

DOGS OF PEACE: A POTENTIAL ROLE FOR PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES IN PEACE IMPLEMENTATION

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Scholars and practitioners generally agree that one of the keys to effective implementation of peace settlements is the provision of strong third party security guarantees.¹ The United Nations (UN) has been largely ineffective at this task and great powers who could be effective are often reluctant to act when national interests are not at stake. This paper argues that Private Military Companies (PMCs) may be able to do the job more effectively than the traditional blue helmets.² This paper addresses two important questions about the potential role of Private Military Companies in peace implementation. First, how can third parties more effectively deliver security guarantees in order to enforce peace settlements in the aftermath of violent conflict? And second, are United Nations military forces the optimum source for strong security guarantees in peace enforcement operations or could PMCs do a better job? I argue that third parties can more effectively deliver security guarantees to enforce peace settlements in the aftermath of violent conflict if they possess the structure and interests to provide three military capabilities necessary to deliver strong guarantees: the ability to project force against belligerents, the ability to rapidly transport elements of an intervention force into

¹Virginia Page Fortna, "Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace," *International Organization* 57 (Spring 2003): p. 343, Barbara F. Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 85 and Stephen John Stedman, "Introduction," in *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousins, eds. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 20.

²PMCs are defined in this paper as the collective private military forces that possess a permanent corporate structure, are driven by business profit, compete in the open global market for a wide range of military services, and employ public and transparent recruiting patterns.

and within conflict zones, and a commitment to the success of a military operation. An intervention force possessing these capabilities can better provide strong security guarantees to the primary belligerents in a conflict than forces which do not possess these capabilities. Security guarantees have an indirect relationship with conflict resolution in that they can influence the war and peace calculus of belligerents. If perceived to be strong, these guarantees can raise the belligerents' expected costs of war to the point where it is no longer seen as a viable option. In turn, this should increase the probability of successfully implementing a peace agreement by maintaining a state of negative peace between belligerents. Following from this, I argue that PMCs are better suited to provide strong security guarantees in peace enforcement operations than traditional UN military forces and that this is due to the comparatively robust structure and interests-based capabilities of PMC forces. Specifically, PMCs are better suited to provide strong security guarantees in peace enforcement operations because they can often meet the three military capability criteria established above. On all measures, PMCs are far more capable than traditional forces. This paper demonstrates the potential superiority of PMCs in peace enforcement operations through a comparative analysis of the peacemaking operations of the PMC Executive Outcomes (EO) in Sierra Leone from May of 1995 to January of 1997 and in Angola from April of 1993 to December of 1995, with two UN-led peace enforcement operations. These include the early months of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), from November of 1993 to September of 1994, and the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), from February of 1995 to June of 1997. This comparison is organized according to the three criteria for providing strong security

guarantees already discussed. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is not to show that EO provided security guarantees in Sierra Leone and Angola, for it did not. Rather, this paper demonstrates that EO's military performance in those peacemaking operations indicates that a similarly capable PMC could possess the requisite military capabilities to provide strong security guarantees if contracted to do so. This is not intended to be a systematic comparison. Instead, this paper offers a first-cut analysis by doing a rough comparison of important cases in UN peace-enforcement and PMC peace-making operations.³

Capacity to Project Force against Belligerents

A beneficial characteristic of intervention forces wishing to provide strong security guarantees is the capacity to project force against belligerents.⁴ If intervention forces cannot meet this requirement, then their presence in a conflict zone is largely ornamental. On this point perhaps more than any other, the cases of Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone and Angola demonstrate the potential superiority of PMCs for providing security guarantees in African conflicts when compared to traditional UN military forces. This effectiveness appears to be supported by two structural advantages

³For the purposes of this paper, a peace enforcement operation is defined as a military intervention where coercive military force is used to compel combatants to adhere to the terms of a peace agreement and deter renewed hostilities. A peacemaking operation is defined as a military intervention where coercive military force is used to compel combatants to stop fighting and a sign a peace agreement.

⁴Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51 (1997): p. 340. Projecting force against belligerents need not be exercised through violent actions or threats. Indeed, in this paper, this concept includes any action by the intervention force that could undermine a belligerent's rational desire to pursue war instead of peace, including preventing belligerents access to valuable natural resources or undermining their ability to mobilize or build up arms undetected. As with overt commitments to use force, an intervention force's demonstrable capacity and willingness to project military force indirectly through these other tasks can decrease the expected probability of gaining through war by weakening the war-making ability of the effected belligerents.

possessed by major PMCs: better quality personnel and better quality combat equipment.

Mission Personnel

Military strategists since Sun Tzu have argued forcefully about the decisive role that military skill and proper coordination can play in a conflict, positing that skilled warriors can route hordes of untrained combatants.⁵ Modern PMCs operate under a similar rationale. Indeed, although these companies tend to deploy units that are much smaller in terms of manpower relative to both their adversaries and major UN military forces, their ability to project force rests in their high level of training, experience, and overall battlefield skill. The majority of participants in modern PMC combat operations are former special forces personnel from the armed forces of the United States, Russia, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, France, and South Africa.⁶ In the case of Executive Outcomes, that firm employed soldiers from the three most elite units of the Apartheid-era South African Defence Forces (SADF). Most were drawn from the disbanded 32nd Battalion, a unit known as "the terrible ones" for having the highest kill ratio of any unit in the SADF.⁷

This can be compared with UNAMIR's force, in which most of the 2,500 peacekeepers deployed in Rwanda in March of 1994 were from either the developing world or former Eastern Bloc satellite countries. Less than 500 were from Belgium,

⁵James F. Dunnigan, *How to Make War: A Comprehensive Guide to Modern Warfare in the 21st Century*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2003), p. 483.

⁶Doug Brooks, *Creating the Renaissance Peace: The Utilization of Private Companies for Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Activities in Africa* (Pretoria, SA: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2000), p. 2. Available from <http://www.sandline.com/pdfs/brooks.pdf>. Accessed on February 23, 2004.

⁷Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 102.

Australia, the Netherlands, or Canada.⁸ Similarly, most of the 3,600 peacekeepers deployed as part of UNAVEM III in Angola in December of 1996 were from either the developing world or former Eastern Bloc satellite countries. Only around 300 were from Portugal, France, the Netherlands, or New Zealand.⁹ Portugal contributed the largest force of any NATO country, at 313 troops, and two other NATO members contributed fewer than 16 troops each.¹⁰ These figures highlight the fact that the United Nations is a voluntary organization, which can limit the quality of personnel contributed to missions in Africa to largely second- and third-rate militaries that may not have the requisite military skill to carry out complex operations.

In the twenty-one months that Executive Outcomes was deployed in Sierra Leone and with fewer than 500 foreign specialists, it was able to drive back rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) troops from around the capital, Freetown, retake key mines from the RUF, and destroy the RUF's headquarters. Furthermore, and most important in any discussion of security guarantees, EO was able to respond to threats from RUF forces geared towards disrupting the first official democratic election in Sierra Leonean history, thereby violating the November 1995 ceasefire. EO accomplished this by conducting reconnaissance missions to determine the location of RUF forces around Freetown and then eliminating them before a disruption of the election could spark a widespread outbreak of hostilities.¹¹ This action had the additional benefit of bringing

⁸Boutros Boutros-Gali, *Second Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda* (New York, NY: United Nations, 1994), p. 6. Available from <http://www.un.org/Docs/s1994360.htm>. Accessed on November 15, 2003.

⁹United Nations, "UNAVEM III Facts and Figures as of June 1997," pp. 2-4. Available from http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/unavem_f.htm. Accessed on January 15, 2004.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹James R. Davis, *Fortune's Warriors: Private Armies and the New World Order* (Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2000), p. 142.

RUF leader Foday Sankoh to the negotiating table and ultimately contributed to his signing a peace agreement with the government in November of 1996.¹²

EO's superior knowledge of military tactics appears to have greatly contributed to its successes. The style of warfare that characterized the Sierra Leonean conflict before EO's arrival was roadside ambushes followed by quick withdrawals. EO's tactics included constantly pursuing RUF forces from the air and on the ground and forcing the RUF to commit to standup battles that put the unskilled rebel force at a severe disadvantage.¹³ Veterans of EO's campaign described their tactics as being so effective that compelling the RUF to stop fighting was "child's play."¹⁴ Similarly, P.W. Singer's assessment of EO actions in Sierra Leone concluded that the PMC's small but tactically proficient force played a decisive role in compelling the RUF to stop fighting and negotiate with the government for the first time.¹⁵

Executive Outcomes displayed similar tactical prowess during its earlier operations in Angola. Through military pressure put on the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) by EO, the Angolan government was able to regain and consolidate control over most of the provincial cities and leverage UNITA leaders to sign a new peace agreement in Lusaka, Zambia, on November 20, 1994.¹⁶ The PMC's detractors argue that it played a much less important role in the outcome of that stage of the Angolan conflict.¹⁷ However, EO's entry into the war coincided exactly with the

¹²Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl, "Should We Privatize the Peacekeeping?" *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2000, A47 and Norrie MacQueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960* (New York, NY: Longman Publishing, 2002), 184-185.

¹³Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 113.

¹⁴Quoted in Singer, p. 113.

¹⁵Singer, p. 113.

¹⁶Neumma Grobelaar, "Angola in Search of Peace: Spoilers, Saints and Strategic Regional Interests," Working Paper 14 (The Hague, NL: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael,' Conflict Research Group, October 2003), p. 15. Available from http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/working_paper_14.pdf. Accessed on January 2, 2004.

¹⁷David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 48.

downturn in UNITA's military fortunes. In addition, UNITA seemingly recognized EO's impact in its demand that a clause be included in the Lusaka Peace Protocol banning all mercenaries from the country.¹⁸

As in Sierra Leone, EO employed previously unseen tactics in the Angolan theatre of war to decisive effect. These included night fighting, joint air-land assaults, and long-range strike missions.¹⁹ Moreover, EO's success in Angola has been attributed to strong unit cohesion and discipline. All employees at EO's Cabo Ledo base on the coast south of Luanda in Angola were encouraged to wear T-shirts with one of the company's mottos emblazoned on the back: "Fit in or Fuck off."²⁰ As PMC researcher A.J. Venter notes, "anyone who stepped out of line was put on the first plane home," a policy that reflected the reality that there was little room for mistakes when attempting to compel 38,000 active duty UNITA personnel to stop fighting.²¹

Beyond this, EO's primary role in Angola was that of a force multiplier, where it utilized its relatively small group of especially skilled employees (never more than 550) to enhance the effectiveness of a much larger force. The PMC trained over 5,000 Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) soldiers and thirty pilots in such fields as motorized infantry, artillery, engineering, signals, medical support, sabotage, reconnaissance, ground support, aerial bombardment, and joint air-ground operations.²² EO's single greatest triumph in Angola occurred in June of 1994 when its personnel led the EO-trained Angolan 16th Brigade to victory over UNITA forces at N'taladonda, a

¹⁸ibid.

¹⁹Kevin A. O'Brien, "Private Military Companies and African Security: 1990-98," in *Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma*, Abdel-Fatau Musah and K. 'Kayode Fayemi, eds. (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 52.

²⁰A.J. Venter, "Privatizing War," (London, UK: Sandline International, 2000), p. 13. Available from <http://www.sandline.com/pdfs/ajventerprivatsingwar.pdf>. Accessed on January 1, 2004.

²¹Venter, "Privatizing War," p. 13.

²²Herbert M. Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 199.

strategic town outside of Luanda, and suffered only four casualties.²³ According to EO veterans of that mission, "that battle changed the whole attitude of the Angolans."²⁴ Indeed, the entire civil war switched to the government's advantage from that point on.²⁵ Overall, EO's involvement in the Angolan conflict provided the ruling MPLA with critical skills that its military forces lacked, giving them a distinct edge over the UNITA rebels. As one UNITA soldier stated during the conflict with EO:

We used to know we could sleep well at night. In this recent war, new tactics meant that fighting continued at night and that light infantry units led by these Executive Outcomes guys would come deep behind our lines. We could no longer rest. It weakened us very much. It is the new tactics in which they trained the FAA [Armed Forces of Angola, the Angolan government army] that made the difference. They introduced a new style of warfare to Angola. We were not used to this.²⁶

The results of UNAMIR's presence in Rwanda could not have been more different. UNAMIR soldiers could not provide strong security guarantees to parties in the Rwandan conflict because its soldiers were incapable of undermining the war-making ability of the belligerents. One of UNAMIR's most important deficiencies was a lack of personnel skilled in intelligence gathering.²⁷ This contrasts markedly with Executive Outcomes' battalions, whose elite South African-trained special forces soldiers were all

²³Ibid.

²⁴Quoted in Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, p. 199.

²⁵Howe, p. 199.

²⁶Quoted in Human Rights Watch, *Between War and Peace: Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses Since the Lusaka Protocol* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1996), p. 10. Available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Angola.htm>. Accessed on January 13, 2004.

²⁷Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," in *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, David Millwood, ed. (Copenhagen, DN: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996), p. 38. Available from <http://www.jha.ac/Ref/aar003c.pdf>. Accessed on November 10, 2003.

well-versed in reconnaissance and intelligence analysis.²⁸ As a result of this deficiency, UNAMIR was largely unable to determine the exact locations or troop strength of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) or the movement of arms to both that organization and the Hutu government.²⁹ These movements of arms were in direct violation of the Arusha Peace Accords, yet because UNAMIR's soldiers could not acquire sufficient intelligence to discern movement patterns and supply networks for these weapons, they were incapable of preventing the arming of belligerent forces.³⁰ Ultimately, this inability to track and control the movement of weapons and the strength of Rwandan Patriotic Front forces throughout the country ensured that UNAMIR could not fulfill the key aspect of its mandate to help make the capital of Kigali a "weapons secure area."³¹

Of even greater importance, this inability to provide accurate information also significantly aggravated the security dilemma within Rwanda in the spring of 1994. The Hutu government in power began to speculate that Tutsi-dominated RPF forces near Kigali were far more numerous and better armed than those forces were in reality. This contributed to a perception on the part of the Hutu leadership that the RPF could not be trusted to abide by other tenets of the Arusha Accords and were preparing to attack Rwandan Hutus.³² As a result of this perception and the inability of UNAMIR forces to offer information that could have perhaps modified it, the Hutu regime scrapped the Arusha Accords and launched its historic campaign of genocide, directed primarily against the Rwandan Tutsi population that it saw as a support base for the RPF.

²⁸Anthony C. LoBaido, "Executive Outcomes: A New Kind of Army for Privatized Global Warfare," (WorldNet Daily), p. 2. Available from http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=16671. Accessed on November 10, 2003.

²⁹Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 39.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Bruce D. Jones, "Keeping the Peace, Losing the War: Military Intervention in Rwanda's 'Two Wars,'" (New York, NY: Columbia University Institute for War and Peace Studies, 1997), p. 11. Available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/conf/iwp01/iwp01ac.html>. Accessed on November 5, 2003.

UNAVEM III's performance in Angola was similarly poor. UNAVEM III's thousands of personnel could not provide sufficiently strong security guarantees to deter violent violations of the Lusaka Protocol or prevent a return to the civil war that EO had halted in 1994. Quite unlike their attitude toward EO employees, UNITA soldiers simply did not respect the poorly trained UN personnel and refused to cooperate on measures designed to reduce the group's war-making ability. For example, armed UNITA soldiers detained a UN weapons investigation team and their helicopters for over twenty-four hours at Calibuitchi in 1997.³³ A UN team attempting to verify allegations that UNITA was storing weapons at Chingongo was also detained and turned away that same year.³⁴

Events such as these characterize the physical inability of UN personnel to verify the storage and movement of UNITA weapons and military personnel. Moreover, the inability of UNAVEM III's personnel to prevent UNITA from recapturing Angola's diamond fields in the northeast, a direct violation of the Lusaka Protocol, afforded the rebel groups a near inexhaustible financial base with which to rebuild its war-making capacity.³⁵ As a result, UNITA freely purchased over \$2.5 billion in weapons while UNAVEM III was deployed in Angola. The rebel group later used these weapons to launch small offensives against the MPLA throughout the duration of UNAVEM III and to eventually restart the Angolan Civil War in 1998 despite the presence of the UN's successor force, the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA). At the end of UNAVEM III's mandate on June 30, 1997, large parts of the country remained

³³Human Rights Watch, "Undermining the Lusaka Peace Protocol," (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1999), p. 3. Available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/angola/Angl998-05.htm>. Accessed on January 23, 2004.

³⁴Human Rights Watch, "Undermining the Lusaka Peace Protocol," p. 3.

³⁵MacQueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, p. 138.

completely unsecured and isolated from the central government.³⁶ Moreover, even as the UNSC voted to transfer authority for the Angolan peace process from UNAVEM III to MONUA, it expressed concern "about the increase in tensions, especially in the northeastern provinces, and the attacks by UNITA on UNAVEM III posts and personnel."³⁷ Taking this into account, the return to full scale civil war under the watch of the even more passive MONUA is unsurprising.

Combat Equipment

Closely related to the high degree of skill possessed by modern PMCs, some of these organizations also possess the modern military hardware necessary to quickly and effectively punish violations of peace agreements. For example, in Sierra Leone, Executive Outcomes possessed an air wing that included Mi-8 "Hip," Mi-17 "Hip-H," and Mi-24 "Hind" attack and transport helicopters outfitted with fully automatic cannons and grenade launchers as well as MiG-17 "Fresco" and MiG-23 "Flogger" fighters.³⁸ These assets were employed in support of ground equipment, including BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles and BTR-60 armoured personnel carriers, to help achieve comparatively rapid victories over RUF forces in response to the rebel troops' planned attempt to disrupt the January 1996 presidential election. These operations resulted in the loss of hundreds of RUF fighters but only 20 EO soldiers.³⁹ Indeed, an analyst who has studied the operation concluded that Executive Outcomes' "casualties have been few, because it

³⁶US Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Response (BHR) and Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), "Angola – Complex Emergency" (Situation Report #3, July 1997), p. 1. Available from <http://www.cidi.org/humanitarian/hsr/97b/0005.html>. Accessed February 15, 2004.

³⁷Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, 156.

³⁸Herbert Howe, "Global Order and Security Privatization," *Strategic Forum* 140 (May 1998), p. 3. Available from <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF140/forum140.html>. Accessed on October 23, 2003.

³⁹Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106.

relied on sudden strikes made possible by its helicopters, which provided both transport and covering fire."⁴⁰

EO utilized similarly capable equipment in Angola and also operated Su-25 "Frogfoot" and MiG-27 "Flogger" ground attack fighters. These aircraft were owned by the Angolan Air Force but, in the absence of Soviet support, Angolan pilots lacked the skill to operate and maintain these aircraft effectively.⁴¹ Much of EO's success in Angola has been attributed to the PMC's surprise long-range helicopter assaults deep within UNITA controlled territory supported by ground attack aircraft and armoured ground vehicles.⁴² As in Sierra Leone, EO lost only 20 employees during the entire Angolan operation while eliminating thousands of UNITA soldiers primarily with its heavy combat vehicles.⁴³ This style of weaponry is simply not made available for UN military missions in Africa because contributing nations either do not possess such resources or refuse to risk losing them in distant, non-strategic conflicts. UN forces tend to be equipped with little more than rifles, unarmed helicopters, and a small number of armoured personnel carriers. Consequently, while PMCs can utilize their heavy equipment to overrun far more numerous but lightly armed belligerents, poorly equipped United Nations forces in Africa often cannot do the same. The UNAMIR mission, for example, was denied an armored fire support unit and armed helicopters and was supplied with very little ammunition.⁴⁴ This situation ensured that, even if coercive Chapter VII operations had been authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) once the genocide had

⁴⁰Christopher Wrigley, "The Privatization of Violence: New Mercenaries and the State," (London, UK: Campaign Against Arms Trade, 1999), 4. Available from <http://www.caat.org.uk/information/issues/mercenaries-1999.php>. Accessed on March 2, 2004.

⁴¹Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, p. 199.

⁴⁴Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 37.

begun, UNAMIR's lightly armed and poorly trained military forces could not have presented a credible deterrent to the comparably trained but more numerous Hutu military and paramilitary forces. Consequently, UNAMIR did not provide a deterrent to the government's violent violations of the Arusha peace accords.

UNAVEM III suffered from similar problems. Very few armoured vehicles were provided to the mission, which was forced to rely primarily on aging sport utility vehicles shipped from Somalia and Cambodia to conduct its patrol and verification operations.⁴⁵ According to the mission's operating procedures, patrols were supposed to be conducted with two vehicles acting as a team. However, because these vehicles were so poorly maintained and in such short supply, patrol teams were almost always limited to a single vehicle. This not only exposed the teams to increased risk, it also reduced the amount of ground that they could patrol in a given period of time. This, in turn, reduced their ability to monitor and control the movement and storage of weapons and combat personnel.⁴⁶

The UN's unarmed ground and air vehicles posed no inherent threat to UNITA forces. Consequently, rebel troops turned away UN patrols with impunity, something that they could never do to one of EO's armoured BMP-2s armed with 30 mm anti-infantry cannons. The lack of respect for or fear of UNAVEM III's lightly armed forces

⁴⁵Phillip Sabinda, "United Nations Operations in Southern Africa: Mandate, Means and Doctrine in UNAVEM III," in *Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension*, Monograph 44, Mark Malan, ed. (Capetown, SA: Institute for Security Studies, February 2000), p. 3. Available from <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No44/UnitedNations.html>. Accessed on February 15, 2004.

⁴⁶ Sabinda, p. 3.

was perhaps best displayed in Quibaxe in March of 1995 when UNITA soldiers shot down a UNAVEM helicopter with no ability to defend itself.⁴⁷

It is clear then that EO's ability to project military force helped establish peace in Angola and Sierra Leone by coercing rebel military forces to comply with ceasefire agreements and sign peace agreements. Similarly, UNAMIR's and UNAVEM III's inability to project military force failed to deter violence and allowed belligerents to build up their war-making capacities and restart the civil wars in Rwanda and Angola. Therefore, although EO showed that it could successfully project force against belligerents during peacemaking operations where it did not have to act impartially, the PMC's demonstrably robust capacity in this area also indicates that a similarly capable PMC could provide stronger security guarantees in peace enforcement operations than much larger UN forces which lack quality personnel and equipment.

Capacity to Rapidly Transport Elements of Intervention Force

A second critical component of strong security guarantees is the ability to rapidly transport elements of an intervention force into and within conflict zones. This capacity is as important for providing strong security guarantees as the capacity of intervention forces to effectively project force against belligerents. Logically, if an intervention force cannot make physical contact with belligerents quickly and easily, then their ability to use military force is rendered moot. Much of the coercive effect provided by Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone and Angola was due to the PMC's capacity to rapidly travel to, from and around the area through the use of helicopters and aircraft to coerce rebel

⁴⁷Human Rights Watch, "The Lusaka Peace Protocol," in *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1999), p. 2. Available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/angola/Angl998-04.htm>. Accessed on January 23, 2004.

forces to discontinue fighting against the government in all places at all times.⁴⁸ This capacity was based largely in the extremely mobile attack and transport helicopters operated by EO during its operations.⁴⁹ This compares with the 16 unarmed transport helicopters assigned to UNAMIR and the seven unarmed transport helicopters assigned to UNAVEM III.⁵⁰ Helicopters are essential in rapidly transporting personnel throughout countries with poorly maintained and war-ravaged road networks. Moreover, the smaller number of transport helicopters combined with the much larger overall force size of the UN operations made personnel transportation far more difficult during those missions.⁵¹ In addition, the complete absence of armed helicopters severely reduced the capacity of either UNAMIR or UNAVEM III to quickly deploy heavy firepower into particularly unstable regions, which further reduced whatever deterrent effect these respective forces had on the Rwandan and Angolan belligerents.

Added to their ability to utilize highly mobile vehicles within a conflict zone, much of a PMC's speed advantage is derived from the fact that they often possess more compatible military equipment and training, and also greater linguistic compatibility when compared to UN military forces.⁵² During the months leading up to the Rwandan genocide in 1994, UNAMIR was made up of soldiers from 24 countries, including those that spoke almost exclusively English (Australia), French (Belgium and some of the

⁴⁸Davis, *Fortune's Warriors*, p. 137.

⁴⁹Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 106. These included 20 Mi-17 "Hip-H" armed transport helicopters, Mi-8 "Hip" Cargo helicopters and Mi-24 "Hind" attack helicopters.

⁵⁰"Background Note: United Nations Peacekeeping Operations – United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda," (Fairfax, VA: Peace Operations Policy Program, George Mason University, December 1994), p. 2. Available from <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/t-po/peace/unamir.html>. Accessed on March 15, 2004. See also Sabinda, "UN Operations in Southern Africa," p. 3.

⁵¹Sabinda, p. 3.

⁵²Howe, "Global Order and Security Privatization," p. 5.

African contributors), and those that spoke a plethora of Eastern European languages.⁵³ Similarly, UNAVEM III was made up of soldiers from 31 countries, including a Portuguese-speaking country (Portugal), English-speaking countries (Bangladesh, India, and Zimbabwe), and those that spoke a similar mix of Eastern European languages.⁵⁴ Training standards were also markedly different between, for example, the Canadian and Nigerian contingents of UNAMIR and the Zimbabwean and Portuguese contingents of UNAVEM III, which further contributed to coordination problems. Conversely, Executive Outcomes exclusively employed soldiers who were formerly part of elite units of the SADF accustomed to a certain standard of training and all could communicate in at least English and Afrikaans. All of these factors combined ensured that EO could assemble a workable group of soldiers quite quickly with minimal compatibility problems.

Beyond this, rather than having to seek out new personnel for each operation, PMCs like Executive Outcomes maintain databases of personnel available on 24 hours notice.⁵⁵ Thousands of soldiers can be contacted almost immediately through phone or email when the decision is taken to deploy.⁵⁶ As an example of their rapid deployability, Executive Outcomes deployed a fully supported battalion (about 500 men) to Sierra Leone within 15 days of signing a contract in April of 1995.⁵⁷ In the earlier Angola operation, EO deployed an 80 person commando assault unit within a few days of signing a contract with the MPLA and moved enough heavy combat equipment into

⁵³Boutros-Gali, *Second Progress Report*, p. 6.

⁵⁴United Nations, "UNAVEM III Facts and Figures as of June 1997," pp. 2-4.

⁵⁵Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 103.

⁵⁶This can also serve the dual function of reducing the operating costs of PMCs, since only a small corporate headquarters staff is drawing salaries between operations.

⁵⁷Howe, "Global Order and Security Privatization," p. 4.

Angola to recapture the oil town of Soyo from UNITA within a month of their initial deployment.⁵⁸ This performance far exceeds UNAMIR's record. The UN force was unable to meet the 39 day deadline for deployment agreed to in the Arusha Accords and instead took until late November 1993, over three and a half months, to arrive in Rwanda.⁵⁹ Similarly, the main infantry elements of UNAVEM III were deployed in Angola four months after the UNSC passed Resolution 976, which authorized the force to deploy as quickly as possible.⁶⁰ These Indian, Portuguese, and Bangladeshi soldiers were reinforced by a second large cohort of UN troops only in late 1996, a full two years after UNITA and the MPLA signed the Lusaka Peace Protocol.⁶¹

Executive Outcomes accomplished its logistical feats with the assistance of its mixed air fleet of owned and leased aircraft. These included two Boeing 727s purchased from American Airlines for \$500,000 each and a diverse array of leased transport aircraft, including King Airs and two former RAF transport planes.⁶² Although some of EO's heavier equipment was transported to Angola and Sierra Leone via the company's small maritime transport unit, all personnel, medical supplies, radios, food, ammunition, and spare parts were transported by air on one of the minimum two flights per week.⁶³ Quickly transporting the volume of troops and equipment generally employed in traditional UN peace enforcement operations in the same style as UNAMIR or UNAVEM III requires dozens of ships and aircraft, equipment only the United States

⁵⁸Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 108.

⁵⁹Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 37 and Jones, "Keeping the Peace and Losing the War," p. 8.

⁶⁰Norrie MacQueen, "Peacekeeping by Attrition: The United Nations in Angola," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36 (September 1998), p. 410.

⁶¹Ricardo Rene Laremont, *The Causes of War and the Consequences of Peacekeeping in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishing, 2002), p. 231.

⁶²Venter, "Privatizing War," p. 16.

⁶³*Ibid.*

can provide on short notice. As a result of this logistical reality, it took over four months to transport a multi-national relief force into Rwanda in the fall of 1994 after the UNSC authorized that move in response to the start of the genocide in the spring of that year. The relief force arrived so late that the vast majority of the 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus who died in 1994 had already been killed.⁶⁴ Similarly, the inability of the main body of UNAVEM III personnel to rapidly deploy to Angola allowed the UNITA rebels sufficient time to start regrouping and rearming their forces. In turn, this allowed the rebel group to launch new offensives against the MPLA and effectively restart the Angolan civil war.⁶⁵

These examples perhaps better than any other demonstrate how being able to transport troops rapidly can contribute to a force's ability to provide strong security guarantees. Indeed, lacking this capacity, any credibility that UNAMIR or UNAVEM III forces might have possessed as guarantors of security in the Rwandan and Angolan conflicts was instantly undermined. A PMC possessing similar transportation capabilities to those demonstrated by EO during its peacemaking operations could conceivably provide stronger security guarantees in a peace enforcement operation than UN forces lacking a rapid transportation capacity.

Commitment to the Success of Operations

The final critical component of strong security guarantees is that intervention forces must be committed to the success of peace enforcement operations. As Barbara Walter rightly suggests, if potential belligerents are to believe in the strength of security

⁶⁴Swedish Institute of Development Assistance, "Background Data on Rwanda," (Stockholm, SWD: SIDA, 2000), p. 1. Available from <http://www.sida.se/Sida/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=362&a=8828>. Accessed October 25, 2003.

⁶⁵Grobbelaar, "Angola in Search of Peace," p. 15.

guarantees, then outside interveners should be self-interested in upholding their promise to provide security even in the face of opposition from belligerents.⁶⁶ Executive Outcomes' interests during its peacemaking operations were fairly obvious: if the company failed to coerce the rebel forces in Sierra Leone and Angola to stop fighting, it would not have been paid. Furthermore, the PMC's long-term reputation would have been tarnished and, as a result, its chances for securing future contracts while competing against other major private security firms like MPRI or Armourgroup would have been greatly reduced.

Although pragmatically lacking the honour sometimes associated with public military service in defence of one's own state, long-term profit appears to have been a powerful motivating force in these cases. Indeed, the company stayed on largely unpaid until it was forced to leave Sierra Leone in 1996 due to pressure from an international community that had misinterpreted its role in the conflict.⁶⁷ Faced with the prospect of being paid eventually by the Sierra Leonean government so long as EO could keep it in power or not being paid at all if EO stood back and allowed the RUF rebels to take over, the PMC rationally chose the former option.⁶⁸ Similarly, EO only left Angola in 1995 because the MPLA cancelled its contract under pressure from the United States and the

⁶⁶Walter, "The Critical Barrier," pp. 340-1.

⁶⁷Davis, *Fortune's Warriors*, pp. 144-5. In 1996, many international observers apparently misinterpreted the positive role that EO had played in ending the civil war in Sierra Leone. Likely the most important reason why EO's contract was terminated in Sierra Leone was because an IMF funding offer to the Sierra Leonean government stipulated that the government would only receive funding if it cut all expenditures on what, on paper, looked like just another mercenary force. Desperate for financial relief, the government of Sierra Leone effectively had no choice but to terminate EO's contract.

⁶⁸Davis, p. 144.

United Nations. The PMC had previously committed to maintaining a presence in the country as a stabilizing force for as long as was necessary.⁶⁹

The United Nations' altruistic interest in providing security guarantees in Rwanda were seemingly far less powerful than EO's profit motive. For all the permanent members of the UNSC but France, Rwanda was largely a peripheral interest.⁷⁰ To assess the priority placed on humanitarianism and security in Rwanda by the great powers, one has only to examine the efforts by the US delegation to the United Nations to initially cap the total number of peacekeepers sent to that country at a mere 500 personnel.⁷¹ With respect to Angola, no permanent UNSC member possessed significant interest in the fate of the Marxist MPLA or the UNITA rebels following the end of the Cold War. As a result, the UNSC denied the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' initial request for the 15,000 soldiers, police, and military observers to staff UNAVEM III.⁷² That body subsequently authorized a deployment of 7,000 total personnel.⁷³ As discussed earlier, even fewer personnel were actually sent to Angola and the largest contribution from a permanent UNSC member was Russia's 151 soldiers followed by 15 soldiers from France.⁷⁴

Similar lack of interest was demonstrated in the months leading up to the Rwandan genocide when, upon being warned by UNAMIR Mission Commander Romeo Dallaire that a genocide of the Tutsi people appeared imminent, the Security Council

⁶⁹Joakim Berndtsson, "Responding to Violent Conflict in an Era of New Wars: Private Military Companies Working for Peace?" (Göteborg, SWD: Göteborg University Department of Peace and Development Research, 2002), p. 29. Available from <http://www.padriagu.gu.se/grundutbildning/uppsatser/berndtsson01d.pdf>. Accessed on September 30, 2003.

⁷⁰Alan J. Kuperman, "The Other Lesson of Rwanda: Mediators Sometimes Do More Damage than Good," *SAIS Review* 16 (1996), p. 236.

⁷¹Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 37.

⁷²Sabinda, "UN Operations in Southern Africa," p. 3.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴United Nations, "UNAVEM III Facts and Figures as of June 1997," p. 3.

voted to reduce the military contribution to the mission from approximately 2,500 soldiers to a mere 270 military personnel.⁷⁵ These remaining personnel were tasked with "promoting a cease-fire" between two parties that in the spring of 1994 were preparing to annihilate each other. However, it is unclear to this day how this force was intended to accomplish what a force almost ten times larger could not.⁷⁶ While tragic, this lack of commitment to operational success in traditional UN military missions is understandable both because of the financial costs of doing so and also because, in the words of Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl, "no country wishes to embark on a peacekeeping mission and find its troop contribution being sent home in coffins."⁷⁷ Force size is not necessarily the only or even the best measure of the strength of a security guarantee. However, reducing the numbers of an already poorly skilled and equipped force can signal to belligerents that a weak guarantee has been made even weaker.

To provide strong security guarantees in a conflict zone, a third party intervener must be able to demonstrate resolve behind their commitments in the face of opposition.⁷⁸ Executive Outcomes demonstrated resolve during its peacemaking operations in Angola and Sierra Leone through stationing a full battalion of elite soldiers with heavy air and ground combat equipment in each country or more than half of the company's entire supply of readily available soldiers. The very presence of this force was a signal to all parties that stability and security would be provided even at a high cost. Furthermore, when EO's forces met with setbacks, such as the 20 deaths that the force suffered in Sierra Leone, the PMC pressed on and ultimately coerced the RUF to

⁷⁵United Nations, "UNAMIR – Facts and Figures," (1996), p. 1. Available from http://www.un.org/Dept/dpko/dpko/co_mission/unamirF.htm. Accessed on November 1, 2004.

⁷⁶Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 44.

⁷⁷Schulhofer-Wohl, "Should We Privatize the Peacekeeping?" p. 2.

⁷⁸Walter, "The Critical Barrier," p. 340.

stop fighting and return to peace talks with the government.⁷⁹ The 20 deaths suffered by the force in Angola appeared to strengthen rather than weaken the company's resolve to fulfill their contract. As EO's Colonel Hennie Blaauw argued, "once we had some of our people killed, they could see we were serious."⁸⁰

This contrasts sharply with the UN forces' response to setbacks, for example, after the UNAMIR force experienced casualties in the spring of 1994. Following the planned murder of 10 Belgian soldiers, Brussels released a public statement on April 12, 1994, announcing that their entire force of 440 soldiers was dropping out of the mission, thus depriving UNAMIR of what was by far its strongest and most capable unit.⁸¹ The Belgian government also attempted at that time to persuade the Security Council to cancel the mission entirely, but were only successful in encouraging the mindset that led to a reduction of the mission to a mere 270 personnel.⁸²

Finally, the progressive downsizing of UNAVEM III's force in Angola closely followed the deteriorating security situation on the ground. Despite a report highlighting the "highest military tension since the signing of the Lusaka Protocol," and the "serious threat of a return to full-scale war," the UNSC reduced UNAVEM III's force by several thousand soldiers and ultimately transferred authority for the stability of Angola to the far smaller United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) in 1997.⁸³ MONUA's initial strength was capped at 3,500 soldiers, police, and military observers, down from UNAVEM III's authorized 4,200 personnel force.⁸⁴ This much smaller force was tasked

⁷⁹Davis, *Fortune's Warriors*, p. 144.

⁸⁰Venter, "Privatizing War," p. 10.

⁸¹Adelman and Suhrke, "Early Warning and Conflict Management," p. 44.

⁸²*Ibid.*

⁸³Dennis Jett, *Why Peacekeeping Fails* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 163.

⁸⁴MacQueen, *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa Since 1960*, p. 140.

with providing the security guarantees that UNAVEM III failed to bring during its two year tour in Angola. As UNITA's violations of the Lusaka Protocol intensified and threats against UN personnel became more frequent, MONUA's strength was further reduced to 1,000 total personnel and then 500.⁸⁵ When the war resumed in earnest in 1998, the UNSC announced the termination of MONUA's mandate and the force quickly abandoned the country.⁸⁶ As Dennis C. Jett, former US Ambassador to Mozambique and Peru, correctly argues, by both downsizing and transferring authority from UNAVEM III to MONUA and then progressively downsizing the latter force in the face of rising violence, the UN illustrated that it was "determined to scale back... and wanted to be able to declare victory and depart," rather than commit itself to the stability of Angola.⁸⁷

Based on EO's performance during its peacemaking operations, it is reasonable to deduce that if a third party like the UN contracted a PMC to provide security guarantees and if payment was contractually conditioned on successfully fulfilling this task, then the PMC could be expected to fulfill the contract even in the face of opposition from the belligerents. Indeed, reputation and profit could provide even stronger motivations for successful performance in operations where a PMC is contracted by the UN because the UN could possibly award additional contracts to good performing PMCs in the future. Even a single poor performance would reduce a PMC's competitiveness against other firms vying for a finite number of peace enforcement

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶João Gomes and Imogen Parsons, "Angola's Institutional Capabilities for DD&R: Experiences and Lessons Learned from Previous Processes," in *Sustaining the Peace in Angola: An Overview of Current Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration*, Monograph 83, João Gomes and Imogen Parsons, eds. (Capetown, SA: Institute for Security Studies, April 2003), p. 24. Available from <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No83/Chap3.html>. Accessed on February 18, 2004.

⁸⁷Jett, *Why Peacekeeping Fails*, p. 165.

contracts. As a result, the contracted PMC would not only be motivated to perform well in order to be paid for each individual operation, it would also be motivated to perform well in order to be considered by the UN for additional future contracts.

This paper has demonstrated that EO's military performance in certain African peacemaking operations indicates that a similarly capable PMC could possess the requisite military capabilities to provide strong security guarantees if contracted to do so. Executive Outcomes demonstrated that it possessed the capacity to successfully project military force against belligerents and to rapidly transport elements of an intervention force into and within conflict zones. Moreover, the PMC demonstrated that it was committed to successful fulfilling the goals of its missions even in the face of opposition from belligerents. These are all critical components of a peace enforcement force aiming to provide strong security guarantees. It is therefore unsurprising that the two UN military forces examined in this paper, UNAMIR and UNAVEM III, failed to provide strong security guarantees since they were lacking in these same three areas. Overall, these comparisons indicate that PMCs may be better suited than traditional UN military forces to provide strong security guarantees in peace enforcement operations.

Certainly the most controversial possible use for PMCs by the international community would be the contracting out of parts of some, or entire, military operations to these actors. It should be noted that, although the case studies examined in this paper involved the use of a PMC by one first party belligerent against another first party belligerent, the largest combat PMCs like Blackwater USA and Armourgroup could be utilized in a "neutral" capacity to provide security guarantees to all parties in a conflict.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Richard Betts rightly argues that impartial peace enforcement operations could require overwhelming military force in order to manage violent acts committed by any belligerents against each other. As a result, the largest and most military capable PMCs

As explained above, PMCs are primarily motivated by profit and will fulfil their contracts, even in the face of opposition from belligerents, in order to get paid. Consequently, so long as all or at least a large portion of the payment for a peace enforcement operation is contractually conditioned on some agreed upon measure of mission success and impartial behaviour, then PMCs can be expected to fulfil their contractual obligations in such an operation.

Due to their rapid deployment capacity, PMCs could be retained in a standby capacity between operations. In addition, whenever UN members prove unwilling to provide sufficient troops of sufficient quality to staff a UN operation deemed necessary by the Security Council, private firms could be assigned to run those unpopular missions. One or more firms could then deploy personnel and equipment to a conflict zone, coerce any belligerents to stop fighting, and work to provide sufficiently strong security guarantees to stabilize a conflict to the point where a traditional volunteer UN force could take over long-term responsibility for monitoring a stabilized peace agreement. A smaller number of PMC personnel could remain in the conflict zone in a fire-fighting capacity in support of the main UN force if providing strong security guarantees proved beyond the willingness or capability of UN troops. Therefore, whenever local parties seek to threaten the success of an operation, as they did during UNAVEM III by harassing and attacking UN personnel, private firms would provide the teeth necessary to enforce compliance. As P.W. Singer argues, "used judiciously as part of longer-term conflict management efforts, they might provide the short-term force

like Blackwater USA and Armourgroup would likely be better able to provide impartial security guarantees than smaller firms. However, a coalition of smaller firms could conceivably provide the same service. Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (November - December 1994): p. 21.

necessary to stabilize situations at critical junctions in the operation."⁸⁹ In this way, PMCs could serve as the rapid reaction forces or standing UN legions that many within and outside the organization have sought for decades.

Although this scenario may appear implausible at first, the analysis presented in this paper suggests that such a scenario would be a good division of labour between traditional UN forces and PMCs. By allowing more capable, faster, and more committed PMCs to deploy as vanguard forces to stabilize a conflict to a point when less capable, slower, and more risk-averse UN military forces can deploy to observe the peace, UN members could remain faithful to their preferred roles as financiers and providers of observation forces. At the same time, PMCs could capitalize on their unique willingness to engage determined belligerents in highly volatile, yet non-strategic conflict zones. Moreover, PMCs have successfully assisted UN soldiers in the past. For example, before British forces took over responsibility for Sierra Leone in the late 1990s, Sandline International successfully rescued UN soldiers operating in that country on several occasions with its fleet of combat and transport helicopters.⁹⁰ Some UN members would undoubtedly still scoff at expanding upon this concept if the organization were to move in that direction. Nevertheless, it may be the organization's only option for securing peace in developing countries when its most capable members decline requests for personnel and equipment.

It now falls to the United Nations Security Council to decide whether to use PMCs in a peace enforcement capacity. The idea that the United Nations could hire the so called "dogs of war" might seem unlikely to some. Nonetheless, the record of use of

⁸⁹Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, p. 185.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

PMCs by permanent members of the UNSC, such as the employment of DynCorp by the US government to combat drug lords in Columbia and the presence of several PMCs under contract to the US and British governments in Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrates that the UNSC-authorized use of PMCs in peace enforcement should not be dismissed out of hand.