

## THE EFFICIENCY OF THE USE OF *PRIVATE MILITARY SECURITY COMPANIES (PMSC)* BY THE UNITED STATES IN IRAQ

**RAVIQ AYUSI**

*Master Program of International Relation, Airlangga University*

Email: [aviqa.yusi@gmail.com](mailto:aviqa.yusi@gmail.com)

Paper ID : 47-2-2-20180601

### ABSTRACT

The shift of security paradigm post-cold war era has made the concept of security more complex, regarding the actor and its scope. The security dynamic trigger the emergence of new non-state actors in the security field. Private Military Security Companies (PMSC) is one of a non-state actors that provides security services. The United States as a developed country makes use of this service not only during wartime but also on other certain condition. The choice of using PMSC services is considered to have greater efficiency than the use of state military. How efficient can the United States get by hiring the PMSC? Based on the analysis, this paper argues that the US efficiency by hiring the PMSC is quite high because of the ability of the US to see the conditions, taking into account further and minimize the impact that would come. This paper will outline through three components: international security governance, the efficient use of PMSC services, and the consideration more about the impact of the use of PMSC services.

**Keywords:** *Private Military Security Company, Privatization, Security, Efficiency, The United State*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the shift of security paradigm has created a new form of threat and security (Cha, 2000). At the end of the cold war, the dynamics of security brought new non-state actors, especially in the security sector. The new non-state actor is the source of security as well as a new threat to the international world. The concept of security becomes more complex especially regarding the agent or subject and its scope. New conflicts and threats that do not involve the state as the main actor, emerges in a vast space of globalization. In dealing with that, the country needs a new method to end the

threat to keep the security of the nation (Ghazaly, 2014). The Private Military Security Company (PMSC) has become one of the non-state actors who provides security service for those countries.

The involvement of PMSC in international conflict is not a new issue. Currently, the PMSC is not only engaged to handle conflicts but also to meet the security needs of other countries and actors in general. Non-state actors such as institutions, multinational corporations, the UN, and even individuals have also hired PMSC services (Rich, 2013). Singer (2002) reveal that the support for PMSC

comes from the global market. The needs of military services in supply by the global private market are getting higher now (Singer, 2002). Even as a developed country, the United States has progressively hired PMSC contractors to support its military power since the 1990s. Many experts argue that the United States has now depended on the private sector in term of security issue such as the hiring of PMSC; thus it cannot stand alone without the assistance of this private sector (The Atlantic, 2016). Moreover, the United States has become the holder of the majority PMSC market and holds the highest number of tenants (Krahmann, 2005).

This privatized military company is unique because it serves a professional military service. The amount of PMSC rentals made by the US can be seen through the PMSC lease during the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, the US Department of Defense employed 155.826 private military contractors and 152.275 troops in Iraq. This level of privatization has never occurred in modern warfare (Dunigan, 2012). After the Iraq war ended, the US withdrew its troops but still posted the PMSC in Iraq. The placement of PMSC is to protect the US diplomatic installation due to the unstable situation in Iraq (Zudma, 2017). The US also raised another 4.970 contractors in Iraq by 2014 (The Atlantic 2016). As several pieces of researches has revealed, the realistic option to meet the risk efficiency is by hiring the PMSC instead of the country's military force.

How efficient can a country, especially the United States, achieve through hiring of

PMSC? Referring to the efficiency of PMSC tenancy, this paper will discuss and explain about three frameworks. First, the ability of the United States to looks at the international security conditions and is more to the security governance. Second, some of the efficient actions taken through PMSC contracting, especially those placed in Iraq. The third, to maintain the high efficiency, it requires a closer look at the added value of PMSC. The United States gained a great deal of efficiency through PMSC due to its ability to observe the condition, to have a further prediction and to minimize any impact.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The type of research is qualitative research. Data collection techniques are using secondary datathrough literature studies such as books, articles, journals and research reports

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Security Governance: How the US sees security**

The end of the cold war which is marked by the dissolution of two superpower nations has affected the international security spectrum and initiated the PMSC growth. The competition of being the most powerful country and the international security protector is no longer the main point which reduces the importance of security spectrum. Furthermore, globalization in a wide space becomes the reason for several extreme and fundamental groups to work together which eventually raises a new threat for non-

traditional security such as terrorism, transnational crime, human security, genocide and other similar threat of international security (Cha, 2000). The various forms of these threats reflect the need for security and the opportunities for PMSC growth (Ghazaly, 2014). Adding with the 9/11 events that increasingly require strength to fight terrorism, but on the one hand, the condition of the number of personnel and weaponry in particular by the US has decreased.

The need for security demands more effective and efficient security policymaking. This security policy causes pressure to increase the security force but on the other hand; there is also a requirement to spend

the least budget of defense. Because of this, tensions arose because of the need for military expenses, training, research and development of armaments (Krahmann, 2005). Moreover, seeing the ever-exposed defense spending by the US is too big, as during World War II which reached 41 percent of GDP and 9/11 events which made US defense spending double twice to 4.6 points in 2005 during the invasion of Iraq and to 5.0 in 2008. The graph below is a graph of expenditure US defense that declined in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War and increased in the 2000s during the war on terrorism (US Government Spending Web).

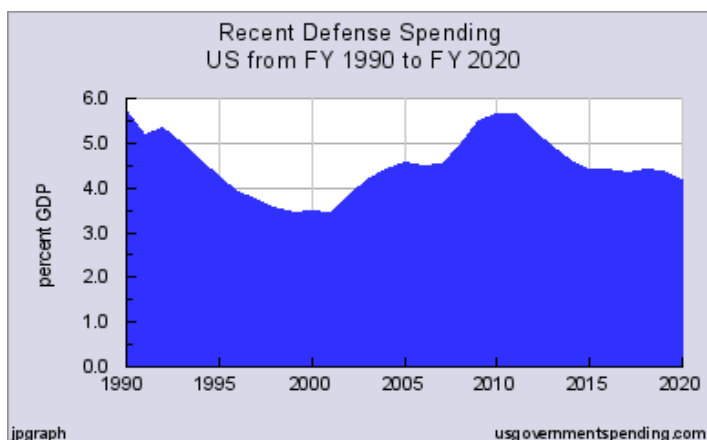


Figure 1: US Defense Spending from 1990 to 2020

The high defense spending that the US has spent and the two pressures previously described are the US considerations to directly involved in international conflicts. The United States involvement is supported by Brooks (2000) which states that the western countries, especially the United States currently are reluctant to send their force to

conflict area such as Africa. Krahmann (2005) also supports this by mentioning in the three improvement factors of PMC that the United States and Europe involvement in keeping the peace is reducing regardless their security interest. The reduction occurs because the country is required to keep the safety in a more-complex situation and to

construct a more effective policy(Krahmann, 2005).

Faced with a variety of security needs, eventually, all actors will seek security support from outside the countries. According to Singer (2002), the support comes from the global market, in the form of a privatized military company business. With the rise of the privatized military industry, all actors can have the ability to reach all security spectrums (Singer, 2002). It is supported by Ettinger (2011) that privatization is related to neoliberalism, or in other words military neoliberalism. With this military neoliberalism, PMSC increasingly becomes a solution for the state in obtaining security. From the overall explanation, it appears that there is security governance, where the US sees that outside the country military expertise is growing. Based on the complexity of current security, the country does not only attempt to seek for safety but also to provide it with minimum budget. So do not be surprised if the US became the market and the largest tenants of PMSC.

### **Efficient Use of PMSC Services**

Based on the current situation and the international need of security, there is a demand on quick response. Not only fast, the state is also required to act more effectively and efficiently. PMSC is used by the US to be one of those answers. The United States has calculated as much as possible as expressed by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 during the Iraq war on The

Atlantic (2016) website that the war will not stop within a few months. The time will drain the energy and cost. Based on that situation, there is only one option left out of three that is to withdraw the army force –to surrender to the enemy, to fill in the line –which implies the imposition the ineffective situation or to bring the PMSC to handle the situation. So do not be surprised if President Bush or Obama chose to fill the military power by hiring PMSC to be placed in Iraq (The Atlantic 2016).

The PMSC works based on the current situation, and it provides a faster and cheaper security service than the country's military force. In line with that, Bures (2005) states that some of PMSC has at least several functions that are to keep the peace and to collect army force along with its professional equipment fast and cheap despite the length of time given. On the other hand, the PMSC owns their improved military skills with its competence and professionalism based on the international standard (Soesilowati, 2017). The consideration of the capabilities and services provided by the PMSC must also be adapted to the capabilities and needs. The table from the US Department of Defense below shows an increase in PMSC and a reduction of the US military in Iraq from 2009 to 2011. In September 2010 the number of US troops increased to 47,305 and the number of PMSC to 74,106 –although in 2011 the number was fewer, the number of PMSC remained the most of the number of US troops in Iraq (Mahardi, 2014).



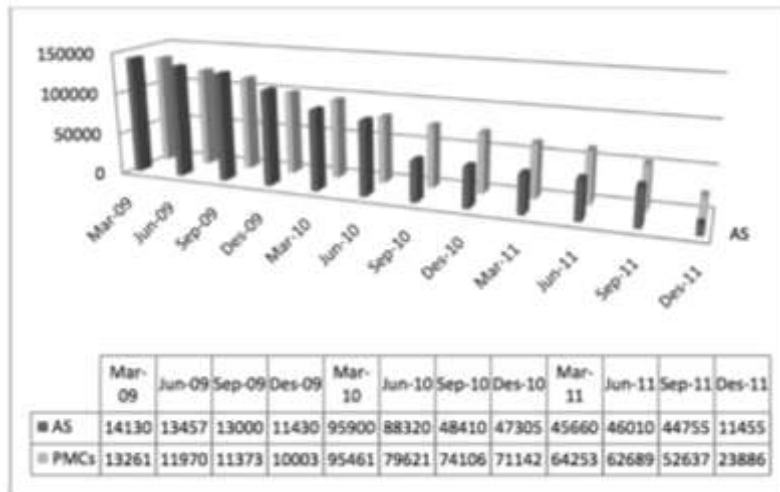


Figure 2: Comparison of the number of the US military forces and PMCs in Iraq

Similarly with the graph of Council Foreign Relations (2014) below, that US military spending is quite high from year to year especially during the Iraq invasion of 2011. Comparable to a large number of troops deployed in Iraq (See figure 2. and figure 3.). But in 2011 the US withdraw its military from Iraq more than the PMSC of

them hired. That is why from 2011 onwards the amount of expenses is reduced. In 2013, military spending fell from \$ 671 billion to \$ 619 billion. And this is the biggest decline since 1991.

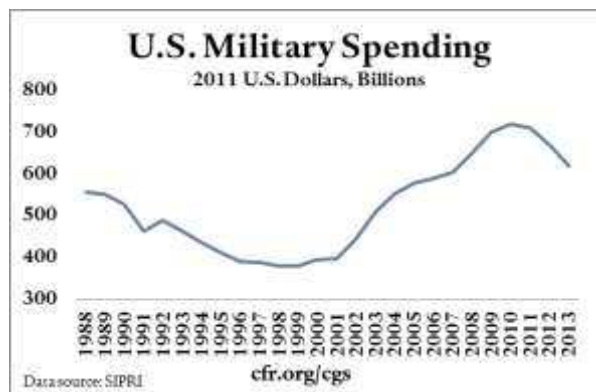


Figure 3: The US military expenditures in 1988-2013

It is seen that the US has taken a policy, where the security that the US wants to create in Iraq is realized through an increase of PMSC and can lower its defense-spending

budget. The decrease in budgetary funds provides economic benefits. Due to a reduction in military costs, military funds could be diverted to strengthen the US

economy to consider that the United States experienced economic crisis in 2008 (Nuechterlein, 2009). So it is not surprising that during the war in Iraq, even Afghanistan, policy could be made more quickly and easily (The Atlantic, 2016). Because the US has calculated as much as possible the choice of leasing on the PMSC in carrying out its mission, given the complexity of security, the growth of the military privatization industry, its internal conditions and the interests that want to achieve. The decision making of PMSC use in Iraq, both during the war even until the war was successful, is still in use by the US. It also shows an advantage that might not be gained that much if only using the military and defense of his country.

### The Calculation of PMSC Use

The results that achieved by the US through the use of PMSC placed in Iraq make the US depend on this private sector. It resulted in the tendency that some experts considered the United States is no longer able to fight without the service of PMSC (The Atlantic, 2016). Nevertheless, the lease of PMSC is not new to the US because in previous post-cold military operations such as in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Zaire, Bosnia, Kosovo have also involved PMSC (Singer, 2002). Significant changes in the military field today are in fact the role of PMSC that has never happened in modern warfare (Rich, 2013). That is the increasing size and expansion of their scope of work. The demand for PMSC services will remain a seriously considered feature because in addition to the efficiency gained in relation to

international market affairs, regulations and market forces (Chesterman and Lehnardt, 2007).

PMSC can increase US military capacity. However, the use of large-scale private military contractors will also bring big risks (Dunigan, 2012). PMSCs entering the world of security have created new opportunities and challenges. The emergence of PMSC in the development of military security and industry is not necessarily without the views and responses that are counterproductive. Human Rights is the highlighted aspect in criticizing the PMSC (Sukarwo, 2009). The real example is when one US-based security services company, Blackwater, was on duty in Iraq in 2007. Blackwater is one of the largest US security contractors in Iraq. At that time Blackwater conducted a State Department vehicle convoy for a meeting in western Baghdad. In that momentum Special Forces section of Blackwater namely Raven 23 Tactical Support Team killed 17 residents in Al Nisour Square who allegedly threatened (Princess, 2017). Ironically those people were civilians which caused the world criticized and is against it. The former Blackwater soldier was found guilty by a court in Washington in 2014 (CNN Indonesia, 2014).

The events of PMSC Blackwater in Iraq became an important lesson. Moreover, there is no international regulatory scheme to carry PMSC operations under the authority of international law. In other words, inadequate legal supervision increases the risk of PMSC in increasing human rights violations (Bures, 2005). So, besides indeed the ability of

PMSC that can be a double force for the US, the US also need to reconsider the risks to be gained so that efficiency in the use of PMSC does not become down. To handle this situation the first step is by checking towards the PMSC company. The checks were conducted on mechanisms, feasibility, professional, cost effectiveness, control, transparency, accountability and legitimacy (Bures 2005). And according to Dunigan (2012) there needs to be additional training requirements to enhance the cultural sensitivity of the country in which PMSCs are deployed, particularly Blackwater in Iraq. However the failure of PMSC will have an impact on US strategy.

The second, which needs to be taken into account in maintaining and improving efficiency, is to supervise the leased PMSCs. Monitoring of PMSC operations should be a high priority. One of the oversights that the US has done is to put video cameras in all vehicles and place agents of the Foreign Ministry's diplomatic security services on their part, following the Blackwater event on Nisour Square Iraq (Dunigan 2012). However, supervising the PMSC operation is very difficult. What makes the PMSC operation runs fast and low in the budget is their ability to use the quick and smart tactics to overcome the failing issues faced by the country's military force. That is why, although human rights and international law are binding, there are operations that are sometimes uncontrollable or intervened for the sake of their success (Brooks., 2000). A large number of PMSCs hired by the US and contracts held by the US Department of State

–and not under the US Department of Defense, makes it difficult for the US to monitor PMSC work in the field (Princess, 2017). So, there is a need for more strategies to reconfigure the way PMSC operations into US war operations (Ettinger, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

The dynamics of post-cold war international security have affected the US in looking at threats and security. Security is not only provided but also managed to get more efficient value. According to scientists, PMSC is one of the US ways to achieve efficiency in creating security. Based on the author's analysis, the efficiency that can be achieved by the US state through the rental of PMSC is quite large. The efficiency is at first due to the United State's ability in mapping the current international security governance. Security is not only limited to be provided but also manifested in the minimum expenditure to create more efficiency value. Based on what has happened, it needs deeper inspection of the PMSC agency before hiring and stricter supervision of the hired ones. This may inhibit the decrease in the efficiency of the negative impact of PMSC usage. Despite the absence of a strong law in charge of PMSC issues, there will be an increased risk of PMSC use.

## REFERENCES

- Brooks, Doug. *Write a Cheque, End a War - Using Private Military Companies to End African Conflicts*. Juli 6, 2000.  
<http://www.accord.org.za/publications/>

- ct6/cheque.htm (accessed Juni 7, 2017).
- Bures, Oldrich. Private Military Companies: A Second Best Peacekeeping Option? *International Peacekeeping* (International Peacekeeping) 12, no. 4 (2005).
- Cha, Victoria D. Globalization and the Study of International Security. *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 3 (Mei 2000): 391-403.
- Chesterman, Simon, and Chia Lehnardt. From Mercenaries to Market: e Rise and Regulation of Private Military Companies (Introduction). *New York University Public Law and Legal Theory Working Papers* (New York University School of Law ), July 2007.
- CNN Indonesia. *Tentara Blackwater Bersalah Bunuh Warga Irak* [Blackwater guilty of killing Iraqis]. Oktober 23, 2014. <http://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20141023103550-134-7583/tentara-blackwater-bersalah-bunuh-warga-irak/> (accessed Juni 14, 2017).
- Council on Foreign Relation. Trends in U.S. Military Spending. Juli 15, 2014. <https://www.cfr.org/report/trends-us-military-spending> (accessed Juni 7, 2017).
- Dunigan, Molly. US Control of Contractors in Iraq is Vital. February 1, 2012. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/pmscs/51242-us-control-of-contractors-in-iraq-is-vital.html?itemid=id#1455> (accessed Juli 7, 2017).
- Ettinger, Aaron. Neoliberalism and the Rise of the Private Military Industry. *International Journal* (Sage Publications, Ltd. on behalf of the Canadian International Council ) 66, no. 3 (2011 ): 743-764 .
- Ghazaly, Mirza Akmarizal. *Penggunaan Private Military Company oleh Negara* [Private Military Company Use by Country]. Universitas Indonesia, 2014.
- Kaya, S. Yelda. Private contractors in war from the 1990s to the present. In *Fighting for a Living*, by A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500-2000, edited by Erik-Jan Zürcher . Amsterdam University Press, 2013.
- Krahmann, Elke. Security Governance and the Private Military Industry in Europe and North America. *Conflict, Security & Development* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis) 5, no. 2 (2005): 247-268.
- Mahardi, Tegar Punang. *Analisa Penggunaan Private Military Companies (PMCs) Oleh Amerika Serikat Pada Studi Kasus Invasi Amerika Serikat ke Irak Tahun 2009- 2011* [Analysis of Private Military Companies (PMCs) By the US In the Case Study of the US Invasion to Iraq 2009- 2011]. (Universitas Brawijaya ) 2014.
- Nuechterlein, Donald E. *Economic Downturn Impacts U.S. Foreign Policy*. November 2009. <http://donaldulechterlein.com/2009/2009.11.economy.html> (accessed Juli 7, 2017).
- Putri, Mifta Giyanti. *Peran Private Military Company (PMC) Blackwater dalam*



- Invasi Amerika Serikat ke Irak Tahun 2006 - 2011* [Blackwater's Private Military Company (PMC) role in US-led invasion of Iraq 2006 - 2011]. (IISIP Jakarta) Februari 2017.
- Singer, P. W. Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security. *International Security* (The MIT Press ) 26, no. 3 (2002): 186-220 .
- Soesilowati, Sartika. *Privatisasi Keamanan dan Tentara Bayaran* [Privatization of Security and Mercenaries]. Kuliah Konflik Global dan Keamanan Manusiawi, Dosen Hubungan Internasional , Universitas Airlangga, 2017.
- Sukarwo, Wirawan. *Tentara Bayaran AS di Iraq* [The US mercenaries in Iraq]. Gagas Media, 2009.
- The Atlantic. America's Addiction to Mercenaries. Agustus 12, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/08/iraq-afghanistan-contractor-pentagon-obama/495731/> (accessed Juli 7, 2017).
- US Government Spending Web. *Recent Defense Spending*. n.d. [http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/defense\\_spending](http://www.usgovernmentspending.com/defense_spending) (accessed Juli 7, 2017).
- Zudma, Farras Abdu. *Kebijakan Amerika Serikat dalam Mengirim PMC (Private Military Company) ke Irak tahun 2011* [US Policy on Sending PMC (Private Military Company) to Iraq in 2011]. *Jom Fisip* (Fisip Universitas Riau) 4, no. 2 (Oktober 2017).