

STUDY GUIDE

SPECPOL
IașiMUN 2019



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Welcoming letter

Dear SPECPOL delegates,

It is with utmost pleasure and excitement that we welcome you to this year's edition of IasiMUN, and we are looking forward to the great debates we are sure will take place in our committee. We believe that this year's topics, **The Arctic Silk Road** and **The accountability of private military companies in creating and sustaining conflicts**, while at a glance may seem complicated and difficult to digest, could spark some interesting debates and lead you to become more invested in world affairs and the world of political discussions.

This year we have decided to introduce study guides in our conference, as we believe that the presentation of the topics on the website no longer sufficed. The study guide has the purpose of guiding your research in the right direction, so that you will be prepared during the conference and know the most basic concepts of the topics, but it should not stand as the sole document on your computer folder named "IasiMUN 2019", but rather be the oldest one placed there.

This document will follow a structure that is easy to follow, from the definition of general key terms that you will often hear during the debate, all the way to historical context, international legislations, and major players. In your personal research, you will have to expand on those ideas, especially in regards to your own state's position, as your main purpose as a delegate should be to follow the interests of the country which you represent.

We want you to make the most out of the debate and the entire conference, so, on a more personal note, feel free to contact any one of us, your chairpersons, in the case of any inquiries that you might get at any point before or during the conference, whether that be related to the topics or not.

To conclude, we welcome you once again to the 2019 SPECPOL committee, and we want to wish you the best of luck on your preparation leading up to the conference. We can't wait to see all of you perform during the debates!

*Regards, your chairpersons,
Alexandra Frunza, Stefana Popa & Andrei Loghin.*

Introduction to the committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee of the General Assembly) makes up one of the six committees of the General Assembly and focuses on political issues such as UN peacekeeping operations (a tool designed by the UN as a method of providing help for nations that are torn by conflict and providing a foundation for lasting peace), peaceful uses of outer space, and most specifically decolonization and the Middle East.

Although at first the sole purpose of the Fourth Committee was decolonization, due to independence being granted to UN trust territories, its responsibilities have shrunk down, causing it to merge with the seventh committee (which had been created to deal with certain political issues), leading us to where we are today: a committee that tackles a wide variety of issues, and with a large list of bodies that report through it:

- Committee on Information
- Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
- Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34)
- Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)
- Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for State of Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)

Topic A: The Arctic Silk Road

1. Key terms

The Arctic = a polar region located at the northernmost part of Earth. The Arctic consists of the Arctic Ocean, adjacent seas, and parts of Alaska, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Northern Canada, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

The Silk Road = The land routes connecting East Asia and Southeast Asia with South Asia, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and Southern Europe. The Silk Road derives its name from the lucrative trade in silk carried out along its length, beginning in the Han dynasty in China (207 BCE–220 CE).

Trade route = A trade route is a logistical network identified as a series of pathways and stoppages used for the commercial transport of cargo. The term can also be used to refer to trade over bodies of water.

Arctic Council = the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic (one notable aspect is that the Arctic Council is a forum, ergo it has no programming budget. All projects or initiatives are sponsored by one or more Arctic States)

Arctic state = the eight countries with sovereignty over the lands within the Arctic Circle, which are the following: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America; these are also the permanent member states of the **Arctic Council**

Non-Arctic state = countries which verify the criteria for admission of observers, most notably including a requirement of applicants to "recognize Arctic States' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic" and "recognize that an extensive legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean including, notably, the Law of the Sea, and that this framework provides a solid foundation for responsible management of this ocean".

“Zhilaohu” = paper tiger

2. Historical background

The history of Silk Road backs thousands of years ago. The aim of the creation of this route was linking China to Europe through the Middle East. Growth of Chinese enterprises and industries which was started since the middle of the 20th century increased the significance of expanding the link routes between China and Europe following expansion of China's export to the West.

The Arctic has already long proven to be a key strategic location – connecting some of the world's superpowers from North America to Europe and the Soviet Union, all the way to China. In fact, it played a key role during World War II, providing a route for transporting supplies and weaponry, as well as in the subsequent Cold War, when the region not only provided the shortest route for US and Soviet strategic nuclear bombers and missiles, but also training waters for nuclear submarines that would become the foundations of continuous at-sea deterrence.

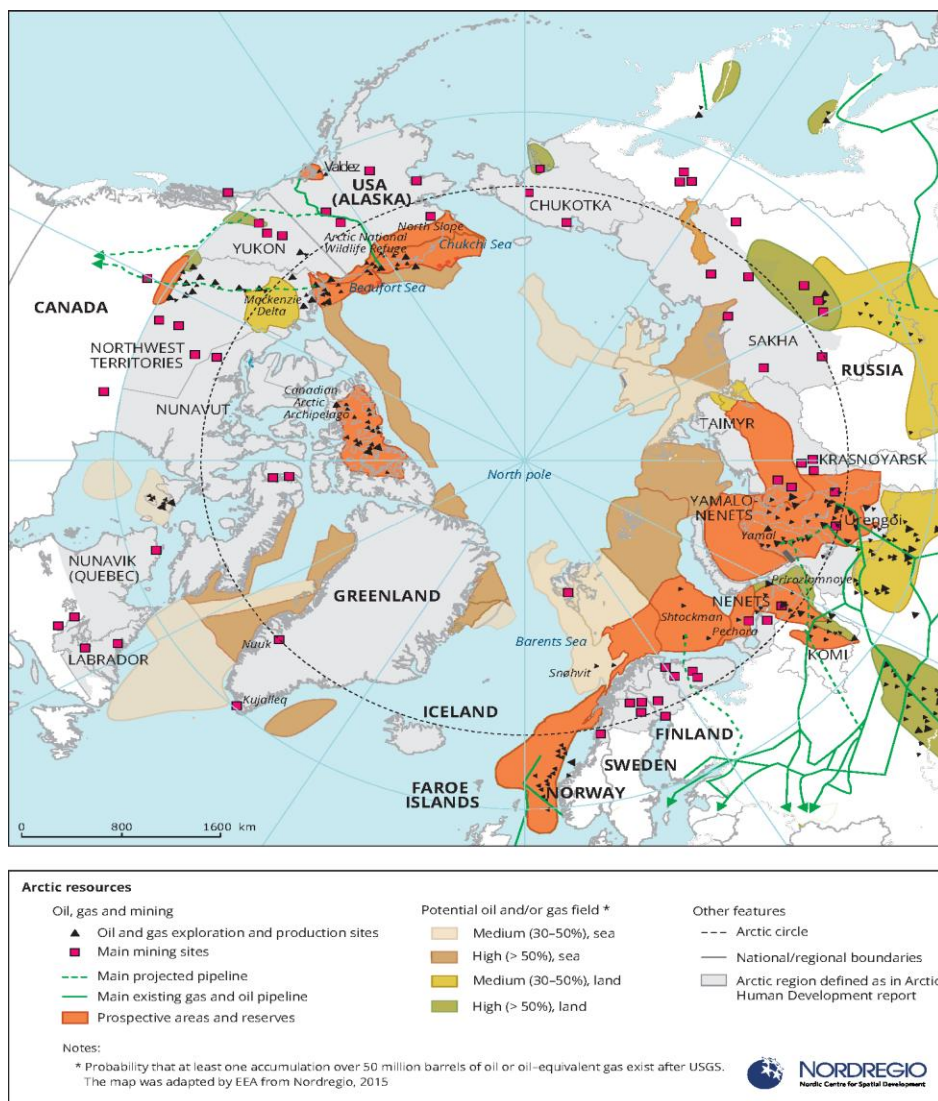
The first transit voyage along the Northern Sea Route (NSR) took place back in 1932 when a research expedition sailed on the Alexander Sibiryakov steam icebreaker. In 2009, the NSR was opened for international transits, which was followed by an increase in transits, which had been suspended in the early 1990s.

Transition into the present day

As previously permanently frozen areas give way to open water, comes the promise of a new logistical hub of global significance, with new possibilities for shipping between Asia, Europe and North America, either through the Northwest Passage – shorter than the Panama route – and, most prominently, through the Northern Sea Route, which is shorter than the Suez route by several days, making it less energy intensive and cheaper to navigate.

As new economic opportunities abound, the race for control intensifies in a region that is already home to overlapping claims on the territory's resources (as illustrated in the figure below), and where new actors from outside the region – including a fast-growing and ever-more assertive China – are taking a keen interest. Today, the region links Russia's oil and gas to China's growing economy, China's exports to the Single European Market, and Russia's Northern Fleet to warmer seas.

Within the Arctic Council itself, there is a growing divide between, on the one hand, the proponents of prioritising environmental sustainability and multilateral solutions, and, on the other, those placing economic development and national sovereignty concerns above all else. While the first group are perhaps more numerous – encompassing the European Arctic states and Canada, the latter group includes the two global heavyweights – the US and Russia. What is more, even among those listing environmental protection and the peaceful and sustainable exploitation of natural resources as key concerns, not all do so with the same degree of assiduity – be it in words or in deeds.

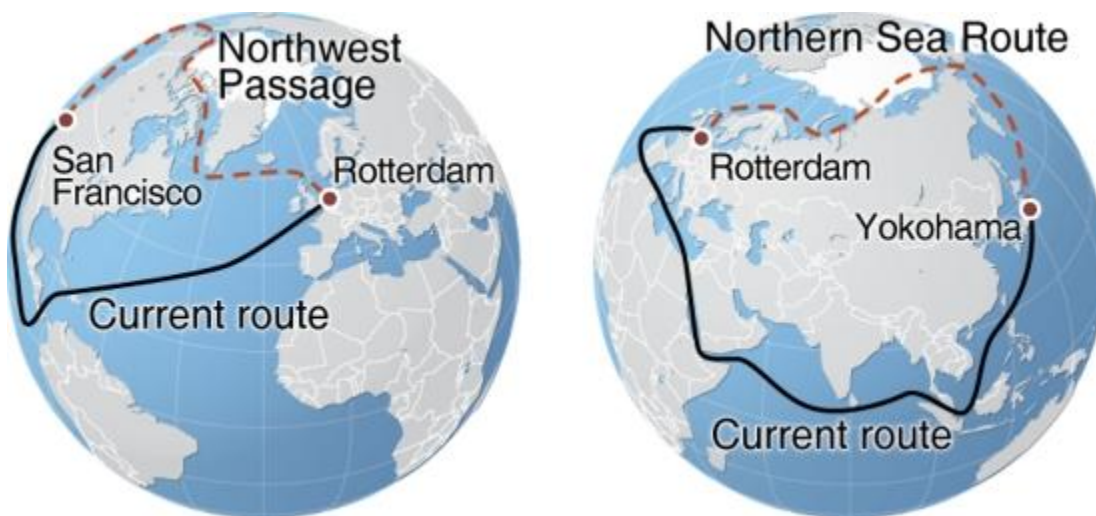


3. International framework

Though Arctic policy priorities differ, every Arctic nation is concerned about sovereignty/defense, resource development, shipping routes, and environmental protection. Much work remains on regulatory agreements regarding shipping, tourism, and resource development in Arctic waters.

Although there is little to no framework on the Arctic region besides that of specialized organizations, the aim of the SPECPOL committee is to formulate a plan of action, which would cater for the demands of most member states present and guarantee the best outcome for the project, while respecting the sovereignty of each country and attempting to forge new alliances starting from the current bloc positions.

China classified itself as a Near-Arctic Country and an Important Stakeholder with respect to the region owing to the New Silk Road Project as well, determining respect, cooperation, mutual benefits and sustainability as the main pillars of its regional policy.



4. Main actors

The people's Republic of China is the central actor in the economical and political power-play of this initiative. Beijing has sought to obtain membership in many international Arctic-related organizations (such as the Polar Navigation and Equipment Committee), engaging in free trade agreements, investment schemes in mining and infrastructural projects, as well as improving diplomatic relations with all the Arctic states. Although factually not an Arctic State, the PRC defines itself as a “Near-Arctic State” with larger interests drawing its attention toward the region. Back in 2014, President Xi Jinping made public the will of his government to make China a “Polar

Power”. The first official Arctic policy white paper said China also eyes development of oil, gas, mineral resources and other non-fossil energies, fishing and tourism in the region. It said it would do so “jointly with Arctic States, while respecting traditions and cultures of the Arctic residents including the indigenous peoples and conserving natural environment”.

The Russian Federation has a prominent presence in the region, due to its geographical position. The Russian plan of action concerning the Arctic region has so far been consolidating the military presence in the area and focusing on the extraction of natural resources. President Vladimir Putin affirmed at China’s second Belt and Road (BRI) conference in Beijing in April 2019 that cooperation, research and development will be the bases for a strategic partnership between China and Russia in the Arctic.

The United States of America has so far shown interest in the potential exploits of a new international trade route, taking into consideration its geographical position and status as a permanent member of the Arctic Council. The US paid less and less attention to the Arctic even during the Obama Administration, the Trump Administration mainly concentrates on the Alaskan energy sources, and in recent years this region has not been represented in the Government. The main pillars of the American plan of action are: to ensure the sovereignty and defence of the United States of America, to secure the Navy in case of a potential crisis, to maintain the free navigability of waters, and cooperation. However, in accordance with the long-standing competition between the USA and the PRC, the American government has shown reluctance to the Chinese initiative.

The United Kingdom has shown on various instances its support for the Belt and Road initiative, synchronizing its national infrastructural projects with the outlines of the global project. However, the UK might not be in favour of all the aspects this initiative presents, as it could endanger its dependance on the current predominant trade routes.

France has not yet made a statement strongly affirming its position on the project, but has shown interest in following the interests the European Union could find in the matter.

Germany has shown support for the Belt and Road Initiative in the past and could potentially be a supporter of this ambitious project as well, taking into consideration the prospects for the German economy.

Norway, a permanent member of the Arctic Council, has been a crucial provider of natural resources extracted from its Arctic territories for the European sector, but its latest decision to walk away from a multi-million oil drilling contract has opened room for discussion in what regards the Norwegian perspective on the matter. As a result of persistent Chinese presence on the sea routes which intersect Norwegian territory, the two states have been strengthening their diplomatic ties, so much so that the PRC could find a reliable potential business partner in the Scandinavian country.

5. Issues to be addressed

Among the aspects which should be addressed during the committee session, there are a select few, which the Chairpersons have taken the liberty to enunciate, in order to facilitate the orientation of each delegate.

As was the case with the Belt and Road Initiative, the main concern which arose as a result of various uncertainties and doubts expressed by other states when faced with the project put forward by the People's Republic of China was **the question of national security**. Due to the history of diplomatic differences, poor communication between countries and the divide experienced in the 20th century, the Chinese state is still regarded with a dose of scepticism whenever it presents a bold idea. With the Arctic Silk Road initiative, the situation is built upon the complex ties between countries and the multilateral nature of their agenda to fulfil certain geo-economical plans, as the issue of what each actor has to win or lose comes into play. During the debate, delegates should follow the interests of the countries they represent and seek to achieve an end result as close to the economical and political direction the state has presented so far as possible.

Because shipping cargo through the proposed Arctic route could be significantly shorter than the current shipping route through the Suez, this topic cannot be discussed without taking into consideration **the current framework of the international trade routes** and how they would be affected.

Although SPECPOL is not specifically concerned with environmental issues, the crafting of the resolutions should also address **the elements impacting the state of the environment and the climate of the Arctic region**, as the change in global climate has played a part in opening the door for this project.

Lastly, yet on a more obvious note, one of the decisive factors in the discussion of this topic will revolve around the power struggle for the dominant influence over the Arctic region, which has long been the subject of territorial disputes.

6. Further reading

The Ice Silk Road Initiative and Its implication for the Arctic Governance

<http://isdpeu/publication/the-ice-silk-road-is-china-a-near-artic-state/>

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/arctic_law_policy.pdf

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/17/arctic-exploitation-battleground>

https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2018/Scholarly_Papers/24_AY2018_Kong.pdf

<https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2017/07/10/chinas-maritime-arctic-silk-road-ice/>

7. Sources

Company, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing. "The American Heritage Dictionary entry: arctic". www.ahdictionary.com.

Elisseeff, Vadime (2001). *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*. UNESCO Publishing / Berghahn Books.

<http://www.geopolitika.hu/en/2018/08/22/polar-silk-road/>

Walking on Thin Ice: A Balanced Arctic Strategy for the EU

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-arctic/china-unveils-vision-for-polar-silk-road-across-arctic-idUSKBN1FF0J8>

<https://arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>

Topic B: Private military companies

1. Key Terms

Private military company (PMC) = a private company providing armed combat or security services for financial gain.

Security contractors/ Private military contractors = Terms used by PMCs when referring to their staff members.

Private military industry/ “The Circuit” = Terms used by PMCs when referring to their business.

Mercenary = a professional soldier hired to serve in a foreign army.

Accountability = the obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner. It also includes the responsibility for money or other entrusted property.

Military services = Specialized services related to military actions including strategic planning, intelligence, investigation, land, sea or in reconnaissance, flight operations of any type, manned or unmanned, satellite surveillance, military training and logistics, material and technical support to armed forces and other related activities.

Security services = armed guarding or protection of buildings, installations, property and people, police training, material and technical support to police forces, elaboration and implementation of informational security measures and other related activities.

Contracting states = states that directly contract with PMCs for their services, including, as appropriate, where such a company subcontracts with another PMC or where such a company subcontracts with another PMC or where a PMC operates through its subsidiary companies.

States of operations = states on whose territory PMCs operate.

The Montreux Document = the Montreux Document is an agreement between signature countries obligations regarding private military and security companies in war zones. It was ratified in Montreux, Switzerland, in September 2008. The document lists some 70 recommendations for good state practices such as verifying companies track record,

examining procedures used to vet staff, correct prosecution when breaches of law occur and insure compliance and personnel training with international humanitarian and human rights law.

Enduring Freedom = As stated in the archive of the US Department of State: “Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is a multinational coalition military operation initiated in October 2001 to counter terrorism and bring security to Afghanistan in collaboration with Afghan forces. OEF operations led to the collapse of the Taliban regime and helped bring a measure of security and stability to Afghanistan for the first time in a generation.”

2. Historical background

The East India Company

Mercenaries, often referred to as the “world’s second-oldest profession”, have been part of the history of war since its beginnings. They have been hired by a variety of actors in order to supplement existing forces and/or to provide specific expertise in military tactics or technology. They have shifted from individual entrepreneurs able to sell their services to the highest bidder, either in groups or singly. This form of entrepreneurial mercenary was common roughly between the 12th and 16th centuries, and was gradually replaced by a more organized system, whereby states took control of the mercenary trade and bought and sold soldiers from one another, a system that began around the 15th century and ended after the Crimean War in the mid-19th century.

Private-sector organisations have been known to use military force for a long time. One such example would be a company that operated during the 18th and 19th century, named “**The East India Company**”. Also known as “**English East India Company**”, formally (1600–1708) “**Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies**” or (1708–1873) “**United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies**”, it was initially created in order to exploit trade with East and Southeast Asia and India, incorporated by royal charter on December 31, 1600. The company slowly became involved with politics and was known to be an agent of British imperialism during those times in India. British influence in China is also a result of the activities carried out by this company during the 19th century.

The initial objective of the company was of economical nature, more specifically the British having a share in the Indian spice trade. It was met with opposition from the

Dutch and the Portuguese, who had a monopoly on that trade at the time. The company settled down to a trade in cotton and silk piece goods, indigo, and saltpetre, with spices from South India. It extended its activities to the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.

The relevance of this company as the grandfather of today's private military companies must not be overlooked, as during its time it had a great amount of influence over Indian policies. Its shareholders could "buy" votes through the purchase of shares. These kinds of activities led to government intervention. The Regulating Act (1773) and William Pitt the Younger's India Act (1784) established government control of political policy through a regulatory board responsible to Parliament. Thereafter the company gradually lost both commercial and political control. Its commercial monopoly was broken in 1813, and from 1834 it was merely a managing agency for the British government of India. It was deprived of that role after the Indian Mutiny (1857), and it ceased to exist as a legal entity in 1873.

Pictured: Official of the East India Company riding in an Indian procession



Transition into the present day

For a great section of the 20th century, PMCs the outsourcing of combat functions became more and more scarce, and agencies of the state became the ones responsible for the employment of military power. This soon began to change during the post-Cold War era, when the market was overpopulated by military specialists and surplus equipment. The Cold War also was followed by the eruption of numerous small wars, especially in Africa. It was in such conflicts that a number of PMCs, including Sandline International (United Kingdom) and Executive Outcomes (South Africa), made their name.

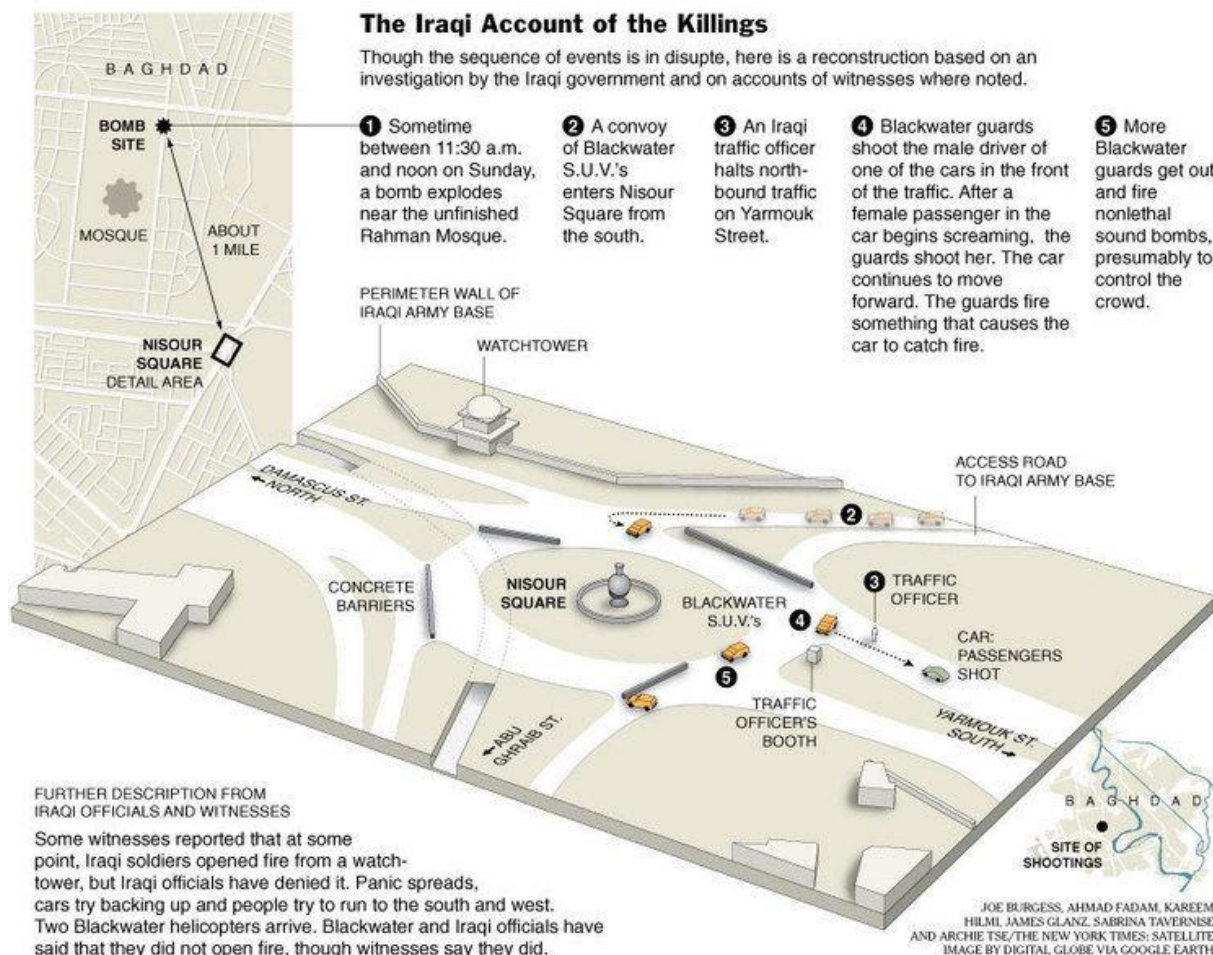
The roots of modern private military companies can be traced back to Captain David Stirling, who founded the **Special Air Service (SAS)** in 1941 to fight the Germans in small hard-hitting groups. The unconventional methods of the SAS were successful and they remained a British institution after the war. David Stirling would go on to found the first 20th-century private military company a couple of decades later, WatchGuard International in 1967. Watchguard hired from the SAS and was created to train the armies of the Persian Gulf sultanates. Another early company was formed in 1975 when three former SAS officers came together and formed the Control Risks Group. Founder David Walker would go on to form Keenie Meenie Services of Iran-Contra fame, and Saladin Security, which is still in existence. Another founder, Arish Turle, would go onto to form the Risk Advisory Group, whose subsidiary, Janusian, is active in Iraq.

By the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan began efforts to privatize government services. Defence Systems Limited was started in this atmosphere as former members of the SAS got into the military consulting and training business. George Bush as vice-president began to privatize aspects of the intelligence services. As Secretary of Defense for President Bush, Dick Cheney contracted Brown and Root Services (now KBR) a total of 8.9 million dollars to put together a proposal on how to integrate private companies more effectively into warfare.

These concepts were not new in the US military. Contractors had been used in conjunction with military operations in the Vietnam War as **Pacific Architects and Engineers** fulfilled duties formerly the responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers, while **Vinnell** and **Halliburton** were providing logistical support and other companies like **Cubic**, **General Dynamics**, and **Lockheed Martin**, have been producing weapons,

staff, vehicles, simulators, armour, facilities maintenance, training services, and technology through contracts from the government for years.

On September 16, 2007 employees of Blackwater Security Consulting shot and killed 17 civilians, injuring 20 more in Nisour Square, in Baghdad, while they were escorting a convoy of the US embassy. As expected, the story has two sides. The private guards of the company stated that they were confronted with an ambush and only acted in defence. The Iraqi government, on the other hand, asserted that the killings were unprovoked and unjustified. The US government acted upon these accusations made by the Iraqi officials by taking the company to court 7 years later. The legal battles proved that the Blackwater employees had indeed used unacceptably excessive force and had recklessly killed innocent civilians. One of the guards was sentenced to life, while the others to 30 years in prison. After this incident, the company changed its name to avoid the bad reputation it had gained and is still operating to this very day under the name of Academi. This incident is remembered as the **Nisour Square Massacre**.



Another illustrative instance is the **Abu Ghraib prison**. The inhumanity that the Iraqi prisoners experienced in several detention centres is widely known in the international community. After their release, many have stated that, apart from the US officials, employees from PMSCs have also taken part in the tortures. Specifically, the companies that proceeded to such actions were “L-3 Services and Titan Corporation” and “CACI International”. The allegations that were made stated that the detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison were subjected to “electric shocks, sexual assaults, being stripped and kept naked, forced to witness the rape of a female prisoner, sensory deprivation, mock executions, stress positions, broken bones, and deprivation of oxygen, food and water as well as other dehumanizing acts of torture”, as described by Joseph Pugliese in “State Violence and the Execution of Law”. There have been many lawsuits against private military contractors such as *Al Shimari v. CACI*, *Saleh v. Titan* and *Al-Quraishi v. Nakhla and L-3 Services, Inc.* These claims have, however, been denied multiple times and no progress has been made, as for the case to be prosecuted.

3. Current situation

Private security and military contractors now account for more than half of the boots on the ground in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, are nowadays part of a billion-dollar industry, and have become major actors in contemporary international politics. Though private military and security companies have received extensive scholarly attention, few studies have focused on the contractors themselves, leaving us in the dark as to who these individuals are. One reason for this limited research is a lack of data. Governmental agencies do not make data available, and given the national security sensitivities involved and the challenges of reaching the population, data are difficult to collect. As a result, a very small amount of information is known about who in the private sector is fighting in these wars.

This business, however, carries a great deal of controversy due to the activity of certain PMCs in war zones in the last two decades. In October 2007, the UN published a study in which it criticized private contractors performing military duties, in spite of being originally hired as “security guards”, which opened the debate of the accountability and power which should be invested in PMCs. Taking into consideration the fact that there is no international court that has jurisdiction over their corporations and that many countries, world powers such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom included, are not signatories to the 1989 United Nations Mercenary Convention banning the use of mercenaries, the question whether the presence of PMCs in active or post-conflict areas is justified and, furthermore, efficient and not being the vessel for carrying out a hidden agenda, as the situation in Iraq has brewed the suspicion.

The dominant aspect of the issue is Private Military Companies (PMCs) and mercenaries hired by sovereign states to perform military roles they are not capable of themselves. PMCs stress they are not mercenaries; they serve states as clients. Sometimes this means assuring the security of legitimate governments. More often PMCs perform guard duties or supply and maintenance services. Because international law does not always cover such actors, their status is highly controversial, although this is not the highlight of the debate.

The United Nations High Commissioner Office identify that mercenaries can operate in three different types of situations. *The first* is **international armed conflict** where mercenaries support **one side**. *The second* involves **internal conflicts** where third states use mercenaries to achieve their goals. Involvements of mercenaries in both situations can cause **disintegration of states** and thus result in denying the right to **self-determination**. *The third type* concerns the **non-conflict situation** when mercenaries are employed to execute **changing of government by violent means**. Such activities can be damaging to the state. It causes special threats to small countries with valuable natural resources because their small military capabilities make them vulnerable to mercenary activities. Additionally, the government that hires such services has to consider financial expenses that in other ways would be spent for development

Types of PMCs:

The private military companies are to be found in four different types:

1. Providers: their role is to offer services such as logistics, intelligence and maintenance to the military forces of states;
2. Consultants: they facilitate the state's military forces with training and strategic advice;
3. Military assistants: they provide direct, organized military assistance, which could also mean fighting at the front line of a battlefield;
4. Security assistants: being mostly armed, they protect from individuals to organizations. Their duties vary from protecting politicians to convoys.

4. International framework

Time and again, the Private Military and Security Companies have been involved in armed conflicts where the international organizations have a policy of not intervening. The PMSCs are usually assigned conflicts of low intensity and post conflict zones, either because the armies are not distributed yet or the situation is characterized by high insecurity. They have also been used for cases in which a State was not present and failed to deploy its armed forces.

When dealing with the issue of PMSCs, the international community is confronted with the lack of legislation concerning the matter. The companies' operations, the limitations of their actions, basic principles that need to be followed, are yet to be set by treaties or resolutions, on which all states have agreed in order to implement control over those businesses. As expected, efforts have already been made in order for common legislation to regulate all PMSCs. Although the international community has come together for a solution, the documents that emerged are not applicable for PMSCs. The "International Convention on the use of Mercenaries", ratified under the Geneva Convention, and the "UN Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries" are not directly dealing with the issue at hand, since both treaties are set on mercenaries, and, therefore, their application cannot be enforced for PMSCs. The Montreux Document, the most recent effort for a regulation, deals directly with the matter unlike the aforementioned treaties on mercenaries. However, it is non-binding, making states not obligated to operate in accordance with it. As of now, the troops of the Private Military and Security Companies are in no way bound to respect the international law of war while performing, as they do not account to a state's government, since they operate under financial terms. With the current situation like this, the creation of appropriate legislation is a crucial matter. With the increase of PMSCs, the international community is in great need of a series of legislative regulations that should aim at the basic principles of control over the companies.

The United Nations adopted the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries 1989, which addresses the negative effects that mercenaries have on the order and integrity of the State and the impact on peace and security. It remains limited to the definition of mercenaries and does not include the activities of PMSCs. Furthermore, 35 States have ratified the Convention, but the majority of the Member States have not.

5. Main actors

The Russian Federation is one of the states with traditionally large armies and state-of-the-art weaponry and technology. Therefore, the use of PMCs was not a widespread phenomenon in Russia, until the recent years. Specifically, Vladimir Putin has commented on these firms saying that they were “a tool for the implementation of national interests without direct participation of the state” (Russian Newspaper Fontanka). He then proceeded to act upon these comments and argued for the legalization and use of PMCs. Based on these statements, there were rumours about Russia contracting private military businesses for operation both in Ukraine and Syria.

The United Kingdom has a similar policy concerning PMCs as the USA. It is home to the first private military company ever created, WatchGuard International, and also home to the largest one, the GS4. The country is not a signatory to the “United Nations Mercenary Convention” but it is one of the 6 governments that have signed the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICoC).

The United States of America is the largest employer of private military companies. It is where the services of the private military sector are both based and consumed, meaning that a majority of them are hired by the US government. The US hasn’t signed the “United Nations Mercenary Convention” or the Montreux Document. It also doesn’t recognize the UN's classification of PMCs as mercenaries.

The start was made with the hiring of private military contractors for operation “Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan and Iraq. This war on terrorism set the ground for many more contracts between the USA and the PMCs. Since the 2015 summer, the number of contractors working for the Defense Department in Iraq doubled from 1,300 to 2,500. With the current situation in Syria, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter stated that the US is in the procedure of hiring private military contractors for operations in Syria.

Among the countries with PMC headquarters on their territory we can count ***France, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom and the United States of America.***

The People’s Republic of China is generally known to be against the use of PMCs, however, with the developments in the ambitious projects of the Belt and Road Initiative, its stance on the issue has become unclear, as China has been taking into consideration

hiring such companies for the sole role of ensuring security in the regions where infrastructural work is being conducted.

6. Issues to be addressed:

With profit being their only motive, the employees of the PMSCs are completely detached from any ideology that motivates them to take part in armed conflicts. This situation may lead to a lack of morals, which could then result in destructive consequences, for example, the violation of fundamental human rights. Countries aren't fighting their wars with their own military anymore. Instead, they hire others to win for them. With this tactic being used more broadly, a new danger comes into view. It's the concern about the willingness of these troops to blur the lines if it serves their purpose. It is often assumed that PMCs and the governments that hire them are actually synchronizing, namely that they have similar interests. It is the exact opposite that happens, namely the fact that they have conflicting goals. For the former it is their private interest, namely the profit and for the latter the public interest, namely the well being of their people. In recent years, many have started to question the allegiance of these groups. When private military companies are becoming political instruments in aid of a government, a new issue comes to the surface. It's the concern of whether these companies have a policy of their own and if this policy is in sync or in opposition with the welfare of the international community.

The first issue is legal definition that would allow for easier identification of such persons or groups. Is an international system of oversight, like the one the working group for mercenaries has called for, needed to regulate PMSCs? *The second issue* is the question of mercenary activities needing to be fully prohibited or regulated. *The third issue* is connected to its potential unlawful character. Should it implicate specific or ordinary existing offences like murder, assault etc.? *The fourth issue* is the responsibility for the activities of mercenaries. To what extent are mercenaries responsible for themselves, and the same for those who recruit and use them? What is the responsibility of states using mercenaries?

7. Further reading:

https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Pacific_Architects_and_Engineers,_Inc.

https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Vinnell_Corporation

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