

Sample essay on history of private security

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Private security is mostly associated with the modern age. However, the concept of private security dates back to over three hundred years ago. At the moment, private security occupies a central place in the security apparatus of the United States. Private security has been defined as an industry involved in the provision of the requisite personnel and equipment necessary for the prevention of losses occasioned by human error and emergencies, but with a view to making profits (Nalla, 2001). The major difference between private security system and the mainstream public security system usually availed by the government is that the former is motivated by the making of profits and is, therefore, run as a private business venture. The United States Bureau of Statistics defines companies that provide private security as those that are primarily engaged in the provision of guard and patrol services. In modern day, the United States boasts in having over 10, 000 private security companies that rake in revenue of over \$15 billion annually. Further, the sector is a major employer with its employees far outnumbering those engaged by the public as police and other employees. More so, the prospects for increased employment are the sector is bright as the number of private security guards is on the increase necessitated by increasing security threats and the need for increased security (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008). This paper seeks to explore the historical development of private security in the United States as well as discuss the factors that have led to its increased significance. Next, the paper will examine the sector's trend towards professionalism and make a case for why security experts in modern day need to have an interest in the historical development of the industry.

As highlighted in the introductory section of this paper, private security is as old as the need for protection. Nonetheless, the need for private security has increased with age and at the moment; it occupies a central place in the security apparatus of most countries. The concept of private security has its first origins in Ancient Egypt as early as the 13th century B. C where the first examples of private security forces are recorded (Nalla, 2001). However, this paper will restrict itself to the development of private security in the United States. Security in the United States has evolved from the period of the first settlers to the modern day well trained forces. The need for private security was influenced by the Industrial Revolution that coincided with the development of factories and an epidemic of criminal activities. Borrowing from England, the first instance of private security in the United States was in the year 1850 with the creation of the first private security agency known as the Pinkerton Agency. The agency was named after its founder, Allan Pinkerton, who was a former Chicago police detective. Though the main employment for this agency was the creation of railroads that traversed the country, the security forces of the agency were hired by the then President, Abraham Lincoln to conduct espionage during the Civil War. Following this, other private security firms such as Wells Fargo and Brinks evolved (Nalla, 2001). It is not clear as to the period within which the first proprietary forces security forces emerged though Henry Ford is attributed as the man behind the refining of ' in-house' security to factory work. The popularity of private security increased with the rise in the automobile industry as industries that provided the materials to factories that manufactured automobiles made use of private security personnel. The Great Depression that was characterized

by increased unemployment and increase in crime further entrenched private security into the security apparatus of the United States. The raging of the war in Europe caused the then U. S President Roosevelt to issue an executive order that gave the War Department of the United States the mandate to not only procure, but also train private security so as to guard the country against any aggression. The bombing of the Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entry into the war by the United States necessitated the further need for war materials, thus fuelling the proliferation of private security. Indeed, by the middle of this war, over ten thousand factories in the United States were guarded by private security (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008). Upon the end of the war, the United States federal government had set a standard that companies in the security sector continued to keep to. Private security firms also adopted these measures thus setting into being the birthing of the first generation of private security managers and the utilization of technology to further the efficiency of security systems. The advent of computer technology has continued to revolutionize the sector by increasing the abilities and the overall spectrum of the security industry with the increasing global security threats, there hassled to a greater and increased need for private security to aid the public sector. This was more so the case in this age where there is dipping budgets for public law enforcement (Nalla, 2001).

The increased significance of private security in the United States and the world over as already hinted is a result of a convergence of factors. A brief glance at the past is helpful at this juncture. Private security gained its foothold in the nineteenth century as it emerged to fill the gaps that were

left by the public law enforcement agencies both in terms of manpower, as well as ingenuity. As such, it may, therefore, be stated that private security increased owing to the inadequacies of the public law enforcement in terms of manpower. Due to growth in the economy, there was a greater need for increased personnel, a gap that could not be adequately met by the public security agencies. Consequently, the private sector opted for private security agencies. More so, it was a lucrative trade and business people ventured into the field to avail the much needed resource (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008). It is also important to note that the public law enforcement was also not adequately resourced in terms of skill or ingenuity. Private security, therefore, aimed at plugging this gap created by a deficiency of ingenuity on the part of public law enforcers. As mentioned in this paper, there has been shrinking budgetary allocations towards the public security agencies, which has simply meant that it is unable to keep up with the bludgeoning spectrum of responsibilities. Further, the increased security threats such as terrorism have stretched the public security agencies to the limits, thus precipitating the need to engage private security firms and agencies (Nalla, 2001). It is the case that the private security in the United States is inexorably moving towards professionalism. It is essential to note that since security has for a long time been in the domain or a preserve of the state, there had not been a standardized system for all security agencies. However, there has been a growing trend towards this end in the recent past. In the year 2008, the Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce published a paper seeking to generate debate over issues pertinent to security agencies (Taskforce, 2008). Such issues included key standards, professional status, educational

requirements, professional accountability and professional unity. There is now a greater focus within the discipline on education and training, code of ethics and professional knowledge.

As evident from the foregoing, it is critical for the security professional today, to have background information on the historical development of private security so as to appreciate the milestones that the sector has made. Such knowledge will greatly aid in the understanding the reasons attending the development of private security and why it is a great asset in this day and age where there is a need for increased vigilance. It will also inform one of the variances that have been there with respect to standards in the security sector as the country and the world at large moves towards military privatization (Nalla, 2001).

References

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