

Chapter 3: The crisis in external response

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Introduction

The international system, through the United Nations Security Council, has been unable to act effectively in enforcing international humanitarian law, ensuring stability, or in providing security for the provision of humanitarian assistance for those in dire need. The Security Council is also reliant on the voluntary contributions of member states to provide the material and human means for enforcing its mandates, but national actors have had little stomach for enforcement actions, unless their parochial national interests have been threatened.

In particular, the UN and the rest of the international community face seemingly insurmountable hurdles in trying to bring stability to conflict-ridden African states. The problem of effective intervention is almost as complex as the type of conflicts that demand efforts at amelioration, and the obstacles are conceptual, contextual, political, and practical in nature. In the absence of political will and public support, of financial and other resources, and of a 'recipe' for success that is acceptable to their own populations and to Africa, lukewarm donor commitments to the continent are fast growing cold.

On the other hand, a number of Western countries that have been major troop contributors to international peacekeeping have been promoting the idea of 'privatising' peacekeeping, albeit behind closed doors – especially in Africa. The basic thrust of their argument is that there can be no peacekeeping without peace, and that the international community has failed to provide a viable recipe for Boutros-Ghali's ill-conceived concept of 'peace enforcement'. Other actors may therefore be far more suited to the task than multinational forces under UN command.

This chapter will explain how the absence of legitimate and effective international responses to African crises has created a potential 'niche market' for the purveyors of a particular brand of private security.

The international community's response mechanisms

Article 1(1) of the United Nations Charter clearly states that the primary purpose of the UN is "... *to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace ...*" Article 24 confers upon the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and directs it to act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the UN, according to the specific powers granted in the relevant chapters of the UN Charter.

For example, Chapter VI of the UN Charter deals with *The Pacific Settlement of Disputes*. It empowers the Security Council to "... *investigate any dispute, or any situation ... in order to*

determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.”

Apart from empowering the Security Council to determine which disputes would endanger peace and security, if allowed to continue unresolved, and to recommend ‘appropriate’ measures to resolve such disputes, Chapter VI provides a weak and vague basis for conflict resolution. It does suggest, however, that keeping the peace will require negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

Chapter VII deals with *Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. It empowers the Security Council to decide on measures to be taken to **restore** peace, and is essentially coercive – allowing for political and economic pressure, as well as the use of force (Article 42). Importantly, Chapter VII requires all members of the UN to “... *make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities ... necessary for the purpose of maintaining International peace and security.*”

The will of the Security Council to use its full powers under Chapter VII obviously depends on the means at its disposal. Unfortunately, the military forces envisaged in Chapter VII never materialised. As early as 1947, the UN’s Military Staff Committee abandoned all hope of securing military contributions to the Security Council.¹ In the absence of sufficient resolve and adequate means to enforce international peace and security, the UN thus had to rely extensively on Chapter VI of the Charter, and the instrument of consensual peacekeeping.

Despite the lack of coercive power, most peace operations established during the Cold War were entirely military in composition and mandate. There were therefore a limited number of actors involved in international efforts to keep the peace through the insertion of impartial military observers or forces to monitor cease-fires – the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, a limited number of troop-contributing member states and, of course, the belligerent member states.

Compared to early peacekeeping missions, those conducted since 1989 have often had a substantial or predominantly non-military mandate and composition.² Where the UN has been called upon to oversee the implementation of detailed peace agreements, a much larger and more complex agenda for operations has been required, which includes such non-military functions as: “... *verification, supervision, and conduct of elections; supervision of civil administration; promotion and protection of human rights; supervision of law and order and police activities; economic rehabilitation; repatriation of refugees; humanitarian relief; demining assistance; public information activities, and training and advice to governmental officials.*”³ This continues to be the norm for most new missions.

The growth in such civilian tasks implies that contemporary operations face enormous problems in staff provision, logistics, and co-ordination among tasks and actors. A plethora of UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are to be found in the contemporary mission area. Transnational corporations have also become major players in conflict-torn areas, while the media obviously remain an important part of the international

community. So do individuals such as retired statesmen, scholars, philanthropists, and others.

However, amidst the proliferation of actors in the international community, it is still the national governments that contribute the military forces which remain essential to operations aimed at ending conflict.

States are the foundation of the international community, but also the cause of severe limitations on its ability to intervene in conflicts to restore peace and security. The UN consists of member states – with the Permanent Five members of the Security Council having a disproportionate say in what is to be done, or not to be done in the maintenance of international peace and security. But the whole UN system is dependent upon the payment of financial contributions from its member states. Most of the major NGOs that provide essential humanitarian assistance in zones of conflict are also funded by a variety of governments.

Limits to international intervention

The end of the Cold War signalled the demise of ideologically-based and motivated conflicts between capitalism and socialism. It allowed a new, co-operative mood for the management and resolution of African conflicts. There was progress toward a peaceful transition to democratic governance in Namibia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa.

At the same time, subregional, ethnic, and religious conflicts flared up in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia, Congo, and the former Zaire. In fact, since the turn of the decade, the UN Security Council has had to react to growing international demands for intervention in a number of ‘complex emergencies’ on the African continent. These have often been characterised by the combination of an internal or international conflict with serious human rights violations and large-scale suffering among the threatened civilian population, which has inevitably resulted in large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. *“In many African emergencies ... beleaguered governments ... have lost control over substantial parts of their territories. Their monopoly of power at state level becomes eroded, proliferating downwards into the hands of warlords.”*⁴ Under such circumstances, the *“... civil population becomes the principal target of violence, its control, division, relocation and extermination the war aims of opposing factions.”*⁵

Many of these conflicts have deep-rooted causes, such as a lack of coincidence between nation and state, ethnic tensions and the suppression of minorities; corrupt and dictatorial regimes; support for such regimes by international arms traders; chronic poverty and underdevelopment, and a grinding debt burden. The international community has struggled to resolve such conflicts, exactly because the causes are numerous, complex and often deeply entrenched. Conflict prevention is a long term business and there are no quick fixes.

However erroneously, the resources and energies of the international community tend to be mobilised around the symptoms, rather than the causes of conflict – particularly when these

include genocide or civil war. The situation is further complicated by the fact that most of Africa's actual and potential conflicts are internal ones within the state, which impedes international attempts to broker peace for a number of reasons.

In the first place, the jurisprudence and methodology of conflict prevention, management and resolution have mostly been established in the context of conflict between independent sovereign states. There are far fewer rules to go by in the case of internal conflict.

Secondly, one of the parties in an internal conflict is likely to be an internationally recognised government, and third parties who want to help, are more likely to be blocked by objections based on interference in the internal affairs of countries.

Thirdly, the causes of conflict in internal situations are often politically sensitive issues: the quality of governance; the way law and order is maintained; the equity of the economic and social systems; and issues such as ethnic discrimination. These issues are particularly sensitive where external involvement is concerned, and governments will understandably resist such attempts.

In the fourth place, the nature of the other party to the conflict also hampers attempts at brokering peace: it is normally an insurgent movement or movements, amply supplied with arms, obsessively secretive, inexperienced in negotiation, without transparent lines of authority, undisciplined, violent, and unfamiliar with the norms of international behaviour, including humanitarian law.

Finally, civilians tend to suffer much more than they do in interstate conflicts. Where civilians are a target of aggression, it is impossible for international agencies to respond to their humanitarian needs without being drawn into the politics of the conflict, as has clearly been demonstrated both in Central Africa and in Bosnia.⁶

Despite such limitations, graphically reported and portrayed humanitarian tragedies still move the international community to act in Africa – but through humanitarian assistance, rather than UN peacekeeping. However, international aid agencies and NGOs lack the power and organisational structure needed to conduct operations in situations of ongoing conflict, and the aid which they provide often becomes a resource which further serves to fuel, rather than resolve armed conflict.

During March 1997, in the former Zaire, for example, Kabila's rebel forces obtained the fuel needed to airlift troops for an attack on the key southern city of Lubumbashi from a depot maintained by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Goma. More than 15 000 gallons of fuel were seized to ferry 300 troops and their weapons southward for the successful assault on Lubumbashi on 9 April 1997. In addition to stolen aid fuel, Kabila's army also relied on stolen aid trucks for transport and stolen aid food for sustenance. Likewise, Mobutu's army hijacked UN-chartered aircraft to transport weapons for its futile fight against the rebels. The planes flew into UN-run refugee camps, where the arms were distributed to Rwandan Hutu refugees who had become Mobutu's first line of defence.⁷

Humanitarian assistance also has a significant indirect impact. When international agencies and NGOs meet the needs of civilian populations, this frees warring governments and opposition forces to use their resources for warmaking. Intergroup tensions are also increased when NGOs provide external resources to some groups and not others, or where they hire workers from certain groups to the exclusion of others.⁸ Food and money, in the absence of troops and diplomatic pressure, have become important components in the tactics of local belligerents, as the UN and other aid agencies increasingly operate in a political, military and diplomatic vacuum,⁹ Burundi and Sudan being examples.

Where the UN Security Council has indeed intervened to restore peace and security in Africa, it has been through stretching and mutating the concept and conduct of classical UN peacekeeping, which was used with varying degrees of success for the limited purpose of monitoring cease-fire agreements (mainly in the Middle East) during the Cold War-era. A degree of success was achieved with 'expanded peacekeeping' interventions in countries such as Namibia (1989) and Mozambique (1992-1995), where regional and global changes had enabled an escape from an impasse and where conflicts had run their course to the point of exhaustion.

In Mozambique, the UN intervened after nearly thirty years of ruinous war which had claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, driven millions from their homes and destroyed much of Mozambique's economic and social infrastructure. After President Chissano and Afonso Dhlakama signed a General Peace Agreement on 4 October 1992, the Security Council authorised the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) – the first UN peacekeeping operation to incorporate a large humanitarian component.

ONUMOZ was able to withdraw with honour after the staging of democratic elections at the end of 1994. In the final analysis, it was a successful political and humanitarian mission, rather than a successful multinational military intervention. The political leadership of the two Mozambican parties remained committed to the end-state of the process, and they were helped along by a population exhausted by war and drought.

However, the general perception of success in Mozambique reinforced an international preoccupation with the idea of establishing peace and democracy in a war-torn society in one fell swoop. ONUMOZ provided a Utopian blueprint against which other operations would be judged as failures. Indeed, virtually in tandem with the Mozambican peace process, the involvement of the international community in Somalia heralded both the high watermark and the subsequent abandonment of Africa.

Armed conflict in the collapsing state of Somalia exploded in November 1991, with heavy fighting in the Somali capital of Mogadishu between armed elements allied to General Mohamed Farah Aidid, those allied to Ali Mohamed Mahdi (the appointed interim president), and a number of other armed factions. The violent conflict coincided with a serious drought, which proved disastrous for the population.

By 1992, approximately half of the nine million people of Somalia were threatened with starvation, severe malnutrition and related diseases. An estimated 300 000 people actually

died from disease and acts of violence, while some two million people were displaced from their home areas in an attempt to flee the suffering.

In March 1992, the warring parties eventually agreed to a cease-fire, to be monitored by UN observers. They also agreed to the deployment of UN security personnel to protect assistance agencies responding to the humanitarian disaster. The subsequent United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) had an authorised strength of fifty military observers to monitor the cease-fire, and a 500-strong infantry unit to provide escorts for UN convoys of relief supplies. A 90-Day Plan of Action aimed to provide food and non-food supplies to some 1,5 million people immediately at risk and to help an additional 3,5 million people with food, seeds, drinking water and basic health supplies.

In the absence of a government capable of maintaining law and order, relief organisations experienced increased hijacking of vehicles, looting of convoys and warehouses, and detention of expatriate staff. On 3 December 1992, the Security Council was moved to welcome a United States offer to help in creating a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid and authorised, under Chapter VII of the Charter, the use of “... *all necessary means*” to do so. The US responded with a decision on 4 December to initiate Operation Restore Hope, under which it would assume the unified command of the new operation in accordance with Resolution 794.¹⁰

By March 1993, UNITAF had deployed a total of approximately 37 000 troops in southern and central Somalia, covering approximately forty per cent of the country’s territory. Although UNITAF had a positive impact on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, incidents of violence continued. There were still no effective functioning government in the country, no organised civilian police and no disciplined national army. On 3 March 1993, the Secretary-General submitted recommendations to the Security Council for changing the UNITAF mission into UNOSOM II which, endowed with Chapter VII enforcement powers, was to establish a secure environment **throughout** Somalia.¹¹ The mission took over from UNITAF in May 1993.

It soon became apparent that Aidid’s faction would not co-operate. Attempts by UNOSOM II to implement disarmament led to increasing tensions which culminated, on 5 June 1993, in a series of armed attacks by Somali militia against UNOSOM II troops throughout south Mogadishu. The attacks resulted in 25 Pakistani soldiers being killed, with ten reported missing and 54 wounded.

UNOSOM II subsequently initiated military action on 12 June 1993, conducting a series of air and ground operations in south Mogadishu. The objective of the action, according to the Secretary-General, was to restore peace to Mogadishu “... *so that the political reconciliation, rehabilitation and disarmament process can continue to move forward throughout Somalia.*”

In support of UNOSOM’s coercive disarmament programme, the US deployed Rangers and Quick Reaction Forces (under US command and control) in Mogadishu. On 3 October 1993, the Rangers launched an operation aimed at capturing a number of key aides of General Aidid who were suspected of complicity in attacks on UN personnel and facilities. During the

operation, two US helicopters were shot down by Somali militiamen. Eighteen US soldiers lost their lives and 75 were wounded. The bodies of the US soldiers were subjected to public acts of outrage, and the humiliating scenes were broadcast around the world.

Within days, President Clinton sent reinforcements and set a pullout date for American troops. *“No single event has done as much to influence peacekeeping in the post-Cold War world as the Somalia intervention. In the five years since the humanitarian mission dissolved into combat, Somalia has had a profoundly cautionary influence on American foreign policy.”*¹² By 28 March 1995, the complete withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops had been effected, with few of the mandate objectives of UNOSOM II achieved.¹³ A Comprehensive Seminar on Lessons Learned from UNOSOM later concluded that the operation’s mandate was vague, changed frequently during the process and was open to myriad interpretations.

The three-year UN intervention in Somalia cost the international community over \$1 685 million. Furthermore, 150 peacekeepers died – 114 as a result of hostile acts. The death of the US Rangers in October 1993 had an indelible impact on US policy on multilateral peace operations. In May 1994, the Clinton Administration’s Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25) decreed that the US would not intervene in future crises unless American national interests were clearly at stake, and the mission had clear and limited objectives, including a well-defined exit strategy.¹⁴

UN officials involved in the mission were left with the conviction that the use of force should be avoided in future peace operations, as the degree of destruction in Somalia was not matched by the achievement of overall (political) mission objectives. The US, on the other hand, ascribed mission failure to the fact that not enough force was used. The UN Secretary-General was faced with the black and white options of either defensive peacekeeping or high-intensity enforcement. Somalia was thus the turning point at which the international community lost all desire to experiment further with ‘middle ground’ operations in Africa.¹⁵

Nowhere was the ‘Somalia effect’ so dramatically and tragically demonstrated as in the tiny nearby country of Rwanda.¹⁶ Fighting between the (Hutu-dominated) Armed Forces of the government of Rwanda and the (Tutsi-inspired) Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) first broke out in October 1990 across the border between Rwanda and its northern neighbour, Uganda. After nearly three years of fighting, and a number of broken cease-fire agreements, a comprehensive peace agreement between the Government of Rwanda and RPF was successfully concluded on 4 August 1993. Both parties called for a neutral international force to assist with implementing the agreement.

On 24 September 1993, the Secretary-General recommended to the Security Council that a United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) should be established, with the purpose of *“... contributing to the establishment and maintenance of a climate conducive to the secure installation and subsequent operation of the transitional Government.”* The mandate of UNAMIR resembled the ONUMOZ blueprint, and envisaged a sixteen-month, four-phase plan which included the demobilisation and integration of the various armed forces and *Gendarmerie*, and concluded with the monitoring of democratic elections and the installation of a new government.

UNAMIR was established on 5 October 1993 by Security Council Resolution 872, and the deployment of the first UNAMIR battalion in Kigali was completed in the first part of December 1993. However, the government and the RPF continued to drag their feet in setting up the transitional institutions in terms of the peace agreement. The security situation in the country deteriorated steadily until, on 6 April 1994, an aircraft carrying President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Ntaryamira of Burundi crashed (or was shot down), killing all those on board.

This sparked a civil war that led to country-wide massacres of the Hutu opposition and intelligentsia, as well as members of the Tutsi minority and other RPF supporters. Within two weeks, tens of thousands had been killed. Victims of the violence included ten Belgian members of UNAMIR. Following the murder of the Belgian soldiers and threats to Belgian nationals, the Government of Belgium unilaterally decided to withdraw its battalion from Rwanda.

By the end of April 1994, it had become patently obvious that the much weakened UNAMIR had neither the mandate nor the strength to take effective action to halt the continuing massacres, and would be unable to protect threatened people in Kigali if a new wave of massacres were to start. UNAMIR had been reduced, by 13 May 1994, to 444 personnel in Rwanda – essentially consisting of a battalion from Ghana. The Secretary-General recommended to the Security Council that it provide a new mandate to create UNAMIR II, consisting of 5 500 troops to support and provide safe conditions for displaced persons and other groups in Rwanda, and to help with the provision of assistance by humanitarian organisations. Despite offers from over fifty potential troop-contributing countries, the Secretary-General calculated that the deployment of the first phase of UNAMIR II could not occur before the first week of July 1994.

On 22 June 1994, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorised the Government of France to lead a multinational operation to assure the security and protection of displaced persons and civilians at risk in Rwanda, until such time as UNAMIR was brought up to strength. While expressing its strong opposition to the French move, the RPF did not seek confrontation with French forces and, on 18 July, unilaterally declared a cease-fire, effectively ending the civil war. On 19 July, a broad-based government of national unity was formed, two weeks ahead of the scheduled French withdrawal from Rwanda.

The French withdrawal effectively heralded the end of international engagement in Rwanda in pursuit of peace and security. The UNAMIR II mission never really got off the ground. On 1 August 1994, it had fewer than 500 soldiers deployed. The RPF had established military control over most of the country, and about 1,5 million (mainly Hutu) Rwandans had sought refuge in the former Zaire out of fear of retribution. It is estimated that, of a total population of approximately seven million, as many as 500 000 had been killed, three million had been internally displaced, and more than two million had fled to neighbouring countries. As the UN Secretary-General observed, the international community's delayed reaction to the genocide in Rwanda “... *demonstrated graphically its extreme inadequacy to respond with prompt and decisive action to humanitarian crises entwined with armed conflict.*”

The inability of the international community to cope with crises such as those in Somalia and Rwanda, is often explained in terms of a lack of political will on the part of third parties to become embroiled in someone else's civil war. This lack of will is not surprising, given the absence of a clear concept for enforcing the peace in situations where peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies cannot operate effectively as a result of crumbling consent and cooperation by the conflicting parties. Although former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali proposed the idea of peace enforcement in *An Agenda for Peace*, he presented it as an activity that would possibly require separate and distinct forces to that of a peacekeeping operation:

*“Cease-fires have often been agreed to but not complied with, and the United Nations has sometimes been called upon to send forces to restore and maintain the cease-fire. This task can on occasion exceed the mission of peacekeeping forces and the expectations of peacekeeping force contributors. I recommend that the Council consider the utilisation of peace-enforcement units in clearly defined circumstances and with their terms of reference specified in advance.”*¹⁷

While the Secretary-General coined the phrase ‘peace enforcement’, he subsequently had to admit that he did not provide a universally accepted definition or concept for its implementation.¹⁸ In fact, ‘peace enforcement’ has since existed solely in the realm of theory, where peace enforcement units intervene impartially in a civil war in order to compel the warring parties to peace talks, so that a peacekeeping operation can be established. In reality, forces such as UNOSOM in Africa (and UNPROFOR in Europe) were unable to maintain impartiality. They either took sides openly, or were perceived as favouring one side, thus becoming the allies of one faction, and the ‘legitimate’ target of others. Mixing the use of force with the principles of impartiality and consent has largely discredited the notion of intervening in intrastate conflicts. According to Mackinlay,¹⁹ “[r]eliance on the military doctrines and humanitarian relief conventions of a previous era, as well as political short termism have disabled international interventions.”

Peace enforcement has failed, not just because of a lack of support or finances, but also because the concept itself is unsound. Peace enforcement bears little similarity to peacekeeping, where the military's primary role is that of a support force, not an active combatant. As yet, there is no coherent body of military doctrine explaining the conduct of peace enforcement operations. No one is even sure what is meant by ‘peace enforcement’. UN ‘peace enforcement’ operations have been combat operations in which the Rules of Engagement governing the use of force have been only slightly adapted from ‘classical’ peacekeeping rules.

It is thus clear that the UN “ ... still lacks the capacity to implement rapidly and effectively decisions of the Security Council calling for the dispatch of peacekeeping operations in crisis situations. Troops for peacekeeping missions are in some cases not made available by Member States or made available under conditions that constrain effective response. Peacemaking and human rights operations, as well as peacekeeping operations, also lack a secure financial footing, which has a serious impact on the viability of such operations.”²⁰

The utility of new mechanisms being developed to enhance UN reaction time – such as the Standby Arrangements System, the Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) and the Rapidly Deployable Mobile Headquarters (RDMHQ) – will depend on effective political direction and the will to put such capacity to good use. However, there is no international mechanism in existence (beyond military alliances such as NATO) for the effective formation and management of Chapter VII operations. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated categorically that the UN “... *does not have, at this point in its history, the institutional capacity to conduct military enforcement measures under Chapter VII. Under present conditions, ad hoc Member States coalitions of the willing offer the most effective deterrent to aggression or to the escalation or spread of an ongoing conflict.*”²¹ Annan, of all people, should know that this is easier said than done – and that the Security Council is still haunted by the Somalia syndrome, for his efforts to end the civil war in the Republic of Congo came to naught.

Fighting began in the Congo capital of Brazzaville on 5 June 1997, when President Pascal Lissouba’s forces tried to disarm the private militia of Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the country’s former military dictator and an opponent of Lissouba in the presidential elections that were scheduled for 27 July 1997. An estimated 3 000 people, most of them civilians, died in the first major clashes between the rival militias, and many more were forced to flee the city – joining the ranks of Africa’s millions of displaced people.

Initially, French troops based at the international airport had managed to keep the opposing sides largely at bay. But on 20 June 1997, ignoring pleas from Lissouba and the UN for them to stay, France pulled out the last of its 1 250 soldiers from Brazzaville, after they had helped to evacuate nearly 6 000 French and other foreign nationals. As the civil war in the Republic of Congo threatened to engulf neighbouring countries, the Security Council authorised the Secretary-General, on 21 June 1997, to consult with potential troop-contributing countries about sending in a force to secure the airport, pending wider deployment at greater strength.

Annan originally estimated that the initial size of the force should be no fewer than 1 600 to 1 800, plus support units and UN military observers. He looked especially to the countries of the region to provide soldiers “... *to try and stabilise the situation and ensure that there is a cease-fire.*” Togo and Senegal volunteered to provide troops for the operation, while UN/OAU envoy Mohamed Sahnoun looked to Paris for the provision of logistic support. However, former president Sassou-Nguesso objected to the proposed force – perhaps because Lissouba reportedly made the mistake of offering the UN \$1 million towards launching the mission.

In the absence of any type of co-ordinated international response, the Republic of Congo soon became a battlefield on which Angolan troops, soldiers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and various mercenary forces were all involved. The UN Security Council continued to vacillate on dispatching advance elements of a peacekeeping mission to Libreville in accordance with an urgent request by the Secretary-General. All that emerged was a statement to the effect that “[t]he members of the Security Council strongly urge the neighbouring countries and other external parties involved to withdraw any forces they may

have sent to the Republic of Congo and to refrain from intervening in that country's internal affairs.”²²

With Kofi Annan still pleading with the Security Council about sending a peacekeeping force, Brazzaville fell to the forces of General (again President) Sassou-Nguesso on 15 October 1997. This concluded the presidency of democratically-elected Lissouba, and crowned yet another violent and unconstitutional regime transfer in Central Africa. While West African states had indicated a willingness to provide intervention forces, the Security Council had supplied neither the mandate nor the means to save the democratic experiment in the Republic of Congo.

Congo-Brazzaville also highlights another facet of international engagement in African conflict resolution – that of single-nation guarantors. Since 1988, the major military powers have largely withdrawn from direct involvement in African conflicts, while even former colonial powers have become far more subtle in their military engagement on the continent. In particular, the withdrawal of France from its role as external guarantor for the stability of regimes in its former colonies has left a gap in the traditional repertoire of external responses to African conflicts.

Until the 1960s, France controlled more than a third of the African continent (22 of the 53 OAU member states were previously under some form of French administration), and its military presence in Africa has been a pillar of its international status. Independence from France in the early 1960s was, in many respects, a charade. However, French control in Africa has now lost its Cold War imperative, politics in Paris has become focused around issues of European unification and, with domestic economic reform a top priority, France's quasi-imperial role in Africa is untenable. Moreover, with the introduction in 1997 of an all-volunteer army, France will no longer have the personnel to maintain large military bases in Africa. Premier Lionel Jospin's socialist-led government has therefore decided to rationalise French defence operations on the continent.

In July 1997, Paris announced military cuts in Africa which involved, most dramatically, a pull-out of its 1 400 troops in the Central African Republic. Over the next five years, France is expected to cut its total forces garrisoned on the continent from 8 000 to no more than 5 000.²³ It plans to fill this gap by a concerted Africanisation programme, by helping to establish military academies and to train armed forces and national police forces.²⁴ The official military policy towards Africa has thus shifted from zone of influence policing with garrisoned soldiers to a 'multilateral approach'²⁵ towards security problems on the African continent. While maintaining existing defence agreements with African countries, France now “... *refuses to be brought into the internal conflicts or to intervene in the interior affairs of its African partners.*”²⁶ Military co-operation will become increasingly focused on the training of African contingents for participation in 'peacekeeping' operations.

France's new policy is but part of a broader international response which aims to solve the dilemmas of intervention in Africa by devolving responsibility for peacekeeping to Africans themselves – an idea which has crystallised into a confusing and contentious mix of foreign 'peacekeeping' capacity-building initiatives.

The devolution of peacekeeping responsibilities

It has also become readily apparent that Boutros-Ghali's An Agenda for Peace and the related definitions are no longer relevant to the realities of intrastate conflict. There can no longer be a clear distinction between 'peacekeeping' and 'peace enforcement', and the UN is reluctant to contemplate anything with a Chapter VII mandate. This reality is reflected in the declining number of UN missions and peacekeepers worldwide. While the number of troops deployed on UN operations ballooned from 10 000 in 1989 to 70 000 in 1995, this number has dwindled over the past two years to some 19 000 by 1998, and will probably stabilise around levels more common in the eighties.

On the other hand, the dwindling statistics belie the fact that the number of non-UN 'peacekeeping' missions are increasing. Substantial and forceful missions have been conducted since 1990 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa, and, since July 1992, by Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. However, it is since the 40 000-strong North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) Implementation Force (IFOR) took over from the overextended UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia at the end of 1995, that the idea of regional peace operations has steadily gained ground. In 1997, a 6 000-strong Italian-led multinational force intervened in the civil turmoil in Albania, with a UN mandate to deliver emergency humanitarian aid. The relative effectiveness, as well as constraints on the use of force by NATO in Bosnia and the force of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Albania, have lent credence to the argument that regional capacities for conducting peace operations would allow for multinational intervention where the UN lacks the capability or the will to act.

After a brief experiment with large-scale, multifunctional peacekeeping and 'peace enforcement' operations (1989-1995), the UN seems to have settled into a phase of conducting much smaller and more specialised monitoring missions, while delegating the large-scale, personnel intensive functions to regional organisations and arrangements.

The precedent for devolving 'peacekeeping' responsibilities in Africa was set when ECOWAS²⁷ intervened in a conflict which began in Liberia late in 1989. A small force of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front for the Liberation of Liberia (NPFL) invaded from Sierra Leone in an attempt to bring down the then president Samuel Doe. This incursion soon degenerated into a many-sided factional war that split the country into fiefdoms with no overall control. By early 1990, several hundred deaths had already occurred in confrontations between government forces and fighters of the NPFL. The civil war subsequently claimed the lives of between 100 000 and 150 000 civilians and led to a complete breakdown of law and order in the tiny country of some 2,3 million inhabitants. It displaced thousands of people, both internally and beyond the borders, resulting in approximately 700 000 refugees in the neighbouring countries.

From the outset of the conflict, ECOWAS undertook various initiatives aimed at a peaceful settlement – including the creation of a Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990. ECOMOG initially comprised about 4 000 troops from The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria

and Sierra Leone (as ECOMOG became drawn into the fighting, the force was later to reach a maximum strength of nearly 12 000). ECOWAS efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in Liberia included the mediation of a series of agreements that became the basis for the shifting mandates of ECOMOG. On 30 October 1991, ECOWAS brokered the Yamoussoukro IV Accord which outlined steps to implement a peace plan that included the encampment and disarmament of warring factions under the supervision of an expanded ECOMOG, as well as the establishment of transitional institutions to carry out free and fair elections. However, the West African force lacked the capacity, resources and credibility to implement this ambitious peace plan.

The impartiality of the force has always been questionable. From the outset, Taylor regarded ECOMOG as the tool of Nigeria, which had assisted former dictator Samuel Doe, both economically and militarily. Taylor was convinced that Nigeria's military regime intended to use ECOMOG to frustrate his attempt to achieve power and was forcing other countries participating in the operation to toe the Nigerian line. This obviously played a key role in Taylor's sabotage of a number of peace agreements, and led to divisions within the ECOMOG mission itself. The tortuous relationship between Taylor and Nigeria, on the one hand, and Nigeria and its ECOMOG partners on the other, illustrates one of the key difficulties with the concept of 'backyard peacekeeping'.²⁸

Although a small United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was established in September 1993, it played a definite second fiddle to ECOMOG and Nigeria. In its four years of deployment, UNOMIL suffered no fatalities, while the only significant outside assistance for the West African effort, before the establishment of UNOMIL, was about \$30 million from the US. By contrast, ECOMOG cost Nigeria more than \$1 billion – and 500 lives. Even in the diplomatic field, ECOMOG took the lead in brokering an astonishing number of failed agreements among the belligerents.

The force initially managed to secure the greater Monrovia area, allowing it to act as a safe haven from the fighting up-country, but was never really able to establish its authority in the hinterland. Moreover, ECOMOG troops were accused of various misdeeds, including extensive looting. At times, they turned brutal in the face of resistance to their authority, particularly from Taylor's NPFL.

It took ECOWAS five years to broker a thirteenth peace agreement in August 1995, which was widely believed to have a real chance of success. It was the first accord to involve all the factions (by this stage, there were nine major belligerent parties), and it also had the support of other political organisations and civic organisations.²⁹ However, on 6 April 1996, Monrovia erupted in bloody conflict when police attempted to arrest Roosevelt Johnson, a former leader of a faction of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) known as ULIMO-J. The carnage involved civilians and children, and forced the evacuation of virtually all the humanitarian relief workers from the former safe haven which had provided shelter for up to one million people. ECOMOG stood by helplessly as warlords looted their offices and supplies. When ECOMOG troops eventually managed to separate the armed factions and gain a measure of control over the city in June 1996, health workers recovered more than 1 500 bodies from shallow graves.³⁰

In the wake of this catastrophe, Taylor reached a *rapprochement* with the Nigerian ruler, General Sani Abacha, and attended a peace conference in Abuja that finally paved the way for elections to be held on 19 July 1997. In an ironic outcome, Charles Taylor won the presidential vote hands down. The UN, of course, welcomed the success of the elections and the Security Council called upon all parties to abide by the results and to co-operate in the formation of a new government. It also called upon the new government to protect the 'democratic' system and to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms under the rule of law.³¹

The ECOMOG initiative represents the first time that a regional body had intervened to stop a conflict in its own region, and there is little disagreement that the military and political actions of ECOWAS saved many lives – at considerable cost to the member states. The operation was one of the largest in the world, and from 1990 to the end of 1995 (when the NATO-led IFOR took over from UNPROFOR in Bosnia), the only major peacekeeping effort not run by the UN. For the people of Liberia, however, only time will tell the difference between Taylor the former warlord and Taylor, the President of Liberia. It has also been said that the same result could have been achieved with less bloodshed and at far less cost if Taylor had simply been allowed to seize power in 1990.

The Liberian experience challenges the assumption that an African capacity for conducting peace operations would allow for effective multinational intervention where the UN lacks the will or capacity to act. However, key players in the international community continue to cite ECOMOG as a success story, and remain intent upon resolving the crisis in external response to African emergencies through a strategy of African empowerment for participation in future peace operations.

Building peacekeeping capacity in Africa

The international community is steadily moving towards a reliance on Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, in the aftermath of the failure of consensual peacekeeping in Africa. However, such an approach requires capable forces and effective regional structures for directing operations. By January 1995, the OAU Secretary General observed that there was a proliferation of initiatives from outside Africa, all with the aim of supporting OAU efforts in the area of peacekeeping. He noted, in particular, that the British government had convened peacekeeping seminars in Camberly, Accra, Cairo and Harare, in order to examine various ways of enhancing the OAU's capabilities to prepare and deploy African peacekeepers.³²

In parallel with the British initiative, a French proposal for an African intervention force had emerged from the Biarritz Francophone Summit of 1994. In essence, the French proposal aimed at the creation of a modest standing force, with possible contributions from African countries, which could be utilised during times of crisis. It was further proposed that this force would be mobilised under the auspices of the OAU and its member states. The French initiative included plans for an assessment of the capacity of member states in a particular subregion to intervene during crisis situations, the training of contingents in peace maintenance, and the training of a high command staff.³³

The main thrust of both the British and French initiatives related to the setting up of a Multi-National African Rapid Deployment Peace Force. These initiatives, which enjoyed European and American support, further envisaged the prepositioning of equipment at logistics bases situated strategically in Africa, with Europe, the US and others providing logistics while Africa would supply the personnel.³⁴

The US soon joined the clamour to ‘capacitate’ Africans. In October 1996, former US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, travelled to Africa to promote a proposal for the setting up of an all-African military force. This African Crisis Response Force (ACRF) was to be used to deal with African crises where insurrections, civil war or genocide threaten mass civilian casualties. The intermediate objective of the ACRF was to develop a rapid reaction capability for such contingencies. It was hoped that the ACRF would be used for humanitarian intervention in Burundi. However, this ‘quick fix’ solution met with widespread scepticism, and the US transformed the idea of an African intervention force into a longer term capacity-building initiative. By mid-1997, the original ACRF idea had evolved into the African Crisis Response Initiative, or ACRI.

According to the State Department, “[t]he African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) is a training program which envisions a partnership with African and other interested nations to enhance African peacekeeping capacities, particularly the capacity to mount an **effective, collective response to humanitarian and other crises**.”³⁵ The transformation of the US initiative caused confusion and some annoyance in Africa, and exposed the lack of donor co-ordination in the realm of African capacity-building.

This moved the major players to announce the launching of a ‘P3’ initiative, which presents the ACRI as the US component of a joint initiative by the UK, the US and France. The French element of the P3 initiative is known as RECAMP (Reinforcement of African Military Peacekeeping Capacity), while the British element is known as the UK African Peacekeeping Training Support Programme.

The P3 further envisages the creation of an African Peacekeeping Support Group (APSG), open to all interested states, which would meet regularly under the aegis of the UN and the OAU to facilitate international co-ordination on peacekeeping training activities in Africa. It was also envisaged that smaller *ad hoc* co-ordinating groups would be set up to deal with more specific issues pertaining to the reinforcement of African peacekeeping capacities.

However, the great flaw in the whole P3 (or APSG) initiative arises from the very element that was meant to make it more politically acceptable – the **failure to establish a credible linkage between capacity-building and capacity utilisation**. An inordinate amount of resources are spent worldwide on military training including, latterly, peacekeeping training. But this has not solved the problem of the lack of political will to act on the part of the UN Security Council and potential troop-contributing countries in the face of man-made crises in Africa.

In other words, the P3 may make a contribution to potential peacekeeping capacity, but potential capacity in the form of more infantry battalions is clearly not the problem at hand.³⁶ There is, theoretically, an abundance of infantry battalions already available on standby for

peacekeeping deployment – but there is no way of putting these together in any meaningful way when faced with a risky intervention which may involve the use of force and exposure to hostile acts.

This factor was graphically illustrated by events in the former eastern Zaire towards the end of 1996. The humanitarian crisis which captured the international media limelight during 1996 clearly had its origins in the Rwanda genocide of 1994 and the subsequent exodus of hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees and militia when the RPF took control of the country. However, once UNAMIR had withdrawn from Rwanda, the focus shifted squarely onto the emerging genocide in Burundi and to US efforts to create an African Crisis Response Force to resolve the problem. Although it had been patently clear that the entire Great Lakes region remained highly volatile, and that the refugee camps in the former Zaire were one of the principal causes of instability, the international community was unable to take any concerted action to ease the plight of refugees or to avert the eight-month civil war which raged through Zaire from October 1996 to May 1997.

The problem was not one of a lack of warning, but one of a lack of political will among those with the necessary capacity to organise a coherent and effective multinational response, and to accept the sacrifices that this would entail. When help was eventually offered, it was not from ‘newly empowered’ African peacekeeping nations; it was a Canadian proposal to lead a multinational force with the limited humanitarian objective of ensuring the peaceful repatriation of refugees to Rwanda. Although the proposed multinational force (MNF) proved to be too little and too late, it did highlight some of the weaknesses of relying on multinational ‘coalitions of the willing’ – even those involving Western powers – for dealing with African crises.

The envisaged operation involved the insertion of armed forces into an area where the parties were still engaged in combat. Perhaps largely because of the potential for combat involved, almost all troop-contributing countries, including Canada, made the presence of US ground forces a precondition for their participation.³⁷ Given the stipulations of US PDD 25, this meant that the planned intervention could only occur in pursuit of the US national interest. While Canada and the US continued to wrangle over the exact timeframe and mandate of the mission, the issue was decided by default. Elements of the Rwandan army attacked the positions of former Zairian government forces and refugee camps thought to be sheltering Hutu militia who had been involved in the 1994 genocide.

Attacks by (soon to be President) Laurent Kabila’s surrogate forces from Rwanda on refugee camps near the border led to the precipitous return of 600 000 refugees to Rwanda. Requests by the UNHCR for military forces to assist in an operation to rescue the hundreds of thousands of others who fled westward into the forests of the former Zaire, remained unheeded. Together with other humanitarian organisations, the UNHCR was left to its own devices in searching for and rescuing refugees, often inside conflict zones. Access to refugees was frequently limited, obstructed or denied, and makeshift refugee sites were subjected to attacks and other atrocities by the military forces of both Mobutu and the agglomeration of forces loyal to Kabila’s *Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo* (ADFL). Although the aid workers managed to help with the evacuation of some 250 000 Rwandans, many others perished either of starvation, disease, or at the hands of the belligerents.³⁸

Despite the failure of the Canadian initiative in the former Zaire, contemporary thinking still sees the solution to the ‘overload’ on UN peacekeeping in increasing recourse by the Security Council to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.³⁹ This notion was stretched to its limits on 6 August 1997, when the Security Council retrospectively authorised the 800-member Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).⁴⁰ Mission costs would be borne by each of the participating countries, the government of the Central African Republic, the French government, and the OAU. The African countries were required to provide limited vehicle support and personal equipment, while the provision of tactical and support vehicles, including fuel and maintenance, was left to the French government.

However, in one of its regular reports to the UN, MISAB has warned that, without financial support, African nations will continue to lack the capability to resolve conflict on the continent. Paragraph 56 of the fourth MISAB report states that “... owing to the insufficiency of the African countries’ own resources, logistic support from the international community, along the lines of the support which France has provided to MISAB and which remains open to contributions for all other States, is still needed.”⁴¹

By the end of 1997, the term ‘coalition of the willing’ had become common UN parlance, and MISAB was increasingly being touted as another fine example of subregional peacekeeping on the African continent in the wake of ECOMOG. However, while both the ECOMOG and MISAB interventions may provide lessons for the development of regional responses to conflict in Africa, they also demonstrate major shortcomings in the field of peacebuilding. If, despite the shortcomings and disparities, these two African interventions are considered worthy precedents for adopting Chapter VIII of the UN Charter as the panacea for conflict resolution in Africa, then the credibility of the international system must be seriously questioned.

The privatisation of peacekeeping?

The crisis in external response is closely related to the notion that international intervention must produce peace and democracy from conditions of abject human misery. However, it is “... difficult, if not impossible, to secure the higher, more dynamic aspects of peace before the lower aspects of law and order are met.”⁴² Third-party intervention in civil conflict must thus necessarily (and primarily) be aimed at the restoration of order, which inevitably involves the imposition of power.

According to Mackinlay,⁴³ “[u]nless a monopoly of violence can be achieved, any attempt to disarm will expose the vulnerable ... Recentralising the power within a state may require recognising and dealing with ‘power brokers’ or war lords ... Achieving real success may mean a tougher trade off between maintaining the moral high ground and the advantages of involving local power brokers in the stabilisation process ...” Thus far, international interventions have been based more on morality (whether this be false or real) than on effectiveness.

Early and concerted action requires a multinational rapid deployment capability for intervention in communal conflicts. The very concept of rapid deployment under such

circumstances negates the use of a complex multinational system of standby arrangements. The latter necessarily involves the mobilisation of national contingents from a variety of countries, lengthy wrangling over the nature and scope of the mission mandate, and the right of contributors to withdraw support for particular types of missions. Indeed, the existing UN standby arrangements system is based on an understanding that specifically excludes 'peace enforcement' operations.

The future of international responses to conflict-induced crises thus seems to be reduced to two scenarios. In the first, the Security Council passes a resolution (and the responsibility) to authorise *ad hoc* member states' coalitions of the willing to 'do something' about the problem. In the second, the UN essentially turns a comfortable blind eye – even where international law is flouted as was the case recently when South Africa effectively intervened militarily in Lesotho. The fundamental issue of political will has therefore been devolved from the level of the UN to anyone or anything capable of initiating some sort of action.

While common wisdom (and, perhaps, decency) has led the world to believe that only national, multinational and intergovernmental actors should be involved in such undertakings, there is no practical or objective reason why other roleplayers cannot enter the intervention 'market'. In fact, these new actors may have a greater degree of 'success' in fulfilling the needs outlined above – especially in the African context. Already, the various humanitarian agencies and NGOs are in the field long before a peace operation is deployed. This trend is therefore likely to continue.

Humanitarian agencies cannot function in anarchic conditions, and they have an understandable preoccupation with security. However, the multinational forces of the international community have not excelled in the provision of such security. In 1995, for example, the UN had to hire two battalions of Zairian soldiers to provide military security at its refugee camps in Rwanda.⁴⁴

The national military contingents of UNAMIR proved an unwieldy humanitarian instrument because of their preoccupation with 'force protection'. Of all the humanitarian functions fulfilled by international troops, they were least available and least effective in providing security (which was precisely their area of comparative advantage over the other humanitarian actors). Moreover, the military were not free agents, but had to subordinate their potential efficacy to political decisions, priorities, and timetables.⁴⁵

During the UN intervention in Somalia, some national contingents refused to carry out what they considered to be dangerous operations. When assigned such tasks, contingent commanders sought to circumvent the chain of command by turning to their national governments for clarification – thereby effectively paralysing the operation concerned.⁴⁶ Aid agencies and NGOs were often forced to enlist the services of armed Somali gangs in an attempt to ensure their security. The privatisation of the security function for humanitarian workers has already become common practice in a number of other UN missions across the world, perhaps reflecting a broader trend towards the privatisation of the humanitarian function itself. According to Walker:

“[t]he burden of caring is being privatised ... A growing ‘contract culture’ may be drawing humanitarian agencies away from their core values ... today there is a plethora of agencies, UN, bilateral, international NGOs, national NGOs, and human rights groups, operating on the ground, all believing they have a legitimate right to provide their unique brand of assistance and protection to those in need ... slowly but surely commercial enterprises see a new product – relief aid – and a new market – donors hungry for profile – into which they can step.”⁴⁷

Humanitarian assistance has indeed become big business, with global figures for 1994 indicating that developed nations provided 4,2 million tonnes of food aid and \$3,4 billion to crisis areas.⁴⁸ In an “... *all-but-unregulated multi-billion dollar global industry of life and death*,”⁴⁹ there is obviously a niche for a cost-effective provider of decent standards of security for those who dispense humanitarian aid in situations of conflict or minimal law and order. Such services would resemble the radical end of the guarding and cash-in-transit sector of the private security market in functioning states.

At a higher level of analysis, the problem is not so much that of security (defined in terms of an enabling environment for the conduct of a specific task such as providing humanitarian aid), but one of stability. Stability is a condition in which a whole variety of tasks can be executed as part of daily life, without undue threat to life and limb. It is this **essential and elementary aspect of law and order** that the international community has been unable to provide in African countries afflicted by civil strife and armed conflict. It is unlikely that this situation will improve simply through the devolution of responsibility to lower level multinational ‘coalitions of the willing’. When the going gets tough, such coalitions become unwilling to take risks, unless their collective core interests are directly threatened.

It is not inconceivable, therefore, that a further stage of outsourcing and privatisation may see the emergence of entrepreneurial actors who are willing to take such risks to enforce stability within the state, as long as there is a reasonable chance of outperforming the competition. In the failing states of Africa, the competition faced by the would-be stabiliser may not be too stiff. Originally armed and trained by the major powers, rebel movements now typically rely on lightly-armed foot soldiers, and their ability to mobilise local populations to join their cause through persuasion or coercion. They often have no access to more sophisticated weaponry than assault rifles, light machine guns and mortars.

For example, Charles Taylor’s invasion of Liberia in 1989 was conducted by a lightly-armed, Libyan-trained force numbering only about 100 men. If even a modest intervention force with tactical aviation assets had been in place, this incursion may easily have been halted. And such an action would not have been beyond the capability of a small private army of specialists. It is the proliferation of such scenarios that presents a possible niche for private security entrepreneurs. These would obviously have a far greater military focus and weight than the police-type guarding and escort service providers for humanitarian assistance.

However, where opposing forces are larger and better armed and equipped, there is a limit to what a private intervention force of fairly modest size can achieve through direct participation in combat operations. The greatest potential for maximising the impact of such a force lies in

the co-option and reorientation of local military forces. This, in turn, would require that a private intervention force consists of a high percentage of specialist instructors, who are capable of retraining and re-educating local forces to high standards of combat proficiency and professionalism – and who are willing and able to lead them in effective ‘conflict termination’ operations.

The morality of such an approach may be debatable, but there is a certain logic to it. Where the means of orchestrated coercion has devolved, without legal authority, into the hands of a number of factions in a failing state, the stability function has already been ‘privatised’ – for it is beyond the ambit of state control. Under such conditions, it is extremely difficult for other state actors to intervene within the framework of state-centric international law. However, the private security or stability practitioner may thrive in such a ‘free enterprise’ environment.

There is not necessarily a contradiction in this logic when the end-state of the contract is the ‘remonopolisation’ by the state of the means of orchestrated coercion. The practitioner is a transnational and transitional actor, and proven success in one contract soon leads to lucrative contracts in other countries. The privatisation of the stability function is also in line with US pressure to streamline the UN system – among others, through ‘outsourcing’ – and perceptions that private industry is always more efficient than public bureaucracies.

However, even the strongest is never strong enough to rule indefinitely by might alone. Stability will soon revert to anarchy if it is not followed by a process of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding requires the mobilisation and engagement of the international community. If the privatisation of the stability function is to succeed, it must be linked to the higher-order notions of peace and integrated with longer term programmes of development. This clearly did not happen in the recent cycle of war and peace in Sierra Leone – a spectacular example which demonstrates the limits to private security involvement (and may soon serve to highlight the folly of ‘backyard peacekeeping’).

A further limit to the privatisation of security within peace processes is that of legality. Morally, there can be no doubt about the repugnance of mercenary activity (which is ineffectually proscribed under international law), or any other form of private activity which makes a direct contribution to ignite or prolong violent armed conflict. The decision to intervene and to take sides in an armed conflict should be a political one, whether it is made by an international organisation, a regional organisation, a coalition of states, or a single country. However, this has not been the case in many instances of humanitarian assistance which have unintentionally served to fuel a number of conflicts where aid workers and their agencies have fallen prey to unscrupulous belligerents in an insecure environment.

It is thus possible (and probable) that professional private contractors will increasingly provide security services to humanitarian agencies and NGOs in situations where the state cannot ensure law and order. It is also possible (but less probable) that private companies which provide cost-effective stability services may eventually be accredited by the UN as legitimate actors in peace processes. The most likely scenario in this regard is, however, the outsourcing of the stability function through ‘mission creep’. In other words, private companies may continue to be contracted by the UN or powerful member states to provide

services related to humanitarian demining or military transformation ('professionalisation'), which places them in an excellent position to expand their mandate – and in the process also their profit margin.

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that such arrangements or agencies are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.” Article 53 refers to enforcement action by regional bodies, but requires that “... no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangement or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council ...”

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“The Security Council, ... [d]etermining that the situation in the Central African Republic continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,
1. Welcomes the efforts of the Member States which participate in MISAB and of those Member States which support them;
 2. Approves the continued conduct by Member States participating in MISAB of the operation in a neutral and impartial way to achieve its objective to facilitate the return to peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements in the Central African Republic as stipulated in the mandate ... including through the supervision of the surrendering of arms of former mutineers, militias and all other persons unlawfully bearing arms ...”
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