

## **U.S. military logistics outsourcing and the everywhere of war**

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**Abstract:** Over the past two decades a network-centric “revolution in military affairs” has profoundly reshaped the geographies of war. No less revolutionary has been the U.S. military’s increasing reliance on private companies that employ a global army of civilian laborers to provide logistical support for operations around the world. This article provides an overview of the scale, scope, and emergence of this phenomenon, supplemented by an analysis of contracting activities at the peak of the war in Iraq in 2008. Following this, I detail three notable geopolitical and geo-economic entanglements that logistics contracting has engendered: 1) subcontracting and the exploitation of a largely South and Southeast Asian subcontracting workforce that is fueled by inadequate military oversight and the down-sourcing of risk, 2) the geopolitics of contractor deaths, travel bans and troop withdrawals instituted by labor exporting countries, and 3) the duality of prosperity and precarity experienced by Bosnians who have worked for U.S. military logistics contractors over the past two decades. Impacting politics, economic livelihoods, and social relations in countries around the world, these entanglements require a rethinking of the spatial dimensions of war. *Keywords:* Logistics, contracting, war, military

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On 1 September 2004 thousands of enraged Nepalese took to the streets of Kathmandu. Their target was the small Muslim community in the country. By the end of the night the city's largest mosque had been set on fire, and dozens of Muslim-owned businesses, hundreds of labor recruiting agencies, and the offices of a number of Pakistani and Gulf-based airlines ransacked. Three people died, including one person shot by guards, when a mob tried to storm the Egyptian embassy (Adhikary and Rhode, 2004; Bell, 2004; Miller, 2006, Chapter twelve). The precipitating event for this outburst of violence was the execution the previous day of twelve Nepalese men by the rebel group Ansar al-Sunna in Iraq. The men had left Nepal a month earlier, lured by a local recruiting agency with promises of employment at a luxury hotel in Jordan. Instead when they reached that country their passports were confiscated and they were told by a local labor broker that they were being sent to Iraq to work on an American military base for a Jordanian-based military logistics subcontracting firm, Daoud & Partners. If they refused to go they would be sent back to Nepal, still owing thousands of dollars in brokerage fees to the local recruiting agency. On the way to their destination the convoy was attacked and they were kidnapped. Less than two weeks later they were killed, and the execution video posted online (Simpson, 2005a; 2005b).

**Logistics contracting and the spatiality of war:** The twelve men were in Iraq due to a remarkable shift in how the U.S. military supports operations overseas. Since 2001 it has relied upon a legion of private military companies (PMCs) that have employed hundreds of thousands of laborers from around the world to assist its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. To date research on military contracting in these conflicts has focused primarily on firms like Triple Canopy and Blackwater. Frequently labeled mercenaries by critics (e.g. Scahill, 2007), these companies

provide armed security for convoys, military bases, corporations and government personnel, such as State Department employees. The literature on private security firms tends to be state-centric and centered on policy relevance (Gallaher, 2012; Eichler, 2014). Prominent themes include the impact they have upon state sovereignty and the monopoly of violence (Avant, 2005; Verkuil, 2007; Krahmann, 2013), concerns about states' ability to control and hold them accountable for their actions in war (Singer, 2005; Isenberg, 2008; Leander, 2010; Bruneau, 2011), analyses of the effectiveness of private security contracting (Dunigan, 2011), and ethical and moral implications of its use by states (Pattison, 2014).

Despite the emphasis on armed security contracting in both academic and popular writing the vast majority of individuals in Iraq and Afghanistan have been employed by massive U.S. corporations like Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), Fluor and DynCorp—or the multitude of subcontracting firms from around the world that they in turn rely upon—that provide logistical support services for the military. This work includes, but is not limited to: The construction, maintenance and operation of military bases; equipment maintenance; food service; transportation; communications and IT support; and supply-chain management. These activities have been relatively overlooked in the literature dedicated to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the privatization of military operations more generally (van Meegdenburg, 2015, p. 337-8), with Christopher Kinsey's examinations (2009, 2014) of the policy implications of the unprecedented reliance upon military logistics outsourcing by the U.S. and U.K. the most detailed work to date. Even less attention has been given to the global workforce that performs military logistics labor, the notable exception being Isabelle Barkers' (2009) analysis of the ways in which interaction with a largely male, South and Southeast Asian workforce performing

reproductive labor shapes gendered dimensions of national identity among American soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

One reason for this lack of attention, as Peter Singer notes (2008, p. 97), is that logistics support seems rather mundane and less “mercenary.”

Yet the growth of military logistics contracting is a critically important topic (Erbel and Kinsey, 2016), not least because it represents a fundamental change in how the U.S. fights its wars. What is new is not the reliance on private companies and labor to support military activities, which has a long history in both the U.S. and among other armed forces (Parrott, 2012), but rather the scale and scope of this phenomenon. In WWII, for example, the ratio of contractors to uniformed personnel was roughly 1:7; in Vietnam 1:6; and in the first Gulf War 1:60 (Fontaine and Nagl, 2010, p. 9).<sup>2</sup> In contrast, in the three largest overseas contingency operations in the past two decades (the peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) the number of contractors has been roughly equal to or greater than the number of uniformed personnel in the theaters of operation (Schwartz, 2010, p. 2). Put simply, the U.S. is now dependent on contractors to fight its wars. Moreover the military’s increasing reliance on private companies to provide logistics support for operations around the world is arguably as significant as the various technological innovations toward network-centric warfare over the past two decades that have been dubbed a “revolution in military affairs,” or RMA (Singer, 2009; Gregory, 2010). Especially since, as one military analysis from 2001 notes, “RMA is predicated on a revolution in military logistics” that centers on the increasing use of private contractors (Ferris and Keithly, 2001, p. 72). Or as former Army Chief of Staff, Eric Shinseki, put it, “without a transformation in logistics there will be no transformation in the Army” (quoted in Farrand, 2006, p. 1).

The transformation of military logistics through contracting is not just operationally linked to RMA (Erbel and Kinsey, 2015), both have also profoundly impacted the spatiality of war—though in different ways. A key claim made by political geographers, for example, is that RMA, combined with the U.S.’s response to 11 September 2001 (hereinafter 9/11), is leading to a blurring of the traditional geographies of warfare: From defined battlefields to multidimensional and fluid urban “battlespaces” (Graham, 2009); from officially recognized combat zones to shadowy campaigns against non-state actors in “borderlands,” “ungoverned spaces” and undisclosed locations (Bachmann, 2010; Mitchell, 2010; Gregory, 2011; Shaw and Akhter, 2012; Shaw, 2013); and novel forms of warfare that radically redefine legal jurisdictions, detention policies and the different classes of people that are considered “lawful targets” (Gregory, 2006; Khalili, 2012; Weizman, 2012; Jones, 2015). In the evocative words of Derek Gregory (2011), we are living in the age of “the everywhere war.”

The main argument this article makes is that military logistics outsourcing is also fundamentally reshaping the spatiality of war. It does this by generating geopolitical and geo-economic entanglements, the effects of which often extend well beyond the immediate spaces of violence. These entanglements profoundly impact economic livelihoods, politics, and social relations in numerous communities and states around the world that are not directly involved in the U.S.’s various wars and military operations through the production of “distant proximities” (Rosenau, 2003) that “dissolve the gap between ‘near’ and ‘far’” (Allen, 2009, p. 207). The emergence of military logistics outsourcing, in other words, is fueling what may be called the everywhere *of* war.

To illustrate this argument I detail three significant entanglements that illustrate the ways in which logistics contracting reconfigures the spatiality of war. The first involves the imbrication of the military with exploitative labor practices and subcontracting companies primarily from the Middle East, and in particular the Gulf region, that rely upon the importation of low-skilled workers from South and Southeast Asia. The trafficking of the twelve Nepalese men to work on bases in Iraq is emblematic of this dynamic, which is driven by the down-sourcing of risk and responsibility through subcontracting and inadequate oversight of this process by the military. The second entanglement concerns the geopolitics of contractor deaths, travel bans and troop withdrawals instituted by labor exporting countries. I trace tensions that arose between the U.S. and Kuwait and labor exporting states—in particular India, Nepal, and the Philippines—following decisions by the latter to impose bans on the travel of their citizens to Iraq in 2004, and the Philippines to also withdraw its small contingent of coalition troops that same year. In addition to illustrating the military's dependence upon a steady flow of workers from labor exporting states, its encouragement of Kuwait and individual workers to evade the bans helped drive recruiting underground, thereby increasing the risk of labor trafficking. Finally, I examine one aspect of the “entanglements of war and peace” (Gregory, 2010, p. 155) by detailing the duality of prosperity and precarity experienced by Bosnian workers over the past two decades, ranging from the peacekeeping economy in that country in the late 1990s, through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the ongoing humanitarian mission against Ebola in West Africa.

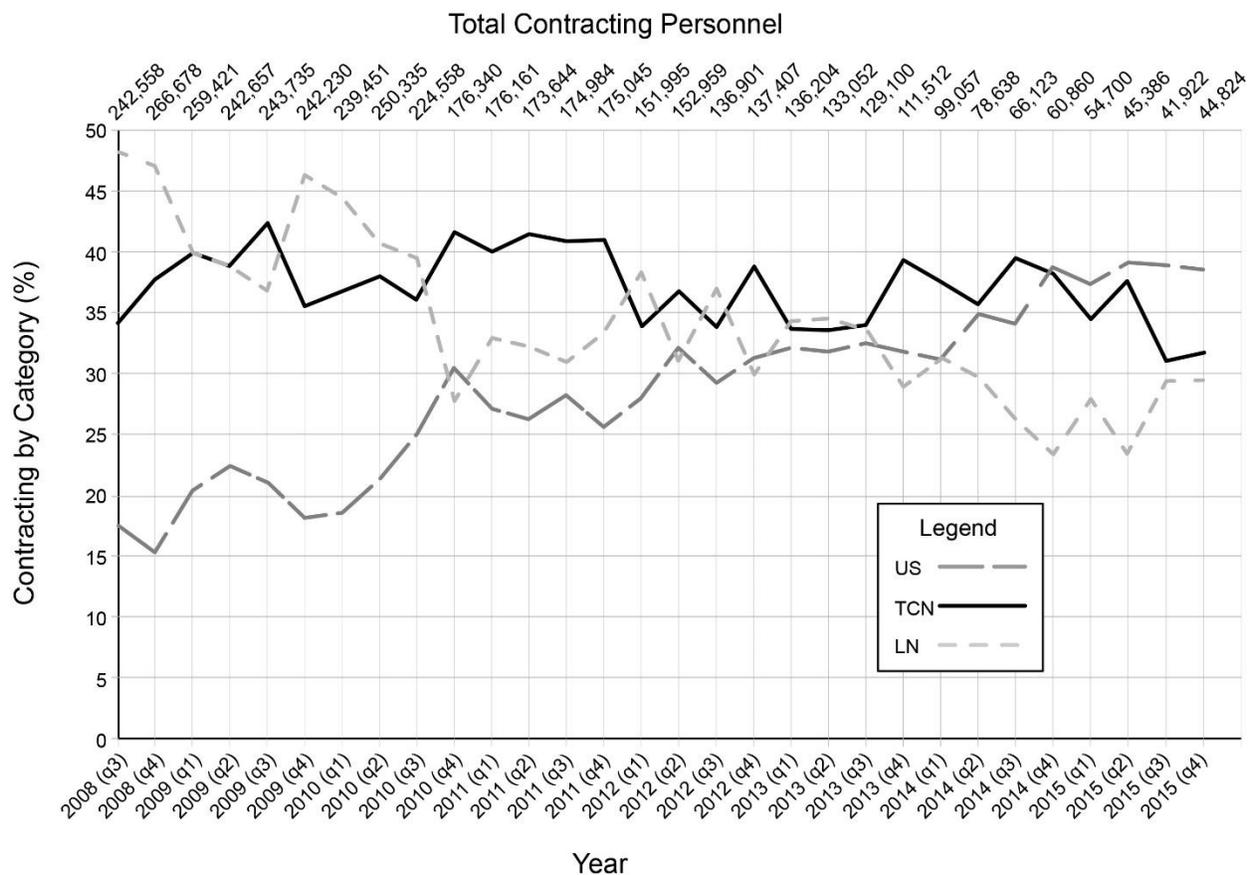
**Structure of article and methods:** In the next section I provide a brief overview of the scale, scope and emergence of military logistics contracting, supplementing this with an analysis of

contracting data from Iraq near the peak of operations in 2008. This latter data provides rare insight into the composition of the key logistics subcontracting firms utilized by the U.S. military. Following this I detail three entanglements that are the focus of this paper. I conclude with some observations about the provisional and shifting nature of contracting entanglements and the need for more comparative work that examines not just U.S. military logistics contracting practices, but also those of allied countries.

This article is part of a larger research project that traces the history of U.S. military logistics outsourcing and details the experiences of workers from the Philippines and Southeast Europe. It utilizes a range of primary source material, from employment contracts, to State Department cables, to military documents released following Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Where possible links to cited documents are provided, though in some cases the author holds the only copies. I also draw in places upon material from interviews with roughly eighty current and former workers from Bosnia, Macedonia, and the Philippines—interviews that in many cases included family members—as well as interviews with several recruiters and government officials in Bosnia and the Philippines conducted between 2013 and 2015. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of interviewees.

**The scale, scope and emergence of logistics contracting:** To understand the significance of logistics contracting by the U.S. military it is useful to describe the scale, scope and emergence of this phenomenon. I begin with a November 2008 quarterly contracting summary published by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). According to the report, which covered CENTCOM's entire Area of Responsibility (AOR) including Iraq, Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle

East, there were more than 266,000 contractors supporting military operations, just short of the total number of troops deployed in CENTCOM during the same period (Schwartz, 2010).<sup>3</sup> This included roughly 163,000 people working in Iraq and 68,000 in Afghanistan, with the remainder located at various bases and logistics support hubs, such as Camp Arifjan in Kuwait or elsewhere in the region.



**Figure 1.** CENTCOM contracting personnel, 2008-2105. *Source:* CENTCOM quarterly contracting censuses, available here: [http://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/CENTCOM\\_reports.html](http://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/CENTCOM_reports.html)

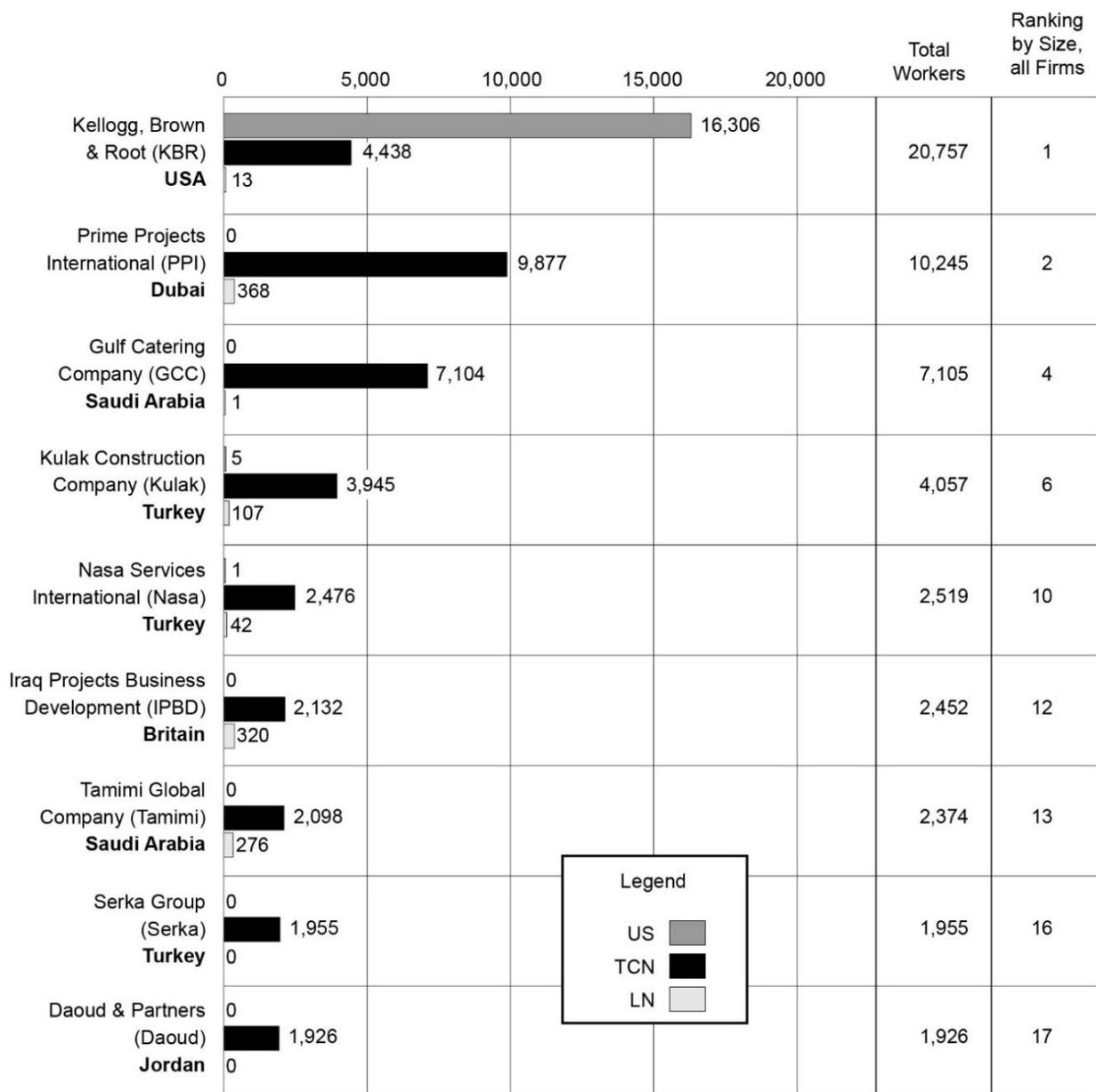
There are four details concerning this report I want to highlight here. First, the military's data represented only a partial accounting of the U.S.'s reliance on contractors to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as it did not include thousands of private security and support staff working for the State Department, or those employed by USAID, which has also grown more

dependent upon contractors to carry out its development projects in recent years (Roberts, 2014). Second, the end of 2008 was the high water mark for military contracting in the region due to the military ‘surge’ in Iraq that began the previous year.<sup>4</sup> But it was in no way anomalous. As the graph above (Figure 1) indicates, the number of contractors working in CENTCOM stayed above 200,000 from the beginning of 2008 until late 2010.<sup>5</sup> At the end of 2013 nearly 100,000 were still working there. And as of October 2015 there were still nearly 45,000 contractors employed in CENTCOM’s AOR. Third, just 8 percent of contractors were involved in providing security, while over 75 percent were performing tasks related to logistics (transportation, construction, base support). This corresponds with a 2010 military analysis of contracting data from Iraq that estimated that the ratio of contractors to military personnel in the field of logistics was nearly 5:1, leading to the conclusion that “on the whole, the military is most dependent on contracted support for logistics operations” (Runstrom, 2010, p. 29-30). The final significant point is the composition of the workforce. Only 15 percent of the contractor personnel were U.S. citizens. Another 47 percent were from Iraq or Afghanistan (in military parlance these are called “local nationals” or LNs). The remaining contractors—roughly 100,000 people—were what the military refers to as “third country nationals” (TCNs), a truly global army of laborers from countries as diverse as Bosnia, Macedonia, Turkey, the Philippines, India, Uganda, Kenya, Nepal, England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. This aspect of U.S. military logistics contracting is also not anomalous. As Figure 1 shows, TCNs have consistently represented a significant share CENTCOM’s contract workforce from 2008 to 2015. Indeed during these years the percentage of TCN workers ranged from 31 to 42 percent, constituting a plurality of the workforce for most of this period.

CENTCOM's quarterly censuses offer an aggregated picture of military contracting in the region over the past decade, but it is possible to dig deeper into the details by looking at raw contracting data from Iraq in the second quarter of 2008.<sup>6</sup> During this period the military estimated that 149,378 contractors were employed in the country, with 20 percent of the total made up of workers coming from the U.S., 38 percent TCNs, and 42 percent LNs. The relatively large percentage of Iraqi workers reflected both an increase in employment for training and reconstruction projects connected to the 'surge', and efforts by military commanders to direct more small logistical support contracts toward Iraqi businesses following the introduction of the "Iraqi First" program in 2006 (Cleveland, 2008). The majority of contracting was conducted through either the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) or the theater-based contracting framework, Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan (JCC-I/A), with the former accounting for 37 percent of workers and the latter 35 percent. Looking at the data it is clear that the bulk of JCC-I/A contracts fall under three areas: 1) private security, 2) reconstruction and training, and 3) logistics support services, with an emphasis on hiring Iraqi companies and laborers.

LOGCAP was not only the largest component of contracting in Iraq, the companies that received contracts under its umbrella were also many of the largest military contracting firms in the country. Leading the way was the prime contractor, KBR, which had nearly 21,000 employees—including thousands from Southeast Europe, which composed the bulk of its TCN workforce—more than twice as many as the next company. Following KBR was its largest subcontractor, Prime Projects International (PPI), with more than 10,000 workers. In fact, nine of the twenty largest PMCs in Iraq were firms that received all or a significant portion of their contracts

through the LOGCAP program (Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> In total these nine firms employed over 53,000 workers, with 67 percent of them being TCNs, mostly from South and Southeast Asian countries. The prevalence of workers from this part of the world was due, in large part, to the provenance of the subcontracting companies, nearly all of which are based in the Middle East. Following well-established recruiting practices and pathways, firms like PPI (Dubai), Gulf Catering Company (Saudi Arabia) and Serka (Turkey) tapped recruiting brokers and agencies in countries like India, the Philippines, Nepal, and Sri Lanka to amass the pool of laborers needed to fulfill their growing contractual obligations in Iraq. As I discuss below, they also ‘imported’ a host of exploitative labor practices that parallel conditions experienced by labor migrants elsewhere in the region (Gardner, 2010; Pattison, 2013; HRW, 2015), thereby entangling the U.S. military with these practices.



**Figure 2.** Largest LOGCAP firms by number of workers and ranking among all PMCs in Iraq, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2008.  
*Source:* 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR FY 2008 Contractor Census Data (Excel spreadsheet), CENTCOM FOIA reading room:  
<https://www2.centcom.mil/sites/foia/rr/default.aspx>

As I have already noted, there is nothing new about the use of private military contractors in war.

However the recent and rapid upshift in the scope and scale of the phenomenon is remarkable.

There are several reasons that logistics contracting has rapidly expanded in the past two decades.

First, following the end of the Cold War the U.S. military experienced significant personnel cuts.

In response it became more concerned with improving the “tooth to tail” ratio; that is, outsourcing noncombat support functions so that a greater percentage of remaining troops are engaged in combat activities (Palmer, 1999; Shorrock, 2008, p. 98). As former Secretary of Defense William Cohen put it in 1997, “we can sustain the shooters and reduce the supporters—we can keep the tooth, but cut the tail” (Cohen, 1997). This allows for a smaller, more focused deployment ‘footprint’ which also has operational and political advantages. For example, when force caps are imposed for a particular mission, as they were in Bosnia and Kosovo, civilian contractors do not count toward troop limits (Vernon, 2004, p. 375). Even in overseas operations that do not have mandated force caps—such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—the extensive use of contractors for logistical support lowers the number of active and reserve military personnel that need to be deployed. Additionally, contractor deaths are far less politically salient, even when they are U.S. citizens, than soldiers. They don’t come home in flag-covered coffins, and they are rarely mentioned when discussing casualties and the human costs of war (Schooner and Swan, 2012). They tend to be treated, in other words, as another category of uncounted civilian bodies in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Hyndman, 2007). Finally, various justifications for outsourcing military logistics—such as the potential for lower costs and greater flexibility—fit broader neoliberal logics that have been driving privatization in recent decades, even in activities traditionally viewed as core national security competencies, such as intelligence analysis (Voelz, 2009; Crampton, Roberts and Poorthuis, 2014).

Similar to various manifestations of “roll-back neoliberalism” (Peck and Tickell, 2002), one can trace the emergence of military logistics contracting on the scale that we see today to the 1980s. The key moment occurred in 1985, when the U.S. Army published new regulations establishing

LOGCAP to “preplan for the use of civilian contractors to perform selected services in wartime” (Army, 1985, p. 1). This followed a directive from Congress the previous year to develop contingency contracting capability for overseas operations (Smith, 2012, p. 32). LOGCAP contracting remained small scale for several years, primarily because it was originally designed to be a decentralized program in which various components of an Army command would be individually responsible for identifying needs and establishing contracts. However in 1992, under the direction of then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, the program was transformed into a single, five year, umbrella contract (LOGCAP I) that would provide support services to soldiers serving in battlefields around the world (Rasor and Bauman, 2007, p. 246-7). The first contract was awarded to Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton, in August. Four months later the company was tasked with providing logistical support for U.S. forces in Somalia.

Somalia was followed by number of small support operations, including the UN mission in Haiti in 1994. However it was the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia starting in December 1995 where LOGCAP, and logistics contracting more generally, was first utilized on a massive scale. By the end of 1996 Brown & Root had built nineteen new base camps for U.S. troops and was providing maintenance and logistics support to a total of thirty-two camps in Bosnia, Hungary and Croatia. In total it earned over \$450 million for LOGCAP support in that first year, more than twice as much as all previous operations combined (GAO, 1997, p. 4). In 1997 Brown & Root lost the bid for the new LOGCAP contract (LOGCAP II) to DynCorp, but was awarded a separate \$2.2 billion “Balkans sustainment contract,” which was subsequently extended to Kosovo when the UN mission was established there in 1999. In a short time roughly 5,000 Kosovars and Macedonians were working for Brown & Root making it the largest employer in the region

(Cahlick, 2002). Such a large workforce was needed because there was little that the company was not asked to do. As one Army officer observed at the time: “When soldiers first step off airplanes in Kosovo, they are met not by their commander, but by a Brown and Root civilian worker who tells them where they can pick up their gear and assigns them to their barracks” (McKenna, 2002, p. 17).

By the early 2000s, then, logistics contracting for overseas contingency operations was well established. Thus even before the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, there was little question that contractors would play a central role in supporting U.S. military operations after 9/11. The company that benefited most from the subsequent bonanza was Kellogg, Brown & Root, or KBR (KBR was formed in 1998 after Halliburton bought M.W. Kellogg and merged it with Brown & Root to create a new subsidiary), which won the bid for the LOGCAP III contract in December 2001. In total the company received more than \$40 billion during the life of this contract (DSB, 2014, p. 12). However, following numerous accusations of cost overruns and fraud against KBR and its various subcontractors (Chatterjee, 2009) the military decided to move away from a single primary contractor approach, and the current contract (LOGCAP IV, awarded in 2008) was split amongst three companies (KBR, DynCorp and Fluor) who compete for task orders.<sup>8</sup>

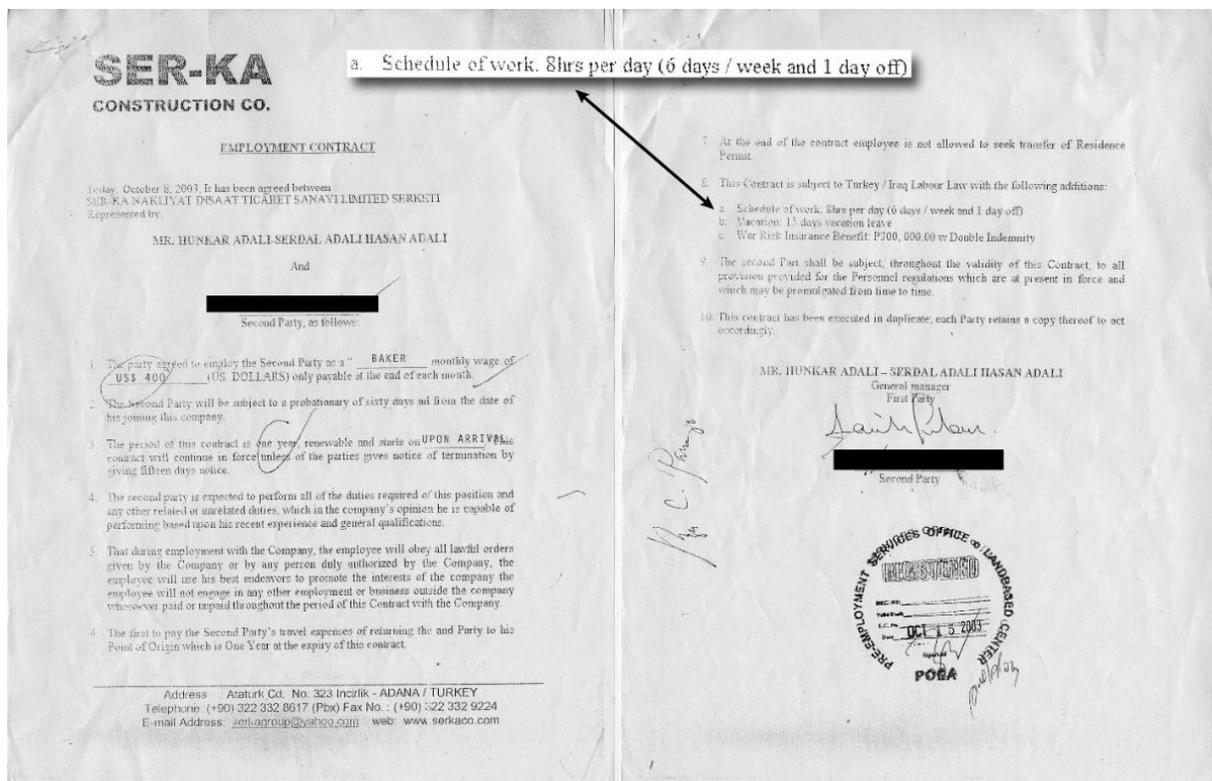
**Entanglement I: Subcontracting and labor exploitation:** In 2008 families of the Nepalese workers killed in Iraq filed a federal lawsuit in Texas alleging that the men were victims of a human trafficking scheme organized by Daoud & Partners and KBR. After initially allowing the case to go forward the judge reversed course in 2014, declaring that Congressional anti-trafficking legislation “was silent with regards to extraterritoriality” prior to 2008, therefore the

plaintiffs did not have standing as the alleged crimes did not take place on U.S. soil (Ellison, 2014, p. 6). In a similar fashion a 2006 DOD investigation into the incident declared that “the U.S. government had no jurisdiction over the persons, offenses, or circumstances that resulted in the Nepalese deaths” (Mount, 2008), a rather curious claim given that Daoud & Partners was one of the largest military subcontractors in Iraq and the men were kidnapped while in transit to work on U.S. bases in the country. However as I discuss at the end of this section, such comments are consistent with the desire of the military to disentangle itself as much as possible from responsibility for an oversight role when it comes to logistics subcontractors’ labor standards and practices.

In addition to trafficking, workers in Iraq and Afghanistan have frequently experienced a host of other labor abuses ranging from squalid and inadequate living conditions to wage theft. For example, while soldiers and KBR employees on bases in these countries have enjoyed lavish meals at dining facilities (DFACs), most of the workers serving them are forced to eat in separate DFACs in their own “man camps”—enclosed, company-run compounds housing workers on bases.<sup>9</sup> In 2010 a violent protest erupted in a PPI man camp in Baghdad when several hundred workers were turned away from their DFAC after food ran out (Stillman, 2011). Several former and current workers I interviewed in the Philippines in spring 2015 also highlighted the monotonous and inadequate food servings provided in their company DFACs, and claimed that this was one of the primary factors behind labor protests and strikes by workers. Another contrast between soldiers, KBR’s largely American and Southeast European workforce, and the predominantly South and Southeast Asian workers employed by subcontractors involves

accommodation, with the latter often sleeping in overcrowded shipping containers or tents in man camps with inadequate bathrooms and shower facilities (ACLU, 2012, p. 29).

Perhaps the most common form of labor exploitation perpetuated by subcontractors is wage theft. This takes two primary forms. The first involves paying wages that are substantially less than initially promised to workers. In the case of several Fijian women recruited to work in Iraq in 2007, highlighted by the journalist Sarah Stillman, they were promised salaries ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,800 a month. However the Turkish subcontractor that they worked for, Kulak, paid them only \$750, and after being passed on to another subcontractor their pay was cut again in half (Stillman, 2011). Another variation of this is renegeing on promised salary bumps after a promotion or after a designated length of time working for a company. A second form of wage theft involves refusing to pay for overtime or hours worked beyond the terms of a contract. For example, contracts that Filipino DFAC workers signed with a Turkish company, Serka, in 2003 indicated that their schedule of work would be eight hours a day, six days a week, with their monthly salary based upon this forty-eight hour workweek (Figure 3).<sup>10</sup> Yet every one of the ten former Serka workers that I interviewed stated that they worked twelve hour shifts, seven days a week, with no additional pay for the extra thirty-six hours worked each week. This was not unusual, indeed twelve hour workdays with no days off is standard for TCNs working for subcontracting companies (ACLU 2012, 30).



**Figure 3:** 2003 Serka contract for Filipino workers in Iraq. *Source:* former Serka employee (name withheld).

In 2004 and 2005 a number of news articles began to appear highlighting the problems of trafficking and other labor abuses by subcontractors (E.g. Cha, 2004; Phinney, 2005; Simpson, 2005a; 2005b). These accounts and subsequent Congressional investigations precipitated changes in the oversight of logistics contracting practices and the global recruitment of workers. First the DOD and State Department started keeping better records on subcontracting firms and workers, with a contractor census beginning in 2007 in Iraq. The military also issued guidelines forbidding companies from charging excessive recruitment fees and confiscating employees' passports, while also mandating minimum accommodation standards (50 square feet per person) and health and safety inspections of man camps (JCC-I/A, 2007).

Despite these and other reforms the problem of trafficking by subcontractors has continued to plague the military over the past decade (GAO, 2014). Indeed, a 2011 report on wartime contracting commissioned by Congress stated that: “At many times during its travels and hearings, the Commission uncovered tragic evidence of the recurrent problem of trafficking in persons by labor brokers or subcontractors of contingency contractors. Existing prohibitions on such trafficking have failed to suppress it” (CWC, 2011b, p. 159). In one notorious case from 2008 approximately 1,000 workers from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh paid up to \$3,000 to local recruiters in exchange for the promise of work with a Kuwaiti subcontractor, Najlala International Catering Services. Najlala flew them to Baghdad, confiscated their passports, and put them up in a windowless warehouse—without pay—for three months before protests and a series of scathing media reports forced KBR and the U.S. military to intervene by finding work for several hundred people and repatriating the rest (Bercault, 2008; Isenberg and Schwellenbach, 2011). However, for those who were repatriated the ordeal was far from over, as they still owed thousands of dollars to creditors with little chance of earning enough to repay these loans.

What stands out in the Najlala and Nepalese cases—as well as many other incidents—is the inability or unwillingness of the military to provide effective oversight of subcontractors and their treatment of workers, despite the fact that these workers’ employment is entirely a consequence of military contracting. While acknowledging legal complexities raised by overseas contingency contracting, it is striking how often narrow, legalistic arguments are used to justify or explain lack of oversight responsibility when it comes to labor exploitation by subcontractors. For example, echoing the determination of the 2006 DOD investigation into the deaths of the

Nepalese men, following its investigation into the Najlaa affair the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad concluded that while the workers were “in U.S. battle space” neither it nor the military had jurisdiction because “the men are not being held on USG [U.S. government] property, nor do they have USG contracts” (Embassy Baghdad, 2009).

In addition to narrow interpretations of extraterritoriality and jurisdiction, abrogation of subcontractor oversight is also justified through reference to “privity of contract,” a legal doctrine that limits the rights or obligations of third parties to contracts. The Army’s manual on operational contracting states that when the U.S. military enters a contract with a prime contractor such as KBR, and the prime contractor in turn makes separate contracts with subcontractors, privity of contract “can limit the ability of Army commanders to directly enforce contractor management policies on subcontractors and their employees” (Army, 2011, Section 1-2). Read cynically, invocations of privity of contract are very useful for evading responsibility for oversight. And in fact, this is exactly the argument that military logistics prime contractors have used to justify their lack of responsibility for monitoring human trafficking by their subcontractors (Schulberg, 2014).

Moreover, the military has a number of legal and policy avenues at its disposal if it wished to be more aggressive in curtailing labor abuses by subcontractors. For example, one solution to the problem of jurisdiction, as recommended by the Commission on Wartime Contracting, would be to “require that foreign prime contractors and subcontractors consent to U.S. jurisdiction as a condition of award of a contract or subcontract” (CWC, 2011a, p. 53). Another approach would be to use the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which gives the military jurisdiction over civilian

personnel working with troops in overseas operations, to prosecute PMCs for human trafficking or other labor abuses (Warren, 2012). That the U.S. military has not pursued these avenues suggests that it is driven by the desire to disentangle itself as much as possible from oversight responsibility. As with the offshore oil industry (c.f. Appel, 2012, p. ), disentanglement and modularity—of infrastructure, labor and contracting regimes—works to facilitate the mobility, standardization, and replicability of military logistics wherever operations are conducted. But this approach also facilitates a morally detached form of “pyramid subcontracting” in which risk and responsibility is down-sourced (Wise, 2013).<sup>11</sup>

### **Entanglement II: The geopolitics of contractor deaths, travel bans and troop withdrawals:**

Logistics contracting does not just produce entanglements between the U.S. military and a panoply of prime and subcontracting companies concerning labor exploitation and trafficking, it also generates novel geopolitical dynamics between labor export states, the U.S. and countries in the Middle East that benefit substantially from subcontracting. According to the Department of Labor over 3,200 civilians working for the U.S. military or various PMCs supporting its operations have died in Iraq and Afghanistan between September 2001 and March 2015.<sup>12</sup> This compares with roughly 6,600 U.S. military casualties in these two wars. While contractor deaths and injuries—especially foreign ones—barely register in the U.S. the same is not true of the countries that they are from. Following the deaths of its twelve citizens, for instance, the government of Nepal declared a national day of mourning. In the Philippines incidents involving workers, such as the deaths of ten men whose helicopter crashed in Afghanistan in 2009 (Jaymalin, 2009), are regularly given prominent coverage by national TV networks and

newspapers. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that the plight of workers in Iraq and Afghanistan has also had an impact on domestic and international politics around the world.

In 2004 insurgents in Iraq began targeting truck convoys carrying food, fuel and materials from Kuwait and Turkey to U.S. bases in Iraq. As deadly attacks and hostage taking of drivers mounted India and the Philippines declared travel bans to Iraq for their citizens. They were joined by Nepal immediately following the execution of its twelve trafficked workers. In each case the countries' decision to impose a ban on their citizens travelling to Iraq for work was driven by domestic political considerations. Nepalese diplomats, for instance, stated that the government felt "very vulnerable" following the anti-Muslim riots in the country, owing to fears about both further domestic unrest and potential reprisals against the hundreds of thousands of Nepalese working in Muslim countries (Embassy Kuwait, 2004c). For the Philippines the tipping point was the kidnapping of a truck driver, Angelo de la Cruz. His hostage takers threatened to kill him if the Philippines did not remove its small contingent of troops from the country. Initially defiant, president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who had just won a controversial election dogged by allegations of vote rigging, eventually acquiesced to this demand following massive protests across the country (Rivera, 2005, p. 128-9). Shortly afterwards the government also imposed a travel ban.

The travel bans immediately set off alarm bells within the U.S. military due to its dependence on workers from these labor exporting states. It also prompted a flurry of urgent behind the scenes diplomacy by the State Department in an attempt to reverse them. To give a sense of just how dependent upon TCN labor for logistical support the military was at the time, one State

Department analysis written shortly after the Indian and Filipino bans were announced stated: “Coalition forces are heavily dependent on Filipino and Indian drivers and other logistical support personnel for...mission critical programs in Iraq. Contractors and U.S. military report that a fully enforced ban would cripple these operations. There are no readily implemented short-term workarounds to ameliorate the effect of a travel ban” (Embassy Kuwait, 2004a). Three days later the Embassy in Kuwait reported that over 1,000 trucks were stuck at the Kuwait-Iraq border—through which roughly 75 percent of goods entered Iraq—and it was estimated that less than a week’s supply of food and water for troops remained in the country (Embassy Kuwait, 2004b).

Initially the U.S. tried to convince India, the Philippines and Nepal to reverse their travel bans, or at least exempt from them their citizens that worked for military contractors. It also promised to improve security measures for convoys, including an increase in military escort vehicles. When this approach gained little traction—and facing an “ever-dwindling” supply of workers as other countries imposed and pondered travel bans in the fall (Embassy Kuwait, 2004c)—it changed course and pressed Kuwait to not enforce the bans at its border crossings, which would “allow distressed contractors to move towards more normal work schedules and alleviate the mounting logistical problems created by the travel bans” (Embassy Kuwait, 2004d). At first Kuwait was resistant to this plan, especially without diplomatic cover from countries that had imposed the travel bans, but it eventually agreed following continued pressure from the U.S. and Kuwaiti trucking firms that held the majority of the military contracts.

For the Philippines the decision to also withdraw its small contingent of troops from Iraq was even more geopolitically fraught than the imposition of a travel ban. Presenting itself as a close ally of the U.S. following 9/11, it had sent troops to Iraq as a member of the “coalition of the willing,” a decision motivated in part by the lure of potential contracts and jobs that it envisioned would accompany the post-war reconstruction of Iraq (Tyner, 2006). The decision to pull out this contingent to secure the release of de la Cruz met with angry condemnation from other members of the coalition. Australia’s foreign minister called the decision “marshmellowlike” and an “extreme disappointment,” while U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that “weakness is provocative” (Tyner, 2005, p. 109). The U.S. also withdrew its ambassador to the Philippines for consultations and—according to interviews with Filipino diplomats and workers in Iraq at the time—imposed retaliatory measures including restrictions on diplomatic personnel visiting the Green Zone and reductions in the privileges of Filipino workers on certain U.S. military bases, such as restrictions on mobility and the use of recreational facilities. In response to criticisms Senate majority leader Francis Pangilinan wrote an open letter that highlighted the distinctive geopolitical situation the Philippines faced due to its position as a major exporter of labor to the Middle East. He noted that over a million Filipino citizens were working in the region, any of which, he claimed, might become “targets of retaliation” if the Philippines did not withdraw from the coalition. He also observed that if other coalition partners had such a large civilian presence in the region their views about continued participation in the coalition would be “starkly different” (Pangilinan, 2004).

As Pangilinan’s comments illustrate, the position of labor export states was shaped by domestic political protests in the aftermath of kidnappings and attacks on their workers in Iraq and the fear

that being seen as too closely linked to the U.S. occupation could potentially put hundreds of thousands of their citizens working elsewhere the Middle East at risk. It is not surprising, then, that these states decided to distance themselves by imposing travel bans. These decisions, and the U.S.'s desperate attempt to circumvent the bans by inducing Kuwait not to enforce them at its border with Iraq, also illustrates the dependency the military has upon TCN labor and the support—or at least indifference—of labor export states in acquiring it.

From the perspective of laborers from South and Southeast Asia the most significant consequence of the U.S.'s decision to encourage the evasion of travel bans to Iraq, and later Afghanistan, was that it drove recruitment underground, thus increasing the risk of trafficking and other labor abuses. In the Philippines, for instance, recruitment and hiring for overseas employment is regulated by the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). While POEA's ability to effectively regulate recruitment by military subcontractors has its limits—as evidenced by the discrepancy between official contracts and actual working conditions and pay experienced by Serka employees in 2003—it did provide some measure of oversight prior to the bans. After their imposition “backdoor” recruiting flourished. This has typically involved, according to interviews I conducted with Filipino workers who have found work this way, either illegal in-country recruitment by labor brokers, or workers arranging their own travel to Dubai (and in some cases even Iraq or Afghanistan) and then attempting to apply directly to companies, often with help from friends or relatives already working on bases. However this backdoor recruiting process is inherently riskier, due to both greater opacity in regards to information, and even less legal recourse available to workers if they are swindled or mistreated by recruiting agents or subcontracting companies.

**Entanglement III: Prosperity, precarity and the wages of peace and war in Bosnia:** In

December 1995 U.S. soldiers began setting up camp at a former Yugoslav air base outside the city of Tuzla. The soldiers were part of the multinational peacekeeping force for post-war Bosnia, and Tuzla was the largest city in the American sector in the northeast of the country. In a short period of time the airport would be transformed into Eagle Base, the main base of operations for American forces in Bosnia. During the 1990s thousands of Bosnians worked at Eagle Base or one of dozens of other smaller camps in the region, employed by Brown & Root as cooks, cleaners, drivers, administrative staff and construction laborers.<sup>13</sup> Thousands more found work as military interpreters (Baker, 2012; Kelly and Baker, 2013) or were hired as project officers, interpreters or support staff by one of the myriad international organizations operating in Bosnia such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the UN (Baker, 2014).

It is useful to view this type of post-war labor through the lens of what Kathleen Jennings calls the “peacekeeping economy,” which she defines as “the economic multiplier effect of peacekeeping operations via direct or indirect resource flows into the local economy” (2010, p. 231). According to Jennings key elements of the peacekeeping economy include formal employment with organizations like the UN, NGOs and peacekeeping forces as well as informal employment with international staff; industries that cater to international staff like restaurants and bars, hotels and apartments, and the sex industry; and investments in postwar reconstruction of infrastructure and housing (Jennings, 2010; Jennings and Boas, 2015). The peacekeeping economy often constitutes a significant portion of economic activity in the immediate years

following a war, especially in small countries like Bosnia that host a significant international presence. At the same time its effects are also highly uneven spatially, as they tend to be concentrated in the national capital and cities where international organizations and peacekeeping troops are located, as was the case with U.S. soldiers in the Tuzla region.

Significantly for those in the region just as peacebuilding intervention in Bosnia was beginning to wind down in the early 2000s U.S. military activities in the Middle East were ramping up. So the shift from work in Bosnia's peacekeeping economy to a distant war economy fueled by U.S. military logistics outsourcing was, for many individuals, made without a significant break in employment. For others it has offered an opportunity to escape Bosnia's depressed post-war economy by finding work abroad, especially with a second wave of recruitment following the decision to give DynCorp and Fluor responsibility for logistical support in Afghanistan as prime contractors under the LOGCAP IV contract awarded in 2008. To give a sense of the social and economic significance of this war economy consider the following vignette from Larisa Jasarevic (2014, p. 262), an anthropologist who studies debt, divination and informal markets in postwar Bosnia, about a recent visit to a well-known fortune teller in Tuzla:

I have been casually visiting Zlata since 2006. In 2011, I found the cups much larger and the scope of her vision extended to keep up with the migration of economic opportunities, from regional, largely informal market trade to more transnational pursuits of fortune with American defense contractors (KBR and Fluor International) in Afghanistan and Iraq. Among those who seek her out...many work for or are applying to Fluor International or else dating, desiring, marrying, and otherwise caring for men employed or seeking employment in Afghanistan and Iraq. A young woman, anxious about her

protracted engagement, walked out of Zlata's room with assurances about the date for her wedding and, just as exciting, news of her future husband's job offer in Afghanistan.

The reason for this excitement is not difficult to understand. By some estimates companies working for the U.S. military have been the largest employers in the Tuzla region over the past two decades, with up to 5,000 people working for military logistics firms in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait at the peak of operations (Pargan, 2010). More significantly, in a country where official unemployment hovers around 40 percent and GDP per capita less than \$5,000, these jobs have offered a chance for economic prosperity that is available to few. Pay has typically ranged from two to three times the average salary in Bosnia for peacekeeping economy jobs in the 1990s (Baker, 2014, p. 4), to five to ten times the average if one lands a position with KBR, Fluor or DynCorp in the Middle East. As one Bosnian magazine rather breathlessly claimed about the "mass departures to Afghanistan" of residents of Lukavac (a small town near Tuzla that was the location of the U.S. military's main logistics hub in the country) in 2009, this represented their "answer to the recession" in Bosnia (Pargan, 2009).

On the other hand there are several aspects of the peacekeeping and war economies that fuel precarity, both in relation to the work itself and the marginalization of one's social and economic position in Bosnia. The first, obviously, involves the risk of severe injury or death while working in an active warzone. Even when not in a warzone this can be dangerous work. In 2014, for example, Fluor recruiters arrived in Tuzla looking for workers to go to Liberia and Senegal as part of its LOGCAP contract to support the U.S. military's humanitarian mission against Ebola. Despite the potentially risks this work presented they found a large number of willing applicants

(Moore, 2014). Another factor is the highly contingent nature of employment—both in regards to the ubiquity of short term, typically year-long, contracts and the fact that workers can be immediately terminated for violating any one of myriad rules regulating life on military bases. This leads to a situation that Catherine Baker (2012), who has researched the position of military interpreters in post-war Bosnia, calls “prosperity without security.” Third, the salaries paid by both peacebuilding organizations in Bosnia and military contracting firms abroad do not include contributions to state employment or pension funds. This means that workers are not able to build up credits for retirement benefits. Nor are they eligible for unemployment benefits when their job ends.

As important as these factors, though, are other more existential dimensions of precarity (Ettlinger, 2007, p. 324) linked to the peacekeeping and war economies, especially the ways in which this type of work socially and economically marginalizes individuals in Bosnia, which presents a number of challenges when their contracts end. One way this occurs is through a social distance developed through enculturation of the mindsets and business practices of foreign colleagues, organizations and companies. As Enis, who has worked for several international organizations in Bosnia over the past two decades, told me in 2014:

After 15 years with the IC [international community] we don't belong here [Bosnia] any more. We are an in-between people.

Another aspect of marginalization that workers report is that their experience and skills acquired while working abroad are not valued by Bosnian employers—who also fear that they won't work for low wage salaries—making it even harder to return to the local economy. One former KBR

employee, Senad, who now runs his own business in Tuzla agreed, and bluntly explained why he tends not to hire others who worked for PMCs in the Middle East:

You have somebody that spent 10-plus years abroad, he lost the feeling of things in Bosnia. Completely useless. He got used to being paid quite a lot. He cannot get paid a lot here. So the motivation for the job is questionable.

The challenge of reintegrating with society has multiple facets, as illustrated by the following quote from Srdjan, a former KBR employee in Iraq:

The main struggle is to get resocialized back into civilian life. Especially in Bosnia—unemployment, the political situation, missed growing of children, failed marriages. Facing the reality of this life here. And some guys just can't find themselves here. And again they apply for another mission.

The phrase “facing the reality of life here” is significant for a couple of reasons. The first is that I heard variations of it from several people when describing their current struggles after returning from Iraq or Afghanistan—struggles that echo those experienced by returning soldiers in the U.S. More important, though, is how the phrase succinctly references the general experience of precarity in post-war Bosnia that is linked to a range of political, social and institutional contexts.<sup>14</sup> That is, precarity not just in reference to a post-socialist economy marked by high unemployment and the loss of economic security, but also endemic political uncertainty, and the ongoing struggle to return to a “normal life” in the aftermath of violent ethnic cleansing and displacement (Jansen, 2006). In sum, the intersection of well-paying but precarious work and the more general condition of precarity in post-war Bosnia produces a paradoxical duality of prosperity and precarity for Bosnians entangled with peacekeeping and war military logistics

contracting. It also illustrates the need for more attention to the manifold relationship between precarious work and precarious life (Ettlinger, 2007; Millar, 2013, p. 35; e.g. Allison, 2013)—especially in the aftermath of violent conflict.

**Conclusion:** Military logistics contracting is not simply a product of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is here to stay (Erbel and Kinsey, 2016). As the U.S. is now dependent on contractors to conduct missions abroad, PMCs and their employees will continue to be called upon to accompany and support the military wherever it is deployed, whether this involves counter-terrorism activities in the Horn of Africa or counter-narcotics operations in Latin America. Indeed, when I was finishing research in the Philippines in April 2015 interviewees were abuzz with news that Serka was recruiting up to 400 people to support an expanding military presence at Al Udeid airbase in Qatar, which serves as the main command center for military operations in CENTCOM (Shanker, 2013). This has two implications concerning future research on logistics contracting that I wish to briefly outline by way of a conclusion.

First, there is a need to look beyond the U.S. military and examine logistics contracting practices among NATO members and other allies that have also had—and continue to have—a significant presence in Afghanistan, the Middle East and, increasingly, Africa. Outside of Christopher Kinsey's work examining the U.S. and U.K. (2009, 2014) there has been little research that compares U.S. and allied logistics contracting. A handful of workers from Bosnia and the Philippines that I have interviewed worked on allied bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as British-run Camp Bastion in Helmand province, for a period of time. Their accounts suggest that this analysis of logistics contracting and entanglements is likely to be generalizable beyond the

U.S., especially given the overlap in PMCs that win support contracts. However this data is too sparse to make definitive conclusions.

Second, the entanglements that I have detailed above are shaped by specific historical factors, from the peacekeeping missions in the Balkans in the 1990s to the development of a labor export-import regime linking Southeast and South Asian countries and petro-states in the Middle East. But as military operations occur in different sites and across different logistics spaces we are likely to see the emergence of new entanglements. To give an example of shifting contracting entanglements, consider the recruitment of Bosnians and Macedonians to work for LOGCAP contractor Fluor in Liberia and Senegal in fall 2014 and a potential health entanglement that has not (thankfully) transpired. These jobs in West Africa have involved building the necessary infrastructure for *Operation United Assistance*, including Ebola treatment centers and living facilities for troops, facility maintenance and transportation. In other words, none of the work entails interacting directly with people who are known to be infected with Ebola. Therefore the risk of contracting the virus is low. Yet if an employee were to become infected, especially before vacation leave, which Fluor offers every four months, it could have profound consequences for its spread in Europe.

There are several reasons for this. First, unlike soldiers and health care workers, who have been subject to quarantines or health monitoring regimes and the tracking of movements upon return from West Africa (Willyard, 2014; Castner, 2015), Fluor's Southeast European employees, according to one worker who recently finished his contract, are simply told to self-monitor their health for the first twenty-one days of leave. Second, when it comes to individuals working for

Fluor, information about their status—especially in transit to and from military bases—tends to be in short supply. The Bosnian government, for example, does not track those who work abroad for either primary contractors like Fluor, or their numerous subcontractors. And while the U.S. military closely monitors workers' activities on its bases, this ends once they leave the theater of operations. Additionally, flight paths home from West Africa to Southeast Europe course through multiple cities. Finally, with a creaky infrastructure, chronic lack of funding, and a patchwork regulatory framework, few would describe Bosnia's public health system as up to the task of handling a potential Ebola outbreak. To be clear, I am not advocating for quarantines, which have been criticized as counterproductive (Willyard, 2014), for Fluor's workers in West Africa. Nor, in pointing out the potential risk that workers could serve as a vector for the spread of Ebola, am I endorsing an even further militarized response to this health crisis, which has also been castigated (Gregory, 2014; de Waal, 2014).

The point is that while military logistics outsourcing is fundamentally reshaping the spatiality of war (and peace), past entanglements do not necessarily provide a clear guide to future impacts. Entanglements, in other words, are driven more by specific circumstances and conditions of military operations than structural factors. Put another way—and here I am drawing inspiration from Deborah Cowen's (2014) insightful analysis of global logistics in the present day—it may be analytically useful to understand the U.S. military as conducting overseas operations across logistics space in addition to specific places.<sup>15</sup> The use of Gulf-based subcontractors for logistics support, for instance, is much less prevalent in regions outside of the Middle East, such as Africa, where workers are more likely to be directly employed by prime contractors. This produces very different contracting practices, work conditions and relations between workers,

PMCs, and soldiers. Thus while there are points of endurance and path dependency when it comes to companies and labor pools—such as Bosnian workers who have followed the U.S. military around the world over the past twenty years—specific components, contexts and arrangements of logistics contracting are continually shifting. Consequently this analysis of logistics contracting and its reshaping of the spatiality of war is also necessarily provisional. As the everywhere war continues to evolve and spread across the globe in places such as Africa (Turse, 2015), so too will the impacts on military logistics PMCs, their workers, and the communities and countries they come from—the everywhere of war—unfold in new and unexpected ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Barker’s argument that this echoes earlier colonizer-colonized relations is fascinating, but interviews I have conducted with former and current workers indicate that relations between workers and soldiers are rather more complex than most existing accounts suggest as they vary considerably and are shaped by a number of factors including nationality, language, gender (a significant portion of workers are women), the types of work one does, the company one works for, the types of bases or camps one works at, and which of the armed services (Marines, Army,

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Navy or Air Force) are in charge of running a base. Though not the focus of this article, these are important dynamics that I explore in more depth in an ongoing book project on military logistics contracting.

<sup>2</sup> The ratio of contractors to soldiers in the first Gulf War is skewed by the fact that a significant portion of logistics support was informally funded and provided by Saudi Arabia and various Saudi companies (Army, 2010, p. 12).

<sup>3</sup> A copy of the November 2008 report, as well as all of the other quarterly censuses, can be downloaded here: [http://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/CENTCOM\\_reports.html](http://www.acq.osd.mil/log/PS/CENTCOM_reports.html). For a map of CENTCOM's AOR see: [http://www.centcom.mil/images/stories/unified-command\\_world-map.jpg](http://www.centcom.mil/images/stories/unified-command_world-map.jpg).

<sup>4</sup> Raw contracting census data from Iraq (see footnote 6 below), for example, indicates that the number of contractors in that country increased from nearly 137,000 in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2007 to more than 149,000 in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2008, and reached its peak at the end of 2008.

<sup>5</sup> This graph is based upon data from all published quarterly censuses from 2008 to the end of 2015.

<sup>6</sup> A copy of this data, which was obtained following a Freedom of Information Act request by journalists, is accessible at CENTCOM's FOIA reading room:

<https://www2.centcom.mil/sites/foia/rr/default.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately it is not possible to compare this data on contracting personnel with the size of contracts. While there are government websites and databases (e.g., fbo.gov and usaspending.gov) providing information on military contracting and expenditures they are incomplete (Crampton, Roberts and Poorthuis, 2014, p. 209). Moreover, in the case of subcontracting, the legal principle of "privity of contract" (see comments on this in the next

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section) means that agreements between prime contractors like KBR and their subcontractors are subject to drastically lower degrees of transparency and oversight (Tyler, 2012). Therefore this FOIA-released data provides, as far as I am aware, the most detailed information on subcontracting in contingency operations that exists to date.

<sup>8</sup> Following the LOGCAP IV award Fluor and DynCorp took over KBR's operations in Afghanistan, but for continuity purposes the military decided that KBR should continue to provide logistical services in Iraq under the LOGCAP III contract until the withdrawal of troops in 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Though called man camps it is important to note that a significant number of women also work on bases, both for primary contractors like KBR, Fluor and DynCorp and various subcontractors, especially those like PPI and Serka that recruit heavily from the Philippines. In cases where the contractor, base, and size of the female workforce is large enough separate camps or living quarters are often constructed for men and women.

<sup>10</sup> The name of the employee has been redacted to protect his identity. Copy of contract on file with the author.

<sup>11</sup> The transference of risk onto workers—especially from Asia, Africa and Latin America—can also be seen in the realm of private security contracting, not just logistics. For more on exploitative labor conditions for security contractors from the “Global South” see (Gallaher, 2012; Chisholm, 2014; Eichler, 2014; Doring, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.dol.gov/owcp/dlhwc/dbaallnation.htm>. The Department of Labor is required by the Defense Base Act to track overseas contractor injuries and deaths for the purposes of providing compensation. It should be noted that the number of contractor casualties is likely

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higher than this as it is incumbent upon companies to report these figures and there is evidence of under-reporting by firms.

<sup>13</sup> A similar phenomenon has occurred in towns in Kosovo and Macedonia near the massive Camp Bondsteel base established by the U.S. military as part of the KFOR peacekeeping mission in Kosovo see (Brown, 2010). Moreover, interviews with Bosnians and several Macedonians who worked for KBR in Kosovo and subsequently ended up in Afghanistan and Iraq suggest that the dynamics that I detail in this section apply equally to workers from Macedonia and Kosovo.

<sup>14</sup> On the importance of investigating the various political and institutional contexts involved in the production of precarity see (Waite, 2009, p. 421).

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed empirical analysis of the support of operations across different logistics spaces, see (Belanger and Arroyo, 2012).