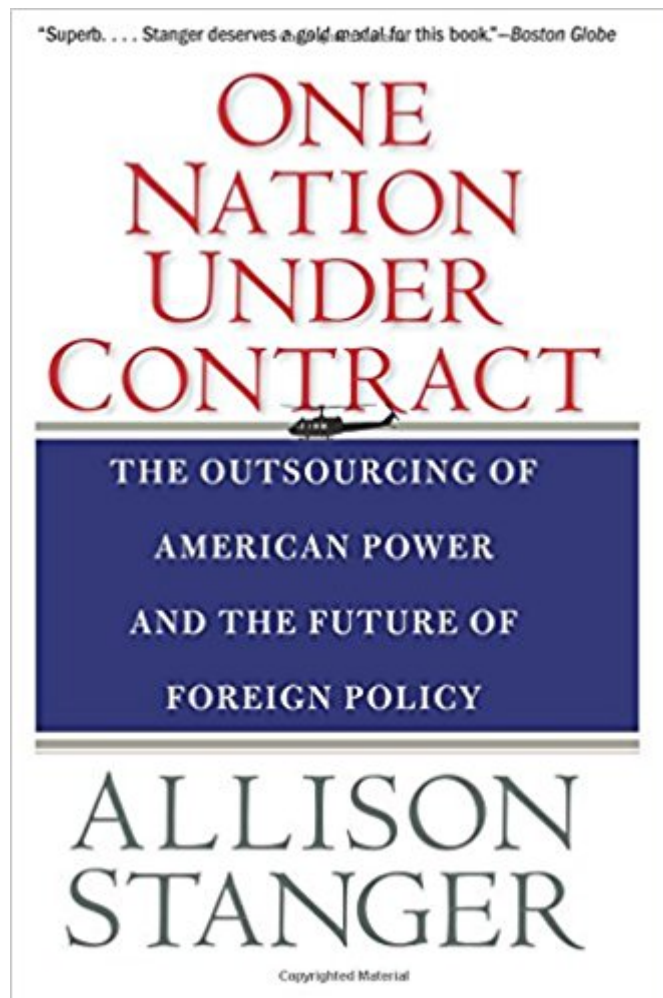




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One Nation Under Contract: The Outsourcing Of American Power And The Future Of Foreign Policy



Synopsis

International relations scholar Allison Stanger shows how contractors became an integral part of American foreign policy, often in scandalous ways—but also maintains that contractors aren't the problem; the absence of good government is. Outsourcing done right is, in fact, indispensable to America's interests in the information age. Stanger makes three arguments. The outsourcing of U.S. government activities is far greater than most people realize, has been very poorly managed, and has inadvertently militarized American foreign policy; Despite this mismanagement, public-private partnerships are here to stay, so we had better learn to do them right; With improved transparency and accountability, these partnerships can significantly extend the reach and effectiveness of U.S. efforts abroad. The growing use of private contractors predates the Bush Administration, and while his era saw the practice rise to unprecedented levels, Stanger argues that it is both impossible and undesirable to turn back the clock and simply re-absorb all outsourced functions back into government. Through explorations of the evolution of military outsourcing, the privatization of diplomacy, our dysfunctional homeland security apparatus, and the slow death of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Stanger shows that the requisite public-sector expertise to implement foreign policy no longer exists. The successful activities of charities and NGOs, coupled with the growing participation of multinational corporations in development efforts, make a new approach essential. Provocative and far-reaching, *One Nation Under Contract* presents a bold vision of what that new approach must be.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stanger, professor of international politics and economics at Middlebury College, comes to admirably nuanced conclusions in this important assessment of the trend of outsourcing critical tasks in the areas of foreign aid, defense, diplomacy and domestic security. Her analysis finds nothing inherently pernicious in the Bush administration's outsourcing of Iraqi security and reconstruction; contracting is a necessity given the ascendancy of the private sector as a key player in diplomacy in a globalized world. The executive branch's error has been to outsource proper oversight and contractor accountability—•a laissez-faire approach she finds dangerous. Stanger is also troubled by the Pentagon's usurpation (and militarizing) of diplomatic and nation-building roles previously under the aegis of the State Department. She argues that the government must recognize that power in the 21st century flows from new sources and complacency at this stage threatens the government with enervation and possible obsolescence. These are vital, well-made and worrying points—•readers will hope that the executive branch will heed the author's call to take the plunge and re-imagine government itself. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"As governments around the world contract out important tasks to private corporations, Allison Stanger has asked the key question: how do citizens reestablish effective oversight over private-public partnerships? One Nation Under Contract is a clarion call to bring the business of government under more effective public control.' Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada 'As we debate how many more troops to dispatch to Afghanistan, it might be a good time to also debate just how far we've already gone in hiring private contractors to do jobs that the State Department, Pentagon and C.I.A. once did on their own. A good place to start is with... One Nation Under Contract.' Thomas Friedman, New York Times"

To be honest, I couldn't finish the book. Initially it was interesting and was thinking that it was going to be more about factual anecdotes about how the government outsources much of its power overseas and how it went wrong but it seems more of a term paper with constant references to other books and articles.

Some of the talking points and statistics in this book are quite interesting to learn about. I feel however that the book is too textbook - Statistics and graphs and redundant points get tiresome. Of course, this is partly my fault since I was not aware of the authour's writing style prior to buying the

book. Ultimately the book fills us in on the laissez-faire going-ons of the U.S. government. Some of it is I'm sure well-known fact and some it may well surprise some of you who do not necessarily follow politics closely. I personally feel the issues posed in this book are bound to be replicated in future administrations just as government really has not changed in the last 70 to 100 years, so ultimately I believe the readers of this book will become jaded a week after reading. Then again...perhaps I am a pessimist? NOTE: I just noticed that I reviewed the paperback edition by accident - I purchased the Kindle Edition - It doesn't change my review of the book of course; however, I would point out that the Kindle Edition suffers from some poor formatting.

Very insightful and informative book. The subject is detailed and explained well, for every reader to feel the impact that our country experiences with using businesses within government to operate. The association is a two edged effect, and has implications far beyond stated public political policies. A must read for any American!

Started it and lost it before I could finish... Was a bit too much for myself to handle.

The book gives us a clear picture about the enormous problems that the government is facing because of the abnoxious influence of the special interest and the corrupt politicians that are at their service...greed is the name of the game.

Allison Stanger's new book, *One Nation Under Contract: The Outsourcing of American Power And The Future of Foreign Policy*, is must reading for anyone concerned with the architecture of foreign policy. It is particularly valuable for those of us whose public service predates the outsourcing explosion of recent years. Prof. Stanger paints her picture of the wholly transformed landscape that statesmen inhabit in the 21st century with stunning hard data meticulously collected and analyzed. It is this grounding of her argument in numbers that pierced the shell of experiential knowledge that blinded me to the transformation of institutions I once worked in and now study. Her argument is that the U.S. government has embraced outsourcing its overseas agenda as a solution for every international problem, with disastrous unintended consequences. That combined with a simultaneous explosion of creative initiatives bubbling up from below, both in the for-profit and not-for profit sectors, have real foreign policy impact. For her, the transformation of the politics and process of foreign policy elevates the "how" above the "what" and means that implementation defines the substance and has led to a militarization of American foreign policy. Finally, she situates

these power shifts of the disaggregated state within the context of a private sector populated by corporations with unprecedented global muscle. As a gardener, I understand the importance of surging plant material in the landscape. When I began gardening in earnest on Cape Cod in 2004, I planted native shrubs, like Red Osier Dogwood, to quickly fill the gaps until the specimen trees I had planted to replace our beloved but dying Pitch Pines could mature. For years the Red Osier performed beautifully. Then, I noticed that they were overwhelming the garden scheme by suckering and fountaining. Suckers, as any good gardener knows, are often undesirable because "the plant's energy is diverted to the sucker rather than to crown growth." The solution is to prune those suckers and, every few years, reshape the plant to constrain its growth and conform its shape to the desired landscape. Allison Stanger has the same advice for the U.S. government: get out those loppers. Collaboration with private sector entities in pursuit of national security is essential in this networked world and certain naturalizing of government functions in the private sector is healthy. The foreign affairs landscape is changing organically and cannot be returned to some old-fashioned topiary filled parterre. But, if the national interest and the public good are to be served rather than private profit, principals in the foreign affairs agencies need to get out their shears and prune those suckers!

This book was a good read, gets fairly well into the subject. Only complaint I have is that now I'm pissed off about the massive waste. LOL

the product showed up as they said it would and on time. can't ask for much more.

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