

Naval War College Review

Volume 57
Number 3 Summer/Autumn

Article 19

2004

Corporate Warriors,

Richard Lacquement

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Lacquement, Richard (2004) "Corporate Warriors," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 57 : No. 3 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol57/iss3/19>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

rhetorical device designed to appeal to the prejudices of the humanist-oriented Italian elite of his day. At the military level, Lynch argues that Machiavelli's appreciation of the role of artillery and cavalry has long been underestimated. Machiavelli goes out of his way to call attention to the limitations of the Roman way of warfare, which was evident in their campaigns against the Parthians, who relied exclusively on light mobile cavalry armed with the bow and guerilla-style raiding tactics.

Lynch suggests that what Machiavelli ultimately envisions is a synthesis of Rome or "Europe" and "Asia," a combination of Clausewitzian commitment to the decisive battle and extensive employment of maneuver, deception, and surprise in a manner reminiscent of Sun Tzu.

Whatever view one takes of Lynch's bold and provocative reading of Machiavelli's text, his handling of the translation is exemplary and unlikely to be challenged in the foreseeable future. He makes use of the definitive critical edition of the Italian text published in Rome in 2001, which removes many errors present in older versions. The translation itself is relatively literal, with occasional awkwardness but much enhanced access to the terminology of Machiavelli himself; there is also a very extensive glossary of terms.

CARNES LORD
Naval War College



Singer, Peter W. *Corporate Warriors*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2003. 330pp. \$35

Corporate Warriors is a must read for military professionals and national security experts. It opens a dialogue to a

valuable aspect of national security that demands greater attention—the armed forces' use of contractors. The framework Singer develops is especially worthwhile, and although many of his suggestions are often provocative, in some areas his analysis is flawed and the implications are loose and unsupported. Overall, however, this work is a superb effort to advance discussion on a critical topic.

The Bush administration has made it clear that even with the demands related to the global war on terror, it would prefer not to dramatically increase the size of its forces. To make up for the difference—particularly with respect to Afghanistan and Iraq—contractors have been hired to pick up the slack. Hence, the current war is one where corporate warriors of private military firms have become part of the environment.

Throughout the world other states and international organizations have also turned to private military firms for assistance. Singer argues persuasively that there are policy and operational concerns about the use of these firms that need to be examined more thoroughly.

The book is divided into three parts, of which the first two are the most useful and of durable value. "The Rise" contains an interesting thumbnail of mercenaries through the ages and sets the context for understanding contemporary motivations for the use of private military firms. "Organization and Operations" provides an exceptionally useful framework for understanding the roles of various private firms that perform duties often identified with the military. Chapter 6, "The Private Military Industry Classified," lays out the taxonomy for firms involved in

military-like activities and distinguishes between providers, consultants, and support firms. The next three chapters are devoted to contemporary examples for three types of firms: Executive Outcomes, the notorious but now officially disbanded South African-based mercenary group, illustrates a military provider firm. MPRI, an American-based firm founded, run, and largely staffed by retired flag officers, illustrates a military consulting firm; and Brown and Root, logistics providers, is a U.S.-based Halliburton subsidiary and illustrates a military support firm. In addition to clarifying the types of firms, these chapters are engaging case studies of prominent and influential corporations.

The book contains some significant flaws, but they generally stem from the groundbreaking effort to comprehend the significance of these firms. There are also many loose assertions, insinuations, and innuendos that are unlikely to withstand closer scrutiny, but for now, as an opening argument, they should be taken seriously.

The effort to differentiate the firms in an analytical and useful fashion breaks down in part 3, entitled "Implications." The words "possible," "might," and "can" show up with inordinate frequency and are indicative of a looser, more speculative analysis. Here, Singer has a hard time maintaining the distinction between the firms he had carefully created earlier. The effect is often to tar all provider firms that bear the most resemblance to mercenaries or traditional military combat organizations. Singer darkly intones about the pitfalls and potential problems that can arise from the use of private military corporations. In this section, he tends to lump together all flavors of private

military corporations, suggesting guilt by association with a small number of admittedly distasteful companies. This tendency to associate loosely all firms with the sins of the most egregious ones (almost always provider firms) seems even less fair given the fact that elsewhere Singer notes that such firms constitute a small fraction of the overall private military firm population. Many of his accusations do not apply well to support firms. A more useful approach would have been to assess the implications for each type of firm with respect to contracting dilemmas, market dynamics, accountability, civil-military relations, morality, and effectiveness.

Corporate Warriors is a valuable point of departure for understanding private military firms. It has cut a path through the dense thicket of concerns about their appropriate role but has by no means cleared the way. The book opens a debate that should engage military professionals, civilian national security leaders, and civil society. In the pursuit of national objectives there are many potentially useful instruments, and this book is clearly one of them. Better understanding private military firms and addressing their appropriate role are essential challenges.

RICHARD LACQUEMENT
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Naval War College



Schneider, Barry R., and Jerrold Post, eds. *Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: U.S. Air Force Counterproliferation Center, 2002. 325pp.

The devastating attack of 9/11 starkly revealed how the United States failed to