

Sławomir Kiraga*

(rev.): Sean McFate, *The Modern Mercenary. Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order*, Oxford University Press, New York 2014, pp. 248.

Dr. Sean McFate is an American scholar of war and international relations and a professor of international relations at the National Defense University in Washington and Georgetown University. He also works with the Atlantic Council and Rand Corporation. His knowledge is based on his extensive experience, which includes many years working for government institutions and private firms. Thanks to his experience as a US Army officer, as an employee of a private military firm and as an advisor to Amnesty International, he possesses in-depth knowledge of the army's functioning, its possible paths of evolution in the context of contemporary threats, as well as of the manner in which governments make use of private military and security firms. His present research interests are focused on the "privatization" of security and the role private firms play in the foreign policy of states.

The book under review is a work devoted to the analysis of the activities of private entities specialized in providing security and military services. In it, the author has summed up his research into the phenomenon of privatization of security.

In the introduction the author presents his own experience from working for private military firms and defines his main research areas:

- Why do even such powers as the United States make use of private firms to perform security and military tasks?
- Will the privatization of security affect the way war is conducted and, if so, how?
- Will the use of private military firms affect international relations?

The author also attempts to answer the question of why have private firms and mercenaries reappeared in contemporary military conflicts? In his work, the author stresses that such entities have been present and used by rulers throughout history, and that the struggle against such entities – reaching its apogee in the second half of the 20th century – was the exception rather than the rule.

Given the complexity of the question of how private military and security firms function, the author divided it into smaller issues, each of which forms a chapter of his book.

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