

force, this option is the "hardest" in all senses of the word for securing the humanitarian space. But it is important still to note the praise given these PSCs for their effectiveness and willingness to work in environments that the international community generally avoids.

### **Current and Future Implications for the Humanitarian Space**

Is the private option the panacea for humanitarians? The text above reveals that interaction between humanitarian IGOs/NGOs and private security proposed by *Mean Times* already exists on many levels. What is limited, however, is analysis of the actual effects of this relationship on securing the humanitarian space, analysis that considers the issues of privatized peacekeeping and its implications for consent, the problems related to legitimacy, and the long term financial and political implications. Generally speaking, the more one moves towards the hardened end of the spectrum, and the more robust the nature of these activities, the more controversial and problematic the effects on securing the humanitarian space. These effects are unique due to the current state of the private security industry.

### ***Privatized Peacekeeping and Consent***

Can there be such a thing as privatized peacekeeping? At first glance, because of the continued desire of humanitarians to have access to populations in need and a secure environment conducive to the delivery of assistance, the idea is appealing. Add to this the limited desire of states to contribute troops to humanitarian endeavours, let alone help devise rapid reaction capabilities or a stand-alone United Nations force. Two related elements, however, conspire against this.

First, the private security industry simply does not have the numbers of personnel or the capabilities to carry out post-Cold War peacekeeping. It is correct that though most firms have limited permanent staff, several boast hypothetical contractual access to several thousand personnel; EO was able to draw from a manpower pool rich in skills: engineers, medical personnel, demining experts, communications technicians, and pilots. Also through by-passing state and international bureaucracies, it was able to mobilize much faster. It is also true that smaller state-led humanitarian operations, such as France's 1994 *Operation Turquoise* in Rwanda which involved only 2,500 personnel, were deemed a relative success.<sup>17</sup> But even the management of some PSCs and analysts strongly supportive of private security question the ability of firms to provide the requisite number of skilled personnel for long periods of time.<sup>18</sup> In fact, during the course of EO's and Sandline Internationals' contracts in Africa during the 1990s, never was there more than approximately 500 personnel contracted for any given operation, a far

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<sup>17</sup> Donald C. F. Daniel and Brad C. Hayes, "Securing Observance of UN Mandates Through the Employment of Military Force," *International Peacekeeping* 3 (Winter 1996), p. 123 note 19.

<sup>18</sup> See Kevin O'Brien, "PMCs, Myths, and Mercenaries: the debate on private military companies," *Royal United Service Institute Journal* (February 2000), accessed at <http://www.icsa.ac.uk/pmcs-nf.html> on 18 February 2000; Correspondence, Ed Soyster, Vice President, Military Professional Resources Incorporated, 23 March 2000. James Fennell of Defense Systems Limited suggests that private firms could take part in a train and equip programme for peacekeeping operations or could provide logistics and management expertise. As for more active participation, this too could be possible, but only as part of a larger multinational operation. Correspondence, 7 April 2000.