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First Prize

From Dogs of War to Soldiers of Peace: Evaluating Private Military and Security Companies as a Civilian Protection Force

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Like many of its member-states, the United Nations (UN) did not have a clear place in the world when the Cold War ended. For forty years, great power rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union had relegated this organization, originally founded upon Wilsonian ideals of collective security, to the task of monitoring ceasefires.¹ When the wall fell, many in the west believed that the UN was poised to realize its potential and could, thus, be relied upon to contain and diffuse conflict in the post-Cold War order.² Unfortunately for all parties involved, this proved to be overly optimistic. As missions in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda all made manifestly clear, the UN was unprepared to restore order in situations of pervasive violence. By the mid 1990s, the international community was thus faced with

¹ It should be noted that the United Nations did have two prior experiences with complex peace operations. The first was the 1960-4 Congo operation and the second was West New Guinea's political transition in 1962-3. Needless to say, neither of these missions provided sufficient preparation for the tasks the UN would be asked to perform in the 1990s and beyond. William J. Durch, *UN Peacekeeping, American Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), p. 3.

² William J. Durch, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 2.

a choice: Either it could provide the UN with the legal space and the material resources it needed to impose peace on conflict ridden societies, or a different actor would have to assume this responsibility.

Regrettably, world events precluded a carefully calculated decision on this matter. In 1999, just four years after UN peacekeepers stood idly by during the massacre in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the international community once again called upon the UN to oversee yet other fragile political and military situations, this time in Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Recognizing that these missions would likely fail if UN forces operated with the same poorly defined objectives and limited means common to missions in the early 1990s, the UN created a Panel on United Nations Peace Operations to outline the proper strategic direction for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The Panel's report, known as the "Brahimi Report" for Panel Chairman Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, put forth a comprehensive list of recommendations. Although member-states were reluctant to contribute the requisite personnel and resources, the UN bureaucracy implemented these recommendations as best they could.³ Thus, by the time six new missions had more than doubled the total number of UN personnel devoted to armed UN missions in 2005,⁴ the UN had taken tentative but nevertheless real steps towards acquiring the capacity to accomplish the new tasks the international community was asking it to perform.

The problem was that demand for UN missions of greater scope and scale was keeping pace with, if not outstripping, efforts to improve UN peacekeeping practices. The sheer size of operations like the 19,000-man UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) was straining the DPKO's ability to keep all missions adequately staffed.⁵ Equally challenging to the forces on the ground were novel mission objectives like improving the rule of law in countries with weak or non-existent institutions of government and politico-military leaders with loose command over their followers.⁶ Beginning with MONUC in 1999 and continuing with greater frequency in 2003, the

³ William J. Durch et al., *The Brahimi Report and the Future of Peace Operations* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2003), p. xv.

⁴ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Year in Review 2005*, p. 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ Jeremy Farrall, "The Future of UN Peacekeeping and the Rule of Law" (remarks made at the American Society of International Law Proceedings, Washington, D.C., 2007).

Security Council began issuing one unprecedented mandate: protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.⁷ In a clear departure from the days of strict non-involvement in local violence, UN forces were now being asked, indeed, ordered to safeguard civilians from whatever forces were threatening their survival.

How the UN was supposed to adapt its forces from a mediating to a coercive protection role was, and remains, unclear. With the DPKO unable to implement such a major doctrinal shift under its current resource constraints and wealthy UN member-states apparently unwilling to increase their UN contributions, many UN troops have been obligated to cope with their protection responsibilities by muddling through.⁸ The results, while a far cry from the disasters of the early 1990s, have nonetheless been unsatisfactory. As the rebel General Laurent Nkunda's August 2008 seizure of Goma in the eastern DRC and the subsequent killing of roughly 150 civilians illustrated,⁹ the UN's inability to protect civilians within its area of deployment is not just a technical problem—it is deadly. Finding a feasible solution to this capacity deficit is critically important.

This paper contends that private military companies provide one such a solution. More specifically, it argues that private military and security personnel are better able to protect civilians supposedly under the purview of UN protection than the UN forces currently tasked with this responsibility. It also claims that recruiting private contractors for this purpose would not introduce downsides like prohibitive financial costs or significant risks of misconduct that would offset contractors' utility. To make this dual case, the aspects of the UN's efforts to protect civilians that most inhibit its success will be identified. This framework will then be used to demonstrate the intuitive appeal of hiring private contractors to do this work. The third and penultimate section provides analysis that buttresses this intuition and further cements the plausibility of hiring private contractors to conduct UN civilian protection missions. The article concludes with a summary of the argument and suggestions for further research.

⁷ There is slight variation in the precise language used to connote a civilian protection mandate in Security Council resolutions. In my opinion, there is no substantive difference between these variations. For a concise list of the resolutions providing missions with a civilian protection mandate, see Victoria K. Holt and Tobias C. Berkman, *The Impossible Mandate: Military Preparedness, the Responsibility to Protect, and Modern Peace Operations* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2006) Annex 1.

⁸ Holt, p. 50.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, "DR Congo: Increase Peacekeepers in Eastern Congo," November, 11, 2008.

Diagnosing Aggressive Peace Operations: A Note on Methodology

Although models of traditional UN peacekeeping have been discussed in academic and policy-making circles since the early 1990s, little similar work has been done on civilian protection models.¹⁰ This unfortunately obviates a completely objective evaluation of military forces' relative effects on the UN's ability to ensure the safety of the civilians they are charged with protecting. The literature on missions that attempted (or are currently performing) civilian protection roles¹¹ instead offers critiques that are aggregated into seven categories: slow political response; insufficient numbers of troops and police officers; poor troop quality; ambiguous and/or poorly constructed mandates;

¹⁰ Former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali identifies three general categories in his foundational report on peacekeeping reform: peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building, and enforcement action. Of these, enforcement action best matches the parameters of civilian protection missions, but the strictly descriptive discussion the concept is afforded in the Secretary-General's report is not a sufficient basis to serve as an evaluative framework. The United States Army field manual on peacekeeping provides a more robust analysis of the military requirements for success in "peace enforcement" missions, but that document's narrow focus on field-level tactics excludes important strategic considerations important in measuring a multilateral intervention's success. William J. Durch provides a scholarly framework for analyzing peace operations. He uses four labels: traditional peacekeeping, multi-dimensional peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and peace enforcement. Because none of these categories includes specific mention of the challenges inherent to protecting civilians, none are appropriate in the present analysis. Gareth Evans offers the most thorough discussion of the term "civilian protection" in his writings for International Crisis Group, however his conflation of peace operations with counter-genocide missions that require war-fighting doctrine to subdue affords his work limited utility in the current paper. (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, 2nd ed. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1995): paras. 23-80; United States Army, *Peace Operations: Field Manual 100-23* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1994), pp. 12-133; William J. Durch, *UN Peacekeeping, American Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, pp. 7-11; Gareth Evans, "Operationalizing R2P in Coercive Peace Operations." Presentation by Gareth Evans to the Working Group on Peace Operations and the Protection of Civilians, ICRC and IIHL Conference on International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, and Peace Operations, San Remo, 5 September 2008).

¹¹ Herein, "civilian protection" and "coercive protection" shall pertain to situation in which the UN is mandated to protect civilians from imminent threat of physical violence. At present, there are six ongoing and historical cases of UN missions with mandates that feature(d) this stipulation. These missions include the United Nations Missions in Cote D'Ivoire (UNOCI), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Liberia (UNMIL), Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and Sudan (UNMIS). Similarly aggressive operations that attempted civilian protection in some form but lacked a specific mandate component for this include the UN mission in Cambodia (UNTAC), the second United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the UN missions in East Timor (UNTAET, UNMISSET, and UNMIT), the UN mission in Chad and the northeastern portion of the Central Africa Republic (MINURCAT), the UN mission in Burundi (BINUB), and the UN mission in Darfur (UNMID).

inadequate UN command and control; limited rapid reaction capacity; and premature force withdrawal.¹²

The fact that these seven observations are necessarily negative appraisals of current UN coercive protection practices rather than an objective means of analyzing these kinds of operations makes them a poor device for comparing different intervention forces' ability to affect the success of UN coercive protection. The reason, put simply, is that any comparative analysis on these terms would put conventional UN forces at a relative disadvantage to other potential interveners. Recognizing this weakness, the critiques listed above are nonetheless employed as a seven-point framework for evaluating possible coercive protection forces. This approach is adopted because the seven variables in question, although derived using a suspect methodology, do seem to capture the core determinants of any military force's ability to succeed in UN civilian protection missions. Only to the extent that one doubts this subjective conclusion can one disagree for methodological reasons with this article's comparative evaluation of private military forces and standard UN troops.

Problems with Robust UN Peace Operations

If one were to summarize in a single phrase, the woes of UN peace operations in the post-Cold War era, "member-states' lack of political will" would be an excellent choice. Those who accuse the United Nations of corruption, incompetence, and complacency often make fair points. However, as many seasoned observers of UN affairs are fond of quipping, the organization has never been much more than the sum of its parts—that is, the sum of its member-states' efforts. In the world of UN peacekeeping, this dearth of commitment to UN efforts is most severe among developed nations that, with few exceptions, refuse to risk politically costly troop casualties by sending elements from their national armed forces to serve in the dangerous situations where UN peace operations are now deployed. The consequences of this collective non-commitment are extensive. A common first-order effect is simply

¹² Several important non-military issues in complex UN operations such as inefficient administrative structures, poor civilian-military communication, and limited reserves of civilian officers are excluded from this analysis as they lie outside the purview of what can reasonable be expected to improve as a result of changes to force structure and composition that would occur if the UN hired private contractors.

that the UN fails to initialize a peace operation mandated to spare civilians from the worst violence a crisis has to offer. This problem was most evident in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where wholly inadequate observational missions¹³ confronted conflicts that, in one case, claimed over 5,000 civilian lives.¹⁴ More robust missions with forces in excess of 10,000 followed each of these tragic and politically embarrassing disasters, but in each case, the majority of the carnage had already taken place by the time they arrived. As horrific as the grim facts of these misguided interventions are, perhaps the most appalling features are the bureaucratic politics that surrounded their creation. In both instances, Security Council members *elected* to send an unarmed contingent, justifying this decision by wishfully characterizing the crises and the primary actors involved as benign.

The political precedent for protective intervention was, in fairness, weaker in the mid- and late-1990s than it is in the 2000s. That this paradigm shift has occurred and continues to hold is, in large measure, a consequence of the horrors that befell the people of Liberia and Sierra Leone. There is, however, little reason to believe that future developing world disasters will not garner an inadequate UN response. As the memories of the failures in Liberia and Sierra Leone fade in the institutional memories of the permanent members of the Security Council, the politically expedient temptation to deploy observers where a protection force is needed will likely resurface.

A second, far more common, problem stemming from insufficient political will is insufficient troop totals. In Somalia, during the UN's second attempt at restoring order (UNOSOM II), the Secretary-General cited slow deployment of UN troops as the main reason some armed factions became bolder in the month preceding the now infamous deaths of 18 U.S. Army Rangers.¹⁵ In Cambodia, insufficient troop numbers forced the UN to abandon its plan to disarm warring factions before national elections, a compromise that ultimately proved extremely costly as it enabled a violent coup d'état in 1997 and persistent looting of the country's natural resources by paramilitary

¹³ UNOMIL and UNOSMIL for Liberia and Sierra Leone, respectively.

¹⁴ This refers to the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF's) January 1999 sack of Freetown, Sierra Leone ('Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), p. 38.

¹⁵ United Nations, *Further Report of the Secretary-General Submitted in Pursuance of Paragraphs 18 and 19 of Resolution 794, S/25354*, paras. 4-5.

groups.¹⁶ Since the mid-1990s, DPKO has benefited from several initiatives that have made mid- to high-quality national troops more available to UN missions. Of these, perhaps the most celebrated is the stand-by high-readiness brigade (abbreviated SHIRBRIG) consisting of forces from 16 countries (Argentina, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden).¹⁷ Although SHIRBRIG has provided the UN with important early deployment capacity in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Sudan (UNMIS and AMIS), and Liberia (UNMIL), it and other similar stand-by arrangements are ultimately hamstrung by stipulations from all participating nation-states preventing deployment of their troops without their explicit permission.¹⁸ In this sense, the UN's troop procurement methods are no more reliable today than they were during the mishaps of the early 1990s. This continuing weakness is manifest in DPKO's consistent inability to reach even 50% of recommended troop levels within the 90-day post-mandate deadline for full deployment¹⁹ set forth in the Brahimi Report.²⁰

Recently, problems acquiring the authorized number of troops for a given mission have been overshadowed by even more severe shortfalls in the number of available police. Although the total number of police assigned to a given mission is usually only a fraction of the total number of troops authorized, law enforcement components of complex UN peace operations have dramatically increased in both scale and scope since the missions in Kosovo (UNMIK) and East Timor (UNTAET, UNMISET, and UNMIT) began. In their new roles, UN police officers are often assigned an array of tasks ranging from restructuring local forces, training and vetting officers, and providing site security, to leading patrols in the field, suppressing organized crime, and combating gang violence.²¹ Assuming these more active law enforcement duties has in turn obligated the UN to drastically increase the number of officers it deploys from a

¹⁶ James S. Schear, "Riding the Tiger: The UN and Cambodia," in *Peacekeeping, American Politics, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, ed. William J. Durch (New York; St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 142-150.

¹⁷ See <<http://www.shirbrig.dk/html/main.htm>>.

¹⁸ Stephen Kinloch Pichat, *A UN 'Legion': Between Utopia and Reality*, (London: Cass, 2004), pp. 171-2. The UN maintains a variety of country-specific stand-by arrangements, or "memoranda of understanding" through the UN stand-by arrangement system.

¹⁹ The 90-day deadline is for complex peace operations. For traditional peacekeeping missions, the Brahimi Report established an even more challenging 30-day post-mandate full-deployment deadline.

²⁰ See <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>>.

²¹ Joshua G. Smith, Victoria K. Holt, and William J. Durch. *Enhancing United Nations Capacity to Support Post-Conflict Policing and Rule of Law* (Washington D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2007), p. 18.

rough average of 2,500 during the 1990s to over 11,500 in 2008. Member-states have had considerable difficulty meeting this rising demand. It took over six months for UNMIK's police component to reach full strength and over nine months for UNTAET to reach three-quarters strength, a ratio that contributing nations never improved upon. In Haiti too, police deployment levels wavered between being six and twelve months late relative to the 90-day Brahimi standard. Were it not for the advent of formed police units (FPUs)—groups of 125-140 heavily armed police that operate together—leading up to the Security Council's authorization of UNMIK and UNTAET, this record of tardiness would likely be worse. Prior to these missions, all UN police deployed as individual officers without their home states receiving compensation. Yet, even with the revenue-generating FPU available, member-states have still been woefully unwilling to meet the UN's growing need for forces capable of specialized tasks like patrolling borders, providing VIP protection, and controlling urban unrest. Although some of this shortfall can be attributed to nation-states' tendency to maintain few spare police forces, simple nonparticipation has also contributed. Indeed, it is both ironic and telling that the UN's greatest dearth in law enforcement capacity is in functional areas best assigned to FPUs.

A fourth direct consequence of developed states' consistent aversion to participation in robust peacekeeping is the marked decline in the quality of UN forces over the past fifteen years. With the notable exception of Indian and Pakistani troops who come to the UN well-equipped and trained for combat as a consequence of their countries' rivalry, many of the top troop contributing countries (TCCs) treat the UN as a military soup kitchen; a place where troops can be fed, paid, trained, and equipped at the developed world's expense. Besides creating serious administrative and financial problems, this abuse of the UN system also inhibits the fulfillment of the UN's militarily demanding new mandates. One of the more high-profile exposures of this mismatch of means and ends occurred in the Congo during the latter half of 2003. There, withdrawal of Ugandan troops from Bunia, the capital of the Ituri district, and the subsequent hasty installment of a battalion of Uruguayan UN troops (URUBATT) created conditions, rival militias reasoned, amenable to open warfare, rape, and pillage. As chaos ensued, UN forces abandoned their civilian protection mandate due to insufficient training, equipment, training, and preparation, although they were able to defend a limited number of UN installations where fearful civilians were congregating. This situation persisted for a month before Secretary-General Kofi Annan negotiated with French

President Jacques Chirac for the deployment a European Union (EU) interim emergency multinational force (IEMF) to restore order. The subsequent commencement of “Operation Artemis,” which consisted of approximately 1,400 troops, 300 special forces, close air support, photographic and signal intelligence assets, and night-vision capacity, reduced the violence in Bunia and the surrounding countryside considerably. Regrettably, the IEMF’s three-month stay in Ituri generated few positive long-term results. Immediately after its departure, rebel groups returned to ravage the citizens of Ituri despite a reinforced UN presence in the district. The situation only eased after the Secretary-General threatened to call on the EU again.²² Force quality was thus a determining factor during MONUC’s operations in eastern Congo. When troops on the ground displayed the expertise, technological sophistication, and discipline characteristic of a developed world military, civilian protection was relatively easy. When the guarantors of civilian safety lacked these qualities, even a numerically large troop contingent had considerably less success.

To this day, MONUC troops lack the basic wherewithal necessary to protect the civilians within their area of deployment. During the former rebel commander Laurent Nkunda’s most recent offensive in North Kivu, his forces terrorized a village and summarily executed all military-aged men they could find for an entire day without interruption. Where were UN forces during this episode? Surprisingly, over a hundred were in a base less than two miles away from the village. In the aftermath of the killing, the commander of these UN troops cited insufficient combat equipment, language barriers, and virtually non-existent intelligence capabilities as the three reasons he was unable to stop the atrocities being committed at his doorstep.²³ The United Nations’ apparent inability to correct the errors made prior to “Operation Artemis” in the five years following that incident is, if nothing else, clear evidence of the structural problems the organization has in fielding forces appropriate for fulfilling the mandates it issues.

The 2004 debacle in Ituri also demonstrates the negative effects of the UN’s practice of issuing mandates that are over-ambitious and/or ambiguous. For MONUC forces, the crux of the problem was the expansive mandate laid out in Security Council

²² United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit: Military Division, “Operation Artemis: The Lessons of the Interim Multinational Force,” October 2004. Accessible at <<http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/PBPS/Pages/Public/Home.aspx>>.

²³ Lydia Polgreen, “A Massacre in Congo, Despite Nearby Support,” *New York Times*, December 11, 2007, Main section, Online edition.

Resolution 1291 (2000) which required UN forces to institute a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program, organize the orderly release of prisoners of war, and protect at-risk civilians, all with a paltry 5,537 troops.²⁴ Civilians in eastern Congo interpreted this bold statement of purpose as evidence that the UN could and would come to their aid if the scheduled withdrawal of Ugandan and Rwandan troops placed them in danger. The Uruguayan battalion of UN troops sent to Bunia was under a different impression. In the UN's formal request to re-locate URUBATT to Bunia from its previous area of deployment in western Congo, it made no mention to the Uruguayan government that its troops would be responsible for protecting endangered civilians. When URUBATT arrived prepared only to secure UN personnel, the airfield, and the Ituri Pacification Committee (IPC) compound, it was thus surprised to find thousands of civilians anxiously expecting that the UN would rid their town of the militias committing wanton acts of violence. That the Uruguayan troops admirably protected whom they could instead of withdrawing entirely from the chaos in Bunia is the major reason the city did not turn into another Srebrenica.²⁵

No post-Cold war UN peace operation better demonstrates the disasters that can result from poor doctrine construction than the second UN operation in Somalia, UNOSOM II. Popular accounts of what took place in Somalia hold that the U.S.-led intervention (UNITAF) was a success before the United Nations assumed command and expanded the operation from simple famine relief to nation-building. In reality, the United States had near absolute control over what was essentially a single operation with inseparable famine relief and nation-building components. The international community's poor results in Somalia are attributable not to the United Nation's incompetence so much as to the United States' deceitfulness. After drafting the plans and mandates for every facet of the intervention in Somalia—from food distribution, to disarmament, to political settlement, and infrastructure development—and supplying the overwhelming majority of the forces necessary for this project (30,000 by December 1992), the United States withdrew, leaving an unprepared and under-resourced UN force (with help from a handful of elite French, Italian, Belgian, and American troops) the unenviable business of hunting down General Mohamed Farrah Aideed and demobilizing his heavily armed marauders. Lured by the prospects of U.S. participation in an intervention that desperately required American expertise, the United Nations

²⁴ United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1291 (2000)*, S/RES/1291, 24 February 2000.

²⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, "Operation Artemis."

was left with a mandate, drafted by the Pentagon, that it could not fulfill.²⁶ Abandonment is thus as much of a danger during the planning phase of a mission as mismatches between what troop contributing countries' (TCCs) will provide and what is required in the field.²⁷

Distinct from the quality of the troops the UN has at its disposal or the tenability of the mandates that govern its forces' behavior are problems of command and control (C2). Under the United Nation's uniquely fractured C2 system, all forces seconded to UN missions are ultimately answerable to their national militaries, not UN commanders. Needless to say, instances of UN troops and TCCs disobeying or ignoring orders from their UN superiors under this system are plentiful. Perhaps the most embarrassing incident occurred in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) after troops from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) left the country in early 2000. Thereafter, Revolutionary United Front (RUF) ambushes of UN convoys occurred with increasingly frequency, weakening UNAMSIL's credibility and costing it valuable equipment. In April, a battalion of Kenyan peacekeepers in the town of Makeni came under particularly intense pressure from the RUF, whose repeated raids had run the UN troops' ammunition supplies dangerously low. To relieve them, force commander Vijay Jetley dispatched a contingent of Indian troops and a helicopter gunship belonging to the Sierra Leonean government with a battalion of Zambian infantry in a supporting role. Their instructions were to traverse the dangerous roads between Freetown and Makeni in a single day and the next morning escort Kenyan troops out of the city. Instead, the force split less than halfway to its destination (for reasons that are unknown to this day), leaving the Zambian battalion the dangerous task of securing the Kenyan forces without air support. Reasoning that this was an assignment they lay beyond the capabilities of a force that had no combat experience and virtually no experience operating as a unit, the Zambian commander disobeyed repeated orders to proceed to Makeni post-haste, electing instead to stop for the night and negotiate with

²⁶ Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst. "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," in *Learning From Somalia: The Lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1997), pp. 239-252.

²⁷ A third kind of mandate-related problem occurs when the UN responds to member-states' aversion to aggressive action in a certain situation by not authorizing a mission that addresses problems needing a robust response. The UN mission in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) exemplifies this dynamic. Such non-coercive protection missions are not treated here, for reasons explained in the "Case Selection" section in Chapter II.

the RUF for safe passage. This ploy quickly proved unsuccessful as the entire battalion was taken hostage and its equipment (including four armored personnel carriers) commandeered for use in an RUF offensive on Freetown. The episode, which came at great cost to UNAMSIL's credibility and military standing in Sierra Leone, only came to close two months later when the battalion's release was finally negotiated.²⁸

Unfortunately, resistance to force commander Jetley's C2 was even stronger and more pervasive than the May 2000 hostage crisis suggests. As he elaborated in his scathing report to the Security Council prior to his resignation in September 2000, Jetley's efforts to fulfill his mandate to restore order in Sierra Leone were systematically sabotaged by members of the Nigerian military participating in UNAMSIL, including the Secretary-General's Special Representative, the former head of the West African monitoring force (ECOMOG) that preceded UNAMSIL, and Jetley's own deputy commander. These men, Jetley argued, were making a great deal of money aiding the RUF in their diamond smuggling rackets and were thus intent on prolonging national disorder regardless of its toll on Sierra Leonean civilians or non-Nigerian UNAMSIL personnel. Their actions towards this end included freeing captured RUF militiamen, refusing to aid in the release of UNAMSIL prisoners, and permitting safe passage of illegal diamond shipments in areas where Nigerian soldiers were deployed. Senior UN officials who saw the report admitted prior knowledge of this nexus of illegal activity and further confessed that they expected negative ramifications from delegating UNAMSIL command to an Indian even though the majority of the troops seconded to the mission were Nigerian. Why did UNAMSIL's deployment move forward when officials in DPKO and the Secretariat's office knew all of these risks seriously jeopardized the operation? The answer, put simply, is that little more could be expected when setting up a UN mission with donated forces in a war-torn, spoiler-ridden African country of little geo-strategic significance.²⁹

Closely related to DPKO's inability to coax sufficient numbers of troops from UN member-states is its oft-bemoaned inability to respond rapidly to ongoing crises. This is a prominent issue in virtually every major document addressing potential peacekeeping reforms since *An Agenda for Peace*, but only after the publication of the Brahimi Report

²⁸ Durch, *Twenty-First Century Peace Operations*, p. 232.

²⁹ Chris McGreal, "Nigerian peace force accused of sabotage," *The Guardian Unlimited*, Main Section, Online Edition, September 14, 2000.

in September 2000 have concrete steps been taken. The first priority was increasing the number of troops and police available for rapid deployment. On-call lists pledging specific capabilities (i.e. pieces of equipment and individual capabilities like civil engineering) or self-sustaining brigades were intended to serve this purpose, but as of 2004, only Jordan and Uruguay had made firm pledges. Similar attempts to accrue stand-by policing capacity have proven even less successful. To date, military officers and other mission planning personnel are the only rapid reaction human assets the United Nations has in numbers sufficient to meet the 90-day Brahimi deployment deadline. As of 2007, DPKO had sufficient designees for logistics, operations, communications and intelligence positions to assemble mission staffs seven days after a mandate's passage in the Security Council. It is important to remember, however, that all personnel theoretically pledged to UN service must receive their home government's express permission before assuming their UN duties.³⁰

To bolster its forces' readiness and sustainability and thereby speed their deployment to the field, the UN established a logistics base (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy in 1994. UNLB's primary task is maintaining mission start-up kits, which include vehicles, engineering equipment, communications, and accommodations. As of 2003, UNLB was developing the equipment reserves necessary to deploy an entire complex peace mission 90 days post-mandate. Missing from these start-up kits, however, is the medium and heavy strategic airlift capacity necessary to transport equipment to theaters of operation. DPKO has traditionally relied jointly on the U.S. military and contracts ("letters of assist" or LOAs) with Russia and Ukraine for this capacity.³¹ When it has been obligated to rely exclusively on LOAs, as it did from 2003-2005 (during which time U.S. strategic airlift was committed to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan), deployment rates never met the Brahimi standard. Furthermore, when the UN has had to set up multiple missions in quick succession, it has often been forced to abandon organic set up procedures entirely, relying instead on private contractors like Pacific Architects and Engineers, Military Professional Resources Incorporated, and DynCorp for everything from airfield construction to food, fuel, and medical supplies.³² In sum, although the UN has improved its ability to field all personnel and equipment required

³⁰ William J. Durch, Victoria K. Holt, Carline R. Earle, and Moira K. Shanahan. *The Brahimi Report and the Future of UN Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2003), pp. 70-75.

³¹ Ibid, pp. 90-92.

³² Durch and Berkman. *Who Should Keep the Peace?*, pp. 40-43.

to initiate complex peace operations in a timely fashion, its member-states' recalcitrance and its inability to function with the resources and efficiency typical of an organization with expeditionary responsibilities have constrained its progress.

Even when the United Nations has been able to field a force capable of executing challenging and multi-faceted post-Cold War mandates, recent history has demonstrated that the force it deploys often does not stay long enough to maximize its positive influence. The prime example of this unfortunate reality is UNOSOM II. As mentioned previously, this mission failed in large part because its lead nation (i.e. the United States) chose to evacuate rather than assume the security responsibilities that followed directly from its de facto authority over much of the country. Fortunately, since this failure, operations in the Mano River basin (including Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote D'Ivoire) and the former Yugoslavia have not fallen victim to this tendency.³³ The same cannot be said for the organization's efforts in East Timor, where the UN made a precipitous retreat after successfully administering elections only to have to solicit Australia and Malaysia's aid in quelling riots sparked less than a year later by disbanded soldiers.³⁴ Thus, even though the United States and the former Metropoles can and do exhibit the commitment necessary to achieve sustainable results from complex peace operations, they are equally inclined towards strictly short-term strategizing that jeopardizes the success of multi-year, multi-billion dollar projects.

Regional Organization as Inadequate UN Substitutes

During the UN's frequent trials in coercive protection over the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, a tendency developed amongst regional organizations such as the EU, African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and Organization of American States (OAS) to test the waters of complex peacekeeping.³⁵ Would shifting the burden of complex peace operations to these institutions bring about improvements in areas where UN efforts are most wanting? Analyzing their supposed comparative advantages and their

³³ Ibid., p. 46.

³⁴ Jane Perlez, "East Timor's Capital Spirals into Violence," *New York Times*, Main section, online edition, May 28, 2006.

³⁵ Another kind of multilateral organization sometimes mentioned as complement to UN activity is NATO. This option is not explored in-depth as it has never participated in a robust peace operation outside of Europe. This thesis is concerned with global solutions to UN coercive protection deficits.

competencies in the seven critical areas elucidated in the previous section indicates that it would not.

Regional organizations theoretically have two advantages in peace operations. The first arises from the reasonable expectation that the states most willing to solve any given conflict are those in closest proximity to the violence, as they are the states most likely to be foisted with the conflict's severest social, economic and political ramifications. Was this the case, delegating complex peacekeeping responsibilities to the constituent regions in which complex emergencies occur should limit operational problems stemming from insufficient political will on the part of interveners. Second, as regional organizations are a community of states that are necessarily at least somewhat proximate to one another, they also provide a ready forum for military cooperation. This, in turn, should decrease problems of command and control in the field and hasten the process of deploying forces on the ground as a crisis is unfolding.

In practice, neither of these benefits is observed. More often than not, internal conflicts do not generate consensus in the region, but rather create divisions. Consider, for example, central Africa, where half a dozen countries are engaged in what is now a long-running melee over Congo's eastern territories and resources. Clearly, there is no "organic," central African solution to that country's woes. Consider also the situation just south of Congo in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. There, the opposite problem prevails; no state is willing to apply more than minor pressure to force Mr. Mugabe to step down or modify his brutally autocratic style of governance. Given this general pattern of weak regional unity on political matters, it is no surprise that regional organizations have also made little progress with inter-state military cooperation. Even the core EU countries that have achieved an unprecedented degree of unification in recent years and have decades of experience cooperating with respect to the former Soviet military have not made appreciable progress in this area. The organization's 2004 shift from a 60,000-man EU Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) to thirteen autonomous "Battle Groups" comprised of 1,500 troops primarily from a single nation-state exemplifies this reticence towards military unification.

Regional organizations thus do not appear to have any unique characteristics that make them inherently superior to the United Nations. To more thoroughly determine if they are, on balance, better than the default international system of responding to the exigencies in coercive protection, it is useful to reconsider the seven

largest pitfalls in coercive protection outlined previously: delayed authorization, force strength, force quality, mandate tenability, command and control, rapid reaction, and staying power.

Beginning with the likelihood of insufficiently robust missions being deployed where military forces are needed, the first of the seven points of evaluation, one can see that the record is mixed. The Economic Community of West African States responded quite quickly to crises in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire during the 2000s. One can, however, reasonably argue that their presence was not entirely benign; the lead nation in both cases, Nigeria, was in one case trying to insure a supply of conflict diamonds and in another was participating at the behest of its own unelected military regime trying to earn favor in the international community. Nevertheless, ECOWAS was on the ground quickly in all three conflicts. The same cannot be said for the South African Development Community (SADC), which has done next to nothing in Zimbabwe, and was more than willing to foist enforcement of the Congo's Lusaka Cease Fire Agreement on an unprepared UN rather than assume this responsibility itself. Regional organizations are thus at best inconsistent when it comes to accumulating the political will to respond to a crisis in a timely fashion.

Regarding the simple question of sheer numbers, it seems that regional organizations do not present a real solution either. Rather than distributing manpower from parts of the world that have relatively few intra-state emergencies (i.e. North America, Europe, and East Asia) to parts that are often inundated with such problems (i.e. Africa) as the UN system does, a regional framework for intervention obligates every region to take care of its back yard. This often places the world's least adequate militaries and governments in the unenviable and frequently untenable position of managing the world's most difficult security problems. Overcoming this natural state requires regional organizations based in more prosperous and less turbulent parts of the globe (i.e. the EU) to muster the troops, material, and most importantly, the political will, to volunteer to solve conflicts in distant countries. This transfer of resources is, however, much more easily done under the aegis of an organization like the UN whose member-states have explicitly universal obligations, rather than a geographically confined institution that, like nation-states, can justify minimal action on the basis of regional interests. Finally, even if one ignores these issues, the mere fact that several of the world's top contributors to coercive protection efforts, including India, Pakistan,

Bangladesh, and Jordan, do not belong to organizations with military apparatuses deals a serious blow to the idea of a regional system of coercive protection. These countries' forces would undoubtedly be used less efficiently than they currently are if coercive protection was the business of regional forums to which they do not belong.

Concerns about sub-par troop quality in the context of a region-centric coercive protection framework mirror concerns about manpower. Under conditions of imposed inefficiencies with respect to the distribution of skilled interveners, the least-skilled will inevitably be saddled with the most challenging military problems, as the AU is in Sudan (AMIS), and ECOWAS was in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. This state of affairs will only be remedied in the short- to medium-term if the developed world is more generous in its troop commitments to the developing world working through regional rather than international channels. That the EU's major success, "Operation Artemis," was by and large a French operation conducted for French interests, and additionally, that the EU-led mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (MINURCAT) has been mired by delayed deployment of troops and equipment seem to controvert this possibility.

As an alternative to conducting operations in Africa themselves, both the EU and the US have pursued substantial military aid to the AU and to a lesser extent ECOWAS. But even with between \$150 and \$300 million in military aid being funneled from the US alone in the past six or seven years, the AU has come nowhere close to fielding the five 5,000-man sub-regional brigades it plans to have ready in 2010. If it is not a lack of money, what can be causing this slow, even stagnant, growth in African coercive protection capacity? The answer is human capital. Although international institutions like the Global Peace Operations Initiative and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center have marginally increased the continent's level of expertise in civilian and military affairs, untrained and inexperienced officials still hold critical positions in already skeletal AU and ECOWAS bureaucracies.

To date, no UN-authorized regional peace operation has suffered from the same mandate problems UNOSOM II and MONUC did (and in the latter case, still do). Part of the reason for this relative success is that regional organizations are less susceptible to one of the two planning-phase hazards discussed in the preceding section. When the UN Secretariat and members of the Security Council are in the process of drawing up the resolution and mission plan that will guide a regional peace operation, they

effectively have to consult with only one contributing entity. This is far more straightforward than the multi-party talks between the UN and every TCC leading up to a standard UN mission. Over the course of that process, the UN can easily end up with multiple different country-specific arrangements, any of which may break down on the ground. If this happens, a debacle akin to what happened to URUBATT in Congo can result. If, however, the UN needs only to speak with a single organization (or the most powerful state in the organization) such confusions have little chance of happening. If this entity cannot agree to do what the UN is asking it to do, it will simply turn down the UN's request. The second kind of mandate-related problem, UN abandonment, is as much a problem for regional peace efforts as it is for international ones. If the UN is as dependent on the EU, for instance, as it was the United States in Somalia, and the situation where the EU is deployed deteriorates to the point where European leaders pull out their forces, the UN will be in exactly the same situation it found itself in during the latter stages of UNOSOM II.

Command and control problems among regional organizations vary predictably according to member-states' level of military professionalism. Within EU operations, there is generally adequate unity of purpose (once forces have been deployed, that is). In other circumstances, individual nation-states seize on the opportunity presented by a legitimate international peace operation to pursue national interests at the expense of peace, much the way Nigeria did in Sierra Leone. Indeed, Nigeria's parochial conduct in the context of UNAMSIL was only amplified in the ECOWAS operation that preceded it (ECOMOG); understandable since states participating in ECOMOG had less leverage over Nigeria than the UN and the other states taking part in UNAMSIL. This same pattern is also observable in peacekeeping operations conducted by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an organization dominated by Russian wealth, manpower, and interests.

Because regional organizations are necessarily proximate to conflicts that occur in their geographical purview, they will often be able to respond faster than a force composed of troops and police from a host of countries spread out across the globe. The question one must ask, is whether this fast-responding force can be effective, or whether it will arrive at the scene of a crisis quickly only to prove unable to alter its course. The preceding analysis seems to indicate that the latter will be true for a great many organizations, including crucially those most likely to be nearest to future conflict

emergencies. As such, when the term “rapid reaction” is made with reference to regional organizations, it must encompass not just local organization’s ability to respond to events in their own areas of responsibility, but also developed-world organization’s capacity for responding to distant demands for coercive protection. The crucial actor in this context is without question the EU, which, unfortunately for the next African country caught in a maelstrom of violence, maintains little airlift and sealift capacity. The effects of this logistical deficit was recently evident in Chad and the Central African Republic, where EU forces for months were unable to quell unanticipated roadside banditry because the equipment needed to address this problem was not forthcoming. Strapped as they were by European governments’ apparent aversion to collectively spending more than 2% of their GDP on defense, this kind of problem is likely to recur in future EU military excursions outside of Europe.

The last benchmark worth considering with respect to a coercive protection force is its political and military endurance. Here again, it is useful to examine two eventualities, one in which a developing world organization is engaged in coercive protection on a member state’s territory, and another in which a developed world military is operating “out of area.” In this first instance, it seems logical to expect that regional neighbors would want to see a regional problem brought to a convincing closure. Although this expectation is not necessarily well founded, there are two reasons for it. First, as previously mentioned and described in the case of Nigeria, regional participants in a given state’s internal conflict may be better served by a continuation of hostilities than peace. Second, developing-world organizations may not have either the military wherewithal or the funds to sustain an operation for years on end. In recent cases of regional military intervention in Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire, this reality has led ECOWAS to request UN replacements less than six months after deploying. Some observers believe that this pattern of events will ensure, more than an absence of manpower or funds, that African regional organizations never develop the indigenous capacity to sustain a peace operation.

The second general kind of regional operation, one in which developed world forces are operating in the developing world, is analogous to typical UN missions insofar as on-the-ground determination is concerned. In both cases, most participant countries will take the earliest convenient opportunity to retire from a given mission, even if drawing down does not make strategic sense in the context of the operation.

This tendency has been observed during strictly UN operations in Somalia and East Timor, and appears also to be true for “Operation Artemis” and MINURCAT, both of which are explicitly short-term contributions to problems that clearly require long-term solutions.³⁶

Closing the United Nation’s Capacity Deficit: The Intuitive Appeal of Non-National Forces

Nation-states, no matter how they are combined or organized, appear unable to adequately remedy the problems recurrent in complex peace operations. This dictates one clear policy prescription for the United Nations: It must reach outside the nation-state system for coercive protection resources. To see why this alternative to the status quo holds promise, it is instructive to consider how use of private sector forces can improve the seven aspects of mission performance that most require improvement.

The first of these, slow response time at the political level, is a problem that stems quite clearly from the UN’s exclusive focus on nation-states. Both the unfounded optimism and the aversion to casualties that made political response time a problem in the past are part and parcel of exclusive state participation in the military and security aspects of peace operations. Reluctance to absorb the political costs of seeing body bags come home from an essentially discretionary conflict feeds wishful thinking at the decision-making level, which in turn validates an intervention incommensurate with what is needed to restore peace. Replacing nation-states susceptible to this confirmation bias with troop contributing entities that faces smaller (if not non-existent) domestic audience costs intuitively reduces the risk that another misadventure akin to the observer missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone shall be repeated.

Insufficient manpower is a second problem that flows directly from using only nation states as troop contributing entities. As the underwhelming results from troop stand-by arrangements have shown, member-states will not relinquish sufficient

³⁶ Another reason EU efforts in Africa have been abbreviated is simply that “Battle Groups” are not particularly sustainable. It is unlikely, however, that the decision to switch from an RRF model to “Battle Groups” was made without considering the impact this would have on EU operations’ sustainability. Indeed, it is highly probable that this exogenous cap on the duration of EU was considered one of the benefits of the force structure switch.

sovereign control over enough of their national assets for complex peace operations to function properly. Employing forces without an explicit national affiliation skirts this problem. Whether this non-national realm of military force is large enough, or more appropriately, can be large enough to meet the UN's demands is an important question that shall be addressed in the section following the present one. For now, it is sufficient to note that using private sector forces in addition to or to the exclusion of national troops and police would mitigate the current deleterious tension between the United Nations interests and its member-states domestic imperatives.

By drawing troops and police from sources other than nation-states, the United Nations not only increases its chances of having the necessary numbers to complete a given mission, it also ensures improved expertise over what UN forces currently exhibit. As mentioned previously, one of the greatest difficulties the UN has in fielding effective military contingents is its major TCCs' tendency to treat UN missions as an opportunity to sustain their ill-prepared forces on the cheap. Were the UN able to accept non-national forces, it would under all but the most demanding circumstances be able to turn away some if not all sub-par contributions in favor of more professional soldiers and police from the private sector. These private forces' overall professionalism of course does not necessarily imply that they possess the skills and equipment necessary for effective coercive protection. Estimating the extent to which it does or can is another question left to for the subsequent section. Relative to barebacked and malnourished troop contingents though, any private force with some degree of professionalism would seem a considerable improvement, even if it does not match ideal parameters. It is this intuition that makes non-national forces appear an attractive alternative to current UN troops.

Flawed mandates are the third kind of problem plaguing complex UN peace operations as currently conceived, and another measure that must be employed in gauging an alternate means of constituting such operations. As MONUC and UNOSOM II illustrate, mandate problems generally fall into one of two broad categories. The first occurs when UN bureaucrats push through a strategy or concept of operations to which TCCs do not fully consent, leaving field commanders in a situation where the military means available to them do not match the UN's stated political ends. A second conundrum follows when the UN must depend exclusively on a single member-state for a given operation's success. In this situation, the lone contributing country is free to

dictate terms to UN officials, making the organization vulnerable to abandonment. By procuring at least a portion of its military resources from entities other than nation-states, and thereby denying one TCC a disproportionate impact on a mission's strategy, the UN's vulnerability to both of these problems will likely be reduced. The possibility still remains that the alternative troop contributor the UN uses will be functionally identical to a TCC when the opportunity to exploit a strong bargaining position arises. Even if this were the case, however, the UN would still be in a better position than it currently is: With a larger total number of parties contributing to UN efforts, it would be harder for one to dominate planning decisions (except, of course, permanent members of the Security Council, who have such authority by design). Under the optimistic assumption that the UN's new military contributors would have no incentive to meddle in the politics of mission planning, the organization would have a new level of assurance that it could find the means to achieve its desired ends in complex peace operations.

By availing itself of non-national forces, the UN would also alleviate problems of command and control that arise when TCCs' national interests conflict with UN objectives in the field. Still, whatever force the UN employs in member-states' stead is likely to have interests at either the organizational or individual level that do not correspond exactly to UN objectives. Aligning these new interests thus remains an issue. Although there are several ways to harmonize these forces—for instance, by securing a verbal commitment to UN ideals or by their completion of a course of training—the most straightforward (and the one most widely used in other market transactions) is proper payment. Approximating this cost and establishing whether it is manageable for an organization with the UN's fiscal restraints is another important question considered in detail hereafter. Discussed in the same section are the practical considerations of command and control when tens if not hundreds of firms must operate in concert. Under current practice, this coordination problem is given little consideration, not because it is unimportant (organizing many different national contingents is, in principle, no easier than achieving cooperation between firms), but because nation-states are reluctant to establish efficient supra-national mechanisms for controlling their troops. Using non-national forces for the first time thus creates a circumstance in which proper systems of command and control for UN operations can properly be considered. The question left to be answered is whether such a system is in fact feasible.

To see significant improvement in its rapid reaction capacity, the UN needs a force that is truly on-call. That is to say, it needs troops and police in reserve that will drop their other responsibilities (if they have any) and respond to UN orders with everything requested of them. This is a tall order, but one that can be purchased for a high enough price, much like loyalty to UN objectives. The task of securing and funding transportation of personnel and equipment to the theater of operations is more difficult. Although recent experiences standing up missions in the DRC, Chad, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire indicate that this may not be possible in the near term without significant contributions from the U.S. military, it is unclear without analyzing the private sector's own cargo and passenger transportation capacity whether this is indeed the case. Hence, in addition to gauging the private military industry's total size, the effort in the following section to analyze private military companies' adaptability to UN civilian protection will also include an analysis of private sector logistical capabilities.

Staying power is the seventh improvement that should result from revisions to the UN's methods of constituting coercive protection operations. Like adherence to overall mission objectives and standby-status, a force's/soldier's willingness to remain engaged in a given mission is in large measure a function of its/their compensation. Thus, if the UN has the financial means available, or perhaps more appropriately, if member-states that would otherwise be contributing troops are willing to make the financial means available, it should be able to purchase the forces it needs to make missions foiled on account of abbreviated international attention a far less frequent phenomenon.

Cursory analysis of private forces' attributes in the areas of numerical strength, force quality, mandate tenability, command and control, rapid reaction, and staying power indicate that non-national military and security personnel should, in theory, constitute an improvement over the existing means of fielding robust UN missions. The above analysis also demonstrates, however, that on some matters there is reason to be skeptical that private forces' potential utility can be realized in practice. What follows is a deeper inquiry into these points of skepticism.

Probing the Plausibility of Private Intervention

To support the preceding section's deductive hypotheses regarding private military force and civilian protection, the following analysis will draw on logic and empirical data to review private military companies' (PMC) true potential to better the status quo. It will, more exactly, address five questions that parallel the five potential constraints on PMCs' relative superiority to UN civilian protection forces. These questions are as follows: Can PMCs field enough forces to make an appreciable difference in the UN's ability to perform coercive protection? Would the forces they contribute be trained, equipped, and otherwise more suitable for civilian protection than current UN forces? Would command and control of private forces be better than it is for UN troops, and at what price can this be achieved? Can PMCs assigned coercive protection responsibilities deploy in a timelier manner than UN forces? And finally, will private forces be more willing to remain in a coercive protection mission than current UN forces? The answers to each of these questions indicates that private forces can be an improvement over UN forces in absolute terms and can furthermore achieve this at reasonable costs to UN member-states.

Can PMCs Deliver Enough Forces?

To determine the degree to which the private sector could improve the UN's ability to field an adequate force, two questions must be answered: How many forces would the UN need; and can PMCs match this demand? The first question is, for obvious reasons, difficult to answer with any certainty. Crises for which international peace operations would be appropriate are simply not a predictable phenomenon. This said, it is possible to make a rough estimate of future demand for UN demand based on current trends in total UN troop deployments. After the year 2000, the total number of military personnel participating in UN peace operations increased as the Security Council made earnest commitments to restoring peace in the DRC and Sudan. Conjecturing that these conflicts will not soon abate, they alone will require troops and police commensurate at least with current force levels, which for both missions combined amounts to 44,000 personnel.³⁷ If either conflict worsens, or if a decision is

³⁷ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Facts and Figures, Troop and Policy Contributors, <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>> (accessed February 12, 2009).

made at the political level to seek a total number of forces closer to the six-digit figures some experts have asserted are appropriate for these missions, future demand for UN forces capable of contributing to complex operations would be greater. This same consideration also holds for the United Nations' other three ongoing coercive protection missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, and Liberia. In the less likely but still plausible event that these missions worsen or have their troop ceilings raised, the total number of troops assigned to these operations would exceed current levels.³⁸

Force requirements for new peace operations are a second factor influencing estimates of future UN commitments to civilian protection missions. In the ten years since civilian protection first became a UN practice, six protection missions have begun and one has been completed, resulting in an average annual accumulation of one half of a mission per year. While it is unlikely that coercive protection will expand at a linear rate indefinitely, over a limited time frame of ten years, for example, linear growth is a plausible prediction. Under these conditions, aggregate demand for coercive protection capacity will grow by an amount equal to five protection missions of "average" scale in the next ten years. Assuming further that an "average" mission requires 20,000 troops and police, one can rationally posit that 100,000 additional forces will be needed by the year 2020.³⁹ This may be an overestimation of future demand for private protection forces if non-national agents render the full gamut of normally long-term political, social, and economic initiatives undertaken simultaneous to a protection mission more efficient, and thereby decrease these operations' average duration. A net demand increase of 100,000 protection forces may, conversely, be an underestimation if the Security Council is encouraged by the existence of a non-national supply of forces to authorize missions where intervention might not otherwise have occurred. Having little

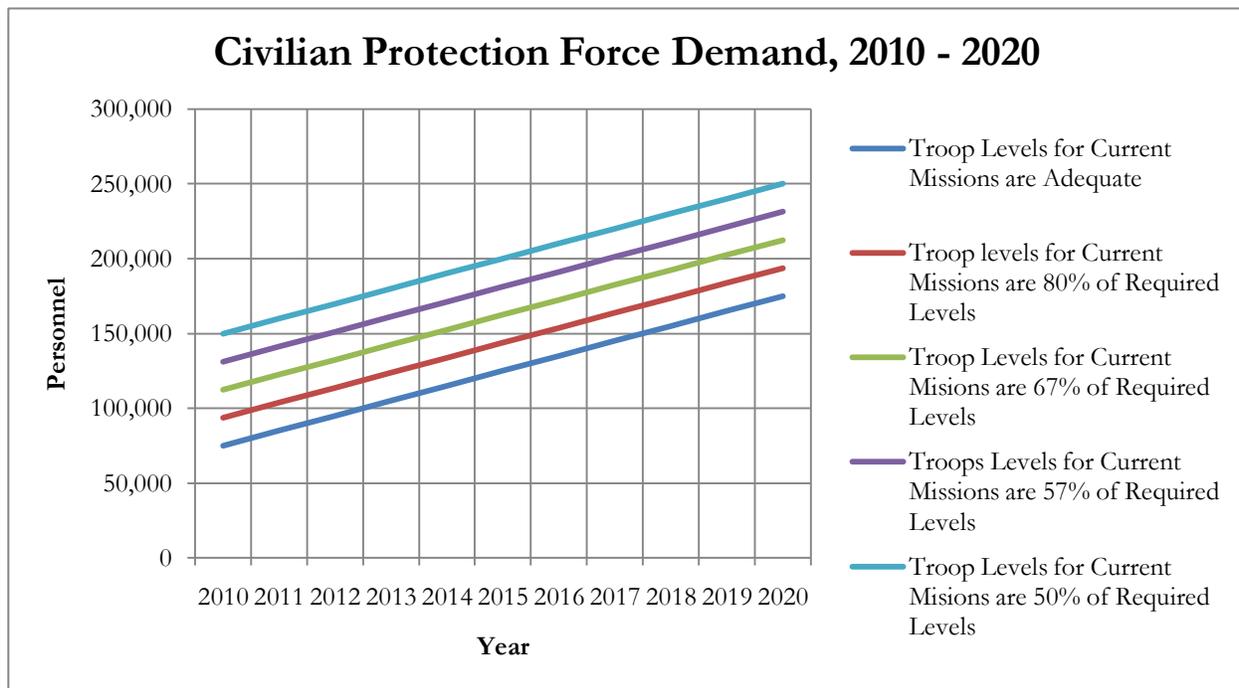
³⁸Troops committed to Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, and Liberia currently total approximately 30,000 (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Facts and Figures, Troop and Policy Contributors, <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>> [accessed February 12, 2009]).

³⁹ Since 2000, an average of between 5,000 and 7,000 UN troops and police officers have been deployed per active peacekeeping mission with a civilian protection component. I have elected to assume that a protection mission of "average" size requires more than 7,000 armed personnel because, as previously discussed, UN missions are chronically (and often severely) under-staffed. Twenty thousand is put forth as the required scale of an "average" protection operation on the basis of the fact that the mission in Liberia, a relatively small country, exhibited competence to achieve its stated ends only towards the end of its mandate, when nearly 17,000 personnel were under UNMIL's command (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Facts and Figures, Troop and Policy Contributors, <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>> [accessed March 15, 2010]).

basis upon which to gauge the likely magnitude of these two effects, I shall assume that they are equal and proceed under the premise that over the next decade an additional 100,000 civilian protection forces will be needed.

With estimations of both present and future demand, it is possible to project aggregate demand. In the present year, UN deployment figures imply that a minimum of 75,000 armed protection personnel are needed. It is highly probably that the missions in the DRC and Sudan, and perhaps Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, and Liberia as well, require more forces than they now have to succeed. Assuming that actual current troop levels are less than the level of true demand by a factor of at most two, one may use varying levels of demand in 2010 and 2020 as well as a projected annual demand increase of 10,000 personnel to model overall demand as follows.

Figure 1: Civilian Protection Force Demand



Having estimated what coercive protection forces the Security Council is likely to request over the next ten years if private forces become available for these missions, it remains only to be determined how much of this burden PMCs should be asked to bear. If one takes as a main reason for hiring private protection forces the desire to relieve DPKO of the need to use inferior troops and police, then it reasonable to assert that private forces should be numerous enough to effectively crowd out these forces in the

market for protection forces. Taking the per-country ratios of troop donations observed in 2009 as fixed, the conclusion is that sub-standard forces constitute roughly 70 percent of the total supply of coercive protection forces. The data in Figure 1 allows one to further translate this fraction to actual market demand for private personnel: Under the least burdensome scenario, the current optimal market supply of private personnel is 52,500 troops and police. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the figure is 105,000. In both cases, an additional 7,000 contractors would be needed to satisfy demand each year.⁴⁰

Table 1: Estimated Demand for Private Sector Forces

Low-end current private force demand	High-end current private force demand	Projected annual demand increase
52,500 troops and police	105,000 troops and police	7,000 troops and police

Establishing whether or not the private military and security sector can make contributions to the UN on such a scale is difficult for several reasons. Most companies, including those that are well established, do not make such estimations on a regular basis. What data they do generate is, moreover, generally kept secret to avoid unwelcome attention from staunch opponents to their activities.⁴¹ Because the market proposed in this paper is purely hypothetical, there is also no directly applicable past evidence to draw upon. In commercialized security’s limited history, there have only been two well-documented surges in the use of private forces. The first occurred conterminously with the rise and fall of ex-South African Defense Force (SADF) soldiers’ private venture titled “Executive Outcomes” during the early and mid-1990s. The second, more contemporary demand spike began in 2003 when both the Pentagon and the State Department began relying heavily upon the private sector to assume post-conflict reconstruction and security responsibilities in Iraq. While imperfect analogs, each of these periods provides some basis for gauging the private sector’s capacity to supply enough coercive protection forces to satisfy current and projected UN needs.

⁴⁰ Calculated from UN troop contribution tables available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>.

⁴¹ Sam Bell. Interview by author, February 11, 2009.

Eben Barlow and Tim Spicer's respective private security start-ups, hereafter referred to jointly as Executive Outcomes (EO)/Sandline since the two firms were often indistinguishable,⁴² began in the immediate aftermath the Cold War, when two trends in international politics paved the way. The first was the rapid downsizing of most developed world militaries and the second was a spate of civil wars concentrated in Africa. EO/Sandline exploited these developments by deploying military assets with experience fighting Cold War-era proxy conflicts to tip the balance of power on chaotic African battlefields. Records of these exploits reveal the impressive ability of early PMCs to accomplish large-scale and resource-intensive projects quickly and efficiently.

Consider, for example EO/Sandline's campaign against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Although this intervention began with a small-scale, 80-man commando raid to capture UNITA-held oil facilities in the coastal town of Soyo, the government's inability to hold this facility following the companies' withdrawal prompted Luanda to greatly expand EO/Sandline's role to a one-year, \$40 million plan to retrain the national armed forces (FAA) and direct operations against UNITA. With this mandate, EO took full control of the Angolan military's defunct 16th brigade and remade it into a force that spearheaded UNITA's battlefield defeat.⁴³

Although the EO/Sandline entity probably only employed between 4,000 and 6,000 combat forces at its height, its de facto strength was in fact much larger for three reasons.⁴⁴ First, their troops and officers were better trained and more experienced than opposing forces. EO in particular was almost by definition a collection of the most effective soldiers for missions in Africa, as its troops were selected specifically because they were the best units in the South African Defense Forces, Africa's most developed military. The companies' ranks included the majority of the Koevoet counterinsurgency police force,⁴⁵ Thirty-Two "Buffalo" Battalion,⁴⁶ five special forces

⁴² Khareen Pech, "Executive Outcomes – A corporate conquest," *Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privatization of Security War-Torn African States*, eds. Jakkie Ciliers and Peggy Mason (Pretoria, South Africa, Institute for Security Studies, 1999), pp. 90-92.

⁴³ Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warrior: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 108-109.

⁴⁴ Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ The Koevoet counterinsurgency police were the most effective counterinsurgency units deployed against the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). They were frequently accused of brutal and indiscriminate violence.

regiments, one parachute brigade, and several offensive intelligence units.⁴⁷ The potency of these forces relative to other African militaries and armed groups was particularly apparent during EO/Sandline's intervention on behalf of Valentine Strasser's regime in Sierra Leone. During that operation, the firm drove the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels from the outskirts of Freetown in a matter of days, quickly reversing the Sierra Leonean government and ECOWAS's consistent losses to the rebels. In a little over a week, RUF leader Foday Sankoh was compelled to sign a ceasefire agreement. According to one EO soldier, the efforts of private forces to neutralize rebels that for years had been wreaking so much havoc in West Africa amounted to little more than "child's play."⁴⁸

The Sierra Leone case of private force intervention also illustrates EO/Sandline forces' effectiveness as military trainers; the second reason why this first wave of military companies was more effective than its raw numbers suggest. After making short order of the RUF, the firm set about training a new army, trustworthier than the existing one in its relations with the rebels, comprised of local tribal Kamajor militiamen. This task was not completed before the EO/Sandline's contract was terminated in January 1997; however in the six to twelve months during which the project was underway, troops completed enough training that contractors, re-entering Sierra Leone in May 1997, were able to immediately partner with them in combat. A perhaps more famous example of PMC expertise being used decisively in a training rather than operational manner is Military Professional Resources Incorporated's (MPRI) reversal of Croatia's position in its war against Serbia with a counter-offensive codenamed "Operation Storm." Training in war-fighting contexts like the Balkans in 1995 may, of course, be relatively more efficacious than similar training for coercive protection. It is, after all, relatively easier to improve a soldier's ability to kill a known opponent than it is to develop his or her skills in discerning hostile forces from civilians and selectively neutralizing them without causing collateral damage. Nevertheless, PMCs' ability to make the forces operating on the their side more effective—sometimes greatly more effective depending on how adept they were to begin with and the tasks

⁴⁶ Known as "the Terrible Ones," 32 Battalion was renowned for having the highest kill ratio in the history of the SADF as well as having committed severe human rights abuses (Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 102).

⁴⁷ Khareen Pech, "Executive Outcomes – A corporate conquest," *Peace, Profit or Plunder? The Privatization of Security in War-Torn African Societies*, eds. Jakkie Cilliers and Peggy Mason (Pretoria, South Africa, Institute for Security Studies, 1999), p. 81.

⁴⁸ Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106.

that they were assigned—multiplies their impact beyond what contractors can accomplish on their own.

Equipment and technological expertise is the third reason PMCs deliver more to their clients than simple troop counts would indicate. Private military companies, for the most, part do not function with equipment markedly superior to what UN operations utilize. EO/Sandline in particular only used surplus Soviet equipment like Mi-24 helicopters, Mig-23 and Mig-27 fighter-bombers, and Su-25 close air support bombers.⁴⁹ What separates PMCs from national contingents in UN operations is thus not what each has at their disposal, but how they use it. Sierra Leone again provides a good example. Of the dozen or so fixed and rotary-wing aircraft in-theater during the RUF's 1999 week-long siege of Freetown, the only craft that was active in efforts to protect humanitarian workers trapped behind RUF lines was owned by a PMC named International Charter Incorporated of Oregon (ICI). On assignment just to provide logistics for the ECOWAS base located on the other end of the peninsula on which Freetown is located, ICI not only undertook these evacuation missions without back-up or support, it did so without promise of compensation. A similar situation currently prevails in Darfur. Although UNMIS has at its disposal numerous Canadian transport helicopters that would be very helpful in projecting UN and AU power beyond their bases, Canada's stipulation that their craft not be used in combat operations means that they instead go essentially unused. Contractors are currently the only ones who regularly fly into and out of Darfuri airspace.⁵⁰

Although the first experiences of PMCs in Africa and eastern Europe during the 1990s were tentative, the opportunities for private security firms in Iraq following the United States' 2003 invasion were plentiful. What had previously been the exclusive domain of multi-national conglomerates or professional military units turned private firms (e.g. EO/Sandline, Alpha Group, Armor Holdings, Bechtel, Kellogg Brown and Root) quickly became a free-for-all in which firms of greatly varying experience and quality vied for State and Defense Department contracts in Iraq. These contracts climbed to almost 25% of total US defense spending in Iraq war spending just months

⁴⁹ Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106.

⁵⁰ Doug Brooks, Interview by author (March 11, 2009).

after the end of major combat operations.⁵¹ The undisciplined frenzy to correct occupation forces' deficiencies by hiring private personnel has two countervailing implications for an attempt to establish the private military industry's current capacity to field quality security personnel. On one level, the fact that the US government could not meet their post-conflict security needs using only well established contractors suggests that demand for private security companies in Iraq may actually have exceeded the supply of qualified personnel appropriate for UN missions. Conversely, one might also argue that government agencies' propensity for awarding contracts on the basis of either political favoritism or bounded bureaucratic rationality produced an under-utilization of more expensive but more reliable PMCs in Iraq. If this is true, the total capacity of high-end PMCs is greater than or, at the very minimum, equal to peak levels of contractor use in Iraq. It is beyond the scope of this manuscript to measure the magnitude of each opposing effect: however, for the purposes of this analysis, it can be assumed for the moment that neither is overwhelming, and that demand for well-established contractors in Iraq matches the limit of what these elements of the private military industry can currently reliably provide.

Working from this premise, it is possible to begin assessing how demand for contractors in Iraq relates to the industry's ability to meet the hypothetical requisites set forth in Table 1. According to the Government Accountability Office's August 2008 report, *Contractors' Support of U.S. Operations in Iraq*, armed contractors in Iraq and neighboring countries numbered around 22,500 from 2004 to 2007.⁵² However, as in Angola, Sierra Leone, and Croatia, this figure does not reflect the effective units of force the industry can bring to bear on a coercive protection mission relative to current UN TCCs. Indeed, even though poor oversight makes abuse of power and shirking in Iraq easy, many contractors in the country demonstrate the same force-multiplying expertise, training abilities, and weapons proficiency mentioned previously. Consider, for example, Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) in its capacity as a provider of guard units for convoys traveling from Kuwait City to Baghdad in 2004 and 2005. Using the number of incidents in which cargo was damaged or destroyed as a metric of success, KBR performed five times better in this task than the U.S. Army.⁵³ Even the infamously

⁵¹ Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* (New York: Nation Books, 2008), p. 37.

⁵² Congressional Budget Office, "Contractors Support of U.S. Operations in Iraq," (August, 2008), p. 14.

⁵³ Doug Brooks, Interview by author (March 11, 2009).

reckless members of Blackwater International (now called Xe) demonstrated positive externalities in the form of exceptional combat effectiveness. That Blackwater-protected VIP Paul Bremer survived his year in Iraq despite destroying the livelihood of hundreds of thousands Iraqis, and thereby inciting mass hatred, illustrates this point, as does the company's record of protecting the coalition compound in Najaf from thousands of Mahdi army fighters with fewer than five contractors on hand.⁵⁴

Iraq war contractors' ability to train their own forces is another reason, beyond frontline combat skills, that personnel working for these companies create positive externalities for their clients. The British firm, Erinys International, provides a good example. In 2004, after receiving a contract to protect Iraq's oil infrastructure, it hired and trained no fewer than 14,000 men (mostly Iraqis, but some from other developing countries) for the assignment.⁵⁵ Another British firm, Global Strategies Group, performed much the same feat, using less than a dozen former British Special Air Service commandos to assemble a force of roughly one thousand Iraqi guards for coalition compounds across Iraq.⁵⁶ Both of these impressive cases are made all the more noteworthy when one considers that neither suffered major incidents of dereliction even though most personnel were drawn from Iraq's militarized and highly fractious society.

Having reviewed the EO/Sandline and Iraq war surges in private security demand, it is now possible to inquire whether PMCs can deliver enough manpower to make an analogous situation of UN-mandated private coercive protection viable. If one compares the demand figures in Table 1 with the availability of reliable contractors, the answer is unambiguously "no." The data from Iraq indicate a market ceiling of around 22,500 armed personnel. Even if one doubles this figure under the somewhat implausible assumption that inferior companies are crowding out half of PMCs' capacity in Iraq, the total still is short of even the lowest troop estimate of 52,500 provided in Table 1. Comparing private military contractors to an equal number of UN troops is not an apples-to-apples comparison, however. As the preceding analysis demonstrates, an accurate measure of relative worth must at the very least take into account fighting expertise, ability to train co-combatants, and risk-acceptant

⁵⁴ Scahill, *Blackwater*, pp. 117-118.

⁵⁵ Scahill, *Blackwater*, p. 99.

⁵⁶ See <<http://www.globalgroup.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=108>> (accessed March 3, 2009).

deployment of equipment. This can be calculated using EO/Sandline's interventions in Angola and Sierra Leone, the two known cases of private intervention because data on all of these variables are available for these examples. Neither provides an ideal template for interpolating probable qualitative externalities of reputable PMCs as guarantors of coercive protection orders since both were interventions to conduct an offensive operation; a markedly different and more straightforward task than providing medium-term protection for an entire population of threatened civilians. Understanding that this introduces a source of bias that might overestimate the net capacity of the private military industry, the following exercise incorporates it explicitly.

To assign a numeric value to PMCs operational effectiveness, a variable ξ is calculated for both the Angolan and Sierra Leonean cases of successful intervention. This variable is defined as follows:

Equation 1: Measure of PMC Effectiveness

$$\xi = \frac{[(\text{number of contractors in-theater} * \text{number of months contractors were in-theater}) + \text{number of forces allied with contractors}]}{(\text{number of forces opposing contractors})}$$

Note: As defined here, a *higher* ξ implies *lower* PMC effectiveness.

In the current context, ξ is a fairly consistent estimate of PMCs' effectiveness across the Angolan and Sierra Leonean cases. It measures two successful interventions where the same contractors were involved by incorporating the number of interveners, the amount of time it took the PMCs to achieve their objective, and the numerical strength of their allies and opponents, but does not include an estimate of their overall skill level. This can be corrected, however, since we are calculating ξ for one mission that was difficult according to both participants and observers (Angola), and one that was by all accounts easy (Sierra Leone).⁵⁷ One can thus derive ξ for a mission of average difficulty, referred to hereafter as $\xi(\text{average})$, by finding the midpoint between

⁵⁷ Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 113.

ξ (Angola) and ξ (Sierra Leone). Since ξ (Angola) is 7.125, and ξ (Sierra Leone) is 0.006, this means that ξ (average) is approximately 3.56.⁵⁸

Knowing roughly what the in-theater “multiplier effect” is for PMCs allows interpolation of how many effective units of force the PMC industry can put forth for coercive protection. Consider two scenarios based on concerns raised earlier in this section about the true number of reliable contractors in Iraq and the difficulty of coercive protection relative to EO/Sandline’s activities in the 1990s. In a positive outlook scenario for PMC use in UN-mandated missions, there are in fact more than 22,500 contractors available (assume 45,000), and coercive protection is no more difficult than defeating an aggressor. In a more pessimistic scenario, the number of available contractors appropriate for coercive protection is below 22,500 (assume 10,000), and coercive protection is much more difficult than being a partisan in a civil war (assume twice as difficult). Table 2 summarizes what each of these cases implies about the effective units of force the private military industry can supply to the UN for coercive protection.

⁵⁸ In Angola, about 500 EO/Sandline forces worked with the 16th brigade and several air wings of the Angolan army to defeat about three and half brigades of UNITA forces in a little over a year. These compute to ξ (Angola) = 7.125. In Sierra Leone, about 360 EO/Sandline convincingly defeated 30,000 RUF in less than a month, which translates to ξ (Sierra Leone) = 0.006 (Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, pp. 115-117; Helmoed-Roemer Heitman, *War in Angola: The Final South African Phase*, [Gibraltar; Ashanti, 1990]; W. Martin James III, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990*, [New Brunswick: Transaction, 1992]).

Table 2: High and Low Projections of Forces PMCs Can Oppose in Coercive Protection⁵⁹

	Optimistic scenario for PMC-use in coercive protection	Pessimistic scenario for PMC-use in coercive protection
Scenario parameters	Number of contractors = 45,000	Number of contractors = 10,000
	$\xi(\text{average}) = 3.56$	$\xi(\text{average}) = 7.12$
Number of average-skilled forces that could effectively be opposed without help from allied forces annually	151,700	16,900

Taking the average of these extreme upper and lower limits, one arrives at an estimate that PMCs can effectively counter 83,850 average armed elements threatening civilians annually. This figure does not immediately suggest a strong conclusion either in favor or against the likelihood that PMCs can eliminate the UN’s dependence on sub-standard, developing world forces in coercive protection missions. To see why this is true, it is useful to think in terms of missions instead of opponents. A very large and difficult mission could feature as many as 60,000 or 70,000 combatants perpetrating violence against civilians.⁶⁰ PMCs could only be expected to play major role in one such operation. If, on the other hand, the referent of choice is a small mission with only 10,000 aggressors (similar to the civil war in Cote d’Ivoire), the UN would likely have no need at all for combat troops donated from member-states, being able to rely on PMCs to supply forces for approximately eight such missions. Insofar as there is an “expected” mission size that falls somewhere between a large, MONUC-like and a small, UNOCI-like operation,⁶¹ PMCs can be expected to provide forces for perhaps

⁵⁹ Note: Number of average forces that can be opposed without help from allied forces annually is calculated from the definition of ξ . See Equation 1.

⁶⁰ The conflict in the DRC has at times fit this model.

⁶¹ Because coercive protection missions are not a frequent occurrence, statistically, it is difficult to discuss a finite expected value. Put differently, the mean size of a randomly selected sample of coercive protection missions will have a very large confidence interval.

four “expected” missions. What is more, because current demand for private forces as set forth in Table 1 is 70% of ongoing missions’ needs, or between three and four of the five extant missions, one can tentatively conclude that PMCs could meet hypothetical UN demand for private protection forces.

Several other factors besides the fundamentally speculative nature of the preceding calculations contribute to uncertainty about how much private forces can really contribute to UN coercive protection efforts. One such source of indeterminacy is the PMC effectiveness factor ξ (average). Because no PMC has ever undertaken responsibilities akin to coercive protection, there is no way to effectively estimate or proxy ξ (average) for this kind of mission. This is highly problematic primarily because the bottom-line estimates summarized in Table 2 are very sensitive to the ξ (average) value one uses. A second factor left out of this analysis, but which might also affect PMCs’ total capacity to contribute to UN efforts is the possibility that UN contracts will garner different interest from personnel considering work with PMCs than contracts to fight civil or discretionary wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, and Iraq. The qualitative differences between unadulterated war-fighting and UN civilian protection may, on the one hand, depress PMCs rosters by deterring employees who sign up in part to experience the thrill of being in a war. Alternatively, the total pool of contractors might actually increase if prospective soldiers and police officers derive extra utility from the perceived altruism of participating in an effort to save innocent people. Establishing which of these effects will operate and to what degree is currently impossible absent specific polling data, although either effect would seem to have potentially significant implications for the PMC industry’s size. In short, one must treat with caution the results of the preceding low-power analysis of PMCs’ ability to supply the UN with coercive protection forces. However, because the preceding exercises are at present also the only instruments for answering this critical question about the market for private force, the results they produce are optimal for this article’s purposes.

Are PMCs the Right Tool for the Job?

From a tactician’s perspective, private forces are unquestionably superior to the overwhelming majority of UN coercive protection forces. However, complex peace operations with civilian protection components have more than a tactical dimension. In

particular, they require forces that have both the raw war-fighting skills necessary to succeed in combat and the capacity to promote law and order in civilian populations.⁶² While it is eminently clear that private security personnel fulfill the first half of this formula, their competencies as agents of law and order have on numerous occasions been called into question.

Blackwater International leaps to mind as an important case for discussion when considering this issue. There is no doubt that Blackwater contractors were often unnecessarily rash in their use of force in Iraq. However, a closer examination of the complex context in which Blackwater operated in theatre leads to the supposition that it is not necessarily the company's natural disposition to behave with impunity towards civilians. Consider, for example, the following quote from Marine Col. Thomas X. Hammes, the officer in charge of reconstructing the Iraqi military after Ambassador L. Paul Bremer disbanded the Saddam-era army, and an individual whose job was made much harder by Blackwater contractors' conduct:

...they were doing their job, exactly what they were paid to do in the way there were paid to do it.... If Blackwater loses a principal (like Paul Bremer), they're out of business aren't they? Can you imagine being Blackwater, trying to sell your next contract saying 'Well, we did pretty well in Iraq for about four months and then he got killed.' And you're the CEO who's going to hire and protect your guys. You'll say, 'I think I'll find somebody else.'⁶³

Because the State Department failed to build into Blackwater's contract strong incentives to treat Iraqis respectfully, the company did not. Indeed, Blackwater had every reason to shoot first and ask questions later with regards to Iraqis since any civilian could, in theory, have been an assassin, and contractors were, for the first few years of the war, immune to prosecution.⁶⁴ It should also come as no surprise that in this consequence-free environment, Blackwater employees adopted excessive aggression as their default disposition, even when it served no apparent purpose. Had their assignment and their conduct been properly engineered in their contract from the

⁶² See Graham Day and Christopher Freeman, "From Policekeeping to Peace: Intervention, Transitional Administration, and the Responsibility to Do it Right" Civitatis Working Paper, (November 2003).

⁶³ Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater*, p. 71 and 73.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

outset, a strong argument can be made that Blackwater would not today be known as a collection of “cowboys.”⁶⁵

Indeed, an examination of previous PMC deployments illustrates that when these companies are properly regulated, civilian populations often hold them as heroes. EO/Sandline’s activities in Sierra Leone provide an apt example. As a matter of course, the British half of the company (Sandline) always consulted the British of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish proper rules of engagement before deploying for a given operation.⁶⁶ Not surprisingly, Britain proscribed scorched earth tactics as a means of forcing an RUF retreat in its former colony.⁶⁷ Sandline’s subsequent successes in keeping the rebel organization at bay and restoring civilian government without resort to extraordinary measures as they had employed in Angola so endeared them to average Sierra Leoneans that when the company was forced to leave after being connected to a violation of a UN arms embargo, citizens across the country took to the streets in protest. Thus, even as the developed world was scolding Sandline for trying to arm a new, more accountable Sierra Leonean army, the people most vulnerable to the company were calling them “saints.”⁶⁸

Private military companies are, thus, primarily the product of the contracts they are asked to carry out. If it is logical for them to treat civilians as nothing more than potential opponents, then this is what they will do. If they are contracted to act on civilians’ behalf, they will deploy their extensive military skills towards this end.

How Can PMCs Be Controlled and Coordinated?

Previous sections have illustrated how, in Sierra Leone, the Nigerian military pursued its parochial interests at the expense of UNAMSIL’s more altruistic goals. Would profit-driven PMCs do the same if they were afforded a similar degree of authority? As with the previous question concerning contractors’ appropriateness for

⁶⁵ Correspondence from an anonymous employee of Aegis Defense Systems, E-mail, November 12, 2005.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ When the South African half of the company, Executive Outcomes, conducted the same consultations with their “home government” prior to entering Angola, they were given no restrictions. EO subsequently made widespread use of highly destructive fuel-air bombs in UNITA territory (Khareen Pech, “Executive Outcomes – A corporate conquest,” p. 111).

⁶⁸ Peter Penfold, Interviewed by Charles Cullimore, July 10, 2003, p. 48.

civilian protection, the answer depends on the nature of the task they are assigned. During the EO/Sandline-era of PMC-intervention, most problems stemmed from client insolvency. Having scant hard currency and virtually no credit with major international lending institutions, both Sierra Leone and Angola were obligated to rely heavily upon future commodity revenue (from diamonds in Sierra Leone and oil in Angola) to pay EO/Sandline for their services.⁶⁹ The resulting exacerbation of the classic principal-agent dilemma manifested itself in both missions when contractors, contrary to their employer's strategic interest, diverted resources away from major combat operations to protect captured diamond and oil fields. Not surprisingly, more recent cases of contractor deployment in Iraq—where the United States is footing the bill—have not suffered from this same problem. Instead, contractors have exploited feeble if not non-existence contract oversight procedures in the State Department and Department of Defense to win over-priced contracts.⁷⁰ Were the United Nations to begin using contractors on the scale currently visible in Iraq, this problem could easily be avoided with proper contract vetting and competitive bidding practices.

Private military companies have the promising potential to be systematically better disciplined than nation-state troops contributed from to UN missions as long as the UN can provide adequate payment and has thorough procedures for issuing contracts. This premise raises a further question however: Can the United Nations pay for private military forces numbering in the high tens of thousands? The answer seems intuitively to be “yes,” since the private sector is generally far more economically efficient than institutions of government (especially multilateral institutions that are not answerable to an electorate). Yet, the flurry of recent reports indicating that contractors in Iraq are considerably overpaid has created some doubt.⁷¹ As has already been discussed, much of this inflated spending is attributable to poorly regulated contracting practices that encourage companies to charge the U.S. government usurious rates. To establish if PMCs are more expensive than UN troops, and by what amount, it is therefore necessary to examine cases in which PMCs accepted or offered fairly priced contracts to perform a mission similar if not identical to a UN mission for which the cost is known. There are only two contracts that appear to meet these criteria: EO/Sandline's ex-post offer to intervene during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and the International

⁶⁹ Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 121

⁷⁰ Congressional Budget Office, “Contractors’ Support of U.S. Operations in Iraq,” p. 9.

⁷¹ Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, pp. 186-220

Peace Operations Association's (IPOA) 2003 proposal that a consortium of five companies assume MONUC's security responsibilities.⁷²

In Rwanda, the case for PMC cost-effectiveness is unequivocal. EO/Sandline could, according to their own estimates, have deployed a 1,500-man force for six months, complete with air and fire support, all for \$150 million (measured in 1994 dollars).⁷³ Put another way, EO/Sandline could have been in Rwanda for the same period that the United Nations' Second Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR II) was, with the same number of troops, for less than 20% of the cost. Assuming that this is not false advertising and that EO/Sandline would have been at least as successful as UNAMIR II (a very conservative assumption), this means that the United Nations could have cut their costs by at least 80% if they had outsourced their Rwandan military operations. Turning to the IPOA consortium's offer to help in the DRC, the same rate of savings seems to hold. For shouldering the full complement of protection, demilitarization, and disarmament priorities in Congo's volatile eastern regions, these companies requested between \$100 million and \$200 million (measured in 2003 dollars) of MONUC's then-\$1 billion budget.⁷⁴ Factoring in that the MONUC spends far more operating (or trying to operate) in the east than it does fulfilling any other part of its mandate,⁷⁵ one can safely assert from this proposal that, as in Rwanda, the UN could have reduced its overall mission costs five-fold by partnering with PMCs in the DRC.

The private military sector is thus both more cost-effective and, under the right contracting conditions, more easily directed towards UN-mandated aims than conventional UN forces. Monopolistic pricing and strategically illogical action related to securing lootable resources are not contractors' only susceptibilities, however. An especially clear illustration of this fact is DynCorp Incorporated, one of United States' most-used contractors, and its complicity in forced prostitution and sexual trafficking in

⁷² PAE, ICI of Oregon, Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), AirScan International, and TASK International were the five PMCs that put forth this offer.

⁷³ Oldrich Bures, "Private Military Companies: A Second Best Peacekeeping Option?" *International Peacekeeping* 12:4 (Winter 2005): p. 539.

⁷⁴ IPOA Operational Concept Paper, "Supporting the MONUC Mandate with Private Services in the Democratic Republic of Congo," January 2003, p. 3.

⁷⁵ United Nations, *Budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period from 1 July 2005 to 20 June 2006: Report of the Secretary-General, A/60/389*, (September 29, 2005), Table 2.

Bosnia.⁷⁶ Would a similar fiasco occur on a greater scale if PMCs became a more integral part of UN missions? An honest answer again must probe the causes of DynCorp employees' improprieties. While it is easy to write off their behavior as a manifestation of an innately despicable corporate culture within the private military industry,⁷⁷ the problem is in fact intimately connected to both the contractor and the contractee. In Bosnia, as in Iraq, the United States government failed to exercise ownership responsibility for the policing and logistical assignments it outsourced, paying DynCorp for work that both parties knew would never be verified, and prescribing a code of conduct without legal or economic consequences.⁷⁸ Even the fact that sexual slavery became a widespread and enduring practice among DynCorp employees is to some degree a product of the environment in which the company was allowed to operate. It is difficult not to expect morally depraved individuals to gravitate towards a company that offers its employees the opportunity to behave however they want under an umbrella of de facto legal immunity. Similarly, although one would hope that an individual high in DynCorp's corporate hierarchy would end this activity once he or she became aware of it, this kind of altruism cannot be expected from a company that stands to lose billions if it blows the whistle on itself. In sum, responsibility for eliminating individual acts of sexual, drug-related, and other kinds of abuse resides with contractors, their commanders in the field, and their corporate bosses. Limiting the frequency and the magnitude of systemic indiscretions akin to the DynCorp debacle in Bosnia is, conversely, primarily the client's responsibility.

In discussing how much a problem contractor' misconduct may be, and whether it presents a prohibitive risk for the United Nations, it is important to consider whether private forces present more of a risk than conventional UN troops. Existing information suggests that they do not. In the DRC, sexual exploitation involving troops from Nepal, Morocco, Tunisia Uruguay, South Africa, Pakistan, and France was rampant until 2005. Once discovered, several perpetrators went so far as to blackmail the reporter who uncovered the scandal.⁷⁹ In Somalia, during UNOSOSM II, abuse including rape, torture, and public humiliation was reported at the hands of Belgian, Italian, and

⁷⁶ Kelly Patricia O'Meara, "US: Dyncorp Disgrace" *Insight Magazine* (January 14, 2002).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Colum Lynch, "Un Sexual Abuse Alleged in Congo," *The Washington Post*, Main Section, Online Edition, December 16, 2004.

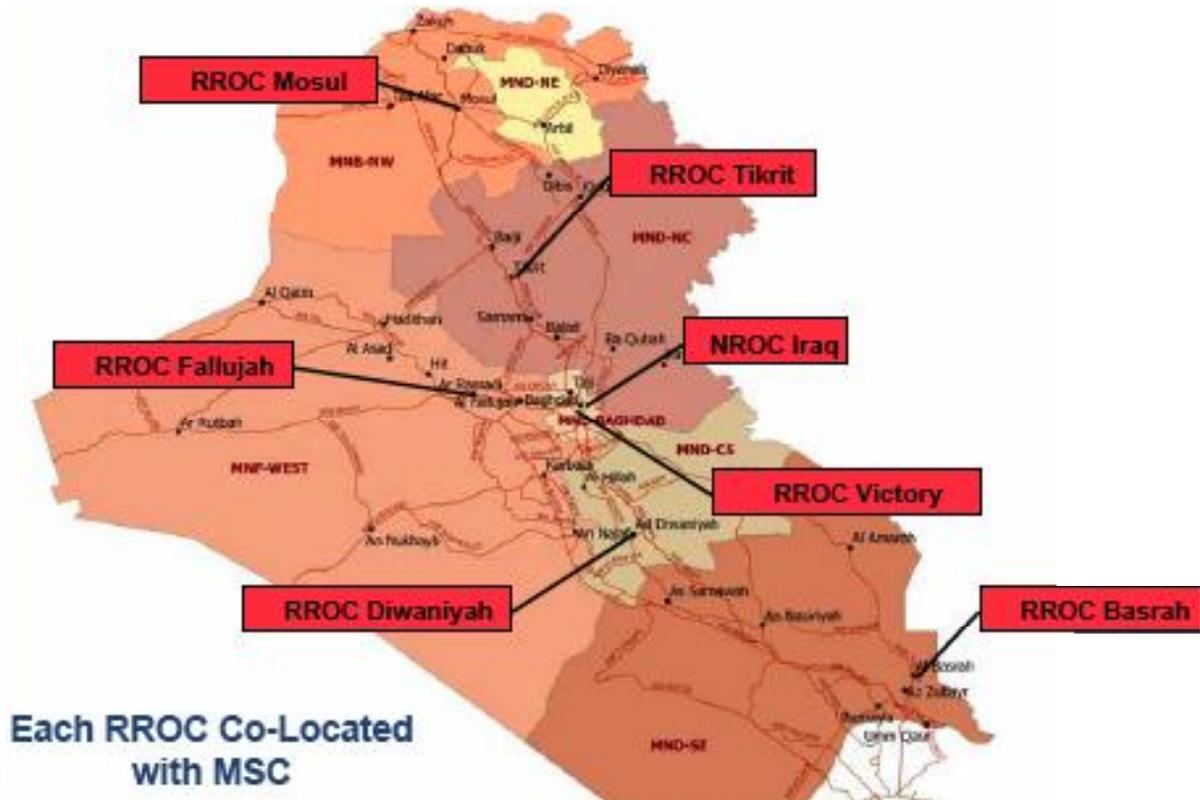
Canadian troops.⁸⁰ There is, therefore, little reason to believe that even very poorly managed PMCs working for the United Nations would be any more of a liability than the troops the UN receives under the status quo.

Thus far in this section, three potential command and control concerns relating specifically to PMCs have been discussed and, to a greater or lesser degree, allayed: principal-agent dilemmas originating from resource payment, monopolistic pricing, and violations of human rights. A fourth and final issue relates not to properly aligning PMCs interests, as each of these do, but to the practical challenge of coordinating the movements of tens, perhaps even hundreds of otherwise unitary firms in a single theater. EO/Sandline never encountered this problem during the 1990s because it was the only entity of its kind. The current situation in Iraq, with over 300 firms working alongside U.S. troops across an entire country, illustrates that this simple, one-firm model of intervention model is today an anachronism. Indeed, if the UN begins deploying firms across multiple, interconnected areas of responsibility (e.g. UNAMSIL, UNMIL, and UNOCI) deadly friendly-fire incidents that at one time occurred once every month in Iraq may balloon.⁸¹ To learn if and how the United Nations can prevent this confusion from happening, it is instructive to consider what mechanisms the U.S. military has developed to address its own problem of integrating firms amongst themselves, with the Army, and with the Marine Corps.

⁸⁰ Joseph Farah, "Those UN Peacekeeping Atrocities." *WorldNetDaily.com*, June 25, 1997.

⁸¹ Joseph J. Butkus and Matthew F. Howes, *MBA Professional Report: A Critical Analysis of the Coordination, Command and Control of Contractors in Iraq* (Naval Post-Graduate School, December 2006), pp. 49-50.

Figure 2: Contractor Coordination System in Iraq

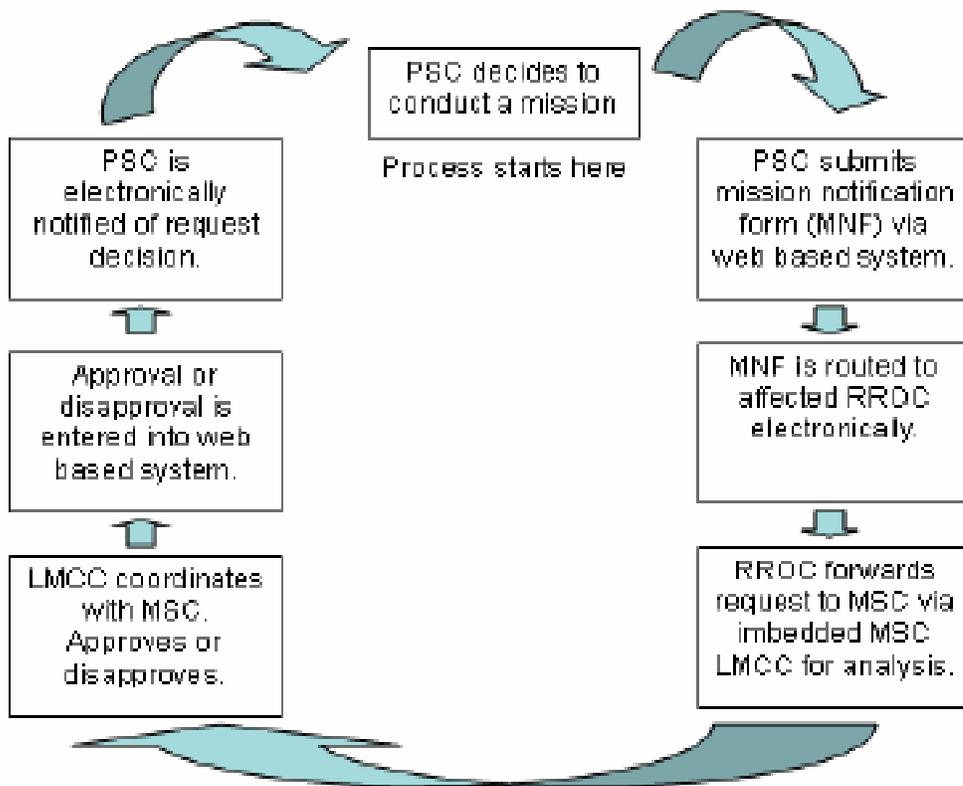


Source: Major Heide Bronke, Senior MNF-I LNO to UNAMI, *MNF-I Liaison to UNAMI, NGO Support Structures* (February 23, 2007)

After an extended period of mayhem during which contractors flooded Iraq unbeknownst to anyone but contract officers in Washington, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Iraq Project and Contracting Office (PCO) collaborated to organize a two-tiered contractor operations center with a national office (NROC) and a network of regional reconstruction operations centers (RROCs) corresponding to the military's existing command structures, known as major subordinate commands (MSCs). The national office's primary responsibilities were twofold; synthesize unclassified intelligence from each of the five regions and with relevant national-level information and serve as an emergency communications center when RROCs are unable to reach units in their area. RROCs were established to provide a venue in which contractors could interact with one another and the military units in their MSC. Intelligence sharing between contractors and the military also occurred at the regional

level; PMCs reported developments in areas they recently passed through and MSC liaison officers provided contractors with declassified information from the NROC. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, RROCs served as the main hub for contractor-to-contractor communication and military-to-contractor directives. In this capacity, RROCs added value both because they harmonized voice and data transmission between scores of disparate systems and because they streamlined communication between the military and PMCs.

Figure 3: PMC Movement Request Process in Iraq



Note: LMCC is the MSC Logistics Movement and Control Center. Each is co-located with the corresponding RROC

Source: Joseph J. Butkus and Matthew F. Howes, *MBA Professional Report: A Critical Analysis of the Coordination, Command and Control of Contractors in Iraq* (Naval Post-Graduate School, December 2006), pp. 56.

Figure 3 illustrates this second process step-by-step. The entire sequence was conducted by electronic communication at least 72 hours before a PMC operation was undertaken. If an operation was denied but contractors proceeded anyway, their

vehicles were detained at any military checkpoints they encountered and they were denied emergency evacuation service or fire support. If the move was approved, the RROC provided each affected MSC with notification as well as information about the contractor's route, size, description, destination, and communications information.⁸²

As a model for coordinating PMC activity in a complex peace operation, the NROC/RROC framework provides a solid archetype. First and foremost, the system has proven effective; following its implementation in 2006, incidents of coalition troops and contractors firing on one another decreased noticeably.⁸³ Second, it proves that, because contractors handled virtually all day-to-day tasks at the RROC level, the system should be easily transferable to a theater of operations where the United States military's logistical capacity and expertise is unavailable. Iraq following the United States' invasion and countries where coercive protection is necessary are, however, not perfectly analogous. The former is clearly a post-conflict environment where contractors serve primarily as construction companies and only secondarily as security providers. Coercive protection, by contrast, usually takes place where war has not begun, has yet to reach culmination, or where the risk of armed conflict is otherwise very real. In these areas, PMCs are civilians' first-responders in times of crisis, and must therefore be prepared to traverse long distances quickly and with little notice. Rarely will they be able to provide three days notice prior to moving. In effect, this means that the transition from the bottom-right corner to the bottom-left corner of the decision-making chain illustrated in Figure 3 must be orders of magnitude faster than was the case in Iraq.

That the United Nations must to some degree assume the United States military's responsibilities in the current NROC/RROC model is another potential problem. If the UN holds ultimate authority over every proposed troop movement down to the company level, there is little hope that the system can be made efficient enough. If, on the other hand, this task is outsourced, as well, to the private sector, the United Nations would be left with just three methods of controlling their own operations: mandating a change in strategy, mandating a change in permitted troop levels, and hiring or firing individual contractors. Even troops deployed through standard nation-state

⁸² Joseph J. Butkus and Matthew F. Howes, *MBA Professional Report: A Critical Analysis of the Coordination, Command and Control of Contractors in Iraq* (Naval Post-Graduate School, December 2006), pp. 51-57.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 73.

contributions would effectively be subject to the private sector commanders running UN versions of NROCs and RROCs. It is safe to assume that neither bureaucrats nor UN member-states would assent to a distribution of power in which private forces exert this kind of control. Thus, PMCs and the United Nations must negotiate a compromise that satisfies both operational rapid reaction requirements and political requirements that the United Nations retain a certain degree of day-to-day control over its own missions.

Achieving adequate command and control over private military companies, if they were to deploy as part of a PMC-led coercive protection mission is, in sum, a multi-faceted but manageable task. Once reasonable fears that private military companies would seek to secure plunder before fulfilling their contracted objectives are today unfounded because methods of payment in the PMC industry are now reliable enough that firms do not have to hedge against payment default. Major contract-related problems that do exist, including above-market pricing and broad-based sexual exploitation, are largely traceable to the poor execution of ownership/client responsibilities. If the UN chooses to make widespread use of PMCs, fixing these problems will, for the most part, be a matter of establishing robust methods of contract vetting and oversight. Coordination is the final and most challenging issue of command and control that is relevant to making private intervention effective. Although the model that has emerged from the United States' occupation of Iraq provides a useful foundation, it must be made faster without bypassing UN authority for it to be transferable to a case of PMC-led coercive protection.

Can PMCs Deploy Rapidly?

One of UN operations' greatest shortcomings is their inordinately long deployment times. On average, it takes UN member-states eight months to deliver the personnel and equipment they promise to a given mission.⁸⁴ While much of this lethargy is evidence of a lack of commitment on the part of the TCCs, some is also due to logistical problems. Transporting mechanized infantry battalions and their necessary support systems thousands of kilometers or across entire continents is a feat that only the U.S. military can accomplish with any regularity or ease. It has been demonstrated

⁸⁴ Doug Brooks, Interview (March 11, 2009).

above that employing PMCs would avoid the difficulties in rapid deployment stemming from lack of political will. To what extent could the private sector also improve the strictly logistical aspect of coercive protection? To answer this question, various PMCs and PMC-experts' claims about the private sector's airlift capacity will be examined, and measured against observed capabilities.

In addition to their much touted superior expertise and experience, PMCs have boasted about their rapid reaction capability. EO/Sandline in particular made a name for themselves with their much-publicized promise that they could deploy 2,000 soldiers on the ground anywhere in the world within 48 hours of signing a contract. Although there is no direct evidence that EO/Sandline ever demonstrated this capability, the fact that it maintained two Hawker Siddeley Andover military transport aircraft,⁸⁵ three Boeing 727 jets,⁸⁶ three Mi-17 transport helicopters,⁸⁷ and three Mi-8 cargo helicopters⁸⁸ under the aegis of its sister company, Ibis Air, increases the likelihood that its assertion was true.⁸⁹ Firms today do not sport both infantry and airlift capacity the way EO/Sandline did; however, they continue to make bold promises about their ability to project force around the globe. Blackwater has, on repeated occasions, stated that if they are contracted to protect internally displaced peoples in Sudan, they could be fully operational two to three times faster than the US military.⁹⁰ The IPOA consortium offering to perform civilian protection and disarmament in eastern Congo make a similar claim in their proposal to the UN, asserting that they could be fully mission-ready 30 to 90 days after receiving orders, depending on the scale of the requested operation.⁹¹ One industry insider even goes so far as to say that the industry standard for having "boots on the ground" is ten days after receiving orders.⁹²

There are two main reasons to trust that high-end PMCs are able to deploy as fast as any developed military in the world besides the United States. The first and most important relates not to airlift or sealift capacity but to access to areas where coercive

⁸⁵ with approximately 25,000 pounds of cargo capacity

⁸⁶ with approximately 60,000 pounds of cargo capacity

⁸⁷ with approximately 4,000 pounds of cargo capacity

⁸⁸ with approximately 4,000 pounds of cargo capacity

⁸⁹ Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106.

⁹⁰ Doug Brooks, Interview (March 11, 2009).

⁹¹ IPOA Operational Concept Paper, "Supporting the MONUC Mandate," p. 4.

⁹² Doug Brooks, Interview (March 11, 2009).

protection is ongoing or a likely future reality. With demand for contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan decreasing from their peaks in 2003 and 2004, firms have identified humanitarian operations in these regions as their next major markets. In preparation for this demand-side transformation, PMCs like DynCorp, PAE, MPRI, Blackwater, Triple Canopy, and Armor Group have begun establishing commercial offices (for liaison with governments and NGOs) and training centers (for preparing indigenous forces) across Africa.⁹³ Some, including most notably Blackwater, have even gone so far as to recast their entire corporate image to become more palatable to humanitarian organizations. NGOs are only one source of potential future PMC employment in Africa, however. AFRICOM, the United States' newest Unified Combatant Command for the African continent (excluding Egypt), also promises to offer many lucrative contracts in coming years as it attempts to project power inland while minimizing the number of uniformed military personnel on-shore.⁹⁴ PMCs, thus, have real incentives to propagate across as much of economically-deprived, war-torn, and resource-rich Africa as possible; doing so positions them to draw business from both the military and humanitarian pools of demand while only paying the set-up costs to capitalize on one of these two potential clients.

The private sector's considerable strategic airlift capacity is the second reason PMCs can be expected to deliver on their rapid reaction promises. Table 3 lists most of the large/heavy airfreight companies that market their services to national militaries, the United Nations, NGOs, or PMCs as well as these companies' air assets. Excluding considerations about each craft's mission capability rates, and assuming uniform abilities to pilot and maintain craft across operators, one can see that in toto, the private sector currently has roughly 30% as much strategic airlift capacity as the United States. Put differently, if all major commercial air cargo operators in the United States and Europe (including Russia and the CIS states) were deployed for a single mission, they would be able to duplicate the airlift of American forces that preceded "Operation Desert Shield."⁹⁵ Even in a scenario where over 50% of the private fleet is unavailable,

⁹³ Sean McFate, "US Africa Command: Next Step or Next Stumble?" *African Affairs*, 107/426, 2008, pp. 118-119.

⁹⁴ Sean McFate, "US Africa Command: Next Step or Next Stumble?" *African Affairs*, 107/426, 2008, pp. 119.

⁹⁵ U.S. Air Mobility Command (AMC) achieved a maximum rate of 17 million ton-miles per day (MTM/D) during Operation Desert Storm (Col. Walter J. Boyne and Ronald R. Fogleman, *Operation Iraqi Freedom: What went Right, What went Wrong, and Why?*, (New York: Forge, 2003), p. 29.) Currently, the United States is capable of at most 55 MTM/D (Christopher Bolkom, *Testimony Before the Senate Homeland*

PMCs would still have the largest strategic airlift capacity of any entity besides the United States.⁹⁶ In sum, even if a given consortium of PMCs cannot rely on pre-positioned personnel or equipment to execute a contract in a given location, they would still be more than capable of deploying for a mission in a timely fashion.

Security and Government Affairs Committee, Hearing on Cost Effective Airlift, September 27, 2007, Appendix 1). 30% of 55 MTM/D is approximately 17 MTM/D. This calculation excludes sorties conducted by the United States Civil Reserve Fleet.

⁹⁶ EU countries' national militaries, the only ones comparable to the United States' in quality, maintain no strategic lifters. Only the United Kingdom owns craft with a maximum payload greater than 33,000kg (Bjoern H. Seibert, *African Adventure: Assessing the European Union's Intervention in Chad and the Central African Republic* (MIT Security Studies Program Working Paper, November 2007, p. 20).

Table 10: Private Sector Airlift Capacity

	An-124 (150,000kg max payload; 4,800km max. range with max. payload)	An-225 (425,000kg max. payload; 4,000km max. range with max. payload)	An-74 (12,000kg max. payload; 4,800km max. range with max. payload)	An-22 (80,000kg max. payload; 5,000km max. range with max. payload)	An-12 (33,000kg max. payload; 3,600km max. range with max. payload)	IL-76(40,000kg max. payload; 3,650km max. range with max. payload)	Boeing 747-100 (79,200kg max. payload; 9,800km max. range with max. payload)	Boeing 707-320 (24,500kg max. payload; 10,040km max. range with max. payload)	IL-100 (21,600kg max. payload; 3,800km max. range with max. payload)	A300 (40,000kg max. payload; 7,200km max. range with max. payload)	DC-8-63 (30,800kg max. payload; 7,240km max. range with max. payload)
Antonov Airlines	7	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Volga Dnepr	10	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
BMR Express	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Polot Airlines	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skylark USA	10	-	-	-	1	5	5	-	3	-	-
GTS	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
UKS Air	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	3	-
Air Foyle	7	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skyline Aviation	2	-	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	2	4
Vulcan Air	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Alenia	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	12	-	8	-
TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR GRAFT	50	3	3	6	13	16	8	13	3	13	4
TOTAL MAXIMUM TON-KM FOR ALL GRAFT	32,437,500	5,100,000	172,800	2,400,000	936,000	2,336,000	6,209,280	3,197,740	246,958	3,744,000	891,968

<p>TOTAL PRIVATE SECTOR KG-KM/TOTAL U.S. MILITARY KG-KM</p>	<p>18.22%</p>
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Will PMCs Stay in the Fight?

Except for those countries in the immediate vicinity of a civilian protection crisis, robust peace operations are a discretionary conflict for every TCC, ancillary to any national security objectives. As explained earlier, this asymmetry of interests between the United Nations and its TCCs has the unfortunate effect of deterring those countries least invested in the outcome of coercive protection (i.e. the developed world) from dangerous missions where their skills and capabilities are most needed. Determining whether PMCs are more willing than TCCs to remain committed to a given mission regardless of difficulty is, thus, an important step in measuring potential of PMCs to improve on existing UN coercive protection practice. There are three reasons to believe that they are: past PMC actions during coercive protection missions, long-term financial incentives, and individual contractor's affinity for the thrill of combat.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that PMCs are more reliable than conventional UN forces during coercive protection operations is the individual company's service record while working for the United Nations. Two previously mentioned high-profile examples of PMC deployment with UN forces—one by ICI in Sierra Leone and the other by PAE in Sudan—aptly illustrate the disparity. In Sierra Leone, contractors went well beyond their contracted duties, actively seeing out aid workers trapped in RUF-held territory, all while ECOWAS forces operating under UN mandate did essentially nothing to quell the siege of Freetown. Likewise, in Sudan, only private sector aircraft dared to brave Darfuri airspace on a regular basis. Although UN forces also had moments of bravery in both Sierra Leone and Sudan, it is difficult to argue that PMCs have not also earned the right to be considered reliable after these demonstrations.

That PMCs have shown themselves to be tough in dangerous peace operations is not without cause; reputation is a critical driver in the private military industry. If a firm comes to be known for its ability to "get the job done" no matter the circumstances, it will have a comparative advantage in winning contracts over firms with less established or inferior reputations. The same argument that Col. Hammes articulated as a justification for Blackwater's conduct in Iraq is again applicable here. If a PMC damages its reputation because its contractors shirk on their responsibilities and are caught, that PMC is for all intents and purposes "out of business." Firms, thus, have a much stronger incentive than TCCs to remain committed to their contracted or mandated responsibilities.

The average military contractor's appreciation of combat is a third and final reason it is logical to expect PMCs to remain engaged in coercive protection irrespective of the dangers it entails. It makes sense that individuals who actively seek out and successfully find employment with a firm that deploys people to dangerous faraway places are also people who enjoys the 'thrills of battle'. Testimony from Blackwater employees verifies this perception. In regards to his decision to go to Iraq with a PMC, Dan Boelens said it was "the last chance in my life to do something exciting...I like the stress and adrenaline push it gives me." Curtis Williams, a former Navy SEAL, also expressed an attraction to the prevailing environment in Iraq. "That adrenaline rush is addicting. It's something that never goes away... We want to go back and kill the bad guy. It's who we are." Dale McClellan, another ex-SEAL Blackwater contractor expressed similar sentiments when asked about the risk he was taking in going to Iraq in 2003, "Most of us have been getting shot at most of our lives anyway. [Besides, our skills—urban warfare, sniping, close quarter combat—are] all worthless in the civilian world."⁹⁷ These kinds of men obviously are not always the ideal instruments for executing a civilian protection mandate. They may even initially be explicitly excluded from participating in peace operations because of their raw warrior mentality. However, should a mission deteriorate sufficiently far, their presence is clearly preferable to the complete withdrawal of international forces that would result if the UN were entirely dependent upon member-states for coercive protection forces. PMCs are thus some of the more reliable troop contributing entities for coercive protection even if their reasons for being firmly committed to their mission—money and a zeal for fighting—are not ideals usually associated with the successful execution of UN objectives.

Concluding Remarks and Topics for Further Investigation

In this article, it has been demonstrated, using a combination of logical reasoning and empirical evidence, that private military and security forces are better able to execute UN orders to protect civilians than the conventional UN troops usually assigned this responsibility. Employing a seven-point framework derived from the secondary literature on UN missions that attempted civilian protection, this article has

⁹⁷ Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater*, pp. 82-83.

systematically analyzed UN peacekeeping forces' current shortcomings and demonstrated the relative superiority of private units. The seven critical nodes used as points of comparison are the likelihood of delayed authorization, force strength, force quality, the propensity for untenable mandates, command and control, rapid reaction, and staying power. When it was not clear from rational argumentation alone if or how private forces constituted an improvement on one of these matters, available quantitative and qualitative data was used to illustrate the plausibility and desirability of using private military companies' troops instead of those seconded from UN member-states with low quality military forces.

Although the sum of the evidence presented herein points consistently to the logic of using PMCs for UN civilian protection, none of these analytic exercises is beyond skeptical reproach. On the contrary, absent detailed information on PMCs capabilities, the logistics of orchestrating hundreds of private firms towards a single political end, and the economic dynamics of a hypothetical UN-centered market (i.e. a monopoly) for private civilian protection, no firm conclusions on the utility of PMCs in a UN context can be drawn. If foreign policy-makers wish to explore further the idea of using private more extensively in multilateral operations, a wise first step would be to invest the time, energy, and money, necessary to accumulate this data.