

cry from the 5,537 military personnel suggested for the United Nations Observer Mission in the Congo (MONUC).¹⁹

Second, PSCs with experience in providing what could be termed "top cover", or the ability to create a secure environment through robust measures as opposed to passive traditional peacekeeping, only engage in these contracts with sovereign clients. These firms, as force multipliers, capitalize on the manpower already available to the state through the provision of training and other assistance.²⁰ The implications of these PSCs' particular services being sovereignty oriented for the humanitarian space are twofold. One, even if a PSC was somehow able to generate the necessary manpower, it would accept a contract with a humanitarian organization only with the consent of the state in which the contract was executed, a highly unlikely occurrence given how states particularly in the South guard the sovereign prerogative. Private security has, for international legalist Juan Carlos Zarate, "developed a *modus operandi* compatible with the needs and strictures of the post-Cold War, state-based international system".²¹ Two, though native soldiers combined with foreign force multipliers may provide the top cover desired by humanitarians, the space they create is not "consensual" as they are guided by sovereign political mandates fighting to win rather than to act impartially. For instance, while international peacekeepers usually attempt to persuade combatants that they are an independent force with third party status, EO, in light of its sovereignty orientation, specifically referred to its peacekeeping potential on its Internet site as "persuasion" services.²²

The point is to recognize that reliance on private contractors combined with national militaries has unique effects on securing the humanitarian space. Access is limited because humanitarian operations can only continue effectively in areas under government control. Also, reliance on or association with these firms could potentially hamper the humanitarians' relationship with opposing groups. This impact with respect to partiality, real or perceived, is further complicated by the fact that many firms or family of firms provide both the ability to take and hold ground and provide guarding expertise. As noted by the ICRC, regardless of the service actually provided by a firm, the image of the humanitarian actor and its activities remains key, and as such "it might be delicate to have a contractual relation with a company which is actively engaged on the side of a party to a conflict".²³ Note, for instance, Lifeguard, which provided the less controversial product of guarding for mines and humanitarian organizations, was an offshoot of Sandline International. It shared with Sandline International connections not only at the managerial level but also in terms of personnel, many of whom actually participated in earlier

¹⁹ United States, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Statement for the Record made by Richard C. Holbrooke, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, (Washington 15 February 2000). It is interesting to note that DSL is currently providing the local security for MONUC operations in Kinshasa.

²⁰ The term "top cover" can be attributed to Michael Grunberg. Correspondence, Financial Advisor,

²¹ Juan Carlos Zarate, "The Emergence of a New Dog of War: Private International Security Companies,

²² This information was taken from the Executive Outcomes webpage: (<http://www.eo.com>) before the company shut down operations on 1 January 1999.

²³ Yves Sandoz, "The Privatisation of Security: Framing A Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Agenda," paper presented at Wilton Park Conference, 19-21 November 1999.