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US RESPONSE TO AFRICAN CRISES: AN OVERVIEW AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE ACRI[1]

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INTRODUCTION

During the three-year intervention in Somalia (1992-1995), more than 130 peacekeepers died. This was the highest fatality rate in the history of peacekeeping. Significantly, the death of 18 United States Rangers during October 1993 led to the withdrawal of US troops from Somalia soon thereafter. By March 1995, the complete withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping troops had been effected, with few of the mandate objectives of UNOSOM II achieved. In May 1994, President Clinton's Presidential Decision Directive 25 had decreed that the US would not intervene in future crises unless American national interests were clearly at stake, and the mission had clear and limited objectives, including a well-defined exit strategy. But the horrors of Rwanda, and more recent crises in Burundi, Zaire, the Congo Republic, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic made it clear that there remained an urgent need for the international community to develop methods for rapid and effective intervention in African conflicts. At present, response capacity depends on the UN standby forces arrangement, which has proven grossly inadequate for meeting the challenges of rapid intervention in African crises. The solution, it seemed, was to devolve responsibility for such interventions from the international community to African countries and organisations.

During October 1996, US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher travelled to Africa to promote a proposal to set up an all-African military force. The African Crisis Response Force (ACRF), as it was then known, was to be used to deal with African crises where insurrections, civil war or genocide threatened mass civilian casualties. The purpose of the proposed force was not to intervene in hostilities, but rather to protect designated safe areas where civilians could gather to receive protection and humanitarian assistance. The intermediate objective of the ACRF was to develop a rapid reaction capability for such contingencies. The US was offering to fund half of the cost of the force, estimated at 25-40 million dollars, depending on whether or not the force would be deployed within a year. It was hoped that the remainder of the cost would be met by European Union members and perhaps Japan. The concept of the ACRF was based on the idea of a marriage of African resolve (and troops), and international resources.

It was envisaged that the ACRF would take six months to build, and that it would consist of a headquarters, support elements, and nine or ten African battalions. It would be able to deploy for periods of up to six months with the objective of providing a more secure environment for internally displaced persons and to facilitate the wholesale delivery of humanitarian aid within designated zones. It was hoped that the ACRF would be used for humanitarian intervention in Burundi. However, this 'quick fix' solution was met with widespread scepticism both within Africa and the US. In response to the criticism, the US transformed the idea of an African intervention force into a longer term capacity-building initiative. By mid-1997, the original ACRF idea had evolved quite significantly into the ACRI.

According to the State Department, "*[t]he African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) is a training programme which envisions a partnership with African and other interested nations to enhance African peacekeeping capacities, particularly the capacity to mount an effective,*

collective response to humanitarian and other crises."[2] This goal is to be achieved through co-ordinated efforts to increase interoperability among African military units earmarked for future peacekeeping duties through training, joint exercises, and the development of common peacekeeping doctrine. There is no intention of creating a standing African force, although the provision of training will be accompanied by the provision of a limited amount of equipment which is intended to enhance peacekeeping interoperability in a multinational context. The US is attempting to work closely with France and Great Britain to blend the ACRI into a common peacekeeping initiative that would draw upon the long history of military co-operation which France and Britain enjoy with numerous African states. This 'joint' initiative is to be based upon the principles of long term capacity enhancement, legitimacy, openness, and transparency.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACRI[3] – The Political Agenda

The goal of the ACRI is to develop an African capacity to maintain peace in a 'permissive environment', where the parties to a conflict have agreed on peacekeeping units coming in to maintain peace. The intention is not to train a peace-making body, as the US has been advised by the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) and other international partners to start with training for Chapter VI operations (traditional peacekeeping) and to develop future capabilities from this basis. The idea is that, if the international community has a large group of military units in Africa from which it could draw a select peacekeeping force, it would be much better prepared to respond to a crisis in Africa.

The creation of a meaningful standby pool of African peacekeepers is a long term process, which will not be completed in a matter of months. As with all capacity-building programmes, the ACRI will demand continued commitment and engagement over time from both recipients and providers. The US is therefore budgeting for joint training exercises which would occur between ACRI-trained units, or at least for such exercises to be conducted with the staffs of these units. An amount of $15 million has been allocated to ACRI for the 1997 fiscal year, and a request for approximately $20 million for the 1998 fiscal year is being considered by Congress. Because the ACRI entails a form of military assistance, it will exclude those countries that are governed by military governments, particularly those that have displaced civilian governments.

While the ACRI is primarily aimed at capacity-building through training, it is hoped that this capacity will eventually be put to good use in promoting the cause of peace. When it comes to deployment, the political authority would not come from the ACRI; it would come from the authority of the particular operation with UN Security Council approval. Once trained, it is envisaged that participating units would deploy, when called upon to do so, as part of:

- a UN operation, under the political direction of the UN;
- a multinational force operation with Security Council approval, but where a group of countries have come together on a voluntary basis to provide the peacekeepers (perhaps with an African country assuming the role of lead nation);
- a force constituted by member states and directed by a sub-regional organisation (hopefully with Security Council authorisation); or
- an operation undertaken by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), should the organisation assume a more active role in peacekeeping.

It is, however, recognised that the countries which receive training and equipment as part of the ACRI will ultimately retain the right to refuse participation in any particular mission, as is the case with the present system of UN standby arrangements for peacekeeping.

It is also recognised that a number of participants and potential participants in the ACRI training currently receive significant military and peacekeeping training assistance from Britain or from France, as well as from the US. The intention is therefore, as far as possible, to pool training resources together, or at least to standardise communications equipment so that such countries will be better able to work together, whether they accept training from Britain, France or the US. The US has apparently met with Britain and France to explore ways to blend their respective training initiatives, and all three countries are said to be committed to working with the OAU and the UN on peacekeeping training initiatives. The US has agreed with France and Britain that the joint initiative will be based on long term capacity enhancement, on openness and transparency, and on legitimacy through clear relationships

and through co-ordination with the OAU and the UN. In addition, a number of countries beyond the countries in Africa and beyond Britain, France and the US have volunteered to participate in the training.[4]

The US would like to see this co-operation expanded to include the creation of an African peacekeeping support group by the international community. This would provide a forum for discussing issues pertaining to African peacekeeping and perhaps lay the foundation for some sort of co-ordinating body that would bring the assets and the talents of many countries to bear on peacekeeping. The suggestion is for a type of clearinghouse, consisting of an informal gathering of states interested in peacekeeping in Africa, that would address the question of what type of training and joint exercises would be useful in the future.

The Military Agenda

The countries selected for the first stage of ACRI training represent a 'coalition of the willing' – those countries that have indicated a desire to enhance their existing peacekeeping capacity through participation in the ACRI programme. Many of the host nation officers have attended courses at various military schools in the US under the International Military and Education Training (IMET) programme. The US Army is said to have already conducted at least three years' worth of joint and combined exchange training in each of the seven countries that have been earmarked for the first phase of training.[5] Each participating country has also been encouraged to invite their contiguous neighbours to send observers, who may assist in filling posts in a simulated higher level multinational headquarters during the training, and who may also participate in a much wider multinational command post exercise at a later date.[6]

The military training component of the ACRI is being conducted principally by soldiers of the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) with some assistance from both the 18th Airborne Corps and US Army Europe. Approximately sixty US soldiers will train approximately 750 host nation soldiers during "*a sixty-day, multi-echelon, multi-function programme of instruction*." The aim of this training is to create a battalion-size unit from each of the host nations which will be capable of conducting effective peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operations, upon the direction of their sovereign leaders.

Within each country, the training team will be commanded by a Special Forces major, supported by a command and control headquarters, three Special Forces operational detachments, and one combat support detachment. Special Forces were chosen for the ACRI training mission because of their specialist country orientation. The 3rd Special Forces Group has 36 detachments that 'look after' 40 countries in their operating area in Africa. These detachments undertake various studies which are designed to 'get inside the culture' of the host nation and to foster understanding of the military force and system of government. The ACRI trainers are also linguistically competent in Arabic, French and Portuguese.

Training doctrine will be based largely on the US Army's stability operations manual, which has a number of prescribed tasks, conditions and standards that are relevant to peacekeeping. In order to ensure international acceptability, however, the training curriculum was designed in consultation with the UNDPKO, and with reference to the Nordic, United Kingdom, and NATO peacekeeping manuals. The melding of the various doctrines has apparently been relatively easy, as most approaches to a Chapter VI peacekeeping operation are quite similar, and involve about seven tasks that are common to any peacekeeping operation.

Although the units to be trained vary both in structure and number, the US Army will endeavour to apply the same standards in both training and evaluation of training. The eventual interoperability (ability to work effectively with units from other nations as part of a multinational force) of the trained units is deemed critical to the success of the ACRI. The US Army hopes to achieve this goal by supplementing the common training standard with the provision of communications equipment and training in logistics management. They will provide similar communications equipment (about a million dollars' worth of primarily Motorola radios) to all countries which participate in the initiative, and hope to establish an organic logistics sustainment capability within each battalion which will permit sustained operations for up to six months.

The 60-day programme of instruction, which has been endorsed by the UNDPKO, is split between peacekeeping tasks, and basic soldiering skills and tasks. The latter includes aspects such as: musketry (individual marksmanship); camouflage and concealment; tactical movement; first aid; and just about the entire range of battle drills up to company level, including ambushes and attacks. The conviction that basic soldier skills are essential to the peacekeeper is illustrated by the fact that the training teams are accompanied by an optometrist who will test trainees and issue spectacles where necessary in advance of live firing exercises.

Peacekeeping training includes aspects such as: the history and principles of peacekeeping; human rights; negotiation and mediation; as well as more practical training in tasks such as convoy escort, disarmament and handling civil disturbances. The training will be conducted in a multi-echelon fashion, i.e. targeting troops, leaders and staff officers for different levels of training and embracing the 'train the trainer' concept. At battalion level, the training is aimed at culminating in an exercise where the following tasks will be evaluated:

- establishment and operation of a series of observation posts;
- employment of a quick reaction force;
- establishment and operation of checkpoints;
- media plan;
- liaison with local authorities;
- negotiation with hostile parties;
- conduct of convoy escort operations;
- establishment of a lodgement;
- provision of command and control; and
- force protection.

During the final week a comprehensive field training exercise will measure all these battalion-level tasks that are deemed necessary in any peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance operation. The evaluation of this exercise will be conducted by a combined team comprised of both US and host nation leaders.

The capacity to control a civil-military operations centre to co-ordinate all international, non-government and private volunteer organisations is also deemed crucial to the successful conduct of the type operations that the units will be trained for. To exercise this aspect, the ACRI trainers intend emulating the Blue Hungwe[7] experience by employing some 300 to 500 local people to act as displaced civilians who will receive the services of a veterinarian, a medical doctor and a dentist. A small engineer civic action project is also planned for each exercise. The training will not include civilian police, but it is hoped that another country might like to assume this task under a broader multinational peacekeeping initiative.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE ACRI – Consultation and Co-ordination

The ACRI has come a long way since it was plugged by Warren Christopher as the African Crisis Response Force in October 1996. It appears as if the new initiative, based on training participation and long term capacity-building, rather than a concept for deployment, has addressed many of the fears and reservations expressed by those countries and individuals who have been consulted over the last nine months. The stated commitment to consult closely with the UN and the OAU must also be welcomed, as must the attempts to co-ordinate US efforts with those of Britain, France, and a number of other countries involved in providing military and peacekeeping training to African countries.[8]

Consultation and co-ordination with the UN and the OAU should not be coincidental, but a firm prerequisite for any training initiative. For example, in October 1996, then Ambassador to the UN, Madelaine Albright said that *"...an African force, we believe, needs to exist, and we would prefer the UN to take a more robust role, but they are not doing it because they don't have the resources ... so we are trying to do this in a different way*."[9] However, it has become increasingly clear that the issue of African capacity-building for peacekeeping cannot be substantially addressed through bilateral arrangements, without involving sub-regional organisations, the OAU and the UN more fully. Despite assurances to the contrary, it is clear that the ACRI is still predominantly a US driven initiative. Britain and France, as well as the

UN and the OAU, have been extremely reticent in commenting on the Phase 1 ACRI training now under way in Senegal and Uganda.

The stated principles of legitimacy and transparency must also be welcomed, but this should be applied at all stages of the evolution of the ACRI. Press statements on a *fait accompli* are not the same as open consultation with all stakeholders in the design and implementation efforts. This pertains to both the drivers of the initiative and the recipients of training assistance. For example, a week after US Special Forces arrived in Uganda to commence with ACRI training, members of that country's legislature were still in the dark as to its aim and objectives. Members of parliament complained that the Government did not consult them before the arrival of the Green Berets. As one opposition deputy observed: "*Uganda has been accused of getting involved in the affairs of Rwanda, Zaire and Burundi. Sudan says that we are involved in its civil war. The presence of these Americans without an official, legal explanation brings further problems*."[10]

The OAU is still working to find a common position on the US initiative for an African peacekeeping force. The OAU regards ACRI training in Uganda and Senegal as bilateral initiatives. According to Mr Sam Ibok,[11] senior political officer in the OAU Crisis Management Division, the OAU had not received any official communication on the training in these two countries: "*There is no common position [on the ACRI] as yet. There are questions that have not been answered. We are seeking clarification*."

While the OAU welcomes all investments in the enhancement of African capabilities for keeping the peace, meaningful co-ordination and rationalisation of such initiatives are urgently needed. However, such co-ordination is impossible without clear direction and guidelines as to the nature and scope of interventions for which African personnel and assets will most likely be required, and under whose direction this emergent capacity will eventually be deployed.

Building Blocks

The 'building block' approach to capacity-building removes many of the political obstacles which confronted the ACRF. It has become increasingly popular to work at the 'grassroots level', rather than pursue a top-down approach to the issue of capacity-building. In the case of the ACRI, the focus is squarely on unit-level assistance, and the battalion is essentially the building block of any army. But this approach does have its disadvantages – it relieves diplomats from the responsibility to address policy issues pertaining to peace operations, and it certainly does not address broader issues of military professionalism and civil-military relations as these pertain to the entire armed forces of the host nation.

Despite widespread recognition of the 'new peacekeeping partnership' between diplomats, soldiers, and civil society, the ACRI is driven primarily by the military, with only minor role-playing allowed for representatives of non-government organisations (NGOs) and private voluntary organisations (PVOs) in the field exercises. These role-players are also highly likely to include expatriates and workers for foreign aid agencies and organisations, rather than indigenous actors. Moreover, because there is normally a relatively high turnover of personnel among the rank and file of an army battalion, whatever personnel are trained through the ACRI are not necessarily the personnel who will eventually deploy as part of the 'earmarked' battalion for peace operations. This weakness has been partially addressed by the 'train the trainer' concept, but trainers also get transferred, promoted or retire.

The ease with which the ACRI has apparently resolved the doctrinal dilemmas associated with training for contemporary multinational peace operations must be questioned. Reference to training "*in accordance with ACRI and UN standards"* is problematic, as is the claim that the ACRI has accomplished "*universal integration of tactics, training, and doctrine fused together to form one standard*." The outline of the training curriculum appears to be based primarily on US doctrine for infantry training in minor tactics, with some reference to Nordic/UN manuals added for political correctness. Skirting around the doctrinal debate is one way of moving ahead, but this may have some disastrous consequences.

There is also little hope that the ACRI will produce soldiers with a deep concern for human rights and respect for the civil authority. Although such aspects may be covered in the formal

training curriculum, the informal curriculum is often far more important in the process of military socialisation. The fact that the training team is drawn from an airborne special forces group raises some concerns in this regard. Airborne/special forces are renowned for their 'gung-ho' attitudes. *Elite* units have a unique corporate ideology which differs markedly from that of conventional army units: one which glorifies physical courage, despises any form of weakness, and is sceptical of broader military authority. It is perhaps no coincidence that the recently publicised atrocities committed by Canadian, Italian and Belgian forces in Somalia all involved members of airborne units.

US military training assistance also does not necessarily enhance democratic modes of civil-military relations. The ACRI relies on relationships between the US military and host country personnel who have already participated in US training programmes. Between 1991 and 1995, for example, 71 per cent of African officers trained in the US under the IMET programme came from countries with authoritarian or dissolving governments. A study by a Washington-based organisation, Demilitarisation for Democracy, concluded that these officers often use their US training to fight democratic rule at home.[12] Moreover, the US has not always been transparent with respect to foreign military training assistance programmes.

With much less fanfare than has accompanied the ACRI, the US Government has been dispatching private companies to provide military and police training to a number of its foreign allies. The larger companies include Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI), which is training two Balkan armies and is seeking to expand into Africa, and Vinnell, which is training the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Twenty-two of MPRI's corporate officers are former high ranking officers from the US military. During 1996, MPRI won a $400 million contract with the Bosnian Government to train its armed forces. Although funded by a number of other countries, this training is being supplemented with large-scale shipments of US weapons to the Bosnian Army, ostensibly to deter an attack by Serbia's better-armed forces. Since April 1995, however, MPRI has also been providing training and advice to the Serbian military.[13]

The US has also maintained a near-continuous military presence in Rwanda since early 1995, training hundreds of Rwandans in combat, military management, disaster relief, soldier team development, land-mine removal, and military and civilian justice. While being trained by the US, the Rwandan military was itself training Zairians to participate in the ADFL-led campaign against Mobutu's forces. From 17 July to 30 August 1996, a US Special Forces team from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, trained 30 Rwandan army soldiers in small-unit leader training, rifle marksmanship, first aid, land navigation and tactical skills, such as patrolling. A US Joint Psychological Operations Task Force also mounted a training programme for Rwandan soldiers that culminated in a propaganda campaign last November to encourage the hundreds of thousands of refugees camped in Zaire to return home to Rwanda.[14]

A Pentagon official has admitted that the Special Forces training was partly intended to help the Rwandan strongman, Minister of Defence Paul Kagame, meet the militia threat from refugee camps. US Special Forces training is now under way in Rwanda again, for the second time within a year. The current round of Special Forces training for at least 90 Rwandan soldiers began on 15 July and is scheduled to run through August – much the same as the ongoing ACRI training in Uganda, and that planned later for Ethiopia.[15] Perhaps this is no coincidence, as Rwanda, Uganda and Ethiopia all played a key role in the Zairian insurgency.

The bottom line is, no matter who is doing the training and with what intentions, once it has been provided, there is no effective way of controlling the way that the equipment provided and skills which have been taught, are used – at least not under the current ACRI concept. Even if ACRI-trained units eventually launch a peace operation, impartiality and minimum use of force cannot be guaranteed outside the UN framework. Within UN operations, the principle of impartiality has also been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to uphold where the organisation has intervened in civil wars. Moreover, such operations have been provided with explicit or implicit Chapter VII enforcement powers. Indeed, regional operations also find it necessary to use some enforcement powers, and are increasingly being authorised under a Chapter VII mandate. Despite the ACRI aim of sticking to 'Chapter VI' training (an increasingly irrelevant distinction), Rules of Engagement (ROE) that clearly stipulate the

conditions under which force may be used, must become an integral part of the doctrine and military education of those forces which are earmarked for future peace operations. This must go beyond the mechanistic adherence to ROE, for it includes an attitudinal dimension which renounces hatred as a means to foster aggression, and includes political understanding for the necessity for ROE.

The Missing Link: Capacity Utilisation

Perhaps the greatest flaw in the whole ACRI concept is the failure to establish a credible linkage between capacity-building and capacity utilisation. The de-linkage was perhaps necessary to move from the ACRF to the ACRI, and to create the political space to move forward with the training initiative. This approach is not unique to the ACRI; it has characterised similar foreign initiatives in Africa. By dropping the idea of creating a force, however, the US initiative loses much of its meaning. An inordinate amount of resources are spent world-wide on military training, including, latterly, peacekeeping training. But this has not solved the problem of lack of political will to act on the part of the UN Security Council and potential troop contributing countries in the face of man-made crises in Africa. In other words, the ACRI may make a contribution to potential peacekeeping capacity, but potential capacity in the form of more infantry battalions is clearly not the problem at hand. There is, theoretically, an abundance of infantry battalions already available on standby for peacekeeping deployment.

Sixty-six countries (including 12 African countries and the US) have officially expressed their willingness to participate in the UN system of Standby Arrangements for peacekeeping operations, the latest addition being China. The UNDPKO Status Report of 2 June 1997 indicates that standby personnel resources which could be made available to the UN are as follows:

Infantry:	50 191
HQ Support:	3 124
Communications:	4 055
Engineers:	7 596
Logistics:	10 150
Air Services:	2 750
Health Services:	4 800
Individuals:	4 405
(Mil Obs, Civ pol, staff officers, etc.)	
Estimated Total:	87 071

This report mentions further that there are insufficient numbers of some support functions to allow for optimum system efficiency, and that the UN is seeking contributions in the areas of head quarters support, communications, engineers, air services, civilian police and logistics. Yet, the ACRI is providing predominantly infantry training, while conveniently leaving matters, such as civilian police training, to another (as yet unidentified) country or countries.

The ACRI is obviously based on the premise that the UN system does not work, and a degree of anti-UN sentiment in working outside the multilateral framework provided by the world body. UN peacekeeping is indeed in a state of crisis in terms of finances, doctrine, quality troop contributions, co-ordination, etc. A number of missions in Africa have contributed to and served to highlight this crisis (Rwanda and Somalia, for example). But so did the missions in Cambodia and Bosnia. According to the UN Secretary-General, *"... [t]he Organisation still lacks the capacity to implement rapidly and effectively decisions of the Security Council calling for the dispatch of peacekeeping operations in crisis situations. Troops for peacekeeping missions are in some cases not made available by Member States or made available under conditions which constrain effective response. Peacemaking, an human rights operations, as well as peacekeeping operations, also lack a secure financial footing, which has a serious impact on the viability of such operations*."[16]

But the US has itself subscribed to the standby arrangements system and provided the UNDPKO with lists of capabilities. Surely energies could be better devoted to making the UN system work, rather than attempting to create potential capacity for an (as yet unknown) alternative system. If the only global institution of international security is incapable of mounting an effective peace operation, it is surely fallacious to expect this of a regional organisation such as the OAU, or of African sub-regional organisations which were formed for the purpose of promoting economic integration.

Unlike the UN, the OAU was not created for the purpose of maintaining peace and security. Most regional organisations lack the type of capacity to direct and control a peace operation which has been envisioned at the UNDPKO, and they will continue to do so for years to come, due to the lack of experience and human and material resources at this level. It is only since 1993 that the OAU has accepted responsibility for conflict management, which puts it nearly fifty years behind the UN in terms of conceptual and organisational capacity in this regard. And the OAU will always have a far greater financial crisis than the UN, if it becomes involved in large-scale peace operations.

These factors challenge the assumption that an African capacity for conducting peace operations would allow for multinational intervention where the UN lacks the will to act. The oft-cited 'success story' in this regard is the mission in Liberia, where the 16-member Economic Community of West African States intervened with a force of 7 000 when the UN failed to take action to end the civil war in 1990. However, the ECOMOG force soon became a participant in the fighting, and remains deployed to this day, at enormous cost to the participating states. As the fighting escalated, the regional force grew to 12 000, and was costing Nigeria, the major contributor, $1 million a day to sustain. It is estimated that the mission has cost Nigeria some $5 billion to date. If this is indeed the way to go, then Nigeria should not be excluded from the ACRI.

Perhaps the ACRI will eventually be operationalised as a coalition of the willing, without any clear notion of legality, higher direction and the concerned support of the international community. The precedent was indeed set for stretching Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to its limits on 6 August 1997, when the Security Council retrospectively authorised the 800-member Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) under a Chapter VII mandate.[17] UN member states will not be assessed for any portion of the mission costs, which must be borne by participating countries. The wording of Resolution 1125 speaks for itself:

"*The Security Council, ... [d]etermining that the situation in the Central African Republic continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region,*

1. *Welcomes the efforts of the Member States which participate in MISAB and of those Member States which support them;*
2. *Approves the continued conduct by Member States participating in MISAB of the operation in a neutral and impartial way to achieve its objective to facilitate the return to peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements in the Central African Republic as stipulated in the mandate ... including through the supervision of the surrendering of arms of former mutineers, militias and all other persons unlawfully bearing arms ..."*

Without a clear concept for capacity utilisation under UN auspices, the ACRI will reinforce the perceived trend towards the 'ghettoisation' of peacekeeping in Africa and of removing African problems from the UN agenda. It will increase the confidence with which the UN Security Council can 'pass the buck' to African 'coalitions of the willing', as it conveniently did in the case of the Central African Republic.

CONCLUSION

Despite the negative points outlined above, the ACRI should be welcomed as a move in the right direction. Africa does need assistance in the realm of conflict management and peace operations, and the ACRI is no doubt motivated by a well intentioned desire to do something about this. But Africans need to define the type of assistance they require very clearly, and to ensure that such assistance makes a real contribution to the maintenance or restoration of peace, rather than to chaos. This would demand a clearer definition of the problem than

simply a 'need to enhance African peacekeeping capacity'.

Before any 'bottom-up' approach can be translated into effective responses, capacity-building strategies and programmes at organisational level are essential if the concept of peacekeeping under regional or sub-regional auspices in Africa is to develop. In the interim, there is (theoretically, at least) no reason why all peace operations should not be UN operations, but with more troop contributing countries from the afflicted region. Africa consists of some 53 independent states that are also UN member states, and has an international obligation to help resolve the crisis in UN peacekeeping (particularly as it effects future African deployments). The OAU probably has a duty to remind them of this obligation and to encourage its members to contribute to the efforts of the world body in this regard.

The ACRI can, perhaps, lead to improved modalities for conducting peace operations on the African continent. However, if it is to move beyond Green Berets and Motorola radios, the concept will have to be refined through intense debate and wide consultation, not only with potential partners in the envisaged 'African peacekeeping support group', but with Africans themselves.

ENDNOTES

1. This paper is published as part of the Training for Peace Project, a venture undertaken by the ISS in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), which is kindly sponsored by the Norwegian Government.
2. Texts of a briefing by Ambassador Marshall McCallie on the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, 29 July 1997.
3. Unless otherwise indicated, the information contained in this section derives from the texts of on-the-record briefings by Ambassador Marshall McCallie and Colonel David E McCracken on the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, 28 and 29 July 1997. Ambassador Marshall McCallie is the Special Co-ordinator for the United States effort to initiate and support an African crisis response force. Colonel David E McCracken is Commander of the Third Special Forces Group, which is conducting ACRI training in Africa.
4. According to a Third Special Forces Group concept brief on the ACRI, these include Japan, Spain, Ireland, and the Nordic countries.
5. Senegal and Uganda are participating in the first phase of training from July to September 1997. Although the US State Department has been hesitant to specify details of the other five countries earmarked for similar Phase I training, the Third Special Forces Group concept brief indicates that the intention is to conduct training in Tunisia from September to October 1997, in Mali, Malawi and Ethiopia from October to December 1997, and in Ghana from March to April 1998.
6. Although individual country training culminates in a battalion level exercise, there will have to be some simulated brigades that distribute orders and manage requests for information. According to the concept brief, the intention is to conduct a 'continental' command post exercise at the OAU's Conflict Management Centre in Addis Ababa during December 1997.
7. 'Blue Hungwe' was a regional battalion peacekeeping exercise hosted by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in conjunction with the British Government from 1-20 April 1997. It involved a combined total of some 1 400 members of the armed forces of ten of the twelve Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, as well as civilian police observers and international humanitarian NGOs and agencies. The troop contributions varied from 400 Zimbabweans and 300 South Africans to one or two observers from Botswana and Zambia. The exercise co-ordinators hired several hundred of the local inhabitants of the Nyanga area to act as displaced people.
8. During March 1997, the French military conducted an exercise similar to Blue Hungwe for a number of Francophone countries in West Africa. However, this exercise was on a far larger scale, involved over 4 000 troops, and included a French battalion. On 22 May 1997, France, the UK and the US reached an accord on principles to guide a renewed multilateral effort to enhance African peacekeeping capacity. This coincides with a perceived shift in France's foreign policy towards

Africa – away from bilateral aid and assistance and towards forging broader multilateral alliances.

9. M Albright, in an address to the Overseas Writers Association, Washington, 3 October 1996.
10. H Wasswa, *US Troops in Uganda Worry Officials*, Washington Times, 30 July 1997.
11. As quoted in G Warigi and K J Kelley, *Africans Strive for Pact on Proposed US Peace Scheme*, The East African, 7 July 1997.
12. Army Times Publishing Company, Daily News Note, 1 August 1997, http://www.defensenews.com/defheads.html.
13. K Silverstein, *Privatising War*, The Nation, 28 July 1997, pp. 1-4, http://www.mblock@thenation.com/issue/970728silv.htm.
14. L Duke, *US Military Role in Rwanda Greater than Disclosed*, Washington Post, 18 August 1997.
15. *Ibid*.
16. UN Report on Reform, 16 July 1997, http://www.un.org/reform/ track2/part2.htm.
17. The force, which has been operating without international approval since early 1997, consists of voluntary troop contributions by Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, and Togo. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, MISAB is now entitled to use force in order to implement its mandate, which includes the disarmament of rebellious factions of the Central African Republic military.