

## BESPRECHUNGEN

**Herbert Wulf, *Internationalizing and Privatizing War and Peace*, London (Palgrave Macmillan) 2005. (Englischsprachige Fassung von: *Internationalisierung und Privatisierung von Krieg und Frieden*, Baden-Baden [Nomos Verlag] 2005.)**

On April 21, 2005, six employees of an American security contractor, three Bulgarian crew members, and two Fiji security guards were killed when their commercial helicopter was downed by Iraqi insurgency missile fire north of Baghdad. This tragic episode epitomizes the new global security environment in which state militaries are called upon to fulfill an ever-widening array of missions, oftentimes in conjunction with forces from other countries and under the auspices of international organizations. At the same time, however, many traditional government functions, including the provision of security services, are increasingly being outsourced to the private sector. These seemingly paradoxical developments are the backdrop to Herbert Wulf's new book in which he competently shows that the internationalization and privatization of violence are intrinsically connected: »Privatization in violence markets (privatization I) contributes to the need for military interventions (internationalization I)« and, in turn, »these military deployments necessitate internationalizing the organization of the armed forces (internationalization II). Outsourcing military functions to the private sector is then a top-down reaction (privatization II) to cope with the increasing num-

ber of military missions abroad« (p. 14). Connected this way, Wulf argues, privatization and internationalization create a »double democracy deficit« since neither internationalized armed forces nor private military companies are subject to any type of democratic control.

Exploring this democracy deficit is the main focus of the book. After defining the key concepts of internationalization (Chapter 1) and privatization (Chapter 2), Wulf provides an overview over UN peacekeeping missions (Chapter 3) and illustrates the merits and problems of multilateral regional interventions using the examples of South Africa (Chapter 4) and the European Union (Chapter 5). Switching from the organizational to the functional context, Wulf then examines the internationalization and privatization of humanitarian interventions (Chapter 6) and the war on terrorism (Chapter 7). Finally, he analyzes existing security privatization efforts in the United States and the United Kingdom (Chapter 8) and concludes by suggesting the establishment of a multi-level public monopoly of violence designed to restore democratic control and promote sustainable peace (Chapter 9).

Overall, the book innovatively connects two seemingly unrelated parallel trends in contemporary international relations and provides a thought-provoking assessment of the nature of post-9/11 security. While each chapter presents a convincing, stand-alone analysis of a specific aspect of the interplay between internationalization and privatiza-

tion, the book would have benefited from a more effective integration of the various themes explored in each chapter into the interdependent cycle between internationalization and privatization that serves as its central theme. The introduction could have linked the chapters more deliberately while each chapter, in turn, could have connected its analysis back to the overall internationalization-privatization-cycle. Nevertheless, Wulf's analysis comes together in the end and the book provides a provocative evaluation of contemporary security challenges and the effectiveness of current response mechanisms.

Wulf's analysis begins with a discussion of a changing security environment that sees military interventions more and more as the primary task for armed forces. But, he argues, traditional images of lightly armed blue helmet forces mediating among conflicting parties no longer capture today's security realities in which the UN takes on a growing range of operational responsibilities. The internationalization of its interventions illustrates the organization's preeminent dilemma: protecting individual and collective human rights while respecting the principles of state sovereignty and equality among its members. While non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states served as the dominant decision guide during the Cold War, the Security Council now increasingly authorizes multilateral interventions based on the UN's responsibility to protect human rights

and prevent or alleviate human suffering.

Measuring the effectiveness of recent and current interventions using six criteria for the justification of the use of force – just cause, right intention, last resort, proportional means, reasonable prospects, and right authorization – Wulf detects a number of serious flaws. First, he criticizes the UN for its selective engagement, i.e., intervening in Somalia and Bosnia, but not in the similar and equally severe humanitarian crises in Rwanda and, more recently, in Sudan, and for not intervening at all when powerful countries violate human rights, as in the case of Russia's pursuit of a protracted conflict in Chechnya. Second, Wulf faults governments, first and foremost the United States, for taking unilateral action without a UN mandate, thereby resisting the relocation of authority for decisions affecting international security and undermining global governance based on the acceptance of international norms. Finally, Wulf finds that member states do not provide sufficient financial and human resources to enable the UN to perform all the peace building and peacekeeping tasks it is called on to fulfill. As a result, he cautions, the UN may be required to turn to private contractors to fulfill its security obligations.

Apart from the United Nations, the new security environment also challenges traditional notions of appropriate military roles and, Wulf contends, requires considerable organizational and doctrinal adjustments. Heeding warnings raised by observers of US

civil-military relations nearly half a century ago, Wulf acknowledges the existence of widespread resistance among parts of the military establishment toward peace operations as those may »diverge from their primary goal of fighting and winning wars« (p. 132). Not surprisingly, he finds that many among the military's top level support the privatization of some security functions, because that would allow the armed forces »to concentrate on »core competencies«, namely »combat«, when they are assisted by private companies« (p. 181). Wulf warns that, given the recent upsurge in armed interventions and growing competition from military forces specializing in non-combat operations and from private companies offering combat support services, continued resistance toward non-combat functions may increasingly undermine the military's own legitimacy.

The fear of undermining warfighting skills through peacekeeping has lead some populist observers of US military and security policy to argue for the establishment of two separate forces: one to fight wars (»a force of might«) and one to keep the peace (»a force for right«). In contrast to internal force separation, Wulf advocates a division of labor between the United States and the European Union. »Whilst Europe is turning away from power and dreams about the realization of the »perpetual peace« of Kant, the United States, meanwhile, exercises power in the anarchic Hobbesian world and depends on the possession and use of military means« (p. 104). At present, the EU spends about 2.5 times more than the US on development assistance. Herein, Wulf argues, lies its competi-

tive advantage. The EU, he conjectures, would do better »by pushing for civil power, aid and trade more self-consciously rather than competing in the area of military power« (p. 128). Since Wulf believes that many crises could be controlled more effectively through disarmament and arms control, he advocates that the EU should take the lead in these areas, instead of allocating more resources to military competition with the United States and a duplication of already existing capabilities. Wulf's argument indeed promises to limit a potentially detrimental security competition and make the coordination of humanitarian interventions more effective. His suggestion for a division of security labor between the US and the EU would not only promote cooperation between global actors whose relationship has been strained recently, but also enable both to pursue security policies based on their respective strategic priorities. The ultimate result may indeed be increased global peace and security.

Of course, Wulf argues, sustainable peace will require enhanced democratic control of the means of violence. Ironically, he observes exactly the opposite trend. The intensified demand for intervention and emergency aid over the last decade has been accompanied by global reductions in defense expenditures and force sizes. At the same time, the so-called revolution in military affairs has shifted the military's focus to high tech equipment and advanced weapons technology. These developments, in conjunction with a growing demand for fighting services by weak or besieged governments, have created a market for private se-

curity suppliers that offer a full range of services from technical, IT, and logistics support to advisory and training to combat and combat assistance. Wulf provides a detailed discussion of the types of services offered by these security firms, supplemented with a comprehensive appendix listing a total of 118 private military companies and the nature of their service activities, and examines in detail the moral, legal, strategic, and operational risks and problems inherent in the outsourcing of security.

Defenders of economic liberalism and advocates of lean government alike have in the past vigorously argued for the outsourcing of government services, believing that market competition would raise the quality of services provided while, at the same time, lowering costs. For many, privatization of military services is a next logical step. Not surprisingly, the two leading countries in previous privatization efforts, the United States and the United Kingdom, currently host some three-fourths of all military contractors. Indeed, reports by the United Nations and the US Government Accountability Office have confirmed that privatizing security functions may render considerable cost savings. However, Wulf contends, the data are uncertain, as many cost effectiveness studies do not track actual performance but merely »assess the *promise* of savings rather than achievement« (p. 186). Given only limited competition among a select few bidders and the fact that many contracts are awarded on a cost-plus basis which allows contractors to charge extra for better than agreed performance, Wulf concludes »it is surprising on what meager em-

pirical basis such far-reaching decisions are being made« (p. 186). And these potential cost savings may come at a high price: the loss of democratic control. Here, the book is perhaps at its best, as Wulf skillfully explores the dilemmas presented by the competing needs of economic gain and political accountability.

Wulf shows that, while militaries aim to win wars and tend to prepare for the worst-case scenario, private companies are on the battlefield to make a profit and, in order to save cost, deliver their services on a just-in-time basis and typically keep only a minimum stock of material. The profit motive can negatively impact military flexibility and overall mission effectiveness and may even provide an economic incentive to extend the conflict or the aid efforts. In addition, the focus on profit may also undermine the quality and morale of the armed forces. Private military companies pay considerably more than state militaries – some specialists currently operating in Iraq receive as much as \$1,500 per day – which hurts recruitment and retention of qualified professionals into the armed forces of their home country. At the same time, outsourcing »can also weaken the combat potential of the armed forces since expertise is lost to the public sector« (p. 189). On the flipside, the recent rise in interventions has made quality control increasingly difficult. As a result of the rapidly growing demand for experts across the entire spectrum of security services, Wulf finds that companies are also experiencing difficulties recruiting enough qualified personnel and oftentimes have to fill vacancies with under-qualified people.

In addition, Wulf warns, com-

panies, unlike militaries in democracies, are presently neither accountable for their actions to parliament or the public, nor are their activities in any way regulated by international law. Therefore, using private contractors may allow governments to mask casualties before a democratic public that is very sensitive to the loss of its sons and daughters. But, Wulf contends, the rising casualty rate among contractor personnel is only one side of the coin: »The casualty rate of Iraqis who die through the actions of private contract personnel or who are tortured or mistreated in prisons is probably rising too...« (p. 64). Again, concerned with the lack of democratic control, Wulf asks »can a government, who has signed these contracts, not also be held accountable for these situations?« While answering this question would be beyond the scope of Wulf's project, the author persuasively illustrates the democratic deficiencies inherent in the privatization of security.

The notion of an underlying democratic deficit also guides Wulf's examination of the global war on terrorism. Since 9/11, Wulf argues, global politics have become more militarized. For the first time, we find a »systematic – although not necessarily successful – security strategy to counter terrorism.« In fact, fighting a war against terrorism becomes a way for the US government to legitimize the global reach of its military. Classifying terrorists as hostile combatants and connecting them, correctly or not, to weapons of mass destruction and »rogue state,« Wulf contends, »seems sufficient for a majority of the voters to legitimize military-based counter-terrorism policies« (p. 150). Ironically, the Bush ad-

ministration appears to have heeded Wulf's criticism of classifying its counter-terrorism measures as a »war,« since it just relabeled its »global war on terrorism« as the »global struggle against violent extremism.« With this new definition, of course, ignoring international norms and the applicability of the laws of war may become even easier.

Wulf correctly identifies a qualitative change in the nature of global terrorism as a result of the 9/11 attacks. While the primary objective of terrorists operating during the 1970s and 80s was to get public attention, today's »mega- or hyper-terrorism« abolishes completely any distinction between civilians and combatants and specifically aims to inflict mass casualties and suffering to »affect the attacked society to its core.« How does this change in the nature of terrorism affect states' response mechanisms? Analyzing the role of the Israeli armed forces in the Palestinian conflict and examining two examples of US retaliations against terrorism – the 1986 bombing of Libya and the 1998 parallel cruise missile attacks against Sudan and Afghanistan – Wulf concludes that terrorism cannot be countered effectively solely through military means. While military power may render quick successes in fighting the symptoms of terrorism, it cannot eliminate its root causes. Citing the UN High-level Panel of Experts, Wulf suggests instead to develop an approach that includes promoting social and political rights and the rule of law, reducing poverty and unemployment, countering extremism and intolerance, strengthening global cooperation to counter terrorism, building state capacity to prevent ter-

rorist recruitment and operations, and enhancing mechanisms to better control dangerous materials and public health. Although Wulf does not discuss any of these supplementary strategies in detail, this list combined with his comprehensive account of military counter-terrorism failures presents a convincing argument against the way the current war on terrorism – or whatever new label is going to be used – is pursued.

Wulf's analysis compellingly demonstrates that nation building cannot be a shortcut to a long-term process of overcoming violent structures. Military intervention is not an alternative to diplomacy, negotiations, and conflict mediation or moderation. Effective global governance based on democratic principles and the rule of law, Wulf argues, requires a »public monopoly of violence« at the local, national, regional and global levels that establishes »rules and regulations for the use of force that more effectively address both the legacy of conflict-endemic societies, the immediate security of the people and the external linkages« (p. 207). This public monopoly, Wulf maintains, should be exercised in a bottom-up fashion with the lowest level always as the starting point and moving to the next level only when the lower level is »not capable or cannot be tasked with exercising the monopoly of force« (p. 208). In addition, Wulf advocates a hierarchy of authority with top-down rule setting capabilities. He explains the advantages of his model: »Given the realities of conflict-prone or war-torn societies, not all four levels will actually be functional, but the multi-level approach is designed precisely for such situations where one of the four levels

is lacking or incompetent, namely to compensate for the partial or prevent the complete breakdown of the monopoly of violence« (pp. 208-9).

While Wulf views internationalization as imperative for an effective public monopoly of violence, he does not see a place for privatization. »The experience of the last four centuries in Europe demonstrates that security must be guaranteed by a monopoly of violence, and that privatizing or commercializing security will lead to the development of different zones of security and insecurity with effective protection only for the privileged who can afford to pay for their security« (p. 209). He concludes that »we can expect effective and sustainable peace processes only if the structural causes of conflict are removed, if political primacy over the military is established, if there is respect for traditional forms of conflict regulation, if the non-violent groups in conflict-endemic societies are strengthened, and if good governance and human security are observed« (p. 213) at each of these levels.

Overall, the book skillfully integrates two seemingly unrelated trends in international relations, internationalization and privatization, into a coherent discussion of a widening array of post-9/11 security challenges. Wulf's analysis and his recommendations for a multi-level public monopoly of violence present a refreshing alternative to the many recent American scholarly attempts to develop grand theories for a security strategy that will, on purpose or by default, manifest and legitimize American military preponderance as the sole or, at a minimum, the most important factor in preventing (or should we say »pre-empting?«) vio-

lence and protecting Western capitalist visions of a peaceful future. Although Wulf's criticism of contemporary US foreign policy is well founded and effectively substantiated, there is no contending that at least for the foreseeable future, the United States will remain the dominant force behind economic and military globalization. Regrettably, given current US leadership, one is inclined to predict a continuation of exactly the same unilateral, preemptive, self-ab-

sorbed and increasingly outsourced policies that Wulf criticizes. To present a practical and effective alternative strategy, Wulf's model, though inherently consistent, will need to convince those it criticizes most. Unfortunately, the book provides no concrete suggestions for how the United States could be persuaded to change its strategic course from preemptive unilateralism to one that embraces multilateralism, nonviolent conflict resolution, global develop-

ment, democratic control of civil society and the armed forces, and respect for international law.

Besides a more extensive discussion of how the idea of a public monopoly of violence could be translated into political practice, my main critique of this book rests in the fact that the various aspects of internationalization (I and II) and privatization (I and II) presented throughout the book could have been integrated more deliberately into

the discussion of controlling the democratic deficit. But these are only minor quibbles about an innovative approach to understanding the effects of internationalization and privatization on the future of war and peace and about a book that I heartily recommend to scholars and practitioners alike who are interested in understanding the global security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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