The humanitarian problem: a study into the use of a privately funded, armed group to provide humanitarian aid and protection to civilians in conflict zones.

Ranulf Lewis Flanagan
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RANULF LEWIS FLANGAN
Introduction

Aim of project

This report has been produced to explore the possibility and benefits of creating an armed organisation to operate in conflict zones with a purpose to provide a form of protection for those who need it, mainly vulnerable civilians, without operating under the influence of an external political
agenda or influences. The end product would be a global, operational capability. There are many challenges which could prevent this, thus, to start with, the organisation should be established to operate in a single conflict zone. This operation would function as a pilot study and if successful, may allow the Organisation to begin to expand globally. The Organisation may appear to work in a similar vein to mercenaries or private military companies, but would aim to disassociate itself from such a label due to differences in overall aim and function and the negative connotations of these labels. The Organisation could be seen to operate similarly to the United Nations Peacekeepers with similar operational values to that of the charity Médecins sans Frontières. Its primary aim would be to protect all those in need regardless of ideology, orientation, or belief for a sufficient amount of time that further aid would be able to be provided, with secondary goals to restore peace, and engage in negotiation between both conflicting sides to strive for a result benefitting the whole country. The ‘further aid’ refers to all available forms of conventional relief aid that are trying to help in conflict zones, and if the conflict can be subdued in areas, would lead to rehousing and supporting people in rebuilding their lives.

**What is a Mercenary?**

Since this organisation holds attributes similar to that of mercenary groups, it is necessary to understand what a mercenary is in our society today. A mercenary is a hired soldier serving in a foreign army, often an ex-professional; they often continue working in the field in search of further profit in an area of life they are well rehearsed and without which many soldiers feel at a loss. In contemporary society, these “guns for hire” often try to distance themselves from the word mercenary, a word holding many negative connotations today. This can be seen by performing a simple google search of the word ‘mercenary,’ the adjective being: “primarily concerned with making money at the expense of ethics.”

As such, most modern mercenary organisations are categorised as Private Military Companies and their employees classed as “contractors” or “operators”. These private military companies, as expected in a globalised and primarily capitalist world, are motivated by profit, and are described succinctly in “The Modern Mercenary” by Sean McFate, who says that there are “Five characteristics [that] distinguish PMCs from other armed non-state actors.” 1/ They are motivated more by profit than politics, 2/ They are “multinational corporations and participate in the global financial system,” 3/ They operate in foreign lands rather than “providing domestic security services”, 4/ They operate in a military manner rather than law-enforcement, thus sometimes being known as para-militaries, 5/ “PMCs are lethal and represent the commodification of armed conflict.”

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1 Anon., ‘Mercenary,’ Google Search. <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=mercenary&oq=mercenary&aqs=chrome.69i57j69i65l1j0i2.1389j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> [accessed 15 September 2016]

2 *The abbreviation of Private Military Companies*

The theoretical Organisation that this report is delving into would not directly meet characteristics one or four for a PMC as established by Sean McFate, not operating specifically for profit, and changing whether it acts militarily or in an enforcement manner depending on the situation; however, it would be operating in foreign lands with well-trained operators able to use lethal force if necessary and would definitely be participating in the global financial system to gain funding. This Organisation could, if established properly, be of great operational value in order to try and resolve the variety of problems as established in the next section.

Why is there a problem and what is already in operation?

The United Nations and other peacekeepers

The idea of a peacekeeping force is not a new idea and peacekeeping forces exist around the world, an example being the United Nations Peacekeepers, headed by the United Nations Security Council. These organisations, however, are not perfect and have often been seen to fail to sufficiently protect a wide civilian base and there have been many problems associated with their historical operations. A prime example of this is Srebrenica; during the Balkan war in 1995, a lightly armed Dutch UN peacekeeper force withdrew in the face of heavily armed Serbians which led directly to the genocidal massacre of 8,000 Muslim Bosniaks.4 5

Another example of these failures can be seen in the book Katanga 1960-63 by Christopher Othen which gives a comprehensive oversight of the conflict in this region, and amongst other things details the operational failings of the Peacekeeper detachments and issues of sexual abuse6, and can also be seen in other reports into the unintended consequences and inadequacies of attempted UN intervention. One article, from the Economist7 describes the lack of Peacekeeper intervention in Africa, despite tell-tale signs repeatedly pointing towards a sequel to the atrocious genocides that occurred in Central African regions such as Katanga and Rwanda. These case studies and articles, combined with a flurry of articles outlining criticisms of the UN Peacekeepers give the impression that whilst noble in aim, the UN Peacekeepers are unfortunately flawed. Due to the permanent members of the security council often being ideologically opposed, this opposition can lead towards operational failures as the wrong Peacekeepers are chosen for the job or political influence in the security council itself delays or hinders peacekeeping efforts. The greatest concern attributed towards


the United Nations Security Council is the lack of true global representativeness. The five “Superpowers” and permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States of America all hold veto powers. These 5 permanent members carry this veto power and amongst themselves hold some strong ideological differences, thus setting the potential for this conflict of interests to lead to infighting in the council and thus a delayed Peacekeeper response. The potential for any of the five permanent members to veto any agenda put forward represents deep seated issues that affect the way the United Nations works on a grand scale. It is good that the United Nations can include those of ideological and political differences, but granting the power of veto produces a much less equal system. Such ideological actions can be seen in the Katanga case study as a force from Gizenga’s Democratic Republic of the Congo tortured and executed Katangese gendarmes. “The UN announced it would take no action against Gizenga’s men but urged Tshombe\(^8\) to keep the ceasefire.”\(^9\) Katanga was a breakaway state which was ideologically opposed by much of the world, thus peacekeeping operations were influenced by this. However, many of the problems the UN Peacekeeping forces face also stem from the fact that the troops sent into these areas are still just human. One of the most serious resulting problems is exemplified in this quote: “Liberian UN troops in the area seemed more interested in pimping local women into makeshift brothels than peacekeeping.”\(^10\)

This raises the question as to whether establishing another organisation could help this, even being set up with integrated peacekeeping values and an aim to protect civilian lives, the soldiers employed amongst its ranks (for in reality they are soldiers placed under a grandly named umbrella)\(^11\) and other employees could potentially hinder the project from being successful for the above reasons. However, given the difference in attitude and values between a full on military force and a dedicated peacekeeping organisation (it pays to keep in mind that the troops engaged in UN peacekeeping operations are drawn from a pool of national military forces, thus come from a regimented military background), the people attracted to the theoretical Organisation are hopefully less likely to indulge in such problematic behaviours like that laid out by Christopher Othen and numerous articles on the subject of peacekeeping problems. That said, if aiming to produce an organisation with extremely well trained employees and operating in conflict zones, it needs to be recognised that this is a recipe for an overflow of emotions due to the huge amounts of stress placed upon these, thus, there need to be ways to relieve such levels of pressure, and support or oversee these operators, as I cover later.

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\(^8\) The president of the breakaway state Katanga seeking political recognition from the United Nations.

\(^9\) Christopher Othen, *Katanga 1960-63*, p. 91

\(^10\) Christopher Othen, *Katanga 1960-63*, p. 77

\(^11\) *It cannot be argued that the those employed would not be defined as soldiers, or militant. These will be men and women trained in the arts of military operations and kitted out with the best kit available to the organisation. Furthermore, with the aim to be an independent organisation, there will likely be a majority of ex-mercenaries/contractors, people with a level of notoriety within our society today.*
The rise of mercenaries

The use of mercenaries has in recent decades risen drastically, such that many of the soldiers on either side of conflicts today are part of private military companies rather than organised national militaries. An example of such mercenary filled warfare was the Bosnian war of 1992-1995, during which, in spring 1995 the more “amateur” Croatian ‘military’ was able to launch an impressive surprise attack. This has been claimed to have been the result of a private military force’s influence, ending the war in weeks. Not only this but the overwhelming strain placed upon humanitarian organisations in Kosovo in 1999 (the Balkans yet again) was dealt with by the outsourcing of US military work to an external, Texan based company, “Brown & Root Services,” preventing the otherwise deployment of 9,000 US reservists in a time when the United States military was already overly extended. Indeed, in the words of Sean McFate, “the United States can no longer go to war without contractors, who provide essential security and logistics support to combat and stability operations.”

These private military companies primarily rose to prominence after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the resultant “security vacuum.” This security vacuum was caused as militaries did not have a ‘great rival’ to incentivise constant growth, but the world suddenly saw the emergence of many conflicts and rising tensions, which the “budding private military industry was eager to fill.” Since then, private military companies have participated in conflicts around the globe in conflicts up to the present day, from Africa, to the Ukraine, to the Middle East. However, these are all separate organisations fighting for profit or an attempt to sway the conflict in their favour with an external motive, often committed to a particular side in the conflict, such as the government or anti-government forces in the struggle in the Ukraine. The same could be said for the militaries of governments participating in these conflicts as well.

What if an organisation could be established that operated independently but without the need to prey on conflict regions for profit? If an armed company with an aim to protect civilians in mind could operate in these regions without a necessity for funding to be based on specific contracts, many atrocities committed in these war-stricken regions could potentially be averted, including those committed by both national/rebel forces and the mercenary companies involved.

One such example of the tarnishing effect and atrocious behaviour of some mercenary forces can be seen in the Blackwater Scandal of September 2007 (as it is widely known, also known as the Nisour Square Massacre). Employees of Blackwater fired upon a crowd of civilians when escorting a US embassy convoy killing 14 and wounding others. The reasons given for this engagement were that the


13 Sean McFate, The Modern Mercenary, p. ‘Blurb’

14 P.W Singer, Corporate Warriors, p. 44

actions undertaken by the employees were in response to perceived threat following a nearby IED detonation. The case led to charges being levelled against all four employees, charging one for murder and the other three for manslaughter. Beyond this scandal the trial itself saw much scandalous behaviour as much of the evidence was not backed up by fact as ballistic profiling and examination of the scene was not possible, thus much of the trial was based upon a battle of witness statements. This case demonstrates the potential problems of operators in high stress environments and in providing oversight, as anything may be a threat to the life of the operator and situations are often not clear to read. Thus, there is difficulty in mitigating the risks of these situations, but is a necessity if an organisation is to operate in these regions with an aim to protect civilians.

One potential solution, in a time of resources growing scarcer, likely increasing risk of natural disasters, and minor conflicts affecting the global scene, is an organisation to provide security and mitigate the consequences of problems around the world, which could provide a necessary and positive influence.

Of course, there are PMCs, charities, and volunteer groups with noble aims such as Médecins sans Frontières and the Syrian White Helmets, a volunteer based rescue and humanitarian aid group, and already discussed organisations such as the UN peacekeepers that operate in conflict zones to try and stabilise the region and help those affected. However, there are very few, if any, military organisations in the vein of what I am exploring that operate to protect civilians and civilian interests which would not either have some form of political bias towards those they protect, or problems in providing sufficient protection due to funding issues, that is why some other method of resource acquirement is needed. An organisation with the firepower, resources and training of any other private military company or paramilitary but operating in the interests of civilians in combat zones rather than for a political or monetary agenda could prove a true benefit as the unwilling/unfortunate victims of war could be more directly protected and those previously unreachable by aid or unarmed groups, more easily reached. If the situation calls for it the operators could approach a situation unarmed, but with well-trained operators, the organisation would have access to more options than the conventional aid organisation.

**Solution and characteristics of solution**

*How could this organisation achieve it’s goal?*

The key question is how could a private organisation actually provide assistance in areas of conflict? The first priority that I have laid out is the necessity to protect civilian lives in the conflict zone. The reason this should be the first priority is (alongside this being the goal of the Organisation) because as an organisation of this smaller nature (not endowed with the massive resource advantage of organisations such as the UN) will likely not be able to directly compete with the forces fighting on

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16 Whilst not a Private Military Company, the work that the Syrian White Helmets are carrying out is very similar to what I want to explore as a potential organisation.
both sides of the conflict in a country. This could actually also help prevent bias as the Organisation is fighting purely in the interest of the civilians affected due to its less competitive nature. Were a priority to be to end the conflict in the region this could lead to unintended bias, as the Organisation either follows its personal interests or the ‘path of least resistance,’ neutralising the threat that is easier to defeat. In both cases this could lead to a long, drawn out conflict which a publicly funded Firm would certainly be unable to participate in effectively, leading to a waste of resources and an opportunity cost as the Firm turns away from civilian protection and turns towards the functioning of a regular mercenary force. (I use the term mercenary here as that is truly fighting for personal gain, except in this instance there would not even be the monetary incentive, potentially reducing combat effectiveness compared to PMCs established primarily for profit motives).

It is not however just necessary for this Organisation to fight for the lives of civilians, as this would never lead to a proper benefit to the populace of the country as a whole. The Organisation needs to work in conjunction with aid providers to secure incoming aid angled towards supporting those in the conflict zone and rebuilding the lives of those affected if the conflict can be subdued. A secondary priority should be to help progress towards a “value free resolution”\(^\text{17}\) to the conflict, not working towards an advantageous resolution towards any party but the population of the country.\(^\text{18}\) This is difficult to ensure, but implementing protocols to prevent one person from driving the resolution of the conflict or the involvement of the organisation growing too great should help minimise the personal influence of the PMC.

Another question is how can an organisation such as this bring about a successful and lasting resolution to this conflict? As previously mentioned it would be necessary to assist in the functioning of negotiation between both conflicting parties, as the only way that a conflict is ever likely to be resolved is if all belligerent parties are in agreement. This is never easy to establish, as the reason for conflict often stems from the fact that there is a significant disagreement between multiple parties to the extent that they are unwilling or unable to negotiate and compromise. It would be important for this Organisation to be of international renown and internationally accepted for its neutrality and peace making values. This would be difficult to establish and would need to be maintained through consecutive successful peace making operations. In the current Area of Operations, the Organisation’s efforts would need to be extremely careful so as not to antagonise either of the parties involved as this will make resolving negotiations much harder, this side is more likely to think the PMC is operating in the interests of their opponents and thus hinder the operations and resolutions of the PMC.

\(^\text{17}\) Such that one party does not dominate the resolution and claim more from the resolution of the conflict. Everyone should be in agreement to the resolution and working towards a resolution beneficial to the populace of the country.

\(^\text{18}\) Although just above I criticised the aim to end the conflict in the region; by not placing this as first priority, and dedicating different resources in the form of negotiators and diplomats, this can be somewhat avoided. It would be much more difficult to resolve the conflict through direct action on the ground, as you are much more likely to be shot than get into a situation through which you can have any influence on the overall result of the conflict.
How could an organisation bring such conflicting parties to the table? It would be useful to have renown from the success of past negotiations, acting in the interests of all parties, and being publicly known for doing as such. This is looking through heavily rose tinted glasses however, as there is very little chance that any negotiations would run so smoothly. Instead, compromises would always have to be made. However, it may be possible to assist matters merely by operating in the interests of those non competing yet violated civilians, as the organisation is seen to act in the interests of the country itself rather than power hungry or more politically inclined groups or individuals.

Ideals and Values of the Organisation

As long as the Organisation maintains its goals and values then it could be highly effective in the conflict zone. There are many methods of funding an organisation such as this, one method would be to open up to the public for funding, the Organisation could reach a large base of the population around the world, though particularly from well developed countries as this is likely to be the source of most benefactors, thus there is the potential for effective fund raising from this source. This does depend on whether the public is willing to fund an armed group, regardless of its morals. Many countries such as the United States or United Kingdom have been stung in the past by funding armed groups with whom they believed they agreed with their values. This has turned many people against such an act, but there are still many who may be willing to fund a more internationally based and transparent organisation; looking at a stereotypical and theoretical demographic of those most willing to fund this Organisation, one could assume these would mostly be those interested in conflict and armament regardless, however, if marketed well the Organisation could certainly reach out to touch a greater number of people.

One option which was posed to me by Simon Adamsdale, founder of Control Risks, was to tap into the large reserves of offshore money held by trans-national companies such as Google and Apple. Since this cannot be repatriated as it would be heavily taxed, the Organisation could appeal to these companies, who want to be seen in a positive light. One charitable organisation who has similarly laid out values to this theoretical Organisation would be Médecins sans Frontières, its ideals being¹⁹:

• Médecins Sans Frontières provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of gender, race, religion, creed or political convictions.

• Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.

• Members undertake to respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers.

• As volunteers, members understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out and make no claim for themselves or their assigns for any form of compensation other than that which the association might be able to afford them. These ideals are honoured by all members of this Organisation. This takes a more individualistic approach, passing on the responsibility to the members. This shows the level of value embedding throughout the organisation, which if done could really help to enforce an abidance of the organisation’s rules and ensure operations ascribe to these values.

**Should the Organisation operate for profit?**

It should be considered that rather than raising funds charitably as previously suggested the Organisation should actually aim to make a profit, to provide the capability to reward its operators and organisers in whatever way they prefer. The aim of this is to attract the best employees and keep them employed, whereby the profit can go through multiple avenues, likely best used either to reward those encountering the stress of the battlefield, or to obtain better technology/equipment. To boost morale and ensure continued employment, personal reward should be given high priority; one of the best ways to ensure that they are happy to keep working as they do, is to try and boost firm profits in whatever way possible to give the greatest rewards possible to their employees.

In aiming to be of greater political neutrality and more widely accepting, it is also necessary to recognise that different employees may rather work not for monetary gain, but for some other reward, especially given the aim to recruit employees from around the world. It is presumptuous to assume that everyone ascribes to the western capitalist ideology, thus every employee should have an individualised contract, lending to why I mention personal reward rather than profit or salary. The operations that this Firm would be undertaking are likely to be in high stress, high risk environments, and in aiming to protect civilians around the world, the motivation of operators is essential to guarantee. To ensure the repeated and reliable service of these operators some significant reward is necessary; there may be some willing to work and fight for little personal gain or as volunteers, but this is likely to be a significant minority.

A generous pay-out or reward for these operators would not only assist in keeping them willing to work with the Organisation, but structures could be implemented to promote good behaviour and maintain operational standards. Something like a bonus scheme could be introduced, such that for every operation in which the standards and values of the Firm are maintained or exemplified, the operators earn a bonus on top of an already generous reward or salary. There would also be a need for punishment if standards are not maintained, such that the operator or team could face significant pay cuts or have their reward decreased for poor behaviour and actions in the Area of Operations. This should not aim to punish bad decisions as the operators are still human and will make mistakes, but punish selfish decision making, trying to exploit individuals for personal gain. This is necessary to eliminate many of the problems seen by the mercenary industry and even the UN Peacekeepers, particularly sexual and physical manipulation of civilians.
However, since judging between these requires human value judgement, this is an example of an area where oversight, or cooperation with international courts of law would be necessary. If this external oversight were not available, certain employees may be favoured in these decisions and events could go under or over punished. By becoming involved with external oversight and working closely in conjunction with international courts, this could help to provide a more valid, impartial oversight system to deter poor behaviour and encourage operators and employees to uphold the organisations values. Furthermore, if done publicly this could help earn international respect and through public transparency could help spread its values to build a positive reputation.

Another scheme of oversight could be implemented to directly oversee the actions of operators in the field. Much like the US Army, the Organisation could implement a form of visual and audio recording, such as head mounted cameras. If mounted upon the helmet of every operator this could ensure that their perspective can be more easily considered. If the cameras could be programmed so as not to be able to be turned off, this could provide constant surveillance in order to ensure the good behaviour of the Organisation’s operators. If something needed investigating, this could be combined with other evidence streamed directly to the overseeing Organisation (as covered later) to allow a valid judgement to be made. Other than for oversight reasons, it could also be used to protect the Organisation. If there is clear evidence, the Organisation could not be accused of having done something that it did not, and would permit the Organisation to be more accountable.

**Benefits of the solution**

*What benefits would it bring?*

The organisation could offer a well-trained alternative to conventional peacekeeping forces such as the UN Peacekeepers, perhaps even a supplementary force that provides a greater amount of protection coverage in conflict zones. Studying the aforementioned problems to the UN Peacekeepers, they can be seen to have gained something of a reputation for failing to act despite the risks of potential genocidal action.20 21 22 The aim and benefit this Organisation could bring is to protect the interests of all affected civilians in a conflict zone rather than prioritising individuals to save based on their association with certain countries, as suggested in the Guardian Article by Chris McGreal, the

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21 Anon., ‘Sliding towards anarchy’, *The Economist*, April 23rd 2016, Section: Middle East and Africa, pp. 41-42

22 N.B. As of 29 July 2016, the UN security council has decided to deploy a UN Police Component of up to 228 police officers. However, this has seen the delay of a few months in which much could have kicked off and had abstentions from Angola, China, Egypt and Venezuela. This shows that even when the signs point to necessary deployment there is still disagreement, even if not shown by vote. It is good that the UN finally decided on a deployment, but the length of time that has passed suggests that the many agendas the Security Council have to address has slowed their response significantly – Anon., ‘Security Council approves 228-strong UN police component for Burundi,’ *UN News Centre*, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54599#.V-T_GDXl-uu> [accessed 10 December 2016]
Peacekeepers acted in the interests of “white foreigners”. Going forward the UN has likely reformed its actions such that this would be less likely to occur in the future, but if things turn pear shaped, the Peacekeepers would likely be directed to key targets of importance to the UN rather than of specific importance to civilians or the country in which they are operating. Like before, the situation may turn for the worse such that the Peacekeepers are forced to withdraw, due to a failure in operational standards, as can be seen in the emotional statement by UN political advisor Shahryar Khan “Ten Belgians are dead, so you don't give a damn that thousands of Africans are about to be slaughtered.”

The lives of operators are important, but it should be necessary to separate different zones in the operation from others, so that whilst some areas may be considered too dangerous, civilians can be protected in others, and if precautions are taken, dangerous areas can be ‘populated’ by the force once again. This should be done rather than completely withdraw which can leave the country at risk, and makes those committing the violent acts feel as if there is nothing that can stop them. Thus, the Organisation should partly base itself in the countries in which it operates so as to provide an incentive to remain and to solve the problem rather than withdraw.

This could further be solved by assessing the types of people to hire. Looking at the “mercenary market,” the range of people working in this field seem to be some of the toughest, continuing a life in the military. If they could be persuaded to work for such an Organisation as this, and were motivated enough towards the protection of civilians, they could be of immense value. Of particular benefit would be the view that this Organisation is a “new solution”. Once a reputation has been established, this would hopefully minimise aggressive action against it, allowing the Organisation to protect those that need protecting, whilst operating cautiously to prevent operator casualties, and due to its reputation, hopefully not inciting direct violent actions; this could be helped by creating a recognisable uniform, similar to the blue berets and helmets of the UN Peacekeepers or the White Helmets of Syria’s White Helmet Volunteer Organisation. This is however, just hopeful speculation; the opposite could be entirely true as the reputation of the Organisation instead attracts violent action towards it, seen as a threat or a way for a group to test or showcase their strength. Thus, the Organisation needs to change how it operates based on local information and potential for violent action brought about by their reputation. On top of this the Organisation needs to ensure it hires the best of the best and has wide ranging combat capabilities, such that if these situations occur it is able to mitigate the threat and protect both its operators’ lives and the lives of civilians.

**Could the UN be reorganised?**

As will be explored, this project must overcome an abundance of pitfalls, as with any theoretical organisation there are large areas which need problem solving in order to provide a valid judgement as to whether the Organisation is viable in the world today, and if not, whether it could be useful in the future. One critical consideration is to ask the question: why could the UN not just reorganise itself to remove some of the problems laid out? From research done it is possible to see

that the UN is attempting to take measures to try and prevent future atrocities and failures (whether this is dealing with sexual abuse claims or ensuring it is more usefully protective in conflict zones).

The aim of establishing this Organisation is to provide a force which is not tied to the UN or other political forces and to provide solutions, or changes that would be unlikely to be implemented into the UN. One of the inherent flaws of the UN Peacekeepers is that they are tied to a security council of highly politically active nations often with conflicting views on conflicts around the world. This may not actively stop the deployment of the Peacekeepers, but the values of the Security Council filter through to the forces on the ground, providing a potential biased viewpoint in the conflict, and often a conflict of interests with the local populace. Similarly, by being tied to an organisation of such political accountability, difficulties arise when trying to deploy the UN Peacekeepers. The UN Peacekeepers can be fairly easily declined the right to enter a country as has been seen in Burundi.24

By setting up an organisation without such political ties, the Organisation should be able to put boots on the ground that will have a positive effect in the country of operations, as it would have made it clear that it is not a threat to any existing powers in a country, and would hopefully be more discreet in its deployment. This Organisation could be deployed to zones that appear to be descending into conflict through a variety of means. Ideally they would enter a country through legitimate means, either being granted permission to use the airspace, and use its resources (such as aerial transport) to enter the country, or could enter the country through already established air links. This last method would require that both countries and the air travel provider themselves knew of the armed nature of the Organisation, but if this could be established then this could offer a more discreet method of entry. The first method here is more viable, but it still runs the risk that the Organisation could be declined the right to enter. If the situation were deemed dire enough, the organisation should be capable of entering the country via its own means, this may not prove politically popular, but would allow the Organisation to save civilian lives in conflict zones when the Government is the one committing the atrocities. This is a good example of why the Organisation would also require an oversight scheme, to evaluate the necessity for this course of action, (something that shall be covered later).

Although the Peacekeepers are involved to remove bias towards a certain party in any conflict, the mission is still only voted upon by the 15-member Security Council, which contains potentially conflicting parties within the council itself. This is concerning due to the lack of representativeness of the security council. The UN Peacekeepers are also often not deployed to existing areas of conflict, not having been established for this purpose. They will maintain a presence in conflict zones if already deployed, and may be deployed to less active areas of a country in conflict, but as they are established to maintain the peace (as in the name) there is often potential difficulty and reluctance to engage and protect civilians in areas of ongoing conflict.

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How could this new Organisation improve on the United Nations?

The UN Peacekeepers have historically run into issues of commitment to regions of conflict. There have been many issues where the situation has spiralled out of control to such an extent that the operations of the UN Peacekeepers have been compromised. This has led to operational evaluation, multiple times leading to the withdrawal of the entirety of UN Peacekeeping efforts from an area. The Guardian article by Chris McGreal mentioned before states that “the UN also left behind its Rwandan staff. When it came to preserving lives, headquarters in New York meant foreigners not locals.”25 (Foreigners here means the above mentioned white foreigners, and local referring to Rwandan locals).

Again, much of this issue has hopefully been resolved by the UN, however the Rwandan situation reported occurred as recently as 1994, something which is not considered by many people today, operations by alternative forces could help to prevent this, given adequate training, and studying past situations to ensure that history does not repeat itself. By being less politically involved or attributable, this Organisation would be a more discreet force in a country of conflict, apart from its efforts to be open to public scrutiny. This may appear to be a problem with the Organisation, especially considering the issues of oversight the report covers below. However, the group may be able to attract less attention due to its intervention being less of a political and more of a humanitarian operation. Thus, if operating in a similar vein to a humanitarian organisation such as Médecins sans Frontières the Organisation may be able to enter a country with greater freedom.

The main catch point is the fact that the Organisation is bringing armed operators into a country, thus, not only does it need to abide by international law, but it needs to ensure it is abiding by the laws of the country. However, with an aim to enter into countries approaching crisis point or already over the tipping point, this Organisation may be able to enter the country of its own means, providing sufficient resources and investment into transport capabilities, without such political repercussions as if the Peacekeepers decided to force themselves into a country. If taking this more forceful peacekeeping method, having more of a disregard for the borders of countries falling into crisis, the Organisation would need to be elite in prowess, with many resources available to it, and have a particularly good oversight system as covered further in the project to mitigate the risks posed by the Organisation if it operates in this more free flowing manner. The combat capability of the Organisation would ensure that, if acting as mentioned, it would be able to hold its own if pushing into a country, and protect civilians in a range of scenarios of differing risks.

The objective is to be able to operate in countries around the world and not be denied as easily as Burundi is refusing the presence of UN forces. The Organisation needs hitting power and elite training to be able to lead negotiations, otherwise armed agitators would be able to dictate, on the premise that they would believe themselves able to outgun and outperform the organisation. At the very least this Organisation offers an alternative to UN Peacekeepers, if problems are seen with Peacekeeping operations in an area, or if Peacekeepers aren’t deployed this could be utilised instead.

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Challenges of and to the solution

Sexual exploitation

Although the UN may be aiming to protect and provide some level of peace in recovering and potential conflict zones, there are problems previously associated and with the institution itself. The UN has had some controversial operations in the past and unfortunate side effects; statistics often showing a spike in illegal sexual activity, primarily prostitution and rape allegations, following the deployment of UN Peacekeepers to a country or area. There have been many attempted explanations for this, such that this could be due to the fact that these troops are transported thousands of miles into areas rife with stress and tension, whilst these Peacekeepers are often well charged with the local currency leading them to indulge in stress relieving activities such as “alcohol, drugs and sex.”

There are of course many factors that could be leading to these issues beyond just this, and as a more human problem these are difficult to entirely problem solve in an organisation.

One of the key issues of the UN however is that they are constrained by privacy rights and are thus unable to perform rigorous background checks on the individuals they send to represent the UN Peacekeeping forces. This leaves holes in the net as some of the countries from which Peacekeepers are drawn may not require such stringent background checking as should be necessary or ascribe to different values of conduct; most importantly however, the checks that are in places have been described as ineffective in identify those who will go on to engage in misconduct. A less politically motivated organisation could improve on this through operating as a business, as it is able to hire and get to know its operators on a more personal level. By being established as one organisation, rather than a conglomeration of many, it is in more direct control of its employees, not drawing its forces from many nations’ armies around the world, instead picking those whose values and record comply with what they need. The UN does provide an opportunity for countries around the world to work towards the same goals, but a private organisation could achieve similar whilst cherry picking who it deploys to the zones of conflict.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual misconduct is a serious issue and has been repeated and undealt with for decades now. Something must be done to deal with the problem. Just like with the UN Peacekeepers, the potential for sexual abuse in organisations operating in these stressful and high risk environments can be particularly high due to this constant level of stress; the operators are often supplied a certain personal allowance for themselves to use in the region, thus gaining attention from the local populace. The


gung-ho nature of many potential operators can also lead to a force with a higher likelihood to commit these sexual crimes. One quote from the article “The vile sex abuse by UN Peacekeepers is leaving the United Nations in tatters,” a statement from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, exemplifies the impact of sexual abuse: Sexual Violence “is as destructive as any bomb or bullet.” The article itself can be seen to be very critical, and utterly condemning of the UN’s operations in Africa in particular, the tone of which is very strong, over-stressing the incompetence of the United Nations. Having stated this evaluation as to its intention, it does need to be stressed however, the topic of sexual abuse is of such significant importance that critical articles like this are necessary to bring these allegations to light and provide a useful insight into the extent of these problems. Upon further research, the full quote given by Ban Ki-Moon is “This grave human rights abuse is as destructive as any bomb or bullet,” an important and memorable statement, one that will resound in the ears of many listeners and readers. To fight these types of incidents in the Organisation, some form of oversight, or well drilled set of values must be present; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, stressed “there has to be accountability and there has to be credible deterrence.”

One of the ways in which to deter these sorts of actions would be to work in cooperation with international law governing regulators, putting those who commit such crimes on trial through systems such as the International Court of Justice in the United Nations or other courts of power, with an international reputation. Another way would be to work on the bonus scheme, such that the reward that the operators receive is so substantially different depending on their behaviour that there is great incentive to behave appropriately and to the standards of the Organisation. However, the best method of deterrence, is prevention of the act, such that even if an operator thought of committing sexual crimes, they would not be able to commit them. Though whether this is possible, and whether it is sustainable in the long term for the Organisation to employ operators who have the potential to commit these crimes, despite being unable, is up to question. This is one of the main reasons that oversight (as covered next), is necessary for an organisation of such independence, and less legal representation.

**A Question of Oversight**

Instead of a reliance on the UN Peacekeepers it could be beneficial to have an independent organisation that could operate with effectiveness in zones of conflict without a political agenda or motivation. Without taking sides in the conflict this Organisation could protect civilians and civilian interests, whilst its greater independence could allow it to provide more universal protection and aid

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in otherwise unreachable areas in zones of ongoing conflict. The UN tends to act as a stabilising force which will help where it is deployed, but is often seen acting as a political presence from the “Western World”. This Organisation, operating independently in unregulated environments could prove problematic without sufficient oversight, but it is also difficult to provide sufficient oversight on how well the Organisation is functioning and on active operations whilst allowing the force to operate in the interests of civilians without warping the values of the Organisation.

One difficulty in establishing oversight is to decide in which form this oversight should be implemented. The oversight could either be implemented as an internal structure, or the Organisation would be overseen externally. Both options could provide acceptable oversight, but by choosing one over the other a set of challenges must be overcome to make use of the advantages. The main advantage of establishing an internal oversight scheme is that it would permit the Organisation to retain its more politically free structure. The oversight could be implemented in the same way, such that the necessary values are threaded through it from the beginning, affecting future performance and helping to ensure that these values are maintained through the future. But this does not ensure that the oversight would maintain a value free perspective, and thus, as it is part of the Organisation, there is significant risk that the oversight it would provide would be given with a bias in favour of the organisation, negating any use of having this as a form of oversight. Aside from a lack of valid oversight, this internal oversight scheme could also pose a hindrance to international reputation and approval. The potential for bias would become a reputation whereby even if the oversight was valid and functioned appropriately, the organisation would be seen to be self-regulating, subject to bias, and operating in the interest of itself.

An external oversight option would remedy many of these problems as it would be less attached to the Organisation and acting in the interests of lawful, thought out, and appropriate actions. However, as the Organisation is trying to operate free from political influence, it is put at risk of the overseer placing their values on operations and disallowing certain actions to be taken, or pushing certain styles of acting as that is considered the “best” way of operating from one perspective, despite necessary reminders that this Organisation should operate according to the local situation, in the interests of civilians, and with a mind towards political neutrality.

By comparing the two schemes it is apparent that the oversight should best be done externally, else the Organisation will be left with too much free rein and no valid evaluation of operations taking place, as oversight becomes more of a part of the process than a way in which to ensure the Organisation operates in a suitable and ethical manner. External oversight should be performed such that a more impartial form of evaluation can take place, checking both the Organisations current actions and general operating standards. Oversight is best performed from a wider perspective if you want a true judgement, thus the Organisation could open itself to the public to receive opinions and judgement from the public eye. To ensure the oversight does not meddle too much into the values of the Organisation the values of independence and political freedom should be made clear to the overseers providing evaluative judgement. Criticisms should be duly accepted, but it could be made
clear that evaluation should be done in the interests of those who will be affected by the organisation (i.e. Civilians) and attempting to minimise political favouritism to different parties in the conflict. The ideal oversight group should act in ways to maximise effectiveness, minimise casualties and problems, but accept the aim to help everyone and protect civilian groups who can be helped whilst maintaining their political neutrality, meaning the Organisation should not favour any group in a conflict over any other.

*Control Risks*

One of the key themes that was stressed whilst talking with Simon Adamsdale, a co-founder of Control Risks, a security company, is to ensure the presence of a form of suitable oversight to ensure that all actions taken by any organisation are taken to minimise risks of fatalities, problems or unnecessary conflict, to name but a few. Oversight can occur in more ways than just the classifications of internal and external. To use Control Risks as an example, Mr. Adamsdale said that it has multiple departments, one of which is Risk Assessment, used to assess the risks in areas around the world, which is not just used by Control Risks themselves, but their services are hired out to other companies, groups or individuals to provide experienced risk assessment. It is thus necessary for oversight to be provided with these external evaluations to ensure that the organisation can see the big picture, and understands the situation that they are in.

A good example of listening to external viewpoints, warnings and basic oversight was in Fallujah, concerned with Blackwater and Control Risks. The incident occurred in 2004, when a convoy of US employees was ambushed, and the four armed contractors dragged from the vehicles and their bodies paraded around the city. This became a media storm, and led to a heavy handed reaction from the US Government. Upon reading Blackwater by Jeremy Scahill33 after having the conversation with Mr. Adamsdale, I was made aware that Control Risks had warned Blackwater of the dangers of Fallujah after Blackwater took over the contract, however, in trying to secure more lucrative contracts, Blackwater wanted to impress its new employees, thus ignored these warning messages. This led to a patrol conducted, unprepared, through the streets Fallujah and the death of the four contractors. Although this is not direct oversight, it implies the importance that external perspectives are heeded and given merit, elsewise uninformed or rash decisions will be made that may end in catastrophe for any of the parties involved in an operation.

The primary problem that can be seen with integrated oversight is that it is less likely to be internationally approved, it gives the impression that the organisation is self-regulating and subject to bias, this would decrease international renown and apparent effectiveness as the organisation would be seen as operating in the interests of itself. If deployed poorly, an organisation such as this could prove dysfunctional to resolving the conflicts and protecting civilians in a conflict area, instead introducing a third (or additional) party to the conflict. This could end up with these operatives being specifically targeted and attempted to be removed, which whilst operating so close to civilians could

cause civilian casualties. There is also the potential that one of the conflicting parties would inherently disapprove of any form of intervention for a multitude of reasons, potentially again putting operatives at greater risk and civilians at greater risk also.

There are incidences of Private Military Companies helping aid organisations such as Blackwater and its contract with ESS. But this is a cost for a company that could be helping people and likely needs the money to be able to afford the aid they supply. The company with which Blackwater was teamed up with and the company with which they were working for were all trying to exploit profit margins, or in the case of ESS, being exploited for profit. By removing much of this profit incentive through funding of other means, aid companies can hire protection for “free” and many more individuals can be provided protection.

Regulation limitations and oversight
One of the vital quotes from Corporate Warriors is that “If this industry is to be around for the coming decades, then how to regulate it is an important concern.” The Private Military Industry is notoriously difficult to regulate due to its international yet independent nature and necessity for a level of confidentiality (though this could be due to the lack of a consistent international regulatory body). The website Global Policy Forum lays out that the measures put down to try and regulate the use of mercenaries are difficult to apply to today’s companies due to the wording used in the Geneva Convention, and documents drafted that hold no legal power. This lack of regulation whilst a problem around the world due to the potential to exploit the lack of any system, could in fact be beneficial towards the establishment of this Organisation, as the relative lack of international power and interference could allow the Organisation to be formed without being hugely influenced by a particular nation or political ideology/powerhouse.

The Organisation would need to be established in a current nation and to abide by international laws to obtain the rights to wield weapons legally in conflict zones, but the relative freedom of regulations may allow it to operate without too great a political influence from the country, in which it is based, on its operational behaviour, this being driven by past experiences of the Organisation and its operators, and the overarching values of the Organisation. However, the lack of regulation comes with its own drawbacks. In place of regulations and laws, private military companies have become

35 P.W Singer, Corporate Warriors, p.238
36 P.W Singer, Corporate Warriors, p.40 – “The Geneva Convention perhaps provides the best general description, defining a “mercenary” as a foreign person who, despite not being a member of the armed forces in the conflict, is specifically recruited in order to fight and is motivated essentially by private gain. However, the legal designation that this international law draws from has its flaws. Due to political compromises among the signatory states, the negotiating parties later added overly specific descriptions that limited the definition of mercenaries. The conventions were amended to define mercenaries as only operating in international conflicts (some state parties wanted to use them internally), when, obviously enough, hired foreigners can and do fight in internal conflicts.” This extract highlights the definition and some of the problems associated with the clause.
labelled, this is probably one of their greatest limiting factors in trying to established a well renowned public image. Without a form of sufficient oversight the level of trust this Organisation would be able to attain from the international community would likely be poor and there would be a fair amount of negative labelling.

The main issue with adopting oversight from an external source is due to the aim of this organisation – to be value free, and free to operate around the world. It is a vain assumption that self-regulation would be any better, the Organisation would not only be more susceptible to corruption and self-interested actions, but would lose the ability to obtain a trusted external viewpoint on its actions, something which can be beneficial to the evolution of a company. Corporate Warriors highlights the necessity for oversight and regulation, particularly given that “PMFs are offering services of concern to society as a whole.” “The firms must realise that they have to be open to a higher degree of scrutiny,” Singer goes on to describe the current situation “Their current lack of full transparency has backfired, as it feeds concerns about firms’ ulterior motives and certainly bars any realisation of full legitimacy.”

Singer highlights the fears established before. A solution does become apparent when looking at this in regards to self-regulation.

Self-regulation is entirely possible given complete transparency to the global public eye and manipulation of the public image, and this could be said to be a form of external oversight as the public and international community is informed of the inner workings of the Organisation, and thus through their own means can protest any malfunctioning sectors. But the public’s experiences would not be in sufficient depth, thus really their use lies in affirming global acceptance of the Organisation. By laying out the exact values, means of achieving goals, and working of the Organisation, the firm is not only accepted as a publicly beneficial firm, but parties in potential conflict areas in which the organisation aims to get involved may also realise the lack of a threat the organisation poses. That said you cannot rely on the fact that conflicting parties would not see the Organisation as an interference or a threat, if they are fighting for the sake of fighting the appearance of a force to resolve the conflict may incite retaliatory violence as they don’t see their viewpoint being considered or detest those they are fighting and will not be willing to work alongside them.

By being completely open to the public eye the Organisation is more likely to be able to enter into conflict zones to fulfil its purpose, whilst reinforcing its trustworthiness by documenting these operations and further spreading news of its use and operational success – highlighting them to the public, either through use of the internet or media corporations, in an attempt to gain global support and recognition. These themselves are not politically neutral and may put a twist on the image of the firm, thus it is essential to provide information to a wide range of sources around the world, and to gain recognition from Governments. This should not affect the workings of the Organisation itself, but may be necessary to increase the public’s awareness of its existence and workings.

38 P.W Singer, Corporate Warriors, p. 239
How could this Organisation be funded?

Any funding that the Organisation is likely to obtain from the area of operations is unlikely to be substantial enough to sufficiently fund further operations; the ideal though would be to keep the Organisation small and cost efficient so as to be able to run on a lower level of funding but still maintain some level of global operational capability, a tough balance to achieve. In fact, having spoken to Simon Adamsdale, it was suggested to drop the global idea, at least at first. The Organisation should operate on a local scale as a “pilot study,” and hopefully thus draw in further funding for future operations. If funding were to be sourced from the conflict zone, it would be more likely to carry an intention or requirement behind it. This could lead the Organisation towards indirectly favouring certain groups in a conflict zone as they must ascribe to the requirements for funding, or directly as certain groups provide better funding thus incentivising the organisation to take this option.

It could be countered that by accepting regional funding this could lead to a better relationship between locals and the firm, as it gives the sense that their perspective is being focussed on. However, this still runs into the problem of catering to certain groups, thus in most scenarios runs counter to the values of the organisation. This would only really work if there were a very kind benefactor, or many individuals who approved of the function the firm was serving and wished or had the resources/funds to help out, but being in a conflict zone, the likelihood of this is beyond negligible. Furthermore, taking sides would place the private Organisation in the firing line of whatever armed opposition exists in the country. Thus, other methods of funding are essential to consider, removing the potential of acquiring payment from either of conflicting parties.

One such method would be to advertise the private Organisation in a similar vein as a charity, aiming to receive funding from a public economic base. This method could prove advantageous, as it is potentially likely to be able to garner more public support around the globe as people invest in the organisation, feeling a more personal connection and a sense that they are helping the world. Furthermore, with greater transparency this feeling could be accentuated as contributors could see where their donations are going, and exactly how they are helping. Although this Organisation is not seen charitably, having been described and established as private Organisation. It would be beneficial to accept donations from the public sphere. This could boost the funds of the Organisation, and could also boost public perception, adding to the “feel good factor” of donating to a worthy cause. The firm should not aim to make the public its main fund channel, but this would provide a welcome boost, and allow the Organisation to expand further. It is not aiming to be a charitable Organisation through this, but given the aim of the Organisation, working for humanitarian good, it would certainly be an idea to reach out to the global community.

Conclusion

This report has laid out the reasons that point towards the benefits of establishing this Organisation, but has also made certain to evaluate this with the problems of establishing the Organisation,
alongside problems with running operations in conflict zones. Looking at the report as a whole, and the extra research which has gone into the report without having made it directly into the final piece, I believe that this Organisation could prove beneficial, not necessarily now but in the future. It could offer an alternative peacekeeping force to those already established, one that is dedicated to the protection and representation of civilians in conflict. Given the complexity of many of the conflict zones today, it is of no doubt that this Organisation would be extremely difficult to set up, much less actually prove particularly helpful in the current conflict zones. By allowing the Organisation to develop from an idea into a small organisation, it may be able to test its usefulness in an ongoing conflict, helping to protect civilians on a local scale and assist in getting aid through the barrier of the conflict. If it can be proven to work, it could be scaled up to be able to protect civilians throughout an entire conflict; and, although a great challenge, and creating its own problems just through scaling up, eventually to progress to something more global, as a true alternative to existing structures. This is mostly just wishful thinking, given its method of operating, it already relies upon funders who believe the organisation would be a benefit, which could not support something on such a global scale. If the Organisation were able to attain funding from the global community, this story could change, but it would also need to be extremely careful not to allow itself to be influenced or controlled by those who fund it, and not to begin to favour those who provide funding. Although funding is necessary, it would be better for the Organisation to collapse due to a lack of resources, than to begin to contribute to the problems in conflict zones, necessitating the discussed forms of oversight.

The real reason this project was considered in the first place was due to the stories that infiltrated news corporations and were published. Civilians in conflict zones hold the worst end of the stick, and are often not given enough of a focus by the militaries and mercenaries of our world. The stories that return describe a world where something must be done to help those who cannot help themselves, and who very few of military capabilities, wish to help.

As I finish up the report, articles are streaming in speaking of the troubles and horrors faced by the civilians in Aleppo, and the frustrations as evacuation efforts are blocked, and prevented. Although uncertain in a situation like this, it is clear that something needs to be done, and it could be this Organisation which could be able to make a difference. One thing that has become clear as conflicts in the Middle East evolve, and tensions around the world rise, is that something needs to be done, something that will help the people, not some backwards, power incentivised, political ideology.
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