The bureaucratic politics of outsourcing security. The privatization of diplomatic protection in the United States and the United Kingdom

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Abstract

States' increasing resort to private military and security companies (PMSCs) does not merely distort the balance of power between different branches of government, strengthening the executive vis-à-vis the legislative. It also redistributes authority and resources within the executive branch, changing the relationship between civilian foreign policy bureaucracies and military organizations. Although the use of PMSCs provides foreign policy bureaucracies with new avenues to pursue their parochial interests, a scholarly analysis of the bureaucratic politics of outsourcing is still missing. This paper probes the hypothesis that the outsourcing of diplomatic security in the US and the UK has been affected by bureaucratic competition and inter-agency rivalries, responding to foreign policy bureaucracies and development agencies’ attempt to maximize their institutional autonomy vis-à-vis military organizations.
**Introduction**

The increasing outsourcing of activities previously performed by state military personnel to Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) does not only redistribute control over the use of force *between* states and non-state actors, giving to private entities the possibility to allocate security on a commercial basis. Nor does military privatization only change the balance of power *among* states, allowing certain countries to draw on the international market for force to increase their military preparedness. The use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) also affects control over the use of force *within* states, redistributing power and resources between the actors and institutions involved in foreign policy making and implementation processes.

The existing literature has largely focused on the impact of the outsourcing of military functions on the relationship between branches of government, arguing that the resort to PMSCs strengthens the executive branch by eroding the power of the legislative to restrict and scrutinize foreign policy. Executive branches of government, however, are far from being monoliths with unitary interests and perceptions. As emphasized by organization theory since Max Weber, bureaucracies are not merely transmission belts implementing the decisions taken by political leaders, but actors possessing vested power, preferences and agency. Scholars such as Richard Neustadt, Morton Halperin and Graham Allison have translated this awareness into a research program in the field of foreign policy, arguing that executives are actually constellations of semi-feudal, loosely linked bureaucratic organizations that struggle over the conduct of foreign policy, trying to advance their own “parochial priorities and perceptions.” The privatization of military activities does not merely distort the relationship between different branches of government,

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strengthening the executive branch vis-à-vis the legislative. It also redistributes power and resources among different actors within the executive branch, changing the relationship between foreign policy bureaucracies and defence ministries. Although the resort to PMSCs provides a new way for certain governmental agencies to promote their parochial interests, a scholarly analysis of the bureaucratic politics of military privatization is still missing. Our study attempts to fill this gap by providing a plausibility probe for the hypothesis that the outsourcing of armed security has responded to the preferences of certain foreign policy bureaucracies, which have resorted to contractors as a way to increase their institutional autonomy vis-à-vis military organizations.

This paper is divided as follows. First, we briefly review the literature on bureaucratic politics, using it as a source of hypotheses on the organizational interests of foreign policy bureaucracies. Second, we look at the phenomenon of military privatization, formulating the hypothesis that the resort to PMSCs provides new ways for foreign policy bureaucracies to maximize their institutional autonomy vis-à-vis their bureaucratic rivals. Third, we assess this argument by looking at the outsourcing of security functions by US and UK foreign policy organizations, showing the importance of bureaucratic politics in providing a fine-grained understanding of the logics underlying the use of private military contractors.

1. Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy

The long dominating statist approach to the study of international relations, referred to by Allison as the “rational actor model”, has tried to reduce the complexities of foreign policy processes by treating state entities as single actors purposively responding to external pressures. As forcefully argued in Essence of Decision, this simplification may obscure as much as it reveals, ignoring the simple fact that decision are made and implemented by a
conglomerate of large organizations and political actors …who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actions of their government. Each of the bureaucratic players involved in the process choose its preferred policy options in terms of no consistent set of strategic objectives, but rather according to various conceptions of national security, organizational, domestic, and personal interests. Governmental decisions are not made according to a single rational decision, but by pulling and hauling.

Forty years after the publication of Allison’s seminal work, the bureaucratic politics approach to the study of foreign policy has developed a valuable academic pedigree. Yet, although bureaucratic politics has become a technique in the study of policy decisions or a level of analysis in the investigation of state action, it advanced little as a theory, that is, as a heuristic device capable of explaining general patterns of behaviour. Students of international politics have largely failed to take up Allison’s challenge to use bureaucratic politics as a theory, systematically testing hypotheses across cases and countries. This is due to a number of reasons.

In Allison’s seminal work, the bureaucratic politics approach is based on the attempt to “identify the games and players, to display the coalitions, bargains and compromises, and to convey some feel for the confusion.” While depicting a more accurate sketch of foreign policy making than the parsimonious assumptions of unity and rationality made by realist scholarship, these directions are hardly useful for the establishment of a viable research agenda. This study adopts a narrower account of bureaucratic politics, seen as the “competitive and conflictual interaction between public agencies (or parts thereof) within the executive branch of government.”

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6 Allison 1971: 146.

Another substantial weakness of the existing literature is that while some attempts have been made to analyze the foreign policies of other countries, bureaucratic politics literature remains largely US-centric. The exclusive focus on a single state has largely confined bureaucratic politics to the descriptive level, preventing its use as a causal factor explaining differences and similarities in foreign policy outputs across countries. Our study provides a comparative dimension to the study of bureaucratic politics by looking at the preferences surrounding US and UK foreign policy bureaucracies’ approach to the outsourcing of diplomatic security.

A third distinct problem of bureaucratic politics is the access to evidence. The study of bureaucratic politics is conditional to availability of sometimes classified or unavailable data. Access to evidence is further stymied by the fact that bureaucratic politics is still seen as a “taboo” that officials rarely acknowledge openly. Such problems are particularly pronounced in the enquiry of the bureaucratic politics of military outsourcing, due to the controversy surrounding the use of commercial security, the unwillingness of state officials to advertise the use of armed contractors and the difficulty to obtain information about contracts between states and PMSCs, often classified on the grounds of both national security and proprietary information law. An analysis of the bureaucratic politics of outsourcing may therefore be a tale of two taboos. We have attempted to overcome this problem by resorting official investigation materials, freedom of information act requests and a set of semi-structured interviews.

Finally, although bureaucratic politics has been resorted to in order to explain a number of foreign policy outputs, the existing literature has remained silent on the transformations of


bureaucratic action occurred in the last decades. However, the shift from government to governance that is increasingly affecting even security issue-areas, the ideological commitment to reduce the size of the state machinery and the growing influence of international organizations, NGOs and private corporations have all affected foreign policy decision-making processes, giving birth to new types of action based on networked cooperation between state, non governmental and commercial actors.11

Due to its focus on non-state actors as the subject of enquiry, most of the existing literature has not systematically explored the ways in which foreign policy bureaucracies have strategically adapted to the material and ideological transformations of the environment in which they operate. Yet, it has been noted among scholars of public administrations that administrative reforms and new public management tools, including the privatization of certain state functions, reflect the bureaucratic struggle for survival and turf expansion.12 As they reallocate power and resources among government agencies, the new types of bureaucratic action that characterize today’s foreign policy are also likely to reflect bureaucratic interests and struggles, shaping the ways in which state agencies pursue their organizational goals. Our study tries to shed light on the bureaucratic interests surrounding the use of non-state actors by looking at the resort to private security contractors as a strategy responding to foreign policy bureaucracies’ parochial preferences.

2. The privatization of military support: an overview

The increasing resort to Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) has received considerable scholarly and journalistic attention. Due to its sensitivity, the outsourcing of armed security functions has dominated the debate in spite of accounting for a relatively small part of the industry. Yet, the logics underlying governments’ resort to armed security contractors in particular


remain insufficiently explored. The murder of the US ambassador on September 12, 2012 has also brought to the fore the importance of diplomatic security as a crucial component of counterterrorism policies.

The existing literature has reached a substantial consensus in identifying the factors that account for the increasing privatization of functions that used to be performed by state military and law enforcement organizations. As summarized by Uttley, military privatization stems from the convergence of financial, technological and operational imperatives. Due to the financial and human resources strain of military organizations and the increasingly technological nature of warfare, which made advanced armed forces increasingly reliant on expertise that can no longer be kept within the ranks, outsourcing to PMSCs is increasingly perceived as an effective policy. Other factors, such as greater speed of deployment and longer operational tempos of contracted personnel, further contribute to making the resort to contractors a cheaper and more convenient option under tightening budget and manpower constraints. In addition, military privatization is also seen as stemming from an ideological imperative, based on the belief in the superiority of market solutions in the provision of goods and services and the commitment to “reinvent” government and reduce the size and functions of the public sector. In sum, security privatization has been largely seen as the outcome of a combination of material constraints and ideological incentives. Such factors are crucial in explaining the increasing outsourcing of military functions. They cannot fully account, however, for a fine-grained explanation of why and in which circumstances state bureaucracies are more likely to resort to armed contractors instead of relying on military personnel.


Our paper draws on bureaucratic politics literature as a source of insights on bureaucratic interests. It formulates the hypothesis that the resort to contractors is not merely a “doctrine of necessity”\textsuperscript{16} dictated by the financial and manpower constraints surrounding the use of uniformed personnel, but a deliberate policy choice responding to foreign policy bureaucracies’ organizational preferences. Hence, the bureaucratic politics paradigm can provide valuable insights on the propensity to privatize functions such as diplomatic security. Our paper provides a comparative analysis of the outsourcing of diplomatic security, looking at the US State Department on the one hand and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) on the other\textsuperscript{17}. By analyzing the bureaucratic preferences surrounding the use of private security contractors, we intend to show that bureaucratic competition, diverging standard operating procedures and foreign policy organizations’ willingness to maximize their institutional autonomy can notably contribute to explaining the use of PMSCs.

3. **Bureaucratic politics and the outsourcing of security**

Organization theory at large and bureaucratic politics literature in particular have forcefully argued that state bureaucracies’ perceptions and actions are shaped and sometimes distorted by parochial interests and goals. This section will review the notion of organizational interests as explored by bureaucratic politics literature. It will then look at how the privatization of certain functions is likely to affect the implementation of policy, providing foreign policy bureaucracies with a new tool to promote their parochial interests.


\textsuperscript{17} We did not consider the US agency for International Development (USAID) as this agency outsourced the provision of aid in Iraq and Afghanistan to a number of commercial and non-governmental implementing partners. These partners, in turn, have significantly relied on private security contractors to move outside military bases. USAID implementing partners also consider PMSCs as offering greater autonomy in comparison to military escorts, but note that military escorts may provide greater professionalism and better security than the small private security teams hired to protect them. Interview to Eduardo Peris Deprez, Regional Program Manager at International Relief and Development (20 November 2010).
3.1. Organizational interests and the making of foreign policy

While using different concepts, the existing literature converges in noting organizations’ tendency to maximize control over the resources needed for the effecting performing of their functions. Bureaucrats seek to preserve the “organizational mission”\textsuperscript{18} or “essence”\textsuperscript{19} of the organization where they sit. As a consequence, organization “stake out their turf”, fighting for their absolute authority and independence on those issue-areas in which they claim to have primary expertise and influence\textsuperscript{20}. They thus seek to preserve their autonomy, seen as a prerequisite to effectively perform their mission, by maximizing control over the resources needed to implement policy\textsuperscript{21}. Preserving and maximizing authority is desirable because it helps minimizing the problematic consequences of interagency rivalries and permits organizations to follow their preferred standard operating procedures, permitting the implementation of policy without external vetoes or constraints\textsuperscript{22}. Drawing on this body of literature, we formulate the hypothesis that the privatization of activities such as diplomatic security and foreign military training responds to the attempt to maximize foreign policy bureaucracies’ autonomy in the performing of their mission.

According to some scholars, the growing involvement of commercial entities in the implementation of foreign policy, their lobbying capacity and their supply of training, advice and intelligence to state bureaucracies and military organizations has arguably provided them with an epistemic power, allowing PMSCs to exert an influence on the making of foreign and defence


While much has been said on PMSCs’ alleged capacity to influence decision-making processes, much less attention has been dedicated to the strategic use of PMSCs by state bureaucratic actors attempting to promote their own parochial interests. Foreign policy analysis has already noted the tendency to resort to “diversionary means of foreign policy” as a consequence of “competition and rivalry between different segments of the foreign policy bureaucracy” and “a desire to foreclose dissent within the councils of government.” Secrecy, covert interventions and reliance on foreign proxies have often become self-serving tools of bureaucracies trying to increase their influence or diffuse responsibility. The most notable example of diversionary policies carried out to circumvent inter-governmental dissent is probably the Iran-Contras affair. The illegal funding of the Nicaraguan Contras through the revenues of arms sales to Iran was promoted by the White House, the National Security Council and the CIA against the wishes of the secretaries of State and Defense and congressional opposition. Similarly, disagreement within the British cabinet can be associated with the decision to use mercenaries in Yemen during the late Sixties. The Foreign Office’s hostility against any type of British direct involvement in the Middle East after the Suez fiasco led to the decision to use former Special Air Force (SAS) personnel on leave from the military to unofficially back the Yemeni realist forces. It was precisely the intervention in Yemen that led David Stirling, founder of the SAS, to found Watchguard, the first PMSC. Like the diversionary practice mentioned above, the resort to PMSCs can also be associated with inter-agency competition and dissent. The reason is straightforward: the use of PMSC provides foreign policy bureaucracies with the possibility to maximize their policy discretion by circumventing the vetoes and restrictions that military


organizations would be likely to impose if their personnel and assets were used. Hence, a connection can be established between bureaucratic competition and the propensity to resort to PMSCs.

As suggested by Allison and Halperin, the implementation of foreign policy sometimes allows for “a choice of implementers”\textsuperscript{28}. For example, “negotiations with foreign governments are usually the domain of the foreign office; but they can be assigned to a special envoy of the head of government, or to the intelligence service”. In most situations, however, “senior players will have no choice about who will carry out the action”\textsuperscript{29}. This is often the case for activities with a military component. For instance, “bombing missions must be assigned to the military, although there may be a choice between different military services”\textsuperscript{30}. The privatization of military activities calls into question such a statement. The possibility to rely on contractors provides foreign policy bureaucracies with the abovementioned “choice of implementers” for many tasks that could previously be performed by military organizations only. The privatization of military services has remained largely limited to defensive armed security and unarmed logistical support, while combat activities such as bombing have remained the preserve of uniformed personnel. Contractors, however, have been involved in a number of security and military support activities, such as the arming and operating of the Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles employed against the Taliban in Southern Afghanistan and Pakistan. The CIA’s choice to employ contractors can be associated with bureaucratic politics, as its reflects the struggle surrounding the use of US Special Operation Forces (SOFs) for intelligence missions between the CIA and military services\textsuperscript{31}. CIA may have preferred the resort to contractors precisely as a way to maximize its institutional autonomy and avoid military organizations’ resistance against the detachment of SOFs for intelligence missions. The

\textsuperscript{28} Allison and Halperin 1972: 51.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid. 52.

\textsuperscript{31} On the use of SOFs in intelligence missions see Field Manual No. 3-05.102, Army Special Operations Forces Intelligence (Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington DC, 31 August 2001). The use of SOFS for cia operations has been criticized by both the military and congress. Andrei Feickert and Thomas T. Livingstone, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress, Congressional Research Service report to Congress (Washigton DC, 3 December 2010).
outsourcing of foreign military training provides another interesting example, as it has arguably provided the State Department with the possibility to carry out the training of foreign forces according to its own preferences. The State Department has become increasingly dissatisfied with the DoD approach to foreign military training, seen as based on a standardized “train and equip mentality” with no other goal than turning local forces into “better shooters in newer equipment”\(^\text{32}\). Such an approach came to be considered as insufficiently capable of accommodating the needs and the cultural sensitivities of foreign societies\(^\text{33}\). The training of the Armed Forces of Liberia, outsourced by the State Department to the PMSCs Dyncorp and Pacific Architect and Engineers, is a case in point. Had the training been carried out by U.S. military personnel, DoD interference and vetoes would have encroached upon the content of the training program, preventing the adoption of the solutions advocated by both the DoS and the Liberian society such as the integration of women into infantry units, not contemplated by US military templates\(^\text{34}\). The outsourcing of the training program allowed DoS officials to circumvent the constraints arising from the U.S. military’s standard operating procedures related to foreign military assistance. Hence, contractors may have been seen by the State Department as better suited at implementing Security Sector Reform programs, based on the restructuring of local forces in a manner consistent with good governance principles rather than simply improving their military capabilities\(^\text{35}\).

As shown by these examples, the resort to contractors provides foreign policy bureaucracies with new means to push forward their preferences. Actors that used to have no choice but depending on other players’ assets and personnel, such as foreign ministries, aid agencies and

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\(^{33}\) Authors’ interviews.

\(^{34}\) McFate 2008: 651.

intelligence services in need for military assets and skills, can now draw on the market as an alternative source of manpower and expertise. By outsourcing such services to commercial actors, these bureaucracies may avoid vetoes, restrictions and interference from military organizations, resorting to actors placed by contractual provisions under their direct command and urged by financial incentives to faithfully stick to their principals’ preferences. Hence, the resort to PMSCs enhances foreign policy bureaucracies’ autonomy and discretion in performing their mission. By looking at the privatization of personal security for foreign policy bureaucracies’ officials deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq by the US and the UK, this paper will provide a plausibility probe for the hypothesis that military privatization responds to foreign policy bureaucracies’ willingness to increase their institutional autonomy.

4. The bureaucratic politics of outsourcing security in the US

As forcefully shown by the seminal works of Allison and Halperin and by a huge strand of following scholarship, mutual distrust, lack of cooperation and bureaucratic competition have repeatedly characterized U.S. foreign policy after World War II. That between State Department and Department of Defense (DoD) is the most renowned of these bureaucratic struggles. Far from ceasing at the end of the cold war, inter-agency rivalries between DoS and DoD may, if anything, have magnified, exacerbated by budget cuts and each agency’s struggle to redefine its role in a unipolar world. While being the first U.S. government department established in the wake of the Revolution and long enjoyed uncontested prestige, the State Department has seen its authority and competencies increasingly challenged by other bureaucracies, and it is now far from being the monopolist of external relations. In the words of Kegley and Wittkopf, the State Department is now a “bureaucratic pygmy among giants”. Due to much bigger size, its ties with Congress, the strength of the military as an interest group and its growing assertiveness in a broader range of

policy-areas, the Department of Defense has enjoyed an increasing influence on US foreign policy. By contrast, the State Department has suffered from a constant, relative decline. As resources are seen as indicators of organizational power, Foggy Bottom’s decline is epitomized by budget cuts. Between 1984 and 1996, foreign affairs plummeted from 2.5 to roughly 1 percent of the federal budget. This trend has magnified the wake of the war on terror. The decision to assign primary responsibility for state-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan to the Department of Defence, leaving the DoS on the sidelines, epitomizes the marginalization of Foggy Bottom in US foreign policy decision-making. As summarized by the congressional research service, there is now a critical “imbalance between DOD and State Department Resources… especially activities that take place in the context of military operations”.

Cuts in human and financial resources, together with neoliberalism’s preference towards market solution, are crucial explanations for State Department’s growing reliance on contractors. However, Foggy Bottom’s increasing resort to PMSCs in the provision of services that used to be performed by the military may be fully understood only within the context of DoS’ commitment to preserve its institutional autonomy vis-à-vis the DoD and defend its organizational mission. The State Department has found in the possibility to outsource certain support function a way to reduce its critical department on DoD resources and personnel. The existence of diverging standard operating procedures between DoS and DoD and the willingness of Foggy Bottom to achieve as much leeway as possible in the performing of its organizational mission have encouraged DoS’s reliance on contractors in various types of tasks. The next paragraph will look at the use of armed security contractors as a strategy pursued by the DoS to preserve its institutional autonomy in the performing of state-building activities in Iraq.

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38 Stanger 2009: 59.


40 Ibid.: 25.
4.1. The privatization of diplomatic security: the Blackwater Affair

In light of the incidents occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan, State Department’s resort to armed security contractors has come under close scrutiny by academics, media and the broader public. Foggy Bottom’s reliance on PMSCs was widely publicized and triggered fierce public criticism after the Nisour Square incident of September 2006, when 17 Iraqi civilians were shot dead by Blackwater private security contractors escorting a diplomatic motorcade. The Congressional Hearings following the Nisour Square incident provide an extremely valuable source of information on the bureaucratic preferences surrounding the use of contractors instead of uniformed personnel.

The protection of DoS personnel and assets overseas is traditionally provided in-house by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS). Security services provided through the Diplomatic Security Service, a law-enforcement agency largely composed by U.S. federal agents. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Diplomatic Security Services were established in 1985, in the wake of a huge spike in terrorist attacks against U.S. diplomatic posts and personnel abroad. As of 2007, the DSS has approximately 1,450 agents. Together with DSS special agents, a traditional role in protecting U.S. embassies and diplomatic personnel has been played by U.S. Marines, tasked by the Foreign Service Act of 1946 with providing diplomatic protection through a Marine Corps Embassy Security Group.

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42 Hearing before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Blackwater Hearings), House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session October 2, 2007, p. 128.


44 Blackwater Hearings: 140

45 For Instance, the protection of the U.S. ambassador in Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge until the fall of Saigon in 1975 was for instance under the responsibility of a U.S. Marines Personal Protective Security Unit. See Hodge 2011.
The practice of hiring PMSCs for embassy protection did not start in the outset of the war on terror, but developed already in the Nineties during the Clinton Administration\textsuperscript{46}. Private security contractors tasked with diplomatic protection were first deployed in Haiti in 1994, and then in Bosnia in 1995. After the spike in the demand for diplomatic security following the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security first devised the Worldwide Protective Services (WWPS) umbrella contract, allowing the State Department to pre-plan the deployment of security contractors for the protection of DoS officials. First awarded to Dyncorp, the WWPS contract covered protective security services in former Yugoslavia, the Palestinian Territories and the protection of President Karzai in Afghanistan. In 2004, the protection for the U.S. Embassy and its personnel in Baghdad was however awarded to Blackwater, due to DynCorp’s inability to meet the full requirements of the mission. Another U.S. firm, Triple Canopy, was tasked with the protection of the U.S. Embassy Office in Basra. In 2005, a second WWSP contract was awarded to Blackwater, DynCorp and Triple Canopy, operating in Iraq under the supervision of the State Department’s DS Regional Security Office in Baghdad\textsuperscript{47}. As of 2007, private security contractors were reportedly employed by the State Department in 155 diplomatic posts in 111 countries worldwide\textsuperscript{48}.

After the invasion of Iraq, the deployment of a number of DoS officials in the Middle East enormously boosted the need for security personnel carrying out diplomatic protection. Although DSS special agents and U.S. Marines from the Embassy Security Group were working in Iraq, much of the day-to-day protection activities of CPA buildings and convoys have been carried out by contractors. Erik Prince, CEO of Blackwater International, as well as State Department’s diplomats and some republican Congressmen defended the use of private security contractors instead of

\textsuperscript{46} Kinsey 2009; Stanger 2010.


military personnel by arguing that diplomatic security is not a function traditionally provided by the U.S. military, and that U.S. soldiers did not have the appropriate training to provide personal security. Hence, firms like Blackwater filled a specialty gap\(^49\). As it became clear in the course of the Hearing, however, this holds only partly true. As shown above, the U.S. military has always had a role in providing diplomatic security through the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group. In addition, the argument that armed security in Iraq requires skills that are different from those available within the military is at odds with the very fact that Blackwater and other PMSCs were using personnel with a military background. Finally, although it is true that the U.S. military had largely refrained from providing diplomatic security in traditional settings, the situation in Iraq was unique in at least two respects. First, DoS personnel were deployed in the theatre of an insurgency, where their personal security was more at risk than in any other location before. As acknowledged by Ambassador Griffin, Assistant Secretary of State from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in his testimony to Congress, the case of Iraq was unique, as for the first time U.S. diplomats were “operating in a combat zone”\(^50\). In addition, instead of performing the entirety of their functions within easily defensible embassy walls, many DoS officials were involved in the supervision of state-building efforts and the reconstruction of the Iraqi infrastructure. Such tasks required DoS personnel to frequently travel into the red zone, and hence to be exposed to a high likelihood of attack from insurgents. The need for military expertise is precisely one of the reasons why contractors were used instead of DSS agents\(^51\). As explained by Griffin, the resort to contractors was preferred to the hiring of new DSS agents because the DoS was unwilling to create a huge

\(^{49}\) Ibid.: 86.

\(^{50}\) Blackwater Hearings: 141.

\(^{51}\) This is still the situation in Iraq. With the withdrawal of the U.S. military from the country DoS has had to expand the number of security contractors protecting its embassy and staff in the country, while also having to employ contractors able to operate military platforms usually the responsibility of military personnel. The State Department will eventually command a hired army of about 5,500 guards to protect its diplomats. See Spencer Ackerman, *Iraq Wants Mercs, Not U.S. Troops, To Stick Around*, at http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/iraqis-want-mercs-not-u-s-troops-to-stick-around/ (Accessed 12 April 2012).
diplomatic security force that would have remained on DoS’s pay list without any longer being needed after the end of the Iraqi contingency\textsuperscript{52}. However, the hiring of contractors was also due to the fact that DSS agents are law enforcement personnel who do not fully possess the entire set of skills needed to operate in a combat zone. As Griffin summarized, “we don’t have the numbers of people that it would take to fully staff all of those operations, and we don’t have all of the various areas of expertise, as I mentioned, such as helicopter pilots and medics and armorers and mechanics, etc”\textsuperscript{53}. Had more DSS personnel been available, skills that can be found only among personnel with a military background would have anyway been needed in order to fill some crucial specialty gaps. This explains why, although DoS eventually decided to increasingly rely on the market, its personnel were working under direct protection from the U.S. military during the first phases of operation Iraqi Freedom. Armed security for DoS officials, however, soon became a “bone of contention among the State Department people, who came to feel that they didn’t have enough security”\textsuperscript{54}. Indeed, the military was only willing to provide protection for high-level DoS officials. In addition, military protection purportedly stymied the mobility of State Department personnel and the flexibility of their schedule. It thus came to be seen as an obstacle to the effective performing of the state-building and reconstruction functions it was tasked with. As explained by Ambassador Satterfield, Senior Advisor of the State Department who also defended the employment of private security contractors before Congress,

Iraq is a dangerous place. Yet I think we can all agree that our diplomats and civilian personnel need to be able to operate alongside our military colleagues and to have the broadest possible freedom of movement throughout that country. We must be able to interact with our Iraqi counterparts and with the Iraqi population. Without protective

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Blackwater Hearing: 150.

security details, we would not be able to have the interaction with Iraqi government officials, institutions and other Iraqi citizens critical to our mission there\textsuperscript{55}.

Hence, the resort to PMSCs allowed the DoS to achieve much greater institutional autonomy in the performing of its functions. In addition, military protection was also seen as incompatible with State Departments’ preferences and standard operating procedures concerning low-profile security details. When asked whether he had a preference for uniformed personnel or contractors, Ambassador Griffin acknowledged that the U.S. military would have been capable of providing diplomatic security services. He also added, however, that “the Army would be capable of doing it if it was done in the manner which we prescribed, which would not be HumVees, they would not be in uniforms…”\textsuperscript{56}. Regardless of whether or not the military could do the job, DoS’ preference fell on contractors because they could provide a low profile, civilian footprint. As further explained by Griffin,

What you want is to have a low profile. You want a protocol that says you don’t bring in tanks, you don’t bring in HumVees, you bring in a civilian car, you want people dressed in civilian clothes for the most part, not dressed in Army uniform… when Mr. Bremer went into places, wasn’t one of the criticisms that he was going in with the Army, with a high profile of military personnel and having an Army footprint instead of having a civilian footprint?\textsuperscript{57}

These statements clearly reveal the existence of a huge mismatch between DoS and DoD standard operating procedures. Military protection entails highly visible military vehicles and uniformed personnel. By contrast, State Department’s diplomatic security policy is based on trying “to make our protective details, our presence, as low profile as possible consistent with the protect mission, as unobtrusive as possible, and as consistent with the civilian setting in which we operate

\textsuperscript{55} Blackwater Hearings: 123.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.: 147.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid: 148.
as possible”. Such a difference in standard operating procedures has created greater incentives for the DoS to rely on contractors instead of uniformed personnel.

Another crucial issue arguably associated with DoS’ resort to contractors has to do with the command of security personnel. Had the protection of DoS personnel and motorcades been provided by the military, it would have fallen under the military chain of command, with DoS officials having no direct authority over their escorts. Contractors, on the other hand, are obliged by contractual provisions to abide by DoS personnel’s requests. DoS personnel may have thus come to prefer private security due to their preference for under-command security providers. As amply shown in the previous section, a large body of scholarship converges in noting that organizations try to preserve their institutional autonomy, acting in a way that gives them the greatest possible leeway in performing their mission. When escorted by military personnel outside the Green Zone, U.S. diplomats had to arrange their movements with a lot of advance, without being able to change schedule and itinerary. Most importantly, they could be denied the possibility to move due to security concerns or the incompatibility between their operations and U.S. military operational needs. Private security contractors proved much suitable for DoS needs, ensuring greater mobility and flexibility for its personnel. By increasing DoS personnel’s mobility, the resort to the market provided a way for the State Department to increase its institutional autonomy.

Nisour Square was only the most notable of a number of incidents involving private security contractors working for the State Department. Although Blackwater’s “trigger-happy cowboys” were considered as the sole responsible for such fire fights in the eyes of the American public and media, such incidents were not exclusively determined by the poor quality of private security personnel, who proved capable of remarkable effectiveness in protecting their principals, or by the

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58 Ibid. The extent to which Blackwater’s private security details can actually be considered “low profile” is questionable. A former contractor dismisses Griffin words as “plain ludicrous”, observing that “there is nothing low profile in shiny brand new SUVS covered in 10ft tall antennas driving in herringbone formation at 60mph with a machine gun pointing out of the back window”. Authors’ Interview to anonymous ex private security contractor.


60 Dickinson 2010: 99.
fact that they were operating in a culture of impunity. These incidents can be considered at least to some degree as an inevitable consequence of the permissive Rules of the use of Force (the equivalent of military Rules of Engagements) set by the State Department’s DS Regional Security Office, that allowed contractors to resort to force preemptively. To be sure, DS protocols envisaged an escalation of force policy referred to as the “use of force continuum” consisting in a series of visual and acoustic warnings that would finally culminate in pre-emptive fire against vehicles approaching diplomatic motorcades. In some circumstances, however, “deadly force can be immediately applied” short of any warning, if this is required by the situation. Such procedures were deemed necessary due to the perceived danger of suicide car bombers, which made any vehicle approaching U.S. diplomatic convoys a potential threat to U.S. officials’ safety. Although Blackwater contractors were prosecuted for their excess in the use of force, they never violated DoS contractual provisions. When asked “When your contractors fire first at a vehicle speeding toward a chief of mission motorcade, is that a violation of the rules of engagements?” Ambassador Griffin replied “Absolutely not”, and further added: “one does not have to wait until the protectee or co-worker is physically harmed before taking action”.

As emphasized by U.S. diplomats, the protective measures envisaged in Iraq were established in accordance with State Department’s first imperative: protecting its most important assets, its employees. The DoS had huge difficulties at devising financial and promotion incentives capable of motivating a sufficient number of DoS personnel to accept the detachment to Iraq, as DoS officials found the local environment extremely dangerous. A single incident could undermine the motivations and morale of DoS personnel,


62 Ibid.:135.

63 Ibid.:144

64 Ibid.

65 Dickinson 2011: 37.
creating greater difficulties in deploying officials to Iraq and compromising DoS capacity to perform the state-building functions it was tasked with. As noted by organization theory, bureaucracies seek to preserve the morale and motivation of its personnel. Low morale weakens an organization’s position and makes recruiting and retaining qualified personnel more difficult. Hence, policies are evaluated not only with respect to its substantive consequences, but also with a view to their potential effects on the morale and motivation of their employees. This helps explaining why State Department’s priorities focused on the protection of its personnel at all costs, in spite of the widespread concerns that the behaviour of its security contractors was incompatible with the imperative to minimize collateral damage and win the hearts and minds of the local population that lies at the core of counterinsurgency efforts.

Considerations associated with its preference for an under-command solution that would provide its personnel with greater mobility and its penchant for a more low-profile approach have an important say in explaining the huge resort of the State Department to private security contractors in the wake of the Iraq war. Such findings resonate with the hypotheses provided by bureaucratic politics paradigm, which sees standard operating procedures as a limit to inter-agency co-operation and identifies in the attempt to maximize institutional autonomy an important driver of bureaucracies’ behaviour. Hence, bureaucratic politics provides valuable insights on the privatization of US diplomatic security in the wake on the war on terror, helping explain its problematic consequences.

5. Outsourcing and bureaucratic politics in the U.K.

According to the existing literature, the bureaucratic competition that characterize U.S. foreign policy arguably affect parliamentary forms of governments to a minor degree, due to the greater coherence ensured by the collegial authority of the cabinet. This holds especially true for the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). While “the FCO is in almost permanent conflict with the Treasury over the allocation of government resources, it is hard to find examples of external policies being negatively affected by bureaucratic conflicts involving the FCO as one of the parties.” The role of the cabinet in ensuring greater consistency in foreign policy action and settling controversies between ministries and a clearer division of labour between bureaucracies arguably contributes to reduce inter-agency conflict in the United Kingdom.

Our study confirms existing evidence in finding a much lower degree of inter-agency rivalry between Foreign Office and the British military than between DoS and DoD. Our findings show that the privatization of diplomatic security by the FCO did not directly respond to the attempt to increase its institutional autonomy from the British military. Unlike the State Department, which preferred the resort to contractors in the performing of its mission, the FCO seems to have resorted to PMSCs only on the grounds of necessity. The privatization of security functions by the British Department for International Development, however, shows a different picture. Differences in organizational culture, interagency rivalries and diverging standard operating procedures played a role in DFID’s resort to PMSCs, helping to explain its preference towards private security contractors instead of uniformed personnel. The next two subsections will look at the resort to armed security by FCO and DFID.

5.1. The Foreign Office and the outsourcing of diplomatic security

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67 Rose 1988


69 Rose 1988.
The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office has distinguished itself for an open-minded approach to the use of PMSCs. Since the Green Paper published after the Arms to Africa Affair triggered by the violation of a UN arms embargo on Sierra Leone by the British firm Sandline, the Foreign Office recognized some types of commercial actors providing security functions as legitimate players on the international stage and valuable tools of foreign policy\(^70\). According to Kinsey, the FCO has “tended to adopt a much more liberal and forward-looking attitude towards the industry” in comparison to the British Ministry of Defence (MoD). This, however, is “largely the result of necessity instead of any preference towards the market”\(^71\).

Close protection for British diplomatic personnel has traditionally been provided by the Royal Military Police (RMP), a corps of the British Army responsible for military investigations, including prisoners’ detainment, garrison policing and foreign police training. While tasked with a number of functions, the RMP is a relatively small body, comprising 1800 among both Regular and Territorial units\(^72\). During the Nineties already, the use of RMP units for the close protection of FCO personnel had to be restricted to the five highest threat locations\(^73\). According to the FCO, “it is not standard practice to use British military personnel to protect diplomatic posts and personnel abroad. Primary responsibility normally resides with local authorities”\(^74\). Already before 9/11, the FCO started relying on security contractors providing embassy guards in particularly sensitive theatres. In the wake of the War on Terror, when the deployment of British military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan enormously increased the need for diplomatic security, PMSCs such as ArmorGroup (now G4S) and Control Risks Group started to be resorted to not only for static

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\(^73\) Email communication with Lt Col Patrick Wellington MBE KHS, 11 April 2012.

\(^74\) Kinsey 2009: 86.
security of FCO buildings, but also for the close protection of their personnel. Between 2006 and 2008, FCO’s spending for commercial private security in Iraq and Afghanistan amounted to about £74.4m\textsuperscript{75}. The list of security contracts for the years 2009 and 2010, released by the FCO by resorting to the Freedom of Information act, shows the importance of PMSCs in supporting British diplomatic activities.

Contracts the FCO has signed with private security companies for the years 2008-09 and 2009-10\textsuperscript{76}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afghanistan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – December 2008</td>
<td>Mobile &amp; Static Security</td>
<td>G4S</td>
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<tr>
<td>January – December 2009</td>
<td>Mobile &amp; Static Security</td>
<td>G4S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – February 2010</td>
<td>Mobile &amp; Static Security</td>
<td>G4S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2010 – February 2011</td>
<td>Mobile &amp; Static Security</td>
<td>G4S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – December 2008</td>
<td>Police mentors and advisers (Training of Afghan Police)</td>
<td>G4S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009 – March 2009</td>
<td>Police mentors and Advisers (Training of Afghan Police)</td>
<td>G4S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2009– February 2010</td>
<td>Vehicle Maintenance (includes Iraq)</td>
<td>G4S</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Iraq</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2008 – June 2009</td>
<td>Close Protection</td>
<td>Control Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2009 – February 2010</td>
<td>Mobile security / Close Protection</td>
<td>Control Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2007 – June 2008</td>
<td>Guarding Embassy</td>
<td>Garda World</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2008 – March 2008</td>
<td>Field Training Coordinators</td>
<td>Armorgroup</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2008 – March 2009</td>
<td>Overseas Security Managers</td>
<td>Minimal Risks</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2009 – March 2010</td>
<td>Overseas Security Managers (includes Afghanistan)</td>
<td>Minimal Risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January – December 2008/09/10</td>
<td>Static Guarding</td>
<td>Control Risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{75} See Foreign Commonwealth Office Freedom of Information request refer 0644-08, 19, released August 2008. This total does not include Other Government Departments (OGDs) and DFID for Afghanistan.

\textsuperscript{76} Author’s Freedom of Information request ref 0610-11, released 1 July 2011.
In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the FCO has resorted to PMSCs in the performing of a number of functions falling into the competencies of the RMP, such as embassy guarding, close protection and police training. The resort to contractors, however, seems to have been first and foremost a practical solution to the Royal Military Police incapacity to meet FCO’s growing security needs. Contrary to what found in the case of the U.S. DoS, the British FCO did not seem to show a preference for contractors in the provision of diplomatic security. Indeed, British Ambassadors clearly expressed their preference for having close protection services carried out by RMP rather than by private contractors. This holds true not only with regard to single ambassadors’ personal preferences, but also for the overarching FCO’s approach. During public consultations on the role of the private military industry, the FCO clearly maintained that is preferred option was the resort to military units providing diplomatic security.

The reasons for this clear preference are numerous. Firstly, as mentioned above, the available literature and the evidence collected in this study suggest that the FCO and the MoD have been characterized by a good working relationship and a low degree of bureaucratic competition. British diplomatic and military personnel have often been working side-by-side, sharing the same working environment, exchanging information and developing mutual trust. A low level of inter-agency rivalry did not provide incentives for the FCO to resort to contractors as a way to maximize their institutional autonomy and avoid interference from the military. This may also have to do with the issue of command. Senior FCOs employees can overrule the advice of RMP close protection teams, therefore preserving similar autonomy in the performing of their work regardless of being protected by military personnel or by contractors. Moreover, FCOs employees preferred RMP teams due to the type of skills and services they can offer. Unlike most U.S. military units, the Royal Military Police is a hybrid body skilled in both combat and law enforcement that receives a specific training on close protection. Having military personnel also means having a high degree of

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77 Email communication with Lt Col Patrick Wellington MBE KHS, 11 April 2012.
professional accountability and mechanisms to deal with ill discipline and poor performance.\textsuperscript{78} This made them ideal providers of protective services, allowing their teams to provide close protection in a manner consistent with FCO’s preference for flexibility and low profile. In addition, it is a standard operating procedure for RMP Close Protection teams to take on all the responsibilities for protecting the Ambassadors. PMSCs mobile security contracts, on the contrary, are said to consist more of an “armed taxi service” than a thorough close protection team. Contractors’ teams reportedly rotate more often than the RMP units detached to protect ambassadors. As RMP close protection teams tend to perform their task for longer periods, this allows them to establish a better working relationship with ambassadors, characterized by greater trust\textsuperscript{79}. A further and crucial issue has to do with costs. When RMP Units are deployed to protect FCO’s personnel, the MoD recovers the costs from the Foreign Office. In a phase of growing commitments and shrinking budgets, this created strong incentives for the FCO to rely on contractors, unanimously considered as cheaper\textsuperscript{80}.

Hence, close protection for British diplomat was considered by the RMP as one of its core functions. Due to its size, however, such a corps could not meet the spike in the demand for close protection by the FCO following the rise of the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, the fact that RMP units had to be paid by the FCO created strong incentives for the Foreign Office to resort on cheaper private security details. British diplomatic personnel did not come to see the provision of commercial security as an under-command solution that would maximize their institutional autonomy. The use of private security by the British Department for International Development, however, shows a different picture, suggesting that inter-agency rivalries, different organizational cultures and the attempt to preserve institutional autonomy have a valuable role in shaping its preference towards private security.

\textsuperscript{78}Email communication with Lt Col Patrick Wellington MBE KHS, 11 April 2012.

\textsuperscript{79} Email communication with Lt Col Patrick Wellington MBE KHS, 11 April 2012.

\textsuperscript{80} Email communication with Lt Col Patrick Wellington MBE KHS, 11 April 2012.
5.2. The Department for International Development and PMSCs

According to Kinsey, “DFID is the most forward-looking department in their thinking concerning the potential utility of commercial security”, and it quickly overcame its initial suspicion associated with the profit-driven nature of the industry. DFID’s approach towards PMSCs seems to have been shaped by the willingness to increase its institutional autonomy by resorting to under-command security providers that proved more compatible with its own needs and standard operating procedures.

The British Department for International Development has its origins in the Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM), created during the Labour government of 1964–70 by assembling departments within the FCO and other ministries. Reintegrated within the Foreign office by the following conservative cabinet, the ODM was again restored as an independent ministry and then once more reincorporated within the FCO by the Thatcher’s executive. Separated from the FCO yet again in 1997, it is now an independent government department headed by a Secretary of State for International Development. Tasked with the provision of aid and development assistance, DFID provides support to developing countries in a broad range of areas such as education, health, environment protection, and humanitarian assistance. In addition, DFID is the main responsible for Security Sector Reform. While the MoD is responsible for military training, DFID is involved in the provision of police training and in the restructuring of developing countries judiciary and law enforcement sector.

DFID has the possibility to rely on PMSCs in two key areas. First, DFID has the possibility to resort to commercial providers of police training and security sector reform, an area that the private military industry is increasingly keen on exploiting. Indeed, DFID has already hired

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private consultants and trainers to implement SSR programs. In Jamaica, for instance, DFID contracted a management consulting company, Atos, to assist the reform of the Jamaican police forces. DFID has also resorted to the private firm Burton Rands as a provider of Security Sector Reform for the Southern Sudan’s People Liberation Army (SPLA). In addition, DFID has also relied on PMSCs in the performing of armed protection, resorting to private security details to protect its staff working in Iraq and Afghanistan. This section will focus on DFID’s preference towards the provision of armed security by private contractors rather than uniformed personnel.

While certainly linked with the cost-effectiveness of contractors and the shortage of military personnel, DFID’s resort to the private sector seems also associated with organizational preferences, low profile standard operating procedures and the attempt to preserve its institutional autonomy. To begin with, the resort to public-private partnerships and outsourcing solutions is deeply embedded in DFID’s organizational culture. As a lean and newly established government department, DFID has been keen on adopting a more flexible and goal-oriented approach to the performing of its mission, avoiding the establishment on unnecessary bureaucracy and delegating the provision of assistance to a range of international, non-governmental and commercial actors. Indeed, DFID, as with all government departments, has openly acknowledged the importance of outsourcing and public-private partnerships and hires a considerable number of contractors to run its projects. In addition, DFID and the British military are characterized by very different

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86 For humanitarian work the whole of DFID’s Operational Team is outsourced on a 5 year tender – currently held by the Crown Agency – which provides everything from humanitarian advisers, security management and financial services etc. These services extend, under the same contract, to those provided by the Stabilisation Unit. Email communication with Mr Neil Barry OBE, Humanitarian Consultant, 1 May 2012.
organizational cultures and a sometimes tense relationship\textsuperscript{87}. In addition, DFID employees often prefer commercial providers of security to military close protection teams for two more specific reasons. First, DFID personnel are keen on being perceived as neutral aid providers by the local societies they operate in, and see the adoption of a light footprint as a crucial standard operating procedure. As a consequence, they have come to see the low profile approach offered by PMSCs as particularly valuable, and certainly preferable to being embedded into a military force protection team composed by personnel in uniform. This holds particularly true for Southern Afghanistan, where the British military is often seen as an unwelcome occupying force\textsuperscript{88}. In addition, DFID has also seen the resort to contractors as a crucial way to maximize the autonomy of its personnel operating abroad. As mentioned above, many DFID personnel are not permanent employees of the department, but contractors hired for a particular task that they need to complete within a timeframe. Military protection makes it difficult for DFID personnel to move around their project site easily, as they first need to get permission from the military units who are responsible for their safety. Due to the tight schedule within which they operate, DFID personnel usually prefer to use private security teams, who can provide them with greater speed, mobility and flexibility. As stated by a former employee of the Stabilisation Unit (SU)\textsuperscript{89} former employee,

\begin{quote}

PSC gives much greater flexibility. Essentially you book them as you might book a taxi – albeit a heavily armed one! Moves with the military have to fit in with whatever their mission of the day might be. They do not work
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{87} Email communication with Barny Mayhew, 30 April 2012. Mr Mayhew is a Independent Consultant for the humanitarian /development sector. He also lectures on these topics to military officers on the Joint Services Command Staff Course at the UK Defence Academy. According to Mayhew, “when both sides make an effort to understand each other and particularly when the individuals on both sides have previous experience of the DFID-military relationship, cooperation can be good … The times when the relationship is likely to be most difficult are when it involves individuals with little or no experience of dealing with the other side and little or no training in how the other side works”


\textsuperscript{89} The Stabilisation Unit is a cross governmental organisation consisting of FCO, DFID and MoD personnel. One of its roles is to undertakes development work to help establish peace and security in countries affected by conflict and instability. See SU home page \texttt{<http://www.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/about-us/what-is-stabilisation.html>} (accessed 14 April 2012).
for you, unless you are the Ambassador of course! PSCs do\textsuperscript{90}.

While low-profile standard operating procedures and autonomy-maximization tendencies seem to have played limited or no role in FCO’s decision to outsource diplomatic security, such factors were crucial in shaping DFID’s preference for PMSCs, strongly associated with the mistrust for the military and its need for greater mobility and a light footprint.

**Conclusions**

This paper has provided an overview of the outsourcing of diplomatic security based on the insights provided by the bureaucratic politics paradigm. It has focused on the hypothesis that the resort to PMSCs by foreign policy bureaucracies should not merely be seen as a second best choice dictated by budgetary constraints and the unavailability of uniformed personnel. The use of private military contractors has responded to foreign ministries’ and aid agencies’ preferences, grounded on the attempt to preserve their institutional autonomy from military organizations and implement policy according to their standard operating procedures. An analysis of the use of private security contractors by U.S. and U.K. foreign policy bureaucracies provides valuable support to this hypothesis. The preference for mobility and low profile has shaped both U.S. State Department’s and British DFID’s preference towards PMSCs, creating greater incentives to outsource armed security functions.

To be sure, our enquiry also reveals some limitations. In one of our three cases, namely the British FCO, a clear preference towards military protection emerged. Such a preference, however, is not incompatible with the hypothesis that bureaucratic politics shapes the outsourcing of security functions. If, as suggested by the existing literature, a connection exists between inter-bureaucratic competition and autonomy-maximization tendencies, we can expect the preference towards

\textsuperscript{90} Interview with Rebecca Buckingham 23 January 2012. Rebecca Buckingham was Head of the Rule and Law Team, Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team from March 2010 – May 2011.
contractors to be stronger in situations when the turf-of-war between foreign policy bureaucracies and military organizations is more pronounced, as in the case of the relationship between DoS and DoD and DFID and the British MoD. By contrast, bureaucracies characterized by a lower degree of competition with military organizations like the FCO should show a lower propensity to use of contractors instead of uniformed personnel. However, the fact that PMSCs were used in spite of FCO’s clear preference towards having Royal Military Police Close Protection teams shows that no systematic connection exists between bureaucratic preferences and the choice of uniformed or commercial security details. Although bureaucratic preferences provide greater incentives to rely on contractors, they are not a necessary cause for the resort to contractors to take place.

In addition, a comprehensive enquiry of the bureaucratic politics of security outsourcing requires a systematic look not only at foreign policy bureaucracies, but also at the interests and preferences of military organizations. The penetration of new commercial players into the implementation of foreign policy activities with a military component does not only provide foreign policy bureaucracies with new ways to increase their institutional autonomy, but it also offers military organizations the possibility to resist from carrying out activities seen as peripheral relative to their core mission. Due to its organizational culture, grounded on the specialization on combat, the U.S. military has not opposed or even openly encouraged the resort to contractors in the performing of diplomatic protection and armed security. While many military field commanders forcefully criticized DoS’ use of security contractors, seen as undermining command and control and detrimental to counterinsurgency efforts, the US military remained officially unwilling to

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91 There is agreement in the literature on military organizational cultures that the U.S. military has traditionally been characterized by an emphasis on conventional combat as its core mission. This has led to a pronounced resistance against the performing of other tasks such as counterinsurgency and peacekeeping. See Russell F. Weigley, The American way of war: A history of United States military strategy and policy (New York: Macmillan 1973); Deborah D. Avant. Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons From Peripheral Wars (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); John Nagl, Learning to Eat soup with a Knife. Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2002); Robert Cassidy, Peacekeeping in the Abyss: British and American Peacekeeping Doctrine and Practice After the Cold War (Westport: Praeger 2004).
replace contractors in performing diplomatic security functions. As stated by a 2007 State Department’s report, “The U.S. Military in Iraq does not consider it feasible or desirable under existing conditions in Iraq for the Department of Defense to take on responsibility for provision of protection support to the Embassy”92. While due to space constraints this paper has focused only on foreign ministries and aid agencies, the privatization of certain functions can be better understood as the resultant of both foreign policy bureaucracies’ and military organizations’ preferences.