

Improving United Nations Rapid Reaction Capability: is a volunteer rapid reaction force the answer?

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Introduction	1
UN Rapid Reaction Capability: a Short History	5
Literature Review	14
Methodology	39
Case Study 1: Rwanda	45
Case Study 2: Sierra Leone	62
Conclusion	96
Bibliography	103

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This thesis is dedicated to Flora—the most wonderful woman to ever live in either China or Canada and the only person to own my heart

Introduction

I came to the United Nations from commanding a mechanized brigade group of 5,000 soldiers. If I had had that brigade group in Rwanda, there would be hundreds of thousands of lives spared today.¹

–Roméo Dallaire

General Kadish has said that this is very difficult. He has said we need to be patient, walk before we run, crawl before we walk. But I think that there are members of Congress who have unrealistic expectations when it comes to missile defense.²

-Donald Rumsfeld

History has shown that the UN's current system for troop and equipment procurement is woefully inadequate for conducting effective and rapidly deploying peace operations. The UN has been involved in the profession of promoting and keeping peace as long as it has existed, and the Charter of the United Nations cites "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war" as the organization's *raison d'être*.³ The UN's founders assumed that the organization would have the ability to call on contingents from member states' militaries when needed for the purposes of maintaining international peace and stability; the bipolar stalemate of the Cold War, however, prevented this from happening. Others suggested that the UN should establish its own army for this purpose, but these proposals were also crushed by a combination of Cold War politics and Third World unease. As a result, the UN had to make do with voluntary contributions from members when the need for peace operations arose. In some cases the troops arrived well prepared and on time to carry out their mission, such as when the UN deployed its "Emergency Force" operation to supervise France, Great Britain, and Israel's withdrawal

¹ Roméo Dallaire quoted in Scott R. Feil, "Could 5,000 Peacekeepers Have Saved 500,000 Rwandans? Early Intervention Reconsidered," *ISD Reports* 3, no. 2 (1997): 1.

² Donald Rumsfeld quoted in Frontline, "Missile Wars," PBS, 2002, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/missile/interviews/coyle.html> (accessed April 23, 2009).

³ UN, *Charter of the United Nations*, preamble.

from Egypt after the Suez War. In other cases, the troops deployed slowly or not at all. The UN's current inability to achieve rapid deployment capability has resulted in "frequent delays, vast human suffering and death, diminished credibility, opportunities lost, [and] escalating costs."⁴ Something clearly must be done.

After the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, General Roméo Dallaire—the official who commanded the UN's small and relatively impotent military observer mission in the Rwandan capital of Kigali—stated that if he had a force of 5,000 soldiers under his command when the genocide began, he would have been able to save "hundreds of thousands of lives."⁵ Many, including Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, took this as evidence that a small "rapid reaction force" could have stopped the killing had the UN deployed it early in the conflict.⁶ By this term, Boutros-Ghali was referring to an oft-proposed concept of a small standing army (usually between 5,000 15,000 troops) that the UN could use for peace operations. Since that time, however, the "rapid reaction force" concept has become intimately linked with the Rwandan Genocide. The World Federalist Movement, a strong rapid reaction force supporter, argues that a volunteer rapid reaction force must be capable of stopping genocide if it is to be judged effective.⁷ Many have noted that the Rwandan militias responsible for carrying out most of the killing had very little in

⁴ H. Peter Langille, "Conflict Prevention: Options for Rapid Deployment and UN Standing Forces," in *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 219.

⁵ Roméo Dallaire quoted in Scott R. Feil, "Could 5,000 Peacekeepers Have Saved 500,000 Rwandans? Early Intervention Reconsidered," *ISD Reports* 3, no. 2 (1997): 1.

⁶ Adam Roberts, "Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History," in *The United Nations Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice since 1945*, ed. Vaughan Lowe, Adam Roberts, Jennifer Welsh, and Dominik Zaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 115.

⁷ Johansen, Robert C. "Expert Discussion of the United Nations Emergency Peace Service: the Cuenca Report," in *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service: to Prevent Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, ed. Robert C. Johansen. (New York: World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy, 2006) 50.

the way of sophisticated arms or other military equipment; a rapid deployment force of some kind, they contend, could have easily stopped them from carrying out the genocide.⁸ Similarly, critics of the standing rapid reaction force concept focus on the Rwandan Genocide as well. For instance, Kelly M. Greenhill argued that the creation of an “international rapid reaction brigade” would not improve the international community’s ability to react to promote peace and stability because situations such as the Rwandan Genocide require more troops, better equipment, and faster response time than the UN would ever be able to provide.⁹ Although she does not say this directly, Greenhill’s claim implies that a UN rapid reaction force must be able to stop or prevent *all* conflicts if it is to be considered “successful.” Even rapid reaction force supporters seem to agree with her logic. Clearly, many believe that ability to stop future genocides in the African Great Lakes Region is a fundamental characteristic of any rapid reaction force proposal.

My research has led me to a conclusion that contradicts this traditional belief. While studying the history of the Rwandan Genocide, I made two important realizations. First, Dallaire’s claim about 5,000 troops being able to stop the killing is much more problematic than most people assume. Second, there are dangerous implications for using Rwanda as a benchmark to decide whether or not the UN should establish such a rapid reaction force. When scholars assess rapid reaction force proposals according to each hypothetical force’s ability to “solve” the Rwandan Genocide, they implicitly endorse the belief that the purpose of a rapid reaction force is to deal with this type of situation. However, if one were to prove

⁸ W. Andy Knight, “Developing a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations,” Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations, February 1996, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/kna01/> (accessed on November 23, 2008), 6.

⁹ Kelly M. Greenhill, “Mission Impossible? Preventing Deadly Conflict in the African Great Lakes Region,” *Security Studies* 11, no. 1 (2001): 77-124.

that such a force could never have stopped the Rwandan Genocide, then the entire concept of a UN rapid reaction force would be discredited.

In the first case study, I will show how it is unlikely that a UN rapid reaction force (or any small force, for that matter) would have been able to either stop or prevent the killing. Even though a rapid reaction force might not have succeeded in Rwanda, however, such a force could save countless lives in other situations. In my second case study, I will show that a lightly armed force of 6,000 volunteer soldiers under direct UN command would most likely have been able to prevent the collapse of the Sierra Leone peace process in 1999, saving thousands of lives and over a billion dollars. It is neither logical nor ethical to oppose a proposal that would save thousands of lives in many conflicts just because it could not save hundreds of thousands in another. There is still a net gain of thousands of human lives and billions of dollars, and it is foolish to ignore this.

Developing the capacity to deal with situations such as the Rwandan Genocide is a laudable goal; however, the UN must begin by pursuing easier to achieve goals *before* pursuing harder ones. As Donald Rumsfeld stated about the proposed US missile defense shield (a project that would cost considerably more than a 6,000 person UN rapid reaction force), “we need to be patient, walk before we run, crawl before we walk.” The UN is still only “crawling” in the direction of developing an effective rapid reaction capability. Although “running” might be the final objective, the difference between “crawling” and “walking” is still thousands of human lives and billions of dollars in international resources. The world is dying to see the UN get up off its hands and knees and take that first step.

History of “Rapid Reaction Capability”

UN Peace Operations in the Cold War

ARTICLE 43 OF THE UN CHARTER: THE ORIGINAL RAPID REACTION PROPOSAL

The belief that the UN should have the capability to respond to emergencies in a rapid and effective manner is as old as the organization itself. Article 43 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter states that every member of the United Nations has a duty to provide the Security Council with “armed forces, assistance, and facilities” when they are needed for the maintenance of international peace and security.”¹⁰ Article 43 was supposed to provide a way for the international community to come together to stop potential conflicts from growing into full-scale wars through two parallel strategies. First, it provided

THE COLD WAR REALITY

While the framers of the UN Charter intended that the new international organization would play a major role in preventing and containing armed conflict, things did not turn out the way they planned. To quote Winston Churchill, an “iron curtain” quickly descended across Europe.¹¹ The Soviet Union was very conscious about its precarious security situation following the end of the Second World War. It worked

¹⁰ Article 43 is part of Chapter VII, which authorizes the UN to take forcible action when the Security Council decides that one or more countries are threatening international peace. Peace operations authorized under Chapter VII are sometimes referred to as “peace enforcement” missions, because they usually have a provision that allows the mission to use force. Chapter VII missions also do not require the consent of the parties involved—the UN can technically use Chapter VII to deploy a mission in an area where the state has not given permission for the deployment. Other peace operations are authorized under Chapter VI, which deals with the “peaceful settlement of disputes.” Chapter VI missions are sometimes referred to as “peacekeeping” missions, although the term “peacekeeping” is often freely used in reference to all kinds of UN peace operations. Chapter VI missions usually require that all parties involved in the conflict consent to the deployment of a UN mission, which in turn usually does not have the power to use force except in self defense.

¹¹ Winston Churchill, “Iron Curtain Speech” (speech, Westminster College, Fulton, MO, March 5, 1946).

tirelessly to consolidate its sphere of influence in the European continent as well as in Africa and Asia. As a result, the Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States guaranteed that the arrangements necessary for Article 43 to function would never be created.¹²

PEACEKEEPING: A COLD WAR CREATION

Since the UN could not actually intervene to stop or prevent wars, it struggled to develop an alternative role for itself in promoting international peace and security. In 1948, the UN deployed its first ever peace operation, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Unarmed and impartial, UNTSO military observers went to the Middle East to supervise compliance with the ceasefires established after the first Arab-Israeli War. Their role was minimal but nevertheless important: UNTSO observers did not carry weapons, so they could not fight even in self-defense; however, they served an important role by reporting ceasefire violations to the UN. This was the UN's first Chapter VI "peacekeeping" mission, even though Canadian diplomat, and later prime minister, Lester B. Pearson did not coin the term "peacekeeping" until the Suez Crisis of 1957.¹³ By definition, peacekeeping missions involved situations where peace had already been established. In peacekeeping operations, the UN used either unarmed or lightly armed observers to perform such activities as monitoring compliance with peace treaties and ceasefires and observing demilitarized areas for signs of aggressive activity. In general, the UN only

¹² Patrick A. McCarthy, "Building a Reliable Rapid-Reaction Capability for the United Nations," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 2 (2000): 141.

¹³ Krasno, "To End the Scourge of War," in *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, ed. Jane E. Krasno (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 228.

deployed missions when all sides agreed to the UN's involvement and the UN's troops avoided the use of force except in self-defense.¹⁴ As a result, these missions were relatively uncontroversial.

While the Soviet Union and the US were willing to tolerate the UN to have this sort of limited conflict-management role, they did not want the organization to intervene in their so-called "proxy wars." These wars were usually civil wars where the Soviet Union, the United States, or both countries funded groups vying for power. Examples of proxy wars include the Angola's 27 year civil war, where three main conflicting parties solicited material and political support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, the U.S., and South Africa; the Nicaraguan conflict, where the U.S. backed rightist "Contra" guerrillas in an attempt to destabilize a left-leaning government; and the Soviet-Afghan War, where the U.S. provided covert training and material aid to Afghanistan's mujahedeen fighters in their battle to drive out occupying Soviet forces. Thus, although the UN was able to help promote peace in some situations, it was too divided along ideological and geopolitical lines to seriously discuss ending other violent conflicts. The UN would have to wait until the end of the Cold War to begin to address them.

NEW PROPOSALS: STANDING FORCES VERSUS STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS

¹⁴ There are major exceptions to UN's decision to only deploy "peacekeeping" missions. These are the Korean War and the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). In the first situation, the Security Council (without the Soviet Union present) voted to authorize a large conventional military mission to force the North Koreans out of South Korea. The Korean War is a fairly unique case, and most scholars do not consider it to be a peace operation. ONUC, on the other hand, was a UN intervention in the middle of a civil war that involved outside intervention by other countries. In many ways it is similar to the more recent missions of the 1990s in places such as Bosnia and Somalia. See Krasno, "Scourge of War," 232-9.

Although the Cold War UN dealt primarily in relatively simple peacekeeping operations, this did not stop some scholars and UN officials from proposing improvements to the way the UN acquired troops for its operations. After the failure to “activate” Article 43, Secretary-General Trygve Lie (the UN’s first secretary-general) proposed the establishment of a permanent peace force that would be controlled directly by the United Nations, first in 1948, then in 1951 and then later again in 1952. Lie’s first proposal was for what he called a “UN Guard Force.” Lie’s vision was for a small force under direct UN command capable of operating in violent areas such as Jerusalem in the late 1940s. The UN Guards, he wrote, “would not be used as a substitute for the forces contemplated in Articles 42 and 43,” but rather their primary objective would be to monitor ceasefires and perform constabulary functions in UN trust territories.¹⁵ Although the Security Council was reluctant to establish a UN Guard Force, Lie went ahead and proposed a “UN Legion.” The Legion proposal was ambitious: it would have been composed of 50,000 volunteer soldiers under direct UN control.¹⁶ Realizing that this idea was probably too ambitious, Lie recommended the creation of a smaller “UN Volunteer Reserve.” Even though the Volunteer Reserve would not have been large enough to threaten either the US or USSR, both countries felt that it was a “terrible idea.”¹⁷ For its part, the Soviet Union was highly skeptical that such forces would be employed in an “impartial” manner (i.e., they would not adversely affect Soviet interests). Both proposals were discarded due to Soviet

¹⁵ Trygve Lie quoted in Roberts, “Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History,” 101.

¹⁶ Roberts, “Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History,” 103.

¹⁷ Brian Uquhart, preface to *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service to Prevent Genocide and Crimes against Humanity*, ed. Robert C. Johansen (New York: World Federalist Movement, 2006), 7.

opposition.¹⁸ The UN did not seriously look into any more such proposals for the duration of the Cold War.

UN Peace Operations in the 1990s

THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE RISE OF UNSAS

The end of the Cold War dramatically improved the Security Council's ability to deal with issues of war and peace. For instance, the Council authorized ten peace operations over the five year period between 1987 and 1992. On the one side, the majority of these operations were Chapter VI peacekeeping operations reminiscent of Cold War missions. On the other, the Council became interested deploying operations in areas formerly off-limits that were formerly considered to be "proxy conflicts" off-limits to UN involvement.¹⁹ For instance, twelve out of the twenty peace operations authorized by the Security Council between 1988 and 1993 involved conflicts that had been fueled by Cold War intrigue.²⁰

The Cold War's end had another important effect on UN peace operations as well: it reopened discussions regarding the creation of an improved system for organizing and allocating troops for missions. These negotiations bore fruit when, in 1993, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali commissioned a "UN Standby Forces Planning Team" to develop a system to manage member-state troop contributions for peace operations. The team proposed the creation of a United Nations Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS). UNSAS was not a standing force, but rather a system in which states agreed to provide a

¹⁸ McCarthy, "Building a Reliable Rapid-Reaction Capability," 141.

¹⁹ Mats Berdal, "The Security Council and Peacekeeping," in Lowe, Roberts, Welsh, and Zaum, 184.

²⁰ Alex J. Bellamy, Paul Williams, and Stuart Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 79.

certain number of troops to the UN for use in peace operations. When not in use, these troops would stay in their home countries training and readying themselves for possible deployment.²¹ At the time, many within the international community felt that UNSAS had a lot of promise. In many ways, it is similar to Article 43's standby arrangements system. In both cases, countries agreed to lend troops to the UN when called upon to do so. Certainly, it seemed to provide the UN with a more stable source of troops and materiel for peace operations than the *ad hoc* system of the past.

UNSAS'S RIGHT OF PASSAGE

The 1990s were characterized by a sense of excitement over renewed prospects for world peace combined with a feeling of dread over the explosion of ethnic turmoil in Africa and the Balkans. On the one hand, the disappearance of the Soviet Union opened up new possibilities for the Security Council to authorize peace operations. The UN had the opportunity to play a bigger role in managing conflicts than it had before, and its provision of peace operations gained new relevance in the post-Cold War world.²² On the other hand, the task facing the UN was momentous. Between 1989 and 2009, the UN launched 46 missions.²³ Unfortunately, UNSAS was not capable of dealing with the stresses of providing for this many operations troops, leaving the UN "chronically unable" to deploy forces in a timely manner.²⁴ Although there were successes, many of the operations authorized were considered failures in the eyes of the international community. Slow deployment times for

²¹ McCarthy, "Building a Reliable Rapid-Reaction Capability," 143.

²² Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, 79.

²³ This number includes multiple and successive missions within one country; thus, UNAVEM I and II in Angola are considered separate missions, as are UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone.

²⁴ Roberts, "Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History," 121.

peace missions and insufficiently prepared troops often lead to “frequent delays, vast human suffering and death, diminished credibility, opportunities lost, [and] escalating costs.”²⁵ Some missions involved states not living up to their troop commitments. During the 1990s it became apparent that there was a “gaping hole” between the UN’s desire to act and its ability to do so.²⁶

After the Rwandan Genocide, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali decided to join the reinvigorated debate over whether the UN should have its own standing military force. In his 1995 publication *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, the Secretary-General admitted that the UN’s reliance on member state contributions for peace operations hampered its ability to respond effectively to crises. Stating that “I have come to the conclusion that the United Nations does need to give serious thought to the idea of a rapid reaction force,” he argued in favor of a multinational high readiness force composed of brigades donated by different member states.²⁷ The Security Council, however, was reluctant to pursue Boutros-Ghali’s rather ambitious project. Instead, the Security Council made it known that it would prefer to look into “the further enhancement” of the existing standby arrangements system.²⁸ Although the debate continued in academic circles, the UN did not give serious consideration to the matter again.

THE BRAHIMI REPORT

²⁵ H. Peter Langille, “Conflict Prevention: Options for Rapid Deployment and UN Standing Forces,” in Woodhouse and Ramsbotham, 219.

²⁶ Knight, “Developing a Rapid Reaction Capability,” 3.

²⁷ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, quoted in Roberts, “Proposals for UN Standing Forces: History, Tasks and Obstacles,” in *UN Rapid Reaction Capabilities: Requirements and Prospects*, ed. David Cox and Albert Legault (Clementsport, Canada: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1995), 53-4.

²⁸ Security Council President Mompoti Merafhe cited in Roberts, “Proposals for UN Standing Forces: History, Tasks and Obstacles,” 54.

In 2000, the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations called upon the international community to help the United Nations achieve what it referred to as “rapid and effective deployment capacity.” In its wide-ranging report (usually referred to as the *Brahimi Report*, after the panel’s chairperson, Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi), the panel argued that many missions were struggling to fulfill their mandates due to a combination of several factors, including slow deployment times, shortages of well trained troops, and poor access to necessary materiel and financial resources.²⁹ According to the report, fragile cease-fires and peace treaties crumbled in part due to the UN’s inability to provide a credible force on the ground.³⁰ In order to address this problem, the UN needed to develop a “rapid and effective deployment capacity,” which the panel defined as “the ability to fully deploy traditional peacekeeping operations within 30 days of the adoption of a Security Council resolution establishing such an operation, and within 90 days in the case of complex peacekeeping operations.”³¹

The report offered a number of suggestions for achieving this goal. These included the development of “on-call lists” of competent military officers, an enhanced standby-arrangements system, better training standards, and improved funding and logistics.³² The report also identified some of the major impediments that have prevented the UN from attaining “rapid and effective deployment capacity”:

Many Member States have argued against the establishment of a standing United Nations army or police force, resisted entering into reliable standby arrangements, cautioned against the incursion of financial expenses for building a reserve of

²⁹ UN General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Official Records, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305, 2000, 15-28.

³⁰ A/55/305, 11.

³¹ A/55/305, xi.

³² A/55/305, 91-169.

equipment or discouraged the Secretariat from undertaking planning for potential operations prior to the Secretary-General having been granted specific, crisis-driven legislative authority to do so under these circumstances, the United Nations cannot deploy operations “rapidly and effectively” within the timelines suggested. The analysis that follows argues that at least some of these circumstances must change to make rapid and effective deployment possible.³³

Although some minor improvements have been achieved since the Brahimi Report came out, all of the major impediments cited still exist, as do the problems to which they contribute. States routinely deliver fewer troops, insufficient materiel, and less funding than they pledge for operations. For instance, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in 2005 that the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was suffering from an extremely slow troop deployment that constrained its ability to protect civilians and demobilize child soldiers.³⁴ These problems will not go away by themselves. The following section will discuss the various proposals for giving the UN rapid reaction capability.

³³ A/55/305, 15-6.

³⁴ UN, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Burundi 2005,” Consolidated Appeals Process, 2005, [http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/CAP_2005_Burundi/\\$FILE/CAP_2005_Burundi_SCREEN.PDF?OpenElement](http://ochadms.unog.ch/quickplace/cap/main.nsf/h_Index/CAP_2005_Burundi/$FILE/CAP_2005_Burundi_SCREEN.PDF?OpenElement) (accessed March 6, 2009), 5-6.

Literature Review

UN Rapid Reaction Capability: Competing Approaches

Approaches to UN rapid reaction capability can be categorized into four main schools of thought. The first school is composed of the standby-arrangements advocates. Proponents of this view tend to emphasize improving the current standby-arrangements system through minor adjustments to the way troops are categorized, trained, and deployed. They believe that it is pointless to focus on standing force proposals right now: they cite a combination of geopolitical factors such as Third World opposition as well as more mundane issues, such as a lack of financial resources as reasons that a volunteer rapid reaction force is not an option worthy of serious discussion. The half-way advocates make up the second group. They support a middle-ground approach. Instead of maintaining the current system, they advocate creating a rapidly deployable force composed of individual national units under direct UN command. The Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG)—a force made up of predominantly European national contingents lent to the UN for peace operations—is this group’s brainchild. Third, there is the volunteer force school. Although there are many variations on what the proper size, composition, and mandate of such a force would be, all members of this last group argue that the United Nations needs its own volunteer standing force for peace operations. Finally, the fourth group includes those who argue that the UN should not pursue any kind of rapid reaction force or arrangement at all. Rapid reaction opponents vary from those who think that regional organizations are better able to handle situations that require rapid response to those who oppose the idea of the UN in its entirety. Because of the sheer

size and eclectic nature of this body of thought, I will not set aside a separate section of my literature review for it. However, in the course of the literature review and the following case studies, I will answer the most common objections to the development of UN rapid reaction capability.

Some may agree with my categorization of these different viewpoints into three distinct schools of thought. H. Peter Langille, Maxime Faille, Carlton Hughes and James Hammond contend that the three main approaches may also be thought of as stages in a “cumulative development process” characterized by “coherent evolution.”³⁵ They note that efforts to improve UNSAS may lead to the eventual adoption of a permanent multinational force, which could in turn evolve into a standing rapid reaction force made up of volunteers. Langille, Faille, Hughes and Hammond are correct that this may occur; however, at the moment, the majority of theorists have limited themselves to supporting one of the three main approaches. Grouping them into schools of thought is useful because it highlights similarities and differences between different proposals. Also, different theorists tend to articulate fairly clearly which solution they prefer pursuing. Thus, a reformist who thinks that the international community should concentrate its efforts on reforming UNSAS now, but believes that a volunteer rapid reaction force could become viable two hundred years from now after UNSAS is perfected, can be safely categorized as reformist because her principal objective is the reformation of the current system. She should not be grouped in the same category as an advocate of a volunteer force who considers UNSAS to be a hopeless mess and believes that reformist efforts are futile. Even if both individuals have

³⁵ H. Peter Langille, Maxime Faille, Carlton Hughes and James Hammond. “A Preliminary Blueprint of Long-Term Options for Enhancing a UN Rapid Reaction Force,” in Cox and Legault, 179.

an ultimate goal of creating a volunteer rapid reaction force, their approaches are nevertheless distinct.

The Standby-Arrangements Approach

Pragmatists and more conservative advocates of UN peace missions favor the reformist approach. The idea of building on the existing system through the adoption of enhancements such as improved personnel databases and training programs is relatively uncontroversial. Unlike the “UN Legion” concept, relatively few states are frightened by the idea of tweaking the current system. This, in turn, makes the reformist approach more politically feasible. A reformist proposal would be more likely than hybrid and volunteer proposals to gain support from UN member states.

In general, reformists agree that the current system for UN peace operations is flawed in several ways. First is the issue of troop readiness and training. National governments provide troops to the UN to use in peace operations. As anyone familiar with the concept of the tragedy of the commons might expect, states rarely contribute their best personnel or equipment unless there is a major incentive for them to do so. Many states often have national objectives in addition to humanitarian concerns for participating in peace operations. For example, a state might contribute generously to a mission to help end a civil war in another country if it were being affected directly by the conflict (e.g., the conflict was causing large numbers of refugees to take shelter in neighboring states). However, there are also cases where contributing countries have an incentive to provide poorly equipped troops. Countries with poorly equipped militaries are often drawn to

peace operations believing that the UN will help supply them with arms and supplies.

Reformists acknowledge that these kinds of situations have a negative effect on the UN's ability to conduct peace operations.

Supporters of the Reformist approach support a platform often referred to as the Canadian Proposal. The Canadian Proposal has four logical parts. First, states are reluctant to contribute to peace operations "because of concerns over the organization's ability to use them in a professional and effective manner."³⁶ Although other factors may affect a state's decision to not contribute, the primary cause is a widespread perception that the UN is not responsible enough to be given funds for peace operations or temporary control over national defense assets such as troops and vehicles. Second, although a standing force may be a long term objective, it is not a viable option at this time.³⁷ Therefore, the organization will always have to rely on contributions from member states when it decides to undertake a peace operation. Third, the current system is fixable; it does not need to be replaced or completely overhauled. Once necessary fixes are made, then the system will be functional. Fourth, once the system becomes functional, proponents believe that member states "will promptly make available the troop contributions which, in the absence of a standing force, are the other crucial component of a UN rapid response capability."³⁸

Most reformers focus their efforts primarily on the United Nations Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS). UNSAS was established in 1993 at the behest of Secretary-

³⁶ Cathy Downes, "Troop Contributors and the UN's Capability for Rapid Reaction," in Cox and Legault, 158.

³⁷ Tim Pippard and Veronica Lie, "Enhancing the Rapid Reaction Capability of the United Nations: the Options," United Nations Association of the United Kingdom, July 2004, http://www.una.org.uk/Enhancing%20the%20Rapid%20Reaction%20Capability%20of%20the%20UN_July%202004.pdf (accessed November 23, 2008) 2.

³⁸ Downes, "Troop Contributors," 158.

General Boutros-Ghali and other reformist elements who complained that the previous system for peace operations was overly reliant on ad hoc arrangements for individual operations. UNSAS is essentially a troop procurement mechanism. Countries sign up with UNSAS to make a certain number of troops available for use in UN peace operations. When the UN decides to authorize a mission, it must then go through those lists and ask countries to fulfill their obligations. Most reformists see UNSAS as an important but limited step towards a fully functional rapid reaction capability.³⁹ UNSAS is less of an institution in its own right as it is an arrangement between Member States and the governing bodies of the UN. UNSAS “is based on conditional commitments by Member States of specified resources within the agreed response times for UN peacekeeping operations.”⁴⁰ “Conditional” refers to the right held by participating states to approve or disapprove the use of their troops in any mission. While reformists regularly bemoan the tendency of many states to refuse to send previously pledged troops, they do not propose to change this aspect of UNSAS. After all, few states would be willing to participate in an arrangement where they had no control over the use of their own forces. Instead, reformists argue for four changes: wider participation, deeper participation, improved training, and improved planning.⁴¹ They contend that more states need to participate within the UNSAS framework. Reformists acknowledge that the UNSAS troop solicitation process has tended to be a long and difficult process that has resulted in long time lags between mission authorization and

³⁹ Jane Boulden and W. Andy Knight, “Rapid Reaction: Filling the Gap,” in Cox and Legault, 38.

⁴⁰ UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “United Nations Standby Arrangements System,” UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, April 2005, http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/milad/fgs2/unsas_files/sba.htm (accessed January 18, 2009).

⁴¹ McCarthy, “Building a Reliable Rapid-Reaction Capability,” 144-6.

deployment.⁴² They also argue that states should try to contribute better troops to missions. To complement the troop solicitation process, they would like to promote a system for common training and standardization of equipment. Thus, they believe that the current system can be fixed without creating a specific rapid reaction force.

The standby approach's biggest flaw is its conservatism. Advocates of building on current system generally oppose any policy proposal that might fundamentally alter the status quo. Problematically, rapid reaction capability's primary foe is the belief that states can be counted upon to set aside national interests and provide high quality troops complete with funding and necessary materiel when the need arises. The empirical record shows that this assumption is unfounded. States obviously do contribute to missions; however, they tend to be selective. States with democratic governments tend to contribute to missions that are either politically popular with their electorates or at least not unpopular. While the jury is still out on whether the so-called "CNN Effect" exists, it is still a truism that most politicians are not willing to risk losing office over unpopular interventions in far-away places. Regarding the UN's response to the genocide in Rwanda, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali noted that "not one of the nineteen countries which at that time had pledged 31,000 troops for future U.N. peacekeeping operation was prepared to send a single soldier."⁴³ Neither UNSAS nor any reformist proposals would prevent this kind of renegeing on commitments.

The standby advocates' claims are also not supported by empirical evidence. They contend that creating better troop contribution databases, standardizing equipment, and

⁴² Boulden and Knight, "Rapid Reaction: Filling the Gap," 38.

⁴³ Paul Lewis, "A Short History of United Nations Peacekeeping," in Benton, 40.

promoting common training can all help the UN overcome its lack of rapid reaction capability; however, the UN *has* tried implementing many of their proposals. Although some minor improvements have been made (e.g., improved computer databases, more consultations between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and troop-contributing states), the UN nevertheless has not seen an increase in member state willingness to provide sufficient numbers of well qualified troops to the UN. To this day, there are only a small number of states that reliably give troops to peace operations. As of December 2008, only four countries contributed more than 4,000 troops each: Pakistan (10,189), Bangladesh (8,358), India (7,963), and Nigeria (4,903).⁴⁴ Although these countries are very generous, the UN's dependence on them for troop contributions poses serious problems. Aside from the longstanding enmities between the first three countries that prevent them from training together, it is troubling that the UN has to rely on a small group of developing nations for a major portion of its troop needs. If India and Pakistan were to go to war with one another again, then the UN would lose two of its most reliable troop contributors. Bangladesh's state is very fragile, and as the recent mutiny by the Bangladesh Rifles demonstrated,⁴⁵ Bangladesh's internal security situation is far from stable enough to guarantee that the country will be able to continue supplying large numbers of troops for peace operations. Nigeria has other security obligations through the Economic Community of West African States, in which it is a very active provider of troops for peace operations

⁴⁴ UN, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Monthly Summary of Contributions (Police, Military Observers and Troops) As of 31 December 2008," UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, December 2008, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/05-08.htm> (accessed March 7, 2009).

⁴⁵ Mark Tran, "Bangladesh mutiny: troops surrender after two day revolt," Guardian.co.uk, February 26, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/26/bangladesh-mutiny> (accessed on February 27, 2009).

and other military interventions.⁴⁶ This small pool of regular troop contributors does not suffice to provide the UN with a realistic ability to procure and deploy troops rapidly and effectively for peace operations.

The Half-Way Approach

This approach encompasses the most varied literature of the three main schools. Any proposal that combines the reformists' focus on individual contributions by states with the idea of a permanent force or reserve falls within this category. The idea of a multinational brigade or reserve is also popular among theorists, largely because the idea does not require explicit approval from a majority of UN member states and thus is currently more politically viable than a standing volunteer force.

There are two kinds of half-way proposals. First there is the idea of a permanent standing multinational force. Member states would either lease or donate national contingents to the UN for use in peace operations. Once the troops and materiel had been contributed, the UN would be free to deploy them for use in peace operations without national parliamentary approval. In 1957, William R. Frye proposed a permanent "United Nations Peace Force" along these lines, which would be composed of national contingents and could be used for "observation, patrol and other similar duty" in UN peace operations.⁴⁷ Member states, however, have tended to be opposed to this option because it

⁴⁶ In total, Nigeria has participated in ECOWAS operations in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, as well as two interventions in Liberia.

⁴⁷ William R. Frye, *A United Nations Peace Force* (New York: Oceana Publications for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1957), 90.

would undermine their ability to withdraw troops. Thus, this proposal has never been given serious consideration.

An alternative to this proposal is the concept of a multinational force where countries retain the right to veto troop deployments. In 1995, the government of Denmark decided to establish a rapid reaction force for traditional peacekeeping operations.⁴⁸ The proposed force was called the Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Although not technically a standing force, SHIRBRIG theoretically provides the UN with a rapidly deployable brigade-sized force for peace operations. According to some, SHIRBRIG's creation was an "integrative compromise" between the reformist Canadian Proposal and more radical proposals for a standing volunteer force.⁴⁹

While it is supposed to work in close cooperation with the Security Council and Department of Peacekeeping Operations, SHIRBRIG is not technically an organ of the United Nations. The SHIRBRIG Steering Committee, a deliberative body made up of representatives from all SHIRBRIG troop-contributing states, decides when and if to provide the UN troops for peace operations. It has participated in four UN peace operations since its formation in 1996. Although it appears that SHIRBRIG may be

⁴⁸ Denmark announced that it only wanted the force to be used for Chapter VI operations, or situations where all the parties on the ground consented to the force's deployment. Thus, had SHIRBRIG existed at the time of the Rwandan Genocide, the UN would not have been able to use it to forcibly stop the Hutu militias from massacring civilians.

⁴⁹ Joachim Koops and Johannes Varwick, "Ten Years of SHIRBRIG: Lessons Learned, Development Prospects and Strategic Opportunities for Germany," Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations, July 17, 2008, http://www.shirbrig.dk/documents/download/Koops_Varwick_2008_SHIRBRIG_GPPi_RP_11.pdf (accessed on November 23, 2008), 9.

eliminated during the summer of 2009,⁵⁰ its thirteen years of existence provide a valuable way to compare both the expectations of its founders and its actual record of performance.

SHIRBRIG's founders envisioned that the force would comprise a rapidly deployable brigade of approximately 4,000-5,000 strong. The Steering Committee would oversee the allocation of troops, funding, and supplies.⁵¹ Advocates claimed that SHIRBRIG would give the UN an "elite tier of rapidly deployable peacekeepers" capable of responding to crises within a narrow timeframe.⁵² National governments would retain the final say over troop deployment, and each country could decide on their level of participation in missions on a case by case basis.⁵³ However, supporters argued that SHIRBRIG troop-contributors would be more dedicated to UN peace operations, and thus less likely to renege on commitments than states only participating in UNSAS.

Empirical evidence, however, shows that SHIRBRIG supporters were overly optimistic in many of their claims. SHIRBRIG has four major problems which severely interfere with its ability to react rapidly and effectively to peace operations. The first problem is related to SHIRBRIG's size. In order to plan a mission effectively, the UN must know how many troops it can expect to have available. Officially, SHIRBRIG was supposed to have 4,000-5,000 troops (by 2008 this number was above 5,000 because more states joined the group). In reality, however, SHIRBRIG has never been able to deploy nearly this

⁵⁰ A "public statement" posted on SHIRBRIG's website suggests that the organization may close on June 30, 2009, and notes that "the member states have concluded that other forums are now better equipped to support the UN." Mysteriously, the planned closure is not mentioned anywhere else on the website or in any official press releases. See "Public Statement," [unknown date], http://www.shirbrig.dk/html/public_statement_shirbrig.pdf (accessed on January 19, 2009).

⁵¹ Peter Armstrong-Whitworth, "SHIRBRIG: the Future of Canada's Contribution to UN Peace Operations?" *Canadian Military Journal* 8, no. 2 (2007): 26.

⁵² McCarthy, "Building a Reliable Rapid-Reaction Capability," 149.

⁵³ Roberts, "Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History," 119-20.

many troops at any given time; in fact, the maximum number of soldiers it succeeded in deploying was 1,200 during the UN Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) in 2000.⁵⁴ Put simply, the “deployment of the full brigade has become the exception, rather than the rule.”⁵⁵ Second, SHIRBRIG is not under direct UN command and the force’s interests have not always been compatible with that of the United Nations. For instance, SHIRBRIG’s leadership has frequently competed with DPKO officials for control over peace operations. For instance, SHIRBRIG’s planning element has argued that it should have more power than the DPKO over designing peace operations. The effect of this has been to undermine SHIRBRIG’s cooperation and coordination with the UN during peace operations.⁵⁶ Third, SHIRBRIG has been frequently unwilling to deploy except in missions that the Steering Committee feels are “safe,” such as Chapter VI peacekeeping missions.⁵⁷ SHIRBRIG participated in UNMEE because it was a traditional peacekeeping operation that primarily involved monitoring a peace agreement between two sovereign states. When SHIRBRIG participated in more complex peace operations, such as the United Nations Mission in Cote d’Ivoire (UNOCI), it only served in a planning capacity,⁵⁸ and very few troops were deployed. Fourth, SHIRBRIG does *not* deploy quickly. Although SHIRBRIG’s founders intended the force to be capable of deploying within 15-30 days, in reality the amount of time between authorization and deployment is considerably longer. For example, the

⁵⁴ Koops and Varwick, “Ten Years of SHIRBRIG,” 23.

⁵⁵ Koops and Varwick, “Ten Years of SHIRBRIG,” 14.

⁵⁶ Koops and Varwick, “Ten Years of SHIRBRIG,” 24-5.

⁵⁷ SHIRBRIG’s founders intended the force for use only in Chapter VI operations, and some troop contributing countries have continued to argue that SHIRBRIG is only “designed” for use in such operations. For example, the Canadian Department of National Defence makes this claim on its website. See National Defence and the Canadian Forces, “The Origins and Status of SHIRBRIG,” December 16, 2002, National Defence and the Canadian Forces, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/view-news-afficher-nouvelles-eng.asp?id=500> (accessed on February 8, 2009).

⁵⁸ Koops and Varwick, “Ten Years of SHIRBRIG,” 19.

majority of SHIRBRIG's 1,200 troops deployed in UNMEE did not arrive on the ground until the end of December 2000, approximately three and half months after the Security Council authorized the mission on September 15, 2000.⁵⁹

At the heart of SHIRBRIG's problems is the fact that it relies on member states to contribute forces. SHIRBRIG member states have been resistant to contributing troops to missions where there might be fatalities. Thus, the UN cannot rely on SHIRBRIG to provide rapid deployment capability in missions where troops may potentially come under fire. More importantly, however, SHIRBRIG states have consistently refused to provide earmarked troops for peace operations, either at all or within a set amount of time. Aside from Canada, Denmark, and the Netherlands, the most SHIRBRIG troop-contributors are reluctant to actually send the troops which they pledge.⁶⁰ When states do agree to send them, their national governments tend to be slow at approving deployments. Indeed, whereas SHIRBRIG's founding document states that the force should deploy within 15-30 days of Security Council authorization, it has had to change that goal to "within 30 days of 'respective national approval processes.'"⁶¹

Some have argued that half-way arrangements such as SHIRBRIG would be more cost effective than a UN standing force of comparable size. For instance, Louis Parai

⁵⁹ It is difficult to compare SHIRBRIG deployment times with UNSAS deployment times because SHIRBRIG has never deployed at full strength. SHIRBRIG's participation in the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea was the closest SHIRBRIG ever got to full brigade deployment, and even then it only sent 1,200 troops. UNSAS deployments involve considerably larger amounts of troops, and there is more data available on average UNSAS deployment speeds. However, the fact that SHIRBRIG was only able to send 1,200 over a period of three and a half months when it was supposed to be prepared to deploy on relatively short notice shows that the force never succeeded in achieving rapid deployment capability. For more information about SHIRBRIG deployment speeds, see International Peace Academy, "Seminar on Standby High Readiness Brigade," International Peace Academy, July 2002, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/SKAI-7DHL3C?OpenDocument> (accessed on March 7, 2009).

⁶⁰ Koops and Varwick, "Ten Years of SHIRBRIG," 18.

⁶¹ International Peace Academy, "Seminar on Standby High Readiness Brigade."

contends that forces such as SHIRBRIG and the European Rapid Reaction Force appear to be “economically the most efficient” in terms of national military expenditures. His reasoning is that a standing force “would incur costs above and beyond those now incurred by Member States and the UN for security and peacekeeping,” whereas a hybrid force would not because it would utilize pre-existing national contingents.⁶² In addition, Parai claims, potential contributors already have sufficient capacity (both in terms of troops and materiel) to carry out peace operations:

However, most recently, the Gulf War (although not peacekeeping operations in the typical sense) was undertaken with existing national military forces of Member States, and accordingly it would appear that existing national capacities are adequate for potentially large UN peacekeeping operations, provided that the major powers are fully committed to the mission. In the case of the Korean War, of course, using the forces of Member States clearly involved additional resources, given the size and duration of the conflict.⁶³

There are several flaws with Parai’s line of reasoning. First, his decision to use the Korean War and Gulf War as examples of UN peace operations is somewhat troubling. Although both wars were authorized by the Security Council, neither fits the general model for UN peace operations. The UN played a very minimal role in the Korean War. Aside from authorizing the mission, the UN’s only purpose in the conflict was to legitimize the US’s decision to intervene in the conflict.⁶⁴ Second, he assumes that major powers will be willing to contribute to a standby force such as SHIRBRIG. This has not happened so far, and it is unlikely to happen any time soon. Although full of interesting proposals, the

⁶² Louis Parai, “A Note on the Economics of Standby versus Standing Peacekeeping Forces,” *Defence and Peace Economics* 17, no. 5 (2006): 417-18.

⁶³ Parai, “A Note on the Economics,” 417.

⁶⁴ Carl Kaysen and George W. Rathjens, “Send In the Troops: A UN Foreign Legion,” *The Washington Quarterly* (1996): 209.

hybrid supporters do not have the answers to solving the UN's current rapid reaction deficit.

The Volunteer Force Approach

I will spend the majority of this thesis discussing the “volunteer approach” to UN peace operations. In general, this group argues that the only way for the UN to achieve rapid reaction capability is to establish some kind of volunteer force under direct UN command. Secretary-General Lie founded this school of thought when he made his three proposals for UN standing forces in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Since that time, there have been many different proposals for creating such a force. The most ambitious (and least realistic) proposal is for a one million person standing army that could be deployed to stop wars as they begin.⁶⁵ Other proposed volunteer forces have ranged from 1,000 troops to 50,000 in size. Some have been intended for Chapter VI peacekeeping purposes, others such as the World Federalist Movement's proposal for a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) are supposed to deal with genocide and other humanitarian emergencies. Although they differ in size, scope, and purpose, all of these proposed forces have two things in common: they are all under direct UN control and are all composed of volunteers.

All volunteer supporters argue that the UN cannot rely on member states to contribute troops to peace operations when they are needed. Carl Kaysen and George Rathjens explain that member states are reluctant to contribute contingents to any mission

⁶⁵ For a brief discussion of the economics of the one million person army proposal, see Lawrence R. Klein and Kanta Marwah, “Economic Aspects of Peacekeeping Operations,” in *The Peace Dividend*, ed. Nils P. Gleditsch, et al. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1996), 533-44.

where they perceive there is a significant possibility that their contingents will suffer casualties. In democratic states, politicians are sensitive to the possibility that combat deaths might spark a public opinion backlash against them. As a result, troop contributing states either decide not to participate, thus depriving the mission of needed troops, or spend considerable amount of time debating participation, thus slowing the overall deployment time. When states do contribute troops, they usually reserve the right to withdraw them at any time if they feel that the deployment is politically risky or contrary to their respective national interests.⁶⁶ Additionally, the most common troop contributing states are usually developing countries that lack well equipped or well trained armed forces.⁶⁷ Volunteers would be more likely to be loyal, professional, and effective in carrying out their mandates than national contingents in the current system.

Although there are many force proposals, some are more politically and economically feasible than others. In general, smaller forces are less likely to be supported by UN member states than larger forces. Some authors have proposed that the UN should have standing forces with troop strengths as high as one million soldiers; such suggestions, however, are not practical. First, it is unrealistic to assume that the international community would be willing to fund such a large force at a time when major UN contributors are regularly behind in their payments and peace operations are normally run on shoe-string budgets. Unless major reforms are undertaken in regard to financing, the force will have to be kept relatively small, at least to begin with. Second, there is the issue of a larger force being perceived as a threat by member states. While a rapid reaction force

⁶⁶ Carl Kaysen and George Rathjens, "The case for a volunteer UN military force," *Daedalus* 132, no. 1 (2003): 93.

⁶⁷ Kaysen and Rathjens, "The case for a volunteer UN military force," 93.

of 6,000 troops is unlikely to pose a serious military threat to most states, a large army would undoubtedly raise more than a few eyes in both the Security Council as well as the General Assembly. In order for the UN to agree to the establishment of a volunteer force, proponents must be able to convince the international community that the force would powerful states would not use it against weaker states, and that valuable resources would be saved by its creation.⁶⁸ In addition, the issues raised above, troops must be transported to the place where they will deploy. Soldiers, armored vehicles, food, medicine, and other supplies all take time to transport. The larger the force, the longer deployment takes. Instead of engaging in intellectual games, it is important to develop a politically and economically feasible rapid reaction solution.

As mentioned previously, Roméo Dallaire is famous for his claim that he could have stopped the Rwandan genocide with a mere force of 5,000 troops. While I will examine this specific claim more thoroughly later on, there are compelling reasons to believe that small well-trained and well-supplied forces can be effective in arresting many potential conflicts if they are deployed early enough. The goal of a rapid reaction force is to react *rapidly*. It must be ready and available for use before the situation reaches crisis proportions. Obviously, a rapid reaction force cannot do this on its own; the Security Council—or General Assembly in the case of a “Uniting for Peace Resolution” action—must be capable and willing to recognize a crisis as it unfolds and not waste time in ordering a response.

⁶⁸ Robert C. Johansen, “Expert Discussion of the United Nations Emergency Peace Service: the Cuenca Report,” in *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service: to Prevent*

Genocide and Crimes against Humanity, ed. Robert C. Johansen (New York: World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy, 2006), 50-1.

However, as long as the “competent organs” of the UN are capable of acting in time, there is every reason to believe that a properly constituted force can make a difference.

Adam Roberts notes that there are ten principal lines of criticism regarding standing UN forces.⁶⁹ First, some have argued that a standing force could never train for all the different potential tasks that they might be asked to carry out, nor could they have the necessary equipment for all possible scenarios. Some of these tasks have included preventative deployments in areas with a high risk of war, reinforcing existing peace operations, protecting civilians, and protecting humanitarian relief efforts. Second, small forces are insufficient for many operations, especially complex missions spread out over large areas, such as Somalia and Bosnia. Third, most recent UN peace operations have involved civil wars. These kinds of conflicts require long-term engagement and require a large amount of military involvement—more than a small rapid reaction force could provide on its own. Fourth, many proposals include a time limit on deployment of between 4-6 months. This short deployment period would probably be too short for conventional peace forces to take over the operation. Fifth, the creation of a permanent UN force could hurt the UN’s reputation as an impartial body and could cause people to see the Secretary-General primarily as a military official. Sixth, regional organizations and alliances are better suited to carry out peace operations. Seventh, the Security Council would not make a good military decision-making body. Eighth, troops in standing UN forces might be reluctant to take actions that could put their lives at risk. Ninth, the international

⁶⁹ Roberts, “Proposals for UN Standing Forces: A Critical History,” 125-8.

community would not be willing to finance a standing force. Tenth, the creation of a UN standing force might undermine regional efforts to create local rapid reaction forces.

Some of the criticisms above bring up valid points about the suitability of a volunteer rapid reaction force while others merely repeat existing critiques of the UN's involvement in peace operations in general. I will address these criticisms in order.

The first three critiques relate to the large selection of tasks that the UN might call on a volunteer rapid reaction force to carry out. This is a very common criticism, and many have remarked that it would be impossible for the UN to create a force that could deal with all the potential scenarios it might face. The necessary size of a force depends on the type, location, and stage of the crisis. Critics have remarked that for this reason, a one size-fits-all approach standing force would not be effective, stating that interventions such as Somalia and Bosnia would have required many more troops than a small UN standing force could provide:

Due to political, economic, and military considerations, any proposal for a standing force, it was said, would lack the required manpower for most enforcement scenarios. While the intervention in Somalia had required 31,000 troops, other interventions, as in Bosnia, might have required up to 500,000 troops. The argument that a standing force could not be designed to meet all possible types of situations and could therefore not be prepared for an unknown enemy was also raised.⁷⁰

The criticism referenced here—a volunteer rapid reaction force is unfeasible because it would be too small and could not be “prepared for an unknown enemy”—is a potent argument. Indeed, if the purpose of a rapid deployment force were to intervene in situations that have already reached crises proportions, then perhaps a 6,000 strong force

⁷⁰ Stephen Kinloch-Pichat, *A UN 'Legion': Between Utopia and Reality*, Cass Series on Peacekeeping (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 142.

would not be well suited to the job. The problem with the application of this argument to a volunteer rapid reaction force, however, is that it ignores the whole *rapid reaction* concept.

The idea is to respond before a crisis erupts, or during the early stages of its eruption.

According to former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, future UN peace operations will need to fulfill two primary requirements: a credible capacity for the suppression of violence and the ability to assist parties in reconciliation.⁷¹ If a force is deployed early enough—that is before the outbreak of full-scale hostilities—it will be able to perform these two tasks with fewer troops, reduced firepower, and considerably less lives lost. If the parties involved in the conflict have already reneged on their ceasefire or peace treaty commitments and are determined to kill each other, then it is likely that a considerably larger number of troops would be needed to stop the fighting. It is not realistic that a force of 6,000 soldiers could have single-handedly stopped ethnic cleansing in Bosnia after the war began in April, 1992; however, a volunteer rapid reaction force proponent might make the claim that a speedy deployment following Bosnia-Herzegovina’s declaration of independence in October 1991 could have helped prevent the following campaign of ethnic cleansing. I should note here that I do not intend to evaluate this claim per se; I am merely demonstrating that smaller forces are better equipped to handle conflicts in their infancy than at more advanced stages.

It is likely that some conflicts would require a larger number of soldiers at the outset than the force proposed here could provide. In such cases, a small rapid reaction force would still be able to serve a valuable purpose as a sort of UN peace “vanguard” force. It could deploy and help stabilize the situation while national contingents are raised

⁷¹ Langille, “Conflict Prevention,” 238.

through UNSAS. For instance, a rapid reaction force along the lines envisioned here would probably not be suitable for a mission such as UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia operation (UNTAC), which employed 16,000 soldiers and 3,600 civilian police performing such diverse tasks as administering a national election and maintaining law and order in urban areas.⁷² Long-term peace building and reconstruction missions such as UNTAC usually require large numbers of troops as well as experts, and a rapid reaction force would not have the necessary expertise or size to carry such a mission out completely. However, a rapid reaction force could serve as a stop-gap measure until a larger force arrives. In Cambodia, one of the problems UNTAC encountered was the slow speed at which its military component (MILCOM) deployed. MILCOM's mission was to monitor a ceasefire that had been enacted on October 23, 1991. Eventually, MILCOM was supposed to have a total of 10,200 troops; however, by April 1992, only 3,694 soldiers had arrived in Cambodia. Full deployment was not achieved until August 1992, a full ten months after the declaration of ceasefire.⁷³ In cases such as this, rapid reaction forces can be extremely valuable. Although the ceasefire mostly held, it might not have and the civil war could have reignited. A rapid reaction force could have deployed much faster and would have been able to monitor the ceasefire until the larger force arrived.

Although these examples address the three criticisms, they do not answer the fourth critique—that a four to six month deployment is not long enough to allow conventional forces to take over the operation. If the UN's rapid reaction force could not deploy for

⁷² James T. Quinlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* 15, no. 3 (1995): 61-2.

⁷³ Cheryl M. Lee Kim and Mark Metrikas, "Holding a fragile peace: the military and civilian components of UNTAC," in *Keeping the peace: Multidimensional UN operations in Cambodia and El Salvador*, ed. Michael W. Doyle, Ian Johnstone, and Robert C. Orr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 109-15.

longer than this amount of time, then how can troops obtained through the notoriously slow UNSAS arrive before the rapid reaction force goes home? Clearly, the rapid reaction force's length of deployment would have to take into account how the amount of time needed for additional forces to arrive. Ultimately, however, one small standing force would be unable to perform these kinds of missions all the time. The UN will have to create more rapid reaction forces in the future if it is to overcome this problem. However, having a rapid reaction force on hand is certainly better than the current regime of relying completely on member states to provide troops for peace operations. The claim that the UN should not create a rapid reaction force because it would be insufficient to deal with all the world's problems is illogical; it would still be better than the status quo.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth criticisms are all aimed more at the institution of UN peace operations in general than the creation of a UN rapid reaction force in specific. The fifth states that the creation of a standing force would hurt the UN's image as an impartial body. This critique implies that the UN would use the force as a tool to coerce parties into resolving conflicts instead of using negotiation as a tool to resolve conflicts peacefully. However, there is no reason that the UN would have to use a rapid reaction force to threaten reluctant parties into cooperation with each other. Furthermore, a rapid reaction force of the size I am proposing would not primarily serve as a tool for outright military aggression. The sixth criticism merely argues that regional associations are better equipped to perform peace operations than the UN. Under the current system, this is sometimes true: organizations such as NATO have more soldiers, funding, and equipment at their disposal than the UN, which has shaky sources of all three. However, most conflicts

today occur in Africa, and organizations there tend to lack both the capacity of wealthier organizations like NATO as well as the impartial reputation of the UN. The Economic Community of West African States' intervention in Liberia provides a good example. Many West Africans understood ECOWAS' intervention in Liberia as a Nigerian effort to prop up a friendly government.⁷⁴ Although some argue that the effort was in fact an example of multilateral cooperation to resolve a threat to regional peace, Nigeria's predominance in ECOWAS led many observers to perceive that the organization was biased. It did not help either that Nigeria was able to use its power as West Africa's sub-regional hegemon to override normal ECOWAS voting procedures in order to authorize the mission.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the international community cannot assume that more capable associations such as NATO will deploy operations in African conflicts. NATO's most powerful member, the United States, is famous for its statement that the Liberian conflict was an "African problem" requiring an "African solution."⁷⁶ Finally, the seventh criticism states that the Security Council is not a good body for making military decisions. The establishment of a volunteer rapid reaction force would not have a major impact on the degree to which the Security Council normally finds itself involved in military matters. There is some truth to the argument that the Security Council does not always handle military decisions in an effective fashion; however, this criticism ignores the fact that the Security Council has been heavily involved in military matters since the Korean War. Unless the international

⁷⁴ S. Neil MacFarlane and Thomas G. Weiss, "Regional Organizations and Regional Security," *Security Studies* 2, no. 1 (1992): 20; Katharina P. Coleman, *International Organisations and Peace Enforcement: The Politics of International Legitimacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 94.

⁷⁵ Ademola Adeleke, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The Ecowas Operation in Liberia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995): 579.

⁷⁶ David Wippman, "Enforcing the Peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War," in *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts*, ed. Lori Fisler Damrosch (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 13.

community decides to amend the UN Charter, the Security Council will remain the organization's principal decision-making body for security-related issues. The eighth critique—UN soldiers would not be willing to risk their lives—simply does not make sense in the case of a volunteer force.

The ninth criticism—financing the force—is a very potent argument. UN member states have been generally unwilling to finance expensive UN operations, and many of the world's richest states are behind on their payments to the UN peacekeeping fund. As of December 2008, the United States owed \$860 million, Japan owed \$1.1 billion, and Spain owed \$225 million.⁷⁷ In this kind of situation, it is hard to see where the UN could get the funds to establish a volunteer rapid reaction force. Additionally, many subscribe to Parai's logic that a standby force is more cost effective than a standing one. However, it is important here to remember that war has plenty of high costs for the international community, both in terms of money as well as lives. Any force that could potentially help support peace and stability would be worthwhile. There is strong reason to believe that a standing rapid reaction force would actually save the international community money in the long run. For instance, Brian Urquhart estimates that a 5,000 person infantry force would cost approximately \$380 million/year (\$541 million in 2009 dollars).⁷⁸ For a six thousand strong force with a few helicopters, this number would still probably come in at under \$1 billion/year. For comparison, the US pays approximately \$700 billion/year on

⁷⁷ "Debt of the 15 Largest Payers to the Peacekeeping Budget," Global Policy Forum, 2008, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/finance/tables/pko/du2008.htm> (accessed March 1, 2009).

⁷⁸ Urquhart, "The United Nations Should Have Its Own Volunteer Armed Forces," 161.

military-related expenditures.⁷⁹ If the volunteer supporters can show the international community that a rapid reaction force would save enough lives and money to be worth a \$1 billion bill, then perhaps the UN might be able to find countries willing to pay.

Finally, the tenth critique states that the creation of a UN rapid reaction force would undermine regional and sub-regional efforts to build rapid reaction forces. Indeed, it is true that ECOWAS and similar bodies have recently looked into the issue of constructing their own permanent forces; however, so far no regional organization has created its own force, and there is no reason to believe that such organizations would terminate their programs just because the UN decided to establish a small rapid reaction force. If anything, the UN force might provide a model for regional and sub-regional efforts.

Gaps in the Literature

Many authors have written on the importance of rapid reaction capability and different proposals for achieving it. Many proposals also have evidence to either support or refute them. The reformists have argued that UNSAS fixed and that this will make states more generous with troop contributions. Although many take this position, the empirical record has shown that states are fundamentally unwilling to provide the UN with the troops it needs. When states do send contingents, they tend to be poorly trained and lacking materiel. Moreover, they frequently arrive months late. Hybrid supporters backed the idea that the UN could have a multinational standby army, yet SHIRBRIG had its own problems: reluctant participants unwilling to honor pledges for troop contributions and

⁷⁹ Fred Kaplan, "What's Really in the U.S. Military Budget?" Slate, February 4, 2008, <http://www.slate.com/id/2183592/pagenum/all/> (accessed March 1, 2009).

extremely slow deployment owing to national approval processes. Clearly, neither school has been able to put forward a workable solution to solve the UN's rapid reaction deficit. What about the volunteer supporters? They have many diverse proposals and no evidence to support that they would work.

Of course, one cannot expect that a hypothetical proposal will have any empirical evidence to back up its effectiveness. For this reason, volunteer rapid reaction force supporters must rely on counterfactual case studies to provide evidence that such a force would be effective. Without such studies, the international community is extremely unlikely to entertain the possibility of creating a rapid reaction force. Unfortunately, there are very few studies on this subject, and most of them deal with a single case: the Rwandan Genocide. As I will argue later, the Rwandan Genocide is far from being an ideal case study for rapid reaction force effectiveness. Instead, a new case study is needed to fill this gap.

Methodology

In this section, I will explain how I intend to perform my counterfactual case studies and why I chose these methods. First, I will describe the specific force structure that I am planning to examine and why it is ideal for the purposes of analysis. Second, I will explain my choice of Rwanda and Sierra Leone as my case studies.

Force Construction

As mentioned in the literature review, there are many wildly different proposals for what a volunteer rapid reaction force should be like. First, there is the issue of mandate and purpose. Some argue that it should be used for humanitarian intervention in countries where crimes against humanity and genocide are taking place. Others contend that the force would be better suited for the prevention of crises, deploying as a peacekeeping-type operation in areas where peace has been established. Finally some suggest that a volunteer rapid reaction force could be suited for a number of different tasks, including both traditional activities such as observing cease-fire lines and monitoring compliance with disarmament agreements (Chapter VI peacekeeping) as well as more “robust” activities such as protecting refugee camps, policing demilitarized areas, and using force when necessary against groups that might be tempted to derail a peace process (Chapter VII peace enforcement). Different purposes require different rules of engagement (ROE) and strategies for deployment, and it is important that a force have sufficiently robust ROE to allow it to pursue its mandate.

Second, there is the issue of size and armaments. Some hypothesize that a rapid reaction force should have its own artillery and air support, while others believe that a lightly armed infantry would be sufficient. As for size, the proposals vary from 1,000 to 1,000,000,000 troops. Finally, should a rapid reaction force be a military body or should it also include civilian police (CIVPOL) and other civilian experts? These are all extremely important factors which must be accounted for in any case study. I will explain my methods regarding each issue below.

THE PURPOSE OF A RAPID REACTION FORCE

Before the international community can have an intelligent discussion over the volunteer rapid reaction force concept, it is important that everyone understands what the concept means. However, as the literature review attests, very few people agree on the purpose of a rapid reaction force. In order to make my case study as precise as possible, I will explain what I view see as the purpose of the ideal rapid reaction force. As my Sierra Leone case study will show, forces that are either unable or unwilling to defend themselves and their freedom of movement are ineffectual at performing even basic Chapter VI peacekeeping duties. For my case studies, I am going to assume that the force would have sufficiently robust ROE to allow it to defend itself, remove illegal obstructions to its freedom of movement, and to safeguard nearby civilians from danger and harassment by combatants. The question of the force's *raison d'être*, however, is even more important. While stopping genocide should be a long-term goal for the United Nations, it would be best if the UN designs its first rapid reaction force for less ambitious goals. This rapid reaction force would be the UN's first standing military body, and in general prototypes should be

treated as such: they should be given easier tasks at first rather than harder ones. Currently, the UN is having just as much trouble deploying rapidly for relatively simple operations as well as it is having trouble stopping genocide. The force I am proposing would be at the service of the UN for rapid deployment to areas where a ceasefire or peace treaty has already been established but could fail if the international community does not react quickly enough to help with its implementation. In a world plagued by civil wars, such a force would be of great help in helping formerly warring parties disarm and demobilize. Such a force would still probably save thousands of lives through helping prevent wars from reigniting.

SIZE

As for size, the UN's first rapid reaction force would have to be on the small size. At the moment, the international community is reluctant to spend large amounts of money on UN peace operations. The force would also have to be small enough that it could deploy relatively quickly. However, the force would also have to be large enough to be effective in a variety of situations. I believe that the ideal size for such a force is 6,000 troops. Currently, most experts agree that a number of troops in this area would have sufficient capacity for a number of different conflicts, yet would be cheap enough for member states to be willing to foot the bill.

MATERIEL

Different conflicts require different equipment. For this reason, a rapid reaction force should have a strategic stockpile of items that might be necessary for potential

operations. Communications equipment, armored personnel carriers, and light armaments are all necessary accoutrements for any UN peace operation. A small number of helicopters would also be useful for scouting areas and, if necessary, in providing troops with air support during fire fights. Cost, however, is still a major constraint. I estimate that the force should have no more than five helicopters. Finally, since the UN would probably be unable to afford its own fleet of troop transport planes, it would have to enter into some kind of agreement with the US to provide transportation to and from the operational theater. Although this may sound as if it defeats the point of creating a volunteer force, empirically the US has shown a willingness to lease, rent, or lend its large C-5 transport planes for UN missions.⁸⁰ Like most developed democracies countries, the US's principal concern about participating in

Finally, there is the issue of whether or not the force should be a purely military one. Size and cost both constrain how many non-military persons would be able to accompany the force. In general, a small number of technical experts such as engineers,

⁸⁰ Many scholars of US foreign policy are familiar with Presidential Decision Directive 25. President Clinton promulgated PDD 25 in 1994 as a result of the national backlash against US participation in UN peace operations after the infamous murders of US troops in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. PDD put heavy restrictions on the ability of the US to contribute troops to UN peace operations, but allowed the US to continue providing logistical support (especially transportation) to UN contingents. Since PDD 25, transportation and funding have been the US's principal contributions to UN peace operations. For an interesting analysis of PDD 25 and the restrictions it placed on US participation in UN peace operations, see Michael Renner, "Peacekeeping and the United Nations," *Foreign Policy in Focus* 1, no. 28 (1996): 1-3. For more information about the Somalia mission and how it affected the US's logistical contributions to UN missions, see United States Institute of Peace, "The U.S. Contribution to Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution in Africa," United States Institute of Peace, December 1994, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/early/uscontr1.html> (accessed April 23, 2009).

communications experts, medics, and others would make for a good addition.⁸¹ However, the force should be principally a military body. Later on, if the UN decides that it likes the concept of a rapid reaction force, it could consider similar rapid reaction CIVPOL and other technical units. For the time being, however, it is best to start with a relatively simple concept.

Choice of Case Studies and Case Study Methods

I have chosen Sierra Leone in 1999-2002 as my primary case study. Sierra Leone has a number of advantages as a case study. First, it is characterized by data richness: there have been a significant number of UN reports, newspaper articles, and scholarly analyses that examine Sierra Leone during this time period. Second, Sierra Leone's situation was very similar to that of other countries, especially in West and Central Africa. Any conclusions drawn from a Sierra Leone case study can be useful in assessing the potential effect of a rapid reaction force in other situations. Third, no one has done a counterfactual case study of the effect of a rapid reaction force on Sierra Leone. This is a major gap in the literature, and it needs to be filled.

I will be using several different methods in my Sierra Leone case study. First, I will be relying on a combination of first and second-hand sources for information. First hand

⁸¹ I should note here that every military force has a "tail" of non-combatants such as computer technicians, cooks, medics, mechanics, etc. Usually, these "tails" are larger than the actual fighting part of the force. Thus, when I refer to a 6,000 person rapid reaction force, I am referring to a 6,000 *soldier* rapid reaction force. Depending on the needs of the force, the ratio of the fighting part of the force (often referred to as the "tooth") to the "tail" could be as low as 1:1 or as high as 1:10. The cost of the "tail" is usually included in the total cost of a rapid reaction force proposal.

sources include transcribed interviews of UN officials and others involved in the Sierra Leonean peace process as well as reports gathered by investigative teams that visited Sierra Leone during the time. I have used over 20 different UN reports during the course of my research. I have also taken advantage of a large selection of scholarly literature on the subject, including some 25 books and articles.

I will begin by looking at the history of the conflict and the peace process. This examination will identify variables that may have led to the collapse of Sierra Leone's peace process. After identifying and examining the variables, I will then go on to show how a 6,000 person rapid reaction force could have saved the peace process.

Before I analyze the Sierra Leone, however, I will first examine the Rwandan conflict (my secondary case study). Many academics have used Rwanda for their case studies, and I wish to show that it is far from ideal for proving the usefulness of a UN rapid reaction force. I will begin by examining the history of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda. I will follow this by looking at the different factions involved, the weapons they used, and the stages that the genocide passed through as it progressed. I will end my Rwandan case study by comparing existing Rwandan rapid reaction force case studies in terms of their explanatory value.

Rwanda: a poor litmus test for a rapid reaction force

Rwanda: the dominant case study in the literature

When discussing whether or not the UN should have its own volunteer force, many scholars immediately use Rwanda to prove their case. On one side, Alan J. Kuperman has argued that even the fastest deploying branches of the US military could not have made it in time to stop the genocide. On the other side, Allison des Forges, Samantha Power, Scott R. Feil and the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict have all contended that a small rapidly deployable force of approximately 5,000 soldiers would have been able to stop the genocide in its tracks. Many feel ashamed of the international community's perceived failure to stop the genocide, and they understandably want to know what the UN could have done to prevent or end it. Would a rapid reaction force have made a difference in Rwanda? Perhaps more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, does Rwanda make a good case study for a UN rapid reaction force?

In this section, I will argue that the Rwandan conflict was harder to stop than many people think. Although it is theoretically possible that a small, rapidly deploying force might have saved some lives, it is unlikely that a 6,000 person rapid reaction force would have been able to prevent the genocide or halt it in its tracks without backup from a much larger rapidly deploying force. Moreover, I will argue that Rwanda makes a very poor case study, and that the scholarly community should avoid judging such a force based on counterfactual analyses of its performance in stopping the Rwandan Genocide.

The Hutu-Tutsi Conflict: A Historical Perspective

COLONIAL ROOTS

Rwanda is a small, landlocked state in the African Great Lakes Region. As many people know from the 1994 genocide, the country has two main ethnic groups: the Hutu and the Tutsi. During colonial times, the Germans and later the Belgians used a “divide and conquer” strategy to turn the groups against each other and strengthen their ethnic identities. The Bazungu (the Rwandan term for the white colonists) never made up more than one percent of the total Rwandan population prior to independence; however, by turning the Hutu and Tutsi against one another, they were able to control Rwanda through an elaborate system of racial hierarchy. Because they were such a small population, the Bazungu had to rely on one of the groups to help run the state. For the Germans and even more for the Belgians, the Tutsi were the obvious choice. They comprised a relatively small portion of the population, and most of pre-colonial Rwanda had been ruled by a Tutsi king. Moreover, the Europeans generally felt that the Tutsi were closer to them in terms of intelligence and ability, making them racially superior to the more numerous Hutus.⁸²

The direct result of Rwanda’s highly racialized colonial system was that local Tutsi officials administered large sections of the country. The Tutsi were also the only group outside of the Bazungu to have access to education, positions within the Rwandan army, as well as the Catholic Church (Rwanda’s dominant religious institution).⁸³ When decolonization arrived in the 1950s and the Bazungu began to surrender their positions of power, the long-oppressed Hutu rose up against the relatively privileged Tutsi. With some help from the departing Europeans (who were afraid that the Tutsi might form a Leftist

⁸² Peter Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda,” *African Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (1997): 94-5.

⁸³ Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide,” 95-6.

government), the Hutu overthrew the Tutsi aristocracy. In 1962, Rwandans elected their first president, Grégoire Kayibanda of the *Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu* (Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement). Within a short period of time, the newly disenfranchised Tutsis began to form rebel organizations to fight against the Hutu government. In retaliation, the government killed approximately 30,000 Tutsis and forced over 100,000 other Tutsi refugees to flee the country.⁸⁴

HABYARIMANA AND THE CIVIL WAR

In 1973, President Kayibanda was overthrown by his minister of defense, General Juvenal Habyarimana. Habyarimana quickly founded his own political party, the *Mouvement Rwandaise National pour le Development* (Rwandan National Movement for Development), and proceeded to outlaw all other parties. Dominated by Hutu from the Northern Rwanda, the MRND systematically discriminated against both Tutsis as well as Southern Hutus. The MRND only permitted Northern Hutus to join the military or attain well-paying positions within the state bureaucracy.⁸⁵ These policies served to strengthen ethnic ties as well as encourage Tutsi opposition to the regime.

The 100,000 or so Tutsis who fled Rwanda after decolonization did not sit by idly as the MRND enacted its discriminatory policies. Many of Tutsis had joined rebel armies, the most powerful and influential of which was the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF). After training with the Ugandan army for several decades, the RPF decided to invade Rwanda. In October 1990, the RPF crossed into Rwanda and won several major battles against the

⁸⁴ Uvin, "Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide," 96.

⁸⁵ Bruce D. Jones, "Rwanda," in Berdal and Economides, 141.

Rwandan military (*Forces Armées Rwandaise*, or FAR). The Rwandan government responded by asking for help from France and Zaire, who both sent troops. Bolstered by foreign support, the FAR managed to expel the RPF, which then retreated to Uganda.⁸⁶ The war continued for another two years until France, Belgium, the United States, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) pressured the two sides to agree to a ceasefire in 1992, followed by peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania. The US and France also pressured the Rwandan Government to democratize, which led Habyarimana to legalize other parties in 1991. Despite reforms Habyarimana's reforms and some progress at the peace talks, the peace process collapsed in February 1993 and the two sides returned to fighting.⁸⁷

The peace talks began again in June 1993. Both sides formally agreed to share control of the government and integrate their forces into a common national military. To help with the peace process, the UN decided to establish a small observer mission to Rwanda. Headed by Romeo Dallaire, the UN intended the mission to be a traditional Chapter VI peacekeeping operation that would monitor both sides' adherence to the peace agreement and investigate violations.⁸⁸ However, a number of elite Hutu politicians attempted to undermine the newly minted peace accord. In addition to bribing politicians not to sign the accord, they also began establishing their own militias. With the support of the FAR and local police units, the militias would later be responsible for most of the killing during the genocide.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Jones, "Rwanda," 141.

⁸⁷ Jones, "Rwanda," 142-3.

⁸⁸ Jones, "Rwanda," 150.

⁸⁹ Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71.

THE GENOCIDE

The genocide began on April 6, 1994. The Hutu extremists, fearing a power-sharing deal with the Tutsis, shot down Hutu President Habyarimana's plane as he was returning from Arusha.⁹⁰ Within a short period of time, the extremists ordered the FAR and the militias to round up and execute all moderate Hutu politicians. After that, the militias set up roadblocks on all roads going out of Kigali, and later at other roads going throughout the country. At these barricades, the militias rounded up and killed both Tutsis as well as numerous Hutus who refused to join them in carrying out the genocide. These killings were not random massacres, but rather directed executions of anyone suspected of being a Tutsi or a genocide opponent. The extremist-controlled Rwandan state even used television and radio to broadcast information that would help the militias in fulfilling their mandate:

Militia would either telephone or turn up at the RTLM [an extremist-controlled radio station] offices to hand over the "search notices". Each "search notice" contained information describing a vehicle of specific colour with a specific number plate which was going from one area of the country to another and which had to be stopped for it contained "inyenzi." The "search notices" also contained the names, addresses and descriptions of people still being sought. Requests from civil servants or military were broadcast calling for the re-supply of weapons, ammunition, or grenades to certain areas. The radio was the voice of genocide.⁹¹

There are three aspects of the genocide that set it apart from most other conflicts in Africa. The first was that the killers tended to use fairly "low tech" weaponry to carry out the massacres. Although some *génocidaires* had access to firearms, the majority carried

⁹⁰ It has not been proven that the Hutu extremists assassinated Habyarimana; however, most scholars agree that they were the most likely culprits.

⁹¹ Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso, 2004), 205.

clubs and simple bladed weapons. The machete, which has come to symbolize the Rwandan Genocide in the media, was the most prominent tool which the Hutus used to kill their Tutsi neighbors. The machete's biggest advantage was its prevalence—over 80 percent of Rwandan households owned at least one machete, while slightly less than 20 percent of households owned two or more.⁹² Furthermore, machetes were cheap and easy to acquire.⁹³ Higher tech weapons were in shorter supply and were mainly concentrated in the hands of the Hutu-dominated armed forces (FAR), which needed all the weaponry it could afford in order to stave off an invasion by the Tutsi rebels (RPF). The result was that the vast majority of the killings used weapons aside from firearms. For instance, approximately 75 percent of the 59,050 killings in the Kibuye Prefecture were caused by weapons that did not use gunpowder. Of the total, 52.8 percent of the victims were killed by machetes, 16.6 were killed by clubs, 14.7 by guns, 1.8 by grenades, and 7.2 by other methods (hoes and other farming equipment, burying alive, drowning in sewage, burning alive, stoning, etc), while 6.8 percent of the deaths were caused by unidentified means.⁹⁴

The extremely primitive (and horrific) tools and methods used to perpetuate the genocide were not the only extraordinary aspects of the genocide. The second striking aspect of the Rwandan Genocide was its speed. Most would assume that a campaign to wipe out an entire ethnic group using such low tech weaponry would be fairly slow. Yet,

⁹² Phillip Verwimp, "Machetes and Firearms: The Organization of Massacres in Rwanda," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 1 (2006): 7.

⁹³ Disturbingly, the extremists ordered at least some additional machetes from manufacturers in Belgium, Rwanda's former colonial master. According to an unnamed source cited by Verwimp, three crates of machetes were sent from Belgium to Rwanda before the genocide. The machetes were carefully hidden among folded bed sheets. It is not clear whether the Belgians knew what the machetes were going to be used for; however, the fact that they were concealed suggests that at least a few individuals in Belgium were aware that they were not going to be used for agricultural purposes. See Verwimp, "Machetes and Firearms," 6.

⁹⁴ Verwimp, "Machetes and Firearms," 13.

the principal phase of the Rwandan Genocide took place in a time frame of about 100 days. For comparison, the Armenian Genocide took place over a three year period (1915-18), the Cambodian Genocide lasted four (1975-9), and the Holocaust stretched out over seven years (1938-45). These comparisons are meant for illustrative purposes only—no single instance of genocide can be used as a yardstick to judge others by in terms of speed since each involved uniquely different situations. However, there is a strong consensus within the literature that the Rwandan Genocide was carried out in a particularly rapid manner.

The third factor is that the Rwandan Genocide involved a high level of mobilization of Hutu society. Most genocides and campaigns of “ethnic cleansing” involve either one organized group directing the killing (e.g., the state) or multiple groups (e.g., several paramilitary militias controlled by different factions). Both the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) and a group of militias killed thousands of people; however, many of the *génocidaires* were Rwandan citizens who had not been involved in militias or extremist Hutu organizations prior to Habyarimana’s assassination.⁹⁵ These men usually became radicalized when the genocide spread to nearby villages. Once the killing began in an area, local Hutu residents often became desensitized to violence and joined in hunting down their Tutsi neighbors. Peer pressure also played a major role in the genocide’s spread:

[The] violence had momentum. That is, once a point was reached when those promoting violence consolidated control and once men started killing, they themselves became increasingly violent and demanded conformity from their peers. Men traveled throughout their communities telling other men, in effect, “Since we have killed, so must you,” and “Since killing has started in neighboring regions, it

⁹⁵ Scott Straus argues that the “demographic profile” of most genocide participants matched that of the average Hutu man, and that most *génocidaires* were “regular citizens.” Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 96.

must start here too.” [...] All Hutu men were pressured to participate, while all Tutsis were targeted for murder.⁹⁶

Men were not the only participants in the genocide, either. Although Straus notes that male Hutus formed the majority of the killers, he also acknowledges that Hutu women played a major role in organizing the killing and directing their male counterparts to potential victims.⁹⁷ It may be hard to imagine; however, much of the Rwandan Genocide was carried out in the mode of a “grass roots” movement. The result of this broad based participation was a pattern of killing that resembled a wildfire: it spread rapidly and engulfed the country in bloodshed and destruction.

THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION AND THE END OF THE GENOCIDE

At first, the international community did nothing to stop the genocide. The existing UN force within Rwanda probably would not have been able to stop the killing. General Dallaire’s force had only three infantry battalions totaling 2,500 troops, while the FAR, militias, and police numbered between 55,000 and 70,000 strong.⁹⁸ Dallaire requested that the UN send him reinforcements; however, the organization did not act immediately on his request. Eventually, the UN authorized a small French-led mission called Operation Turquoise which did not deploy until near the end of the conflict. Astoundingly, the French spent most of their energy protecting the *génocidaires* from the RPA, allowing the Hutu militias to escape into neighboring countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo

⁹⁶ Straus, *Order of Genocide*, 89.

⁹⁷ Straus, *Order of Genocide*, 100.

⁹⁸ Alan J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 40.

(where they would help start another war). The lack of a competent international response meant that the Tutsis would have to end the genocide by themselves.

In July 1994, the Tutsis took control of the situation. The Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA, formerly the RPF or Rwandan Patriotic Forces) launched a successful invasion of Kigali and toppled what remained of extremist Hutu regime (many of the extremists had already fled to the Congo with French support). By the time of the RPA takeover, the Genocide had claimed the lives of between 500,000 and 800,000 Rwandans.

THE GENOCIDE'S AFTERMATH: INTERNATIONAL SHAME AND RENEWED SUPPORT FOR A UN STANDING FORCE

In the end, it was obvious that the international community failed to act. Many immediately assumed that Dallaire was correct in assuming that he could have stopped the genocide with only 5,000 soldiers. One reason for this was that the majority of the *génocidaires* were armed only with machetes. Common sense that soldiers armed with rifles can easily disperse combatants armed with knives.

In the end, Dallaire's comments, the collective shame of the international community for not acting, and the common sense view that the international community should easily be able to stop killers armed with machetes all led to increased support for rapid reaction force proposals. However, as I will show next, stopping the Rwandan genocide might have been harder than most generally believe.

Why Rwanda was harder than we think

DAILLIARE'S CLAIM AND THE PREVENTING DEADLY CONFLICT REPORT

Many people assume that a rapid reaction force “must” be able to deal with conflicts such as Rwanda. In most rapid reaction force proposals the Rwandan Genocide is cited as one of the conflicts that a rapid reaction force would have been able to prevent or stop. Much of this has to do with General Dallaire’s claim that a well-prepared, rapidly deployable force of 5,000 troops could have stopped the *génocidaires* from carrying out their grisly task. Dallaire’s claim has also been backed by others, including academics as well as investigative committees. For example, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict made the following findings that supported Dallaire’s position:

The panel generally agreed that early military intervention—within two weeks of the initial violence—by a force of 5,000 could have made a significant difference in the level of violence in Rwanda and that there was a window of opportunity for the employment of this force during April 7-21, 1994. The group acknowledged that such a force would have had to be properly trained, equipped, and supported, and possess a mandate from the Security Council to enable it to use “all means necessary” to protect vulnerable populations. In Rwanda in 1994, it is likely that 5,000 troops could have averted the slaughter of a half-million people.⁹⁹

The Commission based its findings on a counterfactual analysis written by Scott R. Feil. Feil later published his original counterfactual scenario in 1998 in a book entitled *Preventing Genocide: How the Early Use of Force Might Have Succeeded in Rwanda*. In this work, Feil argues that a 5,000-strong force could have stopped the genocide. Feil based this hypothetical force on the US 101st Airborne Division’s Ready Brigade, which would have had support from an additional special operations unit. In order to be successful, the Ready Brigade would have to arrive by April 21, 1994. Feil contends that any intervention to stop the genocide after this date “would have required massive amounts of force” because the

⁹⁹ Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report with Executive Summary* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997), 6.

genocide was originally restricted to the capital city of Kigali and spread outward at this point.¹⁰⁰

FEIL'S RAPID REACTION FORCE VERSUS OTHER FORCE PROPOSALS

Feil's study is well-researched and makes many useful observations about the Rwandan conflict. However, there are several reasons why his conclusions should not be used as evidence that a rapid reaction force would have been able to stop the genocide. These include differences between the Ready Brigade and a volunteer rapid reaction force, the length of the "window of opportunity" for the intervention, and the nature of the conflict.

First, while similar in size, there are major differences between the Ready Brigade and a UN volunteer rapid reaction force. The biggest difference is in terms of equipment and firepower. In his counterfactual analysis, Feil describes a very heavily armed force backed up by considerable air, artillery, and intelligence support. In addition to five infantry battalions (the actual Ready Brigade only has 2,500 infantry soldiers; however, Feil doubled this number for his analysis), Feil's force would have an attack helicopter battalion with 24 AH-64 Apache gunships; 49 other helicopters including UH-60 tactical lifters and CH-47 transports; an intelligence company, an engineer company, a communications company, a chemical defense company, and a company of military police.¹⁰¹ Although it is theoretically possible that the UN could create a volunteer force of this type, it would also be considerably more heavily armed and expensive than the vast

¹⁰⁰ Scott R. Feil, *Preventing Genocide: How the Early Use of Force Might Have Succeeded in Rwanda, A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (Washington: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1998), 21-2.

¹⁰¹ Feil, *Preventing Genocide*, 21.

majority of rapid reaction force proposals. Feil also adds that he personally doubts that the UN would be able to acquire sufficient resources to create such a force of its own.¹⁰² Thus, while a US rapid reaction force could have theoretically stopped the genocide, Feil appears to believe that a UN force would not have been up to the task.

Although the differences between Feil's force and a UN volunteer force preclude rapid reaction force supporters from drawing too many conclusions from his book, Feil also published an article in 1997 suggesting that a "reinforced brigade" of 5,000 well trained, well armed, and cohesive UN direct troops "could have subdued the killers" with a proper mandate and support from helicopters and an unknown number of other troops operating from nearby staging areas.¹⁰³ Feil also notes at the end of the article that the force would have required some degree of help from the world's superpower, noting that "U.S. participation would have been essential" for obtaining resources and organizing resources, providing support functions," and suggests that without US help, the force would have been unable to complete the mission.¹⁰⁴ Feil's conflicting reports make it difficult to know exactly what kind of unit would have been able to stop the genocide; however, in any case the unit would have had to deploy quickly, be heavily armed, have support from helicopters as well as other ground troops, and have at least some logistical support provided by the US military. Thus, it would seem unlikely (although not impossible) that a volunteer force would have been able to accomplish the mission on its own.

¹⁰² Feil, *Preventing Genocide*, 23.

¹⁰³ Feil, "Could 5,000 Peacekeepers Have Saved 500,000 Rwandans? Early Intervention Reconsidered." *ISD Reports* 3, no. 2 (1997): 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ Feil, "5,000 Peacekeepers," 5.

ALTERNATE EXPLANATIONS: DES FORGES'S "DECAPITATION" PLAN AND KUPERMAN'S CRITIQUE

While the Carnegie Commission largely endorsed Feil's position regarding the necessary strength of an intervening force, others have taken different stances on the issue. The late Allison des Forges, an expert on Rwandan history and politics and a witness to the genocide, argued in 1998 for what she called the "decapitation" plan: a very small force could have ended the genocide if it entered Rwanda within the first two to five days after the killing began and captured (or assassinated) the twenty officials responsible for organizing the genocide.¹⁰⁵ Alan J. Kuperman made a very different claim. He argued that essentially no force could have stopped the genocide, and even a division of 15,000 US soldiers could only have saved 125,000 Tutsis (25 percent of the total victims of the genocide), while a reinforced brigade of 6,000 US troops could have only saved 100,000 (20 percent).¹⁰⁶ Des Forges argument is somewhat unrealistic, since it would have been extremely difficult for the force to enter Kigali, locate all the ring leaders, get past their bodyguards and then arrest them in any case, and organizing such a mission would have probably taken more than two to five days. Taylor Seybolt also notes that it is also far from clear whether or not taking out the ringleaders would actually stop the killing, considering the ethnic and historical dimensions of the conflict between the groups.¹⁰⁷ Kuperman's claim is related to Feil's "window of opportunity" argument, which I will discuss below.

Feil suggests that no mission would have been able to succeed after April 21; however, questions remain regarding whether Feil is correct in his analysis of the length of

¹⁰⁵ Allison des Forges cited in Taylor Seybolt, "Could Genocide Have Been Stopped in Rwanda?" *MIT Security Studies Program*, March 17, 1999, http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives_99spring/seybolt.html (accessed February 28, 2009).

¹⁰⁶ Kuperman, *Limits of Humanitarian Intervention*, 76.

¹⁰⁷ Seybolt, "Could Genocide Have Been Stopped in Rwanda?."

this window. Kuperman argues that the window argument does not matter, since the amount of time to deploy a mission would have ensured that the troops would have arrived after the *génocidaires* had completed the bulk of their killing. For instance, Kuperman estimates that the 101st Division's Ready Brigade would not have arrived until May 4, and that is without Feil's addition of 2,500 extra troops.¹⁰⁸ Even then, May 4 is optimistic, because it assumes that the troops would have deployed immediately after the international community learned of the genocide.¹⁰⁹ Although the UN Security Council would ideally deploy its volunteer rapid reaction force quickly after learning of crises, it is unlikely that it would make a decision this fast. The issue of transportation is also pertinent. Unlike other states, such as Sierra Leone, Rwanda has very few airfields capable of handling large troop transport aircraft. Rwanda's largest airport is located in Kigali, and it is unlikely that the Hutu extremist government would have allowed it to land without a fight.

Some have argued that the "window of opportunity" for action in Rwanda was actually much larger than Feil estimates. Linda Melvern argues that both the UN and the US Central Intelligence Agency knew that the genocide was going to occur as early as January 1994, thereby implying that the organization had months to deploy a mission before the genocide began.¹¹⁰ Due to the CIA's secretive nature, it is unclear whether or not Melvern's claim is accurate (the majority of the government's files on the Rwandan Genocide remain classified¹¹¹). Kuperman, for example, contends that the U.S. intelligence agencies did not

¹⁰⁸ Kuperman, *Limits of Humanitarian Intervention*, 76.

¹⁰⁹ Kuperman, *Limits of Humanitarian Intervention*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Linda Melvern, "Genocide behind the Thin Blue Line," *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 3 (1997): 336-7.

¹¹¹ Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2000): 101.

have resources inside Rwanda at the time because the country had little strategic value.¹¹² Regardless of both Melvern's and Kuperman's assertions, the question of whether or not the CIA knew about the genocide is a moot point: if the organization did know, then it kept that information to itself and the UN had no way of being able to prepare to authorize a mission ahead of time.

Finally, there is the issue of the nature of the conflict. Most scholars agree that the killings of 1994 were motivated by ethnic hatred. The Hutu extremists wanted to eliminate the Tutsi as a population. However, there is a disagreement about how centralized the genocide really was. Some, such as Feil and des Forges, contend that the genocide began as a highly organized operation within Kigali and then spread outward after a few weeks. If this was the case, then one can argue that a small number of troops might have been able to enter Kigali and end the killing. However, Kuperman argues that the genocide was not as centralized as some assume. He argues that most people believe the genocide started in Kigali only because this is where the killings were most visible. In reality, the militias had already fanned out across the country by the time the genocide started. The Carnegie Commission and others have made this assumption based on a report from Dallaire, who claimed that the genocide started in Kigali and then spread outwards. However, the more likely scenario was that Dallaire was simply unaware that massive killings were already occurring in other parts of the country.¹¹³ If Kuperman is correct in his analysis, then there is no way a small rapid reaction force would have been able to stop the killing if it was occurring everywhere at once.

¹¹² Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," 101.

¹¹³ Kuperman, "Rwanda in Retrospect," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2000): 113.

Why Rwanda is not a good case study for a UN Rapid Reaction Force

I have attempted to show in the last several pages that stopping the Rwandan Genocide would have been much more complicated than many imagine. Although some argue that a small 5,000 person force could have ended the killings, there is plenty of evidence that it would either arrive too late to stop the genocide or would have been simply unable to due to sheer number of *génocidaires* spread out across the country. Any UN volunteer rapid reaction force would have faced many formidable obstacles in attempting to stop the genocide, and there is a large likelihood that it would not have succeeded.

The biggest problem with using Rwanda and Rwanda-like conflicts as litmus tests for the effectiveness of a rapid reaction force is that they are essentially worst case scenarios. The Rwandan Genocide was extraordinary for its fast paced killing, society-wide mobilization of *génocidaires*, as well as its geographical remoteness. If the UN were to construct a rapid reaction force and then deploy it to stop a Rwandan-style conflict, there is a high likelihood that it might fail and discredit the entire concept of a standing volunteer force for peace operations. Additionally, if the international community relies on the ability to stop the Rwandan Genocide as a benchmark for success, then skeptics will have an easier time convincing member states that the project would not succeed. For instance, Kelly Greenhill argues that an “international rapid –reaction brigade” would not be able to help stop or prevent violence because it would probably require 45,000 heavily armed troops to

help quell a hypothetical Rwanda-type conflict in Burundi.¹¹⁴ Although Greenhill might be correct in her analysis regarding Burundi, it does not follow that a UN volunteer force would not serve a useful role in other situations. To make this claim is to doom future lives and to prevent the UN from involving itself in situations where it could further the cause of peace.

¹¹⁴ Greenhill, "Mission Impossible," 77-99.

Sierra Leone: A Case Study of Likely UN Rapid Deployment Success

The Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 1999 to assist the Sierra Leone government and other forces in implementing the Lomé Peace Accord—the agreement that formally ended the Sierra Leone Civil War. UNAMSIL’s mandated responsibilities included monitoring a ceasefire between rebel and government forces; facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid; protecting disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) centers; and ensuring “the security and freedom of movement of all United Nations personnel.”¹¹⁵ In order to carry out the operation, the Security Council granted UNAMSIL 6,000 military personnel (to be obtained through UNSAS). At the time of its initial deployment, most people were relatively confident that UNAMSIL would carry out its mandate successfully.

Once the mission began, however, UNAMSIL faced many unexpected problems. Instead of deploying rapidly, individual national contingents arrived at a slow and uneven pace, often without arms, vehicles, and other basic equipment. By the time UNAMSIL achieved full deployment, the peace agreement between the government and the rebel forces had collapsed. Roving bands of rebels and former Sierra Leone Army soldiers kidnapped UN troops, widespread violence resumed across the countryside, and the UN’s reputation as a provider of peace and security was destroyed. To quote ‘Funmi Olonisakin, “the UN, whose very emblem once commanded respect among warlords, heroes, and villains alike, became the focus of their violence and the target of bitter anger and ridicule

¹¹⁵ UN, Security Council, *Resolution 1270 (S/RES/1270)*, October, 22 1999, 2-3.

among the local population.”¹¹⁶ When the UN finally managed to reestablish peace three years later in 2002, the organization’s reputation had been severely damaged and a considerable number of Sierra Leonean lives had been lost. In addition to being ineffectual, the mission also went over budget—costing the UN approximately \$2.8 billion.¹¹⁷ Could the UN have avoided this series of disasters had it used volunteer rapid reaction force? I contend that the answer is “yes.”

In the following case study, I will test two hypotheses and compare their explanatory power. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that UNAMSIL would have been unable to prevent the collapse of the Lomé Peace Accord even if a volunteer rapid reaction force had carried out the mission. Supporters of this hypothesis usually rely on one of two arguments: first, the Lomé Accord was too flawed to end the conflict, or second, one or more of the parties to the conflict were sufficiently determined to prevent peace that UNAMSIL never had a chance. Thus, H_0 implies that UNAMSIL’s slow deployment and poor force composition were not important factors in Sierra Leone’s return to war. The alternative hypothesis (H_a) states that UNAMSIL’s multinational composition resulted in a slow and ineffectual deployment. UNAMSIL’s internal problems then helped facilitate the Lomé Accord’s collapse. If the UN had used a rapid reaction force to carry out the first stages of the mission, it would have been substantially more successful and the peace would have been more likely to hold.

¹¹⁶ Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008), 53.

¹¹⁷ UN, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “Sierra Leone – UNAMSIL – Facts and Figures,” <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/facts.html> (accessed March 12, 2009).

The case study will begin with a general overview of the conflict. This will explain how the war started, who the actors were, and what they wanted to accomplish. Next I will evaluate H_0 and H_a based on the empirical evidence that I have gathered. Finally, I will explain how a rapid reaction force would have dealt with the situation.

A Brief History of Sierra Leone's Civil War

INDEPENDENCE

Sierra Leone became a state in 1961 upon gaining independence from Great Britain (it had been a British protectorate since 1896). As was the case with other states in West Africa, the period following Sierra Leone's independence was neither peaceful nor democratic. Sierra Leone suffered its first signs of major political instability barely six years after attaining statehood. In 1967, the country's armed forces launched a coup d'état against Prime Minister (later President) Siaka Stevens and his All People's Congress (APC) administration. The military government lasted for approximately one year before another group of officers overthrew it and returned power to Stevens. In 1978, Stevens established a dictatorship and outlawed all parties except the APC. Stevens retired seven years later in 1985, and his military chief, Joseph Momoh, became president.

WAR BREAKS OUT

In 1991, an organization calling itself the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched a campaign to overthrow Sierra Leone's government. Although its leader, Foday Sankoh, claimed to be dedicated to "people's liberation," the RUF never seriously attempted

to pursue a specific agenda like most traditional revolutionary movements.¹¹⁸ The RUF's military campaign was indiscriminate and used brutal tactics: both APC officials as well as civilians were targeted for execution, torture, and maiming. The RUF acquired many of its combatants through kidnapping young men and children. A large number of former RUF members have admitted to being "recruited by force." In order to motivate their captive soldiers to fight, the RUF promised them "material rewards" such as drugs and women who had been forced into sexual slavery.¹¹⁹ The government responded with its own brutal tactics and the country devolved into chaos. This marked the beginning of Sierra Leone's civil war.

THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT: ORIGINS AND GOALS

Scholars dispute the RUF's origins. Some argue that it was not an indigenous revolutionary movement, but rather an imported one. For instance, Arthur Abraham contends that the RUF began as an armed band of about 300 fighters backed by Liberian warlord Charles Taylor.¹²⁰ According to Abraham's interpretation, Taylor supplied the RUF with arms, while the RUF enslaved locals to mine diamonds that it sent to the Liberian warlord as payment for his aid.¹²¹ Taylor also taught the RUF his favorite fighting techniques and strategies, which included capturing boys as young as ten for use as child soldiers, coercing peasants to perform labor, and committing atrocities against non-

¹¹⁸ Arthur Abraham, "The Elusive Quest for Peace: From Abidjan to Lomé," in *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*, ed. Ibrahim Abdullah (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2004), 200.

¹¹⁹ Nicolas Florquin and Eric G. Berman, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region* (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2005), 369.

¹²⁰ Adekeye Adebajo and David Keen, "Sierra Leone," in *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004*, ed. Mats Berdal and Spyros Economides (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 247.

¹²¹ Abraham, "The Elusive Quest for Peace," 202-3.

combatants, including rape, mutilation, and murder. Others disagree with Abraham and make the claim that the RUF was a relatively independent revolutionary movement. Ibrahim Abdullah argues that the rebellion is best viewed as an attempt by Sierra Leonean “lumpen proletariat” to overthrow a corrupt neo-colonial regime. He contends that the Liberia-RUF connection resulted from a pact between Taylor and Sankoh to help each other “liberate” their respective countries, not because Sankoh was on Taylor’s payroll.¹²² J. Anyu Ndumbe describes the RUF as a combination of Sierra Leonean university students who were fed up with the repressive APC regime, Liberian forces sent by Taylor, and mercenaries from Burkina Faso. Ndumbe’s position is that the RUF’s *raison d’être* was the ousting of a corrupt and unpopular government, and that a popular revolt against the APC was inevitable due to political, economic, and social conditions within Sierra Leone.¹²³

Although many scholars debate why the RUF formed and who formed it, there is nevertheless strong reason to believe that Taylor aided and encouraged the rebels to attack Sierra Leone in response to the Sierra Leonean president’s decision to participate in the Economic Community of West African States’ military intervention in Liberia.¹²⁴ In addition to being angry with Momoh’s APC government, Taylor may have believed that he could both weaken ECOWAS’s effort to stop his insurgency in Liberia and divert its attention by fanning the flames of war in Sierra Leone.¹²⁵ Additionally, the RUF probably

¹²² Ibrahim Abdullah, “Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF/SL),” in Abdullah, 41-57.

¹²³ J. Anyu Ndumbe, “Diamonds, Ethnicity, and Power: The Case of Sierra Leone,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (2001): 94.

¹²⁴ Ndumbe, “Diamonds, Ethnicity, and Power,” 94. See also ‘Funmi Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 97-8.

¹²⁵ In 1991, Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was engaged in a struggle with ECOWAS to take control of the Liberian government. Taylor may have supported the RUF in Sierra Leone for two reasons. First, Sierra Leone was an ECOWAS member. By encouraging a civil war in Sierra Leone,

received some degree of support from Blaise Compaoré's regime in Burkina Faso as well as Gaddafi in Libya.¹²⁶

THE NATIONAL PROVISIONAL RULING COUNCIL

Momoh was still president at the time of the conflict; however, he did not stay in office for much longer. Above all, Momoh feared that the RUF would destabilize country's political environment enough that the military would step in and overthrow his government.¹²⁷ His fears were correct: in 1992, Momoh was deposed in a military coup.

The new government called itself the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). Captain Valentine Strasser, a young Sierra Leonean officer, headed the junta. Although the NPRC continued waging war against the rebels, Strasser did attempt to negotiate with Sankoh. The RUF's high expectations and demands, however, prevented much from being accomplished diplomatically.¹²⁸ The UN attempted to help foster talks between the NPRC and the RUF by sending several special envoys to Sierra Leone, and eventually one managed to organize talks with the RUF in December 1995.¹²⁹ Although the meeting was important in that the RUF was willing to sit down with UN representatives, it did not bring peace any closer.

ECOWAS would have to deal with two conflicts at once, thus weakening its ability to fight Taylor in Liberia. Second, Sierra Leone's President Momoh supported the ECOWAS effort. Taylor's anger at Momoh may have also played a role in his decision. See Eric G. Berman, "Re-Armament in Sierra Leone: One Year After the Lomé Peace Agreement." Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper 1, Small Arms Survey, December 2000, http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/o_papers_pdf/2000-op01-sierraleone.pdf (accessed January 19, 2009), 14. See also Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa*, 97-8.

¹²⁶ Adebajo and Keen, "Sierra Leone," 253.

¹²⁷ Ndumbe, "Diamonds, Ethnicity, and Power," 95.

¹²⁸ Ndumbe, "Diamonds, Ethnicity, and Power," 95.

¹²⁹ Abubakar Kargbo, "The Long Road to Peace: 1991-1997," in *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, ed. Anatole Ayissi and Robin Edward Poulton (Geneva: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2006), 38.

Even though the UN helped begin discussions between the government and the RUF, neither Strasser nor the rank-and-file of the armed forces were interested in ending the war quickly. Both the rebels as well as the government took advantage of the conflict to profit from the blood diamond trade, and the NPRC's "ruthlessness and rampant corruption" did not endear it to the average Sierra Leonean.¹³⁰ Additionally, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) was in no shape to fight a protracted war against the RUF. Although the SLA experienced a surge in membership after the NPRC takeover, it suffered from numerous problems including drug use, poor training, and non-existent discipline.¹³¹ SLA soldiers quickly earned the sobriquet *sobel* (soldier by day, rebel by night) because their behavior was frequently not much better than that of the average RUF fighter. Indeed, some SLA contingents looted towns and then claimed that the RUF was responsible, while others made secret pacts with local RUF leaders to not take action against the rebels in return for some of the RUF's diamonds.¹³² The military's inability to fight the RUF combined with the *sobel* phenomenon led many rural communities to establish local civil defense forces (CDFs).¹³³ These forces tended to have stronger discipline than the RUF or SLA, and their members usually joined voluntarily in order to defend their local communities.¹³⁴

EXECUTIVE OUTCOMES: THE FIRST FOREIGN INTERVENTION

¹³⁰ Abraham, "The Elusive Quest for Peace," 203.

¹³¹ Larry J. Woods and Timothy R. Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone: Lessons From a Failed State*. Long War Series Occasional Paper 28 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 27-8.

¹³² Woods and Reese, *Military Interventions*, 28.

¹³³ The CDFs are sometimes referred to as *kamajors*, although only one particular CDF actually used this name. See Adebajo and Keen, "Sierra Leone," 248-9.

¹³⁴ Florquin and Berman, *Armed and Aimless*, 370.

In 1995, the RUF stepped up its campaign to dislodge the NPRC government from Freetown. The NPRC was aware that the SLA was unable to repel a direct RUF invasion. As a result, Strasser responded by contacting a South African company called Executive Outcomes and requested their services in defending the capital.¹³⁵ According to the deal, Executive Outcomes would drive the RUF out of the area surrounding the capital, recapture the RUF's diamond mines, and then destroy the RUF's secret headquarters. In return for its services, Executive Outcomes would receive \$1.8 million per month and a large share in profits from the diamond mines.¹³⁶

Although Executive Outcomes succeeded in repelling the military attack, it did little to imbue Strasser's corrupt and ineffectual government with legitimacy. In January 1996—four years after the military deposed Momoh—a group of officers within the NPRC government overthrew Strasser. Strasser's replacement, Brigadier Maada Bio started official peace talks with the RUF and began the process of returning Sierra Leone to civilian rule.¹³⁷ In February 1996, his government held Sierra Leone's first democratic elections in 25 years.¹³⁸

THE KABBAH PRESIDENCY AND THE ABIDJAN ACCORD

¹³⁵ Ndumbe, "Diamonds, Ethnicity, and Power," 99.

¹³⁶ The deal between the NPRC and Executive Outcomes stipulated that Executive Outcomes would perform military services on behalf of the government. In return, an organization called Diamond Works would take over the mines and oversee the harvesting of the diamonds. Diamond Works, in turn, would keep almost two thirds of the net profits and pay the remainder to the state. Woods and Reese note that Diamond Works and Executive Outcomes were related; however, the exact terms of their relationship are unclear. See Woods and Reese, *Military Interventions*, 29.

¹³⁷ Yusuf Bangura, "Strategic Failure and Governance in Sierra Leone," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 4 (2000): 555.

¹³⁸ David J. Francis, "Torturous Path to Peace: The Lomé Accord and Postwar Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone," *Security Dialogue* 31, no. 3 (2000): 358.

Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) won the 1996 elections. Although he continued to fight the rebels using the SLA, CDFs, and foreign mercenaries, Kabbah also managed to get the RUF to agree to a peace plan—the Abidjan Accord. It marked the first major attempt at peace between the government and the RUF. ECOWAS, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the UN all lent their diplomatic support.¹³⁹ The Accord stipulated an immediate end to the fighting and created a series of neutral bodies to monitor both the RUF's and the government's compliance.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the agreement offered blanket amnesty to all RUF combatants for all crimes committed during the conflict.¹⁴¹ Finally, it provided the RUF the opportunity to transform itself into a political party, and even went so far as to create a special trust fund for the RUF's campaign chest.¹⁴² The RUF, for its part, agreed to cease fighting if the government made the additional step of terminating its contract with Executive Outcomes.

Despite these and many other optimistic goals, neither the government nor the RUF attempted to keep their promises. Kabbah, for his part, had Sankoh arrested after the RUF leader signed the agreement, while the RUF continued to buy arms during the peace process.¹⁴³ After Executive Outcomes' departure in January 1997, the government no longer had sufficient arms to deter the RUF from renewing the war.¹⁴⁴ The result was that the Abidjan Accord quickly collapsed and fighting began again.

¹³⁹ Francis, "Torturous Path," 360.

¹⁴⁰ *Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL)* [Abidjan Accord], Articles 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, and 11.

¹⁴¹ Abidjan Accord, Article 14.

¹⁴² Abidjan Accord, Article 17.

¹⁴³ Francis, "Torturous Path," 360.

¹⁴⁴ Berman, "Re-Armament," 11.

The period after the Abidjan Accord's failure was characterized by intense bloodshed and political instability. After Sankoh's release, the RUF decided to join forces with SLA *sobel*s in an attempt to dislodge Kabbah. Headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, the combined rebel/*sobel* army laid siege to the capital.¹⁴⁵ On May 25, 1997, after a bloody invasion of Freetown, the coalition succeeded in taking control of the state. They named their new government the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), and planned to use their new position to tighten their grip over the country. The AFRC, however, did not count on the fact that their takeover might prompt an intervention.

ECOWAS AND WEST AFRICAN SECURITY

The Economic Community of West African States was originally created to be an economic and monetary union with no security role.¹⁴⁶ This changed, however, with the beginning of the First Liberian War in 1989. The Liberian conflict began as a civil war between two factions: a warlord named Charles Taylor, who was backed by the presidents of Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia's dictator, Samuel Doe, who was close friends with Nigeria's then-military leader Ibrahim Babangida. Both Taylor and Doe employed extraordinarily brutal methods that quickly led Liberia into a period of veritable chaos and destruction,¹⁴⁷ and it seemed for a while as if the conflict would engulf the entire West

¹⁴⁵ The *Christian Science Monitor* reported the size of the combined military at 50,000. Some of Koroma's "soldiers" were as young as seven years old. See Carl A. Prine, "Life in a War Zone: African Capital Struggles On," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Olu Adeniji, "Mechanisms for Conflict Management in West Africa: Politics of Harmonization," ACCORD, January 1997, *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, <http://jha.ac/articles/a027.htm> (accessed February 18, 2009).

¹⁴⁷ David Wippman, "Enforcing the Peace: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War," in *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts*, ed. Lori Fisler Damrosch (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 157.

African sub-region. To add to the problem, U.S. officials strongly opposed any international intervention, insisting that the war was an “African problem” that required an “African solution,” and the UN Security Council refused to discuss the matter.¹⁴⁸

After spending considerable effort attempting to end Liberia’s civil war, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) resolved to stop the civil war raging in Sierra Leone as well. The Liberian War had severely threatened West Africa’s stability as a sub-region, and many within ECOWAS felt that the conflict in Sierra Leone was an outgrowth of the conflict in Liberia.¹⁴⁹ As such, the organization wanted to act to contain the conflict before it caused even further damage to the West African community.

THE CONAKRY ACCORD AND THE ECOWAS INTERVENTION

ECOWAS’s first response to the conflict was to send delegates to Freetown to discuss the possibility of returning Sierra Leone to democratic rule. These delegates encouraged the AFRC to accept the Conakry Accord, ECOWAS’s official peace plan. The goal of the Conakry Accord was to stop the civil war and return Kabbah to power. ECOWAS members hoped that their agreement would end the conflict.

At first, it seemed as if the AFRC would cooperate with ECOWAS. Colonel Sesay—the AFRC official responsible for representing Koroma at the proceedings—signed the Accord. However, the rank-and-file of AFRC did not follow through with the agreement and stubbornly refused to give up its hold on power. ECOWAS responded by instituting a

¹⁴⁸ Wippman, “Enforcing the Peace,” 159.

¹⁴⁹ Olonisakin, *Reinventing Peacekeeping in Africa: Conceptual and Legal Issues in ECOMOG Operations* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 97-8.

blockade that severely reduced Freetown's access to food and supplies,¹⁵⁰ followed by an all out assault on the capital by the ECOWAS's military wing, the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG).¹⁵¹ ECOWAS succeeded in forcing the AFRC out and restored Kabbah as president. Shortly afterward, the RUF and AFRC split ranks, with Sankoh still dominating the RUF and Koroma in charge of the AFRC. The UN also decided to deploy an unarmed military observer mission to document the ongoing human rights abuses that were being committed throughout the country.¹⁵²

THE NIGERIAN CONNECTION

For a large part of the war, ECOWAS's troops provided Kabbah with the support he needed to stay in power. This is not to say that ECOMOG was a well trained peace force: indeed, it had a reputation for human rights abuses and theft, thus earning it the nickname "Every Commodity or Moveable Object Gone."¹⁵³ However, Sierra Leone's security and stability relied heavily on ECOMOG's presence. Without it, Sierra Leone risked sliding back into chaos.

Problematically for Sierra Leone, ECOWAS was beginning to have trouble finding troops for its mission. The majority of ECOMOG's troops came from Nigeria. As time went by, Nigerians became more and more restless about their country's involvement in the

¹⁵⁰ Prine, "Life in a War Zone."

¹⁵¹ ECOMOG succeeded in restoring Kabbah in March 1998. ECOMOG also managed to arrest Sankoh. See Francis, "Torturous Path," 359.

¹⁵² The mission's official title was the United Nations Military Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Since the teams were unarmed, the Security Council asked ECOMOG to provide for their security. The mission was later terminated once UNAMSIL began to deploy. See UN, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "Sierra Leone - UNAMSIL - Background," UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2005, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil/background.html> (accessed 2 March 2, 2009).

¹⁵³ Morten Bøås, "Regions and Retionalisation: A Heretic's View," in *Regionalism and Regional Integration in Africa*, ed. Nordic Africa Institute (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute, 2001), 34.

conflict. By itself, Sierra Leone cost Nigeria approximately \$1 million U.S. per day.¹⁵⁴ This was a high price for Nigeria at the time. The war put a severe drain on Nigeria's total budget, and the 1998-9 drop in oil prices drastically reduced government revenues.¹⁵⁵ ECOMOG combat deaths also contributed to the Nigerian public being strongly in support for ending Nigeria's participation in ECOMOG.¹⁵⁶

Nigerian civil society groups had a difficult time pressuring General Abacha (Nigeria's military dictator) to withdraw troops from Sierra Leone; however, in June 1998, General Abacha died. His replacement as head of state, Abdulsalam Abubakar, was not enthusiastic about his country's participation in the Sierra Leonean conflict. Shortly after taking office, Abubakar announced that he wanted to have all of Nigeria's ECOMOG units brought home by the end of May 1999.¹⁵⁷ When presidential elections were held in February, the new elected Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo told an interviewer that he did not know why Nigeria was in Sierra Leone since "Nigeria is peaceful and after all, the nation's wealth is being wasted."¹⁵⁸

Abacha's death and Nigeria's return to democracy posed a serious problem for Sierra Leone's security situation. Problematically, Nigeria was the primary provider of security within Sierra Leone by 1999. The Sierra Leonean armed forces had fallen apart: many soldiers turned to banditry and the units that remained frequently disobeyed

¹⁵⁴ Adebajo and Keen, "Sierra Leone," 257.

¹⁵⁵ Bangura, "Strategic Failure," 563.

¹⁵⁶ Adebajo and Keen, "Sierra Leone," 257.

¹⁵⁷ Bangura, "Strategic Failure," 562.

¹⁵⁸ Bangura, "Strategic Failure," 563.

government orders.¹⁵⁹ Without help from Nigeria, Sierra Leone lacked a military force strong enough to deter rebel attacks.

THE 1999 FREETOWN ATTACK

In January 1999, an army of AFRC troops mixed with some RUF rebels stormed Freetown. The attack killed approximately 7,000 people, the vast majority of whom were civilians. When the AFRC began its attack, ECOMOG quickly left Freetown and retreated to the nearby cities.¹⁶⁰ Nigeria's ECOMOG units were low on morale after repeated attacks in December 1998 that had killed over a thousand Nigerian troops, and they did not want to continue fighting the RUF and AFRC. Kabbah realized that he could not win the war without Nigerian support. His only other alternative was to sue for peace.

The Lomé Accord: Sierra Leone's Opportunity for a Lasting Peace?

In May 1999, President Kabbah and Sankoh met with Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema and the Reverend Jessie Jackson in Lomé, Togo to discuss the possibility of implementing a ceasefire. They agreed that the ceasefire would begin on May 24. The terms of the agreement were simple in theory. First, the parties were to cease all troop movements and maintain their current positions. After that, they were supposed to release all prisoners, avoid any actions that could be interpreted as "hostile or aggressive," and allow humanitarian agencies unhindered access to areas under their control.¹⁶¹ The

¹⁵⁹ Bangura, "Strategic Failure and Governance in Sierra Leone," 562.

¹⁶⁰ Bangura, "Strategic Failure and Governance in Sierra Leone," 562.

¹⁶¹ Agreement on Ceasefire in Sierra Leone.

agreement also stipulated that negotiations should continue on May 25 for the creation of a final peace agreement. The product of their discussion was the Lomé Peace Accord.

In many ways, the Lomé agreement was similar to the previous Abidjan Accord. Both treaties granted amnesty to all combatants, encouraged the RUF to remake itself as a political party, and attempted to create some form of unity government that included Kabbah, Koroma, and Sankoh.¹⁶² However, it also had an important difference. Although the Lomé Peace Accord had an amnesty provision, it was written in such a way that the UN would not recognize it. The UN Special Representative made this clear when he added a reservation to the agreement that “the United Nations interprets that the amnesty and pardon shall not apply to international crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international law.”¹⁶³

Initially, the Lomé Accord’s peace held. The war had drained Sierra Leone’s energy for fighting, and the majority of parties to the conflict benefited from the possibility of peace. This is not to say that the agreement was without flaws (they will be discussed later). However, ECOMOG was able to monitor adherence to the agreement until it handed over its responsibilities to UNAMSIL in May 2000. It was during May that the RUF attempted to kidnap a group of UN peacekeepers and the peace began to unravel.

THE BIRTH OF UNAMSIL

¹⁶² *Peace Agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone* [Lomé Peace Accord], Articles III, IV, V, VII, IX.

¹⁶³ Shalini Chawla, “United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: A Search for Peace,” *Strategic Analysis* 14, no. 9 (2000), http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/sa/sa_dec00chs01.html (accessed February 27, 2009).

Sierra Leone's security situation continued to worsen after the attack on Freetown. The Nigerian government was serious about its intent to withdraw its combat troops. Fighting had also been increasing in rural areas between the different rebel factions, ex-SLA troops, and CDFs. For example, an RUF unit launched attacks at AFRC positions in Makeni, the capital of Sierra Leone's Northern Province in October 1999.¹⁶⁴ Secretary-General Annan's special representative issued several public statements condemning the RUF's actions.¹⁶⁵ The UN realized that the Lomé Accord might fail without ECOMOG's presence. Therefore, in October 1999, the Security Council voted to establish a peace operation in Sierra Leone. The United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone was to be made up of 6,000 military troops including 260 observers (to replace the small UNOMSIL observer team). The Security Council intended that UNAMSIL would deploy to Sierra Leone as soon as possible to assist the government, the RUF, and the AFRC with implementing the Lomé Accord. However, the UN troops did not begin to arrive until three months after the authorization,¹⁶⁶ and many contingents did not bring weapons with them, leaving them vulnerable to attack.¹⁶⁷

The deteriorating security situation also dampened ex-combatants' enthusiasm for entering Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) centers. Although Sankoh had issued public statements encouraging RUF troops to cooperate and enter such centers, many did not feel comfortable because the continued troop movements eroded the "climate

¹⁶⁴ It is unclear who ordered this attack. Many have accused Sankoh of deliberately sabotaging the peace process. Although it is possible that Sankoh authorized it, there is also a strong possibility that a local commander was responsible.

¹⁶⁵ UN, Security Council, *First Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone* (S/1999/1223), 6 December 1999, 2.

¹⁶⁶ Woods and Reese, *Military Interventions*, 75.

¹⁶⁷ Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 312-3.

of confidence” that the UN hoped would lead people to participate in DDR programs.¹⁶⁸ By October, rapes, murders, and other human rights abuses were becoming common again. Additionally, bands of former SLA soldiers and RUF units frequently prevented humanitarian agencies from accessing towns under their control. In Makeni, a group of RUF fighters held 40 aid-workers hostage for four days.¹⁶⁹ The RUF saw that UNAMSIL’s contingents were unprepared, which led them to perceive that the UN force was too weak to enforce the Lomé Agreement. Because of this, some local RUF commanders decided to test the organization’s resolve.

THE UNAMSIL KIDNAPPINGS

Although UNAMSIL arrested Sankoh in May after he ordered his bodyguards to open fire on a group of protesters in Freetown, the RUF kept on kidnapping UN troops and ambushing convoys. In May 2000, a RUF unit ambushed an unprepared and largely unarmed group of UNAMSIL soldiers. Because these soldiers also lacked basic communication equipment, they were unable to call in for help or warn other UNAMSIL troops in the area of the attack.¹⁷⁰ In the end, RUF fighters successfully kidnapped over 500 UN troops.¹⁷¹

These and other kidnappings had a “cascading effect” that affected the whole operation.¹⁷² RUF units throughout Sierra Leone became convinced that the UN was not committed to Sierra Leone, and that they could resume their fight to take control of the

¹⁶⁸ S/1999/1223, 4.

¹⁶⁹ S/1999/1223, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 300.

¹⁷¹ The RUF kept the 500 troops as hostages until the British intervention Woods and Reese, *Military Interventions*, 63-4.

¹⁷² Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 58.

country without any substantial risk of punishment. The RUF's military successes threatened other groups that had up until that point been fairly cooperative. As a result, the AFRC, the CDFs, and many former SLA soldiers decided to rearm for the impending fight.¹⁷³ Some of these Secretary-General Annan requested reinforcements from troop contributing states; however, aside from India and Jordan, all other states ignored his requests.¹⁷⁴ Soon, the RUF, AFRC, ex-SLA, and the CDFs became the dominant forces in the countryside, and UN forces were unable to move, much less guard DDR centers and oversee the implementation of the peace agreement. To quote a UN report, the attacks caused “a very serious setback” in the Sierra Leonean peace process.¹⁷⁵

THE BRITISH INTERVENTION: A SMALL UNIFIED FORCE DOES THE JOB

The capture of the 500 UN soldiers and the subsequent return to war prompted Great Britain to intervene. Seeing that UNAMSIL could not even protect itself, much less the Sierra Leonean peace process, the British government decided to send a small “rapid deployment force” to evacuate British nationals and help the UN regain control of the situation.¹⁷⁶ The British force would be under direct UK, as opposed to UN, command. The force consisted of the 1st Parachute Battalion, 42 Royal Marines, two frigates, 13 Harrier

¹⁷³ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 58.

¹⁷⁴ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 305. Although India and Jordan both sent troops, neither country cooperated fully with the UN. The Jordanian troops refused to perform certain duties which they felt were too dangerous, and India later withdrew its contingent after a conflict between its commander and a Nigerian military official. See Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 301, 308.

¹⁷⁵ UN, Security Council, *Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone* (S/2000/455), May 19, 2000.

¹⁷⁶ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 304.

jets, and several helicopters.¹⁷⁷ The first British troops began arriving in mid-May and the mission reached full deployment by May 30.¹⁷⁸

Officially, the force was only supposed to act in self-defense. However, by deploying small numbers of British troops with UNAMSIL teams, the British soldiers could return fire in self-defense when the RUF attempted to ambush them. The British “proved crucial in steeling the UN’s nerve” and helped restore legitimacy to the mission.¹⁷⁹ Local RUF leaders realized that UNAMSIL troops would fight back when attacked, and Sierra Leoneans throughout the country began to see UNAMSIL more as a legitimate peace operation capable of keeping the peace.

Things began to get better for UNAMSIL after the British deployment. With British diplomatic help, Secretary-General Annan succeeded in pressuring India to send in two companies of the country’s best troops. These Indian units succeeded in dismantling a number of RUF roadblocks, allowing UNAMSIL to resume patrolling areas that it previously could not for fear of being ambushed.¹⁸⁰ Emboldened by its successes, UNAMSIL then proceeded to launch a pre-emptive attack on a formerly pro-government rogue CDF called the “West Side Boyz” that had been planning to ambush a UN contingent. The attack effectively destroyed the “West Side Boyz,” thus further helping to restore UNAMSIL’s reputation among the warring factions.¹⁸¹

In March 2001, the RUF had started cooperating with UNAMSIL again. UNAMSIL troops successfully deployed in formerly RUF-controlled areas beginning in March. Within

¹⁷⁷ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 301.

¹⁷⁸ Woods and Reese, *Military Interventions*, 60-4.

¹⁷⁹ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 301.

¹⁸⁰ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 302-3.

¹⁸¹ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 303-4.

ten months, UNAMSIL had succeeded in disarming and demobilizing 45,000 rebels. On March 2, 2002, President Kabbah declared the conflict over.¹⁸²

Why did the Lomé Accord collapse? Null Hypothesis Explanation

According to the null hypothesis, the Lomé Accord would have collapsed *even if* the UN had deployed a volunteer rapid reaction force. H_0 stipulates that other factors were sufficient by themselves to cause the renewed fighting. In this section, I will examine two common explanations for the collapse that fall under H_0 . The first null explanation is that inherent weaknesses within the Lomé Accord were sufficient by themselves to prevent the peace agreement from taking hold. The second is that at least one of the parties to the conflict was so determined to undermine the peace that a volunteer rapid reaction force would not have deterred them.

H_0 EXPLANATION 1: INHERENT WEAKNESSES WITHIN THE LOMÉ PEACE ACCORD

Many have argued that the Lomé Accord was too accommodating to Sankoh and the RUF. They note that because it granted an unconditional pardon to the rebel leaders and amnesty to their followers,¹⁸³ the Accord was little more than an act of appeasement. For instance, Yusuf Bangura complains that the amnesty provision “reinforced a deeply held

¹⁸² Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 311.

¹⁸³ Part 2, Article IX of the Lomé Accord states that “the Government of Sierra Leone shall take appropriate legal steps to grant Corporal Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon,” and that “the Government of Sierra Leone shall also grant absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of the signing of the present Agreement.” Although Article VII mentions the establishment of a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” the blanket amnesty and pardons granted by Article IX imply that the commission would not have any power to try suspected human rights abusers.

view by the rebels that gross atrocities can yield handsome political dividends.”¹⁸⁴ Trevor Findlay argues that the Lomé agreement “sowed the seeds of catastrophe” by not being harder on the RUF.¹⁸⁵ Thus, Lomé’s flaws guaranteed that that Sierra Leone would eventually return to fighting.

There is no doubt that the Lomé Accord had its imperfections. Granting amnesty to those who commit crimes against humanity and then giving them power in a coalition government violates many people’s moral standards. Bangura’s criticism of the peace agreement makes sense in this regard. Just as many argue that it was a mistake for Britain and France to sign the Munich Agreement with Germany in March 1938, some have argued that it was a mistake for the Sierra Leonean government to sign the Lomé Accord with the RUF. Similarly, Lomé granted material benefits to Sankoh (access to diamonds) and Koroma (a government salary with no responsibilities attached). In both cases, some have argued that the agreement “rewarded” Sankoh and Koroma for their participation in the war.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, many Sierra Leoneans felt at the time that the Lomé Accord created an “unjust peace” by not punishing the RUF for its abuses during the war.¹⁸⁷ This perception may have weakened the agreement in the eyes of the public sufficiently to render its implementation impossible.

While the Lomé Accord was certainly an imperfect agreement, many of its flaws were necessary in order to bring all sides into the peace process. First, the RUF would not have agreed to the accord if it did not involve some kind of amnesty or power-sharing

¹⁸⁴ Bangura, “Strategic Failure and Governance in Sierra Leone,” 565.

¹⁸⁵ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 313-4.

¹⁸⁶ Francis, “Torturous Path,” 365.

¹⁸⁷ Francis, “Torturous Path,” 364.

proposal. The RUF was more powerful than the Sierra Leone government in 1999 in terms of military might. The latter had lost most of its soldiers either to the AFRC or to smaller *sobel* bands, while the former retained a comparatively large number of troops. Without Nigeria's help, Kabbah's government did not stand a chance of winning the war. After Abacha's death and Nigeria's transition to democracy, Kabbah could no longer count on being able to defeat the rebels on the battlefield. At the time of the Lomé Accord's writing, Kabbah was at a military disadvantage. Neither Sankoh nor Koroma would have accepted anything less than amnesty and some degree of power sharing. As Francis argues below, major concessions were necessary in order to end the war:

In a broader political theory context, one would want to know the extent to which justice can be sacrificed for the sake of stability. A realistic analysis of the political context of Sierra Leone shows that the situation offered very limited options. A political compromise that provides for an unjust peace or the continuation of war, carnage, maiming, rape and destruction appear to be the only two plausible alternatives. The majority of Sierra Leoneans, encouraged by the international community, opted for political compromise predicated on an unjust peace.¹⁸⁸

In noting that Sierra Leone only had two choices—continued war or unjust peace—Francis acknowledges that one cannot pursue justice without some degree of order already in place. While this does not completely mitigate the moral questions surrounding the agreement, it does suggest that the Lomé Accord was Sierra Leone's best option for peace. Francis also notes that the accord's amnesty was conditional. As noted previously, the UN warned both sides that the amnesty and pardon provisions "shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international

¹⁸⁸ Francis, "Torturous Path," 366.

humanitarian law.”¹⁸⁹ This left open the option for future human rights prosecutions. Moreover, although some scholars at the time predicted that Sierra Leone’s human rights abusers would never be tried, many of them have been. In spite of the amnesty provision, the Sierra Leone government and the UN partnered together to establish a Special Court for Sierra Leone, some of which is currently going on today at the Court for Sierra Leone in the Hague.

In addition, it is unclear why the Lomé Accord’s moral problems would have made the peace process unworkable. One important thing to consider is time at which most critics argued that Lomé established an instable and unsustainable peace. However, Bangura wrote his criticism in 2000, when the security situation in Sierra Leone was at its lowest point. Since then, Sierra Leone has recovered and is now a relatively stable and peaceful country, which does not make sense if one argues that Lomé’s flaws guaranteed a return to war.

H₀ EXPLANATION 2: LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE PEACE PROCESS

In addition to the first explanation, some scholars have contended that certain parties were never committed enough to the Lomé Accord for it to work. This hypothesis assumes that the Accord’s failure was inevitable because one or more of the participants in the conflict never intended to cooperate. Usually, they argue that Sankoh played the role of a “spoiler” in the peace process. For example, Shalini Chawla contends that Sankoh’s “personal conduct and ambitions” threatened the Lomé Accord from the start. “Sankoh’s commitment,” she argues, “was not to peace but State power and a share in the country’s

¹⁸⁹ UN Special Envoy Francis Okello quoted in Francis, “Torturous Path,” 366.

wealth, with the connivance of some neighbors.”¹⁹⁰ Thus, they argue that Sankoh never intended to cooperate with UNAMSIL, and his intransigence made the failure of the accord inevitable.

There is a great deal of truth in the claim that Sankoh and the RUF were not reliable participants in the peace process. After all, the RUF’s regular ambushes and kidnappings of UNAMSIL troops played a major role in derailing the peace process in May 2000. One could simply argue that no peace agreement can work in an environment where one of the parties is not completely cooperative.

Although the RUF did not always behave itself during the peace process, the real problem began when several local RUF commanders decided to “test” the UN’s resolve to implement the agreement. Seeing that ECOMOG was on its way out, these commanders thought that they might be able to restart the war if the UN was unable to resist their aggression. The fact that UNAMSIL troops were frequently unable to defend themselves made the force a sitting duck for RUF attacks. When UNAMSIL failed to defend itself against their ambushes, they decided that the time was right to restart the war. In doing so, they inspired other RUF units to follow suit, while other groups, such as the AFRC and the CDFs, rearmed to counter the RUF. In other words, UNAMSIL’s poorly trained and poorly equipped troops were very likely the primary cause of the RUF’s decision to disrupt the peace process, and the reason the disruption succeeded.

The claim that the RUF’s lack of commitment made the peace impossible, however, is greatly exaggerated. Once the British deployed their small rapid deployment force and

¹⁹⁰ Chawla, “United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: A Search for Peace.”

the UNAMSIL units were able to defend themselves, the RUF units began to cooperate again. In other words, some local RUF commanders were opportunists who attacked UNAMSIL because they thought it was weak; once UNAMSIL gained strength, they left it alone and largely cooperated with the disarmament and demobilization process.

H_A: UNAMSIL'S ROLE IN THE LOMÉ ACCORD'S INITIAL FAILURE

The alternative hypothesis (H_a) has three components. First, UNAMSIL's problems prevented the force from fulfilling its mandate: without well-trained troops, rapid deployment, unified UN command, or proper equipment, UNAMSIL was not able to monitor the ceasefire, protect DDR centers, or protect itself when attacked. Second, UNAMSIL's failure to carry out its mandate, in turn, helped bring about the Lomé Accord's collapse. Third, a volunteer rapid reaction force would not have suffered from these same problems. I will begin this section by explaining what caused UNAMSIL's problems and how they interfered with the mission. Specifically, I will look at three variables that played a major role in preventing UNAMSIL from carrying out its mandate: insufficient materiel/inadequate logistical support, UNSAS's inability to find well-qualified troops and deploy them in a timely manner, and national government interference. I will explain how a volunteer rapid reaction force would have done a better job in each of these cases.

V₁: INSUFFICIENT MATERIEL/ INADEQUATE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

The UN requires troop-contributing states to provide sufficient logistical support, arms, and equipment for their national contingents. The reason for this is simple: the UN's current *ad hoc* system for peace operations does not have the capability to provide troops

with everything they need to carry out a mission. In the case of UNAMSIL, most troop contributing states did not send sufficient arms or equipment for their soldiers. Eric G. Berman and Melissa T. Labonte note that aside from the Kenyans and the Indians, none of the contingents met UNSAS self-sufficiency requirements for equipment.¹⁹¹ Findlay is even more scathing in his assessment. Aside from India, not one of the contingents was “prepared for peacekeeping in terms of having weapons for self-defense” or protective gear.¹⁹² When countries did send materiel, their troops frequently did not receive it. For instance, a chronic shortage of trucks led UNAMSIL to leave many supplies stranded at Freetown’s Lungi International Airport.¹⁹³ Finally, some units did not even have simple communication technology such as portable field radios.

These shortages in equipment, especially in arms and communications technology, had a major effect on UNAMSIL’s legitimacy in the eyes of the parties. One of the main reasons why the peace collapsed in Sierra Leone is because some RUF and ex-SLA contingents decided to test the UN by laying ambushes and kidnapping troops. UNAMSIL’s materiel shortage meant that many UN soldiers were unable to defend themselves even against motley groups of lightly armed rebels. As mentioned previously, the most damaging case was when one RUF unit captured and disarmed 500 UNAMSIL soldiers in May 2000. Prior to the kidnapping, about 5,000 RUF troops had voluntarily disarmed. AFRC had also been generally behaving itself, and Koroma had been cooperative with the

¹⁹¹ Eric G. Berman and Melissa T. Labonte, “Sierra Leone,” in *Twenty-First-Century Peace Operations*, ed. William J. Durch (Washington: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2006), 170.

¹⁹² Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 313.

¹⁹³ Kim Sengupta, “UN Crisis Team to Salvage Mission in Sierra Leone,” *Independent* [London], June 2, 2000.

UN and the Sierra Leone government.¹⁹⁴ However, the successful kidnappings and ambushes caused local RUF commanders throughout the Sierra Leonean countryside to become convinced that because the UN was defenseless and the government lacked a functioning army, they could win the war that they had previously agreed to end. Indeed, these commanders may have been surprised at how easy it was to attack UNAMSIL.¹⁹⁵ The lack of portable communication equipment was especially crippling. The RUF was able to kidnap large numbers of troops precisely because UNAMSIL headquarters was often unable to inform them that the rebels were approaching.¹⁹⁶ Formerly cooperative groups began to rearm because the war could start up again at any time. For instance, the RUF's kidnappings caused the AFRC to rearm so that it could "defend" the country against the RUF, despite the fact that the groups were formerly allied. Koroma even went as far as to request the CDFs and the remaining SLA soldiers to join him in battle to "prevent Sankoh from derailing the peace process."¹⁹⁷ The renewed fighting caused UNAMSIL to lose even more legitimacy as Sierra Leoneans across the country realized that the UN troops could not even defend themselves, much less safeguard the peace process.¹⁹⁸

V₂: ILL-PREPARED TROOPS AND SLUGGISH DEPLOYMENT

Two of UNSAS' weakest characteristics are the quality and quantity of troops it tends to provide and the slow speed at which they tend to deploy. In the case of UNAMSIL, UNSAS "proved virtually useless in providing the troops and support personnel

¹⁹⁴ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 55.

¹⁹⁵ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 61.

¹⁹⁶ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 300.

¹⁹⁷ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 58.

¹⁹⁸ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 60.

required.”¹⁹⁹ Many of UNAMSIL’s soldiers were poorly trained and not accustomed to taking orders from foreign commanders. Even these ill-prepared soldiers were in short enough supply that the UN had to beg ECOWAS to lend four battalions to add to the mission. These problems seriously damaged UNAMSIL in two ways. First, it undermined UNAMSIL’s legitimacy as a peace operation. Second, it prevented UNAMSIL from protecting DDR centers and monitor compliance with the Lomé Accord.

Legitimacy is extremely important for peace operations. In order to be willing to cooperate with each other, warring parties have to know that the peace operation will be able to monitor each side’s compliance and help facilitate peace-building efforts. As the Brahimi Report states, the first few weeks following a ceasefire or peace agreement are a critical period for peace operations.²⁰⁰ It is during this period that parties to the conflict will decide whether it is in their interest to cooperate. Just as in the prisoner’s dilemma game, each conflicting party will wonder whether the other is likely to cooperate (in this case, disarm and demobilize) or defect (rearm and attack). Peace operations provide a vital service by encouraging the parties to disarm, monitoring compliance with the agreement, and in some situations using force to compel cooperation. The quality of a mission’s troops and the speed at which they arrive are critical to this process going smoothly. If either side believes that the neutral third party not capable of performing its duties, then will reconsider their original decision to stop fighting. Having sufficient numbers of quality troops on the ground during this period is essential in maintaining a mission’s image. In

¹⁹⁹ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 312.

²⁰⁰ Brahimi Report, 15.

the case of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL's slow deployment speed severely undermined the mission's legitimacy in the eyes of Sierra Leoneans.

In Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL did not begin deploying its troops until January 2000, three months after the Security Council authorized the mission and eight months after the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord. Anyone familiar with normal UNSAS deployment speeds will not find this slow pace particularly surprising. To the people of Sierra Leone and the parties to the Lomé Agreement, however, UNAMSIL's slow arrival made it appear that the international community did not take the conflict seriously.

More importantly, however, UNAMSIL's slow deployment undermined the security situation at Sierra Leone's DDR centers. Although many ex-combatants decided to cooperate with UNAMSIL and go through the DDR process, they were only willing to stay at these centers when they were safe from retaliation by their former comrades-in-arms. Many former combatants grew less enthusiastic about the DDR process once they learned of nearby troop movements and UNAMSIL's lack of security at the camps.²⁰¹ By undermining Sierra Leoneans' trust in the DDR process, UNAMSIL inadvertently created a situation where fewer people were willing to disarm.

V₃: NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE

Interference by troop-contributing states was the most serious problem that plagued UNAMSIL. It is difficult to command soldiers with insufficient arms and poor training; however, it is almost impossible to command them when they are receiving contradictory orders from thirty different national governments. In this section I will argue

²⁰¹ S/1999/1223, 4.

that troop-contributing states interfered with the mission, which severely undermined UNAMSIL's capacity to carry out its mission.

Originally, the Security Council authorized UNAMSIL under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which gave UNAMSIL the right to defend itself against attacks and to "take necessary action" to ensure freedom of movement of UN personnel and to protect nearby civilian populations.²⁰² However, some contingents were under the impression that they were supposed to avoid the use of force in all situations. Although the under-armed and poorly trained troops would still have had a difficult time defending themselves when ambushed, some contingents did not put up a fight at all. The Security Council attempted to remedy this problem in February 2000 by re-authorizing the mission. The new mandate clarified that UNAMSIL had the right to use force in a variety of situations. These included self-defense, guarding DDR centers, assisting law enforcement officials, and removing illegal roadblocks set up by uncooperative rebel elements. The Security Council also took the additional step of raising the mandated force size from 6,000 to 11,100 troops,²⁰³ hoping that additional contingents would be better trained and more capable of protecting themselves.

What the Security Council did not take into account was that increasing UNAMSIL's size and refining its mandate would not lead to a direct increase in the mission's ability to defend itself or carry out its duties. Throughout this time, troop-contributing states had been regularly communicating messages to their contingents that they should interpret the

²⁰² S/RES/1270, 3.

²⁰³ UN, Security Council, *Resolution 1289*, February 7, 2000, S/RES/1289,

mandate in Chapter VI “peacekeeping” terms instead of more robust Chapter VII terms.²⁰⁴ Several states ordered their units to withdraw if attacked or allow themselves to be disarmed in order to avoid a firefight. These states were much more concerned about avoiding casualties than in bringing peace to Sierra Leone, and the result was that even when contingents allowed themselves to be captured even when capable of defending themselves. This severely undermined the mission’s legitimacy and encouraged more groups to test UNAMSIL’s resolve, even when most of those groups were even more poorly armed than the UN had had inflated opinions of their own military capability. A man captured by the “West Side Boyz” militia describes this phenomenon in a striking manner:

[The “West Side Boyz”] had the illusion that they could capture Freetown, gain power, be in charge of diamonds, drive expensive cars ...These guys, they were telling us, ‘When we fire two shots, the whole of UNAMSIL will go away’. The UN had run away in May [2000], and ECOMOG collapsed in January 1999 [...] They have an exaggerated idea of their own power, maybe a kind of indoctrination. They’ve been told, ‘If you just have ten guns, you could storm that position’.²⁰⁵

The West Side Boyz militia, like many other small uncooperative units, was neither well organized nor well armed. Indeed, they lacked the capacity to fight even small contingents of dedicated UN troops. One year later, a small Indian unit succeeded in destroying the “West Side Boyz” without suffering any casualties.²⁰⁶ However, as long as UNAMSIL states ordered their troops not to fight, even the smallest and weakest groups would be able to humiliate the UN and undermine peace and security throughout the country.

²⁰⁴ Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone*, 62-3.

²⁰⁵ Former captive of the “West Side Boyz” militia quoted in Keen, *Conflict & Collusion in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 240.

²⁰⁶ Findlay, *The Use of Force*, 303-4

Would a Volunteer Rapid Reaction Force Have Done a Better Job?

Based on my findings above, I contend that a volunteer rapid reaction force would not have had the same problems as UNAMSIL. The two null hypothesis explanations lack sufficient evidence to back them up. In both cases, the authors assumed that the failure of the Lomé Accord was inevitable, with or without UNAMSIL. However, Sierra Leone has been relatively peaceful for about six years now, and the current peace is the result of the Lomé Accord's eventual implementation. The three variables mentioned in H_a offer the most realistic explanation for why Sierra Leone relapsed into conflict in 2000. Sierra Leone was not nearly as difficult to deal with as the Rwandan Genocide or even Greenhill's counterfactual Burundian scenario; however, the force the UN sent to Sierra Leone was woefully inadequate in every respect, and these inadequacies helped create a situation where all sides decided that it was in their benefit to return to war.

A well equipped and well trained volunteer rapid reaction force could have helped Sierra Leone establish a lasting peace much earlier than UNAMSIL did. Volunteer standing forces have three main advantages over standby forces. First, the UN provides them with equipment directly. If they lack necessary equipment, then the UN knows about it and has an opportunity to do something about it. Under UNSAS, the UN usually requires that member states bring their own weapons, vehicles, and equipment. Due to the lack of willing troop contributors, however, the UN rarely enforces these rules. This caused a great deal of problems for the UN's operation in Sierra Leone by undermining the troops' ability to defend themselves when "tested" by potential spoilers. A volunteer rapid

reaction force would have had sufficient arms, vehicles, and communication equipment, and local RUF commanders would have found it much more difficult to ambush or kidnap members of a volunteer force. Rebel units that would have attacked the force would have been destroyed by rapid reaction force infantry and helicopters. This would have served as a deterrent to other potential spoilers and a message to all Sierra Leoneans that the UN was serious about helping with the peace process.

Second, having a rapid reaction force would have allowed the UN to deploy much more quickly in Sierra Leone. Unlike Rwanda—an extremely isolated country without easy air access—Sierra Leone had airfields capable of accommodating troop transport planes.²⁰⁷ Although the UN would probably have had to contract US planes to carry the troops to Sierra Leone, there is no reason to believe that this would take more than two weeks maximum. Most importantly, the existence of a standing force would allow the UN to bypass the cumbersome UNSAS procedures that contributed to UNAMSIL’s slow deployment speed. UNAMSIL troops would have been able to arrive on the ground earlier in the peace process, allowing for better security at DDR camps and an enhanced reputation among Sierra Leoneans.

Third, the establishment of a volunteer force would allow the UN to recruit troops directly. This would give the UN the first opportunity in its existence to “pick and choose” talented and loyal soldiers for its missions. The UN would then be able to train these troops together and teach them how to cooperate and follow orders just like soldiers in any

²⁰⁷ Sierra Leone has eight airports. The principal airport is Freetown’s Lungi International, which was a British airforce base prior to decolonization. Lungi has a 10,500 foot asphalt runway capable of handling most troop transport planes. World Aero Data, “Freetown Lungi,” World Aero Data, <http://worldaerodata.com/wad.cgi?id=SL86499&sch=GFL> (accessed April 20, 2009).

well constituted national army. These soldiers would only take orders given by UN military officers, and troop-contributing countries would be unable to interfere with the mission. Instead of fleeing from rebel ambushes or allowing themselves to be kidnapped, rapid reaction force units would have stood up to provocations. Groups such as the “West Side Boyz” would have learned the hard way that one cannot scare the UN by “firing two shots.”

Sierra Leone was not nearly as hard as Rwanda, and it is clear that a rapid reaction force could have saved many lives in this small West African nation. UNAMSIL faced many problems in Sierra Leone; however, most of these problems were the product of the current UN Standby Arrangement System. The “spoilers” in Sierra Leone were neither well armed nor united, and they could have easily been defeated or deterred by a dedicated and well armed rapid reaction force. Aside from these groups, most parties to the conflict were interested in bringing peace to their country as long as they could be sure that their former enemies were also abiding by the provisions of the Lomé Accord. A rapidly deployable force would have been able to help reduce uncertainty about the peace process and promote cooperation. In short, it could have done a lot of good at less cost to lives and first world treasuries.

Conclusion

Applying Lessons Learned: Current Conflicts

The Rwandan Genocide ended almost 15 years ago and the United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone ceased to exist in 2005. For researchers, using case studies about past events makes sense because we have had sufficient time to reflect upon them. For instance, my claim that a rapid reaction force could have succeeded in Sierra Leone is informed by the knowledge that a small British rapid deployment mission helped UNAMSIL restore the Lomé Peace Accord. Analyzing events that have already happened makes the political scientist's job easier; however, it is also essential that the conclusions we draw from past events have some applicability to those in the present. For this reason, I have dedicated a small section to applying the results of my case studies to current UN peace operations.

THE NEED FOR RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY IN CURRENT UN PEACE OPERATIONS

As of April 2009, the UN is currently involved in sixteen different peace operations. Of the sixteen, one is located in the Americas (Haiti), two in Asia and the Pacific (Timor-Leste and India/Pakistan), three in Europe (Cyprus, Georgia, and Kosovo), three in the Middle East (Golan Heights, Lebanon, and the 60-year-old UN Truce Supervision Organization), and seven in Africa (Central African Republic/Chad, Darfur, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Western Sahara). I have grouped these operations into three different categories based on the likelihood that a UN rapid reaction force would have (or still can) help the mission achieve its goals. The first

category, “unlikely impact,” is reserved for those situations where such a force would be of little use. “Possible impact” is for cases where a rapid reaction force could have helped the mission achieve some goals, but would have been unlikely to help the UN complete its mandate there. “Likely impact” is for cases where a rapid reaction force would have either helped prevent a mission from collapsing and/or would have helped it achieve its mission objective.

Name and Location	Year of Authorization	Location	Rapid Reaction Force Impact
UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)	1948	Middle East	Unlikely Impact
UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	1949	Jammu and Kashmir	Unlikely Impact
UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	1964	Cyprus	Unlikely Impact
UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	1974	Golan Heights, Syria	Unlikely Impact
UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	1978	Lebanon	Possible Impact
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	1991	Western Sahara	Possible Impact
UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)	1993	Georgia, Abkhazia	Possible Impact
UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK)	1999	Kosovo	Possible Impact
UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of	1999	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Possible Impact

the Congo (MONUC)			
UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)	2003	Liberia	Likely Impact
UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)	2004	Côte d'Ivoire	Likely Impact
UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	2004	Haiti	Possible Impact
UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)	2005	Sudan	Possible Impact
UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)	2006	Timor-Leste	Likely Impact
African Union/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)	2007	Darfur, Sudan	Possible Impact
UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)	2007	Central African Republic, Chad	Possible Impact

(Source: author's research)

The first group contains missions that were established during the Cold War. In general, these missions have not had serious deployment or command problems of the kind that hampered UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone. Authorized under Chapter VI and (at least tacitly) supported by both the US and the Soviet Union, these operations are primarily involved with classic "peacekeeping" activities such as monitoring boundaries. In addition to being relatively uncontroversial, these missions were also established with the consent of the parties involved. Although some UN troops occasionally get shot at in Cyprus and in the Golan Heights area, the main parties involved in the conflicts see them as legitimate

forces and tend to leave them alone. Additionally, because of the low risk involved in Chapter VI operations, these missions have not been seriously hampered by national government interference.

Most of the “possible impact” cases exist in situations where an existing peace operation could face trouble in maintaining the peace in the future but is unlikely to do so in the meantime. I have also included UNMIS (Sudan) and UNAMID (Darfur) in this list because the Sudan’s enormous size would probably limit the effectiveness of a 6,000 person rapid reaction force—Secretary-General Annan noted in 2004 that the Sudan is more than 35 times larger than Sierra Leone.²⁰⁸ Thus, although UNAMID in particular has been plagued by many of the same problems of Sierra Leone (extremely slow deployment, lack of access to basic equipment, poor training, and conflicting orders from troop contributing states), a considerably larger force would be needed to monitor and enforce compliance the various parties’ compliance with the 2005 Darfur Peace Agreement. The same principal applies to MONUC in the DRC. Additionally, although UNIFIL was established during the Cold War, I have included it in the “possible impact” group because some of the missions could need rapidly deploying support troops in case hostilities resume between the Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Israel (as occurred in 2006). Similarly, UNOMIG, which is a traditional Chapter VI peacekeeping operation, might also be in need of rapid reinforcements if hostilities between the Georgian government and the authorities in break-away republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia break out again (as they did in 2008).

²⁰⁸ Kofi Annan quoted in Mark Doyle, “Sudan: Big country, big problems,” BBC News, June 10, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3795269.stm> (accessed April 23, 2009).

Finally, the third group includes situations where my preliminary research suggests a rapid reaction force would have been very effective. In the case of Timor-Leste, for example, an extremely cohesive and rapidly deployable force was needed to protect civilians and local government functionaries from roving Indonesian militias. The Timor-Leste intervention is unique because it *was* carried out by a predominantly Australian rapid reaction force called INTERFET.²⁰⁹ However, if it were not for the fact that Australia had an interest in keeping Timor-Leste stable, it is highly unlikely that the mission would have succeeded. The other cases, UNMIL (Liberia) and UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire) also suffered from many of the same problems as Sierra Leone.

Looking to the Future: will the UN ever have a volunteer rapid reaction force?

War is a uniquely human invention. Although many animals are violent towards each other, no other species has put so much effort and technological expertise into perfecting the art of killing. Humans have the dubious honor of being the first and only species to expend their energy building sophisticated weapons, creating organized armies, and even thinking of normative principles of how humans should kill each other and when and where doing so such be legal. Humanity has even created a class of weaponry capable of destroying the very planet on which it lives.

Although human history is fraught with violence and conflict, we as a species also have a deeply rooted appetite for peace. The mass organized slaughters of the two world

²⁰⁹ INTERFET was not a traditional UN force, but an *ad hoc* rapid reaction force created by Australia for the purpose of restoring stability in Timor-Leste. Australia asked the UN Security Council to give the mission blessing prior to the intervention, and INTERFET was later replaced by an all-UN force. For more information about INTERFET, see UN Security Council, *Resolution 1264 (S/RES/1264)*, September 15, 1999.

wars, the many “hot” proxy conflicts of the Cold War, and the explosion of ethnic strife following the end of U.S.-Soviet bipolarity have all deeply offended our sensibilities as human beings. We have an organization that is theoretically dedicated to ending war, and the vast majority of our states send members to discuss strategies for alleviating suffering and preventing violence. The threat of a global thermonuclear holocaust is slipping away, and once bitter enemies such as France, Germany, and Spain have open borders and share a common currency. Yet, war continues unabated in other parts of the world. At this very minute, armed violence still rages in areas of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, and Uganda to name only a few. Is there anything that can be done?

As I have shown, the UN currently plays a very limited role in managing conflict. The organization does not possess a massive military force capable of stopping ongoing wars, and even if the UN did have such a force it would accomplish little without the help of diplomatic action. Although there are undoubtedly exceptions, the UN is more likely to play a productive role if it primarily gets involved in conflicts where a ceasefire or peace treaty has already been established. Peace agreements are fragile things, and they frequently require someone to monitor, and when appropriate, use force to deter would-be “spoilers” from undermining them. Of course, there will be other cases when the UN will need to get involved, but it will have to pick them carefully based on its capacity to intervene, the size of the area where the operation will take place, and the nature of the conflict. The problem today is that the UN has almost no capacity to conduct peace operations except in the simplest Chapter VI cases.

Although Donald Rumsfeld was speaking about missile defense—not a standing volunteer force for UN peace operations—his argument that we must “walk before we run, crawl before we walk” is very pertinent to the issue discussed here. The United Nations currently has a unique chance to promote world peace in a way that has never been done before. It has a chance that empirical evidence suggests will save lives, resources, and could potentially create the foundation for a greater rapid reaction capability. However, the UN is still only “crawling” towards this auspicious opportunity for peace. It is high time for the UN to take its first step.

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