

Introduction

Who are we Some still see PSCS/PMSCS as a dodgy bunch of near mercenaries. PWC might tell you that we are a niche industry which has done more to take human rights impact to heart and provide for regular, sustained and open surveillance audits of our operations than almost any other industry sectors.

We had to after past horrors.

We have our own SIG¹ in ADS- SCEG. We range from very large companies with a turnover of Billions to very small companies. The last figures we have seen from DSO in 2016 said that security experts accounted for over £5bn in exports on a rising graph. We are enablers. We contribute to the prosperity agenda by providing a security environment on land and at sea that allow companies, the shipping industry and Government institutions to carry out their business in hostile, volatile and complex environments

I am a former academic, career diplomat and Ambassador. While seconded to IISS, I wrote a study on the Conflict in the African Great Lakes and ran former PMs African peacekeeping initiative.

As a Senior Adviser to OG UK since 2006, now owned by large US Group Constellis which has some 20,000 employees employed on all continents in 45 countries. We provide training and operational support services to Governments and commercial organisations. In a world where the threat is multi-dimensional, we seek capabilities that cover a broad spectrum, from the bread and butter operational and protective support, life support, to logistics, UAV systems, tracking technology, analysis, social intelligence tools, systems integration information security and crisis response mitigation- Africa has highest rate of kidnapping in the world.

General

During the last decade in Africa we have seen new patterns of collaboration in promoting an effective local response to conflict through PKOs etc. The fact we are here today as a private sector panel is recognition of a potential for creating new and innovative partnerships which can add value and value for money.

The role of the private sector in T and E is well established. Some questions as to value: *“The instructors providing the training are normally Western soldiers or more often than not, private military contractors (PMCs) who teach from a standardised programme of instruction. An equipment package is donated that may or may not be compatible or interoperable with the nations inventory, spare parts and maintenance systems. The result is a model that produces at best episodic and transitory proficiency.”* in the words of an academic expert.

British Military Training is rightly valued around the world, but it is expensive. I have long argued that the initial training should be undertaken by serving military and then it should segue into a private sector exercise before the Treasury start charging full capitation costs. You have the same people now a few years further on as civilians who still have a reserve obligation (not reservists) provided by a contractor. Quality assurance could be provided by the MOD with a small team of permanent assessors against set standards plus the regular surveillance audits already used by the PSC. The cost would fall dramatically.

But I suggest we need to consider more complex hybrid models to align what we can offer to recent political and security developments in Africa over the last decades. What is striking in the new architecture of the common Africa Security and Defence Policy /APSA, is the focus on

¹ i.e. Special Interest Group

Peace-making and military capability. Not much about the essential underpinnings – logistics, life support, medical support, communications and cyber and situational awareness which are the subject of the academic criticism. There is a Micawber like expectation that something will turn up/UN/donors will provide.

Where PSCS can add value

I suggest the private sector might best help leverage efficiency and VFM on “getting and keeping the show on the road”. Launch and sustainability in the following areas:

- a) Situational awareness backed by technology
- b) Logistics training and support
- c) Communication strategy
- d) Counter IED and demining and emergency crisis response

a) Situational awareness. All the PSCS on the platform have run/are running large operations in conflict zones in support of our clients, Government or commercial over years. We necessarily develop an important and far reaching range of contacts at the local and political level. They need to because we not a bunch of expats, but we are recruiting and training locally in large numbers eg drivers, technicians, mechanics and personnel offering protective defensive support for the client. Hence, we need to be aware of the local religious, tribal, cultural and political pitfalls. And in addition, while the word “intelligence” is not used, we will have real analytical skills from both open sources and own experience which enable us to assess local trends and threats. Bespoke reporting and analysis at a high level which integrates data derived from technology is a strength of the private sector. (Given cuts in FCO resources probably better than govt).

b). Transport Logistics and life support. It is not just providing drivers and armoured cars. It all the engineering and mechanical support. When you are using hundreds of armoured vehicles to ferry around your clients/personnel, then you also have a workshop and you will be training locals in maintenance and repair. And you will be tracking them in real time with video recording of the transit/convoy in question from within a vehicle both for LL, to address any later allegations and to provide a detailed incident mapper to identify threats/problems whether RTAS, criminal shakedowns at check points, road collapse, patterns of IEDs or sniper attacks, or weather.

A lot of work now internationally on lessons learned especially from : AMISOM which as you will know has been a series of partnerships between institutions (AU.UN<EU). TCCs, 6 African TCCs and donors. Un support office for logistics with the EU paying peacekeeping allowances and mission support. And US for heavy stuff – airlift and directly contracted companies like Bancroft and Dyncorp (Pscs) as well as Aecom and osprea logistics. A nightmare of ad hoc coordination. Did it work - sort of. : “Amisom did not control its logistics which come from the UN and other forms of partner support. .UNSOS was regularly asked to engage in innovative activities including fixing partner donated vehicles to the AMISOM TCC which did not come with their own maintenance packages”. Logistics again.

The danger is that the approach falls into the category of “capability substitution” rather than genuine “capability building” i.e use of external actors carrying this out for the AU while keeping the institutional knowledge and Lessons learned experience. An expert analysis of 15 African peace

ops show the limitations. “External partners have regularly provided considerable support to regional organisations but it has been delivered through ad-hoc initiatives. *Given the importance of predictable and effective logistics support in high risk peace operations, external partner states and international organisations could better prepare for such eventualities by putting in place agreements with African organisations to smooth the pathway for future ops*”. Amen to that. An exercise we first tried during the 1990s in the PKO initiative with help from the then Staff College/Def Academy, but the difference now is that such preparation should take account of the huge capabilities of the private sector and consider frameworks with them within the specific areas of capability that they could bring.

An interesting model for the future is the UK support through the CSSF for building demining capacity in AMISOM through its Peace Support Team East Africa. Why not work with the Africa Logistics forum/a regional organisation and try and set up some regional logistics centres which can act as hubs for training and even for deployment. A full mechanics workshop with a loan of some former REME experts provided by the private sector to train locals for the longer term is probably worth as much as 50 trucks, and the PM’s announced support this morning for building-up cyber for the police in Kenya

I would suggest a series of workshops with the UN and AU, EU, principal donor nations and the African TCCs and appropriate companies to identify the areas where training could start to fill the gaps – beginning perhaps with essential mechanical support to keep vehicles and computers going, training at a regional centre, and frameworks to provide the areas that only outsiders can provide whether from donors as regards Air lift, or the private sector for longer term continuous training.

[When visiting UNAMIR in Rwanda in July 1994 at the tail end of the killing, I found the beleaguered General Dallaire and wonderful Ghanain battalion doing what they could to keep the hospital going. They had 6APCs and some trucks. They now had one APC and no one to repair it. And no spares. (This was the UN operation so heavily criticised for not halting the genocide? How and with what? (You do not need telling – logistics matter. Civilians need to get that].

C. Communications strategy. Another obvious and vital area. It used to be radio. But Africa today lives by its mobile phone network. Amisom again, lost the battle on social media according to the lessons learned report of 2017.

“Amisom must develop more effective strategic communications in order to disseminate its narrative and key messages to the right audience particularly the Somalis”. We have enough young and vibrant company’s adept at data mining and message projection who are not Cambridge Analytica to fill that gap.

D. Counter IED and demining. Again, these are areas where pscs have developed a great deal of expertise in places like Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. Former military experts – some to NGOs, some to PSCs. CSSF already looks to the private sector.

E. Emergency crisis response. Africa is the continent with the highest volume of kidnaps of foreigners usually criminal enterprise though not always. HMG cannot negotiate. Private sector can help and advise a family.

PERCEPTIONS and Money

Because our clients must answer in terms of HSE (health, security, safety and environment) so do we have to cascade down the obligations to our locally contracted personnel. We have accredited certification to International standards which cover an unusual range from human rights impact, to procurement, export licensing training and maintenance of firearms. We have mega audits every 3 years and an annual surveillance audit. And we share experience with the likes of PWC who advise large companies on the sustainability agenda. Sunglasses and guns still but auditors and oversight at every step.

MONEY and the Export Agenda

But at the end of the day it is less about efficiency than about money and VFM and now the prosperity agenda. New round of CSSF could be imaginative in promoting mixed projects. Use of civilians rather than military to build local capabilities as regards the logistic underpinnings of PKO? Peace missions in Africa could even be DAC worthy while providing VFM.

As enablers, we contribute to stability and providing the conditions within which companies and Govt agents can work. But we need more predictability, and Govt need better understanding of what we can do .