


MEMORANDUM FOR SGM Nicholes, Faculty Advisor L09, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, TX 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Haines Group Research Paper

1. Thesis Statement. The increased use of civilians in combat may put more Soldiers on the battlefield; however, the contracting process is inefficient and costly.
2. Discussion. The attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 has forced the nation to increase its security in virtually all aspects. The number of military personnel sent overseas to fight the War on Terror has forced the Department of Defense (DOD) to hire civilians to perform a variety of duties.
3. Conclusion. The DOD hired civilian contractors in an attempt to counter the strain on the U.S. Military personnel, so the maximum number of Soldiers on the battlefield is more effective; however, several studies indicate that the contracting process is inefficient and costly. The most significant problems identified in the contracting process are oversight, quality control, training, integration, and the law of war.
4. Counterpoint. Civilian employees provide special skills that may not be readily accessible in the military, but critical to the support of full spectrum operations. This allows the maximum number of Soldiers on the battlefield and, in turn, keeps the deployment period for any one unit or Soldier to a minimum.
5. Haines Award. We request that the Haines Award Selection Board consider this paper for the General Haines Award for Excellence in Research. The USASMA American Psychological Association (APA) Style Handbook, USASMA American Psychological Association (APA) Style Reference Handbook, USASMA American Psychological Association (APA) Writing Style Handbook, and *Writing Research Papers*, 11th Edition by James D. Lester, are the guides used in the preparation of this research paper.


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Running head: INCREASED USE OF CIVILIANS IN COMBAT

Increased Use of Civilians in Combat

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Thesis: The increased use of civilians in combat may put more Soldiers on the battlefield; however, the contracting process is inefficient and costly.

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Abstract

The attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 has forced the nation to increase its security in virtually all aspects. The number of military personnel sent overseas to fight the War on Terror has forced the Department of Defense (DOD) to hire civilians to perform a variety of duties. Throughout history, there have always been civilians on the battlefield. In the recent decade however, DOD has hired an unprecedented number of civilians to support our military both in the continental United States and abroad. The increased use of civilians in combat may put more Soldiers on the battlefield; however, the contracting process is inefficient and costly.

Increased Use of Civilians in Combat

Civilians have always been present with the United States military in the comfort of bases during peacetime and on the fields of combat. One could date contractors even before 1492 when, in essence, contracts from the Spanish king and queen authorized Christopher Columbus to expand Spanish control. Captain John Smith received his contract from the Virginia Company to protect and even form a militia to secure Jamestown in 1606 (Preservation Virginia, 2000). Civilian contractors mainly worked the jobs deemed menial. Logistical applications such as cooking, cleaning, moving items from one location to the other and even medical positions are the original contractor workloads.

General George Washington's Continental Army had many workers that followed his men from battlefield to battlefield. This continued with the American Indian War thru the Civil War and even on today's battlefield. The vast majority of these contractors were local hires or Family members of the Soldiers that continued moving with the Army to assist where needed and the majority did not receive pay except in the form of shelter and rations.

And, on the ground, it was a private businessman who, before the start of the Revolution, offered to build a thousand-man army at his own expense, if the Continental Congress, of which he was a member, failed to fund a standing military. That was a far more financially risky endeavor than anything a private security firm like Blackwater has ever attempted. That entrepreneur was George Washington. By the way, Washington himself invested in at least one wartime privateer (Isenberg, 2008).

Costs

Determining the overall expense is almost impossible. Government officials have inquired about the number of incomplete records, lack of documentation, and the simple issue of

ongoing and unfulfilled contracts. From September 11, 2001 until June 15, 2008 the estimated costs for the Global War on Terror exceeds \$864 billion. Each month contract payments are in excess of \$12.3 billion (Belasco, 2008).

According to the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), the U.S. Army awarded contracts worth approximately \$733 million to obtain contract security guards at 57 Army installations in 2006. This total is much more than other DOD services so far (United States Government Accountability Office, 2006). The Army is also using contract security guards at several facilities overseas to include Iraq and Afghanistan. With the need for Soldiers overseas to fight the war on terror, these contracts provide the security force necessary to protect our U.S. Army installations and facilities world wide, the same installations that house many military Families. One factor escalating the cost for these civilian security forces is sole-source contracts.

The government terms sole-source contracting as a contract awarded to one company that meets certain criteria without opening the contract to public bid. When a government contract is open to public bid, companies compete against each other in an attempt to obtain the contract for the lowest cost to the government. The Army has relied heavily on sole-source contracting for its contracted security. The Army has awarded \$495 million and placed sole-source contractors at 46 out of 57 installations in the U.S. This amount is two thirds of the total contract dollars spent on sole-source contract security (United States Government Accountability Office, 2006). It is unclear why the DOD decided to use primarily sole-source contracts for security at these installations; however, it is clear that the Army could have saved a great deal of money if more than one third of the contract dollars were bid for by security companies as opposed to using

sole-sourcing. These facts indicate just how inefficient and costly the government contracting system is.

Compounding these already inefficient and costly contracts are award fees. An award fee is an amount that the contractor may earn, in whole or in part, during contract performance that is sufficient to provide motivation for excellence in such areas as quality, timeliness, technical ingenuity, and cost effective management. The Government's subjective evaluation of the contractor's performance in terms of the criteria stated in the award fee plan determines the amount of the award fee (National Contract Management Office, 2008). The Federal Acquisition Regulation states, "Award fees are issued to fixed fee contracts to motivate the contractor."

The GAO has estimated that the Army has paid out more than \$18 million in award fees; however, these fees were only for compliance of the contracts, and in some cases, the contractor was not in compliance but still received up to 90% of the award fee. The GAO identified one case where a contract review board recommended the contractor receive 99% of the available award fee although they were under investigation for falsifying training records. To correct the mistake, the board later recommended lowering the award fee from 99% to 90% of the available amount (United States Government Accountability Office, 2006). Again, the problem of insufficient oversight and quality control is evident in all these examples. Contractors falsifying documents may have very questionable ethics, but they are still receiving 90% of their award fee. This provides more confirmation that this system is inefficient and brings into question the necessity and effectiveness of the award fee program. If a contractor fulfills the contract obligations, pay that contractor for that job and eliminate the award fee. If a contractor is falsifying documents and placing unqualified personnel in positions of protecting our

installations, terminate their contract and bar them from competing for any other government contracts.

Historical Overview of Monetary Costs

Until recently, military officials have found zero reasons to track or know the number of contractors servicing the branches. In Vietnam, officials contracted organizations such as General Electric and Johnson, Drake, and Piper and relied on those organizations to maintain and determine the number of workers required. During the Vietnam conflict estimates are that 10% of the total force was contractors (Civilian Contractor History, 2009). These men and women were then and are still force multipliers in the eyes of some. Contractors were in Vietnam in 1964 serving not just the military but other organizations such as the U.S. State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. Air America was a logistical organization that flew resupply (combat) missions for Special Forces and local indigenous forces. There were no "front lines" in Vietnam and these civilian warriors faced the same dangers as their uniformed partners.

In August 1990, the Iraqi Army invaded their neighboring country of Kuwait. Simultaneously the United States Army was undergoing a transformation within both the logistics and combat arms arenas. Upon deployment to Saudi Arabia, our Army made a cautious decision to deploy over 9,200 contractors. The lack of organic maintenance forces within the organizations was the major contributor forcing this response. With varying missions, the array included both U.S. and foreign contractors.

The first order of business was logistical. Contractors provided rations and water operations immediately upon troops entering the country. Transportation for personnel and equipment was also necessary. The UH 60 Blackhawk, Hawk Missile Systems, Patriot Missiles, and many other new systems within the Army inventory required civilian weapons' experts. The

United States Air Force deployed the U-2R tactical reconnaissance aircraft in mid-August 1990 to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This invaluable intelligence asset requires multiple contractors to maintain not only the aircraft but the imagery equipment also. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) negotiated more than 550,000 contracts worth nearly \$760 billion (Quartermaster Professional Bulletin, 1997).

Operation Restore Hope and *Operation Joint Endeavor* both occurred in the mid-1990s. The United States Navy required logistical support in Somalia for improved computer operations that assisted in tracking supplies. Technicians and trainers guided the “how to” and maintenance of the computer terminals. Over 1000 contractors deployed to Somalia and remained an additional year in support of the United Nations even after the United States redeployed its forces from theater. Bosnia was a unique situation due to the land mass that surrounded the country. Air and rail operations were the only viable means of moving personnel, equipment, and supplies into operation. Nearly 500 commercial rail systems moved supplies. Each system cost over \$125,000 each. Civilian contracted buses and trucks at a rate over two to one against the military transportation system; this ensured continuous support of personnel movement.

Global War on Terror Corporation Examples

Kellogg, Brown, and Root (KBR) first surfaced in 1901 as a fabrication company. During the 1990s, Halliburton purchased KBR and the subsidy began. In April 2007, KBR separated from Halliburton and became a standalone corporation. In 2001, the government awarded a ten-year contract to KBR for the United States Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program. This confirmed the company’s long-term survival. KBR currently operates mainly in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan with combat logistics support for *Operations Enduring Freedom* and *Operation Iraqi Freedom* with over 50,000 employees. Numerous examples of

contract costs for KBR in combat operations; however, there is no “total costs” or financial figure available for overall completions. One example of the profit available for organizations is a January 2004 Oil Reconstruction Contract solely awarded to KBR. While this contract had a not-to-exceed amount of \$1.2 billion for the life of the contract, actual costs under the contract totaled about \$722.3 million, pending adjustments based on contract closeout. Approximately \$562.7 million came from the U.S.-appropriated Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, and \$159.6 million from the Iraqi’s Development Fund for Iraq (SIGIR, 2009). Recent figures are nearing \$16 billion in contracts for this company alone. KBR can also continue to draw a large profit margin by listing or hiring employees from foreign countries. These employees are exempt from federal and state taxes along with Medicare wages. Continuing under these circumstances only inhibits America’s economy while filling the corporation’s pockets. Along with civilian logistical support is special operations and force protection companies such as Blackwater.

Blackwater is an amazing organization that came into the contractor scene since 1997. The company conducted special operations and force protection countermeasures which were not limited to the ground but air and sea also. Since 2000, the government gave the company over \$1.25 billion dollars in contracts. In Iraq alone, Blackwater has over \$800 million in government contracts and maintains a force estimated at 1,000 personnel. These men and women are involved specifically with the security of high-ranking U.S. and foreign officials. This organization has found itself in the news over the years with tragedies such as the four employees murdered in 2004 in Fallujah. In 2008, several of the employees have been in a legal dispute due to an incident that occurred in Baghdad in 2007 with over 17 Iraqis killed after Blackwater workers encountered a complex ambush with improvised explosive devices. Current

thoughts in Washington include contracting the organization to procure and train a “quick reaction force” and fielding an elite force to fight the pirates plaguing the seas around Somalia. Only time will tell if the use of this form of contractor will continue.

Pay and Outsourcing

One considers pay as the amount of monies received for a specific job or mission. There is an unprecedented difference between contractor and service member pay. Current estimates are that contractors make an average of ten times the monthly pay of a Soldier. Military pay is one-half percentage point below the annual average American’s income by law. With a voluntary force leading this age of war, it divulged upon enlistment that one would not become a millionaire. However, the individual could receive additional training that would allow for a higher paying job after successful completion of their obligation. This in turn could force retention rates to fall drastically. Private contractors receive additional time at home versus the American military. Military policy averages a 14-day rest and relaxation period authorized during a 12-month tour. Most contractors receive 30 day paid leave every six months. Contractors are not without their problems. Issues are beginning to arise about post-traumatic stress disorders not treated, death and injuries, lack of recognition in the public’s eye, and sexual assaults while in theater not taken seriously.

Outsourcing or hiring contractors to assist the military has become the norm for working on installations, combat operations, and post-conflict operations. The following are examples of why this outsourcing is difficult on the contracting process, commanders, and the military.

1. **Contract Oversight:** People have a lack of knowledge throughout the ranks on what contractors are required to do and how they are to do it. No one has the formal education or enough personnel to allow oversight on contracts or projects. In

Kosovo, DynCorp allegedly filled its contracted portion of the U.S. police force in the UN peacekeeping operations with “unsuitable” (overage and overweight) police officers. (Singer 2003, 153) cost cutting becomes a great possibility and forces the government to spend additional taxpayer dollars to correct. In an Army-commissioned report, the Army raised concerns about the lack of personnel to provide sufficient contracting support to either expeditionary or peacetime missions. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, the DOD has increased the number of oversight personnel in Iraq by shifting existing oversight personnel from other locations into Iraq (United States Government Accountability Office, 2008).

2. Contract Management: The few contract managers available fail to be in the correct locations and often have a short tour due to conditions. This does not allow the oversight required for correct management procedures. Ad hoc systems are unable to have vision.
3. Growing Reliance on Contractors: Reliance on contractors forces services to delete certain types of units and personnel from their ranks. Currently there are capabilities that contractors only conduct, such as the Army’s Guardrail system and detection of biological threats in certain theaters. If these contractors are no longer available the services would find themselves attempting to find other contractors or paying higher funds for the source.
4. Dependence and Contractor Failure: With the government allocating specific functions to contractors there have been many issues with employees not wanting to deploy to dangerous areas thus causing missing services for service members. This also occurs when contractors leave project sites due to increased enemy activities or

attacks. Unfortunately, the services must reallocate priorities and time to retake the ground that was once secure and leave forces to protect the contractors.

5. Access to Sensitive Information: Certain information that contractors are privy to is sensitive. Although it is unlikely that a corporation would use this against the United States it is possible that rouge, employees could be looking for monetary gains.
6. Recruiting and Retention Efforts: Retention efforts have lowered since the Global War on Terror. Statistics offer many reasons; however, we fail to acknowledge the lure of excitement and money to work on contracts. The end dollar figure that some of these men and women receive is the small difference.

Despite these drawbacks, contractors play a critical roll in the war on terror and are a force multiplier for our country's military; however, these contractors serving tours in combat zones do not serve without risks. The potential risk of death becomes very aggressive and extremely possible. To mitigate these risks, better training and integration are essential.

Training and Integration

Private companies hire contractors to do everything from cooking meals to interrogating prisoners. The qualifications required for a civilian contractor vary greatly depending on the skill set required. On the other hand, military retirees have the experiences within the service. Though some need training in their particular mission, they also need to be knowledgeable of critical Soldier responsibilities and tasks to ensure survival. Private contractors on a number of occasions work in harm's way when revenue provokes companies to send them into dangerous situations lacking equipment and sometimes training they need. Concerns arise with the quality of the training that these contractors are receiving. For instance, the military does not require these contractors to be prior military. Their current knowledge is a result of outdated training

techniques in comparison to current military doctrine. They often receive vastly different training and equipment than U.S. or even Coalition Forces.

Today the U.S. military training is unparalleled to other developed nations. It has the best resources available. Many operations on the battlefield prove this true in our country's history. The unit measures its success through readiness reports that operational and strategic level commanders review. On the other hand, there is not a similar system to monitor contractor readiness. This can cause doubt in the minds of many regarding whether or not these civilians possess adequate training and preparation similar to the constantly trained and ready U.S. military. Some question their readiness, but their technical knowledge on the other hand is essential.

Our reliance on contractors has substantially increased due to the number of technological systems that augment operations. Civilian contractors enhance logistic and maneuver operations, their battlefield presence is now frequent and widespread. Civilian contracted employees, in fact, help the military. One of the biggest challenges of contracting services in a theater of operation is the integration of the civilian personnel into the military environment. Its completion is in such a manner to minimize operational disruptions.

U.S. forces authority over contractors is different from the way it governs Soldiers. Contractor's duties are based primarily on the conditions of their contract and do not observe military policy or the Uniform Code of Military Justice unless Congress confirms war. The military does however, act in a management role concerning the contracted civilians. Accountability is necessary in everything the military does, but some contracted employees feel they are only accountable to their firms and bypass the military system (J.E. Althouse, 1998). The chains of command become clouded. Not only does this breed conflict but it can place the

contractors, Soldiers, and other civilians in latent danger. Different organizational cultures and values add to this complex challenge.

There are two chains of command on the battlefield one military and the private sector. The only link between the two is through the contracting officer who has sole authority over the contractors (Lexington Institute, 2005). The agreement directs the contractor the conditions or stipulations. This situation creates management challenges for military commanders. A commander who needs to change the performance requirements of a civilian contractor is required to work with civilian protocol to change any agreements previously established. This can be a complex situation because forces depend on civilians for successfully completing its mission.

Communication is a big problem. Both the military and the civilian contractors have a misunderstanding about each other's method of operations and the timeline in which they are completed. This results in conflict. The quality of the communication and coordination of projects from some contractors with military commanders is excellent; from others it is poor. This poor communication and coordinating threatens mission safety and success. Soldiers and contractors must train to the same standards so they can eliminate dangerous breakdown in communication. The chain of command through which communication flows must be clear and everyone must adhere and remain accountable for their actions.

The safety of the contractors is another issue. A cook or a supply specialist in the military learns basic battle tactics so that in an extreme situation they are capable of fighting. Out sourced tasks compromises the effectiveness of an operation and places it at risk. Noncombatant contractors are a distraction to Soldiers when they also provide them with needed protection.

Another argument when discussing the integration of civilian contractors working side by side with the military is that it may deteriorate the military's expertise and ability for commitment. "When the U.S. government allocates a substantial amount of money to private companies rather than its national forces, it encourages private rather than public expertise" (Avant, 2000). Although the use of contractors may be a money saver, the independence under which these companies operate is a concern. The Army is becoming more dependent on the private sector. It could be disastrous for our military to become so dependent on the contractors over which the military has little to no control.

The training and integration of civilian contractors into a military environment will continue to be an issue that needs addressing as the reliance on contractor's increases. Allegations of unlawful conduct by contractors dictate the need for additional training in order to allow civilians to work side by side with the military. Officials from the Department of Defense projected a modification to centralized gaining policy requiring contractors deploying overseas to understand international laws of wars.

Leaders working hand and hand with civilians who accompany the force during deployments must understand the various rules and laws that apply to those civilians. One must be mindful of the roles in which civilians can and cannot perform. The slightest misunderstanding whether intentional or not can cause harm to everyone within that command. The command must insure their civilian counterparts do not do anything that the opposing forces can perceive as a threat. Opposing forces will try to charge unlawful civilians with a war crime if they catch them partaking in any hostile activity. Ignorance cannot be the standard-bearer for doing wrong.

Legal Stipulations

What are combatants, noncombatants, and civilians? One must clearly define these elements because the roles they play on the battlefield are crucial to their identity. The rules and laws that govern them are viable to their treatment if the enemy captures them during armed conflict.

The Division amongst Combatants, Noncombatants, and Civilians

Leaders must know and understand the difference because it will change how the enemy categorizes the civilian's conduct. For example, a Soldier bearing arms and killing an enemy has the rights to prisoner of war (POW) status should the enemy capture him, but the opposition will charge the civilian with a war crime. When we use unlawful civilians on the battlefield, no matter how great the advantage, we lose focus of the rule of law and place U.S. civilian personnel in jeopardy.

Combatants defined. A combatant is a uniformed person who bears arms and actively engages in conflict. For the opposing forces to recognize a combatant as a privileged combatant, they must follow the rules of the law of war. Upon capture, they qualify as a prisoner of war (POW) under the Third Geneva Convention (GCIII). Combatants have the legitimacy to partake in direct combat. Combatant's rights are in essence a license to kill or maim our adversary and destroy their military objective. No one can prosecute a lawful combatant during war as long as they are performing military operations regardless if the act is a crime in peacetime.

Noncombatants defined. A legal and technical term that describes a military person whose role during armed conflict does not allow them to engage in combat. Personnel who fall into this category are medical personnel and chaplains who are regular Soldiers but the Geneva Convention protect them because of their function that is "hors de combat", which mean, "out of

the fight”. A noncombatant is a Soldier that does not get involved in armed conflict.

Noncombatants still fall under the protection of the Geneva Convention and will receive treatment as a POW should the enemy capture them.

Civilians defined. A civilian is a person who does not bear arms and must wear civilian clothes. Maxwell (2004) states, “Unlike combatants, civilians do not normally receive or require POW status, as they are protected under a different set of international roles, the Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons. The Hague’s regulation and Geneva Convention plus the additional protocol guard civilians against willful attack as long as they do not participate in ongoing engagements or falsely bear arms. Armed or opposing forces should not make civilians the direct intent of attack or an area populated by civilians as the target.

Limits on the Use of Force of Civilians Accompanying the Force

As far back as the 16th century, civilians have been accompanying the force. The Revolutionary War relied immensely on civilians to help in the transport of troops. When it came to engineer projects during the Vietnam War, civilians were also in the forefront helping in various construction projects. Communication projects throughout the Civil War, the military depended on the civilians heavily for these tasks as well. At the time of World War II and the Vietnam War, one civilian supported every six Soldiers.

Civilians are on the rise in their partnership with the armed forces. The armed forces rely heavily on civilians to aid in combat operations and to maintain upgraded equipment. Although great advantages may come from this, the down side is the risk of illegal use of civilians in combat and compromising the law of war. For example, during World War II, eight German naval officers came to the United States in essence to terrorize and enable some of the facilities. They discarded their uniforms to fit into the population. They tried to hide their identity as

enemy combatants to evade capture through posing as civilians. Upon capture, the government charged them with war crimes. Military tribunals were the forum the government used. They gave up their right for the government to treat them as lawful combatants.

The enemy should not explicitly target civilians but once in the enemy's custody they should receive POW status, unless shown they were part of the hostilities. One of the biggest issues is insuring that civilians do not pick up arms and try to work hand in hand with the armed forces. If they cross this line from civilian to unlawful combatant, the enemy will not grant combatant immunity; the enemy will recognize them as an unlawful combatant. This is what happened to the German officers.

Regulatory Guidance of Civilians Accompanying the Force

Civilians are populating the battlefield alongside the armed forces in aid of military operations. Distinction between combatants and civilians while on the battlefield is still unclear. The lack of distinction is unacceptable and the Geneva Convention must be more to bridge this gap. They must also make a positive separation because civilians are unable to bear arms and actively protect themselves even in self-defense. The fourth Geneva Convention and the two Additional Protocols covers the protection of civilians. The Law of War needs to have a re-look to make it more viable for everyone as a whole to get this principle of distinction clearly outlined. A person can only maintain or hold one status. If there is any doubt during a conflict if a person is a lawful civilian, then the opposing forces should view them as such. With civilian contractors fighting side by side with our military, the laws and regulations must be clear. Our nation must also put into policy and convention for recognizing the sacrifices our civilian contractors are making on the battlefield.

Contractor Sacrifices and Recognition

Our military personnel are not the only patriots that are willing to make sacrifices; however, the military identifies on-going issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder and provides recognition for superior service. Conversely, contractors are fighting under the same physical and mental conditions but the military, corporate leaders, or our country does not recognize them.

Facing Dangers

According to (Schooner 2005), “This problem was evident on March 31, 2004 when four contractors working for the private security firm Blackwater were ambushed and killed while escorting a convoy in Fallujah.” This event presents itself as an extreme case because these men were hung on the bridge leading into the city of Fallujah. The results of what happened led the military to refer to the bridge as “Blackwater Bridge”. Contractors run a great risk of death when providing security or driving in convoys in combat zones yet they still endure the potential harm and risk of life.

In one particular company, Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR), (Kreiser 2006) discovered that, “50 employees killed and 420 wounded by insurgent attacks or improvised explosive devices (IED).” These deaths and injuries originated from a fleet of drivers providing the needed support for the services. The impact of IEDs are greater to the civilian convoys due to the commercial trucks they are driving. These trucks lack the armor that the military vehicles utilize. Yet these contractors continue to serve without hesitation. To give an example of deaths, (Broder & Risen 2007) list, “Casualties among private contractors in Iraq have soared to record levels this year, setting a pace that seems certain to turn 2007 into the bloodiest year yet for the civilians who work alongside the American military in the war zone, according to new

government numbers.” Running the risk of an ambush or explosion introduces fear, but the thought of falling in the hands of the enemy as a civilian produces horrifying results.

With the amount of civilian contractors almost equivalent to the amount of military personnel in the combat zone, contractors run a greater risk of falling in the hands of the enemy, held for ransom, tortured, or even killed. According to Raghavan & Fainaru (2006), “The hijacking of vehicles is common, and trucks and drivers are often held until security companies pay a form of ransom to get them back, contractors say.” If captured, civilians endure the risk of the enemy torturing and killing them. How does this affect the military? This unfortunately dampens military operations because the military must stop a mission, conduct search, and rescue missions for the civilians. With these deaths, serious injuries and the risk of capture by the enemy, another nightmare manifests with all the traumatic scenes of death and the gore of combat seen by these contractors. These demonic nightmares appear in the form of stress, depression, and possible suicide. This demon is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Serving up to one year at a time, many contractors see death looking at them face to face. Death divulges itself from the front of their vehicle’s windshield as they look out on the road at one of their fellow contractors lying in a pool of blood from an IED. Kreiser (2006) quotes one contractor, “We shed silent tears by day and scream in terror by night.” PTSD affects not only the military community; it affects contractors in the same fashion and possibly worse. These brave warriors head straight from the highway of destruction to the freedom roads of America. The contractors have no opportunities for counseling, no time to reset, and apparently no coverage for the disorder.

The military takes an aggressive role in combating PTSD. What happens to the contractors who see the same chaotic destruction of IEDs and the enemy riddling their fellow contractors with bullets or some sort of fragmentary device? In one case, medical denied a KBR employee any sort of treatment due to late reporting. Risen (2007) also provided this comment as well, "Many work side-by-side with Soldiers and are exposed to the same dangers, but they mostly must fend for themselves in navigating the civilian health care system when they come back to the United States." The military believes in treating PTSD as quickly as possible because of the potential affects it has on an individual, their Family members, and possibly the community. Health care must establish improvements in support and guidance from the employers of these warriors serving along side of the military. The men and woman supporting the effort in the war on terrorism earn their right to recognition and support on a daily basis.

Recognition to the War Effort

The military honors those who serve with and for them during combat and in peacetime. What is unfortunate is the lack of recognition the United States gives to those contractors. Unless it is some dramatic event, the acknowledgment given to contractors equals very little. The civilian population of America and our very own government does not notice the deaths of many contractors. Broder & Risen (2007) quoted a very upset daughter in an interview as saying, "If anything happens to the military people, you hear about it right away," she said in a telephone interview. "Flags get lowered, they get their respect. You don't hear anything about the contractors." This sad but true comment impinges on the efforts of the family support to the contractor serving to support the military. The men and women contractors deserve better treatment. The American people need to acknowledge the heroes within the civilian contractor community who served in the combat zone because they deserve it.

The definition of hero according to the online Merriam Dictionary (2009), “a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities d: one that shows great courage.” The men and women supporting the military as contractors fit the pre-requisites of being a hero. They knowingly and willingly leave their families, give up comforts, and sometimes die while providing the comforts and necessities of the military. Nevertheless, if one of them dies, they do not receive the same honors the military renders to fallen Soldiers. The lives of contractors (Americans) seem vague at most in the eyes of the public. They do not carry the honor of a military unit, but most have served in the military. To the public and even the military, contractors receive monetary compensation, so who cares if they die. The contractors make the choice to generate good money in this fashion and therefore, they opt to put themselves at risk.

Opposing View

Civilian contractors can perform many duties more efficiently and at less cost than maintaining a military during peacetime. The reason for downsizing the U.S. military after the cold war was to save money and resources by implementing a plan to hire civilian contractors to perform many of the duties for our forces. While it is true that many of the civilian contractors receive up to 10 times the amount of a Soldier, once the mission is complete that expense ends. One must also consider that many of the contractors employ third country nationals at a lesser wage than a U.S. citizen. Conversely, when considering the cost of maintaining a peacetime force, to include facilities, training, benefits, and Family members, contractors save the taxpayers money.

Civilian contractors also provide special skills that may not be readily accessible in the military but critical to the support of full spectrum operations to include the maintenance of some Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence (C3I) systems. DOD integrates these

special skills within the military to form a total force. Relying on civilian contractors to maintain this often complex and technical equipment saves the DOD money by not having to train Soldiers to perform this task.

Furthermore, not having to finance the treatment of PTSD or death benefits to civilian contractors that may become casualties on the battlefield saves the government money. Civilian contractors not only save the taxpayers money, they serve as a force multiplier in supporting the military's mission by allowing military personnel in combat zones to perform their mission of defeating the enemy, as opposed to washing pots and pans in a dining facility.

Conclusion

The DOD hired civilian contractors in an attempt to counter the strain on the U.S. military personnel, so the maximum number of Soldiers on the battlefield is more effective; however, several studies indicate that the contracting process is inefficient and costly. The most significant problems identified in the contracting process are oversight, quality control, training, integration, and the law of war. While DOD has taken steps to improve contract oversight, staffing and training challenges remain. Not only does civilian contracting for the military come with a high monetary cost, without proper oversight and quality control, a security risk may exist. At a minimum, an extensive risk management study to identify and mitigate or eliminate these risks is necessary.

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