

The Coming Natural Gas Boom Obama's "Repower America" initiative will pour billions into new energy projects – creating an estimated 5 million NEW U.S. jobs! Domestic oil and natural gas production is projected to surge... handing profits hand over fist to a leading manufacturer of oil and natural gas pipelines and drilling equipment. Find out this company's name and why it's **The Motley Fool's Top Pick for 2009** in a new FREE report called "The Only Energy Stock You'll Ever Need!" [Click here for instant access to this FREE report](#)

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2005

Keeping The Peace In Iraq...With Private Armies

by Michael in New York on [8/16/2005 02:00:00 AM](#)

A very good NYT article about the **25,000+ soldiers of fortune/mercenaries or -- as they prefer -- private security company employees who provide extensive protection in Iraq.** Since we have 140,000 troops there, it's obvious these often elite former soldiers are a crucial element in keeping the peace (not to mention the 50,000- 75,000 unarmed civilian workers from Halliburton et al). Frankly, we're desperately short of boots on the ground and Iraq would be in far worse shape if these hired guns weren't there as well. Some fascinating details in the story, which begins with a look at one company, Triple Canopy:

For guns, too, Triple Canopy had to make do. Transporting firearms from the United States required legal documents that the company couldn't wait for; instead, in Iraq, it got Department of Defense permission to visit the dumping grounds of captured enemy munitions. The company took mounds of AK-47's and culled all that were operable.

So Triple Canopy had vehicles and it had assault rifles, and when it needed cash in Iraq, to pay employees or buy equipment or build camps, it dispatched someone from Chicago, the company's home, with a rucksack filled with bricks of hundred-dollar bills. "All the people in Iraq had to say is, 'We need a backpack,'" Mann said. "Or, 'We need two backpacks.'" Each pack held half a million dollars....

Throughout his time as head of the C.P.A., L. Paul Bremer III, whom the insurgency may well have viewed as its highest-value target, was protected by a Triple Canopy competitor, Blackwater USA. Private gunmen, according to Lawrence Peter, are now guarding four U.S. generals. Triple Canopy protects a large military base. And throughout Iraq, the defense of essential military sites like depots of captured munitions has been informally shared by private soldiers and U.S. troops....

"Sure, they are performing a military role," Garner said of the companies. Then, while noting that he wasn't criticizing the Department of Defense, he added, **"The gut problem is the force" -- that is, the U.S. fighting force -"is too small."** And Bearpark, who has lately become a consultant to a large security firm, maintained that private protection might sometimes be better than what a regular army could offer. The private teams are more streamlined and flexible, he argued; they are often better trained for the job; and they may be willing to take more risks, allowing officials to move more freely. But about the fundamental reason for the C.P.A.'s hiring of the companies, he said: **"The military just hadn't provided enough numbers. It was stretched to the limit."**

There's much more, all interesting. By the way, these men are guarding generals but the Defense Dept. insists they're not performing military functions. Yeah right.



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