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Tuesday, August 31, 2004

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## Milosevic opens defence at trial

**Former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has opened his much-delayed defence at his trial at The Hague.**

He said accusations that he masterminded the 1990s Balkans wars were "unscrupulous lies".

His poor health - due mainly to high blood pressure - has caused delays, but he insists on representing himself.

Mr Milosevic faces charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for his alleged role in the conflicts in which tens of thousands were killed.

Mr Milosevic, sporting a blue suit and tie the colours of the Yugoslav flag, initially complained he had been given only four hours for his initial speech, while prosecutors were given three days to outline their case when the trial began in February 2002.

**The accusations against me are unscrupulous lies and a treacherous distortion of history**  
Slobodan Milosevic

Then he launched into his opening statement: "In the international public for a long time an untruthful and distorted picture was created about what happened in Yugoslavia..."

"The accusations against me are unscrupulous lies and also a treacherous distortion of history."

"Everything has been presented in a lopsided manner in order to protect those who are truly responsible."

He blamed the international community for being "the main force for the destruction of Yugoslavia" in the Balkans wars.

"A multicultural, multi-confessional and multi-ethnic state was destroyed ... this constitutes the gravest international crime," he said.

"Hundreds of thousands of people were wounded and maimed. Thousands of people fled their homes, mostly Serbs."

He once again criticised the legality of the tribunal and of his trial.

The rest of Mr Milosevic's defence is likely to be politically charged, attempting to place his accusers in the dock for what he sees as unjustified attacks on Serbia and the Serbian people in the former Yugoslavia, says the BBC's Geraldine Coughlan in The Hague.

The trial is seen as a test of the International War Crimes Tribunal, and as one of the most important war crimes trials since the Nuremberg trials that followed World War II, correspondents say.

Judges are keen for the trial to be completed by October 2005.

### **Imposed lawyer?**

The repeated delays caused by Mr Milosevic's ill health have prompted some to call for him to be forced to accept a defence lawyer - something he strongly rejects.

He has suffered from high blood pressure, flu and heart problems since the trial opened.

#### **MILOSEVIC TRIAL**

Began Feb 2002

Milosevic faces more than 60 charges

Prosecutors' case rested Feb 2004

Court already heard from 295 witnesses

After his speech, the trial judges will be faced with deciding whether to impose a lawyer on him.

But the amici curiae - so-called friends of the court appointed to ensure Mr Milosevic gets a fair trial - have argued against the imposition.

They say it could increase his stress, deny him his right to represent himself and constitute significant grounds for appeal.

Some observers expect the judges may agree to a type of compromise, in which Mr Milosevic could agree to assistance from a lawyer of his choice.

Mr Milosevic says he wants to call more than 1,600 witnesses in the 150 days allotted to his defence - including former US President Bill Clinton and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

However, it is unlikely they will appear, say correspondents.

The first witnesses are not expected to be heard till next week.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/3613020.stm>

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*Africa News August 30, 2004 Monday*

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Africa News

**August 30, 2004 Monday**

**LENGTH:** 548 words

**HEADLINE:** **Liberia; Justice Minister Dissects Legal Issues** - Wants Principles of Due Process Upheld

**BYLINE:** The Analyst

**BODY:**

**Liberia's** transitional Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Cllr. Kabinah Ja'neh is fighting tooth and nail to ensure that he leaves an indelible footprint on the walls of justice before the expiry of his term of office. As Ellis Togba reports, he has challenged lawyers, law enforcement officers, prosecution and related assignments to ensure that the due process of law is upheld. Besides, he also prayed them to make sure that there would be no basis for the "rate of habeas corpus." The Writ of Habeas corpus is the highest writ in the land and it is issued to compel the prosecution to produce the living bodies of person (s) denied beyond the statutory stipulation of 48 hours.

According to him, the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice is to ensure that the proper things are done at "this time." "We are going to ensure that the principles of due process are upheld. Let us not turn civil matters into criminal ones," he warned participants.

To ensure that the ideas the ministry is trying to inculcate are rooted, Minister Ja'neh said they would embark on "evaluations in the not too long future." Speaking at the close of a week-long seminar organized by the MOJ in collaboration with UNMIL and funded by UNDP at the Ministry, Cllr. Ja'neh spoke of three cardinal objectives the MOJ hopes to embark upon during the transitional period which according to him are aimed at strengthening the "foundation for the rule of law." He named the objectives as the prosecution, law enforcement and rehabilitation.

"Since we don't want to see our prisons as mainly centers for cruelty, we are deeply saddened of the event at the central police detention cells," he observed.

According to him, Liberians must depart from "that past" which plunged this country into violent civil conflict.

The only way do this as far as his suggestions are concerned are that "we respect each other and we allow the laws to be applied irrespective of the persons involved." "That is our job. Whether this country will sustain peace or revert to the past will largely depend on the way we do our job. You know when people go to court for justice and they feel that they have been denied justice, the next thing is that, they take the law into their hands," Minister Ja'neh reminded **legal** minded participants.

Cll. Ja'neh told lawyers and other law enforcement practitioners that the way they perform their responsibilities, they either be contributing to peace or destroying the process to peace depending on the way it is handled.

One of the areas mentioned by the **Justice Minister is legal** reform. Making specific reference to the

penal code, he said "we have to strengthen certain areas." Besides, he noted that there are laws that need to be repealed: the ones that have to do with "free expression." Saying that there should not be any form of criminalization of provisions on free speech, he noted that there are "adequate remedies in our civil actions to deal with these matters because the moment you begin to use the penal code, you stop to defend and when people can't speak out, they find the way to do it." According to the **Liberia Justice Minister**, "Our recommitment to ensuring that we lay a foundation for the rule of law will guide us from here on."

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Terms: **liberia; justice minister dissects legal issues-** ([Edit Search](#))

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Close-up

## Terrorism tribunals are on trial

By John Hendren

*Los Angeles Times*

GUANTÁNAMO BAY, Cuba — Nuremburg it was not.

Unlike the Nazi war-crimes trials, which were conducted by seasoned legal specialists with the world looking over their shoulders, the opening round of the terrorist tribunals at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base last week seemed mired in uncertainty, inexperience and confusion.

As one session ended, the presiding officer appeared to be so blindsided by a defense maneuver that he sat for long moments with his face in his hands before issuing a ruling.

Repeatedly, the translation system broke down.

At one point, a defendant unexpectedly fired his court-appointed lawyer and began to blurt out a confession before officials could bring the situation under control.

And the outside world got only glimpses of the proceedings, which were carried out under such tight restrictions that access was limited and no photographic, television or audio record of what went on are ever to be released.

After four days, the handful of international observers allowed to attend threw up their hands in disbelief and declared the system "fatally flawed."

Said Jamana Musa of Amnesty International, "There were times when I actually had to think to myself, 'They're actually planning on prosecuting people in this forum.' It was mind-boggling."

Despite problems, Army Col. David McWilliams, chief spokesman for the commission, said the week proved the commission's proceeding was "rounded but needed to be refined."

The Nuremburg Tribunals, which convened in Germany on Nov. 20, 1945, were conducted under the auspices of the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

As that tribunal opened, the presiding officer noted that a copy of the indictment in German had been furnished to each defendant, that all the defendants were represented by counsel — in almost all cases, counsel of the defendants' own choosing — and that the prosecutors had made available to "defending counsel the numerous documents upon which the prosecution rely, with the aim of giving to the defendants every possibility for a just defense."

### System dormant for 50 years



[enlarge](#) MARK WILSON / KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

Military police escort a detainee at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba, where a U.S. military tribunal last week held preliminary hearings for four men accused of having ties to al-Qaida.

The proceedings last week against four accused members of al-Qaida taken into custody in Afghanistan employed a military commission, or tribunal, system not used for more than 50 years.

Used in a handful of cases during World War II, notably against a group of Nazi saboteurs captured on the East Coast, the commission system had been abandoned until President Bush revived the idea as a way of prosecuting accused terrorists after the Sept. 11 attacks.

As a result, the five-member panel of military officers convened for the first such trials last week had few precedents to follow. They often seemed unclear what rules or legal procedure should be followed.

On Thursday, defendant Ali Hamza Ahamad Sulayman al Bahlul refused his military lawyers' aid and got halfway through a statement in which he appeared to confess before the presiding officer cut him off.

Col. Peter Brownback appeared to be caught off-guard by the defendant's action and concerned that the trial could be prejudiced if a defendant confessed before he was sworn in and had counsel.

"People of the entire globe, know that I testify that the American government put me under no pressure. I am from al-Qaida and the relationship between me and Sept 11 ...," Bahlul said before Brownback ordered him to stop talking.

Earlier, questioning of the lone alternate member of the commission highlighted the limited legal backgrounds of panel members, despite the complex issues they are expected to deal with.

A defense attorney, Navy Cmdr. Charles Swift, asked the alternate if he understood the primary source of international law. "Do you know what the Geneva Convention is, sir?" Swift asked.

"Not specifically. No, sir," a resolutely frank Lt. Col. Curt S. Cooper answered. "And that's being honest."

That incident and others led observers from nongovernmental organizations to call for an all-lawyer panel.

"We've asked five very able commission members, who have essentially no legal training, to decide complex questions of constitutional and international law," said Deborah Pearlstein, an observer with Human Rights First.

"And they are struggling with the definition of 'jurisdiction,' of 'due process.' Those terms are so basic. It calls the credibility of the entire process into question when we don't even have a baseline to start."

"Not only are we using a form of tribunal that hasn't been used since World War II, we're also holding these proceedings in an isolated location," Pentagon spokesman McWilliams acknowledged.

"We need to ensure we're comfortable with translation," he said, "but I think the legal process did exactly what it needed to do. It allowed for zealous defense under public scrutiny."

### **Scrutiny had its limits**

On the order of retired Maj. Gen. John Altenburg, who has authority over the commissions, fewer than 100 people witnessed each session. No one outside the courtroom and neighboring viewing room is ever to see a picture of the proceedings.

They were not televised, broadcast or photographed. No Nuremburg-like images of alleged war criminals were recorded.

Five human-rights workers and 54 journalists from 37 news organizations descended on this U.S.-occupied sliver of Cuba to witness the proceedings. But they had to write fast.

The eight reporters in the hearing and 29 in the viewing room were allowed to have only pen and pad. Video cameras carried the courtroom scenes to the viewing room, but no tape or film record was kept, officials said.

Only a written transcript is to be kept. A recording for court reporters, undisclosed until a dispute over translation erupted Thursday, will never be released to the public, McWilliams told reporters.

With the fledgling commission struggling to establish its own precedents on the fly each day, many questions were referred to Washington, D.C. For example, Altenburg will decide whether Bahlul can represent himself, as well as what to do about a request to alter the rules so that one defendant could hire a Yemeni lawyer.

"It does sound to me that there was a severe lack of preparation," said Eugene Fidell, president of the National Institute of Military Justice, a nonprofit organization made up mostly of lawyers who participate in military trials. "There was less familiarity with the details of the governing regulations than I would have thought."

### **Hoping for court action**

In the end, The Washington Post reported, the attorneys are hoping that federal judges will agree with their central argument: that the suspected al-Qaida terrorists and Taliban fighters being tried in a makeshift military courtroom here cannot receive due process and fair trials under the commission process.

"These cases are headed straight to federal court," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift, appointed by the military to represent a man who served as Osama bin Laden's personal chauffeur. "They are making this up as they go along."

The defense lawyers, most of them military officers appointed by the government, dominated the proceedings by questioning the legitimacy of the commissions, their rules and procedures, and the fitness of the men assigned to sit in judgment of their clients. They argued that Bush overstepped his authority by creating the commissions, that their clients' rights to speedy trials have been denied, and that the commissions violate the equal-protection clause of the Constitution because only non-U.S. citizens can be tried before them.

Many of the points the defense lawyers tried to make may find their way before U.S. judges because they involve constitutional questions. So far, two of the four defendants formally charged have portions of their challenges already pending in federal court. A third challenge, in the case of an accused paymaster for al-Qaida, is about to be filed in U.S. court, according to his defense lawyer, Air Force Lt. Col. Sharon Shaffer. The case of a fourth man, who admitted in court on Thursday that he is a member of al-Qaida, is on hold while lawyers try to figure out whether he can represent himself or hire an attorney from his home country of Yemen.

Under Bush's executive order creating the commissions, Altenburg must also decide on any efforts to unseat panel members on grounds of conflict of interest. Lawyers for the first two defendants — Australian David Hicks and Salim Ahmed Hamdan of Yemen — challenged the fitness of all but one of the five panel members and one alternate.

Two commissioners served military tours in Afghanistan, and defense lawyers argued that others were too closely linked to the war there, and to the Sept. 11 attacks, to be impartial.

And Hicks' lead attorney, New York civilian Joshua Dratel, previewed an additional motion to get the entire panel thrown out for its lack of legal expertise.

That argument might be a tough sell with Altenburg. He appointed all the panel members in the first place.

*Additional information from The Washington Post*

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PRISON ABUSE

## Commanders can be held liable for actions of their subordinates

BY JENNY S. MARTINEZ and ALLISON MARSTON DANNER  
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**W**ith the latest Army reports on the abuses of Abu Ghraib, the Bush administration has finally acknowledged that the crimes at the prison weren't just the work of a few "bad apples." While the Army now states that it may bring additional criminal charges against other soldiers, it has studiously avoided the possibility of punishing those higher up the chain of command. It has concluded that commanders who failed to supervise their subordinates, ignored signs of abuse and handed down unclear and even illegal policies on interrogation are "responsible" for the problems but not "culpable" because they did not directly participate in the mistreatment.

This position is legally untenable. What most news reports of the scandal have overlooked is that, even if high-level officials did not affirmatively order the abuses, those officials may be held legally responsible for them. Under a legal doctrine called command responsibility, high-level officials can be held responsible for war crimes committed by subordinates -- not only when they directly ordered those crimes, but also when they knew or should have known that the subordinates were committing crimes and failed to take necessary and reasonable steps to prevent or punish them.

The United States has recognized the doctrine of command responsibility at least since World War II, when a U.S. military tribunal convicted Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita for atrocities committed by troops in the Philippines under his command. There was no direct evidence that Yamashita even knew about the crimes, let alone had ordered them. But the U.S. Supreme Court upheld his conviction and death sentence. The Court explained that Yamashita should have known that "the conduct of military operations by troops whose excesses are unrestrained by the orders or efforts of their commander would almost certainly result" in war crimes.

The definitive U.S. Army manual on the law of war incorporates the Yamashita standard, explaining that a commander may be held responsible for crimes of his subordinates where "he has actual knowledge, or should have knowledge, through reports received by him or through other means."

What is more, command-responsibility doctrine applies not only to military leaders, but also high-level civilian officials. The U.S.-led Tokyo Tribunal following World War II (the Far East equivalent of the Nuremberg Tribunal) concluded that the Japanese civilian leadership could be held criminally responsible for mistreatment of military prisoners.

The latest reports make clear that high-level officials in Iraq and Washington certainly had, or should have had, knowledge that they were creating conditions likely to foster abuse. Reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross put Army commanders on notice of the abuses of detainees well before anything was done to stop them. That alone is enough for criminal liability under the laws of war.

Furthermore, while the Schlesinger Report states that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was not officially informed about the abuses, it suggests that reporting structures impeded the flow of "bad news" up the chain of command. Neither report explores what exactly senior civilian and military officials knew about the abuses and when they knew it. It seems highly likely that informal information channels may have been functioning in Iraq and Washington, even in the absence of official reports.

An accurate understanding of responsibility and, in fact, culpability, demands greater information on this critical subject. If the United States was not willing to accept Yamashita's plea that he did not know about the abuses committed by his soldiers when our forces had physically cut him off from contact with his troops, we should not accept explanations of innocence that sound more like the Keystone Kops than the most sophisticated military in the world.

U.S. officials consistently have declared that the willingness to hold ourselves accountable separates the United States from countries that routinely engage in the kind of treatment revealed in the photographs from Abu Ghraib. The United States must ensure that those at the highest levels of government are held accountable for crimes committed against prisoners in Iraq and in U.S. detention facilities around the world. It would be a betrayal of American ideals to leave the criminal process on the steps of Abu Ghraib prison.

*Jenny Martínez is an assistant professor of law at Stanford Law School; Allison Danner is an associate professor of law at Vanderbilt University Law School.*

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Terms: **standards are defined by international courts** ([Edit Search](#))

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*The Irish Times, August 30, 2004*

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**HEADLINE: Standards are defined by international courts**

**BODY:**

Cambodia is about to pass a landmark treaty which will make it possible to try some of those responsible for Khmer Rouge atrocities, writes Jonathan Power.

'The moral arm of the universe is long,' Martin Luther King once said in one of his memorable speeches. "It bends towards justice".

But it is doubtful if the people of Cambodia, the site of the original "Killing Fields", feel that this is likely. Yet their understandable cynicism may about to be confounded.

Cambodia's National Assembly is poised to approve a government decision to ratify a treaty, over a decade in the making, that will empower a special **court** to try surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge, the communist movement that was seized with a mission to refashion the social and economic structure of its country by the sword and the bullet.

Cambodia incarnates the worst horrors of being caught in the crossfire of wars. It was heavily bombed in secret by the Nixon administration.

Then, when the Vietnamese invaded in 1979, Washington had the audacity to line up world opinion behind recognition of the defeated Khmer Rouge regime.

The incongruous sight of the Khmer Rouge flag flying outside UN headquarters in New York was the most revolting testament to mass murder imaginable.

Finally, by the diligence of exiles and the UN, a kind of incipient democracy was created in Cambodia, and gradually the government has come round to some sort of public trial of a small cadre of the Khmer Rouge's top leaders. Most of the judges will be Cambodian, but there will be one UN-appointed judge and one UN-appointed prosecutor. No conviction or acquittal is possible without their acquiescence.

This is the least intrusive of all **international** set-ups in an era that has seen in quick succession the creation of UN war crimes tribunals for ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, plus the establishment of a permanent **International Criminal Court** to deal with future war crimes.

It would seem, despite the hostility of the Bush administration (and also the governments of Russia, China and India) to the ICC, that the overall world tide is flowing in the direction Martin Luther King said was inevitable.

But there is an influential number of people who see it otherwise. In a recent issue of Harvard University's quarterly, **International Security**, Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri argue that "justice does not lead, it follows". In other words, the human rights activists who have fought for these **courts** have it backwards.

First, the authors say, you need a peaceful political order and then one can start to worry about justice. Only when a government is at peace with its electorate, and can govern without challenge, can it be the right time to introduce norms and laws that will prevent future atrocities.

Thus for them, the Yugoslavian and Rwandan **courts** have been counterproductive, keeping chauvinistic feelings among the Serbs and Hutus inflamed.

Although they do not spell it out, presumably they think the slow, tortoise-like approach of the Cambodian government has been the right one.

There is some truth on the authors' side. The Milosevic trial has been allowed to continue too long for it to produce quick therapy for a country still seized by the sanctity of its cause. The boil has not been lanced.

Indeed, one can go further and say it is difficult at the moment to argue that these **courts** have had a measurable deterrent effect on new would-be war criminals.

They still seem to thrive, as events in the Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan, Guatemala, and, on a smaller scale, in Assam suggest.

Don't the leaders of these ongoing atrocities read the writing on the **international** wall? Obviously not.

But the argument misses two important points. We do not in civilised countries have criminal justice systems that are capable of deterring all criminals. Deterrence only works at the margins.

We seek justice in the **courts** partly to punish, partly to uphold a **standard**, and partly in the hope that those punished will reflect on their crimes and resolve to put their past behind them.

It is the same in the **international** arena. We can hope that some villains and governments may be deterred, but we should not count on it. Politicians like Pol Pot and Milosevic who decide on ethnic cleansing have all calculated the odds and decided, albeit mistakenly, that they will win through.

Nevertheless, a **standard is defined**. In contemporary history it reaches back to the Nuremberg trial. Now it is being reinvigorated by the **international courts**. Over time, over generations, new **standards** of justice do develop.

That is why black people are no longer lynched in America and South Africa, why democracy has spread so rapidly in the last 20 years and why, according to the Stockholm **International Peace Research Institute**, the number of violent conflicts in the world has fallen steadily each year of the last decade.

Martin Luther King was right.

Jonathan Power is a commentator on world affairs.

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## UN rejects private peacekeepers

By Thalif Deen

UNITED NATIONS: As the United Nations continues to face a shortage of well-equipped, professionally trained soldiers for its growing peacekeeping operations overseas, a proposal to hire private security forces to rectify the shortfall has been greeted with scepticism.

"There is little or no support for the privatisation of UN peacekeeping," says a senior UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "I cannot think of any member state willing to go along with the proposal," he told IPS.

A proposal to double the current peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), from 10,800 to about 23,900, and the possibility of a new 10,000-strong UN mission in Sudan are expected to bolster the total number of UN peacekeepers from 59,000 to over 82,000.

But most western states remain reluctant to provide peacekeepers, mostly for political and security reasons, abdicating the role of peacekeeping mostly to developing nations.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan complained in 2003 that although these countries have the world's best-equipped military forces, they have refused to actively participate in peacekeeping operations.

Last November, the London 'Financial Times' said Annan was exploring the possibility of hiring private security forces for UN peacekeeping missions as a means of resolving the problem.

In anticipation of this, the paper said, at least one British security firm was building a database of some 5,000 former soldiers who would be available to work for the United Nations at short notice.

But David Harland of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations told IPS the privatization of UN peacekeeping was not on any agenda. Asked if the peacekeepers who

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were killed in Kosovo in April this year were from private security firms, as originally reported, he said they were "seconded for service" by member states.

The shooting incident in the town of Mitrovica left three international police officers dead and almost a dozen others wounded, 10 of who were US correctional officers while the 11th was an Austrian civilian police officer. But none was from any private security firm.

As of July, the 10 largest troop contributors to UN operations were from developing nations: Pakistan (8,544 troops), Bangladesh (7,163), Nigeria (3,579), Ghana (3,341), India (2,934), Ethiopia (2,863), South Africa (2,480), Uruguay (1,962), Jordan (1,864), and Kenya (1,831).

In contrast, the number of troops from western nations averaged less than 600. The largest contributors were United Kingdom (567 troops), Canada (564), France (561), Ireland (479), and the United States (427).

Of the 16 UN peacekeeping missions, seven are in Africa: Burundi (since June 2004); Cote d'Ivoire (since April 2004); Liberia (since September 2003); Ethiopia/Eritrea (since July 2000); Democratic Republic of Congo (since November 1999); Sierra Leone (since October 1999); and Western Sahara (since April 1991).

Last April, US President George W. Bush approved a plan to train about 75,000 soldiers, mostly from Africa, over a five-year period for peacekeeping. The Bush administration, which has called the project 'the Global Peace Operations Initiative', has committed some 660 million dollars to build peace keeping capacity.

"This is meant to expand world wide capacity that could be used by the United Nations or by others," said Douglas Feith, under- secretary-general for policy at the US department of defence.

Feith told reporters "there was not enough capacity in the world to deal with the requirements. Other countries have shown an interest in building up their peacekeeping forces, but they need help."

But Peter W. Singer of the Brookings Institution warns the international humanitarian community to be cautious about its dealings with private security forces. "The emergence of a global trade in hired military services, better known as the 'privatized military industry', is one of the most interesting developments in warfare over the last decade," he writes in the current issue of 'Humanitarian Affairs Review', a quarterly journal of global policy issues published in Belgium.

These firms, he says, now operate in over 50 countries, helping win conflicts in Angola, Croatia, Ethiopia-Eritrea and Sierra Leone. From 1994 to 2000, the US defence department alone entered into over 3,000 contracts with US-based firms, which provided goods and services estimated at a value of more than 300 billion dollars.

The Canadian military, Singer adds, recently privatized its supply chain to the British firm, Tibbett and Britten. But the work of the privatized military industry is not limited to governments, because clients have included rebel groups, drug cartels and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Singer says no example better illustrates the industry's growing activity than the war in Iraq, where private military contractors handled everything - from feeding and housing coalition troops to maintaining the most sophisticated weapons systems.

He warns that the presence of these firms might jeopardise norms of neutrality among aid



groups and lead to a further multiplication of armed forces on the ground.

"In the end, meeting humanitarian needs with private military solutions is not necessarily a terrible or impossible thing," Singer writes. "But, it clearly carries both advantages and disadvantages that must constantly be weighed and mitigated through effective policy and smart business sense."

In this most essential public realm, where people's lives are at stake, he argues, "we must be doubly sure of our dealings with private industry." "We should not let our frustrations lead us down the dangerous path of privatization without due consideration," Singer says. - Dawn/The Inter Press News Service.



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