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International organizations, private military training, and statebuilding after war

Deborah Avant*

Effective security forces are a crucial element of successful statebuilding. The security forces must be conducive to statebuilding and those with basic capabilities that are also responsive to political leadership and operate in accordance with broad international professional norms. Creating security forces in which all three of these elements work together is particularly important in countries emerging from war. Capable security institutions undermine immediate prospects for order. Capable security institutions without political control risk coups. Capable security institutions that operate outside international norms can breed resentment and the resumption of conflict.

Though economic arguments often see state institutions as a product of "market failure"—the reverse is also true. The trend toward markets for goods that should be (or have been) provided by the government is also often a product of "state failure."¹ Organized violence is often considered the quintessential governmental service—but even that can be found on the marketplace, particularly in the current era (Avant 2005; Singer 2003). The growth of a vast range of military and security services for purchase in the last 20 years provides a new tool for statebuilders and there has been an increasing tendency by both transitional states and the international community to contract with private security companies (PSCs) for training security forces, military and police, to both shore up forces during conflict and reshape them in its wake.

PSCs pose dilemmas to would-be statebuilders, though. While they are hailed by some as an avenue to fix broken security institutions in the face of a shortage of western troops (or will) and thus a tool for peacemaking, they are derided by others as an option that increases the chance for opportunism: generating spoilers or otherwise offering incentives for intervening states, non-state actors and domestic groups to evade institutional processes that foster effective security institutions (Reno 1999; Shearer 1998). In many cases the short term capabilities that PSCs offer have exacerbated the difficulties of creating effective and democratic institutions in the longer term. There have been instances, however, where the PSC capabilities have been incorporated into a long term statebuilding project.

Policy solutions to manage this dilemma require a better understanding of what factors lead to variation in outcomes associated with private training. Under what conditions does the turn toward markets provide a useful tool for statebuilding rather than setting states on a vicious cycle of breakdown and decay? I argue that involvement by international organizations can be one important factor explaining this variation. I explore the mechanisms through which international organizations (IOs) can facilitate the statebuilding benefits of private training and evade the costs, both logically and then in two case studies: Croatia, where PSCs operated with the benefit of IO oversight, and Sierra Leone, where they did not. These cases are not selected to test the hypothesis that IOs can tame the use of PSCs for statebuilding, but to demonstrate its plausibility and establish support for the causal pathways by which such taming can occur.

Private security, statebuilding dilemmas and IO mediation

When state security organizations are broken or ill-formed, the market can offer security tools that are more effective in the short run. For a variety of reasons too complex to adequately address here (decline of super-power patrons, democratization efforts, illicit transnational flows of goods and services, and interventions to topple rogue governments, among others), the problem of repressive states that many worried about during the Cold War has been replaced by the problem of disorder. Weak or failed states that can neither fend off attacks nor generate internal order have been linked to chronic under-development, civil war, transnational crime, and terrorism. While Western states (and the international community they are often associated with) are concerned with disorder, this concern is not matched by willingness to commit forces. Beginning in the 1990s and continuing after 9/11, there have been consistent complaints that the "international community" either does not intervene (Rwanda, Sudan) or intervenes with forces that are not numerous enough to accomplish their mission (Kosovo, Afghanistan), not capable enough to accomplish their mission (Sierra Leone), or both (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Even the US-led action in Iraq has been plagued by complaints about inadequate numbers of forces. In these situations PSCs can bolster or substitute for Western forces to provide raw security capabilities—one ingredient necessary for building a state after conflict.

Stable security institutions depend, though, not only on military capacity but capacity that operates through political processes and values seen as legitimate.² At a minimum forces need to have elements of each of these: moderate capacities, under coordinated (if not centralized) political control with some modicum of respect for the population they serve. The key to the impact of PSCs on statebuilding is not only its short term effectiveness but also how the use of private forces impacts the unfolding of political processes and social norms through which force is allocated. Capable security institutions
can undermine statebuilding if they make possible the use of force for individual or sub-group gains. While the efforts of western troops are not impervious to this dynamic, private forces are more likely to feed into opportunism. By their very nature, the flexibility of private forces can more easily be taken advantage of for private gain. As demonstrated in the literature on “warlords,” the potential for these forces to compete with state forces or aid parallel forces often exacerbates state decay (Reno 1998). In some cases, however, this potential is avoided and the short-run capacity that PSCs provide is employed to build security institutions for the state.

I examine the impact of market security options on statebuilding efforts by focusing on how it impacts the micro-institutional setting that shapes strategic action. The most consistent feature of private security is that it changes who controls force and by which processes. This interruption of a broken process offers the prospect of a different (and potentially better) foundation for statebuilding. Often this change is sorely needed in post-conflict environments. Whether it is used to harness force for collective purposes that the population views as legitimate or as simply a more effective method for reaching individual aims that promises no improvement in governing institutions, however, depends not only on whether those empowered by the new market options are successful, but also on whether they pay attention to long-run goals rather than (or in addition to) short-run personal goals, and whether they support moves toward professional standards for security personnel that link the effectiveness of force to abiding by greater collective values. Thus, it is not only important to pay attention to the market forces themselves—private security companies and private financiers of security—but also the constraints (or absence thereof) that inform their use.

Norms and professional standards within the international community are one particularly promising source of constraints for democratic statebuilding because of their focus on principles and processes that have yielded such governance systems in much of the western world. International organizations have tools with which they can encourage attention to these norms and standards: education, financial incentives, and conditionality. By coordinating attention around particular norms and inducing attention to them among both private and governmental actors, IOs could be a potent means for discouraging the opportunism often associated with the use of PSC.

Others have argued that IOs can enhance democratization (Pevehouse 2002; Powell 1996; Fridham 1994; Pridham 1995). Pevehouse (2002) finds that joining democratically dense regional IOs is positively associated with consolidating democracy and hypothesizes a variety of mechanisms by which this occurs. More recently, Mansfield and Pevehouse have argued that transitional states often choose to join IOs when they embark upon democratization because the organization can inhibit leader's incentives to roll back democratic reforms; thus joining IOs is a way for leaders to commit to the democratization agenda (Mansfield and Pevehouse 2006: 137–67). Building on these insights, but seeking a clearer view of the causal processes through which IOs influence statebuilding and democratization, I rely on process tracing in two case studies where PSCs trained militaries in countries emerging from war.

Both Sierra Leone and Croatia employed PSCs during and after conflict to train their military forces. In each case, it is widely agreed that PSCs provided important security capabilities. In Sierra Leone, these capabilities fell prey to opportunist action that eroded statebuilding efforts, while in Croatia they were harnessed to a slow but successful statebuilding effort. Careful analysis of these two cases demonstrates the importance of IOs for this outcome.

PSC training in Sierra Leone directly contributed to processes that inhibited statebuilding in many of the ways suggested by the literature on rentier states and warlordism. The use of PSCs both allowed civilians to hijack the military for non-democratic purposes and enhanced security institutions that did not have strong ties to the state—the kind of parallel forces that are most tempted to opportunist action. Thus, while private training efforts in Sierra Leone were beneficial in generating short-run capacities, these capabilities were used by more than one group within the transitional state for countervailing purposes. With no larger international body to impose conditionality on the leadership, forces were used in a way that inhibited the prospects for long run statebuilding and democratization.

The Croatian case demonstrates, however, that democratically dense regional IOs—particularly NATO and its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program—provided an important framework which ameliorated many of the potential drawbacks of private training. The PfP worked not so much to constrain PSCs (though it did this too) but to both inform and constrain the clients of private security (the government) and students (military personnel) and even international financiers. The PfP informed the fledgling government and military personnel about proper behavior, induced them to behave properly by rewarding proper behavior, and funneled resources through the state in a way that dissuaded opportunism all of which encouraged participation in emerging political processes even as PSCs performed the training. The information, inducements, and dissuasion were tightly coupled to reinforce behavior among a wide variety of actors: civilian leaders, the military, PSCs, opposition parties, and international partners.

Aside from generating support for the propositions that IOs can both aid democratic statebuilding and harness the benefits of using PSCs and guard against the costs, this comparison yields insights about why this is the case. First, because effective security institutions rely on a mix of capabilities, political controls, and social controls, it is important that information and incentives work together. An IO can provide such coordinating mechanisms. Second, once members of an IO have agreed on a program to encourage effective security institutions, that program can also restrain unilateral efforts by donor states that might undermine the program. Third, it is the mix of informing civilian and military leaders about proper behavior, providing inducements for proper behavior on the part of both civilians and the
military and providing sanctions (often in the way of frozen inducements) that makes democratically dense regional IOs useful tools for encouraging effective security institutions. When ideas about what is best for statebuilding are reinforced by rewards for behaving in a consistent way and both are perceived to create more capable institutions, the prospects for statebuilding are greater. Fourth, while the received wisdom is that the two building blocks for security institutions are civilian control and military capability, these cases (along with many others) demonstrate that these are not sufficient. Capable security institutions can be hijacked by civilians operating outside of proper channels as well as by lack of civilian control. By issuing costs for inappropriate action to civilian leaders as well as the military, IO conditionality can curb this tendency.

Finally, these insights suggest that the institutional nesting of NATO and the PIP with a variety of other international organizations into a global network was an important feature of their impact. Regional organizations unconnected (or more loosely connected) with this global network may not have the same effect. Market security options are most likely to be harnessed for statebuilding efforts if they focus on organizations tied to the state, if coordinated effort outside the state can punish and reward the civilian leadership, and if military forces (and others) believe that "proper" behavior is also more "effective." Though there may be other ways to do this, globally networked IOs are clearly a promising source of coordinated effort.

Sierra Leone: contracts for private training and failed statebuilding

Sierra Leone was widely recognized as the paradigmatic weak state in the 1990s (Reno 1999). During colonial rule the British obtained stability in the least costly manner by relying on local chiefs for governance which led to competing centers of power and a system by which the state bureaucracy was used to manipulate resources and undercut challenges (Migdal 1988: 129; Reno 1997). The state became quite prominent—with a large bureaucracy and authoritarian strategies—but popular loyalty remained tied to the local chiefs. This proved a fertile environment for nepotism, cronyism, and corruption. Though large, state bureaucracies were neither strong nor effective (Allen 1978; Migdal 1988: 129–39; Reno 1999).

Sierra Leone's rulers bought loyalty in a variety of ways and the country's diamond deposits played an important role as a revenue source. President Siaka Stevens (in office 1967–85) used diamond mines both as a source of revenue for payoffs and then as a source for payoffs themselves. Before leaving office, he bestowed the ultimate benefit upon his cronies: control of the diamond industry and its exemption from taxation (Reno 1999: 228). This left his successors with only limited ability to supply either state services or patronage and invited a succession of rebellion and coups (Hirsch 2001). 3

By late 1994/early 1995, the government—now headed by Valentine Strasser—was on the ropes. Its finance minister estimated that although 70 percent of state revenues were going to fight the rebels, the regime was still losing ground. In 1995 the rebels attacked (and ended production at) two diamond mines that provided significant state revenues and then drove toward the capital (Howe 1998; Reno 1997). Strasser's strategies to manage the escalating crisis only worsened the situation (Reno 1997; Venter 1995).

The RSLMF was a poor force. The officer was largely ceremonial—part of the patronage system—and troops were not well trained (Douglass 1999: 178; Musah 2000: 81). Also, as the financial situation worsened and wages were not forthcoming, its soldiers were not only ineffective but unruly. They were induced to serve with supplies of marijuana and rum, which led to accidents, poor performance, bad behavior among the civilian population (particularly rape and looting), and a tendency to flee when they met the RUF on the battlefield (Musah 2000: 86; Venter 1995). Finally, as more and more conscripts were sent to the field without pay, rumors of collusion with the rebels (at least in the pursuit of loot) surfaced. These "sobels"—soldiers by day, rebels by night—undermined state control and security in Sierra Leone (Douglass 1999; Howe 1998, 2001; Venter 1995).

Contracts for private security

In early 1995, Strasser turned to the international market for help. He first hired a British firm, Gurkha Security Guards (GSG). Fifty-eight Gurkhas and three European managers arrived in January to train Sierra Leone Special Forces and officer cadets (Vines 1999). On 24 February, though, members of the company and a platoon of RSLMF came in contact with the RUF while on a reconnaissance mission. At least 21 (including several GSG personnel) were killed (Ripley 1997; Vines 1999). GSG sent replacements but refused to perform a more active role or to engage in operations with the RSLMF, as Strasser requested, and were subsequently fired (Douglass 1999: 179; Venter 1995; Vines 1999: 129).

In March, Strasser turned to a second company, Executive Outcomes (EO) from South Africa, and got the capacity he wanted. 4 Branch Energy (a mining company working in Sierra Leone) negotiated a contract between EO and the government by which EO would provide 150–200 soldiers (fully equipped with helicopter support) to support, train, and aid the RSLMF in their war against the RUF (Douglass 1999: 180). The bill was to be $2 million per month, but the company issued credit to the government, agreeing to be paid with 50 percent of the tax revenues from the Sierra Rutile mine once it was re-opened. EO's deputy commander, Colonel Andy Brown, was set up in an office directly below Sierra Leone's defense staff chief, Brigadier Maada-Bio, and the government delegated significant authority to EO over training, logistics, and command and control of Sierra Leone's forces.

EO arranged for an intensive three-week training cycle (for 120 soldiers at a time) at a RSLMF base just east of the capital, emphasizing basic skills, tactics, discipline, and procedures (Venter 1995). 5 They also established
intelligence and effective radio communications. “EO intelligence operators identified possible informants, isolated them, trained them, and supplied them with communications equipment” (Howe 1998: 316). EO handled logistics for the operations in which they participated, employed a doctor on board one of the MI-17 troop-carrying helicopter gunships on all ground operations, and had two casualty evacuation aircraft available (Venter 1995). Though they saw their prime mission as training the RSLMF, EO director Lafras Liutungh admitted that his forces reacted “with vigor” when under attack (ibid.).

Just a month after their arrival, EO led the RSLMF on a counteroffensive. They assumed operation control, provided intelligence information, and accompanied units on operations. Under EO’s leadership, the RSLMF drove the rebels away from the capital and caused hundreds of rebel deaths. EO then continued to work for the government with the goals of clearing the rebels from the diamond areas (in the Kono district) and destroying the RUF headquarters. But as it moved away from the capital, the RSLMF, even under EO’s direction, was less effective; it failed to coordinate with EO and soldiers often fled when faced with RUF ambushes. In the east, however, EO found another resource in the local militias. These forces knew the terrain, had an incentive to fight the RUF to protect their families, and became a good source of intelligence. The Kamajora or Kamajors, an ethnic Mende group from the southeast of the country, were particularly useful. EO trained the Kamajors in counter-insurgency, supplied them with weapons, and gained much from their local knowledge (Howe 1998: 316–17). The Kamajors helped retake the Kono district and remained as a force to be reckoned with (along with private forces at the actual mines—taken on by Lifeguard Security) while EO and the RSLMF moved on to destroy the RUF’s base (Douglas 1999: 184).6

Under EO’s tutelage, the Kamajors became a significant regional defense force but were still beholden to local rather than national authority. As the civil militias gained recognition for their success, the RSLMF grew suspicious of Strasser and his control of the army weakened. When Strasser announced (in late 1995) that elections would be held the following year, there were rumors of collaboration between the army and the rebels to stop the election and mount a coup (Douglas 1999: 183–85; Musah 2000: 90). Strasser was further weakened when EO (having not been paid) threatened to leave—awkward timing given the threat of a coup (Douglas 1999: 184). Despite an agreement with EO in December, Strasser was overthrown by his defense chief in January, whereupon the RUF announced a ceasefire, agreeing to talk with the new leader.7 Even disregarding speculation that EO was involved in the coup, the company did not step aside as the coup was launched but continued to work on its contract—in effect aiding the coup effort.

When, despite efforts to frustrate them, elections were held in February 1996, the newly elected President Kabbah reportedly did not even learn of the contract with EO until April (ibid.: 186). In the ensuing months, Kabbah did manage to secure a rebel ceasefire and open peace talks, but tensions between the RSLMF and the militia groups heightened and broke out into clashes on several occasions. When Kabbah (in response to rumors of coup planning) purged the army and cut its budget in half in September, these tensions increased and it was the Kamajors that struck “with devastating effect” (ibid.) against renewed RUF attacks in the fall while the army operated virtually unto itself in large parts of the country (ibid.: 185).8

The rebels did sign a peace accord on November 30, 1996. One of their conditions, though, was that all foreign military presence, including EO, should leave the country.9 EO withdrew according to the terms of the peace accord in January 1997 (Douglas 1999: 187). When Kabbah took steps to solidify security in the wake of EO’s departure, tensions between the army and the civil militias complicated his task. He appointed Chief Norman (a public advocate of the Kamajors) the Deputy Minister of Defense.10 Chief Norman then reorganized and formalized several militias into the Civil Defense Force (CDF) of Sierra Leone (Douglas 1999: 185; Musah 2000: 94–95; Spearin 2001: 12).11 Norman’s public disrespect for the RSLMF heightened tensions between the government and the army. Kabbah also signed a “Status of Forces Agreement” with Nigeria in March 1997, arranging for Nigeria to provide military and security assistance for the Sierra Leone government.12 The steps were for naught, however, as army associates of the coup plotters from September (led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma) overthrew the Kabbah regime and Kabbah himself fled to Guinea in May 1997 (Douglas 1999: 188–89; Musah 2000: 95–96). The plotters justified their actions by referring to Kabbah’s marginalization of the army (ibid.). Koroma and his cronies, however, also had connections with the rebels. The RUF aligned itself with the new junta, and senior members of the RUF were appointed to positions in the administration (Douglas 1999: 188–89).

As chaos again took hold in Sierra Leone, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent in Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peacekeepers (primarily Nigerians) to maintain law and order and, eventually, to reverse the coup (ibid.: 188; Hirsh 2001: 146). Control of the country was then split between the new junta, which controlled the capital, the Nigerian force, which held the Lungi airport, the Kamajors and civil militia groups, which controlled most of the country’s interior. PSCs were still present—not working for the government but protecting the mines. A ground operation to retake the capital by the Nigerians was unsuccessful and resulted in further destabilization—including the closing of some mines.

In July, exiled President Kabbah turned to another PSC—Sandline International—to help him retake power.13 Sandline’s role was to train and equip 40,000 Kamajor militia, plan a strategy for (and coordinate) the assault on Freetown, provide arms, ammunition, transportation, and food for the assault coalition, coordinate with the 20,000 ECOMOG troops in control of the Lungi Airport, and provide air support and intelligence gathering
in the forces (Riley 2006).\textsuperscript{21} Even proponents of that training, however, worried that these professional soldiers might not prevent opportunistic action by civilian leaders. Of particular worry was the fact that quick elections in 2002 led many of the traditional Chiefs who had long fended power in Sierra Leone to be returned to office. Many of these Chiefs have been accused of using diamond taxes for personal gain rather than public goods and many assert that their exclusionary governing style was responsible for alienating the population in ways that led to the civil war in the first place (Hanlon 2005).

Furthermore, even after many civil defense forces were officially disbanded and the Kamajors one-time leader Sam Hinga Norman was indicted by a war-crimes tribunal, the Kamajors retained a semblance of organizational readiness (Grant 2005). Indeed, though many former members of the RUF were re-integrated through the DDR process in Sierra Leone, most former members of the CDF were not interested in reintegration because they saw themselves as only fighting to defend their villages.\textsuperscript{22} The power of the local chiefs and the continued capacity of these forces, of course, may also be linked. Also, the reintegration process was faulted for not offering real opportunities; and many of the young men who were demobilized remained unemployed. Unemployed young men are often easy targets for recruitment into parallel or rebel forces.

Thus, while progress was made and the last UN peacekeepers were withdrawn in December 2005, much remained to be done. Many of the difficulties exacerbated by contracts with PSCs have remained issues even as Sierra Leone’s government turned to Western states for help.

\textbf{Contracts for private security and statebuilding in Sierra Leone}

Overall, the participation of PSCs under contract with the government of Sierra Leone enhanced the state’s short-term security capacities but did not provide a platform for effective statebuilding. Though different PSCs performed differently, it is clear that EO enhanced the government’s security in the short run. The company led the effort to free the capital from rebel assault, to free the diamond mines from rebel control, and to attack the RUF headquarters. Sandline’s overall effect is more disputed, but it, too, has been deemed indispensable to Kabbah’s return to power by many observers.

Both EO and Sandline (and their advocates) have also argued that the companies hired professionals, behaved professionally and as such increased the chance that force would be seen as legitimate. There are many who support their claims and provide evidence that the personnel each company fielded did behave appropriately in Sierra Leone—much more in line with international norms governing armed conflict than the forces they operated with and against.\textsuperscript{23}

The contracts with PSCs, however, were not guided by overarching principles and did not include such long-term goals as training in human rights
or democratic control of the military. More importantly, they exacerbated the diffusion of control over force. Simply hiring PSC in the first place enhanced the power of international commercial interests given that both companies were affiliated with diamond-mining companies. In Sandline's contract, this link was explicit, given that payment came directly from Jupiter Mining Company owner, Rakesh Saxena. Also, their security capacities led the companies to become political players in their own right. EO's experience is particularly demonstrative of this impact. In the lead-up to the coup, EO was in a position either to dissuade or to encourage the coup by promising to leave (or not to leave). In effect, the company supported the plotters by refusing to tie its continued work in the country to Strasser's regime.

In their execution of their contracts, both companies also empowered new domestic interests—those within, and tied to, the civil militias. This choice generated political power for the civil militias that Sierra Leone's leaders had to contend with. Given that these were just the social forces that had complicated the state's consolidation in the first place, this effect did not bode well for statebuilding efforts. The civil militias became, in effect, parallel forces without clear ties to the state. The tensions between this parallel force and the army were in some instances directly responsible for territory falling back into rebel hands.

When training was taken over by British IMATT teams, the training of Sierra Leone's army was improved. Without hurdles to the prospects for opportunism by civilian leaders, however, it is unclear that the professional training of the army will be enough.

Croatia: contracts for private training and successful statebuilding

Croatia was a new state in the 1990s, born of Yugoslavia's disintegration. The Yugoslav elections of 1990 brought the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) under Franjo Tudman to power. Also in 1990, constitutional changes made Croatia a de jure nation-state. In April, Croatia simultaneously formed the Assembly of the National Guard (ZNG) within the framework of the police forces and halted the enlistment in Croatia of the Yugoslav Army (YPA). When a referendum in May resoundingly expressed Croatians' desire for independence, the Republic of Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia and simultaneously began a statebuilding process and a war.

Initially, local militias nominally coordinated by the ZNG structure fought against both YPA troops and Serb paramilitary forces. The Croatians were handily defeated—some argue by design as Tudman wanted Croatia to be seen as a victim of Serb abuses so that members of the international community would recognize the legitimacy of its claims to independence (Woodward 1995: 171, footnote 69, 463). By 1992, though, the international community had begun to recognize Croatian independence and it behooved Tudman to enhance the effectiveness of his armed forces. He began this with the creation of the Croatian Armed Forces (Hrvatska Vojska, HV) (Vankovska 2002: 6; Woodward 1995: 146–47). The force was designed to reflect the Croatia that Tudman envisioned: party leaders occupied prominent military positions and its ultra-nationalist perspective opened the way for extremist elements (Irvin 1997).

Despite efforts at consolidation, in 1994 the HV had poor leadership, an unprofessional organizational structure (where some forces reported directly to the President and the Minister of Defense) and poor morale and skill. Some officers were reportedly foreign soldiers of fortune, and troops were both poorly disciplined and poorly supplied (Zunec 1996: 221). According to one analyst, "the HV would not be able to wage the offensive operations necessary to liberate its territory and crush the Serbian (Croatian Serb) insurgency" (ibid.: 222). Meanwhile, territorial losses also led opposition leaders to challenge Tudman's rule.

Contracts for private security

It was at this point that Croatia turned to Virginia-based Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) for help. In March the Minister of Defense, Gjojk Susak, requested permission from the US government to negotiate with MPRI for various services. In September MPRI President Carl Vuono and Defense Minister Susak signed two contracts. The first, for long-range management, was begun in January 1995, headed by retired Major General John Sewell and designed to help Croatia strategically restructure its defense department (Shearer 1998: 58; Singer 2003: 125). The second, for assistance in the democratic transition, provided for “military education and training of staff officers and uncommissioned [sic] officers of the Croatian army” (Albarghetti 1995). MPRI sent a 15-man team headed by retired major general Richard Griffits to run this program. MPRI's official training in the DTAP consisted of 14-week sessions with courses in physical training, education management, instructor training, topography, logistics, military service (international military law), leadership, military management (including analyses of historical battles and lessons), and first aid. The materials used were translated textbooks identical to those used at US professional military education institutions (Goulet 1998). The first officers graduated in April 1995 (Goulet 1998).

The exact nature of MPRI's work for the Croatian government is disputed. Some have claimed the company went well beyond its contract to offer scenario planning, advice on arms purchases, or even command on the battlefield. Without going into the details of these arguments, it is clear that at the very least the contract had significant political effects. It signaled US support for the Croatian government, enhanced the power of both Susak and Tudman, and boosted morale in the Croatian Army in ways that had both domestic and international benefits even before any change in the capacity of the HV.
Regardless of the intent behind the contract, NATO and its PIP provided a blueprint for both defense planning and democratization of armed forces that informed MPR1's behavior. From its inception, NATO was not simply an alliance but a security management institution—designed to deal with external threats and also to foster trust and understanding among its members. The liberal-democratic values of NATO led to a set of practices that addressed both external threats and the potential for mistrust and misunderstanding among its members. These practices were successful and provided a model for defense institutions. After the Cold War's end, NATO countries established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council to bring together NATO countries and Central and Eastern European countries to discuss issues of common concern. The Partnership for Peace grew out of this focus on practical bilateral programs between individual NATO countries and its new partners. Many transitional states in Central and Eastern Europe sought this model because of its perceived success, its association with a community of democratic states, or both. NATO countries designed their efforts to socialize transitional states by emphasizing the links between proper democratic behavior and military effectiveness, and the importance of both for full participation in the community of democratic states.

The PIP framework embedded cooperative defense relations in the existing web of democratically dense European institutions—making specific reference to the European Community and the Council of Europe as well as CSCE, NATO, and many of its specific programs. The PIP draws from the principles on which this web of European institutions is based, with both general commitments and specific options for partners (and prospective partners). The menu of options includes a range of defense activities from air defense through defense planning through peacekeeping, military education, training, doctrine, and logistics. All, however, require attention to the general principles including effectiveness criteria such as harmonization and interoperability, as well as normative criteria such as commitment to democratic control of forces and respect for human rights.

The services Croatia purchased from MPR1 were designed specifically for the purpose of moving Croatian forces closer to participation in NATO's PIP. The Democracy Transition Assistance Program (DTAP) was meant to democratize the military and reorganize its troop structure to ensure that Croatia would meet the standards for entry to the PIP. The defense reorganization and strategic planning contract also sought to restructure Croatian defense planning in concert with PIP guidelines. Furthermore, Croatia's commitment to ready its forces for the PIP made Croatia eligible to purchase military training in the midst of an arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia.

Even if preparation for the PIP was only a rationale through which Croatia was able to purchase military advice in the midst of an arms embargo, this rationale nonetheless shaped the advice Croatia received. The PIP influenced the context in which military advising took place and provided standard practices to be taught. It stipulated appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and was linked to a wide range of incentives and sanctions in both international institutions and bilateral relationships.

**Croatian behavior during MPR1 training**

There were several prominent incidents or policies in the initial period of MPR1's training that called into question its democratizing effects. The two offensives shortly after MPR1's arrival were not only successful, but also brutal. In both operations, the HV engaged in an ethnic-cleansing campaign despite little resistance. The latter was, until the war in Kosovo, "easily the largest single instance of 'ethnic cleansing' of the Yugoslav war" (Danner 1998). Human-rights violations included extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, a massive program of systematic house destruction, and forcible expulsions.

MPRI expressed regret at these incidents, but did not suspend its training efforts. Instead, one official claimed that the behavior of the Croatian troops demonstrated their need for democratic assistance. Neither did the US government freeze the contract between MPR1 and Croatia—it also cited the potential benefits of the training for long-term democratization in Croatia as well as the need to maintain US influence in that country.

Some of MPR1's work to transform the Croatian Army also fed into controversial Croatian policies. Efforts to root out communist "dead-wood" played into the HDZ's platform to create an ethnically pure army. Many of the officers with experience were also officers who had served in the YPA. Though it was not intentional, MPR1 nonetheless allowed and even facilitated this non-democratic feature of the HDZ's plans as part of a "democratic" restructuring of the force. Also, MPR1's contract with the government was undertaken without the required parliamentary oversight (Vaukova 2002: 25). Even the budgetary category for MPR1's contract (intellectual services) evaded discussion of the contracts as military or defense related expenditures.

After Operation Storm and the subsequent Dayton Accords, Croatia made some progress toward statebuilding. In 1997, the IMF granted the country $486 million credit over the next three years and the Fund's statement praised Croatia for its efforts in reform despite regional military conflict. The IMF's move gave a boost to the Croatian Democratic Party, and Tudjman was re-elected in 1997. On May 27, 1998, the US Ambassador to Croatia, William Montgomery, praised Croatia for its efforts at improving its military with the assistance of MPR1. The country also changed its laws in 1998 to make torture and ill-treatment, as defined in the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a criminal offense.
nated improvements in democratic practices and military reform. Croatia joined the PIP program in 2001, signaling its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as to facilitating transparency in national defense planning, ensuring democratic control of the armed forces, maintaining capability and readiness, developing cooperative military relations with NATO countries, and developing forces better able to operate with NATO forces. Croatia began to participate in the highest level of military–military exchanges with the US outside the NATO structure. Gradually MPRI’s work in Croatia expanded to include an Army Readiness Training Program (CARTS) and then, after Croatia’s admission to the PIP program in 2001, assistance and support in implementing that program’s requirements. MPRI is happy to take credit for helping Croatia to design and implement the military reforms, and members of the US government back their claims.

Contracts for security and statebuilding in Croatia

In Croatia, the participation of PSCs enhanced the state’s security capacities, inserted professional security personnel and changed who controlled force. In this case, the increased capacity, professional personnel, and political change led to improved state institutions.

Even without arguing that MPRI had a significant effect on the operational capacity of Croatian troops during Operation Storm, most agree that the government’s contract with MPRI improved the capacity of the Croatian forces. Although there are some who criticize MPRI’s approach to training the Croatian army on purely functional grounds, on balance most observers agree that the Croatian military is significantly better and that Croatia’s security has been enhanced by its contract with MPRI. According to one source, “the Croatians are the premier fighting force in Southern Europe,” due to their training from MPRI; according to another, with MPRI’s help, “the Croatians can do anything.” Tonino Picula, Croatia’s former Foreign Minister, claims that MPRI’s aid was significant in helping Croatia achieve its rightful independence. Even critics of MPRI’s training concede that it had effects on the defense establishment. Due to both its impact on morale (evidence that the US was on its side) and its long-term reformulations of the defense department and the structure of the forces, the contract is hailed as enhancing the abilities of the Croatian armed forces. As American defense officials claim: the “results speak for themselves.”

The impact of MPRI’s contract also changed the balance of political power over force in Croatia. It accorded more power to one portion of the government—Tudjman and the HDZ—less power to the parliament, and skirted constitutional procedures. MPRI’s training also helped the HDZ by bringing political benefits to the party, and gave justification to the HDZ’s platform by facilitating the removal of communist officers, which played into Tudjman’s plans for an ethnically-based army in Croatia. Furthermore, the

Under Tudjman, however, democratization was halting. Even though the country changed its laws to make possible the criminal prosecution of torture, it refused to investigate the atrocities alleged in Operation Storm. Tudjman’s hard-line nationalism led him to resist many Western initiatives. He made it difficult for Serbian refugees to return to their homes and played an obstructionist role vis-à-vis Western efforts in Bosnia. Also, cronism within the HDZ led to money going to the party elite rather than to more deserving others. Though Tudjman managed to keep inflation down, he resisted sweeping economic reforms because they threatened his political support (Kuhner 1999). More pertinent to the military’s behavior, he also refused to turn over evidence and war-crimes suspects to the international war-crimes tribunal. This resistance had costs. Croatia’s failure to help with the war-crimes issue led international financial institutions to cut off relations. “Under HDZ rule, Croatia was prevented from joining NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, from gaining an Association Agreement with the EU, from receiving assistance under the PHARE program, and even from becoming a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)” (Fisher 2000).

Even during this time, US Department of Defense reports to Congress pointed to a gradual increase in the integration of the Croatian military with international professional values. Writing for the PIP consortium, Rudocar Vukadinovic and Lidijj Cehulic suggest that there were advocates of democratic standards, respect for human rights, and greater democratic control over the armed forces within the Army in the late 1990s. Although they point out that these advocates were “labeled by the Croatian leadership as national traitors, dissidents, devils, ‘sheep,’ ‘goose,’ and so on,” their presence, alone, is evidence for the impact of the training program on interrupting Tudjman and the HDZ’s hold on the military (Vukadinovic and Cehulic 2001: 70). International standards for military professionalism began to take root in Croatia in the 1990s as the result of MPRI’s training.

Stronger evidence for the impact of training emerged after Tudjman’s death in 1999. The opposition defeated the HDZ in the January 2000 election and a peaceful transfer of power to the coalition yielded a new president, Stipe Mesic. At that time Washington promised to increase foreign aid to Croatia (from $12 to $20 million) and to push for Croatia to become part of NATO’s PIP (Drogin 2000). Under Mesic, the Croatian government made some significant and tough decisions with regard to its military that reflected attention to the principles of democratic civilian control and human rights. In September 2000 Mesic fired seven generals who criticized the government’s crackdown on war criminals. In July 2001 the Croatian parliament decided to cooperate with the Hague war crimes tribunal and to extradite two Croatian generals—Ante Gotovina and Rahim Ademi—who were indicted for war crimes.

Though Mesic’s reform capacities were hindered by an awkward constitutional structure that placed opponents in key government posts, the US
contract enhanced the leverage of the US government. By freezing the contract, the US could damage Tudjman’s credibility. MPRI, with a strong commercial interest in keeping the US happy, emphasized its attention to the US government’s goals in its contract with Croatia.

As critics have pointed out, many of these political changes were undemocratic (Vankovska 2002: 20). They also opened the way for international interests (particularly American ones) to be represented in Croatia. But these political changes consolidated rather than diffused control over violence. Before the contract, there was little control—on anyone’s part—over the use of violence in the country. Furthermore, even though the contract opened the way for US influence over the use of force, US influence operated through the Croatian government rather than independently. Thus contracts with MPRI did not lead to the diffusion of power over violence the way they did in other cases, such as Sierra Leone. This was true for international actors (the US had no direct access to Croatian forces) as well as for domestic actors (MPRI did not work with sub-state forces but instead worked to integrate forces into the Croatian army). Though it restricted direct exercise of power over violence by international actors or domestic actors outside the state, this structure, somewhat paradoxically, also gave international actors a central point of leverage within the Croatian government and made it easier to encourage the Croatian military and government to attend to collective (rather than individual) goals.

The government’s contract with MPRI also enhanced the Croatian army’s integration with professional values. The ethnic-cleansing campaign undertaken after Operation Storm did not reflect attention to military professionalism, and some have claimed that units of the HV trained by MPRI took part in ethnic-cleansing campaigns.60 That very serious episode aside, however, there has been a long-term trend towards acceptance of international professional values by the Croatian military. The speed at which reforms were undertaken in the wake of Tudjman’s death indicates that international standards for military professionalism have taken root in Croatia.

The overarching web of institutions and the PIP framework were important at several points in this contracting story. First, the justification for the US to license MPRI’s contract with Croatia in 1994, when the country was under an arms embargo, was the argument that the contract would speed democratization. This justification led to the inclusion in the contract of courses and training that focused specifically on appropriate professional behavior and international law as it applied to military personnel. These training units, common in US professional military education, taught about the system of democratic civil–military relations (at least as it exists in the US) and used case studies and other methods to teach appropriate military responses to difficult situations. Similar to courses taught in US military academies, they did not simply preach the acceptance of civilian control of the military and appreciation of human rights, but demonstrated how these principles are related to military effectiveness. Even though there were pressing and immediate security concerns in Croatia, the training program focused on long-term institution building.

Furthermore, the PIP framework both provided a standard for military institutions as part of a democratic state, and also offered carrots (increased US funding) and sticks (freezing of training) that the US (and other international actors) could use to encourage the Croatian military and government to focus on long-term professional development in the military in addition to their short-term security goals. The Croatian government had reason to abide by the PIP terms, even if only instrumentally.

A significant number of Croatian military personnel were educated on the basis of these principles in classes. Partly because of the cachet of American training, partly because of the lure of the PIP program, education by MPRI also enhanced the individual careers of those in the Croatian military who participated.61 The reorganization of the Croatian Defense Department further reinforced these policies. Finally, the promises (and then delivery) of US financing for continued military reform have further reinforced the standards for military professionalism in Croatia. The long-term aims of the training and the fact that the contracts were sustained over several years also gave more time for these effects to be felt. By introducing new values, connecting them with effective military performance, and promising military aid for continued changes, the participation of MPRI in training the Croatian military has nudged improvements in the professionalism of the force.

The participation of PSCs under contract with the Croatian government improved security, changed who controlled force (and through which process), and improved the integration of force with international values. It is unclear that Croatia would have started down this path without the private option. The contract between MPRI and Croatia was a way around the international embargo in the Balkans, which had made sending US troops to train the Croatian forces very difficult. The contract proved crucial to Tudjman’s consolidation of political power and to the ability of Croatia to expel Serbian forces from its territory, and allowed for the beginning of a process of statebuilding in Croatia. The ultimate result in Croatia, however, has been a more capable force that is also responsive to political institutions and professional norms. This is a testament not to MPRI, per se, but to its use within NATO’s PIP program, which required an extended training program and issued significant external incentives for Croatian political and military leaders to work toward international standard of military professionalism. This high conditionality—along with some lucky junctures—led private advice and training to enhance long-term control over force in Croatia.62

Comparisons and conclusions

There are a number of differences between these two cases. Croatia had been part of a relatively functional state, while Sierra Leone had no such history. Also, the conflict in Sierra Leone had a different logic and the rebel forces
fought differently than in Croatia. Finally, Croatia's factor endowments and economic situation was much more conducive to statebuilding than Sierra Leone's. Statebuilding in Sierra Leone, then, presented more hurdles at the outset.

Regardless, these cases do reveal that market-based security can influence statebuilding in very different ways. In both instances, PSCs offered new capacities, increased professionalism (relative to poor state forces) and a changed political dynamic. In Sierra Leone, the new capacities diffused control over force and made it easier for capacities to be used for sub-group goals. In Croatia, however, the new capacities centralized control over force in a way that enhanced the potential for statebuilding and democratization. At the very least, this analysis demonstrates that, rather than assuming that the market for force will either aid or undermine international efforts to promote statebuilding and democracy, analysts would be well served by investigating the conditions likely to lead to one or the other outcome.

I have suggested that institutional factors contributed to these differences. While the use of market options empowered new international and domestic actors in each case, different actors were empowered in the two instances. In Sierra Leone, it was international commercial firms, PSCs themselves, and eventually sub-state forces. In Croatia, by contrast, the use of market forces empowered states, state-based organizations (the US and NATO), and the emerging state (Tudjman and his party). While market forces worked to centralize control of force in Croatia, they exacerbated the diffusion of control in Sierra Leone. Further, the contracts in Croatia were justified by (and operated under) a clear international framework designed to both inform and encourage institutional development in transitional states, whereas no such framework existed in the case of Sierra Leone. The framework of the PIP program offered many tools with which to leash market forces to long-term collective goals—and the progress that Croatian forces have made can be linked directly to those tools. Absent these tools in Sierra Leone, there was not a coordinating mechanism to inform the variety of actors involved about what might be best to include in a contract, let alone to induce these actors to make choices that would contribute to Sierra Leone's long-term institutional development.

One might argue that the difference between these two experiences can be explained by some difference between the companies or what they did. For instance, one might argue that MPRI is a more professional company and its employees are less prone to opportunistic behavior than EO or Sandline, or that MPRI's contract in Croatia was for training while EO and Sandline's was for more direct participation. In fact, however, as the discussion of Sierra Leone demonstrates, it was not the individual behavior of EO and Sandline employees was the issue. Also, there is widespread speculation that MPRI did, in fact, participate more heavily in the planning and implementation of Operation Storm than it has claimed. MPRI's contract with Croatia did have within it attention to civilian control of the military, human rights, and other professional norms, but this was because it was ostensibly designed to prepare Croatia for the PIP program.

Some also claim that MPRI worked much more closely with the US government than did EO with the South African government, or Sandline with the British government. This is true. The US has a regulatory structure that neither South Africa (at the time) nor Britain share. This regulatory framework, however, did not prevent MPRI from siding at times with the Croatian government against the demands of officials in the Pentagon. As one Pentagon official put it, "the contract was a tool with which MPRI could resist compliance with shifts in US policy. Contracts are rigid tools for fluid environments." The PIP framework, however, provided boundaries that MPRI had a harder time evading. Finally, MPRI has engaged in a number of training efforts with states involved in, or emerging from, conflict such as Colombia and Iraq that have not resulted in similar successes. Though I do not have the space to go into the details of these instances here, the relative success of MPRI's efforts in Colombia and Bosnia stand in sharp contrast to what are widely regarded as failures in Colombia and Iraq.

Security institutions are a key component of statebuilding. To contribute to statebuilding, these institutions must be effective, abide by political controls, and operate within the bounds of acceptable behavior. PSCs provide a tool for generating more effective forces in transitional states. Because they operate outside of what are often regarded as corrupt state institutions, they also redistribute political power in ways that may be beneficial for long-term change. The dilemma, however, is that this tool can be hijacked in ways that make statebuilding harder rather than easier—by diffusing control over force and/or allowing force to be used for private or sub-group purposes. Though any military training is subject to hijacking, the market forces involved in contracting with PSCs exacerbates these difficulties.

I have examined international organizations as a potential framework by which such hijacking can be evaded. The two cases examined in this chapter reveal that IOs can simultaneously inform the fledgling government and military personnel about proper behavior, induce them to behave properly by rewarding proper behavior, and funnel resources through the state in a way that dissuades opportunism. My analysis is similar to those who have examined the way in which international institutions are socializing states in Europe, though it focuses greater attention on the tight coupling between information, inducements, and dissuasion (Checkel 2005). IOs can thus be instruments that coordinate the interests of powerful states and provide tools with which actors in less powerful states can be persuaded to cooperate (Hurrell 2005). They are most successful in influencing security institutions, however, when they link perceived effectiveness and proper behavior.

Europe, of course, is the quintessential "democratically dense regional IO network." Can the insights here be of use to other regions? Or, as Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods? Keohane puts it, is it possible to do peacebuilding in bad neighborhoods?
suggests that features that coordinate international preferences by translating broad normative commitments into specific blueprints for action, centralize (rather than diffuse) control over force within a territory, and coordinate carrots and sticks for civilian and military personnel will work towards statebuilding. This may seem like a tall order, but the fact that institutions in Europe exist offers the prospect of extending portions of the existing framework. In that context, suggestions for a “global NATO” provide not only the promise of increased capacity for international action, but also the potential for staying power rather than simply triage.34

Finally, efforts at statebuilding in the 1990s seemed difficult at the time, but look comparatively easy in retrospect—particularly when contrasted with efforts in the post 9/11 world. Cooperation between western states has been strained as some have seen the US as acting in unilateral ways. As Astrid Suhre’s chapter in this volume demonstrates, US efforts to fight the “war on terrorism” in the short run have often hampered efforts to create the stable states that promise to reduce breeding grounds for terror in the long term. These post 9/11 and post-Iraq strains may generate more resistance to cooperating within a global web of institutions. At the same time, institutions that enhance global cooperation are even more important when preferences among the powerful diverge and when short-term goals threaten to undermine long-term security.

Notes

* The author thanks Alex Cooley, Kim Marten, and the participants and directors of the Research Partnership on Postwar Statebuilding for comments on previous drafts.

1 Sometimes this failure (real or perceived) is in particular issues areas — such as schools or prisons. Other times it is more fundamental.

2 For discussion of rational legal authority, see Gerth and Mills 1978: 299. See also the discussion in Barnett and Finnemore 1999; and Barnett 2001: 59.

3 The RUF had grown in the 1980s sponsored by Liberian warlord, Charles Taylor and filled with young men who had few other options. See Abdullah 1998.

4 Abdullah 1998.

5 Three groups of 120 were trained in the first three months.

6 The RUF headquarters was attacked in October 1996.

7 There was some speculation that EO aided Bia's coup because Bia's brother, Steven, was partner in Soruss - a Belorussian company that leased aircraft to EO.

8 The RUF believed that EO was the reason for the Kamajor success.

9 The Adibjan Peace Accord.

10 Norman had a long history in Sierra Leone — though initially as a part of the RSLMF. He was a participant in the first post-independence coup that unseated Siaka Stevens after his APC party had defeated the SLPP in the 1967 general elections. See Musah 2000: 81.

11 The CDF was coordinate five different militia groups: the Kamajors in the South, the Gbetheris in the center, the Donzos in the East, the Kapras in the West, and the Tamaboros in the North. The coordination effort has been less than successful. Much of the training that EO (and to a lesser degree, Sendline) accomplished was with the Kamajors.


13 Purportedly at the suggestion of British High Commissioner Peter Penfold. Ibid, p. 189; Musah 2000: 98.

14 It appeared as if agreement was reached in late October, but it fell apart over details in November.

15 Four other major factions, with the Kamajors make up the CDF: the Gbetheris in the center, the Donzos in the East, the Kapras in the West, and the Tamaboros in the North. Efforts to transform these into a single force by Deputy Defense Minister Sam Banga-Norman have not been successful. “Sierra Leone: Managing Uncertainty,” ICG Africa Report, No. 35, October 24, 2001, p. 5.

16 Just why these arms were impounded is unclear. Alex Vines suggests that Kabbah had changed his mind about purchasing the weapons. See Vines 1999: 65. Dooglass suggests that they were impounded on the basis of questions about their legality given the UN arms embargo. See Dooglass 1999: 192.


21 See also Human Rights Watch, World Report 2003: Africa/Sierra Leone.


24 See Zanec 1996: 217. See also Talatovic 1996.

25 For the international politics of Yugoslavia’s disintegration and how it affected the extremism of each of the republics, see Woodward 2002.

26 See also Vankovska 2002: 6.


28 Ed Seyster claims a six-person assessment team was sent in November 1994. Also in November Joe Kruzel made a trip to Croatia offering some limited mil-mil contacts and a token IMET ($65,000) program. When Croatia (in January 1995) announced that it wanted the UN out by March 1995, the US withdrew the mil-mil contact and the IMET but, “someone in State with some vision decided that we needed to maintain contract with them and saw the long range benefits to DTAP.” Email correspondence, March 23, 2000.

29 For more on the speculation about MPR’s actual behavior, see Avant 2005, ch. 3.


32 See the general discussion of socialization in Europe in Checkel 2005.


34 http://www.nato.int/issues/pfp/pfp.htm.
Part III

Political economy