

Volume 4, Number 4 January-February, 2009 PeaceOps.com

# JIPO

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS

New Iraqi SOFA Throws  
Contractors Under the Bus

Q & A with Mo Ibrahim

Iraq Versus Vietnam:  
A Comparative Analysis

We Don't Get No Respect

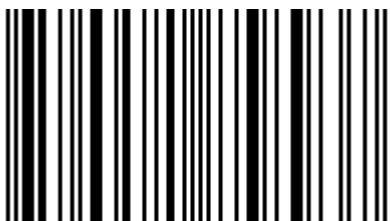


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## PEACEKEEPING IN CONGO

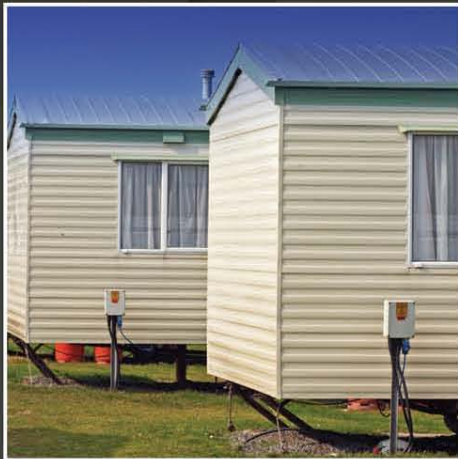


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Volume 4, Number 4 January-February, 2009

# JIPO

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS

THE PUBLICATION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION  
*Founded in 2004 as the IPOA Quarterly*  
ISSN 1933-8189 ISBN 978-0-9818589-3-7

*Editor-in-Chief*..... J. J. Messner     *Publisher*..... Doug Brooks  
*Assistant Editor* .....Emma Cosgrove     *Business Manager*..... Jared Lawyer  
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Doug Brooks

# Zusätzliche Friedenswächter Bitte!

## Time for Germany to Pull Its Weight in Peacekeeping



Photo: Cherie A. Thurlby /U.S. Department of Defense

**W**ITH only a tiny military capability, Canada was the last Western country to provide significant NATO-class military units to support international operations in the more dangerous and less popular missions, a role of which Canadians are justifiably proud. For many Westerners the mere fact that the West helps to authorize and largely pays for U.N. missions is more than enough, but for decades it was the Canadians who backed their ideals with professional soldiers. Although not every mission has been successful, a Canadian presence certainly enhanced the odds. Canada continues to live up to its internationalist tradition by robustly supporting NATO efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. However, those operations require the same troops that would otherwise be serving on more direct humanitarian operations. Canada's absence offers an opportunity for other Western nations to take the lead – most obviously Germany.

International peace operations, especially in places that have no direct

national interest for the West, are overwhelmingly populated by militaries from less developed countries. Although these forces can be well trained, they rarely have the equipment, specialized capabilities and other kinds of support that NATO-class militaries take for granted. As a result, the most deadly humanitarian catastrophes and difficult military operations in the world are being courageously addressed by militaries lacking critical tools necessary for success. Some of the missing capabilities can be replaced with private sector services, but Germany, Western Europe's largest NATO partner, is best positioned to assist in bolstering the effectiveness of these international peace operations.

The Germans have the ideal Western military for peace operations with the largest military in Western Europe. They have been leaders in numerous international military collaborations, including the SHIRBRIG – the joint European 'Standby High Readiness Brigade' that successfully deployed in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peacekeeping

operation. In the Balkans, the Germans demonstrated that they could in fact provide critical support to international efforts. They have also been proactive in raising ethical international issues within the European Union. For clear historical reasons, no citizens in the world have a sense of humanitarian responsibility like the Germans.

German military personnel have indicated an interest in playing a more significant role in international peace operations, but some concerns remain to be addressed, particularly the fact that many German soldiers are actually conscripts, and the thornier issue of political realities. The first issue is easily resolved: deployments to peace operations could require the express willingness of the soldiers to deploy to international humanitarian missions. The second issue of political realities is, however, more difficult, and certainly requires political leadership, but the obvious humanitarian value should make it a logical next step forward for Germany after the Balkans. Although these ► 06

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**04** ◀ idealistic issues are too easily buried in the minutia of domestic politics, the relevance – and effectiveness – of the international community depends on Germany taking a significant lead.

Germans certainly share the Western aversion to body-bags returning from foreign conflicts – especially from those not obviously in a country's direct national interest, but this raises a third issue: an extraordinary and uniquely post-Second World War aversion to causing casualties. Yet this magnificently laudable principle also infers contempt for the international peacekeepers from scores of other nations pledged to battle in support of international principles.

Robust international mandates are justified under international law and



*A German soldier in Afghanistan ... one of the safer bits. Photo: Bundeswehr.*

## Germans standing idle in the face of shocking violence against civilians – especially with such proficient military capability available – is unjustifiable.

have the clear and simple overarching humanitarian goal of preserving civilian life on a mass scale.

While Germans themselves must internally struggle with this issue, standing idle in the meantime in the face of shocking violence against civilians – especially with such proficient military capability available – is unjustifiable. Exorcising the sins of the 20th century will require the sublimation of domestic apprehensions about contributing to the obvious greater global good. International mandates are sparing in their authorization for the use of force, but if the collective international humanitarian will is to have any meaning, the finer militaries, including the German forces, must be prepared to robustly support greater humanitarian ideals.

What does this have to do with the private sector? Nothing directly. The ultimate objective of peacekeeping and stability operations is to save lives. Whether the Germans exercise their humanitarian potential or not, the private sector will continue to actively support peacekeeping operations in Darfur, Eastern Congo, Haiti and other places – largely ignored by the West – where the international community is attempting to make a difference.

Many Germans have sincere reservations about the role of for-profit companies working in conflict and post-conflict environments, and they will no doubt air those opinions. But success in peace operations has enormous humanitarian implications, and the private sector will be there...

with or without German support.

I frequently highlight the reality that, beyond funding, the West has abrogated responsibility to directly support international peace operations. This absence of significant Western military presence helps me justify the critical role of the private sector in supporting these essential humanitarian missions. That said, more than any other Western country, Germany has a conscience, an internationalist perspective on the future, and a large and professional military. No other nation has the capability, the capacity and the moral imperative to take leadership in creating a 21st century global peacekeeping reality that finally relegates the horrors of the past century to the history books. ■

# Contracting Under the SOFA

## New Agreement Subjects Contractors to Iraqi Criminal and Civil Laws



U.S. President George W. Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. Photo: Eric Draper/White House.

ON November 16, 2008, the executive branches of the United States and the Republic of Iraq approved a status of forces agreement (SOFA) providing for the withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Iraq no later than December 31, 2011, and regulating the presence and activities of U.S. forces in Iraq in the meantime. President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki signed ceremonial copies of the SOFA in Baghdad on December 14.

### Behind the SOFA

The United States and Iraq were under significant pressure to execute a SOFA before December 31, 2008, the expiration date of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1790 (2007) which had extended the “mandate of the multinational force in [Iraq] – ‘for the last time.’” Both governments issued public statements in the months of negotiations leading up to the signing of the SOFA insisting that an agreement authorizing the continuing presence of U.S.

Forces in Iraq must be reached before the expiration of Resolution 1790.

Eager to get the SOFA signed and to herald Iraq’s sovereignty, the U.S. government acceded to Iraq’s demand that U.S. contractors be denied the immunity previously granted to them under Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order 17. Under CPA Order 17, contractors could not be arrested or detained by Iraqi authorities and were “not subject to Iraqi laws or regulations in matters relating to the terms and conditions of their contract.”

Under the terms of the SOFA, U.S. citizens who are contractors in Iraq will be subject to the jurisdiction of Iraqi criminal and civil courts beginning on January 1, 2009. Additionally, State and Department of Defense officials have advised contractors asking about the status of employees not covered in the terms of the SOFA (such as third-country nationals) to “assume no-one is immune” from Iraqi jurisdiction.

### Iraqi Judicial System: A Primer

So, what should contractors operating in Iraq know about the Iraqi judicial system? Much of the written code and procedure in the Iraqi judicial system is descendant from the same Napoleonic Code that formed the basis for many of the legal systems in continental Europe. However, according to specialists in human rights law and practitioners on the ground in Iraq, there is an apparent current disconnect between the rule of law as codified in Iraq, and the actual operation of the judicial system in its detention centers, prisons and courtrooms.

Contractors should familiarize themselves with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq report issued on December 2, 2008. The U.N. report sharply criticizes Iraq’s judicial system as suffering from systemic human rights abuses. It notes that “many detainees have been deprived of their liberty for months or even years, often under ► 08

07 ◀ precarious physical conditions, without access to defense counsel, or without being formally charged with a crime or produced before a judge. Continuing allegations of widespread torture and ill-treatment of inmates are of particular concern.” Moreover, “slow bureaucratic procedures, insufficient resources, degraded infrastructure and lack of effective accountability measures result in inordinate delays in processing detainees’ cases.”

The U.N. report describes widespread and routine torture or ill-treatment of detainees in pre-trial detention facilities, including police stations. Many prisoners interviewed by the U.N. claimed to have been beaten or otherwise ill-treated, particularly upon arrest or while undergoing initial interrogation, most commonly to extract forced confessions from them. Allegations include beatings with cables and fists and forcing detainees to remain in stressful positions for prolonged periods. The U.N. also found that judicial investigators fail to advise detainees of their right to a lawyer and their right to silence.

According to the U.N. report, the situation appears particularly grim in areas under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In one sample group of 55 KRG detainees, 38 had been held for up to four years without referral to an investigative judge, charge or transfer to court. Moreover, between April and June 2008, the U.N. documented 16 cases of detainees who were tortured during investigations by both security and intelligence officials, including two detainees who alleged being raped during investigations. These detainees allegedly suffered internal injuries and did not receive adequate medical attention.

The U.N. report’s recommendations

section encourages Iraq to adopt measures to ensure basic rights for defendants: grant detainees access to legal counsel, ensure that persons are not held without being charged with cognizable offenses, address the issue of detainee abuse by law enforcement and detention personnel, alleviate overcrowding of detention facilities, improve sanitation and hygiene conditions, and crack down on the intimidation and arrest of media professionals. U.S. contractors need to understand that the U.N. recommendations have no immediate or guaranteed effect in Iraq, and that nothing in the SOFA guarantees U.S. citizen contractors even basic U.S. constitutional protections while serving U.S. interests in Iraq.

The lack of protections for U.S. contractors in Iraq differs sharply from the protections given U.S. service members and civil servants in the SOFA. For example, a U.S. soldier arrested by the Iraqi police must be handed over to U.S. authorities within 24 hours of detention or arrest. By contrast, a U.S. citizen contractor arrested by the Iraqi police will be left to the disposition of the Iraqi judicial system – left entirely to sit in the Iraqi jail, awaiting Iraqi justice.

Contrary to some reports in the media, the SOFA does not fill a jurisdiction gap in accountability over U.S. contractors. There are already jurisdictional means by which U.S. courts can hold contractors in Iraq accountable for their actions under both the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Any prior failure to investigate and prosecute allegations of contractor wrongdoing in Iraq has been due to an absence of political and prosecutorial will on behalf of the U.S. government, not due to a lack of jurisdiction.

Nonetheless, starting January 1, 2009, the U.S. government can only obtain jurisdiction over U.S. citizen contractors suspected of wrong-doing if the Iraqi government “waives its primary right of jurisdiction in a particular case.” The SOFA does not require Iraq to notify the U.S. authorities when U.S. citizen contractors are arrested, meaning that the arrest of an American citizen may not even come to the U.S. government’s attention. According to the Department of State, there will be no exceptions to this deference to Iraqi sovereignty, not even if a contractor is arrested for doing exactly what his U.S. government contract obligated him to do.

Companies already under contract supporting U.S. interests in Iraq are understandably concerned and overwhelmed with unanswered questions. A few days after the signing of the SOFA, representatives from the Departments of State and Defense faced questions from contractors at meetings convened ostensibly to provide answers to many unresolved questions surrounding implementation of the SOFA. The contractors asked wide-ranging questions about Iraqi criminal and civil law, including:

- Will Iraqi criminal jurisdiction be retroactive, so that U.S. citizens in Iraq can be charged for offenses allegedly occurring years ago?
- Will employees already back in the U.S. now be subject to extradition if they are charged in Iraq?
- Will criminal defendants have rights to or access to legal counsel, basic sanitation and health care?
- In the civil court system, will Iraqi courts allow pre-judgment attachment of U.S. contractor assets, and will contractor equipment in Iraq be seized if a contractor is sued?

The U.S. government left each of these questions unanswered, and as of the date of this draft, has ▶ 10





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**08** ◀ offered no follow-on guidance on any of the issues raised.

The clear take-away for U.S. contractors is that they must independently become conversant in all aspects of Iraqi law, its civil and criminal procedure, as well as administrative requirements for licensing, customs, taxation, etc. Potential ways to mitigate the costs of that undertaking are discussed below.

What exactly contractors must now learn is outlined in the SOFA to some extent. Under Article 3 of the SOFA, contractors may only transfer people into or out of Iraq “in accordance with applicable Iraqi laws and regulations, including implementation arrangements as may be agreed to by the Government of Iraq.” Article 8 references “applicable Iraqi environmental laws, regulations and standards.” Article 9 requires respect for the relevant rules of land and maritime safety and movement, aviation and air navigation. Article 11 might mean that contractors face fees for using communications frequencies. Article 13 suggests that contractor personnel can be prohibited from possessing and carrying weapons. The list goes on: Article 15 (Import and Export), Article 16 (Taxation), Article 17 (Licenses or Permits), and Article 20 (Currency). This is just the beginning of what contractors must do to accommodate the change in jurisdiction.

Contractors should also be aware that Iraqi jurisdiction (and the predictable media coverage of every contractor arrest) will mean additional civil suits in U.S. courts against contractor companies. There are several types of domestic suits against contractors that could be based on incidents in Iraq, and contractors operating in Iraq should begin to prepare for them.

First, contractors are subject to potential civil and criminal litigation in U.S. federal court every time a contractor employee injures a civilian in Iraq. In recent years numerous cases alleging violations of the Alien Tort Claims Act and Torture Victim Protection Act have been brought against U.S. companies based on their work in Iraq. There has also been an increase in lawsuits charging U.S. companies with violating various other human rights conventions, as well as a long list of potential state law torts such as wrongful death, negligence, battery and false imprisonment.

Now that U.S. contractors are susceptible to Iraqi criminal prosecution, there is every reason to believe that Iraqi charges for alleged contractor misconduct will be followed in short order by stateside civil litigation seeking monetary damages as soon as U.S. plaintiffs’ lawyers can identify the victims and their families.

Secondly, companies will also face lawsuits brought by their own employees (or families of employees) based on incidents in Iraq. “Failure to warn” and “fraudulent inducement” employment contract lawsuits are already a common way of blaming companies for sending employees into harms way.

The U.N. report discussed earlier could become “Exhibit A” in such suits. There are ways to mitigate those risks though, through employee notifications, warnings, training programs and litigation risk assessment reviews of policies and procedures.

The SOFA means that companies will face increased litigation risks, have to learn the ins and outs of Iraqi law, modify their operations and train their employees accordingly, negotiate

costly new insurance coverage, replace employees who decide to seek employment elsewhere rather than subject themselves to Iraqi jurisdiction, all the while not defaulting on contracts. It’s a tall order.

Companies should give their existing contracts a close read and consider whether any of these increased costs can be passed through to the government. Contractors should work with individual contracting officers to obtain equitable adjustments to cost and schedule based on clauses requiring “compliance with all local laws and regulations,” and could pursue various changes clause arguments, constructive change, and excusable delay theories.

Trade organizations could also push for extraordinary contract relief under Public Law 85-804. PL 85-804 gives the President the ability to authorize (by Executive Order) federal agencies to indemnify public contractors against unusually hazardous risks they undertake when facilitating the national defense. When indemnification is granted under PL 85-804, the contract is amended to provide indemnification for third-party claims (including litigation costs) resulting from the risk inherent in the contract.

The indemnity applies only to the extent that the claims exceed the contractor’s insurance coverage, and does not cover claims resulting from willful misconduct or lack of good faith. PL 85-804 indemnification is appropriate when the United States asks contractors to support the national defense and to incur extraordinary risk while doing so.

Like now for example. ■



Paul D. Williams

# Lessons Unlearned

Despite Being the Largest U.N. Mission, MONUC Has Little Success to Show for It



MONUC Peacekeepers see action. Photo: Marie Frechon/U.N.

**M**ISSION des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo, or MONUC, is the peacekeeping equivalent of “mission impossible.” Stuck in the middle of the most deadly conflict since World War II, MONUC has suffered 129 fatalities and by mid-2009 will have cost approximately \$7.4 billion.

When the latest crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo hit the international headlines in late October 2008, MONUC comprised of just over 18,500 uniformed personnel, more than half of which came from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Permanent Five members of the Security Council provided only 254 or 1.37 percent of this figure; 234 of which were from China. In light of the ‘deteriorating humanitarian situation’ and ‘targeted attacks against the civilian population’, on November 20, the Security Council authorized “a temporary increase” to MONUC’s forces of up to 2,785 military and 300 police personnel. They will probably not arrive for another six months.

From day one, MONUC has faced three interrelated problems. First, the country lacked effective state institutions and suffered from predatory soldiers and corrupt officials. Second, the vast and underdeveloped terrain meant that delivering MONUC’s supplies was logistically challenging and expensive. The third problem was the warring parties: successive Kabila regimes, Rwandan Hutu rebels, various local militias and movements, and neighboring states, which have tried to influence Congolese politics by supporting rebel factions and plundering precious resources. While a bleak scenario, there are important lessons to be learned from MONUC’s experiences.

## 1. Capabilities Versus Expectations

The first lesson is that peace operations must close the capabilities-expectations gap. While the 1999 Lusaka Accord raised international expectations, it made no attempt to address the economic incentives fueling the war. Local expectations were unduly raised in February 2000

when MONUC was mandated to protect civilians. The problem was that its meager contingent of 5,537 soldiers did not fully arrive until mid-2003. In late 2004, MONUC was also tasked with helping a transition process that is still nowhere near complete.

By November 2006 the U.N. had spent millions of dollars on elections that legitimized the incumbent autocrat Joseph Kabila. While this was acceptable in many foreign capitals it was hugely depressing for many Congolese citizens. As Tatiana Carayanmis observed, it was notable that in the 2006 elections people voted overwhelmingly against those who ruled them during the war; only to see the same elites retain power. By this stage, MONUC had grown to over 18,000 uniformed personnel but its limitations were obvious.

To close the capabilities-expectations gap U.N. Security Council should find sufficient troops and resources to achieve its lofty mandates or it should adopt a less grandiose view of ► 12

11 ◀ what a peace operation can achieve in the DRC.

## 2. Craft Achievable Mandates

Clear and realistic mandates are an important part of closing the capabilities-expectations gap. MONUC received neither. In strategic terms, MONUC was mandated to assist successive governments that have been as much a part of the country's problems as the rebels. Initially, Laurent Kabila's regime stymied MONUC to the extent that it could not deploy significant numbers of troops until after his assassination in January 2001. While his son, Joseph,

## 3. Size Matters...

For MONUC, size matters in two main respects. First, DRC's huge territory and difficult terrain make MONUC's job harder. Previously, the U.N.'s most complex missions have been in small territories such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Timor Leste which did not present the huge logistical challenges facing MONUC. Additionally, Africa's biggest states are well known for their dysfunctional governments, huge swathes of uncontrolled and undeveloped territory, and consequently unstable borderlands which tend to attract insurgents and neighboring states.

armed force. On this measure, MONUC fares better given that General Nkunda is said to control some 6,000 fighters while the FDLR rebels have about 6,000-7,000.

## 4. ...But Size Isn't Everything

Although numbers matter, the quality of the peacekeepers and their equipment is equally important. Logistically, MONUC has suffered from poor transportation – particularly a lack of armored personnel carriers and helicopters – and inadequate supplies. It also lacked sufficient intelligence gathering capabilities. The quality of its forces is also mixed; although

“The U.N. Security Council should find sufficient troops and resources to achieve its lofty mandates or it should adopt a less grandiose view of what a peace operation can achieve in the DRC.”

was more cooperative, his government has failed to implement several important commitments, including disarming the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rawanda (FDLR). Disarmament and demobilization – let alone reintegration – is difficult to organize even when belligerents are willing participants.

When combatants are reluctant – as they have been in the DRC – it is almost impossible. MONUC's job is even harder because the FDLR's willingness to demobilize is linked to the political situation in Rwanda – something MONUC is unable to control. MONUC was also hampered by the lack of clarity about key terms in its mandate such as “assist,” “protect civilians,” and “illegal armed groups.” More precision won't eliminate disputes over interpretation but it would help clarify the terms of debate.

Size is also important in a second sense. MONUC forces reached their current size in three main stages, each of which came in response to major developments on the ground (Laurent Kabila's assassination and the two crises around Bunia and Bukavu). Although a U.N. report of March 1999 estimated MONUC would need more than 100,000 troops, it was initially given under 6,000. During the current crisis, MONUC had approximately 6,000 peacekeepers in North Kivu. To put this in perspective, consider two common approaches used to calculate required troop strength. The first measure suggests 2 to 10 troops are required for every 1,000 inhabitants within the crisis zone. With North Kivu's population, estimated at 5 million, MONUC should have had between 10,000 and 50,000 military personnel deployed in this region alone. The second method suggests that protection force must be equivalent to the largest indigenous

notably its personnel received little if any relevant training before deployment.

The distinct lack of Western troops has not helped either. Western soldiers made only brief appearances during two operations: Artemis (June-September 2003) and Eufor RD (April-November 2006). This signaled that Congo's conflict is not important enough to risk putting Western soldiers permanently under MONUC command. It also feeds perceptions that two classes of operations exist: missions with Western troops and those without. As Philip Roessler and John Prendergast argued, the “war was ... too gruesome and devastating for the West to ignore, but too difficult and too low a priority to address seriously.”

## 5. Expect Unexpected Crises

That MONUC would face ▶ 14



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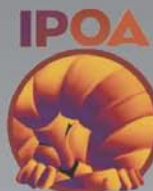
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12 ◀ unexpected crises was entirely predictable given the history of warfare in Congo. Yet the Security Council consistently appeared to set troop numbers on the basis of best-case planning and with an eye on reducing costs. For example, following the Bukavu crisis in mid-2004 the Council authorized only 5,900 of the 13,100 additional troops requested by the U.N. Secretary-General.

While planning based on worst-case scenarios generates its own problems, setting the size and budget of peacekeeping missions on the basis of naïve and unduly optimistic scenarios is worse. National militaries around the world acknowledge that deploying more troops earlier reduces the likelihood of them actually having to engage in combat while deploying less invites hostile parties to test their resilience.

## 6. Peacekeepers Can't Stop a War

Even peace operations with Chapter VII mandates, like MONUC, are not designed to achieve victory by defeating particular enemies. Rather they are supposed to impartially uphold the principles and rules written into their mandate and relevant peace agreement. When belligerents have committed to work together in a peace process peacekeepers make it more likely that a settlement will stick. But where belligerents remain belligerent, peacekeepers can do little. Indeed, where there is no peace to keep it may be immoral and counter-productive to deploy peacekeepers at all.

When forced into such situations peacekeepers will predictably draw hostility from all sides: governments will complain they don't disarm rebels; rebels will complain they ignore government abuses; and



*Lost in the Wilderness? Photo: Martine Perret/U.N.*

civilians will complain they don't protect them from both groups. In sum, when groups want to fight, it is unfair to expect under-resourced peacekeepers to stop them.

## 7. Protection of Civilians

This doesn't mean peacekeepers cannot sometimes offer civilians a degree of physical protection by facilitating humanitarian relief, defending particular locales, or coercing specific groups. For example, after Ugandan troops had withdrawn from Ituri in spring 2003, some 700 Uruguayan peacekeepers managed to protect approximately 15,000 civilians in Bunia airport and MONUC's sector headquarters. Similarly, in 2005 the Pakistani brigade in South Kivu helped provide civilians with safe passage through the Kahuzi-Biega Park and organized village defense communities to alert peacekeepers of imminent attacks by banging pots and blowing whistles.

## 8. Bad Behavior

A final lesson is that peacekeepers engaged in criminal activity pose a

strategic (not just tactical) challenge to the mission and undermine the legitimacy of U.N. peace operations generally. In MONUC's case, reports of peacekeepers sexually abusing local civilians and trading in illicit goods did significant damage; they eroded the mission's status locally and globally and hence made it much harder to achieve its objectives. Tackling such issues is therefore not just about dealing with a few bad apples; it is crucial to the strategic success of the operation and U.N. peacekeeping more generally. It should be treated accordingly.

It is vital that the Security Council supports MONUC more effectively. Sadly, MONUC's experiences have exposed the hypocrisy of governments that want to be seen to be doing something to protect the civilian casualties of this terrible war, but do not consider it necessary to do whatever it takes to actually end it. While the recipe for ending this war will be difficult to find, it is clear that even an expanded MONUC mission will fail until a workable political settlement is reached among the conflicting parties. ■



# Blurred Vision

## From Ituri to North Kivu, MONUC's Lack of Vision Has Hindered Its Effectiveness



*That's right, kid. I'm standing between you and oblivion. Photo: Marie Frechon/U.N.*

**T**HE recent violence in the North Kivu province again raised the issue of lessons learned or not learned as to the use of force during peace missions. In MONUC, the military component is constantly pushing the line between complex, robust peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The peacekeeping mission in DRC has a clear mandate and robust armament to implement this mandate.

Rules of Engagements are issued that give MONUC soldiers and their commanders sufficient flexibility to use their weapons effectively and adequately. Unfortunately it was not the case during the recent fighting in North Kivu. In reviewing briefly the Ituri crisis of 2003, Bukavu crisis of 2004 and the North Kivu crises of 2008, it is interesting to note why, when and how the MONUC troops failed to protect civilians under imminent threat by not using force. In the run-up to the 2006 elections, MONUC's Eastern Division under command of Major General Patrick Cammeart was very successful in

stabilising the Eastern DRC using the mandate and robust armament to implement this mandate. The question could be asked; what changed? Nevertheless, there are a number of factors that limit the use of force: operational factors including the necessity to identify and employ the right calibre of individual and forces; tactical factors including the mitigation of operational risk and the influence of the multi-national dimension on operations in the implementation of the mandate.

### **Ituri Crisis 2003**

The transition started on June 30, 2003 with Joseph Kabila as the president and with four vice presidents, all former belligerent leaders. Just before the start of the transition, the withdrawal of the Ugandan Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) had created a vacuum in the district of Ituri and in particular, in the city of Bunia, where fighting broke out between Ituri Armed Groups in May 2003. MONUC had very limited forces available to protect the

population and stop the deadly fighting. The U.N. Secretary-General asked France for military intervention. A battle group of the European Union arrived quickly and France was the lead nation in the EU operation (ARTEMIS) lasting three months until September 1, 2003. Fifteen hundred soldiers were needed for the restoration of order in Bunia alone. Since then, MONUC became a mission mandated under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

### **Bukavu Crisis 2004**

The Bukavu crisis of June 2004 put again a severe blow to the credibility of the U.N., MONUC and the peace process. There were several indicators in the year before that a crisis was in the making. The 10th Military Region Command (MRC) was divided and the authority of their commander undermined by loyal Rally for Congolese Democracy-Goma (RCD-G) supporters, military and civilian. Support from a foreign country in the form of weapons, ammunition and equipment was evident. On ► 16

15 ◀ May 26, 2004 fighting broke out in Bukavu between elements of the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and dissident soldiers loyal to suspended deputy commander of the 10th MRC Col. Jules Mutebutsi. Laurent Nkunda, a notorious RCD-G officer started an offensive from his stronghold in Goma vicinity to support Mutebutsi. Some 35 km North of Bukavu he stopped his advance, perhaps on orders of Vice President Ruberwa, leader of RCD-G. MONUC threatened Nkunda to stop his advance toward the airport and Bukavu city, or face the use of force by MONUC forces including the use of attack helicopters. Military orders were issued to the MONUC Kivu brigade commander to defend the airport and Bukavu with force if necessary, to deny non-government forces entry. However, Nkunda ignored the threat and continued his advance. Partial control over the airport was surrendered to him by one of the MONUC sub-commanders in violation of the given orders. Temporarily Nkunda was stopped some 15 km outside Bukavu by MONUC Kivu brigade forces but soon the town fell to him without further resistance. The result was looting, rape and murder on a wide scale. MONUC forces stood by and were not allowed to intervene. MONUC military had issued orders and given direction to use force if needed. However, they were overruled with instructions not to use force by the civilian senior leadership of the mission. It is clear that when threatening the opponent with the use of force, if one does not live up to the threat, credibility is lost.

### Elections 2006

MONUC has been very successful in implementing its mandate since the beginning of 2005 with the run up to



MONUC Receives Reinforcements. Photo: Christophe Boulieraac/U.N.

the 2006 elections despite severe challenges as described earlier. Armed groups and bandits have attacked U.N. personnel, and the FARDC along with the U.N. have suffered casualties. This campaign has forced the MONUC to use force, up to lethal force, regularly inflicting casualties on our opponents and compelling them to surrender. MONUC is conducting more mobile, higher tempo operations than ever before. Such operations demand day and night employment of all the assets. These types of operations, including the use of Special Forces, opened a new chapter in peacekeeping operations. Experience has clearly demonstrated that certain U.N. regulations should be adjusted in order to carry out those operations. MONUC is breaking ground for future missions. Mobile Operating Bases, night operations, deployment of Special Forces and air mobile operations are required to maintain a high tempo in order to keep the opponent off-balance. Troop-contributing countries and the administration should be prepared for these types of operations, which generate special requirements including, defense stores, ablutions, communications equipment and air transport. Standard operating procedures regulating the air tasking procedures, the modus operandi for military aircraft and the delegation of authori-

zation of military air operations were finalized in MONUC during this phase of operations.

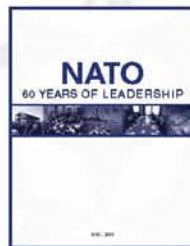
### North Kivu Crisis 2008

Since the end of August 2008, violent hostilities have re-erupted in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Eastern province, North Kivu, despite a January 2008 ceasefire agreement. Fighting between an armed opposition Tutsi group led by Laurent Nkunda, the Congolese national army, and various militias, have caused an estimated 250,000 people to flee their homes since August 2008 and resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis. Laurent Nkunda's latest military offensive, launched in August 2008 on Goma and subsequently north towards Kanyabayonga, marks a change in those of previous years in that his troops have demonstrated clear superiority over FARDC. The latter have put up little resistance and many soldiers have fled. Nkunda's Congres national pour la Defense du peuple (CNDP) has been using tanks which several analysts consider evidence of continued support from Kigali. MONUC has been unable to quash CNDP's advances and, critically, has failed to protect the civilian population who have suffered grave human rights abuses at the hands of all parties to the ► 18





# NATO – 60 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP



In April 2009, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will be 60 years old. To mark the occasion of NATO's 60th anniversary, the publisher of *The Year in Defense* is creating a special commemorative publication entitled *NATO – 60 Years of Leadership*.

The publication will be released in April 2009, featuring histories from leading experts, interviews with former NATO leaders, profiles of the current leadership, and special reports on NATO's current policies in expanding membership, technology, communications, systems development, and education.

Faircount Media Group is a leading international publisher with offices in the United States, the U.K., and Australia. The company publishes periodicals and special editions for government and military customers including NASA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Army Materiel Command, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Marine Corps, NOAA, USSO-COM, DARPA, DLA, PEO-F35 Lightning II, the Royal Australian Regiment, plus many others. By combining high-quality design, peer-reviewed editorial from subject-matter experts, and targeted circulation, the company has used this winning formula to establish itself as a key player in the field.



CORPORATE SUSTAINING MEMBER OF

**16** conflict. The question could be asked why the failure of MONUC again during this crises? The answer can possibly be with the leadership within MONUC. During the fighting between FARDC and CNDP, MONUC supported the FARDC during attacks on CNDP. This unfortunately resulted in MONUC losing its impartiality and is now seen as just another role player. The resignation of the appointed Spanish Force Commander of MONUC Lt. Gen. Vicente Diaz de Villegas after only seven weeks in his job confirmed the lack of a clear vision within MONUC on the implementation of the mandate. The reasons he gave for his resignation were similar to the above: a lack of vision by MONUC, ambiguity about the use of force and the dilemma of implementing the peace process in North Kivu.

Most damaging after the recent North Kivu crisis for the mission was the perception by the international community in general and the local population in particular that, after

Bunia in 2003 and Bukavu in 2005, MONUC had again failed to support and protect the Congolese people. In essence it showed that MONUC's operational capacity to handle crisis situations fell considerably short of what was required. It cast into doubt the role of peacekeeping anywhere since it overturned the assumption that if the U.N. peacekeeping troops are deployed with a mandate to use force, they should be relied upon to do so when the situation demands it. To do less would be to place at risk not only the troops themselves, but also all of the U.N. peacekeepers, military and civilian alike, wherever they are deployed.

Even U.N. led operations under Chapter VII have their limitations. Strict rules of engagement, civilian led logistics and often reluctance on the part of troop-contributing countries to use force, limit the freedom of movement of the commanders in the field. Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammeart, during an interview before leaving MONUC in 2007, emphasized that

MONUC is a peacekeeping force, but in order to keep the peace, sometimes you have to enforce it. Until the end 2007, it has done so effectively and professionally. Integration, cooperation and a better understanding from all U.N. actors, including the military and wider players from the international community, are key to taking forward the U.N. and expanding its reputation and its capability in peacekeeping. It needs good people who are well trained and able to overcome remaining frustrations.

The U.N. should invest much more in keeping good people in the organization, and 'poaching' them from others, if possible. Multi-dimensional, complex and robust operations are being undertaken in a way that was not envisaged a few years ago, and this complements traditional peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building. MONUC must use the lessons learned during the period of 2005 to 2007 and implement it in the current situation. ■

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# MONUC, Inc.

## Plan A Has Not Worked So Well. How About a Privatized Plan B?



Clearly in need of some new friends. Photo: Myriam Asmani/U.N.

IN 2003, I published an op-ed in *The Washington Post* calling for greater private sector augmentation of the MONUC mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sadly, five years on, the situation has again deteriorated. In that op-ed, I argued that the U.N., or the international community writ-large, should look to the private sector in order to provide the capacity and skills necessary to allow for a successful mission. In this reprisal of that op-ed, we have added a bit here and tweaked a bit there, but sadly, the original recommendations largely hold true.

While warfare in Iraq, Afghanistan and Darfur has drawn greater attention worldwide, a far more deadly struggle has raged in the DRC. Yet it has been largely marginalized by the international news media. That multinational conflict has claimed more lives than any since World War II -- at least 5.4 million, according to the International Rescue Committee.

The contending armed forces are not huge, and military casualties are light.

But the civilian death toll rises by hundreds or thousands every day. Most victims aren't shot or knifed but instead are chased away from their farms and homes by armed thugs. The most vulnerable, especially the very young or weak, simply die of starvation or disease in the bush. Ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, cannibalism, child soldiers and massive illegal exploitation of natural resources are all outrages of this war. Despite various political agreements, peace has been elusive. Factionalized rebel armies, foreign troops and warlords continue to fight among themselves and against pro-government militias and the DRC's own government army is little more than an ill-disciplined rabble.

Since 1999 a small U.N. peacekeeping unit has been operating in Congo. It was formed with the best of intentions: to help implement nascent political agreements. But it is badly overstretched. Despite being the largest U.N. peacekeeping mission on earth, with over 17,000 personnel, the MONUC mission has had minimal

effect in a country more than five times the size of Iraq. While it is technically a peacekeeping operation, the U.N. mandate allows the use of armed force to protect U.N. personnel and operations, and in certain cases to protect Congolese civilians. Unfortunately, the mandate has been exercised sparingly, and the gangs of armed teenagers making up the majority of the warring factions murder, rape and plunder with impunity.

Western interest in DRC has not been entirely wanting. There have been varying deployments of U.N. "blue berets" from Western nations, such as France, as well as multinational deployments under the European Union banner. This welcome Western interest helps to stem the violence temporarily, and especially so since Western nations tend to have the most capable militaries around. But the often slim numbers and limited deployment of these Western nations in DRC unfortunately does little to fundamentally alter the country's brutal conflict. ► 20

19 ◀ Humanitarian groups make the case for more troops and a stronger mandate but face the perplexing problem of today's "Westernless" peacekeeping: Stronger mandates make states less inclined to contribute troops. Worse, the professionalism of troops eventually proffered to U.N. operations is often questionable, and a significant number of U.N. peacekeepers themselves have been implicated in illegal activities whilst active on the MONUC mission. Reportedly some deployed troops have also made special arrangements with the United Nations specifically stating they will not use armed force for any reason.



Meanwhile, back at the ranch... Photo: A. Burridge/U.N.

bring the means and motivation to carry out the full mandate by providing key services to fill the gaps in the Congo unit's capabilities: high-tech aerial surveillance and armed rapid deployment police who could bring

soldiers and police were paid their wages in a timely manner, vastly reducing the all too common malady of security forces robbing citizens to pay themselves.

## “ The private sector offers the most comprehensive package available to assist U.N. peacekeeping. ”

There is another solution. A number of for-profit companies with years of experience in peace operations have demonstrated their immense capabilities in challenging environments from Sierra Leone to Iraq, and from Afghanistan to Sudan. These companies bring a significant level of professionalism and capacity that could help to fill the vacuum in the DRC. In recent years international peace operations have increasingly relied on the private sector to provide essential services, with impressive success thus far. Aviation companies have proven willing to brave bullets to support peacekeepers in West Africa, and logistics companies have provided remarkably efficient services even in the midst of widespread chaos where little else functions.

IPOA created an initiative in 2003 that offered a comprehensive package to assist U.N. peacekeeping. Private companies operating under and in support of the U.N. structure would

years of peacekeeping experience and NATO-level professionalism. They could be assigned specifically to protect vulnerable populations, while a helicopter firm would be able to quickly transport police to hot spots as well as assist with emergency evacuations and humanitarian supply.

Another firm could give Congolese gendarmes police and human rights training so they could gradually take over the quick reaction duties, control the international borders and ultimately supplant the U.N. peacekeepers. The private consortium would be a “force multiplier,” making the U.N. operation substantially more effective for a fraction of the cost of its current budget. This private sector option could even be a model for improved peace operations in the future.

One addition suggested since the original IPOA concept was for an independent foundation based outside the DRC that would ensure DRC

The ultimate solution, of course, must be Congolese, and the U.N. nongovernmental organizations and political bodies should be the ones to facilitate the peace process, not the private firms. Likewise, once security has been restored, reconstruction and reconciliation are better handled by the many innovative and knowledgeable nongovernmental and international organizations experienced in those tasks.

Critics of the concept worry about the precedent of using armed private companies for tasks traditionally reserved to national armies. Yet the United Nations itself hires armed private security to protect its warehouses and offices. In light of the continuing carnage, many wonder why similar firms are not allowed to protect people as well. The status quo in the DRC in the years since IPOA presented that concept way back in 2003 has continued to be a death sentence for millions. ■



# Recognizing Good Governance

An Interview with Dr. Mo Ibrahim



Dr. Mo Ibrahim. Photo: Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

**D**R. Mo Ibrahim, a British national of Sudanese origin is a global expert in mobile communications with a distinguished academic and business career. He is also a member of the Africa Regional Advisory Board of London Business School and has also been listed by Time Magazine in 2008 as one of the world's 100 most influential people. Dr. Ibrahim is the founder of one of Africa's most successful companies, Celtel International which was later sold to MTC Kuwait. In October 2006, Dr. Ibrahim launched the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to recognize excellence in good governance and leadership in Africa.

**JIPO:** You have been quoted saying that there is a need to get out of the "pessimism that all African leaders are corrupt. There are some doing wonderful things and implementing the right policies. They need to be honoured..." Do you feel that on a psychological level the distinction in receiving the award is in itself another source of change in attitude towards better governance by African leaders and that psychological issues are at times, more important than the formal structures?

**Dr. Ibrahim:** I think the award itself serves a number of purposes. To start with, we need to highlight not only to the world, but unfortunately to Africa itself, that there are good leaders around. It is amazing that the general pessimism about African leadership which is understandable given the media focus on Darfur, Zimbabwe and Somalia. This somehow carries through to Africa. First, we need to


highlight that there are good leaders around and we should know them and we should celebrate them. It is also the honor of receiving it. I mean the way Joaquim Chissano or Festus Mogae felt about being awarded the prize is really beyond words. They were wonderfully touched and extremely grateful. They felt that, at last, somebody had recognized what good they have done. I am sure that many African leaders are looking also for the same honor. This is natural.

**JIPO:** This year's index has shown that governance performance across a large majority of African countries is improving and that progress is being made across the continent against a range of key governance indicators. However, it is argued that the annual prize is not a cost effective means of bringing about better governance in African countries, because funds could be better utilized to establish the administrative and

institutional infrastructure that are directly needed to foster accountability. Do you believe this is a valid criticism?

**Dr. Ibrahim:** It is totally valid. How much are we spending on Africa on direct aid, on investments on how much African governments themselves are spending each year? We are talking about numbers north of \$100 billion. Our prize is a drop in the ocean. Our prize is very important because it is leveraging all this money. How much does Darfur cost us? If we can avoid that, if we can avoid one Darfur, if we can avoid one Somalia and if we can avoid one Zimbabwe. what is the value of that? So what I am saying here is really we are leveraging with a very little amount of money and with some honor we are leveraging all these resources to achieve better governance and equitable ruling for our ► 24



A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a bright yellow hooded raincoat, carries a young child in his arms. The child is also wrapped in a yellow raincoat. They are standing in a vast, arid desert landscape with rolling sand dunes under a clear sky. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

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21 ◀ people. That is invaluable and I think of it as the best investment I have ever made in my life.

*JIPO: How do you see civil society engaging in any upcoming electoral processes that may ultimately ensure good governance practices?*

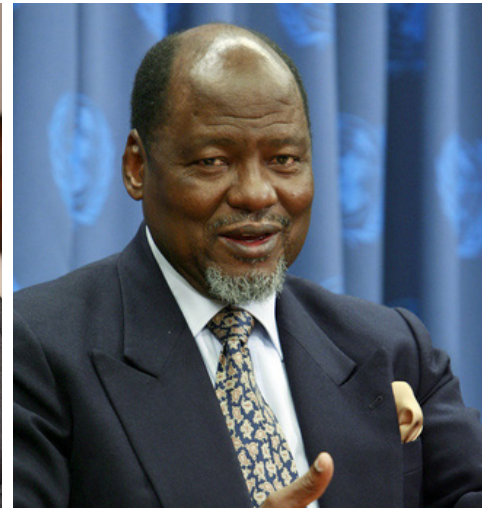
**Dr. Ibrahim:** Civil Society is a great hope for us. It is through the maturity, the organized and well-informed civil society that we can hold meaningful change. The main audience for our foundation is civil society. The index is a gift to civil society to really be able to indulge in that conversation with their governments, which is an informed conversation. It is civil society which is campaigning for sensible, sustainable development policies. Again, it is civil society campaigning for and dealing with climate change. It is all these pressure groups. That is the conscience of the world and that is what is moving forward. We are not relying on governments or politicians or all those people who have their own agendas. But they are all responding to the pressure from civil society. Civil society at the end is going to go to the ballot box and remove those guys if they don't behave.

*JIPO: Given that this is a "by Africans and for Africans initiative", what role do you envision for the African Diaspora in working alongside civil society institutions to support your foundation's goals of realizing good governance practices in Africa?*

**Dr. Ibrahim:** I think there is a great role for the African Diaspora to support their continent, as their people. We have already noticed that the largest amount of cash transfers coming into Africa is not from Western governments, it is coming from the African Diasporas. Those guys, through remittances back home are already helping. What we want



Festus Mogae. Photo: W.H.O.



Joaquim Chissano. Photo: Mark Garten/U.N.

now is also some transfer of know how, expertise and knowledge to help rebuild Africa. I am, myself and my foundation, itself is a member of this Diaspora community. We have a great role to play back at home and we should play it and we should not forget our people.

*JIPO: Your foundation has established several scholarships for emerging African scholars who may some day become leaders in their respective fields. Do you believe that such an investment will improve the standards of African politics in the long run?*

**Dr. Ibrahim:** Absolutely. What we are doing is really small compared with the sort of efforts needed. We have been in support of various scholarships with the London School of African and Oriental Studies, London School of Economics, the American University in Cairo and the Universities in Khartoum. It is important that we also look after the new generation. Education is very important. So it is a small gesture actually, because after all, we only have a few scholarships but between us and between other NGO's and other people, we hope together we can really help bring forward some good future leaders: In all aspects of life, not only in politics but also in industry and in finance and so on. So there are a lot of things that need to

be done actually. We just need to all put our shoulders into it and push a little bit.

*JIPO: What are the policy implications that should be taken out of this index for people outside of Africa, specifically within the new U.S. government?*

**Dr. Ibrahim:** To be honest, I think we need an international Index. I don't see why we don't have a similar index for Latin and South America, we don't have one for Asia, we don't have one for Europe and North America as well. I don't think that the behavior of governments in these countries has always been that meticulous.

I think there must be a way to really evaluate in a rather objective and dispassionate way, the performance of each government and we need to publish that. Of course some developed countries do that on their own through the office of statistics. Whether the digestible and easily assimilated picture of the status of governance really comes out through offices of statistics or not, that's debatable. We really need something simple and easy to understand which is produced for civil society worldwide. Good governance is not only important for Africa, but important for everybody. ■



# A Review of African Peacekeeping

## An Increasing Commitment Required Continent-Wide



*African peacekeeping by Africans: A South African blue beret in D.R. Congo. Photo: Marie Frechon/U.N.*

**F**OLLOWING the end of the cold war, numerous observers thought that Western countries would be more inclined to support peacekeeping missions in the developing world, particularly in Africa.

They were not totally wrong because two years later the United Nations did not take long in convincing developed countries to intervene in Somalia to assist populations in need. The United States would later lead an international peacekeeping coalition into the country. Unfortunately, weeks after the intervention, several U.S. soldiers were killed and their bodies dragged through the roads of the capital city. The images, conveyed by CNN to the Western public, were not well received, particularly in the United States. Under huge pressure from their constituencies, members of the U.S. Congress had no other choice than to withdraw the troops.

In 1994 during the Rwandan genocide, even with the painful images spread around the world, Western

countries were reluctant to send troops to Kigali, mainly to avoid the drama U.S. troops experienced in Somalia. The genocide ended up killing nearly 900,000 people.

These two events constitute the major turning points that have shaped developed countries' visions of peacekeeping missions in Africa. In fact, on the one hand, based on the lessons learned from Somalia, they are not anymore, inclined to send their men and women to Africa. On the other hand, even if they do not want to send troops in Africa, Western leaders and their constituencies would like to prevent genocide, such as the case of Rwanda, from happening again. The consequential compromise between African and Western leaders is, nowadays, to "Africanize" the peacekeeping missions in Africa by sending African troops supported by the international community on the ground. The purpose of this article is to address, first, the successes of this approach, as well as, secondly, to study its challenges.

During the last years, many improvements have been made in peacekeeping missions because of a strong commitment from the international community and African countries. First, the United Nations Security Council has been quicker in passing the required resolutions. During the cold war, it was much more challenging to find consensus among the five Security Council members, mainly because of ideological and strategic interests. Nowadays, despite some ongoing discrepancies, the Security Council is more effective, with an average of four months needed to start a peacekeeping mission.

Second, there are more countries willing to support the peacekeeping missions. The European Union is more effectively coordinating peacekeeping matters with a multilateral approach, instead of continuing the previous bilateral post-colonial approach. Indeed, even if the former colonial powers still maintain strong bilateral ties with their former colonies, their willingness to privilege the EU's leadership, through ► 26

25 ◀ its European Security and Defense Policy and its Common Foreign Security Policy programs, is inarguable.

The United States, with its sixth combatant command (AFRICOM), although not yet unanimously welcomed by African countries, is trying to support the continent in the improvement of its peacekeeping missions' capacities. To that end, it has created the African Crises Response Initiative, which, later, in 2002, was replaced by the African Contingency Training Assistance program. The two initiatives have helped train and equip thousands of African peacekeepers.

The French *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* program has also trained, equipped and logistically supported many African peacekeeping forces. The French logistical bases, established throughout the continent, are well appreciated in the sense that they facilitate the storage of the basic necessities of African peacekeepers.

Portugal, on the other hand, is supporting its former colonies in improving their capacities in peacekeeping missions with the energetic *Programa de Apoio às Missões de Paz em África* (PAMPA) program and through the commonwealth of Portuguese speaking countries. In addition, Portugal is actively supporting European initiatives in Africa.

The same approach as Portugal and France has been adopted by the United Kingdom as evidenced by several bilateral programs and a strong commitment within the European Union's involvements in the continent's stabilization. Under the United Kingdom African Peacekeeping Training and Support Programs, the

Conflict Prevention Pool, and the Africa Pool (for funding) Africa is receiving strong support from the United Kingdom. It is also important to mention the Danish program that has been, for decades, promoting peacekeeping in Africa and the strong financial support from Canada and Japan.

Despite many challenges, which remain to be solved, peacekeeping missions in Africa are being increasingly owned by Africans who have been trying to be more efficient in conflict prevention and the training of larger numbers of troops. In effect, at the political and strategic level there is an undeniable commitment from African leaders to find African solutions to African crises. Thus, a peace and security council has been created within the African Union, clearly indicating an increasing willingness of African countries to minimize the coups d'état on the continent. A panel of elders, established by African leaders, is also very active in this regard.

In the meantime, the creation of the African Peers' Evaluation Mechanism and of early-warning offices in each region has largely consolidated the conflict prevention mechanism on the continent even if, in many aspects, this mechanism can be improved. In contrast to the situation during the early years of independence, today several African countries have experiences with peacekeeping operations. In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Comores Islands, Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic, African leaders and African troops have been forcefully involved in trying to resolve crises.

Furthermore, African countries are increasingly willing to cooperate with the international community (U.N.,

EU, U.S., etc.) in order to put an end to the continent's conflicts. They train their troops with the support of their Western partners (see, for example, the peacekeeping center in Mali and the peacekeeping training center in Ghana). In addition, they are focusing on the creation of the African stand by forces planned to be operational by the year 2010. For this purpose, AU and EU have recently signed the "Amani Africa" agreement to strengthen their cooperation in peacekeeping matters.

In the end, there are a lot of improvements in peacekeeping missions in Africa because of a strong commitment from the international community and African countries. Nevertheless, many challenges still remain if wider successes are desired. The challenges for peacekeeping missions in Africa are numerous three of them stand out: the risk of a decreasing commitment from Western countries due to worldwide crises, the need to coordinate the major actors' involvements, and shortages of well-trained and well-equipped African peacekeeping troops.

The commitment of the international community and African countries is quite strong, but may decrease for several reasons. In fact, with the world's financial crisis, peacekeeping missions may lose priority in political decision making. Furthermore, Western countries, more concerned with the war on terror, might not have enough means to pursue the same commitments in Africa as they have done in the past. With the recent increases in fuel prices, most of Western countries have attempted to invest more financial resources in alternative energy sources. On the other hand, with the food and energy crises, some African countries might encounter increasing difficul- ▶ 30



# Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam

## An Analysis of the Similarities and Differences Between Two Controversial Conflicts



*Iraq Versus Vietnam. Photos: Spc. Daniel Herrera/U.S. Army; U.S. Army*

**H**ISTORICAL forces and international pressures make this an era of persistent conflict. The United States has a mixed record in dealing with these conflicts. We tend to win the invasion and botch the follow up. Two monumental disasters, Vietnam and Iraq/Afghanistan, dominate the historical record. Our failure in those two arenas is a major driving force for change. In response to Vietnam, the U.S. Army did an excellent job of rebuilding itself to fight conventional wars, but seemed to think of Vietnam as a bad dream best ignored. The key civilian agencies, USAID and the Department of State, were similarly myopic.

To its substantial credit, the U.S. military — and especially the Army — response to Iraq/Afghanistan is substantially more proactive. The military has stood up AFRICOM to more directly and effectively respond to conflicts and disasters in Africa. The military revised its strategy to conduct the war in Iraq and seems to be similarly engaged in Afghanistan.

Over the past two years, the Army has issued three field manuals on 1) Counter insurgency, 2) Post conflict, and 3) Stability operations. The issuance of field manuals will strike some as a tepid, bureaucratic response to an enormous national disaster. However, it is a major attempt to change the corporate culture by codifying the lessons learned in the past several decades. In producing the manuals, the military reached out to other agencies and the NGO community in an attempt to develop a valid whole of government approach. The military is executing the changes in Iraq and Afghanistan, which provides a real world test as to the validity of the doctrine. One hopes implementation of the revised doctrine works and comes in time to rescue the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan

At a minimum, the effort of revising military doctrine to fit existing circumstances is a significant step forward and reflects a widespread recognition that purely armed intervention is an insufficient response to most conflicts. Specifically,

within the military, there is recognition that winning the peace is an essential element in any effective national security strategy. Critically, winning the peace requires an enduring commitment to comprehensive, cooperative and competent post invasion follow on action.

Implicit in the military perspective is the view that a prime reason for the failure of the U.S. government to meet its objectives is that the civilian agencies have not stepped up to the plate and adequately performed their missions. There is much justification for this criticism. Partly it is the two disastrous decisions to disband the Iraqi Army and totally purge the Iraqi government to the lowest levels of any even nominal Baath party members. Equally important, none of the civilian agencies has adequately staffed province level programs. This has led to a view in the military that never again will the military go it alone.

The driver of change is the attempt to achieve true military civilian ► 28

27 ◀ integration, that is, a whole of government approach including the Department of State, USAID, USIP, and Interaction (representing the NGO community.) This requires development of a shared doctrine for stability operations and codifying that doctrine, so that field commanders and personnel can effectively implement the doctrine in actual operations. It involves recognition that both the military and civilian agencies have substantial experience in counter insurgency and stability operations since World War II, much of it successful; however, while individual officers learned neither the military nor civilian agencies as organizations, nor the U.S. government as an

adversary, not losing represents a victory of sorts.

There is a pronounced tendency for the national leadership, especially the elected U.S. political leadership, to believe the challenge they face is unique calling for a distinctly new approach. Looking back from the perspective of history, the new challenge often seems reasonably similar to previous challenges. While no two situations are identical, we have much to learn from past experiences. Had the U.S. leadership conscientiously reviewed the lessons of Vietnam, Laos, Panama, Kosovo, etc. and then adapted those lessons to Iraq & Afghanistan execution of those

*approach to the conflicts.* Ultimately, the U.S. adopted such an approach in Vietnam and it seems to be coming in Iraq but it took far too long.

5. *Opposition within the Department of State and USAID bureaucracies to the wars* resulting in a weak organizational response to the wars. This inertia is especially noticeable in Iraq and Afghanistan.

6. *Establishment of the CORDS and PRT programs.* In the face of slow indecisive overall progress, the U.S. political leadership established CORDS in Vietnam and the PRTs in Iraq/Afghanistan to deal with the stability phase of the total effort. In Vietnam,

## “ While no two situations are identical, we have much to learn from past experiences ”

institution adequately absorbed the lessons.

In seeking a solution, one must deal with at least two and generally three different time lines: the United States, the host country government, and the adversary. The U.S. timeline is the shortest, generally much shorter than the host country, and is based on a plan for quick decisive victory. Victory is often left undefined or, worse, expressed in a vague utopian hope for a local version of liberal constitutional democracy. The host country government is generally a status quo power that needs U.S. assistance and thus pays lip service to the need for change but is reluctant to embrace the challenges and disruptions change inevitably brings because they represent a potential diminution of their position. Our adversaries typically have a long timeframe; generally, a key element in their strategy is out lasting the U.S. and host government. Often for the

wars would have been significantly more effective. Vietnam and Iraq have particularly close parallels.

### Vietnam and Iraq: Similarities

1. *Weak political support among U.S. voters* because of a widespread and growing view that the war and the way each was being fought was a strategic mistake.
2. *Ineffective governance on the part of the host government*, in particular high levels of corruption and the inability to unite their nations politically.
3. *Ineffective senior U.S. political leadership.* Two Secretaries of Defense with large egos and allegedly superior intellects that prevented them from listening to anything with which they might disagree were given free rein by two Texas presidents.
4. *Difficulty at the operational level in forging an effective whole of government*

there were Civil Operations Rural Development Support (CORDS) province teams composed of military advisors, USAID officers, CIA officers, and public affairs personnel. A Province Senior Advisor (PSA) and Deputy Province Senior Advisor (DPSA) led the CORDS province teams. If the PSA was a military officer, typically an Army Colonel, his Deputy would be a civilian officer (typically USAID) of similar rank. In about half the provinces, the civilian was PSA and the Deputy military. A typical CORDS province team had police, rural development, health and agriculture specialists. At the CORPS level, a range of technical specialists backstopped the province teams. A typical CORDS province team had approximately 200 personnel. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are much smaller, typically 27 – 28 U.S. personnel, but similarly structured and having many of the same functions.



1. *Greater public tolerance of the prolonged efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan because of lower casualties and an all-volunteer army.*

Although voters are critical of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and want them ended, the level of disenchantment has not approached that of the Vietnam era.

2. *Operational freedom.* CORDS province teams had wide discretion on all operations within their provinces; contrastingly, the PRTs seem far more restricted in their scope of action. Contracting authority for even local projects is limited on the PRTs; in Vietnam, on CORDS team one could promptly implement just about any project the PSA/DPSA thought appropriate. In Iraq/Afghanistan PRT travel is subject to multi level review by security officers. PRTs have an assigned security officer who can do his job by telling other team members they cannot travel. Alternatively, one can call Baghdad or Kabul for permission. In two or three days, one generally gets an answer, which even if positive does not lead to a rapid response in a dynamic environment. In Vietnam CORDS officers made their own travel arrangements based on their assessment of local security.

3. *Recruiting.* When the military states that State and USAID lacks the capacity, they really mean those agencies do not have enough staff to meet their responsibilities. In Iraq and Afghanistan, both State and USAID are attempting to fill province level positions from internal resources. It is not working. In Vietnam, USAID largely solved the problem by recruiting outside the agency for CORDS. Generally, it was former Peace Corps or similar volunteers or retired military officers that USAID specifi-



*A different kind of war? Maybe not. Photo: U.S. Army*

cally recruited to staff the CORDS field positions. Neither USAID nor State has adequately staffed the PRTs in Iraq and Afghanistan. USAID does not have adequate staff for its worldwide responsibilities. Partly it has addressed the worldwide issue by making extensive use of contractors. There are of course thousands of contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan; however, few are on the PRTs, which the administration sees as one of the keys ultimate success. The ostensible reason being that USAID cannot delegate contracting authority to contractors for local projects, even though that authority is often granted in other bilateral programs.

Significantly higher visibility of the senior leadership of the CORDS program. Bill Colby, Vietnam chief of CORDS, became DCI; John Paul Vann, CORDS field leader, was the subject of a Pulitzer prize winning biography. Contrastingly, the PRTs and their leadership are largely invisible to the US public.

#### **What is to be done?**

The military response is encouraging in that it recognizes this type of challenge is likely to be an enduring one and the United States needs a more effective approach to deal with it. In particular, the efforts to build common doctrine are encouraging.

Hopefully, out of this effort will come a greater unity of effort and increased effectiveness.

State and USAID promise to do better. State is standing up a quick response corps of up to 4,000 officers. USAID hopes to double its staff in the next two years from the current approximately 1200. While a laudable goal success seems unlikely in what seems certain to be an austere budget climate in the wake of the current financial crisis.

Encouragingly, the Obama campaign is proposing mobile development teams for Embassies in Africa. At the moment, State is taking a not invented here attitude but that could change on November 8.

What is missing is - inclusion of the role of the contractors in the doctrine making process. Contractors are typically the people who actually do the work on the civilian - particularly - USAID side. The reluctance of USAID to use contractors on PRTs and give them authority to sub-contract for local projects is a substantial obstacle to progress. Now seems like an opportune time for the contracting and NGO community to marshal forces and present its views to the new administration as to how it can most effectively serve the common cause. ■



Photo: Marie Frechon/U.N.

## Peacekeeping in Africa

26 ◀ ties in maintaining their peacekeeping efforts. Western disinterest in peacekeeping missions in Africa is already evidenced by the Darfur crisis and the compelling lack of means for the U.N.-AU hybrid.

Despite many improvements, peacekeeping missions still take a quite long time to be launched. In fact, three different groups intervene in order to have a peacekeeping mission on track. First, the group of U.N. Security Council members has to vote a resolution. Second, the (often Western) countries that finance peacekeeping missions must set the budget. Finally, the group of African, Asian and Latin American countries who provide troops must mobilize their forces. Each group has its own concerns, which can delay the deployment of peacekeepers.

Peacekeeping missions in Africa can also be impacted by the insufficiency of well-trained and well-equipped African troops, despite the continent's efforts in this domain. In effect, since the fall of the Berlin wall, most African countries have been pressured by the international community to downsize their armed forces and spend less money on military equipment. The situation in Darfur, where nearly 9,000 troops are available while the mission requires nearly 20,000 troops, underscores these difficulties. The same deficit of troops has been seen in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Somalia.

African missions have benefited from a strong commitment from the international community and the African leadership. There are not only multilateral efforts, but also bilateral initiatives organized by former colonial powers the United States and

Denmark to support African countries in their efforts to conduct peacekeeping missions. Nevertheless, the overall Western commitment to Africa may yet decline. In the meantime, African countries' engagement in taking the lead of peacekeeping missions on the continent can be undermined by national "human security" challenges. Preventive actions need, therefore, to be taken, as soon as possible. The democratization process needs to be strengthened and a regional and continental cooperation pursued to prevent conflicts in Africa. African standby forces must be created for quicker and more effective interventions. Concomitantly, each country should increase its troop mobilization capacities by stressing trainings and the provision of equipment. The continent should also envision building a dynamic African private sector for logistical and operational support for its peacekeeping missions.

The developed countries, despite these new challenges, need to remain committed to the peacekeeping missions. It is their interest to participate in the stabilization of Africa. More failing countries in Africa will certainly facilitate a growth in terrorist activity throughout the continent and the world in general. In addition, with its billions of people and numerous natural resources, a stable Africa constitutes a viable economic market in this time of financial and energy crises.

Better coordination needs to be undertaken between countries that have launched peacekeeping missions, the ones that finance them and the countries taking the risk in sending troops. ■



Gary L. Sturgess

# Contracting in the Seven Years War

A Review of David Syrett's  
*"Shipping and Military Power  
in the Seven Years War"*



*Making the oceans safer. Image: University of Exeter Press*

**C**ONTRACTING for military support? It's not a new idea. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, private contractors were actively involved in supporting the military across most of the Western world.

John Hancock's fortune came from military contracting in King George's War (1744-46). At the capture of Havana in 1762, the British used 20 ships of the line, 10 smaller warships and 200 merchant ships under contract. Twenty years later, at the height of the War of Independence, the British were supplying 72,000 men with millions of tons of provisions shipped three and a half thousand miles across the Atlantic, using private contractors.

Why did military contracting fall out of favor? The narrative – as it appears in most history books and academic texts – is that the contract state of the 18th and 19th centuries failed because of corruption and incompetence. Direct delivery was more reliable and less vulnerable to self-interest.

The literary motif of the corrupt government contractor is very old. Seventeenth and eighteenth century audiences laughed louder at Shakespeare's Falstaff because they saw something that modern audiences don't – a large-than-life portrayal of a venal military enterpriser. And measured in terms of political controversy, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that military contracting was deeply flawed. Newspaper accounts and congressional records provide powerful evidence of greed and mismanagement in government contracting.

Historians on both sides of the Atlantic are now revisiting this analysis, drawing on the vast repository of original documents that lie buried in public and private archives across Britain. Their research has confirmed just how widespread military contracting was until the late 19th century, and since politicians and journalists paid no attention to the vast majority of military contracts, this seems to suggest that, most of the time, contracting worked.

Foremost among these revisionist historians has been David Syrett, of the City University of New York, whose final work, *"Shipping and Military Power in the Seven Years War,"* has just been published posthumously.[1] A 'world war' that eventually drew in most of the major European states, the Seven Years War led to the decline of France as a major colonial power and the loss of significant territories in North America and the West Indies and on the Indian subcontinent.

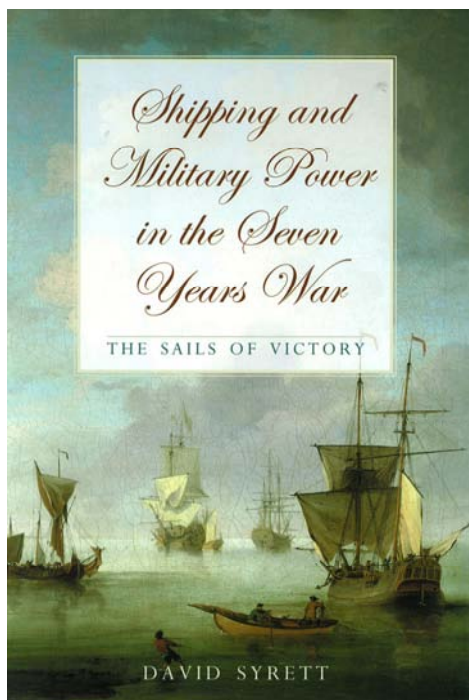
Syrett's thesis is that Britain's capacity to utilise its merchant shipping enabled it to conduct successful campaigns on so many fronts around the world. "One of the hidden military assets of Britain during the eighteenth century was a large and expanding merchant marine which was capable, apparently without restraining the Kingdom's commercial activities, of providing a large number of vessels to support military operations." (p.124)

For the most part, military ► 32

31 ◀ historians have underestimated the comparative advantage enjoyed by a government able to harness industrial and mercantile capacity in this way.

Syrett has recognized the importance of administrative capability in accessing and controlling these vast private reserves. It was not enough that Britain possessed a large and expanding merchant marine. It was also necessary for public officials to have the skills to procure and manage these resources under contract, to create a corporate memory capable of being accessed by subordinates through effective policies and procedures, and to share best practice through interagency collaboration.

To understand how competition and contracting worked in practice, it was first necessary for Syrett to understand the government agencies responsible for different aspects of military procurement and to reconstruct the bureaucratic processes by which they worked. Through a succession of books and journal articles published over almost four decades, Syrett traced the development of these administrative systems over the course of the 18th century, from the War of Austrian Succession (1739-48) through to the American War of Independence (1775-83). Increasingly, Syrett strove to understand how these markets actually worked. He studied the contractual incentives employed by the various procurement agencies and sought to understand why they differed. He noted the dominance of a small number of shipbrokers and tried to understand the reasons for their success. In his final book, he documented the work of the naval agents, the contract monitors who were essential to the success of contracts performed half a world away.



In *Shipping and Military Power*, he also described this machine in motion, explaining how, in a period of just five months from initial conception, the different agencies brought together the diverse range of resources needed to launch the successful attack on Havana. “The whole effort was decisively moved forward by the administrative skills and determination of the Commissioners of the Navy and other government officials. . . . Putting into practice valuable experience already acquired made possible the rapid dispatch of such a force from England.” (pp.120-121)

Syrett was by no means alone. Bernard Pool, Mary Ellen Condon and Roger Morriss had all studied aspects of naval contracting. In his most recent study of naval logistics management, published last year, Morriss concluded that the achievements of the naval administrators, in terms of scale and reach, were simply ‘breathtaking’.[2] Syrett helped us to understand the practical realities of this system at work.

This approach has now been taken a step further by a group of scholars at the Greenwich Maritime Institute

under Roger Knight, who have just finished a 3-year study of naval victualling during the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815). Knight and his team have explored the importance of trust in successful working relationships between government and contractors. They have paid much greater attention to the supply side, struggling for the first time to understand how merchants worked together to meet government’s demands. And they have sought to understand the risks that were transferred to these private merchants and whether government got value for money.

They have arrived at similar conclusions – sound administrative arrangements and robust relationships between contractors and government were crucial to the victory over Napoleon. By drawing on a wider pool of physical resources and management capability, the British military were able to remain in the field longer and outperform their French equivalents.

How is all of this relevant to us? The long-term success of military outsourcing depends not just on how well these functions are performed today. The legitimacy of the industry also depends on the mythology that surrounds public service contracting, and to a considerable extent, that mythology is shaped by our reading of the past. It matters to politicians, public officials and private providers today that military contracting was done well in the past. We can still laugh at Falstaff. It must be clear however, that he is a caricature of the worst and not the norm. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1 Syrett, *Shipping and Military Power in the Seven Years War*, University of Exeter Press, 2008. 2 Roger Morriss, ‘Colonization, Conquest, and the Supply of Food and Transport: The Reorganization of Logistics Management, 1780-1795’, *War in History*, 2007, 14 (3), 310-324



# It's the Economy Stupid

## The Economic Importance of Eastern Congo



Shouldn't you be in school? Photo: Marie Frechon/U.N.

As more and more American journalists penetrate the war zones of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is becoming increasingly clear that the cause of instability is a surrogate war being perpetrated by the government of Rwanda. The leading insurgent group, led by Colonel Laurent Nkunda is financed, armed, trained and even manned by the army of Rwanda.

Colonel Nkunda proclaims that he is fighting for two reasons. First, he wants to protect the Congolese Tutsi ethnic group from discrimination and possible violence in the Kivu provinces of Eastern Congo. Secondly, he says that the former Rwandan Hutu army in exile, including some who participated in the genocide of 1994, continues to operate in the Congo, and he is there to prevent them from doing it again.

There is some truth in Colonel Nkunda's argument, but the far more relevant issue is economic. What most observers fail to realize is that Rwanda

has had *de facto* control of North Kivu province and its extensive mineral and timber resources for a full 12 years. That's hard to give up.

The Rwandan army entered the Congo in 1996 to destroy Hutu refugee camps and to bring Laurent Kabila to power as the first post-Mobutu President. Between 1996 and 1998, Rwandan forces occupied and controlled the Eastern Congo. In 1998, Kabila asked the Rwandans to evacuate its forces. Rwanda complied, but two months later came back in full force, along with surrogate Congolese rebels. This unleashed a full four-year war involving a number of Africa nations. Throughout this period, Rwanda continued to control the Kivu provinces and their natural resources.

With the end of the war in 2002, the Rwandan army pulled out of the Congo at the insistence of Secretary of State Colin Powell. But their surrogate Congolese rebel army, the RCD ("Congolese Rally for Democracy"), remained in control.

The Rwandan control of resources remained intact.

In 2006, the Congo had a very successful democratic transition that was recognized as legitimate, both internally and externally. The Rwandan RCD surrogates in the East were not successful in the elections, and their forces were supposedly "integrated" into the Congolese army. The post-election government of President Joseph Kabila understandably wanted to exercise its sovereign right to control all of the territory. This clearly threatened Rwandan control of North Kivu's resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that Colonel Laurent Nkunda and his Tutsi militia appeared as a new insurgent challenge to the new democratically elected regime.

The objective of the Nkunda militia is to deny control of the Kivu territory to the central Congolese government sitting in Kinshasa. As long as this is the case, the Rwandan business-government complex can continue to integrate the Kivu economy ► 34

33 ◀ into the Rwandan economy, and can continue to benefit from Kivu's ample mineral resources. The Congolese government has given its own army the mission of taking control of the Eastern provinces. Unfortunately, the army has not demonstrated the capacity to defeat the better trained and equipped Nkunda militia that is fully backed by the Rwandan army. The Congolese army is either underpaid or not paid by the corrupt generals who confiscate their salaries. The army has to live off the local peasantry and adds to the problem of wartime suffering.

The nub of the problem is economic. After twelve years of Rwandan control, North Kivu province is economically integrated into Rwanda, and probably accounts for about 50 percent of Rwanda's gross national product. Without Kivu's resources, Rwanda would undoubtedly suffer a tremendous drop in its economic development prospects.

What is the answer? The Congolese government has the sovereign right to

control its territory and its resources. On the other hand, the Congolese government should understand that its far Eastern regions are naturally part of the East African economic zone. The natural flow of goods and services to and from the Eastern Congo is through Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania, not through the port of Matadi, a thousand miles away on the Atlantic Ocean. The Southeastern mining area of Katanga has natural connections through Zambia and Southern Africa.

The time has come to make the Rwanda connection legitimate by integrating the economies of Eastern Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. A common market and free economic zone covering this territory surrounding lakes Albert, Kivu and Tanganyika would allow for the free movement of trade and populations. This would benefit all of the countries involved and would eliminate the fundamental reasons for insurgency. Rwandan business persons could continue to trade in Kivu minerals, but would pay royalties

and taxes to the government of the Congo, a win-win situation.

Is such a solution feasible? The Congolese authorities need to stifle their great resentment against the Rwandan government for all of the misery it has inflicted on the Congo since 1996. The Rwandans need to understand that they cannot uphold their economic interests at the expense of hundreds of thousands of Congolese who are suffering from displacement and malnutrition. The international donor community cannot continue to provide fungible cash to Rwanda that is transformed into military assistance to surrogates in the Congo.

It is also time for the international community to let the government of the Congo understand that it cannot claim legitimacy as long as its army is untrained, unpaid, undisciplined and predatory against the Congolese population. It was the case during Mobutu's 31 years in power, and it is a crying shame that it continues to this day under Kabila. ■



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# We Don't Get No Respect

## Shades of Vietnam Color Public Perceptions of Private Contractors



Can you find the contractor in this photo? Photo: Senior Airman Christina D. Kinsey /USAF

THE late American comedian, Rodney Dangerfield, was probably best-known for his catchphrase of “I don’t get no respect.” From within the private contracting industry, the thought “we don’t get no respect” resonates continually.

If a poll was done to determine the level of respect for various professions, it is likely that military servicemen would be near the top, along with firemen, doctors and nurses. Private contractors, however, would likely be languishing near the bottom with such godforsaken professions as lawyers and tax inspectors. But why?

Our servicemen work in often hostile environments, regularly putting their lives in danger (and sadly, sometimes paying the ultimate price) in support of government foreign policy objectives. Meanwhile, private contractors, many of whom are themselves former servicemen and women, work in often hostile environments, regularly putting their lives in danger (and sadly, sometimes paying the ultimate

price) in support of government foreign policy objectives. What ultimately is the difference? For servicemen and women making the transition from uniformed to private services, why would they fall from one end of the “respect” spectrum to the other when in reality, they are doing a very similar job for essentially the same ultimate employer.

Take Art Laguna, for example. Mr. Laguna served in the U.S. Army National Guard for three decades, serving in Iraq three times and Bosnia once. He was also a volunteer helicopter pilot who flew medical evacuation missions with the California National Guard, and was recently awarded the Legion of Merit. When Mr. Laguna left the military, he became a private contractor. And it was as a contractor that Mr. Laguna was killed in the line of duty when the helicopter he was piloting was shot down over Baghdad. The mission Mr. Laguna was flying that day was to assist a U.S. Embassy convoy that had come under attack. In a recent Washington Post op-ed, Marybeth,

Mr. Laguna’s widow, expressed her exasperation at how her husband’s honorable service was so often tarnished by the fact that he worked for a private contractor.[1] Indeed, if Mr. Laguna had been shot down while in uniform, anyone who smeared his memory would likely be branded as callous and “unpatriotic;” however since he was a private contractor when he was killed, he was instead prone to be labeled a “cowboy” or a “mercenary,” as Mrs. Laguna experienced and reported in her article

In many ways, the current operations in Iraq can be compared with the war in Vietnam. As American soldiers returned from serving their country in Vietnam, they were booed, jeered and spat upon. Being a Vietnam veteran was for quite some time, stigmatized and it took years, if not decades, for them to be accorded the same respect that had been bestowed upon those who had served in previous conflicts. Looking back, most people would likely agree that the way in which those veterans were treated ► 36

35 ◀ was atrocious. For those who believe the war in Vietnam was a mistake and was an ill-conceived policy, the general realization at least tends to be that the fault lies with those who created the policy, not those whose duty it was to carry it out.

Societal opinion has moved to the point that servicemen and women are no longer the target of criticism for unpopular wars. As millions marched before and during the Iraq conflict, in opposition to the war, the target of discontent was not your average soldier, but rather, the administration. In many ways, it seemed society had learned the lessons of Vietnam. But instead, that same Vietnam-era



The Iraq War protesters have tended to be very colorful . Photo: J. J. Messner/IPOA

indispensible public service in bringing us the harsh realities of war, and a good number of them are motivated by this desire to serve. Likewise, many State Department officials who volunteered to go to

years to come. Short of a draft or a remarkable uptick in military funding and recruitment (or a similarly unlikely expansion of coalitions of the willing), the U.S. military will remain overstretched, and will therefore continue

## “ Vietnam-era stigmatization has migrated to private contractors. ”

stigmatization has migrated to private contractors. It is now private contractors who are (metaphorically at least) being booed, jeered and spat upon.

Though contractors enter conflicts willfully and for profit, it is remarkable how detractors of the industry are quick to divine the motivations of people going to work in Iraq. If you are a private contractor, you must be going to Iraq to profit off of the war ... or so the belief goes. But what of war correspondents, whose careers are often propelled by surviving danger postings? Surely a journalist is likely to profit, career-wise, from covering a war more than they are from covering the real estate beat in Boston. Or government bureaucrats who accept postings in Iraq (or any dicey environment for that matter), happy in the knowledge that such a posting will accrue brownie points, serious credibility and some danger pay? But from another perspective, many war correspondents provide an

Iraq, likely did so in order to help reconstruct a battered society. Why is it therefore such a stretch to imagine that a contractor, like Mr. Laguna, would want to go to Iraq as an extension of his service to his country?

Industry critics like Jeremy Scahill, who calls the private sector “Bush’s shadow army” or a “Pretorian Guard”, demonize the industry to the point that its reality is distorted into myth and the myth is promoted to the point of trendiness. Contractors have made mistakes. Some contractors may even have broken the law at some stage. But with 200,000 contractors in Iraq alone, this deviant minority is a small one.

The reality is that the U.S. military is overstretched. Even with a new Administration, Iraq will not go away overnight and President-Elect Barack Obama has made it clear that Afghanistan will likely remain a focus for

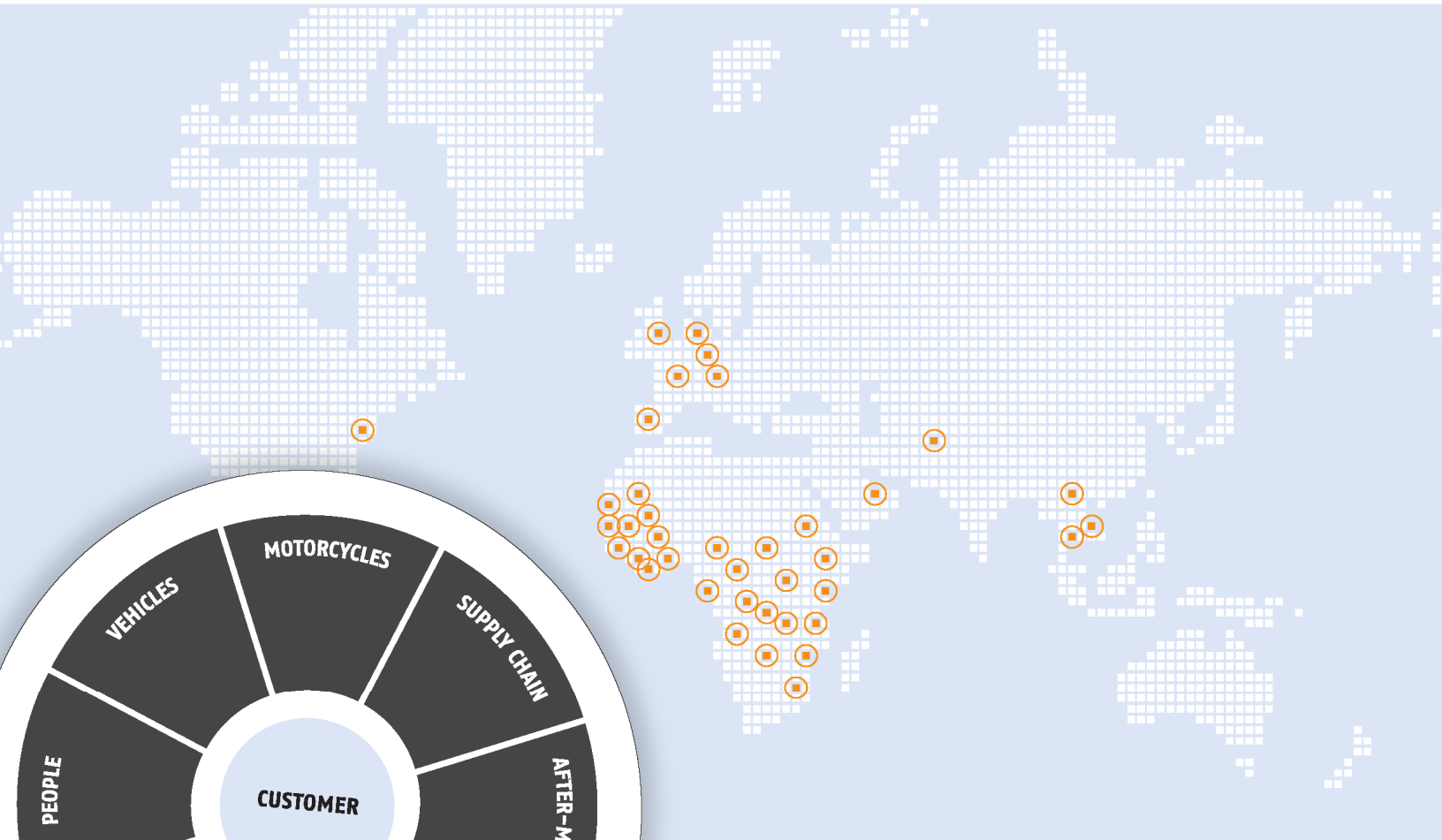
to rely heavily on contractors to provide essential services. It is right that people continue to ask questions of their policy makers and continue to demand that contractors meet a high level of accountability and ethical conduct. But beyond this, it is high time that we all treated contractors with the respect they have earned by often laying their lives on the line to protect their countrymen and rebuild shattered societies, rather than treating them like the red-headed stepchild of U.S. foreign policy.

To again quote Rodney Dangerfield, “when I played in the sandbox, the cat kept covering me up.” As contractors continue to operate in the sandbox that is Iraq, hopefully they will begin to be treated with the respect they deserve. ■

### ENDNOTES

[1] Laguna, Marybeth. 2008. My Husband Was a Blackwater Hero. The Washington Post, November 30: B03.





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