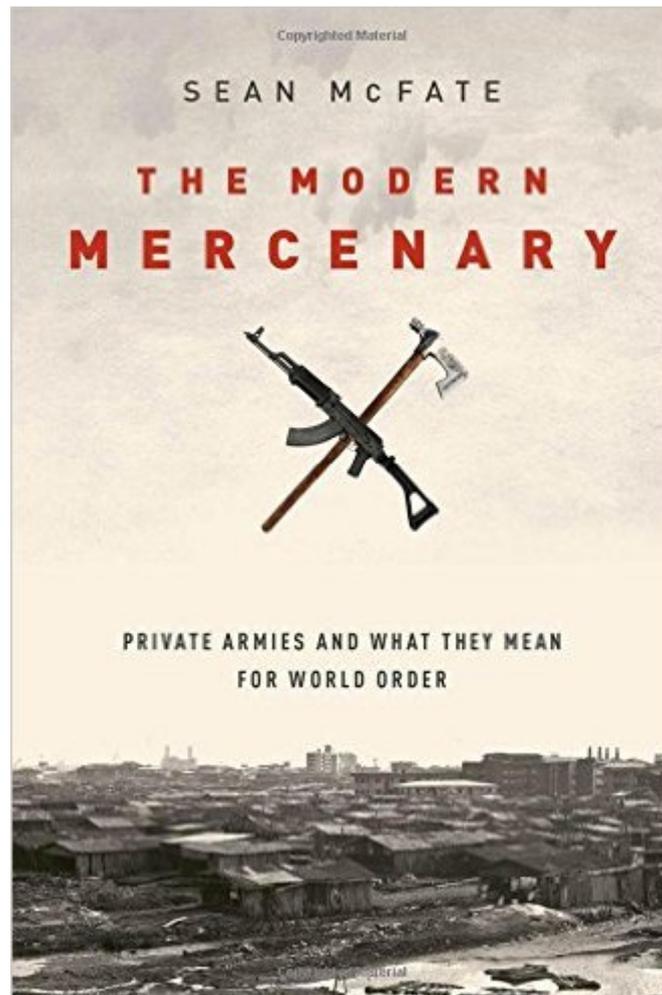


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The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies And What They Mean For World Order



Synopsis

It was 2004, and Sean McFate had a mission in Burundi: to keep the president alive and prevent the country from spiraling into genocide, without anyone knowing that the United States was involved. The United States was, of course, involved, but only through McFate's employer, the military contractor DynCorp International. Throughout the world, similar scenarios are playing out daily. The United States can no longer go to war without contractors. Yet we don't know much about the industry's structure, its operations, or where it's heading. Typically led by ex-military men, contractor firms are by their very nature secretive. Even the U.S. government—the entity that actually pays them—knows relatively little. In *The Modern Mercenary*, Sean McFate lays bare this opaque world, explaining the economic structure of the industry and showing in detail how firms operate on the ground. A former U.S. Army paratrooper and private military contractor, McFate provides an unparalleled perspective into the nuts and bolts of the industry, as well as a sobering prognosis for the future of war. While at present, the U.S. government and U.S. firms dominate the market, private military companies are emerging from other countries, and warlords and militias have restyled themselves as private security companies in places like Afghanistan and Somalia. To understand how the proliferation of private forces may influence international relations, McFate looks back to the European Middle Ages, when mercenaries were common and contract warfare the norm. He concludes that international relations in the twenty-first century may have more in common with the twelfth century than the twentieth. This "back to the future" situation, which he calls "neomedievalism," is not necessarily a negative condition, but it will produce a global system that contains rather than solves problems. *The Modern Mercenary* is the first work that combines a broad-ranging theory of the phenomenon with an insider's understanding of what the world of the private military industry is actually like.

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Customer Reviews

Modern Mercenary is an exceptional book at an important juncture in American foreign policy and international security. As Dr. McFate demonstrates, with the conclusion of American operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, military contractors are now an integral and legitimate tool for consideration in a policymaker's toolkit. Drawing on personal experiences and scholarly research, Dr. McFate convincingly explains how private military contractors can be effective in achieving certain foreign policy goals, while also identifying the corresponding caveats and attendant dangers. Moreover, Dr. McFate shows how, along the continuum of history, the ascent of private military force providers actually marks a revival of a phenomenon with a long tradition. Revisiting the neomedievalism thesis of Australian international relations scholar Hedley Bull, Dr. McFate links the emergence of private military actors to famed historical figures like Albrecht von Wallenstein, Sir John Hawkwood, and the numerous condottieri who figured prominently in Italy's past. A brisk 272 pages without an ounce of fat, national security professionals would be well served by picking up a copy of this book and keeping an eye for more unique insights from this prolific author.

VERY well written. I was immediately drawn into the topic and particularly appreciated that the author gives a full overview of where the book is headed. Living as I do within the historical setting of a classical medieval Italian city, and realizing that the historical accounts of the many local paid-mercenary battles are now being repeated in our own times really catches my attention. That old axiom about history repeating itself was never more clearly demonstrated than in this very compelling book.

Timely explanation to how the market for private military "companies" developed in history and what has created the reemergence of the contract warfare business and use of private armies in modern times. Most insightful book on how the world order is adapting and confronting changes from a Westphalia system of war and politics to a new "neomedievalism" way of thinking and managing conflicts. This book is not about individual mercenaries fighting on the ground level but covers the economics and political reasons for or why the Private Military Contractor business is now in full

swing and why. The author does a great job of exploring both the current reasons to why contractors are both beneficial and negative to those who employ them. McFate also brings attention to what questions and concerns need to be addressed before utilizing such companies continues into the future of our modern world.

An excellent book, which covers much more than the uses (and drawbacks) of mercenary forces. It discusses the rise of the nation-state as the sole repository of loyalty, and reminds us that this is very much a modern concept. (In the medieval period, a nobleman owed loyalty to the overlord(s) who gave him land, perhaps in addition to his king or duke, also to the pope, and perhaps to a knightly order or a local government (any of which might be in conflict with each other). Later came the rise of the nation-state with a monopoly over a person's loyalty. Nation-states fought wars and made peace treaties and (until the 20th century) tended to keep fighting tidy and brief. They suppressed mercenary forces as rivals to their monopoly on lawful force. Now, the author suggests, we are seeing a return to divided loyalties -- multinational corporations, fighting between peoples or tribes, fighting to impose a religion, where there is no one with whom to negotiate peace. In such a setting, he suggests, the rise of mercenary forces is natural.

It doesn't matter if you are interested in the topic or not, McFate makes relevant and even essential a modern military landscape in which he has had highly unusual experience. He also has a writing style that manages to combine authoritative, fact-filled pages with a welcome readability. If you read this book you will understand many of our contemporary world situations much more clearly--especially notably difficult areas such as Africa--and you will also get a remarkably fresh perspective on history.

This a great book and would recommend it to anybody interested in politic and/or military operations. It is eye opening and concerning. The Neomidevilism theory is well defined and it's results can be clearly seen in today's world.

This is one of the most informative and powerful books I have read in many years. I read it because of interest in this topic. But what I got was a lot more. It really helps a person understand many of the current situations in the world. It also helped me see that our current state sponsored military responses to situations in our world will no longer work. Most of our leader's are still thinking in the past and they do not yet understand we face a whole new world and the old approaches will no

longer work.

A thought provoking look at where "world peace" may be headed. The implications of this book are thought-provoking and worrisome. I'm glad I lived through the 50s and 60s and am now old and don't have to worry about where we are headed in twenty years, although I fear that my children and grandchildren are in for some disturbing times.

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