

The International Privatization of Security: Implications for Canada
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After their “decade of darkness” as described by the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, the Canadian Forces (CF) are reemerging as a prominent tool in Canada’s foreign policy toolbox. Billions of dollars have been allotted for the purchase of military hardware ranging from tanks to helicopters to heavy-lift jets. The main political parties debate not whether to increase CF manpower, but rather by how much; Prime Minister Paul Martin’s Liberals called for 5,000 regular force members while Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Conservatives say 13,000. To underscore and ensure the CF’s utility, General Hillier in 2006 reorganized the CF into operational commands. In particular, with the creation of Canada Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM), this reorganization heralded nothing less than the creation of the CF’s fourth service alongside the army, navy, and air force. All four services, particularly the army and special operations forces (SOF), have increasingly been deployed overseas as illustrated by the successive commitments Liberal and Conservative governments have made in Afghanistan and, by extension, to the US. This is a considerable move away from the view long held by some that Canada is a country of peacekeepers. But this engagement is in keeping with the 2005 International Policy Statement’s goals of improving Ottawa’s relations with Washington. In fact, the CF’s prominence in Afghanistan – the military’s largest *combat* deployment since the Korean War – is such that the CF is arguably the dominant partner amongst the other government actors in Canada’s new integrated or “whole of government” approach.

The decade of darkness and the CF’s reemergence from it coincide with the increasing presence and evolution of a new non-state armed actor – the international private security company (PSC). The PSC industry is currently a multi-billion dollar global enterprise; countries on all the continents (save Antarctica) have either hosted PSC operations and/or served as the home base of firms. PSC clients include states, international organizations, multinational corporations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Today, for instance, some 28,000 PSC personnel provide security to a variety of international clients in Afghanistan. What is more, the US has become a key player in this industry, both as an employer and as the location of several PSC headquarters. Compared to the 160,000 US military personnel in Iraq, there are over 180,000 civilian support staff – as many as 48,000 of them armed and employed by PSCs.

This article’s objective is to analyze how this PSC phenomenon has already impacted and may further impact upon, pose complications for, and offer prospects to the Canadian government and the CF as Canada’s military might is reapplied overseas. The article will make plain that in terms whether the CF should be primarily a force at the service of UN led operations, PSCs do not play a role. The concerns of the UN and its member states and the industry’s defensive posture prevent firms from playing a larger role. However, this defensive posture, coupled with Washington’s increasing hesitancy to rely wholeheartedly on state allies, presents different opportunities for US policymakers. Though this is not necessarily a zero-sum development in terms of

promoting Canada-US relations, it does suggest that the US will appreciate more contributions that involve deployments to dangerous areas and direct engagement in combat efforts. In the Canadian case, PSCs themselves both potentially hinder Canadian contributions by straining SOF capabilities and possibly permit a refocusing of tasks within the CF and in how Canada conducts counterinsurgency and other operations abroad.

United Nations Peace Operations and Defensive Posture

The fact that the CF has reemerged in the context of the Afghanistan mission, one that is not led by the UN (though it does have its authorization), has been troublesome for those who envision the CF's *raison d'être* to be the support of UN peace operations.¹ This thinking has considerable currency, even if UN peace operations have changed largely from peacekeeping to peacemaking and peace enforcement, from Chapter Six mandates to Chapter Seven mandates under the UN Charter (meaning that the use of force is increasingly sanctioned). Because Canada's engagement in Afghanistan coincided with the 50th anniversaries of the United Nations Emergency Force and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lester Pearson for his efforts in this historic initiative, the CF's reemergence and its lack of participation in UN directed operations is placed in sharp relief. As of January 2008, Canada ranked as the 56th largest contributor to UN peace operations with only 168 personnel deployed out of a worldwide total of 90,833.

Despite the disappearance of a country like Canada from UN directed peace operations, it is unlikely that PSCs will serve as replacements even though strong arguments have been made in this regard.² For demand reasons, while many UN bodies ranging from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the World Food Program have relied upon PSC expertise in the past, PSCs taking a prominent role in UN directed peace operations appears to be a non-starter for several reasons. First, UN officials and experts see the PSC application of force in direct support of UN mandates as usurping the responsibility of the UN member states to employ violence for political ends. As contended by Jean-Marie Guehenno, the UN Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping, "[i]f you want to have peace, it's not just a technical issue, it's a political issue". Echoing Guehenno's position is Andrew Mack, a one-time strategic planner for former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan: "The head of peacekeeping...has made it pretty clear that having mercenaries within an intervention force is not on...They're not going to use them on the pointy-end stuff because it just doesn't work politically".³

Second, the UN's membership, predominantly from the developing world, does not wish to see PSC involvement. From one angle, many developing world states, as they attempted to break their colonial ties in the 1960s and 1970s, were the targets of

¹ See A. Walter Dorn, "Peacekeeping Then, Now and Always," *Canadian Military Journal* 6, no. 4 (winter 2005-2006): 105-106; Bill Robinson, "Boots on the Ground: Canadian Military Operations in Afghanistan and UN Peacekeeping Missions," Polaris Institute, 17 May 2006, www.polarisinstitute.org/files/Boots%20on%20the%20ground.pdf.

² See, for instance, Doug Brooks and Gaurav Laroia, "Privatized Peacekeeping," *National Interest* (summer 2005): 121-125.

³ Citations take from Frank Langfitt, "Private Military Firm Pitches Its Services in Darfur," *National Public Radio*, 26 May 2006, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5433902; David Pugliese, "Soldiers of Fortune: Mercenary Peacekeepers," *Ottawa Citizen*, 16 November 2005, A11.

operations by so-called soldier of fortune mercenaries. As a result, the definition of “mercenary” as laid out in the UN’s 1989 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries is specifically targeted at soldiers of fortune. Though, as thoroughly examined by many analysts, PSCs differ substantially from soldiers of fortune in their organization and operations and, thus, do not fall under the convention’s definition, many developing world states do not wish to give any quarter to non-state commercial actors with the potential to employ violence.⁴ To do otherwise would suggest that there are good actors and bad actors in this regard; this would dilute the convention’s impact and potentially the UN’s activism on the issue.

From another angle, PSC involvement in peace operations means increased competition for those developing world states that make significant personnel contributions. Of the top 10 contributors in the aforementioned January 2008 statistics, nine of the states were from the developing world; Italy occupied the tenth position. While such participation can be viewed as substantial support for the UN system, it is also the case that many developing world states participate in peace operations largely either to keep their military forces occupied and out of the country or because they desire the hard currency remuneration that their troop contributions generate. Even if PSC participation might bring about a qualitative improvement in UN forces as developing world troop contributions have often been poorly equipped and trained, many states are loath to open this Pandora’s Box for fear of politically beneficial and lucrative opportunities evaporating.

On the supply side, the PSC industry has sensed that it operates in a marketplace dictated by states and has responded accordingly. For the most part, PSCs have asserted that they do not seek contracts calling for combat activities in direct support of bringing about political change and/or changes on the battlefield— the sort of activities that would, for instance, be involved in a Chapter Seven UN mandated peace operation. What is more, such a distinction is helpful because it further differentiates PSCs from soldiers of fortune who explicitly engaged in such combat. Hence, for Falcon Security, “We do not, and have no desire to, conduct offensive operations”. For ArmorGroup: “We don’t do military replacement. We won’t take part in offensive action of any kind. We protect people on the ground”.⁵ Many PSCs complement the aforementioned defensive tasks by conducting humanitarian demining and working in security sector reform. Hence, the industry no longer uses the term “Private Military Company”. Instead, the term is Private Security Company, one that suggests a less assertive and more defensive and reactive character.

United States and Allies

The CF’s reemergence, while surely directed at the security of Canada and Canadians, can also be viewed through the lens of Ottawa’s managing and even improving its relationship with Washington. In this sense, the CF’s reemergence, evident

⁴ Deborah Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁵ Citations taken from James Cameron, “Privates on Parade: Private Security Companies in Post-Conflict Situations,” *World Today*, May 2007, 12; Paul Keilthy, “Private security firms in war zones worry NGOs,” *Reuters*, 11 August 2004, www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/109223838271.htm?_lite_=1.

in operations in Afghanistan alongside US forces, provides support to Washington's international policy initiatives. Additionally, as Joel Sokolsky contends, such operations are to illustrate to American policymakers that Canada takes continental security seriously by demonstrating "a willingness to send forces overseas to participate in the forward defence of the North American homeland".⁶ This illustration is necessary because of the extreme level of threat many Americans perceive. It is also necessary because Canada's credibility in Washington has seemingly suffered, in part because of individual policy decisions such as Canada's stance on missile defence and the war in Iraq, but also in part because of the often noted longer term languishing of Canadian foreign, defence, and development policy.⁷ Therefore, to avoid the charge of free riding and to have greater influence with and renewed respect from the US, applying a reinvigorated CF is crucial in the mind of General Hillier: "We can offer our government more options to pile on in such a way that we get the profile and we get the credit for it".⁸ When considered through Hugh Segal's arguments, this decision is in keeping with the historical conduct of bilateral relations: "[N]o matter who is in the White House, what the balance is in the Congress or Senate, the relationship with America is always better when our capacity to pull our own weight, deploy in alliance or joint operations, and maintain a diplomatic *amicus curiae* position wherever possible and then some is actively advanced".⁹

Yet it is important to recognize that Canada's "pulling of its weight" is currently occurring in a changed context in which the US views its traditional allies differently and has a wider conception as to who its reliable allies actually are. While the Canadian government desires to show that it considers North American security to be important, the US is recognizing less the contributions that allies might make in support of its international efforts. For instance, recent iterations of guiding documents such as the Quadrennial Defense Review have not stressed the importance of the US relying upon the military forces of allies. This affects Canada because the CF lacks the capability to conduct major overseas operations independently. As a result, the CF is likely to make the greatest impact, and accrue for Canada the greatest credit, by working in a coalition, particularly one in which the US is either involved or has direct interest in its success.¹⁰

In addition, perhaps, to the hubris of American unipolarism, several variables inform this purposive downplaying of allies by the US. A strategic divide has opened up in an important alliance like NATO such that there are no longer common unifying threats, or at the very least, member states view contemporary security challenges, and how to best deal with them, differently. Another is the limited military utility of allies working alongside the US. As was discovered during operations in Kosovo and Serbia, an interoperability or technology gap was found to exist between the US and other NATO members. Allies had not followed or kept pace with the US lead as it promoted the "Revolution in Military Affairs" or "Military Transformation" during the 1990s. This

⁶ Joel J. Sokolsky, "Clausewitz, Canadian Style?" *Canadian Military Journal* 3, no. 3 (autumn 2002): 9.

⁷ For example, see Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept: How We Lost Our Place in the World* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004).

⁸ Cited in John Geddes, "Bullets fly. Ottawa ducks," *Macleans*, 25 August 2006, www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20060828_132392_132392&source=srch.

⁹ Hugh Segal, "A Grand Strategy for a Small Country," www.cda-cdai.ca/symposia/2003/segal.htm.

¹⁰ In this regard, see David S. McDonough, "The paradox of Afghanistan," *International Journal* 62, no. 3 (summer 2007): 620-641.

gap was particularly glaring with respect to European allies because though most of their militaries were not configured for expeditionary operations, the crisis in Kosovo was a *European one*. The lessons learnt for Washington were that while having allies sometimes adds further legitimacy to military efforts, the limited usefulness of allies in operational terms means that all actors must resort to the lowest common denominator of operability for the sake of safety. A third is that despite the limited abilities of allies to operate alongside US forces, the political leaders of allied states have wished to have considerable say in mission direction and management, the Balkans again being the case in point. This continued to grate several US officials, especially after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, when American threat sensitivity rose exponentially. As expressed by former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the conduct of military multilateral operations, with the US taking the lead, was to be different: the “mission must determine the coalition, the coalition must not determine the mission”.¹¹ Finally, there is the lack of solidarity amongst members of NATO, a problem currently made plain in Afghanistan where member countries do not either wish to send troops, or if they do, to put them in harm’s way. Comments made by the current US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, capture the US frustration: “As it stands today, non-U.S. NATO nations have more than 2 million men and women in uniform, yet we struggle to maintain 23,000 non-U.S. troops in Afghanistan. This is partly a function of how NATO militaries are organized, and partly a matter of resources - but it is mostly a matter of will and commitment”.¹²

In contrast, private actors such as PSCs feature prominently in guiding documents of the US security and military establishment. While allies may lag behind in terms of interoperability and technology and may not share Washington’s policy objectives, contractors, as noted in the 2004 National Military Strategy, are to be brought closer to the fold:

While engaged in multiple worldwide operations to meet these requirements, the Armed Forces of the United States must maintain force quality, enhance joint warfighting capabilities and transform to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Executing this strategy will require a truly joint, full spectrum force – with a seamless mix of active forces, the Reserve Component, DOD civilians, and contracted workforce – fully grounded in a culture of innovation¹³.

Contractors, in fact, are so important that the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review describes them as forming the fourth column alongside active, reserve, and civilian government employees in the Pentagon’s Total Force concept. PSCs are willing to serve, they possess the necessary capabilities in order to respond to the client’s wishes, and their efforts are not accompanied by political obligations. A concrete example of this Total Force approach was evident in the January 2007 remarks made to the US Senate Armed

¹¹ Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Transforming the Military,” *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May/June 2002): 31.

¹² Cited in “NATO About to Lease Troop Helis for Afghanistan?” *Defence Industry Daily*, 6 November 2007, www.defenseindustrydaily.com/nato-about-to-lease-troop-helis-for-afghanistan-04157/?camp=newsletter.

¹³ United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The National Military Strategy of the United States of America,” 2004, 27, www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf.

Services Committee by the Commander of Multinational Forces – Iraq, General David Petraeus, indicating that he counted PSC personnel as important contributors in facilitating counterinsurgency efforts.

This relationship between the US and PSCs is becoming increasingly symbiotic. Despite, or perhaps partially because of, its wary approach towards state allies, the US military is severely overstretched. In the Afghanistan mission, for instance, NATO's Chief of Staff for ISAF in 2007, General Bruno Kasdorf, recognized the necessary *quid pro quo*: "If you don't have enough military forces, very often that is a way out then, to count on private security companies".¹⁴ With the US spending billions of dollars on private security in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the world, the relationship is clearly quite lucrative for PSCs. Companies have responded to this US demand; PSC personnel, largely in the service of the US and supporting institutions, now collectively outnumber the individual troop contributions of those 21 and 37 non-US countries operating in Iraq and Afghanistan respectively. PSCs have been willing to accept levels of risk and casualty tolerance much greater than many contributing countries. In Iraq alone, PSCs like Blackwater USA, ArmorGroup, and DynCorp International have together suffered over 80 fatalities. In recognition of PSC efforts and sacrifices, US officials have publicly praised PSC personnel and mourned their deaths.

Variables that might disrupt this symbiosis and signal Washington's return to more established multilateral patterns are not necessarily forthcoming. In terms of allies, the intransigence of some traditional US allies may lessen once the deeply unpopular administration of President George W. Bush leaves office in early 2009. Nevertheless, considerable structural problems will still prevent the forces of many European countries from working in an interoperable manner with US forces to the degree desired by Washington. Not only is the bar for transformation set very high, reaching it will become more financially difficult to meet as Europe contends with the increasing medical and social costs of an aging population. In terms of the new US administration, it too will likely embrace the continued use of PSCs. Recent history has shown that political party may not be a factor. Indeed, President Bill Clinton's administration initiated the US-PSC relationship with firms working to train soldiers in Africa, the Balkans, and elsewhere and to execute Plan Colombia, a major US anti-drug program in South America. Already, campaigners for Senator Barak Obama have indicated that while US management and oversight of PSCs can improve, the status quo on using PSCs would likely remain should he win the Democratic Party's nomination and the US Presidency. Certainly, whoever is in the White House following the 2008 election would not wish to contemplate the politically and financially costly reintroduction of the draft, the only real mechanism to ensure that US forces have sufficient "public" manpower to fulfill Washington's strategic obligations. These obligations seem unlikely to retract. It is in this light that one can view AFRICAP, a contract tendered by the Pentagon in 2008 meant to support the newly created Africa Command, itself a vehicle to execute the expanding War on Terror. The eventual contract recipient will be responsible for a variety of tasks including peacekeeper training, aerial surveillance, and support in operational deployments.

¹⁴ Cited in Jason Straziuso and Fisnik Abrashi, "Afghans cracking down on security firms," *USA Today*, 11 October 2007, www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-10-11-3134857502_x.htm.

Although the rise of PSCs and the relative decline of state allies are not necessarily correlational or absolute, the presence of the PSC marketplace offers pause for thought in terms of improving Canada-US relations. True, the US still does rely upon allies in military operations and allies are still willing to contribute. PSCs have not usurped all the activities in which allies traditionally engage. As well, the defensive stance of PSCs is self-limiting in what they can do. Nonetheless, such a defensive footing does partially relieve US forces to engage in combat operations, the sort which many allies have declined. These defensive activities, in addition to humanitarian demining and security sector reform, might themselves have been done by allied militaries. Because combat is inherently risky and potentially costly in terms of blood and treasure, Canada-US relations are arguably best served by the CF working where the benefits will be highest: in parallel or together with US forces in risky endeavours.

Special Operations Forces

A unique characteristic of the CF's reemergence is the prominence of SOF in the military's larger makeup and its overseas operations. This is a considerable change from past practices. JTF-2, Canada's primary SOF unit, has existed since 1993, having replaced the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Special Emergency Response Team. Nevertheless, the unit had a relatively low profile. In part this was due to the shroud of secrecy enveloping the unit's operations. But it was also due to considerable egalitarian pressures within the CF that disdained the notion that the larger conventional forces were somehow "unspecial". Similarly, de-emphasizing JTF-2 might make it less likely personnel from conventional forces would volunteer, a sensitive issue because SOF in Western militaries have traditionally attracted high caliber candidates. Moreover, the notion of superiority or elitism within the CF played at least some role in the significant embarrassment Canada endured in the wake of the 1993 Somalia incident and the subsequent disbandment of Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995. One can appreciate, therefore, that as late as 1999, some members of senior CF leadership stressed that Canada did not possess "special forces".¹⁵

Today, in contrast, Canadian SOF is at the forefront in terms of public recognition and operational prominence. Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the government moved to double the size of JTF-2 (to approximately 600) and to augment its budget by CDN\$119 million. As many as 100 JTF-2 personnel are currently operating in Afghanistan. Accompanying the creation of CANSOFCOM mentioned earlier was the 2006 formation of the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR). The regiment, to have 750 personnel by 2010, is to both enable JTF-2 and relieve it of some of the tasks it currently performs. These developments come at the expense of manpower in the conventional forces but are, collectively, meant to offer the Canadian government a greater number of military options relevant to the contemporary security milieu. This, for

¹⁵ David Last, "Special Operations Forces in Conventional Armies: 'Salvation Army?' or 'Dirty Dozen?'" in Bernd Horn, J. Paul B. Taillon, and David Last, eds., *Force of Choice: Perspectives on Special Operations* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004), 36, 57. See also Bernd Horn, "When Cultures Collide: The Conventional Military/SOF Chasm," *Canadian Military Journal* 5, no. 3 (autumn 2004): 6; David Pugliese, *Canada's Secret Commandos: The Unauthorized Story of Joint Task Force Two* (Ottawa: Esprit de Corps Books, 2002), 121.

General Hillier, is a necessity: “Our special forces are the tool of choice. They are in incredible demand”.¹⁶

This demand on Canadian SOF relates closely to the importance the US places upon SOF in contemporary operations – the sort of risky endeavour noted in the previous section. In January 2003, the Bush Administration assigned the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) the main responsibility for conducting the “Global War on Terrorism”. In recognition of Canada’s contribution, for instance, approximately 40 JTF-2 personnel in 2004 received from the US commendation for their conduct alongside US SOF and those of other countries. Similarly, the Bush Administration lobbied Canada to establish the CSOR so that Canada could both have more robust SOF and take burdens away from US SOF. The particular appeal of Canadian SOF to the US rests both in their strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, Canadian SOF are highly trained and are interoperable with US SOF. On the other hand, because of Canada’s limitations in terms of intelligence collection and tactical air transport, the ability of Canadian SOF to conduct independent operations overseas, just like the larger CF, is limited. This draws Canadian SOF even closer to their US counterparts.

The challenge, however, is that PSCs add to this demand for SOF expertise in a variety of ways. First, many firms have a strong SOF pedigree in terms of their management and ownership. For instance, ArmorGroup, has its roots in the UK’s Special Air Service (SAS), Blackwater USA’s ownership has earlier experience with the US Navy SEALs, and Triple Canopy’s founders came from the US Army’s Delta Force. Even Watchguard International, established in 1967 and the basic template for today’s PSC, was formed by Sir David Sterling, himself one of the SAS’s creators during World War Two. Second, SOF personnel generally work in small groups as do teams of PSC personnel; mass formations, more prevalent amongst conventional forces, are uncommon in both SOF and private operations. Third, because of SOF’s capabilities, heralded by the likes of General Hillier and other prominent military and political officials, there is a certain marketing currency in PSCs possessing this sort of expertise. Fourth, and in a related way, because there is no overarching mechanism for quality control in the PSC industry in terms of either domestic or international legislation, having former SOF members on staff is meant to suffice. Not only are SOF volunteers usually exceptional members of conventional forces, SOF training, conducted at considerable public expense, weeds out upwards of 80 percent of the SOF applicants. PSCs can, therefore, attract highly skilled individuals at minimal expense; they can plunder the ranks of public SOF.

In the Canadian case, though the loss numbers are not known publicly, the drain has become a worry to the CF and has caught the interest of the Senate’s National Security and Defence Committee. As stressed in one CF analysis, “[t]he world-renowned reputation of JTF 2 as a SOF...unit has drawn attention from many of these security firms”.¹⁷

¹⁶ Cited in Bruce Campion-Smith, “Elite forces ‘tool of choice’ in Afghanistan,” *Toronto Star*, 28 March 2007, www.thestar.com/printArticle/196777.

¹⁷ Cited in David Pugliese, “Soldiers of Fortune,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 November 2005, A17. In 2004, the CF indicated that 15 percent of JTF-2 personnel had left the CF in recent years. “JTF 2 members leaving unit to work in Iraq,” 9 April 2004, www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1081475935368_13/?hub=TopStories.

To stem the flow of SOF manpower from the public to the private sector, the CF faces somewhat unique problems. One is that the level of urgency is high in Canada due to the CF's small size. Whereas USSOCOM had in 2006 a total authorized strength of 52,846 personnel in all trades, CANSOFCOM, when it reaches its maximum size in five years, will have only 2,200-2,500 personnel. Hence, as the CANSOFCOM's first commander, Colonel David Barr, recognized, "even small numbers, given that our annual completion rate on a special operations assaulter course is small, so you lose three, four, five people, that's a lot".¹⁸ Given the emphasis in CANSOFCOM on quality rather than quantity, these individuals take time to replace; SOF training and education can take upwards of five years.

What is more, because SOF personnel are recruited from the CF's ranks and not "off the street", further strain is placed on the conventional forces and the possibility for intra-CF animosity increases. For instance, to counter private remuneration that can sometimes be several times greater, the CF introduced in 2006 financial incentives and bonuses directed at Canadian SOF generally and particularly at the experienced operators in the "assaulter" classification. But the more the CF tries to match the high salaries in the private sector and makes SOF "more special", the greater the chance for resentment amongst the other three services. Indeed, when announced, the CF tried not to emphasize that the increases were some form of "retention allowance".¹⁹

On the one hand, CANSOFCOM might still take the best the conventional forces has on offer while on the other hand the necessary quantity may not be there to ensure the requisite quality. For instance, back when he was the Conservative defence critic, the now former Defence Minister, Gordon O'Connor, questioned if the CF was "big enough to get that much talent".²⁰ Collectively, these issues will likely heighten in significance in the future; SOF will likely remain important in contemporary conflict and CANSOFCOM will have additional responsibilities come the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010.

Efforts to prohibit, or at least to manage the flow of Canadians on a case by case basis, from working in the PSC industry are likely not solutions to this manpower challenge. Historically, the Canadian track record is not promising. In 1937 the federal government introduced the Canadian Foreign Enlistment Act, a measure meant at the time to prevent Canadians from participating in the Spanish Civil War. Despite the lack of easy global transportation and instantaneous communications (key ingredients in today's PSC marketplace), over half of the 1,200 Canadian volunteers who fought for the republican cause traveled to Spain after the law was put in place.

Contemporarily, and paradoxically, deterring the PSC employment of Canadians would likely not be to Washington's liking because the US has become such a prominent customer of PSC services. To somehow prohibit Canadians from working in the industry, in spite of the issues noted above, would deprive firms of the requisite expertise and might prompt other states to launch similar initiatives. To manage the flow of personnel on a case by case basis would make the flow of manpower to PSCs for US

¹⁸ Cited in Kathleen Harris, "Special ops' tough task," *Ottawa Sun*, 21 November 2006, 7.

¹⁹ David Pugliese, "Elite troops get more pay to stay," *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 August 2006, www.espritdecorps.ca/pugliese_060826.htm.

²⁰ Cited in David Pugliese, "Military creates new special forces unit," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 January 2006, www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=42f8826a-fba4-483e-bda6-fa351644ff2f.

government clients a political control issue, something that does not currently happen with Canada's trade of military equipment and services to the US (e.g., the use of Canadian produced armaments in the Iraq conflict, an American initiative not endorsed by the Canadian government). Yet to exempt the US from case by case management would reduce the scope and utility of any Canadian initiative. Because the Canadian government wishes to have better relations with the US, a larger issue framing the CF's reemergence, management of this sort is therefore unlikely. But at the same time, even small seepage of Canadian SOF manpower to PSCs places additional stress on CANSOFCOM and the CF and ironically limits the government's military options.

Future Interaction with the CF?

Even if PSCs may dilute somewhat the foreign policy usefulness of Canada employing military force, what possibility is there for interaction with PSCs in the context of the CF's reemergence? At present, Canada does have contractual relationships with firms. For instance, Saladin Security, Hart Security, and Blue Hackle Security currently provide protection services, respectively, to the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, the Strategic Advisory Team, and the Joint Co-ordination Centre in Kandahar City. In recent years, Blackwater USA has provided training in close protection, driving, and shooting to personnel from the JTF-2 and the CF's military police. As expressed by the current Conservative Defence Minister, Peter MacKay, these sorts of relationships have been longstanding: "Private security firms have been used from time to time depending on the issue, depending on the type of training that is required. That is standard practice...It has happened under the previous government and we are very judicious when we enter into these contracts".²¹ In this regard, as directed by Liberal governments, Canada employed PSCs to protect Canadian diplomatic and development personnel in Africa and Central America.

In the context of Canada desiring more clout vis-à-vis the US and with the US particularly prizing the contributions states can bring in terms of combat roles, an examination of the tea leaves reveals the possible convergence of several variables. One is that the CF not only has become more comfortable in relying upon *unarmed* contractors in support roles, it is also increasingly willing to put them into danger zones. When the military implemented its Contractor Support Program (CSP) in 2000 and later the successor Canadian Forces Contractor Augmentation Program (CANCAP) in 2002, the initial objective was to use contractors in more benign security environments such as a post-Dayton Accord Bosnia.²² These programs were meant to allow the CF greater operational flexibility, to reduce some of the strain CF personnel were facing, to permit the CF to concentrate more on "core" or "tooth" type capabilities and less on "tail" or logistic tasks, and to deploy CF personnel to more dangerous environments. They

²¹ Cited in Gloria Galloway, "Ottawa defends use of clandestine security firm," *Globe and Mail*, 24 October 2007, A17.

²² CANCAP can cover these activities: "Administration and Management; Food Services; Materiel Management and Distribution; Communication and Information Systems; Land Equipment Maintenance; Health Services; Transportation; Accommodation and Support; Construction Engineering Services; Power Supply and Distribution; Water Supply and Distribution; Waste Management; Facilities Operations and Management; Roads and Grounds; Fire Services; Geomatics Support; Environmental Management; and Ammunition Support." See Background: Canadian Forces Contractor Augmentation Program, 14 July 2004, www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1409.

targeted the one third of CF personnel who were usually deployed in support efforts. The CF took advantage of CANCAP to the degree that in 2004, Treasury Board approved a CDN\$300 million increase in the five year program, an increase well above the initially set maximum of CDN\$200 million. Likewise, in recent years CANCAP personnel have been utilized first in Kabul and now in Kandahar City, a ratcheting up of the danger levels with each deployment. In fact, the CF has awarded General Service Medals to several CANCAP personnel for their efforts “in the presence of an armed enemy”.²³ More recently, as of early 2008, the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires now provides unarmed personnel who manage security passes at the NATO airfield in Kandahar. Taken together, policies and initiatives such as these generally see private personnel in greater numbers performing a greater number of roles alongside CF personnel in environments not characterized by stability far away from “frontlines”.

A second variable is that what the CF assesses as “core” appears to be shifting beyond what is detailed in a program like CANCAP. The “tooth” aspect of military service is becoming even sharper and, as such, more commercial opportunities potentially exist for armed contractors. Alongside PSCs offering defensive services such as the guarding of bases and protection for supply convoys, CF “core” activities are being reinterpreted as specifically involving combat, rather than just the general utilization and management of armed force per se. In discussing the use of PSCs to provide “perimeter security” for the Canadian Provincial Reconstruction Team’s base in Kandahar City and to create “security cordons” following incidents with Canadian convoys, a military spokesman made the distinction explicit: “The Canadian Forces does not use any private security contractors to conduct offensive operations...Using private security contractors for specific tasks permits Canadian Forces personnel to focus their efforts on those duties where they bring the greatest value to the mission”.²⁴ This evolving Canadian position is not unique. The British Ministry of Defence is also considering how PSCs, defensively, could allow troops to concentrate on other activities in zones of conflict.

Third, ensuring that the CF has the requisite manpower to engage in combat operations, beyond the challenges currently facing JTF-2 specifically, further highlights the PSC option. Given its growing war fighting stance, the CF’s ongoing recruitment drive particularly targets combat arms positions in the army’s infantry and armored units. This is in keeping with the past Liberal government’s desire to see 80 percent of the CF’s expanded manpower directed to front-line army units. To streamline the recruitment process, the CF has relaxed some its background checking criteria and restructured how medical appraisals are performed on recruits. However, despite some success in meeting its recruitment goals, the Department of National Defence (DND) reported in 2007 that the CF’s effective strength (i.e., those individuals who are healthy and available) actually dropped due to increasing retirements and medical leaves. As a result, the CF has had to reassess and lengthen the timelines regarding its ability to increase the ranks of the regular force by 13,000 as per the Conservative government’s wishes. This struggle will likely continue as the CF expects many personnel, perhaps as high as 15,000 members, to

²³ Kevin Thornton, “CANCAP employees receive the General Service Medal,” www.forces.gc.ca/site/Feature_Story/2005/04/cancap_f_e.asp.

²⁴ Cited in Andrew Mayeda, “MPs seek cost of private contractors,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 November 2007, A5.

leave military service in the next few years.²⁵ An added wrinkle is Canada's relatively strong economy which the CF's Chief of the Land Staff, Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie, views as a cause of the jump in personnel leaving the army from eight to 12 percent between 2003 and 2007: "[I]n terms of money, being a soldier is not your optimal career choice".²⁶ In this vein, unemployment levels in Canada at a record 33 year low as of January 2008 do not bode well for the CF being an employer of choice.

In an attempt to maintain its manpower levels, the CF has raised the retirement age and has sent letters to recent retirees, especially from the army, urging them to re-enlist either in the regular force or in the reserves. Keeping experienced personnel in the CF is important not only for the prosecution of operations, but also to train those individuals who have enlisted. Already major army exercises and training programs have been cancelled for want of qualified trainers.

To deal with these manpower challenges, the CF has turned to the private sector. For activities such as recruit training, Lieutenant-General Leslie echoes the fact that soldiers should be involved mostly in their core duties: "With regard to privatization of certain activities within the military, when it makes sense to do so and it's only a function of money, then I am absolutely in favour of it, so that we can free up soldiers to do the soldier activities for which they're trained".²⁷ As such, the CF has deemed private contractors useful in training tasks ranging from parachuting at CFB Trenton to heavy armored vehicle operations at CFB Gagetown.

Given the other variables noted above, the next logical step in providing manpower relief that would still allow for a "combat punch" would see PSCs further displacing CF personnel in some defensive tasks on operations. Such a shift would not simply be a "function of money" because it further refines the unique capabilities and responsibilities of the CF, but it is apparent in Afghanistan that such a refocusing is already underway. The necessary complementing element to this step would be a more robust managerial approach as to how the CF deals with PSCs. It would have to encompass a number of variables ranging from PSC rules of engagement to interoperability to accountability and oversight to the vetting of private personnel to CF training. Moreover, given that the CF's Chief of Review Services determined in June 2006 that the CF did not yet have sufficient policy and doctrine to effectively manage CANCAP, four years after the program's creation, such laxness would have to be stemmed regarding contractors of the armed variety. Otherwise the military's operational requirements may not be met effectively and, moreover, the potentially negative implications of poor PSC management and control could arise for the CF specifically and Canada generally.

²⁵ J.L. Granatstein, *Whose War Is It? How Canada Can Survive in the Post-9/11 World* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2007), 40-41; David Pugliese, "Forces' expansion behind schedule," *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 November 2007, www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=cbee6334-7b4e-4735-be10-008d27692602.

²⁶ Cited in Matthew Fisher, "Forces fight dwindling numbers as troops quit," *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 October 2007, www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=ef48764b-9b31-47e6-b66b-844b6ead81f7. The general made it clear that combat roles themselves were not motivating personnel to leave the CF.

²⁷ Cited in David Perry, "Contractors in Kandahar, Eh? Canada's 'REAL' Commitment to Afghanistan," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 9, no. 4 (summer 2007): 22.

Concluding Remarks: On the Horizon? Privatization and Integrated Missions

As implied at this study's start, the CF's reemergence has not occurred in a larger national policy vacuum; other actors have collectively been involved in reasserting Canada on the international stage. But, for the government, more is needed than just DND, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and other organizations seeking similar objectives. They must act together in a coordinated and synergistic way in order to deal with complex challenges such as countering terrorism and weak statism. This "whole of government" or integrated approach is not dissimilar to other strategies adopted by the US and the UK. What is different, however, is the appeal of maximizing the limited resources of a smaller state like Canada so that it can better achieve its policy objectives and "punch above its weight".

It follows that a military involved in an integrated mission, such as the CF, is interested not only in what supporting contributions it can make, but also in how other actors reinforce its endeavours. In this regard, the Canadian army has developed its concept of Joint, Interagency, Multinational and Public (JIMP) so that it knows what assistance it can offer and what others can bring to the table. For the CF, this knowledge and the capabilities of other actors are critical in the context of counterinsurgency operations such as those underway in Afghanistan, operations meant to capture the "hearts and minds" of local populations. From the CF's perspective, "hearts and minds" operations are important for the sake of force protection, intelligence gathering, and building cooperation.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance, by either the overstretched combat-focused CF or NGOs, is therefore viewed in this light. However, NGOs, for their part, even if they may be heavily funded by CIDA or subcontracted by other bodies, are not keen on being employed in this manner. Many Canadian organizations have been quite vocal in their opposition.²⁸ Integration represents the militarization of assistance and it threatens the sanctity of the humanitarian ethic that stresses the impartiality, neutrality, and independence of those who deliver humanitarian assistance. Need is to dictate the priorities of humanitarian assistance, not the political utility of particular populations.

PSCs, in contrast, have no qualms about possible integration through their delivery of humanitarian assistance. It represents further commercial opportunities and enhances the industry's acceptability, thus separating it even more from soldiers of fortune. While no PSCs have delivered humanitarian assistance to date (though some have protected NGOs themselves), some have indicated their willingness to do so. States donors also seem increasingly interested by this offer. USAID warned NGOs in 2004 that it would seek arrangements with other assistance deliverers should they not be supportive of US policy. In 2006, the UK's Department for International Development took the further step by indicating that all its projects were open to tender and that PSCs, especially, could place bids. Presently, Canada has not made similar indications of interest, but it does face similar challenges in cooperation and seeks similar integrated

²⁸ Stephen Cornish, "No Room For Humanitarianism in 3D Policies: Have Forcible Humanitarian Interventions and Integrated Approaches Lost Their Way?" *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 10, no. 1 (fall 2007): 1-48; Canadian Consortium on Human Security, "The Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan: A Human Security Dilemma for Canada," www.humansecurity.info/page438.htm.

approaches to overseas missions. This will be an important issue to watch in the future, if only because the term “humanitarian” will have been stretched beyond recognition.

Overall then, PSCs have challenged and will continue to challenge many long held assumptions, particularly concerning the management and application of force. Once states were thought to be the sole purveyors of military force applied beyond their borders. The PSC industry’s rise, however, partially challenges these assumptions. PSCs work for a variety of clients, but states, especially the US, are their main sources of revenue. They offer a variety of services, but they do not become engaged in contracts that call for combat duties. They can do many things that state militaries perform, but they do not entirely usurp the utility of a state having allies drawn from the international community of states. The CF is reemerging, therefore, upon this shifting and grey landscape, one that alters the CF’s utility as a foreign policy tool, especially vis-à-vis the US, and one that may affect how the CF evolves. What PSCs will do in the service of states in the future, how states will manage the PSC industry, and how the CF will respond are crucial issues for policymakers and researchers alike in the coming years.