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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

**PROTECTING DIPLOMATS IN IRAQ: WHAT CAN THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF
STATE DO TO IMPROVE IT'S MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF SECURITY
CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ?**

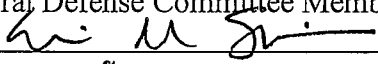
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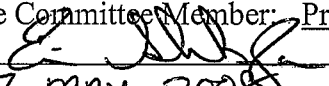
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Acknowledgement

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Diplomatic Security Service Special Agents Edward Sykes and Stephen Sullivan, who gave their lives in Iraq in the performance of their duty.

Executive Summary

Title: Protecting U.S. Diplomats in Iraq: What Can the U.S. Department of State Do to Improve its Management and Oversight of Security Contractors in Iraq?

Author: Special Agent Michael Eicher, U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service

Thesis: As insurgent attacks against U.S. military and diplomatic personnel in Iraq are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, the U.S. Department of State will continue to rely upon the services of private security companies, such as Blackwater, USA to protect U.S. diplomats assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq. By exercising proper management of its security contracts and implementing measures to hold contractors accountable for their performance, the Department of State will improve the effectiveness of its protective security programs.

Discussion: Private security contractors hired by the U.S. Department of State have protected U.S. diplomatic personnel in Iraq since 2003. The contractors have performed their mission with great success in that no U.S. diplomats have been killed while under their protective coverage. However, the controversial September 16, 2007 killing of 17 Iraqis in Nisour Square, Baghdad by PSCs employed by Blackwater USA, under contract to the Department of State, publicized the problems associated with the Department of State's management of its security contracts and with the general lack of regulation and accountability regarding all private security contractors operating in Iraq. The September 16 incident was the catalyst for change because it compelled the Department of State to review its security contract management practices and improve how it manages and oversees its protective security contracts.

This paper addressed the question of what the Department of State can do to improve its management and oversight of the World Wide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract both at Diplomatic Security Service (DS) headquarters in Washington, D.C. and at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Recommendations were offered for how DS can improve management of the WPPS program at the headquarters level by developing standardized operating procedures for regional security officers to uniformly implement at all U.S. embassies. Also discussed was the importance of providing proper training for all new assistant regional security officers being assigned to supervise protective security missions in Iraq and the benefit of assigning contract management specialists to Iraq to oversee the \$500 million WPPS contract. Additionally, a recommendation was discussed to revise and update the WPPS training curriculum to make it more flexible and adaptive to changing security environments. Lastly, a recommendation was provided for DS to increase the number of inspectors available to monitor and evaluate the training PSCs receive from their respective security firms prior to deploying to Iraq.

Key recommendations made in a report prepared by Under Secretary of State for Management, Patrick Kennedy, were also reviewed. These recommendations included the benefits of hiring Arabic speakers to accompany all PSC protective security missions, the benefits of installing audio and video equipment in all motorcade vehicles to provide real time information, and to record all mission activity. Furthermore, the benefits and concerns

associated with establishing incident response teams, or "Go Teams," to investigate PSC escalation of force incidents were offered.

Conclusion: With the implementation of the recommendations made to improve the management and oversight of the WPPS contract, the Department of State will improve the safety its diplomats in Iraq. Furthermore, the likelihood of escalation of force incidents involving its 945 "strategic security contractors" in Iraq will be reduced, along with the strategic impact of incidents, such as Blackwater's Nisour Square shooting, to U.S. foreign policy and the current counterinsurgency strides towards success.

Introduction

Private security contractors (PSCs), hired by the United States (U.S.) Department of State (DOS), have protected U.S. diplomatic personnel in Iraq since 2003. The contractors have performed their mission with great success in that no U.S. diplomats have been killed while under their protective coverage. However, the controversial September 16, 2007 killing of 17 Iraqis in Baghdad by PSCs employed by the private security firm Blackwater, which was under contract to DOS, publicized the problems associated with the lack of regulation and accountability regarding all PSCs operating in Iraq. The September 16 incident was the catalyst for change because it compelled the Department of State to review its security contract management practices and improve how it manages and oversees its protective security contracts.

This research paper will address the research question of what the Department of State can do to improve its management and oversight of the World Wide Personal Protective Service contracts to better protect its diplomats serving in Iraq. This paper will also discuss the controversy concerning PSCs operating in Iraq and some of the problems they have caused. Furthermore, the paper will review the Department of State's management responsibilities concerning its protective security contracts, and it will offer recommendations for the DOS and U.S. Embassy, Baghdad to improve its management and oversight of these contracts.

Background: Department of State's Security Responsibilities and Use of PSCs under the World Wide Personal Protective Service Contract (WPPS)

The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is responsible for safeguarding American diplomatic personnel at 159 U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide under the authority of the Chief of Mission (U.S. Ambassador). Diplomatic Security Service special agents, serving as regional security officers (RSO), are responsible for the management of security programs to protect personnel, buildings, and information. The Diplomatic Security Service has a total of 1,450 special agents, 60% of whom serve domestically either in field offices in cities throughout the U.S., or in Washington D.C. These assignments include investigative, protective security, and headquarters support positions. The remaining 40%, or approximately 580 special agents, serve overseas as RSOs.¹

Due to the size and scope of its overseas protective security operations over the years, DS has been required to employ private security contractors (PSCs) to meet the expanded protective security requirements. The first PSCs were deployed on a small scale to protect U.S. Embassy personnel in Haiti in 1994; they were used again in 1995 to protect U.S. Ambassadors implementing the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia. Due to an expanded need for PSCs, in 2000, DS awarded the first World Wide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contract to DynCorp. DynCorp was contracted to organize, deploy, and oversee PSCs that would protect U.S. and certain foreign government officials overseas. In 2002, the WPPS contract expanded and PSCs were deployed to Afghanistan to protect U.S. Embassy officials as well as the President of Afghanistan.

In 2004, the WPPS contract expanded further with the deployment of PSCs to protect U.S. diplomats at the newly opened U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. According to a senior DS official, the opening of U.S. embassies in Afghanistan and Iraq forced DS to expand its

capability to meet the increased protective requirements in non-permissive environments without the delays associated with recruiting, hiring, and training additional special agents.² DS benefits from using PSCs because they can be recruited, vetted, hired, trained, and deployed in approximately 120 days, compared to the two-year process it takes to recruit, hire, and train a DS agent.³ Since DS does not have enough special agents to meet its global protective security requirements, using PSCs gives DS the flexibility to expand or reduce the number of security personnel required to perform protective security functions based upon the circumstances and the need.

As the diplomatic mission in Iraq expanded and the protective security requirements at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad increased, DynCorp was unable to meet the full contract, requirement levels for personnel. Therefore, to supplement the existing DynCorp contract, DS awarded a contract to Blackwater. A third contract was also awarded to Triple Canopy to protect U.S. diplomatic personnel at Regional Embassy Office, Basrah. In 2005, due to changing program requirements resulting from the escalating threat environment in Iraq, Blackwater, Triple Canopy, and DynCorp were awarded contracts under a new WPPS umbrella contract, in which personnel qualifications, training, equipment, and management requirements were upgraded from the previous contract. As of December 2007, there were 945 American PSC personnel deployed to Iraq under the WPPS contract: Blackwater employs 744 PSCs, DynCorp 100, and Triple Canopy 101.⁴ Thirty-four PSC protective security detail teams were assigned at U.S. Embassy Baghdad and fifteen additional teams were deployed at other regional U.S. Embassy offices in Iraq.⁵

Key Elements of the DS Administration of the World Wide Personal Protective Service (WPPS) Contract⁶

The following information summarizes key elements of the WPPS contract that affects contractor performance, accountability, and DOS oversight.

DS Oversight of WPPS Contractor Operations: The DS/Regional Security Officer (RSO), with a staff of assistant regional security officers (ARSOs), oversees and manages contract operations that support protective security details conducted under the authority of the Chief of Mission (COM). The RSO, under the authority of the COM, establishes protective security standard operating procedures, rules of engagement/use of force policies, communication/coordination procedures, after action incident reporting procedures, standards of conduct, training regimen, operational security procedures, and other operation-specific guidelines. ARSOs are assigned to oversee protective security missions and accompany some protective security details to observe and ensure contract conformance and quality control. The Washington D.C. based headquarters element, DS High Threat Program (DS/HTP) office, addresses senior level policy/contract issues with contractor corporate management representatives, conducts audits, monitors task order compliance, coordinates contractor vetting, and inspects contractor training facilities to ensure compliance with DS training requirements.

Contractor Requirements: PSCs hired by private security firms under the WPPS contract must be U.S. citizens and have at least one year of protective security experience acquired from any of the following organizations: DOS/DS, U.S. Secret Service, FBI, other federal law enforcement agencies, U.S. Special Forces, U.S. military/infantry, commercial executive protection service/with police or military background, federal/state/local law enforcement agency with SWAT, or emergency services experience. PSCs with the prerequisite experience then undergo a full DOS background investigation and must qualify for a security

clearance. PSCs must then satisfactorily complete 164 hours of protective security training provided by the security firm, in accordance with the terms of the WPPS contract training curriculum. This training includes firearms proficiency, driving/motorcades, defensive tactics, medical training, protective formations, as well as other relevant training. Lesson plan development and training are supervised by DS/HTP headquarters representatives at the contractor's U.S. training facilities to ensure compliance. Only those PSCs who satisfactorily meet all training standards are deployed.

Discipline: The WPPS contract contains standards of conduct that address the use of firearms, drugs and alcohol, personal misconduct, performance of duties, and criminal behavior. All PSC personnel are expected to fully comply with the standards of conduct. Violations can result in remedial training, reassignment, contract termination, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities, such as the U.S. Justice Department, depending on the severity of the incident. DS/HTP in Washington D.C. also maintains records of contractors terminated for cause from the WPPS program to prevent their obtaining employment with other private security firms under contract with the USG.

Escalation of Force (Rules of Engagement) Policy: The WPPS contract requires all PSCs to follow the U.S. Embassy, Iraq COM Firearms Policy for any use of force. In summary, the policy authorizes the use of deadly force to be used only in incidents where there is no other alternative and where the PSC, the protectee, or others would be subject to imminent and grave danger.⁷ An escalation of force continuum ensures that the proper level of force is used in each unique situation. Furthermore, the use of deadly force can be immediately applied if the threat dictates this necessity. After an escalation of force/shooting incident, PSC personnel must also immediately report to the RSO any incident involving the discharge of a firearm, any attack,

serious injuries, death, or property damage. The RSO staff investigates PSC escalation of force incidents which might occur during protective security operations to ensure these actions are in compliance with the Embassy's use of force policies and the WPPS contract.

The Controversy over Private Security Contractors in Iraq and the Catalyst for Change

Armed private security contractors have operated in Iraq since April 2003, providing protective security services for diplomats, aid workers, government officials, businessman, and journalists. Use of these contractors, many of whom are employed by private security firms indirectly contracted by the United States Government (USG), is considered vital to U.S. and international reconstruction and stabilization efforts. However, PSCs have also had an adverse affect on the U.S. diplomatic and military missions in Iraq. The aggressive motorcade tactics and shoot first ask questions later approach, which has killed a number of civilians, has been counterproductive to the overall mission. A number of PSC shooting incidents during protective security operations have resulted in additional foreign policy problems for U.S. and Iraq leaders otherwise engaged in efforts to stabilize Iraq and develop government institutions. According to Peter W. Singer, a Brookings Institute expert on private military contractors, "PSC actions have angered Iraqi government officials, inflamed Iraqi public opinion, weakened U.S. efforts in the war of ideas in the Middle East, undermined efforts to build up Iraqi institutions, and harmed, rather than helped counterinsurgency efforts."⁸

To understand the size and scope of PSC operations in Iraq, figures from the Private Security Company Association of Iraq indicate there are 181 private security firms operating in Iraq that employ approximately 50,000 armed security contractors from throughout the world.⁹ Of this number, approximately 20,000 to 30,000 PSCs are employed under an assortment of

USG (i.e., Department of Defense, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of State) contracts and subcontracts.¹⁰

The reckless behavior of some PSCs contracted to protect U.S. Government facilities, supply convoys, as well as diplomats, and aid workers helping to build Iraqi government institutions, has recently led to widespread criticism of U.S. Government agencies, especially the Department of State, by the Iraqi Government and the U.S. Congress.¹¹ This criticism results from DOS not providing proper contractual oversight over the private security firms they employ. Serious concerns have also been raised over the legal accountability for all PSCs who commit acts of wrongdoing while employed in Iraq under USG contract.

The criticism of DOS management of its Blackwater contract stems from several widely publicized shooting incidents concerning Blackwater PSCs in Iraq. One such incident occurred on December 24, 2006, when an intoxicated, off duty Blackwater contractor, shot and killed an Iraqi bodyguard working for the Iraqi vice president at the presidential palace located inside the Green Zone. The contractor faced no legal consequences other than having his contract terminated and immediately being sent back to the U.S. The DOS/U.S. Embassy Baghdad officials who oversaw the security contracts were also criticized for their role in expediting his departure and coordinating a condolence payment to the family of Iraqi bodyguard, according to a Washington Post article titled "Blackwater Enablers."¹²

Another shooting incident occurred on May 24, 2007, when a Blackwater PSC shot and killed an Iraqi driver whose vehicle came too close to their motorcade outside the Interior Ministry. The results of the subsequent investigation did not indicate if the PSC responded in accordance with DOS rules of engagement.¹³ The NY Times, in a September 27, 2007, article claims that Blackwater tops all private security firms in Iraq in the number of escalation of force,

or shooting incidents, its PSCs are involved in compared to other private security firms, such as Triple Canopy, DynCorp, and Aegis.¹⁴

The culminating event and catalyst for change, which focused the world's attention to the problems associated with PSCs operating in Iraq, occurred on September 16, 2007. Five Blackwater PSCs, killed seventeen Iraqis and wounded twenty-seven others in the Nisour Square area of Baghdad while allegedly under attack during a protective security mission.

Investigations by the Iraq Interior Ministry (MOI), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. military concluded that the Blackwater contractors "fired without provocation and violated rules of engagement which resulted in at least fourteen unjustified deaths."¹⁵ This incident also highlighted the legal controversy surrounding PSCs in Iraq and supports the perception that they are above the law.¹⁶

There were also obvious concerns over the foreign policy problems those incidents caused. After the Iraqi Interior Ministry announced the results of its investigation, Iraqi Prime Minister Malaki directed that all Blackwater personnel leave Iraq as soon as possible, further complicating U.S. mission efforts. Malaki stated that "Iraqis will not tolerate the cold blooded killing of its citizens," adding that "the deaths had sown widespread anger and hatred among Iraqis."¹⁷ The shootings caused senior USG officials to shift strategic policy efforts from pressuring the Malaki government to make political reforms, to scrambling to repair the strained relationship.¹⁸ A senior U.S. military official stated that "this shooting incident damaged U.S. efforts in Iraq more than the Abu Ghraib prison scandal did and undermined U.S. military efforts to stabilize Iraq and to win the hearts and minds of Iraqis."¹⁹ The U.S. military has also been highly critical of private security contractors in Iraq for not properly coordinating their movements through areas with active military operations. Coordination and communication

lapses have led to a number of friendly fire shootings between military units and PSC protective security details.²⁰

The above mentioned Nisour Square shooting incident was the catalyst for change because it raised questions concerning the lack of legal accountability, regulation, and proper U.S. government oversight of private security firms operating in Iraq. Widely publicized hearings held by the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, on October 2, 200. Committee members were highly critical of the Department of State (DOS) for its apparent lack of oversight of Blackwater, accusing DOS of covering up Blackwater misconduct, and “serving as their [Blackwater’s] enablers.”²¹ In the aftermath of the September 16 Blackwater shooting controversy, the U.S. Secretary of State sent a delegation of experts, led by the DOS Under Secretary of State for Management, Patrick Kennedy, to Iraq. Their job was to review the problems associated with the U.S. Embassy’s protective security practices (with Blackwater) and determine measures to strengthen DOS management and oversight of the WPPS contract.

In his “Report to the U.S. Secretary of State on Personal Protective Services in Iraq”²² (referred to as the Kennedy Report), Kennedy effectively describes the problematic environment under which protective security operations are carried out by DOS, the Department of Defense (DOD), and other organizations in Iraq.

U.S. Government PSCs in Iraq, including those of DOS, operate in an environment that is chaotic, unsupervised, deficient in oversight and accountability, and poorly coordinated. DOD has eight private security contractors, DOS has three, and various other USG agencies, including components and subcontractors of State and Defense, employ many others. The United Nations, other governments, private corporations, media representatives, NGOs, even the Iraqi government, hire private security companies. These numerous armed PSC details provide their services next to and within large scale military operations carried out by Multi-National Force – Iraq and the Iraqi Armed Forces.²³

Regardless of these difficulties, substantive procedures and measures can be implemented by DOS, DOD, and other USG agencies in Iraq to improve oversight and coordination of private security contractors performing protective security duties in Iraq.

Based upon the previously discussed summary of the key elements of the WPPS contract, the mechanisms exist in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) and the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad Regional Security Office (RSO) to effectively manage and oversee the WPPS contract. The next section of this paper will provide recommendations for the DOS, Diplomatic Security Service, Washington, D.C., which will improve its management and oversight of the WPPS contract. These recommendations will be followed by a discussion of the key recommendations made in the Kennedy Report for the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, RSO to implement.

Recommendations

The following seven recommendations are offered for the Diplomatic Security Service, located in Washington D.C. DS/HTP is responsible overall for the management of the \$570 million annual WPPS contract, \$519 million of which is allotted for Iraq protective security operations. DS/HTP contracting officer representatives (CORs) centrally manage the contracts and budgets and oversee contract task orders from Washington D.C. while the RSOs, located in U.S. Embassies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and Bosnia, serve as the contracting officer technical representatives (COTRs) ensuring operational compliance with the contract. At the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the responsibility of managing the WPPS contract is delegated by the senior RSO, through the deputy RSO, to assistant regional security officers (ARSOs) assigned to manage the high threat protection program portfolio. ARSOs are typically junior level officers with little contract management experience, especially a contract the sheer size and magnitude of WPPS II. At the same time, RSO staff must also manage numerous other Embassy security

portfolios, respond to other priorities and exigencies, and address collateral responsibilities due to personnel transfers, travel, and staffing shortages.

Recommendation One: Establish institutionalized, standard operating procedures (SOPs) to unify the efforts and headquarters expectations of RSOs managing HTP programs/WPPS contracts worldwide. A senior Diplomatic Security Service officer commented that “there were no standardized contract management practices” for RSOs overseeing the HTP programs because the overall program is centrally managed by DS/HTP in Washington, D.C.²⁴ In comparing the way the programs were managed in the past at the U.S. Embassies in Kabul, Afghanistan and Baghdad, Iraq, the officer explained that RSOs have different program priorities and different management styles, and managing these programs within the context of a war zone is complex.”²⁵ The U.S. Embassy Kabul, RSO staff were described as “highly proactive in their management of the HTP program and viewed it as a priority to ensure that Blackwater fully complied with the terms and conditions of the WPPS contract.”²⁶ In comparison, the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad RSO staff managed the HTP program, although substantially larger than the Kabul HTP program, much differently. The difference was that the Baghdad staff focused more attention to scheduling and coordination details and less attention to contract oversight and compliance.²⁷ According to the same senior officer, RSO Baghdad’s priority was to ensure that the Embassy’s demands for the fixed number of PSC security teams were met as the threat conditions escalated. At the same time, the shortage of RSO staff did not permit them to properly oversee the operations of 49 separate PSC security teams, much less enforce contract compliance.²⁸ Establishing standardized operating procedures for the management of WPPS contracts for RSOs worldwide would ensure that DS mandated program requirements, standards, and expectations were uniformly implemented.

Recommendation Two: Establish 50 new permanent assistant regional security officer (ARSO) positions within the U.S. Embassy Baghdad RSO for Diplomatic Security Service special agents to supervise every WPPS protective security mission. In order to sustain the manpower levels within the Diplomatic Security Service to meet this requirement, the Department of State should also hire an additional 100 new special agents over the next year. (Additional discussion regarding the role the new ARSO positions should have concerning contract management is provided in the discussion of Recommendation 3.) There will also be additional administrative and logistical requirements associated within the U.S. Embassy Baghdad RSO Office to support 50 additional personnel. To fully support an enlarged staff, DS and RSO should hire 35 new administrative and logistics support specialists.²⁹

Assigning DS agents to oversee every protection security mission is an important measure for RSO Baghdad because it will permit DS to regain control of the HTP program from the WPPS contractors. DS agents will be in a position to supervise most PSC activities and evaluate their performance. A DS officer familiar with Embassy Baghdad protective security operations endorsed this recommendation and commented that "without surprise, there were significantly fewer PSC escalation of force incidents reported when a DS agent accompanied protective details on their missions. When there was no DS supervision present, the PSCs were more inclined to have problems."³⁰ While assigning ARSOs to supervise PSC operations will reduce the number of escalation of force incidents, along with other types of PSC misconduct, I have some concerns about the proper training of these ARSOs.

Recommendation Three: All Diplomatic Security Service special agents assigned to the U.S. Embassy Baghdad RSO to supervise WPPS protective security operations should be required to take the DOS three day contracting officer technical representative course, which

provides basic level contract management training. Additionally, DS agents should also be required to take the DOS Iraq Area Studies familiarization course offered at the DOS National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This course offers exposure to Iraqi culture, traditions, language, U.S. civil military relations, political issues, and U.S. counterinsurgency efforts. Currently, the only training DS agents receive prior to deployment to Iraq is the DS High Threat Protection course, which only provides the skills necessary to conduct protective security duties and supervise tactical operations, not necessarily the intangible skills needed to lead and direct a squad of 12 to twenty PSCs in a permissive, sometimes hostile operating environment.

The typical DS agent who will be assigned to the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad to supervise PSC protective security operations, is a junior level officer with an average of two to four years of DS domestic program experience and little, if any, supervisory experience. Prior to deployment to Iraq, all agents currently take the mandated six-week high threat protection course which provides the basic tactical skills needed to perform protective security duties and supervise tactical operations. The typical WPPS PSCs that DS agents supervise in Iraq, are older and possess on average, five to twenty years of either military or law enforcement experience, which often intimidates some junior level DS agents.³¹ A Blackwater PSC employed at U.S. Embassy, Baghdad commented in the book *Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in the War on Terror*, that "a great deal of animosity exists between the DS agents and security contractors in Iraq. DS agents view contractors as cowboys and the contractors view DS agents as bureaucratic losers."³² According to the chief of the DS High Threat Training Program, to overcome the discord that often exists between DS agents and PSCs, DS agents deployed as ARSOs, must be properly trained by DS to demonstrate a "command presence," to "exert authority" over PSCs, and to "reign in" and hold problematic PSCs accountable.³³

While the DS High Threat Course provides the necessary tactical skill set, it is limited in leadership training. DS agents with natural leadership abilities will succeed in these ARSO/HTP positions, while those agents without these inherent skills will require mentoring and oversight by more experienced RSOs.

Recommendation Four: Permanently assign professional contract management specialists, referred to as contracting officer representatives (CORs), to the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad RSO Office to supervise oversight of the WPPS contract and ensure contract compliance. The Iraq portion of the WPPS contract encompasses \$519 million and employs 945 PSCs.³⁴ As of November 2007, there were no DS CORs assigned to provide RSO Baghdad contract management support. Rather, DS/HTP centrally managed the contract from Washington, D.C. By implementing the recommendation to assign CORs to the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad RSO, the CORs will be able to carry out DS contract management and oversight functions in Iraq directly with the three WPPS security firms. The COTR-trained ARSOs assigned to the RSO/HTP section to supervise protective security team operations, will provide oversight of PSC operational performance, training, and equipment. The combined efforts of the CORs and ARSOs will improve WPPS contract management and oversight and address Congressional criticism that the USG is unable to adequately oversee and control or coordinate the performance of its private security contractors due in part to a lack of contracting personnel.³⁵

Recommendation Five: The DS/High Threat Protection Office (DS/HTP) and the DS/Training Center (DS/TC) should conduct a comprehensive review of the four- week, 146 hour DS protective security training curriculum to determine if tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that DOS contracted firms teach new PSCs are relevant to the current threat

environment. The review should also determine which aspects of the curriculum should be revised and updated.

To support the rationale for this curriculum review, a British private security firm director in Iraq offered a relevant commentary on the British and American approaches to protective security in Iraq. He explained that although Blackwater and his firm operate in the same environment, "Blackwater tries to ensure safety by rolling aggressively with a prominent and imposing display of force, while the traditional British style has contractors trying harder to blend in and be discreet, hoping to pass unnoticed below the radar of those who might want to attack."³⁶ He added that British contractors use the minimum amount of force required and suggested "that if you drive around all day pointing guns at people and shooting at them, don't you think it will come back to you?"³⁷ I concur with this commentary and propose that rather than teach a standard, one size fits all approach to protective security, DS/HTP and DS/TC should modify the WPPS curriculum and adopt a more flexible approach to protective security, similar to the British model. Reducing the profile of high visibility motorcades and security entourages should be permitted as circumstances dictate in order to blend into an area, or "hide in plain sight."³⁸ The WPPS contract and training curriculum should be revised. The DS rules of engagement, particularly those concerning pre-emptive fire and the code of conduct, should be updated, improved, and re-enforced with additional training hours.

Furthermore, cultural awareness training should be added to the curriculum to expose PSCs to the cultures and traditions of the countries to which they will deploy (e.g., Iraq and Afghanistan). This cultural training could be modeled after the DOS Iraq Area Studies familiarization course attended by State Department personnel prior to their deployment to Iraq. Additional training modules should also be added to familiarize PSCs with the operating

environments, communication systems, and tactics and procedures systems utilized by multi national forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This familiarization training would lead to better DOS-DOS coordination and fewer friendly shooting incidents between multi-national forces and PSCs.

Finally, it is essential that DS special agents, with high threat protection experience in Iraq or Afghanistan, participate in the comprehensive review of curriculum. This is important because DS agents manage these WPPS programs in Iraq and Afghanistan and see first hand how the WPPS PSCs incorporate this training in the operating environment. The contribution of these DS agents to the curriculum review is valuable because there will be senior level Washington, D.C. based DS managers responsible for the outcome of this review without the benefit of Iraq or Afghanistan experience. Furthermore, this review should not be left solely to contractors employed in DS/HTP and DS/TC.

Recommendation Six: DS/HTP should increase the number of personnel with high threat protection experience available to inspect and evaluate the training provided to PSCs by the three WPPS security firms. According to a DOS officer, two DS/HTP employees now conduct these inspections on an irregular basis.³⁹ The current frequency of inspection and level of oversight is inadequate and could result in deployment of PSCs who are poorly prepared to carry out their duties. I also agree with a point expressed by Robert Pelton, in his previously mentioned book *Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in the War on Terror*, that “the exploding demand for PSC in Iraq has lowered the standards of the suppliers.”⁴⁰ This requires DS/HTP representatives to be on site at the U.S. training facilities used by the WPPS security firms during the majority of training to ensure quality control and compliance with training standards. Increased DS monitoring of PSC training may also give DS an opportunity to better screen

PSCs' emotional and psychological suitability/compatibility. DS conducts full background investigations on all PSCs and provides at least a secret level security clearance to those with a clean record (i.e., they do not possess a criminal record or have derogatory information in their background that would otherwise disqualify them from PSC employment). The weakness in this vetting process is that it does not prevent the security firms from pumping through the system PSCs who might otherwise be unsuited due to a personality or emotional compatibility concern, even though they may satisfactorily complete all aspects of training.

Recommendation Seven: WPPS firms should recruit more PSCs with backgrounds in law enforcement, as opposed to PSCs with strictly military backgrounds. Currently, most PSCs deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have significant military experience, which is highly valued. The vast majority of PSCs are trustworthy, dedicated professionals who provide a valuable service to DOS under dangerous conditions. However, efforts should be made to recruit more PSCs who possess law enforcement experience, while meeting the experience requirements stipulated in the WPPS contract. This recommendation is offered based upon the main tenant of DS protective security doctrine which is to "cover and evacuate" the protectee during an attack. Former law enforcement officers possess a mindset that is more adaptive to this DS doctrine, as well as to the defensive-oriented DS rules of engagement. This is based upon the former law enforcement officer's professional training and experience, which often contrasts with the approach taken by some PSCs with prior military experience who were attacked while conducting protective security operations. (Please note that I am not using this forum to question, or second guess, the actions taken by any DOS representative having come under attack.)

The DS Branch Chief, High Threat Training Programs, stated in an interview that “regardless of DOS training, the instinctive response of those PSCs seemed to be more offensive in nature, to defend their ground and return fire, rather than to cover and evacuate.”⁴¹ This same DS officer expressed doubt that a few weeks of firearms training to DS standards could compensate for the instinctive, muscle memory response PSCs with military experience respond with given their years of tactical training and combat experience.⁴² While DOS protective security operations in Iraq will always benefit from qualified PSCs with military experience, hiring more PSCs who have law enforcement backgrounds will provide the teams with a more diverse situational perspective. I believe this solution will likely lead to a reduction in the number of reported escalation of force incidents because law enforcement officers are often keen observers of human behavior and street activity and also possess strong situational awareness. This awareness should improve the PSCs’ ability to more readily recognize potentially dangerous security situations and evacuate when possible, rather than remaining on site and engaging in an escalation of force incident.

Recommendations for the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad Regional Security Office (RSO)

The following paragraphs analyze the key recommendations made in the Kennedy Report⁴³ for the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad RSO. Implementation of these recommendations will improve RSO oversight and accountability of the 945 PSCs employed under the WPPS contract in Iraq and result in fewer escalation of force incidents.

Recommendation One: Arabic speakers should be hired to work in protective security motorcades. Currently, PSCs employed under the WPPS contract are not required to possess Arabic language skills, and typically do not. Providing each PSC team with an Arabic speaker during protective operations will reduce communication difficulties between Iraqi civilians and

PSC teams and reduce the likelihood of unnecessary civilian casualties in the event of a potential escalation of force or other security related incident. If Iraqi or third country nationals fill the positions in the absence of Americans, these non-American personnel must first be fully vetted, to include successful completion of a polygraph examination. This will require RSO use of polygrapher from DOD, or another government agency, in the absence of a DOS polygrapher. While not foolproof, this measure will serve to identify Iraqi employees with potential insurgent affiliations and may help to keep them from infiltrating the Embassy and plotting an ambush. Proper vetting might avoid an incident similar to a March 2004 incident in Fallujah where four Blackwater employees, escorting a convoy of trucks with assistance from local Iraqi forces, were led into an insurgent ambush arranged by the Iraqi forces. The ambush resulted in the deaths of the four Blackwater PSCs and the subsequent Battle of Fallujah.⁴⁴

Recommendation Two: Video and audio recording equipment should be installed in every RSO motorcade vehicle. Additionally, audio recording equipment and advanced Blue Force Tracker computer equipment should be installed in the Embassy Baghdad, RSO tactical operations center (TOC). Installation of this equipment will provide the advanced capability to record all radio transmissions, track the real time movement of all vehicles, and electronically catalog and store this data. These measures will enhance the safety of those in the motorcades by pinpointing their exact location at all times in the event a quick reaction force must be summoned. The cataloging of electronic records of Embassy motorcade movements will permit the immediate determination of possible involvement of an Embassy motorcade in the event of a significant security incident.

The installation of video and audio recording equipment in over 200 security vehicles will also improve oversight of PSCs and leave little doubt as to what actions might have

transpired in proximity to PSC motorcade vehicles during an escalation of force incident. Given the uncertainty of the circumstances surrounding the September 16 Blackwater shooting at Nisour Square and the contradictory information provided by a number of PSCs who were involved, this enhanced level of oversight, while excessive, is fully justifiable.

Recommendation Three: Establish RSO incident response, or "Go Teams," that will respond immediately to the scene of an escalation of force/shooting incident involving any protective security team operating under authority of the U.S. Embassy Chief of Mission. Such teams include the Embassy Baghdad, RSO/PSC teams under WPPS contract, as well as other PSC teams operating under other DOS and USAID contracts. The team will gather potential evidence and investigate the circumstances of each incident ensuring that the Embassy Baghdad, Chief of Mission Use of Force/Rules of Engagement policy were properly followed.

The RSO Go Team will work in coordination with the U.S. military unit responsible for the incident location and with appropriate Iraqi Interior Ministry officials. The findings of the Go Team investigative report will be submitted to the Embassy Joint Incident Review Board for review and, if warranted, referred to the U.S. Department of Justice if the U.S. Embassy Escalation of Force policy was violated. This recommendation will improve oversight, accountability, and coordination of protective security operations and increase responsiveness to the Government of Iraq (GOI).

However, the shortfall of this recommendation is that few DS agents possess the forensic investigative expertise in such areas as evidence collection and ballistic analysis, which would be necessary to properly conduct shooting and loss of life investigations for prosecutorial referral. ARSOs designated to serve as Go Team members should receive the necessary investigative training from DS to conduct such investigations. Furthermore, FBI agents

assigned to Embassy Baghdad Legal Attaché Office, should also serve on RSO Go Teams when a loss of life investigation is involved. FBI agents typically have more investigative expertise than DS agents in investigative disciplines, such as evidence collection and preservation and forensic investigation. Another option for the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad RSO is to augment the Go Team with additional American contractors who possess the necessary investigative experience.

Conclusion

In 1999, then-U.S. Marine Corps Commandant General Charles C. Krulak coined the term “strategic corporal” to reflect the greater levels of responsibility tactical level Marines were assuming, which influenced conflicts at the operational and strategic levels of war, especially from the perspective of the global media effect of their localized, tactical actions. Krulak stated:

Their [Marines’] missions will require them to confidently make well reasoned and independent decisions under extreme duress. Decisions that will be subject to the harsh scrutiny of the media and the court of public opinion. In many cases, the individual Marine will be the most conspicuous symbol of American foreign policy and will potentially influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic as well. His actions, therefore, will directly impact the outcome of the larger operation, and he will become, as the title of this article suggests – the Strategic Corporal.⁴⁵

In this age of instantaneous, global information, the Blackwater PSCs involved in the September 16, 2007, Nisour Square shooting became the Department of State’s “strategic security contractors” in a negative context. The actions of the Blackwater PSCs had an adverse effect on U.S. foreign policy for the following reasons: strategic level bilateral policy initiatives were derailed, senior-Iraqi government officials were angered, Iraqi public opinion against the U.S. became inflamed, U.S. efforts in the war of ideas in the Middle East were weakened, efforts to build up Iraqi institutions were undermined, and the U.S. military’s counterinsurgency efforts were negatively impacted. This incident was the catalyst for change due to the instantaneous

world wide, media publicity it received, the diplomatic response President Bush and Secretary of State Rice had to make in its aftermath, and the subsequent Congressional hearings that were held. The hearings were highly critical of the Department of State's management of its World Wide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) contracts and served to highlight the lack of accountability that exists for all U.S. contractors operating in Iraq.

This paper addressed the research question of what the Department of State can do to improve its management and oversight of the World Wide Personal Protective Services contract both at Diplomatic Security Service (DS) headquarters in Washington, D.C. and at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. The paper also offered recommendations for how DS can improve management of the WPPS program at the headquarters level by developing standardized operating procedures for regional security officers to uniformly implement at all U.S. embassies with WPPS contract. This paper discussed the importance of providing proper training for all new assistant regional security officers being assigned to supervise protective security missions in Iraq and the benefit of assigning contract management specialists to Iraq to oversee the \$500 million WPPS contract. Also discussed was a recommendation to revise and update the WPPS training curriculum to make it more flexible and adaptive to changing security environments. Lastly, a recommendation was discussed for DS/HTP to increase the number of inspectors available to monitor and evaluate the training PSCs receive from their respective security firms prior to deploying to Iraq.

Key recommendations made in the Kennedy Report were also discussed and evaluated. Recommendations included the benefits of hiring Arabic speakers to accompany all PSC protective security missions, the benefits of installing audio and video equipment in all motorcade vehicles to provide real time information, and to record all mission activity.

Furthermore, the benefits and concerns associated with establishing incident response teams, or "Go Teams," to investigate PSC escalation of force incidents were offered.

In conclusion, while the insurgency in Iraq progresses with continued attacks against U.S. military and diplomatic personnel, their mission will continue as will attacks against them. U.S. Embassy, Baghdad diplomats will continue to travel beyond the safety of the International Zone and protected bases to engage Iraqi government counterparts, tribal leaders, and Iraqi citizens in the pursuit of U.S. policy objectives. U.S. diplomats will continue to be protected by better trained security contractors directly supervised by DS special agents. As attacks against U.S. diplomatic personnel are likely to continue, WPPS security contractors and DS agents will respond with the necessary level of force to neutralize the threat and to reach safety. While unintended collateral casualties are never fully unavoidable under such circumstances, by exercising proper management of the WPPS contract, and implementing measures to hold contractors accountable for their performance, incidents such as the Nisour Square shooting are unlikely to occur in the future.

With the implementation of the recommendations made to improve the management and oversight of the WPPS contract, the Department of State will reduce the likelihood of future escalation of force incidents involving its 945 "strategic security contractors" in Iraq, along with the strategic impact of such incidents to U.S. foreign policy and the current counterinsurgency strides towards success.

End Notes

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- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ J.K.L. Elsea and N. M. Serafino. "Private Security Contractors in Iraq: Background, Legal Status, and Other Issues." CRS Report for Congress (2007). July 11, 2007. 19. <http://house.oversight.gov>.
- ⁵ Senior Official, International Programs, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, Rosslyn, VA. Interview with author, December 7, 2007.
- ⁶ U.S. Department of State. "Worldwide Personal Protective Services (WPPS) Contract." International Programs, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, Rosslyn, VA. Reviewed by author, December 10, 2007.
- ⁷ U.S. Department of State. "Use of Force Policy - U.S. Embassy Baghdad, Iraq." Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. Reviewed by author, December 10, 2007.
- ⁸ Peter W. Singer. "Counterproductive." Armed Forces Journal. Washington, D.C. November, 2007. 36.
- ⁹ J.K.L. Elsea, N. M. Serafino. "Private Security Contractors in Iraq: Background, Legal Status, and Other Issues." CRS Report for Congress. July 11, 2007. 3. <http://www.oversight.house.gov>
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Hearing on Private Security Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Opening Statement of Chairman Henry Waxman. 110th Congress. October 2, 2007. <http://www.oversight.house.gov>
- ¹² "Blackwater Enablers." The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), October 4, 2007, All Edition, sec. Editorial. <http://proquest.com>.
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- ¹⁷ Adam Zagrin and Brian Bennett. "Iraq Limits Blackwater Operations." Time Magazine, September 17, 2007. <http://time.com>.
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- ²⁶ Ibid
- ²⁷ Ibid
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- ³⁰ Special Agent Edward Brennan, Chief, High Threat Training Programs, Training Center, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, Dunn Loring, VA. Interview with author, December 11, 2007.
- ³¹ Ibid
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