

UDC 356.15(470+571)“1998/2013”
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.34.324616

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Bibliographic Description of the Article: Kryvyziuk, L., & Onishchuk, O. (2025). Creation of the first private military and security companies in the Russian Federation (1998 – 2013). *Skhidnoievropeiskyi Istorychnyi Visnyk [East European Historical Bulletin]*, 34, 146–156. doi: 10.24919/2519-058X.34.324616

**CREATION OF THE FIRST PRIVATE MILITARY AND SECURITY COMPANIES
IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (1998 – 2013)**

Abstract. The purpose of the research. The author set himself the aim of researching and revealing the creation of the first Russian private military and security companies at the end of the 1990s, as a modern mercenarism phenomenon of previous generations. **The research methodology** is based on the general scientific principles of objectivity, systematicity and historicism. In the research there have been used general scientific methods: logical, analysis, synthesis, periodization and the others, as well as special methods of historical research: historical and genetic, historical and comparative, chronological. **The scientific novelty** of the obtained results consists in the comprehensive analysis of the creation process of the first private military and private security companies in the Russian Federation from the end of the 1990s to the beginning of the 2000s, their tasks, geography of activity, peculiarities of training and motivation of mercenaries. **Conclusions.** After analyzing the recent research and publications, it has been determined that the first among Russian private military and security companies at the end of the 1990s there were established “Orel-Antiterror”, “RIK”, “Ferox”, Moran Security Group, “RSB-Group”, Vega, “Slavyansky Corps” and “Wagner”. Private military

and security companies became a very promising and attractive business. In fact, they became a tool in the hands of pro-government Russian oligarchic groups to satisfy their business interests both domestically and abroad. The emergence of such structures has significantly expanded the ability of the Russian Federation to project its influence through military means in different regions of the world, in particular in Ukraine since 2014 and since 2015 in Syria, using hybrid influence and methods that the state cannot officially use. Private military companies were controlled by the Russian special services and staffed mainly by ex-servicemen from various power bodies and who had combat experience. Training of mercenaries was carried out in training centres and on military training grounds. Open or covert support of mercenaries, in particular financial, was provided by the state. The motivational factor for mercenaries was financial mainly.

Key words: mercenarism, mercenary private army, private military company, private security company, Russian mercenaries.

СТВОРЕННЯ ПЕРШИХ ПРИВАТНИХ ВІЙСЬКОВИХ ТА ОХОРОННИХ КОМПАНІЙ У РОСІЙСЬКІЙ ФЕДЕРАЦІЇ (1998 – 2013)

Анотація. Мета дослідження. Автор поставив за мету дослідити та розкрити створення перших російських приватних військових й охоронних компаній наприкінці 1990-х рр. як сучасне продовження давнього феномена військового найманства. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на загальнонаукових принципах історизму, об'єктивності та системності. У роботі використані загальнонаукові методи: логічний, аналізу, синтезу, періодизації, реконструкції, контент-аналізу та інші, а також спеціальні методи історичного дослідження: історико-генетичний, історико-порівняльний, хронологічний. **Наукова новизна** одержаних результатів полягає у комплексному аналізі процесу створення у Російській Федерації перших приватних військових та охоронних компаній з кінця 1990 – на початку 2000-х рр., їхніх завданнях, складі, географії діяльності, особливостях підготовки та мотивації найманців.

Висновки. Проаналізувавши останні дослідження та публікації, автори з'ясували, що першими серед російських приватних військових та охоронних компаній наприкінці 1990-х років були і "Орел-Антитеррор", "РИК", "Феракс", Moran Security Group, "РСБ-Групп", Vega, "Славянский корпус" і "Вагнер". Приватні військові й охоронні компанії стали дуже перспективним і привабливим бізнесом. Фактично, вони в руках провладних російських олігархічних груп перетворилися на інструмент для задоволення своїх бізнес-інтересів як всередині країни, так і за кордоном. Поява таких структур суттєво розширила можливості Російської Федерації проєктувати свій вплив військовим шляхом у різних регіонах світу, зокрема в Україні з 2014 р. та з 2015 р. – в Сирії, використовуючи гібридний вплив і методи, якими держава офіційно не може скористатися. Приватні військові компанії контролювалися російськими спецслужбами і комплектувалися переважно колишніми військовослужбовцями із різних силових структур, які мали бойовий досвід. Підготовка найманців здійснювалася у тренувальних центрах та на військових полігонах. Відкрито чи приховано підтримку найманцям, зокрема фінансову, надавала держава. Мотиваційним чинником у найманців був переважно фінансовий.

Ключові слова: найманство, наймана приватна армія, приватна військова компанія, приватна охоронна компанія, російські найманці.

Problem Statement. The mercenary warfare practice and involvement of military specialists on a contractual basis in wars and conflicts has a centuries-old history. A widespread use of private military companies (hereinafter referred to as PMCs) in modern wars is closely related to the hybridity of their actions (Melnyk, 2023). The geopolitical changes that occurred in the world with the end of the Cold War prompted a rapid development of a private military industry. Since then, private military and security companies (hereinafter referred to as PMSCs) have become a very promising and attractive business. International humanitarian law experts and analysts predict a rapid spread and expansion of the types of services that PMSCs can provide. A certain prototype and prerequisite for the creation of PMCs in the Russian Federation

(hereinafter referred to as the RF), which have been operating on the territory of Ukraine since 2014 to the present during the current Russo-Ukrainian war (Hrytsiuk, & Lysenko, 2023), were paramilitary formations (organizations and volunteer units) that participated in military conflicts in the post-Soviet space, in particular in Transnistria, the North Caucasus, and Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Ensuring national security and countering Russian armed aggression make this issue relevant and necessitate the need to generalize and study the experience of establishing the first private military and security companies in the Russian Federation.

Review of Recent Research and Publications. The issue of creation and activities of the Russian PMCs is being studied by many scholars and journalists. For example, in 2003, the monograph by M. Boltunov was published (Boltunov, 2003), in which there are described the features of selection and staffing of the Russian private company “Orel-Antiterror” and the “Vympel” group, as well as their main purpose. In 2004, on Radio Liberty there was material by M. Myhalysko (Migalis’ko, 2004), in which there was revealed the scandal surrounding the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as the UN) “Oil for Food” programme, which involved not only the Russians, but also representatives of many countries, as well as some UN officials and a former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. In 2005, the online newspaper “Dilova Stolytsia” published an article (Ves’ mir, 2005), which provided information about the scandal regarding how the Iraqi government sold oil at a low price, for which it received “kickbacks”, and it was also indicated which Russian companies and politicians made money from Iraqi oil. At the same time, it is noted that since 2003, the role and services of the Russian company “Orel-Antiterror” in Iraq have increased significantly.

Since 2014, interest in Russian PMCs has been growing again. For example, on the website of the newspaper “Kont” there was published an article by V. Selivanov (2014), which covers the history of the Russian PMCs operating at that time, and in “Voenno-politicheskoe obozreniye” there is an article about PMCs as a very effective tool of influence (ChVK – jeto, 2014). In 2015, the publication “Crime” published an article about the Kremlin’s mercenaries, in particular about the “Tiger Top-rent Security” detachment of the Russian PMC (Tigr Top-rent sek’juriti, 2015).

In 2017 – 2019, a number of publications were published in various periodicals about the origins of some Russian PMCs and how they ended up in the Middle East (B’orn Vysokij, 2017; V livijskoj armii, 2017; Mihajlova, 2018), how they will “raise the image of the country”, about the selection and activities of the PMC “RSB-Group” and the “Tiger Top-rent Security” unit (My podnimem imidzh, 2018; Chto za kompanija, 2018; Anton Tosh, 2018). In 2019, several publications were published dedicated to PMC “Vega”, its origin and activities (V Sirii dejstvujut, 2019; V Sirii pojavilas’, 2019; ChVK “Vega”, 2019; Andriukaitis, & Sheldon, 2019).

In 2021, materials dedicated to PMC “RSB-Group” were published (Kompanija ChVK, 2021) and analysis of the activities of Russian PMCs in Africa. In 2023, the portal “Word and Deed” published materials about Russian PMCs and named the countries in which they operate (Riefer, 2021) (Yaki pry`vatni vijs`kovi kompaniyi, 2023), as well as the material on “Grey Dynamics” about the services provided by PMC “Vega” (Bertina, 2023). In addition, there are a number of publications dedicated to the Russian PMCs, in particular about “RSB-Group” (O kompanii, 2023; Obshhestvo, 2023), and also “Anti-Terror-Eagle” (Shho ce za kompanija, 2023) and “Moran Security Group” (Moran Security Group, 2023).

We used some methodological recommendations for conducting the study from the publications of Vasyl Ilnytskyi, Mykola Haliv, and Volodymyr Starka (Ilnytskyi, & Telvak, 2018; Ilnytskyi, & Haliv, 2019; Ilnytskyi, Starka, & Haliv, 2022).

The purpose of the article is to do the research and reveal the creation of the first private military and security companies in the Russian Federation (1998 – 2013) as a modern mercenarism phenomenon of previous generations.

Results of the Research. The basis for the formation of the majority of PMOCs in the Russian Federation were former servicemen of the law enforcement agencies who were unable to adapt to civilian life after being discharged from military service. Some of the PMCs ceased their activities for various reasons, but their mercenaries, who had a significant practical experience, became the basis for new similar formations. Another important aspect was that the Russian PMCs were created, as was often declared, to protect “state interests,” but in fact to satisfy business interests of certain oligarchic groups. That is why, they became a tool for “racketeering” natural, financial, production and other resources both within the country and abroad. For example, it is believed that the first such company was the private non-state security company “Orel-Antiterror”, registered in 1998 in the city of Orel (the RF). It should be noted that in some sources, in particular (B’orn Vysokij, 2017; Shho ce za kompanija, 2017 та ил.), this company belongs to the PMC. It should be noted that the status of this company as a security company is spoken about by its founder, Sergey Isakov, former vice-president and deputy chairman of the board of directors of Vnukovo Airlines (Mihajlova, 2018). This company recruited military personnel who had retired to the reserve, primarily from special forces units of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) of the General Staff (GS) of the Armed Forces (AF) of the Russian Federation, the “Vympel” group (Boltunov, 2003) and the Navy. For example, after receiving a contract to raise ships that sank in the port of Basra, the company “Orel-Antiterror” created its own unit of combat swimmers (Selivanov, 2014). No information has been found about the level of payment for their services, benefits, contract terms, and possible compensation in case of death. It is practically closed. The mercenaries were trained according to adapted programmes developed in the Soviet special forces of the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the USSR (Mihajlova, 2018).

The company “Orel-Antiterror” began its activities in Iraq, which at that time was under a trade and financial embargo imposed by the UN Security Council in 1990 after its invasion of Kuwait (Resolution No. 661) (Rezolyuciya 661, 1990; Kasinjuk, 2016, pp. 128–129). Thus, in 1996, within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 986, the UN Oil-for-Food programme was launched, which provided for mitigating the consequences of international sanctions. It gave the then Iraqi authorities the opportunity to export oil under international control and in return purchase food and humanitarian goods for the country’s population (Rezolyuciya 986, 1995; Slobodian, 2013, pp. 122–123). As S. Isakov noted, “we all heard about Baghdad, ... Someone also saw real business opportunities...” (Mihajlova, 2018). Therefore, in 1999, the company “RIC” (in Russian: “Russian Engineering Company”) was established, through which food supplies were sent to Iraq and cheap oil in return. In accordance with the license received, the company “Orel-Antiterror” began to provide protection for industrial facilities, in particular oil pipelines, mineral deposits, seaports, escorting convoys and ensuring the protection (delivery) of cargo. In addition, it took on the retraining of Iraqi special forces, patrolling embassies, and protecting diplomats and private individuals. At the same time, the Russian airline “Vnukovo Airlines” received a monopoly on air services between Iraq and the outside world (Mihajlova, 2018). Thus, the Russian Federation, which saw great business opportunities after the withdrawal of the American military contingent from Iraq (Khamrai, 2012, pp. 204, 223), entered the Iraqi market through private structures.

It should be noted that business opportunities in Iraq were seen not only by the Russian Federation, but also by France, China and other countries, as well as by some UN officials and former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, as a result of which the UN was forced to create an independent expert commission to investigate the scandal related to this programme (Migalis'ko, 2004). There is information that the Iraqi government sold oil at a low price, for which it received “kickbacks” worth \$1.8 billion. The largest amount, \$19 billion out of \$64 billion, was earned from Iraqi oil by Russian companies, in particular RAO “UES of Russia”, “Russian Engineering Company”, “Zarubezhneft”, as well as the leader of the Russian political party “LDPR”, Vladimir Zhyrynovsky (\$8.7 million) (Ves' mir, 2005).

In 2003, after the entry of the Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I) and the start of the US Operation “Freedom to Iraq” (UN recognizes, 2008; Syrinska, 2015, p. 116), the role of the company “Orel-Antiterror” increased significantly, as the number of foreign private security and military companies in the country, as noted in some sources, exceeded 400 (Selivanov, 2014). In the same year, a “Non- governmental educational institution – “Anti-terror” Training Centre was established on the basis of the “Orel-Antiterror” company with the assistance of the Union of Paratroopers of Russia, and owing to a direct support of the state leadership, was able to sign contracts with well-known Russian companies, in particular “Tatneft” and “Energoengineering”, on the protection of their facilities and personnel in Iraq in 2005 – 2007. In 2004 – 2007 Centre took part in the defense of international missions in Iraq. A detachment operated under it “Tigr Top-rent Security LTD (registration – British Virgin Islands) (Bogoslavcev, 2009), as it was formed in 2005 and consisted of veterans of the Russian special services (in 2006 it ceased its activities). There were also settlements by Iraqi civilians, supported by a group of security forces from the Iraqi Ministry for Defense. Only in this composition could it solve the tasks assigned to it: escorting convoys, protecting personnel of oil companies, transported cargo, representative offices, diplomatic missions, and other important civilian and military facilities. The group also engaged in sniper (counter-sniper) training of fighters, riflemen, sappers, radio engineers, rapid response fighters and the others. Therefore, its composition included special forces, snipers, sappers, radio engineers and other specialists. The detachment closely cooperated with the security forces of Iraq, as well as with American and British private companies, in particular Blackwater, ArmorGroup, Control Risks, Aegis, and Pilgrim Group (Tigr Top-rent sek'juriti, 2015; Chto za kompanija, 2018). Thus, as noted by I. Bogoslavets, a Russian veteran of UN special missions in Iraq, Israel and Lebanon, experience was gained in the field of protection and security of the Russian business structures, and owing to it, a favourable climate was created for the entry of even more Russian companies into the war-torn region (Bogoslavcev, 2009). Later, other independent “security groups” (actually PMSCs) were formed on the basis of the “Tigr” detachment, which still operate in the Middle East, performing tasks to protect facilities and communications in various missions of Russian companies, the UN, and on behalf of the Iraqi government, as well as in Afghanistan (2006 – 2007), Israel, Lebanon, Palestine (2006), North Ossetia, and Abkhazia (2008). Among “security groups” are the following ones: “Redoubt-Antiterror”, “Ferax”, “Moran Security Group” (Moran Security Group, 2003) and the others (Riefer, 2021). Since the beginning of the war against Ukraine in 2014, the mercenaries of these PMCs, which we will consider below, have “emerged” in the Ukrainian Crimea and Donbas, albeit in a different capacity. The scope of activity of the company “Orel-Antiterror”, which is not included in governmental structures and has become an entirely independent organization with powerful staff and funding, has expanded its activities to Africa (Nigeria,

Sierra Leone, Angola) and India. The company's representatives also operated in the Balkans, demining the area. For example, in 2008 – 2009 a group of sappers from the “Orel-Antiteror” company demined the area of approximately 1 square. km near the airport of Niš in Serbia (more than 450 pieces of ammunition were destroyed), and in 2009 almost 1.5 sq. km near the city of Parachyn, where the “Pivdenny Potik” (“South Stream”) main gas pipeline was supposed to pass (B'orn Vysokij, 2017; Shho ce za kompanija, 2018). Therefore, the Russian Federation, which at that time did not officially participate in operations in Iraq and other countries through private military (security) companies (PMSCs), could pursue its foreign policy and, above all, economic interests there.

Over the course of ten years, starting in 1998, more than ten PMCs were created in the Russian Federation, which were usually headed by veterans of Russian special services, in particular the Federal Security Service (FSB) of the Russian Federation, the GRU of the General Staff, and, accordingly, were closely connected with them. This is, for example, the PMC “RSB-Group” (“Russian Security Systems”), which was created by a reserve officer of the Border Service of the FSB of the Russian Federation Oleh Krynitsyn (the company's general director) and registered in Moscow in 2011 (My podnimem imidzh, 2018). In June 2022, the Office of Foreign Assets Control – a division of the U.S. Treasury Department that deals with financial intelligence, planning, and the application of economic and trade sanctions to support U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives, states that “RSB-Group” is a PMC and is closely linked to Russian special services, employs highly qualified Russian special forces fighters, including veterans of Russian special services. The company provided services for Russian companies in close coordination with the Russian FSB, including servicing military aircraft in Libya (Lin, 2016). In response, the head of “RSB-Group”, O. Krynitsyn, noted that “the task of our company is not attacking, but deterring. That is, we prevent seizures, attacks, etc., and if necessary, we enter into fire contact. Can we be called a PMC? More likely yes than no” (ChVK – jeto, 2014).

The activities of the “RSB-Group” PMC have several directions: land and sea. It provides military consulting services in high-risk areas, in particular, areas of increased terrorist threat, in areas of military operations, as well as in areas of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans (primarily the Gulf of Aden), where there is a threat of attacks by sea pirates. At sea, this includes armed protection, escort and security of civilian vessels, and conducting security audits of oil and gas offshore platforms. On land, its specialists work in Arab countries, conducting reconnaissance, VIP protection, escorting vehicle convoys, and securing facilities, including radar and IT security. The company also works in the areas of demining (Caucasus, Afghanistan, Serbia, Iraq), a high-level competitive intelligence and analytics (Obshhestvo, 2023; Krinicin, 2023; Kompanija ChVK, 2021). For example, employees of the “RSB-Group” PMC participated in the demining of one of the largest cement plants in Libya in Benghazi, which belongs to the Libyan Cement Company. The contract amount, according to media reports, was \$10 million (V livijskoj armii, 2017).

To perform tasks on the territory of the Russian Federation, the reserve of the “RSB-Group” PMC operates a licensed private security company (PSC), the Limited Liability Company (LLC) “Private Security Organization “RSB-Group” for information and analytical support – a private intelligence company. To perform special operational tasks in the territories of other states, a personnel reserve of about 250 people has been created, which includes reserve officers of special forces units of various branches of the armed forces who have extensive personal combat and operational experience gained in military conflicts both

in the Russian Federation and abroad (O kompanii, 2023). Legally the company purchases and stores weapons (semi-automatic rifles chambered for the NATO cartridge 7.62×51) and equipment (body armor, helmets, spare magazines, first aid kits, “night lights”, binoculars, satellite phones, walkie-talkies, etc.) outside the Russian Federation (Anton Tosh, 2018). The “RSB-Group” has a regional office in Senegal and representative offices in Turkey, Germany and Italy. The units of this private military company simultaneously operate in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The mercenaries of the “RSB-Group” were deployed in Sri Lanka, Libya, Aden, Malacca and Guinea Straits (Yaki pryvatni vijskovi kompaniyi, 2017; TOV, 2023).

The main motive for working for the “RSB-Group” PMC, as the analysis of sources showed, is earnings. The mercenary’s salary is not officially disclosed. There is information that for cargo escorting it was \$80–120 per day (insurance \$250 thousand) (Tosh, 2018), and in the “green zone” of Iraq \$300–500 per day (B’orn Vysokij, 2017). The mandatory criteria for hiring at PMC “RSB-Group”, in addition to those listed on its official website, as noted by company employee Hennadiy Kozachkov, are: recommendation from a trusted person whose opinion is authoritative for the company’s management (if a candidate shows himself from a negative side, not only he will be fired, but also a person who recommended him); knowledge of languages (English is always welcome, and Spanish, French, Arabic – depending on the region of task performance); “the ability to perform assigned tasks without creating problems, responsibility, restraint and composure in any situations. Professional training is a given. The RSB-Group” company selects the best candidates among the available candidates, because as the mercenaries testify, among the veterans of military conflicts “there are many who have problems with their “head” and discipline” (Tosh, 2018).

Employees of the “RSB-Group” PMC do not participate in armed conflicts as mercenaries, and do not consult organizations and groups that have any relation to terrorist organizations (Kompanija ChVK, 2021; Zvonok, 2018). The analyzed sources do not contain information about the participation of the “RSB-Group” PMC in the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine. As the mercenaries note, participation in this conflict can be a significant obstacle to employment (Tosh, 2018; Zvonok, 2018). However, the “RSB-Group” PMC, in coordination with Russian intelligence services, provides services to Russian defense and related companies, thereby directly or indirectly contributing to or supporting the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine (the company is under international and Ukrainian sanctions) (SShA vveli, 2022).

The international corporation “Vegacy Strategic Services Ltd” (“Vega”) occupies a certain place in the global market of private security business, which was founded in 2011 in Mykolayiv (Ukraine) by the Ukrainian citizens Anatoly Smolin and Andriy Kebkalo initially as “Vega Strategic Services”. A year later, in 2012, the company began its work in the Russian Federation (headquarters in Moscow) and received official, but offshore, registration in Cyprus under a new name – “Vega”. Its employees were veterans and former servicemen of special naval, army and police units of Ukraine and Russia, who had significant experience in participating in missions and operations in the so-called “high-risk regions” (ChVK “Vega”, 2019; Bertina, 2023).

It should be noted that in some sources it is called the first “classic” private military company. For example, its co-founder Andriy Kebkalo said in an interview: “The idea of creating “Vega” was based on the desire to provide the first Ukrainian PMC at the international market” (V Sirii pojavilas’, 2019). But the Security Service of Ukraine notes that “Vega” has no relation to “private military companies”. Its scope of activity is related to the work of private security firms and related services aimed at identifying, locating and preventing

potential threats to the security of individuals and legal entities, particularly at sea (armed maritime security). The company has its official representative offices in Malta and Panama, as well as official agents in Greece, the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, the Republic of South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Madagascar and many other countries in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and is one of the few security companies in the world that uses its own weapons (Andriukaitis Lukas, Sheldon Michael, 2019; V Sirii dejstvujut, 2019; Moj tranzit, 2014; ChVK “Vega”, 2019).

“Vega” denies its involvement in the war in Ukraine. However, there is information that since 2016 it has been recruiting mercenaries for the “Wagner” PMC through Russian-controlled security structures. According to the SBU, its Moscow branch, headed by a former citizen of Ukraine from Odesa, Dmytro Dzhynikashvili (in September of 2013 he left for Moscow, where he joined the ranks of the “Slaviansky Corps” PMC and personally participated in the hostilities in Syria, in 2016 – 2017 in the Central African Republic he was a medical instructor in the “Wagner” PMC), in early 2014, was actively used by Russian special services as a cover structure for recruiting mercenaries to participate in the hostilities in Ukraine (V Sirii dejstvujut, 2019). Since the summer of 2018, the company “Vega” has been operating in Syria at the invitation of the Syrian government. It is assumed that there it cooperated with the command of the Russian troops in Syria. It did not participate in the hostilities, but provided security and personal protection for VIPs and various facilities, and was also engaged in training the Palestinian-Syrian group “Al-Quds Brigade” (another name “Jerusalem Brigade”; in Arabian – *فيسدقلا ءاول* Liwa al-Quds), which, as the Lebanese independent newspaper “Al-Modon” notes, is supported by Russia and operates in the Syrian province of Aleppo (Fighting in Aleppo, 2019). The financing of this company’s activities, particularly in Syria, is not disclosed. This may be using profits to cover operating expenses and reinvesting them in market expansion (Bertina, 2023). Thus, from the above mentioned, we can conclude that the company “Vega” has certain connections with the Russian state. Although it did not participate in the hostilities on its behalf, as, for example, the “Wagner” PMC did, it nevertheless “cautiously cooperated” with it, in particular providing services to the governments of countries loyal to and supported by the Russian Federation.

Conclusions. The practice of mercenary warfare and military conflicts, as well as the involvement of military specialists on a contractual basis, has a centuries-old history. The widespread use of PMCs in modern wars is closely related to the hybridity of their actions. The changes that have occurred in the world since the end of the Cold War have prompted a rapid development of the private military industry. Since then, PMSCs have become a very promising and attractive business.

In the article there has been analyzed and revealed the creation of the first Russian PMSCs from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. In particular, it has been determined that the first Russian private companies to be created during the period under study were “Orel-Antiterror”, “RIK”, “Ferax”, Moran Security Group, “RSB-Group”, “Vega”, “Slaviansky Corps”, and “Wagner”. It has been determined that the emergence of such structures has significantly expanded the Russian Federation’s ability to project its influence militarily not only in Transnistria, the North Caucasus, and Yugoslavia, but also in Ukraine since 2014 and in Syria since 2015, using hybrid influence and methods that the state cannot officially use.

A promising direction for further research on this issue may be research on the creation of paramilitary organizations and volunteer units in the Russian Federation, as well as their use in military conflicts (1991 – 2016).

Acknowledgements. We express sincere gratitude to all members of the editorial board for consultations provided during the preparation of the article for publishing.

Funding. The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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*The article was received March 29, 2024.
Article recommended for publishing 27/02/2025.*