



Outsourcing: An Impact to Readiness?

Cynthia M. Robertson

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Contractors have been used for the defense of countries throughout history. Historians give us both positive and negative impacts of using contractors. Positive impacts were the support and augmentation they offered to the troops. Negative impacts primarily resulted because of priorities over profit and fear of proximity to the war. Our policies are leading us back to the use of contractors for battlefield support. We have expanded the historical definition and premise for outsourcing to privatization and commercialization. In today's environment of the end of the Cold War and DoD downsizing, policy dictates more use of commercial products and outsourcing primarily to take advantage of commercial technology and reduce the costs of our weapon systems. It has also forced commanders to use contractors to fill the gaps in force structure. It is important that we understand the environment of the commercial world to best adapt its assets to our defense environment. The DoD is responsible for the security of our national interests. Our citizens pay our defense forces to maintain that security. Because we use our taxpayer's money to fund our weapon systems, we are obligated to account for that money. We should also be obligated to correlate the readiness impact of this reform initiative. This paper seeks to define potential impacts to combat readiness of using contractors to support/perform battlefield operations. It will present both positive and negative results and recommend a smart use in today's environment. The structure of this paper will be in accordance with Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) Research Handbook guidelines: Part I: Introduction, Part II: Background, Part III: Issue(s) Analysis, and Part IV: Conclusions/Summary/Recommendations. The scope of the paper will be focused on battlefield operations, those functions that impact our readiness. In doing so, the background will address the definitions of readiness and battlefield operations.

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