

# Twenty-First-Century Fascism

## Private Military Companies in Service to the Transnational Capitalist Class

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Globalization of trade and central banking has propelled private corporations to positions of power and control never before seen in human history. Under advanced capitalism, the structural demands for a return on investment require an unending expansion of centralized capital in the hands of fewer and fewer people. The financial center of global capitalism is so highly concentrated that less than a few thousand people dominate and control \$100 trillion of wealth.<sup>1</sup> At the same time half of the world's population lives on less than three dollars a day and some 40,000 people die daily from malnutrition and easily curable diseases. This gross inequality is what William Robinson calls the crisis of humanity.<sup>2</sup> This crisis of capitalism threatens humanity in an unprecedented manner not only by increasing mass poverty, but also in terms of environmental and spiritual poverty. The world faces a new dark age of neo-feudal totalitarianism unlike any previously known.<sup>3</sup>

The few thousand people controlling global capital amount to less than 0.0001 percent of the world's population. They are the transnational capitalist class (TCC), who, as the capitalist elite of the world, dominate nation-states through international treaty agreements and transnational state organizations such as the World Bank, the Bank for International Settlements, and the International Monetary Fund.<sup>4</sup> The TCC communicates their policy requirements through global

networks such as the G-7 and G-20, and various nongovernmental policy organizations such as the World Economic Forum, the Trilateral Commission, and the Bilderberger Group. The TCC represents the interests of hundreds of thousands of millionaires and billionaires who comprise the richest people in the top 1 percent of the world's wealth hierarchy. Ironically, the extreme accumulation of concentrated capital at the top creates a continuing problem for the TCC, who must continually scour the world for new investment opportunities that will yield adequate returns.

War is one use for over-accumulated capital. A permanent war on terror offers a unique opportunity for the TCC to loan capital at a profit to governments for military actions, and to participate in rebuilding efforts made necessary by war. The collection of taxes on working people's incomes to pay for permanent war results in increasing pressure toward neoliberal governmental austerity measures, which further impoverish the 99 percent and transfer yet more wealth to the global 1 percent.

The TCC are keenly aware of both their elite status and their increasing vulnerabilities to democracy movements and to unrest from the teeming masses. The military empire dominated by the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) serves to protect TCC investments around the world.<sup>5</sup> Wars, regime changes, and occupations performed in service of empire support investors' access to natural resources and their speculative advantages in the market place.

When the empire is slow to perform or faced with political resistance, private security firms and private military companies increasingly fulfill the TCC's demands for the protections of their assets. These protection services include personal security for TCC executives and their families, protection of safe residential and work zones, tactical military advisory and training of national police and armed forces, intelligence gathering on democracy movements and opposition groups, weapons acquisitions and weapon systems management, and strike forces for military actions and assassinations.<sup>6</sup>

Private military companies (PMC)—known less formally as mercenaries—have been part of armies as far back as the Roman Empire. To protect their interests throughout the Mediterranean, the wealthy

city-states of Florence, Genoa, and Venice, which lacked large populations for raising armies, hired mercenaries under a contract (*condotta*) system. The Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company hired private soldiers to protect their investments around the world.<sup>7</sup> However, a newer form of PMC has been emerging in the past few decades, one that involves the penetration of private capital into the security business of protecting the TCC's interests and global capitalism. The expanding crisis of desperate masses, alienated work forces, and environmental exhaustion means an unlimited opportunity for PMCs to engage in the enforcement of TCC dictates.<sup>8</sup>

The Iraq War opened the opportunity for a rapid increase of PMCs. The US spent billions annually on security, with some 150 PMCs in the Iraq and Afghanistan war zones.<sup>9</sup> By 2008, there were more PMC mercenaries than actual US government troops in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> In 2010–11, the Department of Defense (DOD) had 90,339 contractor personnel in Afghanistan and 64,250 in Iraq. From 2005 to 2010, the DOD spent \$146 billion on PMCs in the Afghan/Iraq war theater. The majority of the private contracting was for base support and logistics; however, 18 percent of the private contractors in Iraq—roughly



10,000 people—were listed as working in security. A third of these security contracts involved US citizens, 15 percent were locals, and the balance consisted of third-country nationals.<sup>11</sup> Many of the PMCs in Middle East wars were opportunistic organizations that withdrew as the war scaled down, but the largest PMCs not only maintain presences there today but also have expanded their services to other countries and private corporations worldwide.

Actual expenditures by the US government for PMCs remain high as the US scales down its troop presence in the region.<sup>12</sup> Some of the largest and most famous firms have merged and/or reconfigured in order to hide negative reputations. They are increasingly integrated in ways that expand their abilities to offer security and safety to the TCC while generating profits. “The newest wave of private military agents are commercial enterprises first and foremost. They are hierarchically organized and registered businesses that trade and compete openly (for the most part) and are vertically integrated into the wider global marketplace.”<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter we evaluate six of the current largest PMCs in terms of their history, growth, and stability. We examine (1) Aegis; (2) Academi (better known by its previous name, Blackwater) and Triple Canopy, which merged to form Constellis Holdings; (3) Military Professional Resources Inc. (L-3 MPRI); (4) Erinys; (5) G4S; and (6) DynCorp. We identify trends and commonalities that demonstrate the increasing militarization of capitalism and the transnational capitalist class.

## **AEGIS DEFENSE SYSTEMS**

Tim Spicer, a British citizen, founded Sandline International in 1995. Calling Sandline a “private military company,” Spicer arranged a three-month, \$35-million contract with Papua New Guinea to provide mercenaries, intelligence, weapons (including attack helicopters), and troop training in support of the government’s civil war against separatist rebels. One month into the war, the regular army, supported by the Australian government, staged a coup, and arrested Spicer and his forty-seven mercenaries and expelled them from the country.<sup>14</sup> Spicer went on to found Aegis Defense Systems in 2002,

now a multimillion-dollar PMC. Based in London, Aegis boasts “project experience in over 60 countries.”<sup>15</sup>

Aegis offers private security services to governments, international agencies, and corporations. On its website, Aegis reports that it “now provides a wide breadth of complimentary service streams including Kidnap for Ransom Support, technology integration, advisory and intelligence, training, consultancy, strategic communications and protective services.”<sup>16</sup> Aegis is registered as a United Nations contractor and is a main security provider to the US government. Over the past decade, its contracts with the United States Department of Defense exceed \$1.3 billion in services. For instance, it is under contract with the DOD to provide security support services for the US Project and Contracting Office that manages the US reconstruction program in Iraq.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, “[i]n separate contracts, AEGIS provides security protection to a number of significant blue chip companies operating in Iraq.”<sup>18</sup> A November 2014 DOD document reports that Aegis has a \$12.7 million contract to provide private security services at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan through September 2015.<sup>19</sup>

Aegis’s twelve board members are all men and include nine high-ranking former military officers, three international finance and banking people, two former members of British Parliament, and president Ronald Reagan’s national security advisor, Robert McFarlane.<sup>20</sup>

## **BLACKWATER**

Blackwater is probably the best-known private security company in the world. Started in 1997 by Erik Prince, an ex-Navy SEAL (Sea, Air, Land teams), the company was established to provide top-level training for the United States military and law enforcement. Their training center was 7,000 acres of swampland on the border of North Carolina and Virginia. Blackwater was awarded its first government contract after the bombing of the USS *Cole* in October 2000. It opened another training center in 2001 with indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, urban city reproductions, a man-made lake, and several driving tracks.

In early 2002, Blackwater USA established a branch specifically devoted to fulfilling security contracts. One of its first big contracts was

to provide twenty men with top-secret security clearances to protect the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan, which was tasked with hunting down Osama bin Laden.<sup>21</sup>

Soon thereafter, Blackwater was firmly footed in America's business overseas, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to governmental affairs, Blackwater has also been the recipient of numerous private contracts, most of which have been kept secret. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, 200 Blackwater employees deployed to the devastated areas. There are conflicting reports as to their actual business in the areas affected by Katrina. Blackwater insisted they were there to provide humanitarian aid, free of charge, while others note that many Blackwater employees were under contract to protect government buildings. Either way, Blackwater was an undeniable presence in Katrina's aftermath.<sup>22</sup>

In May 2006, the US government awarded Blackwater, DynCorp, and Triple Canopy contracts to provide diplomatic security in Iraq, establishing an unprecedented number of hired guns working overseas for this purpose.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the most notorious event involving Blackwater took place at Nisour Square in Baghdad on September 16, 2007, when Blackwater employees killed seventeen Iraqi civilians. According to Iraqi government sources, a convoy of US State Department diplomats was approaching Nisour Square when their Blackwater guards spotted an unidentified car traveling on the wrong side of the road. The US convoy opened fire on the vehicle and also threw stun grenades to clear the scene. Nearby Iraqi police mistook the stun grenades for fragmentation grenades and returned fire on the convoy. The Iraqi government holds firmly that the Iraqi civilians were fired upon without provocation.<sup>24</sup>

Blackwater claimed that its guards gave multiple warnings to the car by means of verbal commands, hand gestures, and throwing water bottles at the car. The vehicle had slowed but failed to stop when an Iraqi police officer approached the car and appeared to push it toward the convoy. With insurgents commonly disguising themselves as police, the Blackwater guards feared the convoy was under attack and they fired on the car, killing the driver, a passenger, and the police officer. As more police officers returned fire on the convoy, the situa-

tion grew increasingly chaotic, and the convoy ultimately needed support to exit the scene.<sup>25</sup>

When the smoke settled, altogether seventeen Iraqi civilians were dead and twenty more had been wounded. The following day the Iraqi government suspended Blackwater operations in the country. The incident fueled Iraqi rage over American involvement, severely weakened political ties, and created a backlash in the US over private security firms.<sup>26</sup> In October 2014, a US federal district court found that the deaths were not a battlefield tragedy, but the result of criminal acts. The court convicted four of the Blackwater guards on charges of murder, manslaughter, and using a machine gun. All of the convicted face several decades, potentially up to life, in prison.<sup>27</sup>

Following the Nisour Square incident, Blackwater began a process of restructuring its public image. In October 2007, Blackwater USA changed its name to Blackwater Worldwide, altered its company logo, and started shifting resources away from security contracting. In 2009, Blackwater Worldwide changed its name yet again to Xe Services LLC, and also began another round of restructuring. Founder and CEO Erik Prince resigned as CEO and Joseph Yorio took over daily operations, while Prince continued as chairman of the board. In 2010 a private group of investors purchased Xe and renamed the company Academi. The new company instituted a new management system, created a compliance and governance program, and assembled a leadership team characterized by “deep experience with crisis management” and prior experience in senior government positions.<sup>28</sup> The members of Academi’s board of directors all serve on the corporate board of Constellis, which has controlled Blackwater and Triple Canopy since 2014.

## **TRIPLE CANOPY**

Triple Canopy is a private security-and-risk-management company founded in 2003 by former US Special Forces soldiers Tom Katis and Matt Mann. The name Triple Canopy references the layered canopies of jungles where the company’s founders received training. Triple Canopy secured its first government contracts in 2004, following the US invasion of Iraq. Like many PMCs, most of its early contracts

were to protect high-ranking government officials, as well as troops in transportation. Soon, contracts included the protection of high-risk US embassies around the world, and in Iraq a growing presence beyond Baghdad.<sup>29</sup> After the 2007 Nisour Square massacre, Triple Canopy's profile in Iraq increased. The investigation of its PMC rival, Blackwater, gave Triple Canopy the chance to take over lucrative contracts previously fulfilled by Blackwater.<sup>30</sup>

To differentiate itself from Blackwater, Triple Canopy championed a code of conduct for private security forces. According to CEO Ignacio Balderas, "While governments and clients play an important role in regulating the sector, the industry itself must be willing to take a stand and set standards."<sup>31</sup> Triple Canopy's website promotes Balderas and the company as being at the forefront of developing an international code of conduct for private security contractors.<sup>32</sup>

Although Triple Canopy has tried to present itself as an ethical company, they have issues of their own. For example, on July 8, 2006, four Triple Canopy guards on duty in Baghdad were involved in multiple shootings of civilians. The incident centered around one guard in particular, Jacob C. Washbourne, who was accused of firing on Iraqi civilians in three separate incidents that day. Although the incident's details are unclear, in part due to a nearly impenetrable protective curtain that shields private contractors from blame, the *Washington Post* put together most of the pieces of the story. The day before Washbourne was due to return home, he and three other guards went on typical runs up and down Baghdad's Airport Road. Those three reported that Washbourne told them, "I want to kill somebody today." Later, Washbourne opened fire on two civilian trucks, stating that he felt threatened by them, and at close range on a taxi.<sup>33</sup>

The fates of those Washbourne opened fire on that day are unknown because Triple Canopy conducted the only known inquiry into the situation. The three other guards with Washbourne that day described him as a man on a rampage who, as their team leader, instructed them to not disclose what happened that day. Washbourne denied all responsibility for firing on the trucks and denies that the shooting on the taxi ever occurred. He and two of the other guards were terminated for not properly reporting the incidents.<sup>34</sup> Realizing the possible severity of the incident, Triple Canopy reported it to the

director of security for the Green Zone in Iraq, who declined to investigate and referred the case to Joint Contracting Command for Iraq, who in turn also declined to investigate what happened. The case went cold when a spokesperson for the US Central Command said, “This is not a Centcom issue. It’s whoever was running that contract. We’re fighting a war here.”<sup>35</sup>

Although Triple Canopy may present itself as a paragon of ethical practices in the private security and contracting world, it is still complicit in the broader issue of the unchecked power that private security companies have over civilians. Triple Canopy, along with dozens of other private security, logistics, and reconstruction contractors, were the beneficiaries of \$138 billion allocated by the US for the Iraq War.<sup>36</sup> As Triple Canopy continued to gain prominence following the Iraq War, it joined with rival firm Academi (Blackwater) under a new management team, Constellis Holdings, which has consolidated some of the private security world’s biggest players into a single firm.

## **CONSTELLIS HOLDINGS**

Constellis Holdings is a leading provider of security, support, and advisory services to the US government, foreign governments, multinational corporations, and international organizations. Constellis Holdings came into existence in June 2014 with the merger of Academi (Blackwater) and Triple Canopy. At the time, the conglomerate acquired numerous other prominent companies that were under the former Constellis Group, including Strategic Social, Tidewater Global Services, and National Strategic Protective Services.<sup>37</sup>

While all of the Constellis Group companies, including Academi and Triple Canopy, remain officially separate, they are under the control of the larger umbrella of Constellis Holdings. With the merger, all of these companies are able to utilize each other’s resources, most notably Academi’s world-class training facility. The majority of the new board of directors are from Academi,<sup>38</sup> which makes it hard to overlook that this may be yet another attempt by its leadership to distance the company from its tarnished Blackwater past. In any event, the resources and manpower now consolidated as Constellis likely make it the most powerful PMC firm.

Red McCombs leads the all-male board of directors. With an estimated net worth of \$1.78 billion, he ranks no. 1,054 on the *Forbes* list of the world's billionaires.<sup>39</sup> He is a former owner of the Minnesota Vikings, Denver Nuggets, and San Antonio Spurs, as well as a cofounder of Clear Channel Communications.<sup>40</sup> Joining McCombs on the board is John Ashcroft, the former attorney general under George W. Bush, and one of the driving advocates of the war on terror after September 11, 2001. The board also includes retired admiral Bobby Inman and two leading finance managers, Dean Bosacki and Jason DeYonker. The final two men on the board are Jack Quinn, a leading Democratic advisor for many years, who served as chief of staff to vice president Al Gore from 1993 to 1995 and as counsel to President Clinton from 1995 to 1997, and Tom Katis, the cofounder of Triple Canopy and a decorated Special Forces veteran who earned a Bronze Star as a Green Beret.<sup>41</sup>

## ERINYS

Jonathan Garrett, a former British Army officer, founded Erinys in 2002. Garrett graduated from the Royal Military Academy–Sandhurst in 1983 and began working in the private sector in 1992 with Defence Systems Limited (now ArmorGroup International), mostly in Africa. He is the CEO of Erinys, which is incorporated in the British Virgin Islands and headquartered in Dubai, with offices and subsidiaries in Africa, Iraq, and England. The name Erinys comes from the avenging goddesses of Greek mythology, Erinyes, who punish crimes against the natural order.

Erinys was awarded a lucrative contract by the US Army Corps of Engineers to protect Iraqi oil fields in 2003.<sup>42</sup> The contract was awarded to Erinys's subsidiary Erinys Iraq Ltd., which was a surprise to many observers at the time. However, a member of the Iraqi National Congress was one of Erinys Iraq Ltd.'s founding partners, and its director, Faisal Daghistani, was the son of one of Iraqi politician Ahmed Chalabi's most trusted friends. Chalabi had close ties with neoconservatives in the Bush administration and reportedly acted as the middleman in dealings with Erinys Iraq, which resulted in them getting the contract.<sup>43</sup> Erinys employed up to 1,000 people in Iraq.

The company faced a lawsuit over the death of an American soldier who was killed by an Erinys convoy in 2005. The suit was the first case of its kind.<sup>44</sup> It was involved in a shooting incident in 2008 with an Iraqi taxi, which left three unarmed civilians wounded.<sup>45</sup>

Outside Iraq, Erinys has significant, if troubling, connections across Africa, including the founders' ties dating back to apartheid-era South Africa and white supremacist Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), as well as operations in Nigeria and Ghana.<sup>46</sup>

An undated page on the company's Web site indicates: "Following recent changes in control the board is currently being reconstituted."<sup>47</sup> Previously, an all-male board of directors has led Erinys.<sup>48</sup> Its past members include John Holmes, a former Special Air Services (SAS) commando in the British Army; Alastair Morrison, the cofounder of Defence Systems Ltd., and another former SAS officer, who is famous for his involvement in the rescue of hostages held on a Lufthansa jet in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1977; and Michael Hutchings, a career soldier in the British Army. Sean Cleary, a former South African military intelligence operative, served on the board of Erinys South Africa.

## **MILITARY PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES INC. (MPRI)**

Retired US major general Vernon B. Lewis Jr. founded MPRI in 1987. By 2002 it had grown to forty administrators, 800 field agents, and 12,500 personnel on call, with over \$100 million in contracts. In 1997, MPRI's all-male board consisted of thirteen US generals and an admiral.<sup>49</sup>

MPRI provided military consulting on security services and tactical operations in several countries in the 1990s, including Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Colombia, Angola, and Nigeria. In 1994, MPRI served as consultants to the Croatian army. Though the firm denies helping to conduct offensive operations against Bosnian Serbs—which would have been in violation of a 1991 UN Security Council arms embargo that made direct military assistance illegal—analysts believe that MPRI directly supported the Croatian army's Operation Storm in August 1995, which "utilized typical American operational tactics, including integrated air, artillery and infantry movements,

and the use of maneuver war fighting techniques to destroy Serbian command and control networks.”<sup>50</sup>

The Croat surprise attack was described as “a lightning five pronged offensive, integrating air power, artillery, and rapid infantry movements . . . classic US Army textbook tactics.”<sup>51</sup> The Croatian success led to some 200,000 to 300,000 Serbs fleeing the region, creating the worst refugee crisis of the Yugoslav war.<sup>52</sup>

In 2000, L-3 Communications acquired MPRI for \$40 million. Under L-3, MPRI won numerous contracts. In 2001, it serviced both sides of the Balkan war: MPRI provided consultants to the Macedonian government, while MPRI trainers worked with a branch of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), rebels opposed to the Macedonian forces. Under the auspices of NATO, US forces “saved” 500 rebels from Macedonian forces, including seventeen MPRI instructors, relocated them to another area, and allowed them to keep their US-made weapons.<sup>53</sup> In 2005, MPRI received a six-year contract with the Department of Justice to support the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program in providing personnel and facilities for law enforcement programs in foreign countries. That contract was reported to be worth up to \$400 million. In 2008, MPRI was one of a handful of PMCs contracted by the US military for “information operations” in Iraq and possibly Afghanistan.<sup>54</sup>

MPRI was quietly disappeared by L-3 Communications in 2014 after agreeing to pay \$3.2 million for false labor charges in supporting the US Army in Afghanistan. The US Department of Justice proved that MPRI billed for employees who had not worked because they were on leave outside the country. The false billing occurred between March 2005 and October 2010.<sup>55</sup> By the end of 2014, MPRI was no longer listed on the L-3 Communications website. Its offices in Virginia were closed and its website was no longer active. L-3 now lists CyTerra as its primary securities division.<sup>56</sup> CyTerra has also had difficulties with proper billing.<sup>57</sup>

## **G4S**

With roughly 625,000 employees spanning five continents in more than 120 countries, G4S is one of the largest private-sector employers

in the world. Some of its more important contractors are the governments of the UK, the US, Israel, and Australia; in the private sector it has worked with corporations such as Chrysler, Apple, and the Bank of America.<sup>58</sup>

According to its own website, the company known today as G4S traces its roots back to a Danish security firm established in 1901. That company, through a series of mergers, became Securicor in 1951. It then became Group 4 Securicor in 2004 when Securicor merged with Group 4 Falck. In 2002, Group 4 Falck had entered the US security market by acquiring the Wackenhut Corporation, which was the second largest US security services company at the time.<sup>59</sup> Since its beginnings, Wackenhut had strong ties to the US government and especially its military.<sup>60</sup> Group 4 Securicor became known as G4S in 2006.

The second-largest private employer in the world, G4S offers security guards, alarms, management and transportation of cash and valuables, prison management, and electronic monitoring of offenders in 120 countries worldwide.<sup>61</sup> G4S's annual revenue in 2014 was nearly \$10.5 billion.<sup>62</sup> Increasingly, G4S operates in "complex environments" and accepts jobs that national armies are not trained to do.<sup>63</sup>

In Nigeria, Chevron contracts with G4S for counterinsurgency operations including fast-response mercenaries. G4S undertakes similar operations in South Sudan, and has provided surveillance equipment for checkpoints and prisons in Israel and security for Jewish settlements in Palestine.<sup>64</sup>

The G4S board of directors consists of nine men and two women, and, unlike board members of the previously described PMCs, none of G4S's board members list prior military service, instead encompassing a broad range of backgrounds, including finance, media, accounting, and logistics.<sup>65</sup>

G4S has been plagued with problems in the last decade, including most noticeably its botched contract at the 2012 London Olympic Games. G4S failed to provide the 10,000-plus trained employees it had promised under contract. Instead G4S provided roughly 2,000 properly trained personnel, with many more receiving only a few weeks' preparation. The result led to the British military being called on to provide some 13,000 troops to maintain security alongside G4S during the Games.<sup>66</sup>

In June 2014, G4S was accused of violently removing protesters from outside its own London offices, a claim the company denied. A few months later G4S had to pay \$100,000 for unlawfully restraining youths in a secure training facility. In 2011, a double amputee was improperly secured in one of G4S's ambulance services and died while he was being transported to the hospital. An inquest found that G4S staff had not been sufficiently trained to move patients safely from their homes to hospitals. And as far back as 2004, a fifteen-year-old died when three G4S employees at Rainsbrook Secure Training Center restrained him. None of the officers were charged in that incident.<sup>67</sup>

As of July 2012, the financial core of the transnational capitalist class was heavily invested in G4S.<sup>68</sup> Nine of the thirteen largest, most-connected money management firms and banks in the world have direct investment holdings in G4S.<sup>69</sup> The financial core of the TCC is directly linked to and invested in the world's largest PMC.

## DYNCORP

DynCorp originated with two companies formed in 1946, an aviation maintenance business named Land-Air Inc., and a cargo business started by World War II pilots, California Eastern Airways.<sup>70</sup> After mergers and resulting name changes, the company became known as DynCorp in 1987. By 1994, it reported over one billion dollars in annual revenues; after merging with or acquiring some forty additional companies, DynCorp earned revenues of \$2.4 billion in 2003.<sup>71</sup> In 2003, the Computer Sciences Corporation purchased DynCorp for \$914 million, then two years later sold part of the company to Veritas Capital Fund LP for \$850 million. After being a privately held company since 1988, the company went public in 2006.<sup>72</sup> In 2010, Cerberus Capital Management acquired DynCorp International for \$1.5 billion.<sup>73</sup>

DynCorp currently employs 22,300 people, offering services in “global stabilization” that include international policing and police training, judicial support, immigration services, base operations, and security for diplomats and senior governmental officials.<sup>74</sup> In 2005, CorpWatch described DynCorp as “the world’s premier rent-a-cop business,” which “runs the security show in Afghanistan, Iraq, and

the US–Mexico border. They also run the coca crop-dusting business in Colombia, and occasional sex trafficking sorties in Bosnia.”<sup>75</sup>

DynCorp remains under the control of Cerberus Capital Management LP. Cerberus describes itself as a leading private investment firm with an investment team consisting of nine primary advisors. The all-male team consists mostly of Ivy League graduates, including high-level finance capital advisors and two lawyers. The most politically connected advisors are John Snow, former US secretary of the treasury (2003–06) and chairman of the Business Roundtable; and former US vice president Dan Quayle (1989–93).<sup>76</sup>

## ANALYSIS

In *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*, William Robinson devotes a chapter to the policing of global capitalism in the twenty-first century. He describes transnational capitalist class elites’ responses to democracy movements, including their reliance on militarism, masculinization, racism, and scapegoats as ideological justifications for police state repression.<sup>77</sup>

Robinson hypothesizes that continuing the concentration of capital and massive poverty will lead to nation-states facing legitimization crises that would require them to employ a vast host of coercive control mechanisms, including mass incarceration, various levels of martial law, and an increasing separation of classes into restrictive geographical zones.<sup>78</sup>

Private military contractors would play an essential role in the enforcement of this future neofascist capitalist world that Robinson foresees. Capital would be free to travel instantly and internationally to anywhere that profits are possible, while nation-states would become little more than population containment zones with increasingly repressive labor controls. For these reasons, many scholars have come to understand PMCs as a component of neoliberal imperialism that now supplements nation-states’ police powers and could eventually substitute for them.<sup>79</sup> Estimates are that over \$200 billion is spent on private security globally, with higher annual expenditures anticipated. The industry currently employs some fifteen million people worldwide. Many of the security companies are smaller ver-

sions of G4S, offering a range of services from guarding banks and private buildings to armed security and outright warfare.<sup>80</sup>

The firms we reviewed offer the full range of PMC services. The larger firms are increasingly integrated within the world of transnational capital. PMC boards of directors and advisors—almost exclusively male—represent some of the most powerfully connected people in the world with multiple sociopolitical interlocks to governments, military, finance, and policy groups.<sup>81</sup>

The trend toward privatization of war is a serious threat to human rights, due process, and democratic transparency and accountability.<sup>82</sup> The US/NATO military empire sets the moral standards for denial of human rights by using pilotless drones to kill civilians without regard for international law in various regions of resistance to empire. Labeling dead civilians as insurgents and terrorists, the complete lack of due process and human rights belies any standard of governmental moral legitimacy. This lack of moral legitimacy in turn sets standards for private military companies to operate with much the same malice in the shadow of the empire.

The globalization of PMC operations alongside transnational capital investment, international trade agreements, and an increasing concentration of wealth in the TCC means that the repressive practices of private security and war will inevitably come home to roost in the US, the European Union, and other first-world nations.

The 99 percent of us without wealth and private police power face the looming threat of overt repression and complete loss of human rights and legal protections.<sup>83</sup> We see signs of this daily with police killings (now close to a hundred per month in the US),<sup>84</sup> warrantless electronic spying, mass incarceration, random traffic checkpoints, airport security/no-fly lists, and Homeland Security compilations of databases on suspected radicals.

We must recognize that among the 99 percent are reactionary elements characterized by extreme racism, homophobia, and xenophobia that will be encouraged and unleashed by the empire to disrupt emerging democracy and human rights movements. The resulting chaos and fear will be used to justify even more repression and martial law. The rapid deployment of repressive shock forces remains imminently possible in coming years, requiring only natural disaster, actual

security threats, or false flag operations in order to be implemented. The massive police lockdown of segments of the city of Boston after the marathon bombings on April 15, 2013, is one example of the rapid deployment of thousands of police and the implementation of de facto martial law. Boston residents seemingly accepted government orders for them to stay indoors and shelter in place.<sup>85</sup>

Each time we look past the crimes of the empire we lose a portion of our integrity of self. Ignoring repression becomes part of continuing compromise in our daily lives leading to a moral malaise and increased feelings of helplessness. It becomes easier to accept as normal the presence of the police state and PMC agents in our daily lives—after all, they are keeping us “safe” from the evil ones. As humanitarian activists we must continue to personally address these issues openly and honestly by asking the individuals in control of global capital for moral legitimacy, structural mediation, and systemic reform.

There seems little possibility that the electoral process in the US or most nation-states will allow for elected officials—even progressive and fair-minded ones—to forestall capitalism’s need for continued growth. Even progressive tax reform and adjustments in income inequality would likely be inadequate to offset the rapid deterioration of the global environment and the massive poverty facing half of humanity.

It is time to address the capitalist elite, the one-thousandth of 1 percent, by directly appealing to their humanity. Given the emerging research on the transnational capitalist class—the few thousand individuals who control \$100 trillion worth of capital—it would seem that an organized group of nongovernmental organizations and civil society leaders could seek to negotiate directly with the financial core of the TCC to explore ways of addressing war, fascism, global poverty, and environmental collapse.<sup>86</sup> After all, these managers of global capital have names, physical addresses, and online presences. They also have families (including, in many cases, children and grandchildren) and friends who are increasingly threatened by global chaos. The financial core of the TCC is in a position of power to make corrections to the formation and use of capital, which could serve humanity’s needs rather than simply drive profits. This isn’t an all-or-nothing

agenda, but rather an attempt to mediate the massive negative consequences of the path of continuing capitalist concentration of wealth in the desire to prevent global socioeconomic and/or environmental collapse. In actuality, humankind is faced with extinction, at least to life as we know it, and any attempt to forestall this global certainty seems worth the effort.

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## Notes

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# **CENSORED 2016**

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The Top Censored Stories and Media Analysis of 2014–15

**Mickey Huff** and **Andy Lee Roth**  
with **Project Censored**

Foreword by  
**Nicholas Johnson**

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**Khalil Bendib**



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