Transformational Diplomacy. The DOS website describes the future and how changes will be implemented. It states, “To meet current diplomatic challenges, the Secretary will begin a major repositioning of U.S. diplomatic personnel across the world.

In a multiyear process, hundreds of positions will be moved to critical emerging areas in Africa, South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.”¹⁴ In essence, the DOS recognizes the need to adjust its structure from the Cold War model and is currently moving to meet the needs of the changing global environment. In a speech given at Georgetown University on January 18, 2006, Secretary Rice stated, “We have nearly the same number of State Department personnel in Germany, a country of 82 million people that we have in India, a country of one billion people. It is clear today that America must begin to reposition our diplomatic forces around the world, so over the next few years the United States will begin to shift several hundred of our diplomatic positions to new critical posts for the 21st century. We will begin this year with a down payment of moving 100 positions from Europe and, yes, from here in Washington, D.C., to countries like China and India and Nigeria and Lebanon, where additional staffing will make an essential difference.”¹⁵

As the Department of State moves to be more responsive in the COE, so will the Diplomatic Security Service in support of the precepts of Transformational Diplomacy. What technological adaptations will accompany such changes? What adjustments to DSS leadership and chain of command structure are required to accommodate the decentralization of DOS posts? How will DSS allocate agents to secure more posts in high-threat locations? What role should PSCs play amidst these long-term changes? Should DSS have a massive recruitment surge to meet the future needs of Transformational Diplomacy rather than the costly option of using expensive PSCs?

The entire State Department would be affected as it would struggle to accommodate the hiring of an additional 1,000 to 3,000 DSS agents. The number of

security agents would begin to rival that of FSOs thereby significantly reducing the intra-organizational dominance enjoyed by FSOs. There would be a momentous change in culture and mindset to achieve the DOS mission. Furthermore, injecting DOS with such a surge of DSS agents, most with prior military and/or law-enforcement experience, would alter the ideological make-up of the Department. An influx of military-minded DOS personnel, regardless of their specialty, has the potential of upsetting the delicate DOS vs. DOD balance when planning and executing U.S. foreign policy.

Recommendation #2: Is DOS The Proper U.S. Governmental Entity To Dictate Rules of Engagement For Its Contracted Security Personnel?

DOS is, at its core, a diplomatic entity. However, the multi-polarity of the future contemporary operating environment (COE) may require the continued conduct of diplomacy while the U.S. military performs kinetic combat operations - within the same theater, country, village, or street. Diplomatic engagement in this COE implies the existence of two distinct factors: first, there will definitely be a need to protect these diplomats, otherwise, no sane diplomat will volunteer for such high risk assignments; second, there will be some semblance of a transition from a DOD-centric “military domination phase” to a DOS-centric “civilian nation-building phase.” This recommendation suggests further exploration into how the criteria for exercising lethal force are determined by DOS for its high-threat protection personnel, regardless of whether they may be PSC detail members or DSS agents. Is it appropriate to have a diplomatic entity determine such criteria? Would DOS consider allowing DOD to determine such criteria? To borrow Deborah D. Avant’s lens of analysis, I would submit the decision-making authority in this matter equates to the nation’s ability to exercise

violence in order to achieve national objectives. This is further complicated by the fact that this is done within the sovereign boundaries of another country. Neither the American people nor the host nation populous may feel comfortable in seeing this authority exercised by a civilian diplomatic organization.

Recommendation #3: Should The U.S. State Department Change Its Emergency Evacuation Procedures?

DOS' use of PSCs in war zones may have an ancillary effect on how it perceives and reacts to unstable environments and hostile threats of the future. *DSS Agent #12* made an interesting point when he wrote, "State should follow its own existing guidelines to drawdown and evacuate its Missions in non-permissive environments...Diplomatic Security will have to further consider a continued presence in high threat regions..."¹⁶ *FSO #3 stated*, "Our political leaders now expect State to perform extensive diplomatic, reconstruction, stability, and post-conflict tasks in war zones. In the past, these conditions would have passed DS tripwires and led to a drawdown of diplomatic presence if not a complete removal of diplomatic personnel. Indeed, in Belgrade and various African posts, this still happens."¹⁷

The use of PSCs has allowed DOS to overlook the existing criteria that dictate *where* it will establish or maintain diplomatic presence. Traditionally, the development of hostile conditions in some parts of the world have had the potential of forcing some U.S. embassies to evacuate its personnel thereby removing U.S. diplomatic representation. However, Iraq and Afghanistan represent an anti-thesis to this line of thinking. In these countries, PSCs have enabled the U.S. to bring diplomatic representation *into* pre-existing hostile conditions. There are many more U.S embassies

in unstable, developing countries rated as “high-threat.” Yet, only Baghdad, Kabul, and Tel Aviv have been provided a superior level of high-threat protection on a long-term basis. Does this imply that other unstable nations, though considered “high-threat,” are not as politically, militarily, nor diplomatically significant to U.S. national interests?

The PSCs capability to provide enhanced high-threat protection to its personnel at a moment’s notice may affect the planning and preparation for non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO). Embassies all over the world maintain and follow strict adherence to NEO “tripwires” while the embassies in Baghdad in Kabul have always operated in conditions well beyond these tripwires. It may be time for DSS to update or re-examine the NEO criteria in light of the enhanced capability provided under the WPPS contract.

¹ Mark Hunter, interview by author, Dunn Loring, VA, April, 29, 2008.

² DSS Agent #12 Survey Form

³ DSS Agent #7, phone conversation with author, March 2008.

⁴ Foreign Service Officer #3 Survey Form

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gregory B. Starr, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Greg Hays, conversation with author, Dunn Loring, VA, April 29, 2008.

¹¹ Ed Brennan, interview with author, Dunn Loring, VA, April 29, 2008.

¹² E-mail message correspondence with a DSS supervisory agent, Regional Security Office, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, May 4, 2008.

¹³ Gregory B. Starr, interview by author, Rosslyn, VA, April 30, 2008.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, “Transformational Diplomacy,” U.S. Department of State, under “January 2006: Secretary Rice’s Remarks,” January 18, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm> [accessed March 12, 2008].

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ DSS Agent #12 Survey Form

¹⁷ FSO #3 Survey Form

APPENDIX A – Anonymous Email Surveys (DSS Agents)

DS Agent #1

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

I think the year to year (or limited time frame contracts) are an advantage for known temporary human resource gaps. Hiring contractors that are qualified and then providing them additional training with a qualification requirement (weapons quals and re-quals etc.) can meet the requirements for support security personnel. I do not feel leadership positions should be contracted out - administrative requirements for the company should not have any leadership role to the government with the contractor. When the temporary need for additional security ends the contracts expire and the contractors are released. The regular government employees are reassigned to the needs of the government.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

I feel the newest plan for oversight of the contractors is a good plan. Leadership positions need to be government employees and contractors can fill PSD positions answering to Special Agent leadership. When contractors fail to perform to standard or require discipline they are returned to the contract company for replacement etc.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

The role of leadership should not be contracted out - only filling PSD positions and having administrative positions within the contract company to manage their employees' needs within the contract. DSS will need to continue to train and prepare Special Agents to fill leadership positions.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Have them fill only PSD subordinate positions, supervised logistics and administrative positions and specialized positions that are not fillable by available government employees

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

N/A

DS Agent #2

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

It is a specialized role and limited in duration and changing in scope. Contractors can provide qualified people and scheduling flexibility - need them one year and don't the next, need 50 this year and 300 the next. It's an efficient system but its management and supervision needs more oversight and accountability.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Know our limitations. Ask "should we do it" instead of "can we do it". Decisions should be driven by security and not politics. Operations should be thoroughly planned and all available resources provided. Not the time to improvise or do it fast and cheap. Give our people every chance to succeed in their mission. Recognize that there is a time to say no or seek outside assistance from DOD.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Clear guidance, policy, procedure with consistent oversight and supervision then hold everyone accountable.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Agents can't do it alone, PSCs are an essential component to achieving the current goals of the Dept. It is DS responsibility to ensure it is done right.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

DS Agent #3

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

DS manpower is a limited resource. The use of properly trained and appropriately overseen contractors is an effective use of this resource.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Short term operations should be handled exclusively by DS either through TDY agents or MSD depending on the level of threat and numbers needed. For long term requirements DS should establish the initial requirement then utilize contract as an interim, with direct DS oversight, while training up the necessary security from the local population if this is a feasible final goal.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

DS should establish a transparent hiring process for its programs requiring contractors. The hiring and vetting of the contractors should require direct involvement of DS agents. Some of the DOS programs have contractors hiring contractors, this leads to problems of favoritism and the "good ole boy network" undermining an effective program. In some cases DOS contracts a package (Iraq, Afghanistan) to a company and they are required to hire individuals meeting DOS specs. DOS should have access to those personnel files and have the opportunity to review those hired before boots on the ground.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Insure DOS is actively involved at all times, transparency exists and we demand the standard set for them always be met. See above #3.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

DS Agent #4

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

NO

Why or why not? Please explain.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

DS needs to re-evaluate what kind of an organization it is trying to be. We hire contractors based on their military experience (SF, SEALs, Force Recon, combat ours, etc...) to work in Iraq and Afghanistan. DS says that the skills these individuals have are crucial to mission success. Yet, the average agent does not have this kind of background. If these skills really are needed, then the average DS agent is not qualified to work in Iraq let alone be in charge of anyone. Having worked with Blackwater and Dyncorp in Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Erbil, it is my opinion that the average DS agent is not considered to be qualified to work here by the contractors that they are in charge of. DS has reinforced this perception. I have been at meetings where the head of the High Threat Office has stated that, "You (BW) are the experts. You are the best in the world. We are here to learn from you." Having said that, the DS agent in the field in Iraq is the novice learning from the very people DS supposedly train in WPPS. It is no surprise when agents get into confrontations with senior contractors about who is in charge of the detail. The contractors feel that the agents are in charge in name only. The contractors who are vocal about this are occasionally relieved by the RSO.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

DS management seems to have fallen in love with "Tier 1 operators" in general and SF guys in particular. They hire SF people just because they are SF. If you need an accountant, a logistics expert, a government funding expert, a building project manager, do not hire a retired SF guy to do the job. DS had done this and screwed up several large projects. By their own standards they set in the field, the senior DS managers aren't qualified to do their own jobs. Being scuba, jump, or whatever qualified does not make one an expert in all matters related to work at a high threat embassy.

If we really need Tier (fill in the number) operators to do the job, we should probably turn it over to the military to begin with. If it takes a SEAL team to insert a FSO at a meeting how much good are we really doing?

DS has done a tremendous disservice to all of its agents worldwide by demanding the

skills in PSD contractors but not in its own agents. We are going to put ourselves out of business because "we" are not qualified to run our own PSD operations in high threat environments. It is funny to have PSC program managers demand to be able to review the qualifications of agents assigned to "it's" PSD operations. DS should have written into any PSD contract that DS has total control and review over which personnel are assigned to leadership positions (Program Manager, Detail Leader, Shift Leader, etc...).

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

DS should either hire 1,000 new agents to run high threat operations or get used to the idea of a permanent presence of PSD contractors in theater. It is ironic that agents are in charge of people who make five times more than they do. What is the incentive to take the risk of working PSD missions in Iraq and elsewhere year after year? Already there is a total breakdown of the system. Agents who refused to work in the red zone or come to Iraq altogether are rewarded for their behavior by DC. Take a look a who in IP is being rewarded for avoiding service in Iraq.

DS is not even taking care of the people coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq is not considered a "real" tour because we don't do "real" RSO work. In short, we are not considered qualified to be RSOs at nice posts.

Where are the senior agents in DS with all the experience running PSD operations? Why aren't they in Iraq? It is rare to find an agent out here who was hired before 1998. An agent with one year in the High Threat Office in Iraq has more real world experience with regard to PSD operations and terrorist attacks than just about all of senior agents in DS. These senior agents need to understand that if they have to refer to an incident that occurred during the Reagan or Carter administration as an example of their work in a high threat environment, then they need to do a tour in Iraq.

DS Agent #5

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

YES in the near term; The current state of DS, in my opinion, necessitates the use of contractors in this area. We currently do not have sufficient personnel to effectively carry out the mission. Political issues preclude our senior management from openly and honestly disclosing the true extent of our need for resources required to fulfill our mandate abroad. For years, DS has done "more with less" but the truth is you do less with less. Until there is a consensus within the branches of government that our mission must be more appropriately funded, we will have to employ private security firms to augment our personnel in critical threat locations. Even in the unlikely event that we are authorized to recruit, hire and train enough Agents to deal with our expanding duties, they will not be mission ready in the short term.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

This is directly linked to Q1; DS must expand its presence in high and critical threat areas.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

To the extent possible, DS should be more heavily involved in the solicitation process. PSD members are sensitive positions and individuals should be more carefully vetted. DS needs to be involved in this process instead of leaving it entirely up to the contractor, who is likely to serve its financial interests first.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Just as DS Agents are often charged with having to employ diplomacy in their duties, PSD members in this setting must be those who understand that their actions can have broader implications for bilateral relations. It is understood that being overly selective is not feasible when manpower is desperately needed. That being said, we need to have an active role in selecting the personnel who ultimately will be relied upon to make potentially life/death decisions on the Governemnt's behalf. Some additional training, such as post specific political/and or cultural information may help personnel begin the process of determining what does/does not constitute a threat in a given area.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

A big part of this issue is the bottom dollar: Over a 20 year period, it supposedly costs less to employ a PSD contractor than an FTE. PSDs don't draw benefits like you and I and don't get salary increases. Plus our training costs much more. But if we end up with the contractors out there for the long haul, this could reverse itself. Also, Congress (and State) view PSD guys as even more expendable than we are. It's easier to place blame and liability on them to deflect it from the seniors who are actually to blame for not providing proper oversight. If you recall, no one in the States really cared how many civilians got killed before last September...it became politically sound to care!

DS Agent #6

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

There are simply not enough agents to do the job, the military is not trained to do protection, and it is the best allocation of resources. A contractor can respond to changing requirements in a way that a U.S. GOVERNMENT entity can not.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

DS should continue to operate, but should also continue to work with DOD to ensure common standards (although ours are usually higher) and understanding. When/if an incident occurs it must be fully investigated and documented in a transparent fashion. Things that DS cannot control (legal jurisdictional issues), DS should be vocal on these facts. Not doing so looks as if we've somehow done something wrong by not prosecuting for example. Simple fact is laws are not necessarily in place for us to do it. Also, DS must be realistic, if jobs are protection jobs only, a DS agent is not only not required, but would be underutilized in this role. A contractor hired to do one thing is a perfect fit for this sort of task.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Contracts must clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and privileges of the contractor. DS must then hold them to those standards through vigorous oversight.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

Given the continued increase in requirements of DS, over which DS has no control, contractors must continue to be a fixture in our planning and policies as we go forward. Instead of focusing on trying to replace contractors with agents, we should focus on strengthening policies, procedures, and contractual language that affect these positions. Also we must continue to work towards interagency agreement/standards with DOD and DOJ to determine how civilian misconduct will be dealt with.

DS Agent #7

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

State cannot maintain an appreciable presence in such a theater without them. Particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, DSS hasn't done an adequate job of selecting agents with the proper mindset, maturity or experience to perform the job.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Perform stricter screening of applicants to positions in such posts, have as a minimum the requirement that, with rare exceptions based on prior military and law enforcement service, only agents with a field office tour and one overseas tour as an ARSO be assigned to such posts. Have the high threat course mirror MSD green team and make such high threat postings an exception to the CONUS/OCONUS posting rules.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Maintain stricter internal controls within DSS regarding the use of PSCs. That is, do not launch a PSC contract sending men into a high threat environment with the logical actions and consequences that entails and then try to backtrack by inflicting convoluted rules of engagement of threats that require the men on scene to consider anything other than threat of death or serious bodily harm to themselves, their principal or innocent bystanders. Consideration of the impact of a detail's actions on the local community is the responsibility of DSS before even launching that detail.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Continue their use as necessary and put mechanisms in place that would ultimately have DS agents serving as the shift leaders.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

DS Agent #8

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

NO

Why or why not? Please explain.

I feel that the initial use of contractors was a short term solution that became an easy fix. The money that is currently applied to WPP contracts could be used to hire and train direct hire employees.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Hire direct hires with a term of service not to exceed 5 yrs. If the situation dictates terms of service could be extended.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Give more control to the RSO for discipline/dismissal of contractors.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

PSCs are an easy fix to several problems facing DOS. 1. Lack of expertise, 2. Needs for surges in personnel. To name two, DOS should transform into an organization to fill its current requirements.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

I feel that DSS is restricted by its position within DOS it should be moved into a separate element either still under the overall State umbrella or to another Department (DHS for example). DSS is conflicted in it's overall role: is it suppose to manage or perform certain function. Another hinderance is that DSS does not allow personnel to specialize and thus personnel with specialized experience are often not placed into positions where they could best perform.

Continued comments solicited by email:

1. When I say direct hire I mean a DS agent with a stipulation that it is a term appointment and permanent. 1801 concept as some uniform guys have at some agencies.
2. Some of the contracts are written that if there is a problem it has to go back to WPP in DC and then they have to take it to contracting company.
3. I mean that DOS/DSS does not recognize any specialization. Some agents choose to concentrate in an area but it is not official. CDO will often push people into varied assignments to widen their experience base. However, this often requires additional training and time to learn the job. This in turn leads to decreased productivity while the person learns the ins and outs of the new job. This also goes

back to people being more interested in managing programs than performing the task.

DS Agent #9

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

The level of threat currently experienced in Iraq requires a large amount of protection details. At this time there are simply NOT enough agents to provide the level of security required by American officers while conducting their diplomatic duties. Reducing the level of security/protection details will simply increase the likelihood of more Americans serving the U.S. GOVERNMENT in Iraq being killed in the line of duty.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

When employing contractors to perform Protection Details (PRS) it is imperative that DS maintains strategic as well as tactical control over the PRS details. As has already been witnessed, when a contractor loses control of a situation (irregardless of whether they were right or wrong) the U.S. GOVERNMENT bears the ultimate responsibility. The contractor may be punished (criminally, financially, etc.) but the damage to the USG's reputation and mission has already been done. DS agents (government employee versus a contractor) must be imbedded with the details and be the ones who are ultimately responsible for what happens during a detail.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

I believe that there needs to be series of checks-and-balances that ensure that everyone involved in a PRS detail: agents contractors and the protectees - all understand their roles and responsibilities. In many ways, the Principals (individuals being protected by the detail) tend to have a resentful or misunderstanding of what is happening around them. Despite the training they get before being assigned to such high threat posts, they need to be made to understand that is not only their lives at stake, but also those of the detail assigned to protect them.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

It is often hard for those on the ground to see the "big" picture. In many cases the decisions made by management in Washington are dealing with the large, "strategic" picture in the region and/or conflict. The contractors and agents working on the PRS details tend to focus on the "tactical", day-to-day aspect of the job: moving a protectee in and out of a highly dangerous area with no loss of life (on either side).

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

Having been assigned to high threat posts and deployments for over eight years, I have seen the strengths and weaknesses inherent with using contractors versus agents. However, as in the case of Iraq, I have also seen the problems with using agents/contractors versus military protection details. Mismanagement and a lack of clear goals, coupled with the fact that the short length of the tour, inhibits any institutional knowledge from being generated. I would also point out that I feel many of DS's reactions and "solutions" to the problems have been short sighted and of a "knee jerk" variety. Often, it would seem that DS is reactionary in their thinking versus being proactive. It would appear that the problems of "now" are receiving the majority of the Department's attention, when some time and planning should be focused on what issues are going to be faced in the future. Many of the individuals making the decisions are from a generation that never faced situations like those that are currently threatening our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sadly, I think that the situation will get worse before it gets better. The nature of protection details are primarily reactionary but the planning that goes into managing these programs needs to be forward thinking.

DS Agent #10

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

Not Sure

Why or why not? Please explain.

But I would like to say no, at least until we can create a viable DSS employed unit to fill these roles, i.e., such as making the DSS UD group full employees and have these officers serve with RSO's on protective details.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

In the current state, we have to rely on contractors, but at least one DS agent should be part of the detail.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Mandate that all PSC's attend a 2-week DSS instructed course before deployment and provide that all PSC's fall under the same Code of Conduct as of the DS Agent.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

See above.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

I think that DS would be better served if they would make the DSS Uniform Division full employees, their duties would include PRS. We would get the same PSC's that are currently working for Blackwater, Dynacorp, etc. These employees who are in the vast majority of cases are former military and by signing on with DSS would continue their government service toward retirement.

DS Agent #11

1. While I may have strong opinions about the US State Department's Use of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan it does not change the logic that supports their use. To put it in simple terms the State Department has not choice but to use contractors from a logistical standpoint. If the State Department were to replace contractors with full time Agents what would those Agents be assigned to do once the security conditions improve (or the US withdraws?) It is also worth mentioning that new Agents will not have the knowledge, skills, and abilities of currently available contractors.
2. I believe DS should provide greater oversight with respect to contractor training, tactics, and operations. DS should have personnel permanently assigned to all contractor training areas to provide oversight and guidance in all applicable areas. I also feel it's prudent in high threat environments to have both the AIC and Shift Leader positions filled by experienced DS Agents. If one of the functions of a DS Agent in a contractor security detail is to provide oversight, simple prudence would dictate that you need two people (two witnesses). This would protect both parties involved.
3. I don't see any major issues with the way DSS contracts PSC's. Of course I am of the opinion that we should try to get the best people available, but fiscally this simply isn't possible.
4. The goal of the DSS (and contractors as assigned) is to provide for the safe conduct of Diplomacy. This, traditionally, has always been an entirely defensive operation. While going on the offensive simply isn't possible in a conventional sense, it might be in an unconventional way. I submit that our protective details require greater surveillance, detection, and information gathering capabilities. This could come in a variety of forms; cameras, electronic monitoring equipment, even designated defensive marksman providing oversight. If you have to be on the defensive it would be nice to see what's coming.
5. In the end I think my biggest complaint with both DSS and the contractors we use is training. Nobody gets enough training, we are not all on the same page (with respect to training and tactics), and there is no mandatory re-training.

DS Agent #12

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

The reality is that the Diplomatic Security Service does not possess the organic assets to fulfill its requirement of providing protection in high threat environments, and therefore must rely on PSCs to enhance its capabilities to provide protection. These enhanced protection capabilities include static guard posts and Personal Security Details (PSD). DSS does not have the manpower to provide the number of agents required to staff PSD details in high threat environments, nor does it have the resources to staff static guard posts.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

First, State Dept needs to re-examine its global mission with respect to high threat environments, and then further define its requirements to sustain its diplomatic efforts; it is not enough to simply have a diplomatic presence in such an environment. Second, State should follow its own existing guidelines to drawdown and evacuate its Missions in non-permissive environments. In lieu of this, Diplomatic Security will have to further consider a continued presence in high threat regions, and perhaps raise the standards for service above that of the "basic" agent. Reliance on PSCs is clearly one alternative that does provides the necessary skill sets in order for DSS to handle its responsibilities in high threat locations.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

This question is somewhat open-ended, but what is truly required is for Diplomatic Security Service agents to provide contractual oversight of contractors, by becoming Contracting Officer Representatives (COR), in order to enforce contractual obligations. However, this is a responsibility that DSS has a whole shuns away from, and therefore fails to apply the necessary contractual leverage to ensure contract compliance by contractors. Additionally, DS must maintain operational oversight of the contractors, without hindering the subject matter expertise of those contractors , to ensure that contractors are not acting of their own accord. And this a very fine line on to ask DS agents to strike a balance without ever having previous contracting experience to do so.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Providing education and awareness to PSCs about the necessity of the State Dept's diplomatic mission is single best course of action to ensure achieving U.S. diplomatic

goals. This is because nearly all PSC contractors have a Dept of Defense "combat arms" special operations background, and the goals of DOD and the methods to achieve them are vastly different from those of DOS. Therefore it is necessary to ensure that PSCs working on behalf of DOS fully understand the ramifications their actions, misconduct, or perspection of misconduct, can have, in regards to the entire diplomatic community. And although they are contracted to provide protection in high threat environments, they have, by their willingness to take part in such endeavors, become an integral part to the overall diplomatic mission, and must act accordingly. Too often, PSC contractors see themselves as separate to the diplomatic process, instead thinking of themselves as merely hired "gunslingers", and this is a very dangerous misperception to carry where diplomacy is concerned.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

APPENDIX B – Anonymous Email Surveys (Foreign Service Officers)

Foreign Service Officer #1

6. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

Definitely, if the only other option is to fill this role using DS agents. Private security contractors are hired to perform specific functions. DS agents are highly trained to execute a broad number of leadership and management roles in addition to personal security, and have a unique familiarity with and focus on the broader mission of Dept. of State operations. Requiring what likely would be hundreds of agents to provide convoy and static security would represent a significant misallocation of resources.

7. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

DSS might create specific GS-based or schedule-B skill codes into which security personnel could be hired. Particularly with the Schedule-B option, DSS could define personnel requirements, training parameters, etc., from the outset, there would be a clear delineation of authority under the COM (and concurrent diplomatic privilege), and DSS would retain the flexibility to scale hiring and maintaining of personnel based on need. In the interim, DSS might consider increasing contract compliance oversight.

8. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

The State Department should appeal to Congress to have them modify the "lowest priced technically acceptable" bids vice the "best value" bids with regard to PSCs. This change would prevent companies from intentionally lowballing contract bids in a way that is unsustainable over the longterm, based on the assumption that post facto contract modifications would cover the resulting funding/income gap. I'm not familiar enough in the development of contracts to comment further. I do think, however, that hiring PSCs ad hoc breaks the continuity that should exist between the overall U.S. GOVERNMENT mission objectives overseas, and those of the security personnel (in other words, the scope of the PSC mission is restricted solely to completing a single move or standing post for a single shift successfully, and does not extend to or incorporate broader U.S. GOVERNMENT goals).

9. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

If PSCs have to be used, it would be helpful to provide training on the sensitivity of

the environment in which we operate overseas. The locations where PSCs are required coincide exactly with those places where the need to maintain positive relations with the local nationals is most critical not only to the diplomatic mission, but to the security environment. As such, longstanding DSS positions on less-than-lethal measures, for example, may need to be reconsidered. Host government authorities should be involved, or at least briefed, to the extent possible to avoid the appearance of the U.S. GOVERNMENT circumventing or allowing contractor circumvention of local and U.S. law. Also, it would be helpful if mission personnel get briefed on PSC rules of engagement -- understanding the orders the PSCs receive (and why) may help diffuse common complaints lodged by mission personnel about PSCs with regard to perceived overly aggressive posture and disproportionate threat response.

10. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

N/A

11. Would you, as a State Department employee, feel *more or less safe* serving in high threat locations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) knowing that you will be protected by a team of Private Security Contractors in the execution of your diplomatic visits?

It depends. I have served in a number of high-threat locations, both at Embassies and in PRTs, and there have been times when traveling with a lower profile would have seemed much safer. Overly-defensive security posture in some cases not only prevents me from executing my duties-- it creates a perception among the local population of an Embassy under siege, and gives credibility to insurgents, terrorists, etc., who take credit for the heightened force protection. At the same time, however, there is a clear need for PSCs on official moves involving large numbers or high-ranking Embassy personnel (COM, DCM, etc.). A blanket SOP for all moves with a one-posture-fits-all approach is operationally efficient in the short term, but is inappropriate given the great variety of activities in which Mission personnel engage and works at cross purposes with the primary U.S. GOVERNMENT goal, i.e. to "show the flag" and advance U.S. policy overseas.

Thank you.

Foreign Service Officer #2

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

Not Sure

Why or why not? Please explain.

I'm not sure that DSS has any choice but to continue to use PSCs, because the State Department lacks the resources to fund and staff DSS in a manner that would allow DSS to provide security at the same level that PSCs do.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

I have the highest respect for my DS colleagues and can't pretend to advise on security matters. From the standpoint of public opinion, however, I can report that PSCs are perceived to operate outside the law, and being closely linked to them certainly doesn't improve the Department's public image.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

The public should be better educated about how – and why – such contracts are awarded. The process of awarding the contracts must be transparent, and the Department should also explain to the public why such contracts are necessary. The public may not understand the dangers of high threat locations and the resource constraints that DSS operates under.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

The Department must find a way to overcome the perception that PSCs operate outside the law. That may mean finding new PSCs to take contracts over from companies who have been involved in high-profile public scandals; giving DSS more resources so it can adequately supervise the PSCs in a hands-on way; and committing to an information campaign to better educate the public about the high-threat environments in which we do business and the resource and staffing constraints that we serve under.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

6. Would you, as a State Department employee, feel *more or less safe* serving in high threat locations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) knowing that you will be

protected by a team of Private Security Contractors in the execution of your diplomatic visits?

I would feel safest if both the PSC and a DSS team were present in the high-threat environment.

Thank you.

Foreign Service Officer #3

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

NO

Why or why not? Please explain.

Private security contractors should have only been an interim solution in 2003-2005, once the U.S. GOVERNMENT decided that it was going to make a long-term commitment to staff diplomatic posts in war zones, they should have ramped up DSS hiring to staff these positions. Time and time again, actions by security contractors have undermined the political goals of the U.S. effort in Iraq, because they do not follow the same rules of engagement. Given their higher rates of pay than the U.S. military or other U.S. GOVERNMENT security forces, contractors distort the economies of security.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

DSS has done its traditional job, but the job has changed. Our political leaders now expect State to perform extensive diplomatic, reconstruction, stability, and post-conflict tasks in war zones. In the past, these conditions would have passed DS tripwires and led to a drawdown of diplomatic presence if not a complete removal of diplomatic personnel. Indeed, in Belgrade and various African posts, this still happens. If we are going to have a "expeditionary" Foreign Service, then DSS will have to transition itself from its traditional counter-intelligence, internal security, dignitary protection, and supervisor of local and Marine Guard forces to adding a significant paramilitary constabulary and gendamerie function. Many of our closest allies deploy paramilitary (stability) police and military troops together as part of a whole of government mission. Without a national police force, this has been very hard for the U.S. GOVERNMENT to do, leading to the hiring of contractors who are in it for the money rather than the mission. If we were to create a constabulary force in DSS, it would take resources and time as well as retraining many DSS agents to move out of a strict law enforcement mentality to take on the executive and leadership functions of military officers earlier in their careers.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

I don't know if anything can be done, it seems that many of the deals are made at the highest levels by politically connected insiders.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Drastically reduce their numbers, role, function, and importance. A single act of undisciplined firing by contractors can undercut years of diplomatic engagement, and there appear to be hundreds of these incidents, yet has any contractor has ever faced

criminal charges for murder, rape, or drunkenness on duty? If we have to use PSCs. they should be restricted to static duty at Embassies and Consulates. DSS has the capacity to recruit, train, and deploy agents who have the diplomatic skills that are prized in the FS. Believe it or not, there are DSS agents who have served in the Peace Corps or other volunteer organizations and get the big picture. Right now, there are reports that many captains leaving the military because of the way the Army has taken them for granted. State should try to recruit as many as possible into DSS and the FS to build a constabulary and Pol-Mil officer function that we lack. Of course, the issue is that State's budget has stayed static since the end of the Marshall Plan in the 1950s while the missions have greatly increased - particularly since 2001.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

If I had to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan, I would prefer to be imbedded in U.S. or coalition troops (some, the ones without caveats) rather than rely on PSCs. If there is a bad shoot with professional military or DSS, there are consequences-both groups travel with lawyers/JAGs to make sure the troops know and follow the Rules of Engagement. After 3 bad years, the military and State get basic counter-insurgency theory, they often don't shoot first or indiscriminately, even if this means more risk. However, it appears PSCs can simply blow away people and disappear. Finally, there is the basic question of rightsizing and resourcing State's commitment in Iraq. What in the earth can Embassy Badghad DO with 45 political officers? Once single cultural affairs officer traveling through Indonesia running English Language Camps and sports clinics probably is a lot more successful reaching young muslims than any reporting officer in Embassies Badghad and Kabul.

6. Would you, as a State Department employee, feel *more or less safe* serving in high threat locations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) knowing that you will be protected by a team of Private Security Contractors in the execution of your diplomatic visits?

It depends who they are. Are they a disciplined group of ex-SAS members or some cowboys from the LAPD and NYPD who left the force because they were under investigation from internal affairs? Are they Gurkhas or a bunch of unreliable local hires? Are they tied in to local military commands or are they doing their own thing like blackwater tends to do?

Thank you.

Foreign Service Officer #4

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

With protection responsibilities so essential and far-ranging -- and resources so scarce -- contractors provide an invaluable service as diplomats are asked to serve in such high-threat locations.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

The key "value-added" that DSS brings to security is in oversight, management, and coordination. From local guards to contractors to their interlocutors in the host government, DSS must continue to focus on the big picture of protecting the mission and its members.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

DSS should ensure stricter oversight of PSCs, especially in high-threat areas where contractors can outnumber DSS agents significantly. By exercising control and coordination, DSS can remove a large amount of the mistrust and concern that has been expressed.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

DSS should increase its resources to manage PSCs, not replace them. PSC has a specialty that serves diplomats overseas very well and we must not make a hasty decision to abandon that specialty in an effort to appear responsive to the concerns expressed over a single incident.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

6. Would you, as a State Department employee, feel *more or less safe* serving in high threat locations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) knowing that you will be protected by a team of Private Security Contractors in the execution of your diplomatic visits?

More safe. Most of the PSCs with whom I have come into contact have excellent experience, judgement, and instincts. Their entire job is protection and they carry it out in a professional manner. However, without proper oversight and coordination, this can present problems.

Foreign Service Officer #5

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

There simply is no alternative unless DOD were to have the resources.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

I believe the manner in which DS currently handles its responsibilities in high-threat locations is adequate.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

I don't know enough about this process to answer.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Greater oversight by DS would be helpful but to do this DS would likely need additional resources.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

6. Would you, as a State Department employee, feel *more or less safe* serving in high threat locations (such as Iraq or Afghanistan) knowing that you will be protected by a team of Private Security Contractors in the execution of your diplomatic visits?

No doubt I would feel more safe, especially if the alternative was no protection. I would also feel safe with with DOD or DS-direct hire protection.

Thank you.

APPENDIX C – Anonymous Email Surveys (PSC Detail Members)

Security Contractor #1

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

There are few reasons for this:

1. The need for this type of high threat security work will not last...at least not at this magnitude. You can not hire and train over a thousand DSS agents and then kick them loose once the need is no longer there.
2. With PSCs handling the security, DOS has a layer of insulation (not unlike plausible deniability) where if there are any wrong doing or any questionable acts on the part of the PSCs, the DOS is not directly responsible. They can huff and puff and condemn the actions of the PSCs and do what is necessary to appease the host nation...to a degree. The ICs working for the PSCs should not be subject to the laws of the host nation.
3. PSCs as opposed to DSS agents, I believe, will have a more aggressive attitude and posture when it comes to the security of the protectee and/or the site. Afterall they are ICs and this is not their career and not AS worried about creating an international incident as agents may be (meaning that they can focus more on keeping everyone alive than what kind of consequences will a particular action create and what will it do to their career).
4. Although DOS can hire agents with the same background as PSCs (combat experience, combat arms MOS, specops, etc), the requirements for becoming a DSS agent are obviously much more stringent. This will reduce the pool of qualified personnel to choose from which in turn reduces the number of operators that have the requisite skillset, combat experience and combat mindset to operate efficiently in that hostile environment.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

The DOS WPPS II is a good program. Good leadership is key...just like every other organization. DOS has to approve all the leadership positions from shift leaders on up. Everybody fills out a bio and is sent up the chain for DOS approval. These positions are approved based on experience in related fields and leadership experience. This process can be improved by having more oversight and input from

the RSO/ARSO. Last year, when I was in the program, the promotions to leadership positions were based primarily on the bio....if you had enough checks in the boxes you got approved. The Detail Leaders on up to the RSO/ARSO should screen the bios (and the person) more carefully for leadership ability, tactical background, sound judgement, maturity and common sense. I realize that there is a lot on the plate of the RSO/ARSO, therefore I recommend that another DSS agent (another ARSO maybe) be in charge of running the WPPS II program in their AOR. This agent(s)' primary focus will be the PSCs. He (she) should be overseeing the teams training, making sure that it is conducted regularly (especially IADs) and conducted properly. He should look into the teams' SOPs and TTPs to make sure that it is sound. ROEs needs to be clearly understood by all. He should, on a daily basis, enforce professionalism. Some PSCs can and will be loose canons if not supervised...this is one of the drawbacks of hiring combat minded personnel. It seems you can not get one with the other in some cases (rough around the edges). And no doubt it takes strong leadership to keep some in check. Without it they will walk all over them. And lastly, make sure that the evals mean something. The DSS agent(s) need to read them all. Currently it goes up the PSC chain (not all) and then it seems to get "filed". Also, increase your intel assets and make sure all the different intel assets share information / intelligence.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Some of this was answered in the previous question. One thing I would like to add is that the contracts be written so as to have minimum pay for the independent contractors (ICs) delineated in the contract to include pay for each successive leadership position. You need to pay more for good leadership. The old adage that "You get what you pay for" definitely applies in the contract world. I am sure that the PSCs make tons of cash off of each IC. And finally, better oversight by DOS from train-up to mission execution.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

I believe that the use of PSCs is essential for the DOS to achieve its' overall goals. Travel is a necessary for DOS representatives to conduct business and to reach their objectives. And they must be able to do so with a fair amount of confidence in their own safety and well-being. Utilizing PSCs is the best way to provide that margin of safety in those semi-permissive environments. Aside from that I really do not feel that PSCs have any role in the diplomatic goals of DOS. The goal of the PSCs is to secure what ever or whomever it is contracted to protect. The only area where the PSCs may affect the diplomatic goals of the US is if during the course of carrying out their duty, they create an incident that is embarrassing to the US or possibly de-rail any goodwill or progress in winning the hearts and minds of the host nation. So I guess yo can suffice it to say that the role of the PSCs is to do job professionally and quietly....out of sight out of mind. They should not become the focus of any diplomatic topic.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

Security Contractor #2

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

Because the contract companies have the ability to pool qualified personal in a timely manner. Key word, Qualified:
Personal that have real world experience and/or like experience to do the PSD job and are compensated for their work. DS would not be able to provide enough personal to replace the contractors and the experience they bring. There are several DS Agents that would do an outstanding job replacing contractors; however, they would need additional training. We do not have the instructor staff to train them or enough Agent to replace all contractors. (My opinion)

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Do a study on what the contract companies/military have been successfully at and make SOP's to help guide new personal/leaders and other awarded companies in the future.

Other responsibilities DSS Agents could do: Supervise each contract detail performing HT duties by a Qualified DS Agent. This would include the Agent being attached to the detail some type of written report documenting what is working and what's not, are they in compliance with DS standards or are they "Cowboys" etc. (From what I have been told, some form of this may already be taking place)

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

The hiring practice from what I have seen and heard about is broken.

Quick fix: Have the personal that review the hiring package be qualified to read and understand what it is that the person is applying for. Then individuals that slip through the cracks don't end up supervising a bunch of "alpha" males that have there own idea of what PSD is and make up their own SOP's without following what DSS has approved. Additionally, on the face to face interview, there has to be qualified personal asking the right questions to the potential PSC'er and be able to understand what experience the person brings to the table. In other words, don't have a school teacher interview a person with a military/Police background for a job as critical as the position is. (This is typical here)

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

I believe our goals would be to carry out the duties safely and professionally. This all goes back in hiring the right personal for the job. I also believe it would be best to make the PSC'ers GS-14+ because of the responsibility the person has, after all one bad decision could cause a diplomatic disaster.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

Thank you.

Security Contractor #3

1. Do you feel that the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) should *continue* to use Private Security Contractors (i.e. Blackwater, Dyncorps, Triple Canopy) to fulfill its protection responsibilities in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan?

YES

Why or why not? Please explain.

Yes, The military and DSS have too many other responsibilities and not enough man power to do it themselves.

2. Based on your experience, how should DSS proceed to best handle its responsibilities in high threat locations?

Continue with contractors to fill the VIP/Security roll and for them to continue to be part of and to monitor activities as well as DSS being part of the package for accountiablity as to the actions of the contract personell.

3. What should be done to improve how DSS contracts the use of PSCs?

Make sure that the contractors have the right people for the jobs at hand, ie: experience, training and maturity that goes along with the specific jobs.

4. What should be done, in regard to the use of PSCs, to best achieve the overall diplomatic goals of the U.S. Department of State?

Continue to screen the contractors to make sure they have the right kind of people for the specific jobs and to keep the pay where professionals will continue to work in stead of getting just anyone that has been in the military or law enforcement.

5. Feel free to add any additional comments to cover anything I did not ask in the above questions.

In my experience ex or current Law Enforcement officers with SWAT and other tactical skills have the restraint to do a better job. They just don't jump into shootings and have a higher restraint in use of force situations and have better people skills over most military types.

Thank you.

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Dr. Ted A. Thomas
Department of Command and Leadership
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Mr. Bud Meador
Department of Military History
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

Mr. Billy Miller
Department of Command and Leadership
USACGSC
100 Stimson Ave.
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301