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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

TRANSITIONING FROM A U.N. OBSERVER MISSION TO A
ROBUST PEACEKEEPING OPERATION:
LESSONS FROM SIERRA LEONE

By

Peter Londono

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the College of Naval Warfare in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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May 18, 2001

Introduction and Thesis

On October 22, 1999, the U.N. Security Council in its resolution 1270 established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to succeed the U.N. Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), which the Council had established fifteen months earlier. For the first time, the Council and the U.N. Secretariat, principally the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), had to formulate mandates and concepts of operations (CONOPS) to confront a power/money based organization that rules through terror with no clearly defined ethnic, clan, political, or ideological agenda. In May 2000, UN forces came under attack and were nearly routed before the situation was stabilized. The fast growth of the U.N. mission in Sierra Leone from a small team of observers operating under Chapter VI to a large, multi-disciplinary “Chapter 6 ½” peacekeeping operation with complex organizational and logistical requirements was undoubtedly one of the proximate causes of this debacle.

However, a central conclusion of this survey is that although DPKO has demonstrated an improved capacity for organizing forces and formulating rules of engagement (ROE), its CONOPS for Sierra Leone further damaged the U.N.’s already frayed reputation for neutrality and effectiveness. Moreover, the U.N.’s setbacks in Sierra Leone showed that success in executing today’s post-Cold War “second generation” peacekeeping operations depends less on coalition building or fielding large numbers of troops than on the deployment of an inner core of trained and adequately equipped contingents under a unified command structure that are supported by militarily competent powers committed to executing an overall political/economic/military strategy.

Sierra Leone, a failed state?

Robert D. Kaplan in his 1994 essay “The Coming Anarchy” held up Sierra Leone as an example and as a harbinger of the wave of “failed states” that would sweep West Africa and much of the Third World. Peering into this bleak future, he predicted a withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, and the empowerment of private armies and international criminal cartels that would loot the natural resources of the continent.ⁱ Since 1991, the “Revolutionary United Front” (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh and a collection of renegade military officers, tribal chiefs, and criminal elements, has waged a protracted war against a succession of governments in Freetown, democratic and otherwise, that has brought mayhem, anarchy, and devastation to the country. Fielding an army of 15,000 fighters, the RUF controls the eastern and northern half of the country, including the lucrative diamonds fields. The conflict, which has been fueled by rivalries to exploit diamonds and other natural resources, has killed an estimated 20,000 people, internally displaced about a third of the population of 4.6 million, and generated a flow of half million refugees to neighboring countries.ⁱⁱ Over the years, Liberian President Charles Taylor, despite his vehement denials, has supported and sponsored the RUF, with arms and mercenaries to enhance his control of regional arms trafficking and the illicit diamond trade, which may be linked to Libya and Middle Eastern interests.ⁱⁱⁱ

The U.N. gets involved.

In November 1994, then U.N. Secretary General Boutrus Boutrus-Ghali, at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and with the approval of the Security Council, appointed Berhanu Dinka (Ethiopia) as Special Envoy to broker a negotiated settlement in concert with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).^{iv} Despite continued unrest, presidential

elections were held as scheduled in 1996, which were won by Ahmed Tjan Kabbah. Although the election results were rejected by the RUF, negotiations facilitated by Dinka led to a peace agreement known as the Abuja Accord. However, the agreement was derailed in May 1997, when elements of the armed forces, joined by the RUF, overthrew President Kabbah in a military *coup* that set up a ruling junta, the self-styled “Armed Forces Revolutionary Council” (AFRC). A new Special Envoy, Francis Okelo (Uganda), was appointed, who tried but failed to persuade the AFRC junta to step down.^v

On October 23, 1997, ECOWAS and the AFRC signed the Conakry peace Agreement, which called for a ceasefire to be monitored by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) assisted by U.N. observers.^{vi} However, the wheel turned again in February 1998, when ECOMOG forces numbering 12,000-15,000 troops launched an offensive that restored President Kabbah’s government. The AFRC forces fled into the bush and, for a time, allied themselves with the RUF.^{vii}

The UNOMSIL Mandate

On July 13, 1998, the Security Council, in response to the recommendations of Secretary General Kofi Annan, adopted resolution 1181 establishing UNOMSIL under a six-month mandate to deploy up to 70 military observers (MILOBS) to monitor the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program being undertaken by the GOSL with ECOMOG, as provided in the prior peace accords.^{viii} A small civilian component was also attached to monitor the humanitarian and human rights situation. Secretary General Annan named Okelo as his Special Representative under the mandate.

In retrospect, UNOMSIL’s CONOPS plan was misconceived.^{ix} Aligning and associating U.N. observers with ECOMOG, a force that had been a party to the conflict, to carry out the DDR program clearly violated the principle of legitimacy and the factor of impartiality.^x Relying on ECOMOG for security and “muscle” to carry out the DDR

process not only undermined the neutrality of U.N. observers, but also the legitimacy of the program in the eyes of the RUF and other potentially hostile groups. The CONOPS hinted at these problems, when it cautioned that that unarmed observers under ECOMOG's protection might not be regarded as neutral by hostile forces; that a further expansion of the force might be needed; and that future recommendations would depend on ECOMOG's progress in expanding GOSL control of the countryside.

ECOMOG forces proved unable to hold territory or to defend the civilian population from RUF hit-and-run attacks and atrocities, including deliberate maiming. Not surprisingly, the DDR program stalled along with ECOMOG's operations to bring security to the countryside. Moreover, by allowing the RUF to gain an unexpected advantage, the ECOMOG operation violated the principle of security for peace operations, which subsumes force protection to enhance legitimacy and impartiality, in order to attain international credibility, as well as freedom of movement throughout the area of operations.^{xi} This optic reflected negatively on UNAMSIL.

In December 1998, the RUF launched an offensive to seize control of the government, overrunning most of Freetown. A month later ECOMOG forces, along with AFRC forces now realigned with the GOSL, managed to push the RUF out of the capital, but not before an estimated 5,000 people had lost their lives. In the chaos, UNOMSIL personnel had to be evacuated and the size of the mission downsized.

The Lome Peace Accords and The Transition from UNOMSIL to UNAMSIL

The near success of the RUF offensive, together with the ineffectiveness of the new Sierra Leone Army (SLA) still being trained with British assistance and the growing unwillingness of Nigeria to maintain its troop contribution to ECOMOG, impelled the GOSL to seek a settlement with the RUF. On May 24, 1999, the parties agreed to a ceasefire, and on July 7, 1999, signed the Lome Peace Accords that provided for RUF

participation in a government of national unity, amnesty, and an expanded DDR program under U.N. and ECOMOG auspices to disarm and demobilize an estimated 45,000 “former combatants,” among the RUF, the AFRC, and village militias known as Civil Defense Forces (CDF).^{xii} On August 20, 1999, the Security Council, welcoming the *Lome* agreement, adopted resolution 1260, which tripled the number of MILOBS to 210 and expanded the mandate to take on the task of monitoring the ceasefire.

On September 26, 1999, after Nigerian President Obasanjo decided to scale back his troop commitments to ECOMOG, Secretary General Annan proposed that a “robust” peacekeeping force be deployed to ensure implementation of the *Lome* process.^{xiii} On October 22, 1999, the Security Council responded by adopting resolution 1270, which established UNAMISL at an authorized strength of 6,000 troops, including 260 MILOBS. On November 19, Secretary General Annan named Oluyemi Adeniji (Nigeria) as Special Representative, and Major General Vijay Jetley (India) as Force Commander.

UNAMSIL’s CONOPS called for the deployment of six infantry battalions equipped with armored personnel carriers to DDR “reception centers” to help implement the disarmament and reintegration provisions of *Lome*.^{xiv} Tasks included ensuring freedom of movement of U.N. personnel, monitoring the ceasefire, and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. To expedite deployment and to save on transportation costs, some Nigerian ECOMOG forces already in country were “re-hatted” as “blue helmets.”^{xv} It was hoped that UNAMSIL would thereby “derive maximum benefit from the experience acquired by ECOMOG on the ground.”^{xvi} To ensure effective command and control, the concept also called for one of the troop contributing countries to establish a “core force” headquarters, as well as “a joint operations centers with ECOMOG at headquarters and, if necessary, also at the subordinate levels in the field.”^{xvii} None of these steps, as we shall see, were implemented effectively.

UNAMSIL's Faulty Assumptions

A close reading of the CONOPS shows that its adequacy and feasibility were predicated on three assumptions. First, the expanded force would be operating in a permissive Chapter VI environment, in which all parties would do their part in the peace process -- although the report notes with concern the failure of RUF leader Sankoh and others to assume their duties in the government of national unity.^{xviii} Secondly, the CONOPS assumed that ECOMOG forces would remain in Sierra Leone with sufficient strength to maintain security in the Freetown and the Lungi peninsulas, to provide security at DDR sites, and to undertake operations against “rogue elements unwilling to participate in the peace process.”^{xix} Thirdly, it was assumed that Liberia would honor its assurances to support the *Lome* process and to participate in a regional Joint Security Committee to stop diamond smuggling, the flow of arms, and cross-border incursions.

The CONOPS did not address how the amnesty provisions of *Lome* could be reconciled with its human rights provisions and the issue of war crimes. The report merely noted that the nature of a proposed truth and reconciliation commission had generated “intense debate.”^{xx} On the plus side, the CONOPS did integrate an economic dimension by calling for a trust fund, targeted at \$40 million, to be administered by the World Bank, to offer former combatants stipends, retraining, and other incentives to make the DDR process work.

Neither the CONOPS nor the larger report defined an objective or a desired end-state under which the mandate would come to an end. A possible milestone might have been fulfillment of the task to provide support in the election scheduled for 2001 or the training and certification of the SLA by the British military mission.^{xxi} Instead, the CONOPS promised periodic reviews and incremental withdrawals “by one, or even two battalions, as the process unfolds and the security situation improves.”^{xxii}

Nevertheless, the CONOPS warned that in the eventuality of a withdrawal of ECOMOG forces remaining in country, “a much stronger U.N. force of about 10 infantry battalions would be required and contingency planning would keep this possible scenario in view.”^{xxiii} This last proviso really amounted to a recipe for “mission creep” from a Chapter VI to a Chapter VII operation, given ECOMOG’s much stronger ROE.

Departure of ECOMOG; Size of UNAMSIL Doubled

After failing to collect subsidies from donors to continue their operations in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and other ECOWAS members in December 1999 informed the U.N. of their decision to withdraw their ECOMOG forces. In response, the Security Council on February 7, 2000 adopted resolution 1289, nearly doubling the force to 11,100 troops, in order to pick up most of ECOMOG’s functions under *Lome*. The Council expanded UNAMSIL’s mandate, first, to provide security to government buildings, the airport, and other transportation nodes; secondly, to administer the DDR program and to guard weapons, ammunition, and military equipment collected from former combatants; and, thirdly, to coordinate with and assist Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities to maintain law and order. Two Nigerian battalions were “re-hatted” as “blue helmets” to bridge UNAMSIL’s deployment gap, as two Indian battalions were mobilized.^{xxiv}

RUF Attacks on U.N. Personnel; Breakdown of Lome

After ECOMOG forces departed Sierra Leone on April 17, 2000, the RUF began mounting challenges to UNAMSIL deployments. On May 1, RUF forces initiated a series of coordinated attacks against UNAMSIL personnel in DDR centers in central and eastern Sierra Leone. Nine peacekeepers were killed and over 500 taken hostage.^{xxv} The British government dispatched forces to Freetown to evacuate British citizens, hold the approaches to Freetown, and secure the airport for the arrival of UNAMSIL

reinforcements. Invoking emergency powers, President Kabbah arrested Foday Sankoh and other RUF ministers participating in the government of national unity for their refusal to take action to stop the RUF attacks.^{xxvi} Although the U.N. hostages eventually were either released or rescued, in some cases through the good offices of Liberian President Taylor, it was clear that the *Lome* process had broken down and that UNAMSIL was no longer operating in a permissive Chapter VI environment.

Post Mortems and Recommendations to Stabilize the Situation

Although the CONOPS plan suggested that not all parties might view ECOMOG as neutral, one of its implicit assumptions was that UNAMSIL enjoyed that distinction. Although the CONOPS plan anticipated that “rogue elements” might mount attacks, there does not seem to have been any planning to establish a structure of intelligence or “information gathering” (a term recommended in the Joint Pub 3-07) to alert UNAMSIL forces deploying to DDR centers that coordinated attacks might be imminent. Colonel Kenneth Allard in drawing lessons learned from the U.N. operations in Somalia states flatly that in societies where the distribution of arms reflect the internal power structure, troops given the mission of disarming armed factions in effect have been committed to combat.^{xxvii}

An internal U.N. assessment conducted by Manfred Eisele, a former Assistant Secretary General in DPKO, found a serious lack of cohesion with no commonly shared understanding of the mandate or the relatively robust rules of engagement authorized under the CONOPS.^{xxviii} Shortcomings were found in command and control, the training and readiness of many contingents, integrated planning, logistical support, and coordination with the civilian component of the operations. The report even blamed the transfer of UNAMSIL headquarters to a new location in early May for causing problems

in communication among components, particularly when the headquarters staff had to support the emergency deployment of reinforcements required to stabilize the situation.

The Washington Post correspondent Douglas Farah detailed even more fundamental problems with command and control.^{xxix} The most serious was friction between the Indian Force Commander Major General Jetley and the Nigerian Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General Mohammed Garba, who as commander of the Nigerian contingent refused direct orders during the crisis to deploy to a critical road junction northeast of Freetown and to locations in the eastern part of the country. Farah's sources also noted that half of the UNAMSIL units arriving before the crisis broke failed to deploy with the arms, communications equipment, and logistics required under a DPKO checklist. As a result, many peacekeepers were taken hostage, because they were unable to receive warnings or call for reinforcements. Lack of transportation also hampered redeployments and maneuver. Finally, SLA commanders resisting RUF attacks complained that UNAMSIL forces had declined to support their operations.

On May 19, 2000, the Security Council, acting on the Secretary General's recommendation for an immediate reinforcement of UNAMSIL from its deployed strength of 9,250 peacekeepers, authorized an increase in its strength to 13,000 troops to help consolidate UNAMSIL's fall-back defensive positions in Freetown, at the airport, and other strategic locations in the southern and western parts of the country. The Secretary General's report to the Council estimated that UNAMSIL would require 16,500 troops to fulfill its existing mandate in the hostile environment that had developed.^{xxx} This figure represented an increase in two infantry battalions (one mechanized and the other air mobile), a light artillery unit, additional air transportation assets and armed helicopters, and a maritime unit of six armed patrol boats, as well as medical, communications, intelligence, and command personnel.

However, many Council members, including the U.S., were in no mood to increase the strength of the force to this level without a fundamental re-thinking of its structure and mission. In testimony before Congress, then U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke explained, “Without an expanded mandate, allowing for a more robust force to deal with the growing RUF threat, we do not see the rationale for expanding UNAMSIL to 16,500 troops.”^{xxxix}

Options for Expanding UNAMSIL’s Force and Mandate

Britain and India supported the Secretary General’s proposal for increasing the UNAMSIL force to 16,500 under the existing mandate set out in resolution 1289, and were opposed to a tougher mandate, fearing it would expose their troops in Sierra Leone to attacks from the RUF.^{xxxii} DPKO recommended that the additional deployments take place in secure areas to restore a degree of “normalcy” and confidence to resume the DDR process, which had enrolled 24,000 participants and collected 10,840 weapons before it was interrupted by the RUF offensive. Although such a force could deter the RUF, the “live and let live” posture implicit in the strategy would have implied a virtual partition of the country between the GOSL and the RUF.

Another option proposed by Nigerian President Obasanjo and supported by a number of ECOWAS military chiefs meeting in Abuja was the deployment of a separate Nigerian-led force under a separate U.N. mandate “to fight and defeat the rebels,” provided that the force received logistical and airlift support from the U.S.^{xxxiii} This would have amounted to an “ECOMOG II” deployment, but this time sanctioned under a Chapter VII peace enforcement mandate to take down the RUF, coupled with direct support from militarily competent powers. Under this option, UNAMSIL presumably would have retained its “Chapter 6 ½” mandate to restart the DDR process and to fulfill

its mandate under resolution 1289. However, a split mandate would have implied a split command and would have raised concerns among UNAMSIL troop contributors.

The third and final option would have been to reorganize UNAMSIL under a full-blown Chapter VII mandate with adequate resources, unity of command, and the determination to crush the RUF. However, as noted above, such a proposal would have run into strong opposition from troop contributors and key members on the Security Council. Moreover, Secretary General Annan warned that giving UNAMSIL a strong peace enforcement mandate under Chapter VII, implicitly to make war against the RUF, without a strong commitment from member states “with ready capacity and the necessary resources that such a mandate implies” would have unduly raise expectations, increased costs and risks, and undermined the credibility of the organization.^{xxxiv}

The U.S. Strategy

As early as May 30, 2000 in a letter to Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to win congressional support for UNAMSIL, Ambassador Holbrooke first articulated an overall political-military strategy to degrade the RUF, first by increasing the military capabilities of SLA, regional, and U.N. forces to confront the RUF, and secondly by “disrupting” RUF access to the diamonds fields, revenues, arms, and political support from Liberia, including measures “to deal appropriately” with Liberian President Taylor.^{xxxv} At the same time, Ambassador Holbrooke backed away from any option to defeat the RUF militarily. He wrote, “Completely eliminating the RUF as a military force is not likely to be possible at an acceptable cost, but sharply reducing their capability to threaten the people or government of Sierra Leone is within the reach of sufficient numbers of properly trained, equipped, and well-led troops.”^{xxxvi} Alluding to the essential role of Nigeria and ECOWAS in implementing this strategy, Ambassador Holbrooke added, “The U.S. will

need to be ready with congressional support and funding, to provide equipment and training to those who are willing to do the military job.”^{xxxvii}

U.S. assistance to potential troops contributors was a key element in Ambassador Holbrooke’s strategy. In May 2000, as the Security Council debated options for a revitalized UNAMSIL, the United States European Command (EUCOM) dispatched a team to the area to assess the deployment requirements of Nigerian units offered to reinforce UNAMSIL.^{xxxviii} An assessment team was also deployed to survey the capability of airports in the region to support U.S. strategic airlift requirements. In August 2000, EUCOM launched Operation *Focus Relief*, a \$20 million program to support UNAMSIL, with most of the money earmarked to train and equip three Nigerian battalions and one Ghanaian battalion participating in the operation.^{xxxix}

The Security Council Inaugurates “Task-Driven” Planning as a Way Forward.

On August 4, the Security Council adopted resolution 1313, which, rather than selecting any of the options noted above, identified a series of highly operational “priority tasks” whose fulfillment were deemed critical for the success of the mission. The Secretary General and DPKO were asked to make recommendations to enable UNAMSIL “to maintain the security of the Lungi and Freetown peninsulas, and their major approach routes,” “to deploy progressively and in a coherent manner and with sufficient numbers and density at key strategic location and population centers,” “to assist the GOSL to extend state authority and further stabilize the situation progressively throughout the county,” “to patrol actively on strategic lines of communications, specifically main access routes to the capital in order to dominate ground [sic], and ensure freedom of movement,” and “to deter and decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile action or threat of imminent and direct use of force.”^{xl} The Alternate U.S. Representative explained that the Council had taken “an

historic step by insisting on task-driven planning” to identify tasks and objectives before the Council decided on troop level or resources to ensure the mission’s success.^{xli}

As part of a broader strategy to disrupt the RUF’s of lines of communication and its ability to market diamonds from its illicit mining operations (which might be regarded as the RUF’s center of gravity), the Council began to move against its illicit diamond exports. Resolution 1306, adopted on July 5, 2000, sought to prohibit diamond imports from Sierra Leone unless registered under a certification program. Resolution 1315, adopted on August 14, 2000, called for an independent special court to try RUF leader Foday Sankoh. To answer Congressional criticism that the *Lome* process had given Sankoh and other RUF criminal elements a “free ride” on war crimes, Ambassador Holbrooke pledged that Sankoh “should play no role” in the government and would be held accountable for his actions.^{xlii}

DPKO’s Task-Driven CONOPS for UNAMSIL; The Indians and Jordanians Balk

On August 24, 2000, in his sixth report to the Council, the Secretary General responded to the tasking under resolution 1313 with a revised CONOPS. The plan, prepared by DPKO, called for an augmentation of the force to 20,500. The mode of operation was “progressive forward deployment accompanied by coordinated political steps, involving the GOSL, ECOWAS, and the U.N., as well as public information campaign” to encourage the RUF to disarm and transform itself into a genuine political party.^{xliii} In the first phase, two infantry battalions would be deployed along with a number of force multipliers assigned to each sector of the operation, including logistics, communications, helicopter transportation, air-ground coordination units, intelligence, and electronic operations units. In the second phase, an additional three battalions and an augmentation of the force to 20,500 military personnel would be required to undertake eastward deployments into RUF-held territories in conjunction with increased political

and economic pressures.^{xliv} In all phases, special equipment “not usually associated with peacekeeping operations” would be required, such as equipment for surveillance and target acquisition, in some cases with night and all weather capability. The concept also relied on a combination of political and military instruments to extend GOSL authority, restore security throughout the country, and assist in the promotion of a political process to renew the DDR program.

The Secretary General also hinted at problems with troop contributors. In his consultations, all indicated concerns that the CONOPS “would demand a very strong force with the necessary force multipliers.” Most stressed that “that they could not be expected to take part in peace enforcement operations.”^{xlv}

However, action to authorize an increase in troop levels was delayed, when India announced the withdrawal of its 3,000-man contingent, probably the most competent and professional contingent in the force, after the Secretary General had requested New Delhi to replace Major General Jetley as the force commander.^{xlvi} The Indian decision followed months of friction between Jetley and Nigerian Brigadier General Garba, in which Jetley accused Garba of collaborating with the RUF and undermining the peace process in order to profiteer from the illegal diamond trade.^{xlvii} Press reports indicate that the Indians were also annoyed that British troops operating in Sierra Leone had not been put under U.N. command.^{xlviii} A few weeks later, the Jordanians followed suit and announced that they would be pulling out their 1,800-man contingent, partly because no NATO country had agreed to participate in the mission.^{xlix} As the Secretary General’s report suggests, the decisive reason for the Indian and Jordanian decisions was probably their reluctance to bear the brunt of what they viewed as a peace enforcement operation.

UNAMSIL Expanded; Strong CONOPS Endorsed

After Bangladesh, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine had made commitments to relieve the withdrawing Indian and Jordanian units, the Security Council on March 30, 2001, adopted resolution 1346 authorizing an increase in UNAMSIL's strength to 17,500. The Council also endorsed UNAMSIL's revised CONOPS of successive forward deployments of "robust patrols" into RUF controlled areas with ROE authorizing units "to respond robustly to any attack or threat of attack, including, if necessary, in a preemptive manner."^l The CONOPS promised that at a later stage, "subject to availability and consultations with troop contributing countries, UNAMSIL would deploy further forward to the diamond producing region and some border areas."^{li}

To support this overall strategy, the Council on March 7, 2001 adopted resolution 1343, which set conditions for the automatic imposition of sanctions against Liberia by May 7, 2001, unless the Liberian government could demonstrate to the Council that it had ceased all support to the RUF.^{lii} At the same time, the Secretariat and Council members took steps to recruit Pakistani and Bangladeshi contingents to replace the departing Indians and Jordanians. According to Indian press reports, the U.S. has facilitated the recruitment of a Pakistani contingent by agreeing to military sales.^{liii} At the same time, Nigerian units receiving training under Focus Relief began to deploy to UNAMSIL and to a new ECOMOG mission operating in areas bordering on Sierra Leone.^{liv}

Conclusions and Recommendations

By this exhaustive and incremental process, UNAMSIL today, at a cost of \$1.5 million per day, is the U.N.'s largest, most complex, and, potentially, most hazardous peacekeeping operation. Its success or failure in dealing with the criminality and rapacity of the RUF in looting the natural resources of Sierra Leone may well decide the Security Council's approach to similar situations in Zaire and Angola, countries with far greater

natural resources and implications for U.S. and Western interests, and with far larger operational areas and potential costs than UNAMSIL.

In trying to sum up the lessons learned from UNAMSIL's humiliation at the hands of the RUF, Special Representative Adeniji said in a press interview, "We have come to realize that the sedate atmosphere for classic peacekeeping didn't exist and doesn't exist. We misjudged fundamentally in the way we deployed. We were easy targets."^{lv} Perhaps, this is true, but as noted in resolution 1313, the RUF offensive also "revealed serious inherent weaknesses in the mission's structure, command and control, and resources [and] that successful achievement of the objectives of the mission [would] depend on the provision of fully equipped, complete units with effective command and control structure and capacity, a single chain of command, adequate resources, and commitment to implement the mandate."^{lvi}

Resolution 1313, although open to criticism for setting a precedent for policymakers to micromanage operations, sought to provide a roadmap for a revised CONOPS to correct these deficiencies. The Council's insistence on "task-driven planning" to set troop levels and allocate resources is a novel approach, which raises interesting questions as to a possible future role for the long-dormant Military Staff Committee to assist the Council in this endeavor.^{lvii}

DPKO's product, as endorsed in resolution 1346 and drafted to reflect the Council's carefully balanced consensus, seeks not to defeat the RUF militarily, but rather to create conditions on the ground, both military and political, that would induce a power shift in favor of moderate elements in the RUF willing to participate in the peace process on the basis of *Lome*. Nevertheless, the situation remains precarious, and there is no guarantee that the RUF will buy into the DDR and *Lome* processes. UNAMSIL may have to score some real operational successes to exact sufficient costs to convince the RUF leadership to

cooperate. For this overall strategy to succeed, all the Council's instruments of power will have to be brought to bear in coordination with UNAMSIL's efforts on the ground, including, the World Bank's DDR incentives program, economic sanctions on Liberia to isolate the RUF, as well as, the diplomacy of the Special Representative and others to co-opt the RUF.

Continued engagement by the U.S. and the United Kingdom also will be required. EUCOM's Operation *Relief Focus* to train Nigerian and other ECOWAS forces to participate in UNAMSIL, as well as the British training mission for the SLA, is essential for increasing the military capabilities of the forces confronting the RUF. EUCOM will have to provide expertise and support to ensure that training and accelerated troop rotations improve UNAMSIL's combat effectiveness.

If UNAMSIL's complex strategy of utilizing regional and other Third World troop contributors in combination with political and economic instruments should fail, the U.S. may have to reevaluate its support to U.N. peace operations to leverage its selective engagement strategy – despite the legitimacy that the aegis of the U.N. confers. Complaints from the international community that the U.S. and other Western countries are not shouldering their share of the burden in high risk U.N. peace operations constitute another complicating factor in using U.N. peace operations to pursue an engagement strategy. Pressure is mounting for the U.S. to be responsive, not only as a paymaster, but also as troop contributor in U.N. peace operations.^{lviii} Developing countries now contribute 75 percent of the “blue helmets,” while the U.S., the EU, and Japan pick up 85 percent of the bill. Lukhar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister heading up a panel looking at U.N. peacekeeping operations, has questioned the fairness of this arrangement, saying, “You can't have a situation where some people contribute money and others blood.”^{lix}

END NOTES

Introduction and Thesis

On October 22, 1999, the U.N. Security Council in its resolution 1270 established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to succeed the U.N. Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), which the Council had established fifteen months earlier. For the first time, the Council and the U.N. Secretariat, principally the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), had to formulate mandates and concepts of operations (CONOPS) to confront a power/money based organization that rules through terror with no clearly defined ethnic, clan, political, or ideological agenda. In May 2000, UN forces came under attack and were nearly routed before the situation was stabilized. The fast growth of the U.N. mission in Sierra Leone from a small team of observers operating under Chapter VI to a large, multi-disciplinary “Chapter 6 ½” peacekeeping operation with complex organizational and logistical requirements was undoubtedly one of the proximate causes of this debacle.

However, a central conclusion of this survey is that although DPKO has demonstrated an improved capacity for organizing forces and formulating rules of engagement (ROE), its CONOPS for Sierra Leone further damaged the U.N.’s already frayed reputation for neutrality and effectiveness. Moreover, the U.N.’s setbacks in Sierra Leone showed that success in executing today’s post-Cold War “second generation” peacekeeping operations depends less on coalition building or fielding large numbers of troops than on the deployment of an inner core of trained and adequately equipped contingents under a unified command structure that are supported by militarily competent powers committed to executing an overall political/economic/military strategy.

Sierra Leone, a failed state?

Robert D. Kaplan in his 1994 essay “The Coming Anarchy” held up Sierra Leone as an example and as a harbinger of the wave of “failed states” that would sweep West Africa and much of the Third World. Peering into this bleak future, he predicted a withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, and the empowerment of private armies and international criminal cartels that would loot the natural resources of the continent.^{lx} Since 1991, the “Revolutionary United Front” (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh and a collection of renegade military officers, tribal chiefs, and criminal elements, has waged a protracted war against a succession of governments in Freetown, democratic and otherwise, that has brought mayhem, anarchy, and devastation to the country. Fielding an army of 15,000 fighters, the RUF controls the eastern and northern half of the country, including the lucrative diamonds fields. The conflict, which has been fueled by rivalries to exploit diamonds and other natural resources, has killed an estimated 20,000 people, internally displaced about a third of the population of 4.6 million, and generated a flow of half million refugees to neighboring countries.^{lxi} Over the years, Liberian President Charles Taylor, despite his vehement denials, has supported and sponsored the RUF, with arms and mercenaries to enhance his control of regional arms trafficking and the illicit diamond trade, which may be linked to Libya and Middle Eastern interests.^{lxii}

The U.N. gets involved.

In November 1994, then U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and with the approval of the Security Council, appointed Berhanu Dinka (Ethiopia) as Special Envoy to broker a negotiated settlement in concert with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).^{lxiii} Despite continued unrest,

presidential elections were held as scheduled in 1996, which were won by Ahmed Tjan Kabbah. Although the election results were rejected by the RUF, negotiations facilitated by Dinka led to a peace agreement known as the Abuja Accord. However, the agreement was derailed in May 1997, when elements of the armed forces, joined by the RUF, overthrew President Kabbah in a military *coup* that set up a ruling junta, the self-styled “Armed Forces Revolutionary Council” (AFRC). A new Special Envoy, Francis Okelo (Uganda), was appointed, who tried but failed to persuade the AFRC junta to step down.^{lxiv}

On October 23, 1997, ECOWAS and the AFRC signed the Conakry peace Agreement, which called for a ceasefire to be monitored by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) assisted by U.N. observers.^{lxv} However, the wheel turned again in February 1998, when ECOMOG forces numbering 12,000-15,000 troops launched an offensive that restored President Kabbah’s government. The AFRC forces fled into the bush and, for a time, allied themselves with the RUF.^{lxvi}

The UNOMSIL Mandate

On July 13, 1998, the Security Council, in response to the recommendations of Secretary General Kofi Annan, adopted resolution 1181 establishing UNOMSIL under a six-month mandate to deploy up to 70 military observers (MILOBS) to monitor the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program being undertaken by the GOSL with ECOMOG, as provided in the prior peace accords.^{lxvii} A small civilian component was also attached to monitor the humanitarian and human rights situation. Secretary General Annan named Okelo as his Special Representative under the mandate.

In retrospect, UNOMSIL’s CONOPS plan was misconceived.^{lxviii} Aligning and associating U.N. observers with ECOMOG, a force that had been a party to the conflict, to carry out the DDR program clearly violated the principle of legitimacy and the factor

of impartiality.^{lxix} Relying on ECOMOG for security and “muscle” to carry out the DDR process not only undermined the neutrality of U.N. observers, but also the legitimacy of the program in the eyes of the RUF and other potentially hostile groups. The CONOPS hinted at these problems, when it cautioned that that unarmed observers under ECOMOG’s protection might not be regarded as neutral by hostile forces; that a further expansion of the force might be needed; and that future recommendations would depend on ECOMOG’s progress in expanding GOSL control of the countryside.

ECOMOG forces proved unable to hold territory or to defend the civilian population from RUF hit-and-run attacks and atrocities, including deliberate maiming. Not surprisingly, the DDR program stalled along with ECOMOG’s operations to bring security to the countryside. Moreover, by allowing the RUF to gain an unexpected advantage, the ECOMOG operation violated the principle of security for peace operations, which subsumes force protection to enhance legitimacy and impartiality, in order to attain international credibility, as well as freedom of movement throughout the area of operations.^{lxx} This optic reflected negatively on UNAMSIL.

In December 1998, the RUF launched an offensive to seize control of the government, overrunning most of Freetown. A month later ECOMOG forces, along with AFRC forces now realigned with the GOSL, managed to push the RUF out of the capital, but not before an estimated 5,000 people had lost their lives. In the chaos, UNOMSIL personnel had to be evacuated and the size of the mission downsized.

The Lome Peace Accords and The Transition from UNOMSIL to UNAMSIL

The near success of the RUF offensive, together with the ineffectiveness of the new Sierra Leone Army (SLA) still being trained with British assistance and the growing unwillingness of Nigeria to maintain its troop contribution to ECOMOG, impelled the GOSL to seek a settlement with the RUF. On May 24, 1999, the parties agreed to a

ceasefire, and on July 7, 1999, signed the Lome Peace Accords that provided for RUF participation in a government of national unity, amnesty, and an expanded DDR program under U.N. and ECOMOG auspices to disarm and demobilize an estimated 45,000 “former combatants,” among the RUF, the AFRC, and village militias known as Civil Defense Forces (CDF).^{lxxi} On August 20, 1999, the Security Council, welcoming the *Lome* agreement, adopted resolution 1260, which tripled the number of MILOBS to 210 and expanded the mandate to take on the task of monitoring the ceasefire.

On September 26, 1999, after Nigerian President Obasanjo decided to scale back his troop commitments to ECOMOG, Secretary General Annan proposed that a “robust” peacekeeping force be deployed to ensure implementation of the *Lome* process.^{lxxii} On October 22, 1999, the Security Council responded by adopting resolution 1270, which established UNAMSIL at an authorized strength of 6,000 troops, including 260 MILOBS. On November 19, Secretary General Annan named Oluyemi Adeniji (Nigeria) as Special Representative, and Major General Vijay Jetley (India) as Force Commander.

UNAMSIL’s CONOPS called for the deployment of six infantry battalions equipped with armored personnel carriers to DDR “reception centers” to help implement the disarmament and reintegration provisions of *Lome*.^{lxxiii} Tasks included ensuring freedom of movement of U.N. personnel, monitoring the ceasefire, and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. To expedite deployment and to save on transportation costs, some Nigerian ECOMOG forces already in country were “re-hatted” as “blue helmets.”^{lxxiv} It was hoped that UNAMSIL would thereby “derive maximum benefit from the experience acquired by ECOMOG on the ground.”^{lxxv} To ensure effective command and control, the concept also called for one of the troop contributing countries to establish a “core force” headquarters, as well as “a joint operations centers

with ECOMOG at headquarters and, if necessary, also at the subordinate levels in the field.”^{lxxvi} None of these steps, as we shall see, were implemented effectively.

UNAMSIL’s Faulty Assumptions

A close reading of the CONOPS shows that its adequacy and feasibility were predicated on three assumptions. First, the expanded force would be operating in a permissive Chapter VI environment, in which all parties would do their part in the peace process -- although the report notes with concern the failure of RUF leader Sankoh and others to assume their duties in the government of national unity.^{lxxvii} Secondly, the CONOPS assumed that ECOMOG forces would remain in Sierra Leone with sufficient strength to maintain security in the Freetown and the Lungi peninsulas, to provide security at DDR sites, and to undertake operations against “rogue elements unwilling to participate in the peace process.”^{lxxviii} Thirdly, it was assumed that Liberia would honor its assurances to support the *Lome* process and to participate in a regional Joint Security Committee to stop diamond smuggling, the flow of arms, and cross-border incursions.

The CONOPS did not address how the amnesty provisions of *Lome* could be reconciled with its human rights provisions and the issue of war crimes. The report merely noted that the nature of a proposed truth and reconciliation commission had generated “intense debate.”^{lxxix} On the plus side, the CONOPS did integrate an economic dimension by calling for a trust fund, targeted at \$40 million, to be administered by the World Bank, to offer former combatants stipends, retraining, and other incentives to make the DDR process work.

Neither the CONOPS nor the larger report defined an objective or a desired end-state under which the mandate would come to an end. A possible milestone might have been fulfillment of the task to provide support in the election scheduled for 2001 or the training and certification of the SLA by the British military mission.^{lxxx} Instead, the

CONOPS promised periodic reviews and incremental withdrawals “by one, or even two battalions, as the process unfolds and the security situation improves.”^{lxxxix}

Nevertheless, the CONOPS warned that in the eventuality of a withdrawal of ECOMOG forces remaining in country, “a much stronger U.N. force of about 10 infantry battalions would be required and contingency planning would keep this possible scenario in view.”^{lxxxii} This last proviso really amounted to a recipe for “mission creep” from a Chapter VI to a Chapter VII operation, given ECOMOG’s much stronger ROE.

Departure of ECOMOG; Size of UNAMSIL Doubled

After failing to collect subsidies from donors to continue their operations in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and other ECOWAS members in December 1999 informed the U.N. of their decision to withdraw their ECOMOG forces. In response, the Security Council on February 7, 2000 adopted resolution 1289, nearly doubling the force to 11,100 troops, in order to pick up most of ECOMOG’s functions under *Lome*. The Council expanded UNAMSIL’s mandate, first, to provide security to government buildings, the airport, and other transportation nodes; secondly, to administer the DDR program and to guard weapons, ammunition, and military equipment collected from former combatants; and, thirdly, to coordinate with and assist Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities to maintain law and order. Two Nigerian battalions were “re-hatted” as “blue helmets” to bridge UNAMSIL’s deployment gap, as two Indian battalions were mobilized.^{lxxxiii}

RUF Attacks on U.N. Personnel; Breakdown of Lome

After ECOMOG forces departed Sierra Leone on April 17, 2000, the RUF began mounting challenges to UNAMSIL deployments. On May 1, RUF forces initiated a series of coordinated attacks against UNAMSIL personnel in DDR centers in central and eastern Sierra Leone. Nine peacekeepers were killed and over 500 taken hostage.^{lxxxiv}

The British government dispatched forces to Freetown to evacuate British citizens, hold the approaches to Freetown, and secure the airport for the arrival of UNAMSIL reinforcements. Invoking emergency powers, President Kabbah arrested Foday Sankoh and other RUF ministers participating in the government of national unity for their refusal to take action to stop the RUF attacks.^{lxxxv} Although the U.N. hostages eventually were either released or rescued, in some cases through the good offices of Liberian President Taylor, it was clear that the *Lome* process had broken down and that UNAMSIL was no longer operating in a permissive Chapter VI environment.

Post Mortems and Recommendations to Stabilize the Situation

Although the CONOPS plan suggested that not all parties might view ECOMOG as neutral, one of its implicit assumptions was that UNAMSIL enjoyed that distinction. Although the CONOPS plan anticipated that “rogue elements” might mount attacks, there does not seem to have been any planning to establish a structure of intelligence or “information gathering” (a term recommended in the Joint Pub 3-07) to alert UNAMSIL forces deploying to DDR centers that coordinated attacks might be imminent. Colonel Kenneth Allard in drawing lessons learned from the U.N. operations in Somalia states flatly that in societies where the distribution of arms reflect the internal power structure, troops given the mission of disarming armed factions in effect have been committed to combat.^{lxxxvi}

An internal U.N. assessment conducted by Manfred Eisele, a former Assistant Secretary General in DPKO, found a serious lack of cohesion with no commonly shared understanding of the mandate or the relatively robust rules of engagement authorized under the CONOPS.^{lxxxvii} Shortcomings were found in command and control, the training and readiness of many contingents, integrated planning, logistical support, and coordination with the civilian component of the operations. The report even blamed the

transfer of UNAMSIL headquarters to a new location in early May for causing problems in communication among components, particularly when the headquarters staff had to support the emergency deployment of reinforcements required to stabilize the situation.

The Washington Post correspondent Douglas Farah detailed even more fundamental problems with command and control.^{lxxxviii} The most serious was friction between the Indian Force Commander Major General Jetley and the Nigerian Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General Mohammed Garba, who as commander of the Nigerian contingent refused direct orders during the crisis to deploy to a critical road junction northeast of Freetown and to locations in the eastern part of the country. Farah's sources also noted that half of the UNAMSIL units arriving before the crisis broke failed to deploy with the arms, communications equipment, and logistics required under a DPKO checklist. As a result, many peacekeepers were taken hostage, because they were unable to receive warnings or call for reinforcements. Lack of transportation also hampered redeployments and maneuver. Finally, SLA commanders resisting RUF attacks complained that UNAMSIL forces had declined to support their operations.

On May 19, 2000, the Security Council, acting on the Secretary General's recommendation for an immediate reinforcement of UNAMSIL from its deployed strength of 9,250 peacekeepers, authorized an increase in its strength to 13,000 troops to help consolidate UNAMSIL's fall-back defensive positions in Freetown, at the airport, and other strategic locations in the southern and western parts of the country. The Secretary General's report to the Council estimated that UNAMSIL would require 16,500 troops to fulfill its existing mandate in the hostile environment that had developed.^{lxxxix} This figure represented an increase in two infantry battalions (one mechanized and the other air mobile), a light artillery unit, additional air transportation assets and armed

helicopters, and a maritime unit of six armed patrol boats, as well as medical, communications, intelligence, and command personnel.

However, many Council members, including the U.S., were in no mood to increase the strength of the force to this level without a fundamental re-thinking of its structure and mission. In testimony before Congress, then U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke explained, “Without an expanded mandate, allowing for a more robust force to deal with the growing RUF threat, we do not see the rationale for expanding UNAMSIL to 16,500 troops.”^{xc}

Options for Expanding UNAMSIL’s Force and Mandate

Britain and India supported the Secretary General’s proposal for increasing the UNAMSIL force to 16,500 under the existing mandate set out in resolution 1289, and were opposed to a tougher mandate, fearing it would expose their troops in Sierra Leone to attacks from the RUF.^{xci} DPKO recommended that the additional deployments take place in secure areas to restore a degree of “normalcy” and confidence to resume the DDR process, which had enrolled 24,000 participants and collected 10,840 weapons before it was interrupted by the RUF offensive. Although such a force could deter the RUF, the “live and let live” posture implicit in the strategy would have implied a virtual partition of the country between the GOSL and the RUF.

Another option proposed by Nigerian President Obasanjo and supported by a number of ECOWAS military chiefs meeting in Abuja was the deployment of a separate Nigerian-led force under a separate U.N. mandate “to fight and defeat the rebels,” provided that the force received logistical and airlift support from the U.S.^{xcii} This would have amounted to an “ECOMOG II” deployment, but this time sanctioned under a Chapter VII peace enforcement mandate to take down the RUF, coupled with direct support from militarily competent powers. Under this option, UNAMSIL presumably

would have retained its “Chapter 6 ½” mandate to restart the DDR process and to fulfill its mandate under resolution 1289. However, a split mandate would have implied a split command and would have raised concerns among UNAMSIL troop contributors.

The third and final option would have been to reorganize UNAMSIL under a full-blown Chapter VII mandate with adequate resources, unity of command, and the determination to crush the RUF. However, as noted above, such a proposal would have run into strong opposition from troop contributors and key members on the Security Council. Moreover, Secretary General Annan warned that giving UNAMSIL a strong peace enforcement mandate under Chapter VII, implicitly to make war against the RUF, without a strong commitment from member states “with ready capacity and the necessary resources that such a mandate implies” would have unduly raise expectations, increased costs and risks, and undermined the credibility of the organization.^{xciii}

The U.S. Strategy

As early as May 30, 2000 in a letter to Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to win congressional support for UNAMSIL, Ambassador Holbrooke first articulated an overall political-military strategy to degrade the RUF, first by increasing the military capabilities of SLA, regional, and U.N. forces to confront the RUF, and secondly by “disrupting” RUF access to the diamonds fields, revenues, arms, and political support from Liberia, including measures “to deal appropriately” with Liberian President Taylor.^{xciv} At the same time, Ambassador Holbrooke backed away from any option to defeat the RUF militarily. He wrote, “Completely eliminating the RUF as a military force is not likely to be possible at an acceptable cost, but sharply reducing their capability to threaten the people or government of Sierra Leone is within the reach of sufficient numbers of properly trained, equipped, and well-led troops.”^{xcv} Alluding to the essential role of Nigeria and

ECOWAS in implementing this strategy, Ambassador Holbrooke added, “The U.S. will need to be ready with congressional support and funding, to provide equipment and training to those who are willing to do the military job.”^{xcvi}

U.S. assistance to potential troops contributors was a key element in Ambassador Holbrooke’s strategy. In May 2000, as the Security Council debated options for a revitalized UNAMSIL, the United States European Command (EUCOM) dispatched a team to the area to assess the deployment requirements of Nigerian units offered to reinforce UNAMSIL.^{xcvii} An assessment team was also deployed to survey the capability of airports in the region to support U.S. strategic airlift requirements. In August 2000, EUCOM launched Operation *Focus Relief*, a \$20 million program to support UNAMSIL, with most of the money earmarked to train and equip three Nigerian battalions and one Ghanaian battalion participating in the operation.^{xcviii}

The Security Council Inaugurates “Task-Driven” Planning as a Way Forward.

On August 4, the Security Council adopted resolution 1313, which, rather than selecting any of the options noted above, identified a series of highly operational “priority tasks” whose fulfillment were deemed critical for the success of the mission. The Secretary General and DPKO were asked to make recommendations to enable UNAMSIL “to maintain the security of the Lungi and Freetown peninsulas, and their major approach routes,” “to deploy progressively and in a coherent manner and with sufficient numbers and density at key strategic location and population centers,” “to assist the GOSL to extend state authority and further stabilize the situation progressively throughout the county,” “to patrol actively on strategic lines of communications, specifically main access routes to the capital in order to dominate ground [*sic*], and ensure freedom of movement,” and “to deter and decisively counter the threat of RUF attack by responding robustly to any hostile action or threat of imminent and direct use of

force.”^{xcix} The Alternate U.S. Representative explained that the Council had taken “an historic step by insisting on task-driven planning” to identify tasks and objectives before the Council decided on troop level or resources to ensure the mission’s success.^c

As part of a broader strategy to disrupt the RUF’s of lines of communication and its ability to market diamonds from its illicit mining operations (which might be regarded as the RUF’s center of gravity), the Council began to move against its illicit diamond exports. Resolution 1306, adopted on July 5, 2000, sought to prohibit diamond imports from Sierra Leone unless registered under a certification program. Resolution 1315, adopted on August 14, 2000, called for an independent special court to try RUF leader Foday Sankoh. To answer Congressional criticism that the *Lome* process had given Sankoh and other RUF criminal elements a “free ride” on war crimes, Ambassador Holbrooke pledged that Sankoh “should play no role” in the government and would be held accountable for his actions.^{ci}

DPKO’s Task-Driven CONOPS for UNAMSIL; The Indians and Jordanians Balk

On August 24, 2000, in his sixth report to the Council, the Secretary General responded to the tasking under resolution 1313 with a revised CONOPS. The plan, prepared by DPKO, called for an augmentation of the force to 20,500. The mode of operation was “progressive forward deployment accompanied by coordinated political steps, involving the GOSL, ECOWAS, and the U.N., as well as public information campaign” to encourage the RUF to disarm and transform itself into a genuine political party.^{cii} In the first phase, two infantry battalions would be deployed along with a number of force multipliers assigned to each sector of the operation, including logistics, communications, helicopter transportation, air-ground coordination units, intelligence, and electronic operations units. In the second phase, an additional three battalions and an augmentation of the force to 20,500 military personnel would be required to undertake

eastward deployments into RUF-held territories in conjunction with increased political and economic pressures.^{ciii} In all phases, special equipment “not usually associated with peacekeeping operations” would be required, such as equipment for surveillance and target acquisition, in some cases with night and all weather capability. The concept also relied on a combination of political and military instruments to extend GOSL authority, restore security throughout the country, and assist in the promotion of a political process to renew the DDR program.

The Secretary General also hinted at problems with troop contributors. In his consultations, all indicated concerns that the CONOPS “would demand a very strong force with the necessary force multipliers.” Most stressed that “that they could not be expected to take part in peace enforcement operations.”^{civ}

However, action to authorize an increase in troop levels was delayed, when India announced the withdrawal of its 3,000-man contingent, probably the most competent and professional contingent in the force, after the Secretary General had requested New Delhi to replace Major General Jetley as the force commander.^{cv} The Indian decision followed months of friction between Jetley and Nigerian Brigadier General Garba, in which Jetley accused Garba of collaborating with the RUF and undermining the peace process in order to profiteer from the illegal diamond trade.^{cvi} Press reports indicate that the Indians were also annoyed that British troops operating in Sierra Leone had not been put under U.N. command.^{cvi} A few weeks later, the Jordanians followed suit and announced that they would be pulling out their 1,800-man contingent, partly because no NATO country had agreed to participate in the mission.^{cvi} As the Secretary General’s report suggests, the decisive reason for the Indian and Jordanian decisions was probably their reluctance to bear the brunt of what they viewed as a peace enforcement operation.

UNAMSIL Expanded; Strong CONOPS Endorsed

After Bangladesh, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine had made commitments to relieve the withdrawing Indian and Jordanian units, the Security Council on March 30, 2001, adopted resolution 1346 authorizing an increase in UNAMSIL's strength to 17,500. The Council also endorsed UNAMSIL's revised CONOPS of successive forward deployments of "robust patrols" into RUF controlled areas with ROE authorizing units "to respond robustly to any attack or threat of attack, including, if necessary, in a preemptive manner."^{cxix} The CONOPS promised that at a later stage, "subject to availability and consultations with troop contributing countries, UNAMSIL would deploy further forward to the diamond producing region and some border areas."^{cx}

To support this overall strategy, the Council on March 7, 2001 adopted resolution 1343, which set conditions for the automatic imposition of sanctions against Liberia by May 7, 2001, unless the Liberian government could demonstrate to the Council that it had ceased all support to the RUF.^{cx} At the same time, the Secretariat and Council members took steps to recruit Pakistani and Bangladeshi contingents to replace the departing Indians and Jordanians. According to Indian press reports, the U.S. has facilitated the recruitment of a Pakistani contingent by agreeing to military sales.^{cxii} At the same time, Nigerian units receiving training under Focus Relief began to deploy to UNAMSIL and to a new ECOMOG mission operating in areas bordering on Sierra Leone.^{cxiii}

Conclusions and Recommendations

By this exhaustive and incremental process, UNAMSIL today, at a cost of \$1.5 million per day, is the U.N.'s largest, most complex, and, potentially, most hazardous peacekeeping operation. Its success or failure in dealing with the criminality and rapacity of the RUF in looting the natural resources of Sierra Leone may well decide the Security Council's approach to similar situations in Zaire and Angola, countries with far greater

natural resources and implications for U.S. and Western interests, and with far larger operational areas and potential costs than UNAMSIL.

In trying to sum up the lessons learned from UNAMSIL's humiliation at the hands of the RUF, Special Representative Adeniji said in a press interview, "We have come to realize that the sedate atmosphere for classic peacekeeping didn't exist and doesn't exist. We misjudged fundamentally in the way we deployed. We were easy targets."^{cxiv} Perhaps, this is true, but as noted in resolution 1313, the RUF offensive also "revealed serious inherent weaknesses in the mission's structure, command and control, and resources [and] that successful achievement of the objectives of the mission [would] depend on the provision of fully equipped, complete units with effective command and control structure and capacity, a single chain of command, adequate resources, and commitment to implement the mandate."^{cxv}

Resolution 1313, although open to criticism for setting a precedent for policymakers to micromanage operations, sought to provide a roadmap for a revised CONOPS to correct these deficiencies. The Council's insistence on "task-driven planning" to set troop levels and allocate resources is a novel approach, which raises interesting questions as to a possible future role for the long-dormant Military Staff Committee to assist the Council in this endeavor.^{cxvi}

DPKO's product, as endorsed in resolution 1346 and drafted to reflect the Council's carefully balanced consensus, seeks not to defeat the RUF militarily, but rather to create conditions on the ground, both military and political, that would induce a power shift in favor of moderate elements in the RUF willing to participate in the peace process on the basis of *Lome*. Nevertheless, the situation remains precarious, and there is no guarantee that the RUF will buy into the DDR and *Lome* processes. UNAMSIL may have to score some real operational successes to exact sufficient costs to convince the RUF leadership to

cooperate. For this overall strategy to succeed, all the Council's instruments of power will have to be brought to bear in coordination with UNAMSIL's efforts on the ground, including, the World Bank's DDR incentives program, economic sanctions on Liberia to isolate the RUF, as well as, the diplomacy of the Special Representative and others to co-opt the RUF.

Continued engagement by the U.S. and the United Kingdom also will be required. EUCOM's Operation *Relief Focus* to train Nigerian and other ECOWAS forces to participate in UNAMSIL, as well as the British training mission for the SLA, is essential for increasing the military capabilities of the forces confronting the RUF. EUCOM will have to provide expertise and support to ensure that training and accelerated troop rotations improve UNAMSIL's combat effectiveness.

If UNAMSIL's complex strategy of utilizing regional and other Third World troop contributors in combination with political and economic instruments should fail, the U.S. may have to reevaluate its support to U.N. peace operations to leverage its selective engagement strategy – despite the legitimacy that the aegis of the U.N. confers. Complaints from the international community that the U.S. and other Western countries are not shouldering their share of the burden in high risk U.N. peace operations constitute another complicating factor in using U.N. peace operations to pursue an engagement strategy. Pressure is mounting for the U.S. to be responsive, not only as a paymaster, but also as troop contributor in U.N. peace operations.^{cxvii} Developing countries now contribute 75 percent of the “blue helmets,” while the U.S., the EU, and Japan pick up 85 percent of the bill. Lukhar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister heading up a panel looking at U.N. peacekeeping operations, has questioned the fairness of this arrangement, saying, “You can't have a situation where some people contribute money and others blood.”^{cxviii}

END NOTES

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