



Molly Dunigan, Victory for Hire: Private Security Companies' Impact on Military Effectiveness. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

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The topic of private security has become an increasingly popular subject in the context of international relations. Involvement of private security companies (PSCs) in contemporary military operations including Iraq and Afghanistan has often produced overtly negative public sentiment towards such actors. Nefarious terms including *war profiteer*, and the more commonly used *mercenary*, illustrate the stance of popular literature regarding PSCs. This literature has largely focused on the pernicious

relationship between such companies and human rights, in addition to notions of state sovereignty. In Victory for Hire, Molly Dunigan aims, through an analysis of the relationship between PSCs and military effectiveness, to uncover the implications of security privatization for democratic states engaged in conflict. In approaching her research in this fashion, Dunigan breaks from mainstream analyses of PSCs, producing a valuable resource for academics and policy makers alike.

Victory for Hire provides a succinct narrative of the development of 20th century PSCs. Dunigan recognizes the plethora of operations executed by the modern PSCs and outlines definitive parameters for her study. By drawing on historic and contemporary examples of corporate operations, Dunigan's research presents a critical analysis of the effects that these actors can have on modern warfare. She successfully compares and contrasts a variety of cases in which PSCs have been employed in the interest of answering questions of effectiveness, while illustrating the effects of structure and identity on military and private security relations. In pursuing her research question, Dunigan includes an analysis of three distinct case "types," including: cases of co-deployment of PSCs and state military; cases of substitution of PSCs for state military; and cases of integration of PSCs and state military. In doing so, Dunigan is able to extrapolate insightful conclusions and recommendations relevant to each case typology and thus the future of security privatization.

While Victory for Hire provides a critical academic study of the subject matter, the research raises two interrelated issues associated with the use of PSCs which require further examination. Dunigan rightly identifies the salience of counterinsurgency to modern warfare which is largely viewed as a 'war amongst people' characterized by 'non-state actors'. She briefly notes that debate regarding the most effective means of executing a successful counterinsurgency is characterized by tactics directed at 'hearts and minds' versus the more brutal, 'draining the sea.' It is clear that the pursuit of a 'hearts and minds' strategy as the predominant method of counterinsurgency has radically different implications for the future of private security than 'draining the sea.' Before democratic states can implement Dunigan's proscribed 'structures' so as to increase the effectiveness of PSC's participation in war, we must first commit to *which* tactic we are willing to pursue in the interest of securing victory. A second interrelated issue involves the impending dissemination of private security to nondemocratic states.

In her discussion of PSCs, Dunigan utilizes case studies of firms solely from democratic countries. One can accept this logic as she maintains that the majority of modern PSCs are situated in democratic states. The scope of her conclusions, however, pertains to like cases. Utilization of private security by nondemocratic states and their subsequent relationship with military actors therefore requires further investigation. Both the conclusions and recommendations espoused by Dunigan in this book have implications for the future of PSCs, particularly those emerging from nondemocratic countries. Consequently, the cultivation of norms for PSCs may ultimately inform the operations of private security actors emerging from such countries. As a result, Dunigan is correct in calling for the implementation of clear 'structures' to guide the activities of PSCs, the implications of which may extend far beyond the scope of Victory for Hire.

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