



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

*An initiative of  
the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs  
and the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice,  
Princeton University*

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**Series:** Policing                      **Interview no.:** B5

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**Interviewee:** Peter Miller  
**Interviewer:** Arthur Boutellis  
**Date of Interview:** 15 January 2008  
**Location:** Ottawa  
Canada

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- BOUTELLIS:** Good afternoon, my name is Arthur Boutellis. I'm an interviewer with the Institution for Fragile States at Princeton University. I am now sitting with Peter Miller of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Office, the Gendarmerie Royale du Canada, in Ottawa, Canada. Today is the 15th of January 2008. First, thank you for your time. Before starting the interview can you please confirm that you've read, understood, and signed the informed consent as well as the legal release forms.
- MILLER:** *Yes I have read everything, I agree with it. I just want to correct one thing; I am retired from the RCMP, retired three years ago.*
- BOUTELLIS:** So I'd like to start by asking you a little more about your personal background, the jobs you've held in the past. Particularly you worked overseas, how did you come about being involved and in what capacities did you serve in police reform efforts?
- MILLER:** *I served for 35 years with the RCMP and much of my career as a senior officer I spent in human resources. One of my jobs was to deploy police officers to UN missions. So starting back in 1989 I started to send people on missions. I was sending them to the first mission which the RCMP participated in which was Namibia. I had a strong desire to go myself, but it took me a while to go because I was always non-releasable from my duties. In 1996 I finally got to go on my first UN mission. I was sent to Haiti where I was the number two person, I was the Deputy Commissioner in charge of operations and training for nine months, from 1996 to '97.*
- I came back to Canada and basically since that period of 1996 I've been working in the international arena within the RCMP and outside. So '96-'97 I was in Haiti. I came back and I became the Head of Foreign Services for the RCMP which includes the liaison officers that work abroad and Interpol. So again, I was still working in the international area. I was only there a year and the UN selected me to be the Police Commissioner in Western Sahara which is the southern part of Morocco, the disputed territory. I was there for one year as police commissioner having police officers from ten countries under my command. I came back to Canada and then I was the head of police peacekeeping here in Canada, the RCMP peacekeeping branch. So I was responsible for deploying all Canadian police officers to UN missions abroad.*
- I was in that branch for about three years as the head and then I was again selected by the UN to be the police commissioner in East Timor where I served for about 18 months, Timor being a very interesting mission and one of the bigger missions the UN had at the time. It was a mission which was left in a very difficult situation and virtually no infrastructure when the Indonesians left. So the UN basically became the interim government until they elected their own. We were the police force; I was the head of their police force for their country. I had about 3000 police officers which includes the local police and the international police at the peak. It was a complex, very complex mission.*
- I retired from the RCMP right after that mission and since then I have been working with the Pearson Peacekeeping Center and again I'm doing international work. Much of my work now is relating to capacity building in Africa, capacity building of African countries to participate in peacekeeping. Of course, having been in several missions and having had many Africans working for me, I know their strengths, I know their weaknesses and I'm in a good position to design a program and to work with them and make them better participants in peacekeeping.*

**BOUTELLIS:** I'd like to come back maybe to the actual UN police officers in this mission later on in the interview but I'd like to start by asking you maybe, the latest mission, when you were police commissioner in Timor, if you could give us a little description maybe of the mission, the goals and then the status of public order when you first got in and the challenges you faced and how did you go about to address the UN mandate.

**MILLER:** *When I arrived in the mission in 2001, before deploying on mission you go to New York and you have a briefing with various people, political affairs people, other people in DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations). When I went into the mission in 2001 it was obvious from my meetings in New York that the mission was in dire need of a police development plan. There was no plan in place in how to develop the Timorese police force and what would be some of the indicators when the UN could leave.*

*One of my first priorities upon arriving was to develop a plan, which we did. When I arrived in Timor there were very few police officers, Timorese police officers. The bulk of those who were there were former Indonesian police officers that did not flee, they stayed in Timor. They were part of the resistance movement in Timor. They fought from within the system, from within the police. Then when the Timorese fled they stayed. So we had a nucleus of police officers, the ex-Indonesian police officers and we had a very small number of young Timorese men and women that were trained.*

*When I arrived there, there were about 150 police officers that had been trained. When I left there, we had about 1200 of the 1500 trained and the remainder were in training at the time. So we took them to that point. We were still faced with a lot of banditry. There were a lot of paramilitary groups that we had to face constantly during my 18 months there. On December 4, 2002, there was rioting in the streets, the burning of stores, the burning of the Prime Minister's residence, and four civilians were shot and killed by the police, by the Timorese police. So we had some very tough moments.*

*We had a formed police unit that was there during my time in East Timor and only one and you obviously know that from research now they are something that is very popular these days. When we're talking about Sudan, we're talking about anywhere from 18 to 20 formed police units. I had a formed police unit but regrettably they were pulled out just before the rioting. They were pulled out in September of 2002 and our major incident happened in December of 2002. I maintained at that time that they should not be pulled out, that the Timorese police were not ready to handle major situations. But for cost-saving purposes they were pulled out and we had to live with the consequences of some deaths and rioting in the streets, it was tough.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Can you tell me a little bit more about this formed police unit? What was it composed of? What was their mandate, equipment and so on?

**MILLER:** *I had about 125. They were from Portugal. They were militarily trained. They were sort of a Gendarmerie style force so they had the dual training police and military. They were equipped with very heavy weapons. They come into mission totally self-sufficient. They come in with all their equipment, their tents, their vehicles, air conditioners. Everything that they need, they show up, they set up a camp. Their duties are to respond to public security incidents, rioting, and so forth. So they were there until the Timorese would be able to build that capacity and would be able to handle that side of things.*

*There comes a point where police can be overwhelmed and Timor didn't have a military. So you can't have the aid to the civil power and have the military come and assist or back up the police; there were no military. So you had to have that strong capacity to be able to deal with heavy weaponry.*

BOUTELLIS: You just said that the benchmark for this formed police unit to be able to hand over to the Timorese police was the fact that they were able to sustain themselves basically. But you just mentioned earlier that this Portuguese formed police unit was actually withdrawn not based on assessment or evaluation of the self-sufficiency of the Timorese police.

MILLER: *I think a lot of it—I don't think that the evaluation was sound enough you might say. We had gone through a very quiet period. Things seemed to be stable. So sometimes that's the calm before the storm. I think everybody had been lulled into a sense of security. Of course, there's a lot of pressure in New York from donor countries to get their police officers back or to cut back on cost, reduce the size of the mission. So there was a combination of factors. I, on the ground, as the police commissioner felt it was inappropriate to pull the formed police unit out at that time. I voiced my opinion several times; however, the decision was taken that we would cut back and they would be removed from the mission so they left in September.*

BOUTELLIS: Let me now get into the different technical areas. I would like to start with asking you about recruitment. The UN—I welcome any kind of comparison you might want to do with previous missions you were on, but let's ask for Timor. As the man who was executive, as you were forming a new police force, what were some effective strategies you put in place to recruit and were those determined by UN headquarters or the mission mandate or were a lot of these designed by your mission in the field?

MILLER: *When you're saying recruiting police officers do you mean the domestic police or the international police?*

BOUTELLIS: These questions are about the domestic, the indigenous police.

MILLER: *The indigenous police the recruiting process was designed before I arrived there. The decision was taken that they would hire the former Indonesian police officers. That was a very unpopular decision by the way but that was a political decision that was taken and I had to live with that decision. I had to even defend it in front of Parliament one time where I had to stand up and answer questions, very unusual for the head of the international police, but questions from people that were saying that these former Indonesian police officers were part of the problem and they had done illegal acts and so forth. So our position was none of these people were hired without having to go through the recruiting process which I had to sort of live with and work with. If anybody had anything against these people, any evidence of wrongdoing they were supposed to bring it forward. An investigation would be done and if it supported their allegations, they would not be kept in the police. But there was never any proof of any wrongdoing of these people.*

*So the process was already in place, the selection process at the front end. What happened though later on is that the process became somewhat politicized in that supporters, there were attempts to have us hire people that were supporters of elected officials. That's something, when I was the police commissioner there was a local person, a Timorese that was to be their Head of the Police working*

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*with me. The difficult part is for me saying to him, we cannot cave into these pressures. We cannot start selecting people who just happen to be the friends of elected officials and do not meet the entrance criteria. His attitude basically was that's easy for you to say, you don't have to live here afterwards, I have to live here.*

*So he felt enormous pressure, this fellow who was my counterpart in the Timorese police, enormous pressure on him from several different areas to hire certain people. I was always vigilant in trying to watch for that, that we didn't allow the police force to become politicized. That's a big problem not only in Timor but around the world, in many countries I go to, politicization of the police, the selection process and so forth.*

*One of the biggest challenges we had was to try to accommodate the former freedom fighters "Falintil" into the police. Most of them did not meet the entrance requirements. They were not happy about this and protested on several occasions.*

BOUTELLIS: You said you were not part of the designing of the recruitment process.

MILLER: *No, that was already in place. They had already started hiring. There were people in training when I arrived. There were even a few that had graduated from their training.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there trial periods and were there any people who were retired?

MILLER: *Terminated.*

BOUTELLIS: As the training was going on?

MILLER: *Yes. Some people didn't make it through training. Also, once they got out into the field I was trying to impress upon my counterpart, Paulo Martins, the head of the Timorese police, that some of these people will not work out once they get out in the field. You have to weed them out. You have to be strict on discipline and so forth. So, some of them were weeded out. There was a disciplinary process put in place. Investigations of their police were done jointly with my international police and their local police. Every area of the police force we had Timorese police working alongside our international police. So internal investigations, if somebody did a bad deed, that investigation would be done by internationals and Timorese police. That's how we did that. So we did weed some people out.*

BOUTELLIS: Concretely, do you have any specific examples of how were the community inputs gathered? How was the intelligence gathering work done?

MILLER: *For?*

BOUTELLIS: For vetting out potential bad recruits who had been involved in crimes prior?

MILLER: *It's like anything else. A complaint comes in and then we conduct an investigation. Now, sometimes you do an internal investigation, but if it is a criminal act committed by the police officer, you actually do a criminal investigation. So you're investigating perhaps a murder. This criminal investigation later leads also to an internal investigation being conducted. So that's how it's done and it's just the regular investigation where you go speak to witnesses and what happened and so forth.*

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BOUTELLIS: Can you maybe touch on the challenge of the language barrier maybe? That might affect different levels and how did you address these? I guess working in tandem with indigenous police might have helped, but how did you—? Did you face any obstacles due to the language barrier?

MILLER: *When I was interviewed by the UN in New York to go to Timor, I was interviewed by the SRS (Special Representative of the Security General) who has since passed away in a bombing in Afghanistan, Sergio (Vierira) de Mello.*

BOUTELLIS: In Iraq.

MILLER: *That's right, Iraq. He interviewed me in New York along with the Prime Minister who came out. So I was interviewed by those two. The issue of language came up.*

*I said, "My plan," and I had the Undersecretary General of DPKO sitting in the room. I said, "My plan, if selected, is I would ask DPKO to transfer in—I had a Portuguese guy who worked for me in Western Sahara, to transfer him as my staff officer or Chef du Cabinet we could say. Have him transferred in, he's Portuguese." I said he would be with me at all times. So they did that. When they picked me they transferred him in. There were challenges, obviously, because of the language, but many of the real educated people spoke some English. But Timor has four languages. They speak Portuguese, they speak Bahasa, they speak Tetum and they do speak a bit of English, some people. But English is not widely spoken. Anyway that's how I handled that. I was surrounded by some Portuguese speakers.*

*Luckily my counterpart within the Timorese police, he spoke English fairly well, so we could communicate. The language was not a big problem.*

BOUTELLIS: Let's move to the next functional area which is training and professionalization. I'd like to ask you if you could describe for us some of the training programs that were put in place. I guess some were already initiated prior to your arrival. If you may have modified any of these and how the curriculum was designed and maybe if I can ask you from your previous UN missions were any of the training programs there inherited from other missions or any lessons transferred?

MILLER: *One of the biggest problems in these missions where we're creating police forces is that we are under a lot of pressure to get the domestic police trained and on the job as quickly as possible. We repeated the same mistake that we made in other similar missions. We figure we'll give them 10 or 12 weeks of training, put uniforms on them, and get them out there. That is a problem. That's a fundamental weakness. We did similar things in Haiti as well. We're under-training these people; they're not really prepared or qualified to go out and to face the challenges that they face as police officers. To give a police officer eight, ten, or twelve weeks training is insufficient. What has happened in almost every case, without fail, is that we have to go back and re-train these people. So that is a big weakness with the system. I know there's a lot of pressure and it emanates from New York and contributing countries and so forth. I think we have to recognize that people need more training, but there's that urgency to get them out there. Countries will not want the international police officers to stay there longer than they have to. That's been the problem, not wanting to leave our police officers out there longer.*

*Look at what's happening in Iraq. They're trying to find a way to leave right now; we're talking military here, but it's the same thing. They're training a military force*

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*that is going to take over and be responsible, it's the same scenario here. They've almost not even finished their training and now things are going to be handed over to them. It's the same type of thing with the policing. I think we have to bite the bullet and have a minimum accepted standard here for that training that they get and stick with it and make the countries understand, the PCCs (Police Contributing Countries), that unless we do it right, we're going to be back in there, there's going to be problems. So that's what has happened over and over again, the same thing happened in Timor. Their basic training was inadequate.*

BOUTELLIS: When you said doing things right you mentioned the length of the training is inadequate.

MILLER: *And the quality of the training too. Perhaps more training in use of force, police powers, human rights, areas like that. I think that what you've got to do is you have to monitor your public complaints, monitor what has happened to your police officers and take a look at—constantly be looking at your basic training. Is there a need to strengthen your basic training. In Timor we had evidence that we needed more human rights training for our police officers. I used to deal a lot with human rights organizations that used to come in to the mission area. It was obvious to me—we took a look at the human rights training that they had as part of their basic recruit training and it was inadequate. So what did we do? We asked human rights organizations to give us input on that and beefed up their basic training in the area of human rights. That's something that needs to be done. It gets back to their basic training. We sort of have a tendency to get them out there right away. Maybe they only get one or two days on human rights when in fact maybe they need five or ten days on that. So that is what has traditionally happened in a lot of missions. They're under-trained. They go out there and you end up with the results that we often see.*

BOUTELLIS: You just mentioned limitation, the feedback. You got some complaints and then you solicited feedback from various NGOs, Human Rights Watch and so on. I'd like to ask you if there are any other evaluation tools that would allow you to retool your training or at least to identify shortfalls.

MILLER: *We would look at—there are several indicators, your internal investigations, the number of complaints against your police officers, we would have to look into that. We would have to look into—those are indicators of potential problems when you're having a lot of public complaints about police officers beating people up and so forth. So you have to be vigilant, watching for that. Crime patterns as well. Those are indicators that people are under-trained. We also get feedback from our police officers that are out there mentoring them, working with them.*

*We went from being the police with full executive authority to gradually having the new Timorese police officers working with and gradually handing things over to them. There were 13 districts, I believe in Timor if I remember correctly. We had turned over six or seven districts. When we turned over districts, we mean Timorese in charge as the district commander and deputy commander and so forth. It's all Timorese with perhaps three or four internationals as advisors. We take a step back and we become advisors rather than be operational police officers. So that's where we were at the end, we were turning over the easier districts first. The most complex one, for example, Dili, the capital, the highest crime rate and so forth was to be the last one handed over. We were saving that as the last one. We knew we needed more time to train police officers and hand that one over. So those are some of the indicators. Feedback we get. Human rights organizations I welcomed their input.*

*One of the first things I did when I arrived in mission was to meet with them. I wasn't—to show them that I wanted to work with them, cooperate with them. I want to know if my police officers are misbehaving, whether they're my international or they're the domestic, local police officers. So we had a good relationship with them. So I relied on some of the feedback from them and other UN people who are working out there in the various districts. We get feedback from them as well.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Are there particular areas of the curriculum that you think should have been beefed up and let me ask, related to that, it might be [Indecipherable 27:03] but some people suggested that training in even basic reading and writing skills should be an important part and is often neglected. What is your take on this? Are there any specific areas of the curriculum other than human rights?

**MILLER:** *Literacy is a big problem, not only in Timor but in many other countries. It has been a problem. Probably there should be a certain amount of that to get them up to an acceptable standard. Police techniques as well. When a police officer lacks confidence and doesn't know how to deal with certain situations, what is he going to do? He's going to pull his gun out. That was happening a lot; they pulled their guns out when in fact they should be trying to solve it by talking to the people and trying to resolve situations. So better emphasis on problem solving, negotiation skills, that type of thing. They didn't spend enough time on those types of skills.*

**BOUTELLIS:** One last question on training before we move into the next technical area.

**MILLER:** *Conflict analysis, conflict prevention, these are other areas as well.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Often the training programs are quite expensive and quite expensive to sustain for the countries. What do you think, do you have any suggestions on cost saving or examples that you've seen that could be useful.

**MILLER:** *Yes, it's expensive, but look at the alternative, sending the UN back in later to finish the job. That's much more costly. That's why I get back to what I said earlier, do it right the first time. Let's bring together maybe the UN—I know they have a panel of experts and so forth, former police commissioners. They should be looking at that. What is the minimum standard for basic training for police officers when we're building a police force? Also the re-training, sometimes you're keeping a nucleus of people that were part of a very bad organization. I think there has to be a special strategy for those people that functioned in a very dysfunctional organization.*

*Even the former Indonesian police officers, I think probably in hindsight now, we probably should have had a special training for these guys to give them a better understanding of what a good police organization should look like.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Following up on that, sort of integrating the former Indonesian forces into a new, coherent police unit, and reformed, what, in your opinion could have been more emphasized in the training because of that? Were there any successful parts of this integration and what were the short-comings?

**MILLER:** *I think there were some very good successes. Some of the districts were functioning very well. But what you have to have, you have to have—these people in Indonesia grew up in this era of heavy-handedness, a police force that was very heavy-handed. A senior elected official in East Timor once told me, "I*

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*don't believe in community policing. I believe basically in a tough approach to dealing with our people, that's what they need and that's what they understand". To a certain point, he might have been right in that you have to have that capacity within the police force. But he was taking it too far. He meant that in all dealings with the public you have to have that very, very tough approach.*

*What you need to have is a well trained and experienced formed police unit that are there, in the background and that the people know, you don't mess with these guys. Even if you mess with the guys on the street who may only have a 9 mm weapon, if you mess with them you're going to have to deal with these other guys. Now that's what you had to have, that strong capacity. In many countries around the world they have riot teams. If things get out of hand, you bring in your riot teams and they deal with the problem. They have heavier weapons, tear gas guns, batons and shields. That's what they needed there.*

*However many of the politicians wanted to go much further. They wanted the day-to-day policing to be an aggressive style policing which was not what we were trying to put in place, which was not what the UN wanted. We wanted a system based on community policing, respect for the people, trying to solve the problems of the community by working with the people. So the buy in for community policing was not there with some of the elected officials right from the start, and in some cases it was never there.*

*On one occasion when there was a jail break from our jail in Dili, the UN police was criticized by some of these elected officials for not shooting the escapees. This would have been a terrible situation had the UN police or the Timorese police opened fire on them as it was well reported that many of the prisoners were being detained illegally. We did not use deadly force in this case and we got all the escapees back. They all came back eventually or we captured them.*

*One of the difficulties you have leading into this because it impacted on our effectiveness, was the quality of the international police officers. I'm sure that's something you're probably interested in. The quality of the international police officers is not always good. It was obvious that many of them had little or no pre-deployment training and that many countries are not sending their better police officers. Many of these police officers had discipline problems.*

BOUTELLIS: These are the international police.

MILLER: *The international police. The quality was not there. That's why today, when I have the opportunity to work in police contributing countries trying to strengthen their capacity, it's because I've been on the receiving end. If you send in weak police officers, you're going to get weak quality work. Not only that, they're a very poor example for the local police. Some of the local police officers are looking at some of our international police officers and shaking their head. So the quality wasn't always there.*

BOUTELLIS: You were in the UN Mission in Haiti in '96. Five years later you were Police Commissioner in the UN Mission in Timor. In the meantime you had been involved in Kosovo.

MILLER: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Have you seen any evolution in terms of initiatives from the UN to improve the quality or at least to have some kind of pre-deployment testing?

*MILLER: Absolutely. Right now, as we're sitting here, the UN is developing—they've said that's enough. We tired of receiving police officers with no pre-deployment training or poor quality pre-deployment training. The impetus for this is the start up of Sudan. It's going to be a very complex mission and there are going to be probably around 6000 police officers. The UN has said, enough is enough. So right now, several countries are working with the UN and Canada is one of them, to develop a pre-deployment training package, standardized, with a generic portion to it and a mission-specific portion. So the intent would be the UN develops, or through their partners like Canada and Australia, Norway, Sweden, others, develop this standardized module, standardized component of it and then with an add on which is mission-specific for Sudan or mission-specific for Chad or for Haiti, whatever. So right now this is under development. Right now there's a conference coming up in Ghana, at the Kofi Annan Center, coming up in February. They're bringing together about eight or ten countries with DPKO to look at this very issue.*

*The UN has sent a note verbal to Canada asking us could we, on an emergency basis go and train Ghanaians and Nigerians right now, for deployment into Sudan. We have developed a mission-specific training package right now for deployment into Sudan and the UN has asked us in the absence of theirs being ready to go and do it right now. So I have a team right now—.*

**BOUTELLIS:** For the Royal Canadian Mounted Police--.

*MILLER: No we're giving it in Ghana to 48 Ghanaian police officers that are going into Sudan. I have a team from Pearson Peacekeeping Center, in Ghana, training 48 Ghanaians. Now starting next week I have a team in Nigeria to train 20 Nigerians to go into Sudan. So for me, this is great news. It should be great news for anybody that works in the UN system because prior to this, police officers were going into missions with no training at all.*

*In 2005, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre received funding from the Government of Canada to strengthen West African participation in peacekeeping missions. So we went in to West Africa and did research in nine countries. We looked at their process of selecting people, deploying them, training them and so forth and sending them on mission. We looked at every aspect of it, not one of the nine countries was giving their people pre-deployment training. They were selecting people. Often times the process was not sophisticated at all. You couldn't really justify how they made their selections but they were sending them on mission. Nine countries interviewed, nine, all nine, no pre-deployment training.*

*They were selecting people, giving them a little bit of equipment, putting them on a plane and sending them off on mission.*

*So today, those countries, this is what we're doing, the Pearson Peacekeeping Center, working with these countries to put in a pre-deployment training package in place. Now, since we started this, three years ago, now the UN is coming out and saying, we want mission specific and so forth. So now we're working with the UN to do that. This is going to be worldwide I expect within a year. It is going to be worldwide.*

**BOUTELLIS:** How long is this training if I may ask?

*MILLER: The training is going to be, it will be either two or three weeks. That part is up in the air. If it is three weeks there will be an exercise, sort of a practical exercise in the third week. We're making it very interactive. The people we've spoken to in*

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*New York, we, Pearson Peacekeeping Center, meet with the training people in New York. One of the things they said to us, "we don't want death by PowerPoint." We don't want somebody to stand up in the front of the class da-da-da, just PowerPoint presentations, no. We believe in the problem-based learning methodology which is very interactive. Your class sessions are never more than about 20 minutes. Then you go off in your group and you have to deal with a problem, solve it, come back, give presentation, critique each other, go back into your groups. So that's the learning methodology, right now, that we're giving in Ghana and Nigeria right now. The UN one, we think they're going to want to adopt the Canadian model of problem-based learning.*

BOUTELLIS: Excellent, thank you for this "aparte" it is really useful. Let me come back to the indigenous police reform process for a second. One comment you made earlier was about community policing and the aborted community policing. I understand from what you said in Timor the foot patrol were wearing arms?

MILLER: *Yes, police officers were armed.*

BOUTELLIS: The Timorese police officers. In other countries where community policing has been tried or tried to be put in place, there are different situations. In Sierra Leone for instance,

MILLER: *Unarmed.*

BOUTELLIS: Is unarmed. Do you have a particular take on this? Do you think this is something important in post conflict environments? What are the key areas of community policing under this—?

MILLER: *My feeling, Timor was supposed to be an unarmed mission. The first police commissioner was an Australian and most of the Australian police forces are unarmed. So Timor was supposed to be unarmed. It came from that way of thinking of unarmed police forces. I know the first police commissioner. I met with him in New York before I went in. So it was supposed to be unarmed. But what happened, there were a couple of very violent incidents that happened and there were some people that got killed, some internationals got killed. The decision was to make it an armed mission. My preference is to have unarmed missions as much as possible and I think that is the preference of the United Nations as well. But sometimes the risk factor is just so high, that you have to go with an armed mission. There's nothing wrong with unarmed police forces, but the situation in Timor, there were so many weapons out there, so many police stations under attack constantly, police officers being killed as well, that I don't think the decision to arm the police force was a bad one.*

*Now, yes, we did have four people shot on December 4, 2002, but that's not necessarily because they were an armed police force. It gets back to their training. They learned how to shoot. They were good shooters, but they didn't learn perhaps enough on when to shoot and when not to shoot. It gets back to what I said, their authorities, their powers, power of arrest and so forth. When you lack confidence and you don't know how to deal with a situation and you're not properly trained, there will be a tendency to pull your gun and that's what happened. Plus, they didn't have probably the confidence in their backup, their own formed police unit. A bunch of young guys that were 22, 23 years old. You know in the RCMP in Canada, I was a member of our riot team; I was the head of our riot team in New Brunswick. Generally the average amount of service on that team probably was around 15 to 20 years of service. The average service of our*

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*people. Yes, you had some young guys with seven or eight years service, but you had a lot of them with 20, 25 years service.*

*So you have very experienced people who have been faced with many difficult situations and knew when you could, when it's appropriate, when it's not and that's part of the problem here. You put too much pressure on a very young police officer like that, it's no wonder that they react the way they do. They're not ready to handle that.*

*I forgot to mention previously that when Timor had their problems about two years ago, when there was rioting again, the UN in New York—and I felt good in a way, that the UN finally admitted, finally, and it was the Under-Secretary General (Jean-Marie) Guehenno himself said, "We probably pulled out too early." That was the first time I had heard anybody say that. That's when they had the rioting in the streets and people were killed. It was right on CNN every night for a few nights. We probably pulled out too early, lessons learned. But when I was saying, "You're pulling out too early," it was falling on deaf ears at that time. It took another incident to happen for people to realize that. So lessons learned. We've got to stay in. When you go into these things, you have to stay in for the long run and not bail out too early. But take it back even another step, that initial training too.*

*So there are a couple of things here. You need a good initial training and you can't be out of there, you have to be in there for the longer term. So these are a couple of lessons that we should have learned by now.*

**BOUTELLIS:** One of the important early tasks in building a police force is to strengthen internal management. Core elements include promotion system, disciplinary system, record keeping, accounting and so on. What were, in the case of Timor, what were the significant management problems that you confronted and if you want to share your experience?

**MILLER:** *The significant management problems related mostly to, initially they came under our command. We didn't build their headquarters you might say or their administrative capacity right away. People were graduating from training. They would go out into the field and work as police officers on patrol, on the beat and so forth. So they were out there. The decision was that we would then select from amongst those people because your headquarters you have to have people that have certain abilities, fairly strong. When you start to pick people to be your district commanders, your chief of operations, your deputy chief of operations, you're going to pick from amongst the best. So you want a period to assess them. So that's what we were doing, constantly assessing them to find the best elements to come in and work in headquarters. So we would look at how they were performing in the field. We'd look at education. Some of these people had university degrees. So they weren't all people with grade five educations.*

*We took our time to assess them that way and until we started to put that in place, they worked under our command. I think that that methodology is solid. You can't just hire somebody, you're 22 years old and I hire you and I say you're going to be the Deputy Chief of Operations, how do you like that? You haven't done a day's work in the field. That would be difficult to do it otherwise when you're building a police force as we were doing basically from scratch except for the former Indonesian police officers and we couldn't put them in all the key positions. There would have been an uproar, politically. That was a no-go to do that.*

BOUTELLIS: What are some of the biggest successes of your mission with regard to internal management?

MILLER: *I would say that we identified, we came up with a process on certification of the police officers. We said that we would not turn over a district to the Timorese until 80% of the police officers were certified and X number of police officers would have driver's licenses and there would be X number of vehicles in the district. We had a criteria there that we would have to meet before we would turn over the district to them. Then they would work towards getting at 100%. We would have police officers working there in mentoring roles and they would be monitoring that obviously to try to get to the 100%. But I think that that was one of the biggest successes. I think the districts were going very well. We had some districts that were handed over for over six months when I was there and they were functioning very well. We didn't notice a big difference when one day the international guy—he's no longer the district commander, it's the Timorese guy. We didn't really notice a big difference when we made that transition in the six districts that we handed over.*

*In the end when we had problems it was in Dili which was never handed over. Dili was never handed over when I was there because of the rioting that took place and the departure of the foreign police unit. So I would say, and we also started putting the management structure in place. We had competitions, we advertised, the positions for Chief of Operations, Deputy Chief of Operations, Human Resources and so forth. We identified the best elements, had competitions, people applied. We brought them in and then they worked along a counterpart, an international counterpart. So you had a Chief of Operations from the internationals working with the Chief of Operations Timorese working side by side. So as situations were coming in the Timorese guy would be looking at it and would be coached by the international. I think that's a fairly sound process as well.*

BOUTELLIS: Following up on this particular point, you mentioned earlier that it was quite sensitive at that time, the fact that a lot of former Indonesian forces were part of the new police force and there were issues of external accountability vis-à-vis the community and so on. I was going to ask you, this tandem between Timorese and international police officers; how did that work in terms of enhancing the accountability to the community, how was it perceived in district where the international police were still in charge and then it was progressively transitioned. Did you see significant changes in perceptions?

MILLER: *One of the challenges that we're faced with is with international police officers working for you, I mentioned the quality before. But there is also the style of policing too. I had 41 different countries working for me, police officers from 41 countries. Not all those countries come from a strong tradition of community policing. Some of those countries, the police officers that are sent on mission that have very corrupt police forces and very aggressive attitudes towards the public. That's not great. The UN does not distinguish between police forces like that. We try to bring everybody on board and try to make them work professionally as a police officer. It would be difficult to say, we're not taking you because your police force is corrupt. We hope that their selection process is good and will weed out their bad police officers. That's where there is a problem. They don't have good processes in place; they don't have a structure in place. So they end up being in mission.*

*So working alongside the internationals, the locals, it poses challenges from time to time when you had one of these police officer's who is not a firm believer in*

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*community policing. We would be wanting the police officers to get out and get into the community and talk to people and so forth. Yet, perhaps, this individual who is supposed to be mentoring the local person is not a firm believer in community policing or knows very little about it. That is why pre-deployment training is so important and that they learn about community policing in their pre-deployment training as the style of policing that the UN advocates.*

*So it keeps coming back to training these people, having a good selection process, deploy them on time, in a quick matter, trained, equip them and so forth. And they're not doing any of these things.*

**BOUTELLIS:** As a police commissioner in Timor, I want to ask you, facing all these problems of no pre-deployment training of your own UN police forces, were you able to cope with this? Did you put in place any way to palliate?

**MILLER:** *As I said earlier, I tried to minimize the impact that those weak performers could have on me. So we had—whenever we'd get a new group of people, if I had Canadians arriving in mission, I'd have district commanders, internationals calling me and saying, "Can I have some Canadians?" Nobody would call when I'd get some of these weak countries and those police officers arrive in mission nobody was calling me up and saying can I have police officers from that country? No, nobody wanted them. So what we do is we spread them around, spread them around the country, minimize the impact. You can't put all the police officers from the strong countries together.*

*They did an experiment. Sergio de Mello was a very bright man, a great guy, a friend of mine. He did an experiment one time in Bacau, the second largest city in Timor. His experiment was to provide a more homogeneous UN group to work with the local police. So we transferred—the experiment was we put police officers from one country only in Bacau. There were some 70 or 80 police officers from the country in question in Bacau. This contingent was one of the middle-of-the-road in terms of quality of police officers. They were not the best, nor the worst. They were middle of the road, to me, maybe even a little bit above average.*

*They went in there, they did a pretty good job. Where this theory falls apart is, you can do that with a good contingent, and you can send all the Canadians for example, but what do you do with all the weak ones? Are you going to lump them all together and send all of one group that's of very bad quality? Are you going to send them all to one place? So I didn't believe in it but we tried to make it work.*

*It's fine if they're all good police officers, it makes sense because you have one style of policing. You would have more coherence then if you have 15 different countries, police officers working in Bacau that you had in most places. So it fell apart, it didn't work. The assessment of that was not that positive. It worked well there but where it was criticized in that it couldn't be put in application because of the problems you had with other contingents. I would have liked him to have tried it with one of the weak contingents. The results would have been disastrous. So it didn't work out.*

**BOUTELLIS:** Earlier you alluded to the political nature of the police force. I want to ask you about the challenge of depoliticizing a police force. How do you go about—of course you faced this challenge?

**MILLER:** Yes.

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BOUTELLIS: How did you first identify it, where did it come to you? Where were the first—?

MILLER: *Who? How did who?*

BOUTELLIS: The political nature?

MILLER: *Political issues, interferences, how did it come to our attention?*

BOUTELLIS: Yes, to your attention.

MILLER: *It usually came to my attention by way of discussions with the Commissioner of the local police himself, who told me about instances when people were trying to influence him.*

*So it came to our attention that way; it came to our attention from international police officers that told us about incidents or they heard about things.*

BOUTELLIS: Was the, what I would call the Timorese UN police reform model of like having this tandem team between international and Timorese helpful in any ways in at least identifying the problems? Or, as you were mentioning, the fact that there was someone to talk to?

MILLER: *It was good and we had to work in tandem. When you're building a police force like we were doing, you have to build every facet of that police force. You're giving them—you're building the capacity to do investigations on the ground, you're building the headquarters capacity. We talked about earlier, human resources, finance. All of the usual administrative areas, one of the key areas you're also building, any modern police force, you have to have an intelligence capacity. This is the area that gave us the most problems because when you work in the field of intelligence you come into contact with very sensitive or delicate information. So, we had an intelligence unit that was headed up by a former intelligence specialist that was in mission. He was one of my CIVPOLs and he was right out of the CIA, retired, and then came on mission. So he was building the intelligence capacity within the Timorese police. We had several other police officers from Australia, Canada and other countries who had experience in the field of intelligence. We also had Timorese police officers in there.*

*The Timorese police, there was a lot of political influence obviously and some of them were on Xanana Gusmã's side, the President, some of them were sympathetic to the Prime Minister, (Mari) Alkatiri. So when we had very sensitive information—some of the investigations that we were doing were implicating politicians and some of those politicians were on one side or the other. So we had to be very, very careful about the information. We did not trust our intelligence officers from the Timorese police that were working in the same unit as ours so we had to hold back some information. When it was too politically sensitive they didn't find out about it until it was too late. They didn't find out until we did our search or whatever.*

*It's a shame because you want to get them involved but you just can't do it. So if you have a young police officer who is 22 years old and he comes into some information that is dirt on Alkatiri and he's a sympathizer of Xanana Gusmã, well guess what happens? The information gets passed on. This is one area that is tough, the whole intelligence field, and you're trying to build that capacity. So they'd get involved in cases on some of the local criminals that are committing crimes, we'd involve them on that. But when it was politically sensitive like the*

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*cutting of sandalwood, millions of dollars of illegal smuggling and sale of sandalwood, we couldn't get them involved, the stakes were too high.*

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned earlier the transition strategy, or the sort of benchmarks of 80% of the police deployed in active, had to be able to hand over to the Timorese police certain regions. In the case of this section of intelligence gathering unit you were just mentioning, what would be the exit strategy?

MILLER: *Very tough. That wasn't handed over while I was there, but the intention was to continue to work with them in trying to depoliticize the police. I was all for having some training for political people on what is appropriate and what is inappropriate and what is inappropriate in dealing with the police, political interventions and so forth that they were doing. We never did get around to that but I see that as being very essential. When you're building a police force and you're training police, you should also train all these ministerial people, all these ministers. They didn't come up in the field of politics. They just all of a sudden woke up one day and they're the minister responsible for the police, or they're working in the minister's office. Training is required there on what is an appropriate relationship between the politicians and the police, because that relationship in countries is often inappropriate to the point that they're interfering with investigations.*

*The police has to be autonomous to a certain extent. There is a reporting relationship to the minister, yes, but the minister should not be briefed on the fine details of an investigation. That shouldn't happen and that was happening.*

BOUTELLIS: Going to the next section, I would like to ask you about non-state security groups. Of course you mentioned the paramilitary groups in that country presenting major challenges to the police force being built. Can you talk a little more about those groups and how the police were addressing some of these issues and if there were any other—

MILLER: *There were several groups. We had to constantly deal with the former military. There was never a strategy put in place of DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) strategy for the former military, especially on the reintegration part. They were never reintegrated. There should have been a strategy, some kind of a job creation program. There are countries that are prepared to do things, get them to plant trees or whatever, but do something. But they were there in the background, constantly undermining the government. So that was one group. There were several other groups, paramilitary, different factions, supporters of different people, different politicians. We also had—the border was very porous between West Timor and East Timor so we had groups constantly coming across, Indonesians, coming across, trying to discredit Timor. They didn't want to see it stable. So they were constantly coming across the border and trying to destabilize things. So that was another thing that we had to deal with.*

*There were a lot of weapons out there, as well, from the period of the Indonesian era, the resistance movement, access to weapons. I don't know how many times we had police stations attacked and hundreds and hundreds of rounds, automatic weapons shot into our police stations. So that was a fairly regular occurrence that this was happening. We'd get information about these weapons, intelligence that would come in on where the weapons are. Intelligence that sounded fairly credible but by the time we'd go and try and seize the weapons where they were supposed to be they were gone, they were moved. So there were obviously some leaks of information. That's how we started to suspect these guys and we had to stop telling them all this information some times. They didn't find out about some searches we were going to do until perhaps five*

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*minutes, ten minutes before we were leaving the station, or an hour before. But you keep them in the room and they can't pass the information on. So that's how we got around that in the end. But prior to that there were leaks of information we suspected.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there any other measure that were taken to address this issue of armed groups directly attacking the police force? Who was responding? Who was the backup for the police under attack of these groups, heavily armed?

MILLER: *The backup were the Portuguese FPU (formed police unit) when they were there. After that of course we only had the local FPU, all these young guys lacking confidence, lacking experience, having weapons. They didn't have all the equipment either that they should have had. The equipment was minimal.*

BOUTELLIS: Who had trained the local FPUs, was it the Portuguese?

MILLER: *The Portuguese. But the Portuguese when they left, they took much of their equipment. They left some things behind, like they left the vehicles, but they didn't leave a lot of their equipment behind.*

BOUTELLIS: Now taking a step back, moving beyond the specific technical areas, I'd like to ask you about the broader challenges, some we may not have touched on that you would like to talk about. Maybe also if there are some specific tasks among the ones we've discussed that you think should come before others.

MILLER: *One of the big problems is the issue of sovereignty of the country—we saw this in Sudan. How long did it take the UN to finally get in there now and get the concurrence of the local government? Sovereignty is often a problem. We saw it in Western Sahara, we had a problem. We saw it in Timor once the government was put in place and so forth. We're finding that constantly we're being faced with challenges in our dealing with the local country. I think the international community, the UN has to be stronger in the dealings with that country when they're constantly trying to hamper our operations.*

*The international community has to be stronger and exert pressures on the host country. Often there is a tendency, the sovereignty of the country and so forth—well, unless you're willing to do that and exert pressures like that you might as well not be there.*

*The second thing is I think the UN is doing the right thing; this whole area of the quality of police officers has to improve. There is a tremendous pressure, the numbers as well, so that gets into bringing new partners on board, encouraging other countries to participate, that's the area I'm working in right now. So that's another big challenge.*

*The other one is staying in for the long run. As I said, not bailing out too quickly. But I think they've been burned a few times now, so I think that the UN realizes that they have to commit longer. So the message to the PCCs or the TCCs (Troop Contributing Countries) for the military has to be prepared to stay for the long run. So that's another big challenge that they face as well.*

*The other big thing is the issue of formed police units. I think that they are very, very effective and it's a good means to keep stability in the country, to allow, if it is a police training type mission, to allow that police force to grow and mature and be able to take over. You have to be prepared to leave those. That's very, very expensive, these formed police units.*

**BOUTELLIS:** I'd like to come back to your different experiences in Haiti first and Western Sahara and Timor. We've discussed mostly Timor but have you drawn lessons, are there any challenges and maybe some ways you address these challenges that you've been able to transfer or not? If you'd like to share this with maybe people who will get deployed to other missions that could be useful.

**MILLER:** *The lessons learned from what I've seen, and I go and I speak to heads of police forces around the world, mainly in Africa but soon in South America, we'll be going in there as well. One of the things that I do is bring heads of police forces from Africa into a United Nations mission. So I bring them in there first hand and I'm there with them. Before we go in I talk to them about the importance of selecting good people, training them, equipping them, sending women, and so forth. So I talk about many of these important things. I bring them in mission and then we show them. Usually it's a fairly significant mission like the Congo or we might be going to Sudan eventually. But I'm bringing a group into Congo in about one month's time. You would be amazed at the attitude change of IGPs, Inspector-Generals of police, when I bring them in mission and they see that. They see a mission. We show them where they visit usually a couple of police stations; they speak to the local police officers. They speak to the international police officers. They'll speak to the force commander, police commissioner, SRSG and so forth. You'd be surprised at how much it opens up their eyes.*

*They leave there, go back to their country and they are committed. Committed to sending better people, putting a process in place to pick good people, not leaving them there too long despite the fact they want to stay for two or three years to make more money. So they're committed to having a regular rotation of people. They're committed to sending more women because we try to showcase women and let them see that women are performing well in peace operations.*

*You know that when we started our project and we went into Africa, many of the African countries are francophone in West Africa. When I spoke to their gendarmerie about them sending women in peacekeeping missions, I spoke in Senegal, for example, their reaction was "mais non, non, non. La gendarmarie, c'est pas de place pour des femmes". You know, we should not have women in the gendarmerie. Two years later after visiting a mission, after us having a gender conference, after me and my team members emphasizing the fact that women are working as police officers all over the world. Today the gendarmerie from Senegal has women in their police organization now. They changed their law to allow women in police. Mali and Burkina Faso gendarmerie have also opened their doors to women. So one of the things that we're most proud of is that after working for a hundred years men only, they now have women in their organizations and, guess what, five years down the road when they meet the minimum standard, you're going to see women from Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso in mission.*

*So these are some of the ways that we try to change those attitudes. I go to New York about every three months and I go meet with DPKO and I ask them, how can we help you, what are some of your challenges. So I listen very carefully and we jot down what they say. They'll say we don't have enough francophone police officers, we don't have enough women. We're tired of people being sent on mission with no pre-deployment training. The light goes on with me and then I come back and we build this into our projects, our proposals. So we're focusing a lot on all of these issues when they talk about them. We go, we ask, and then we try to address those concerns. They themselves can't do all this but they rely on*

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*partners like us. So we really are in tune with what they want and I know them well over there, so it is working out well.*

BOUTELLIS: Our conversation has been really rich in discussing innovations. You yourself are a person in peacekeeping involved in groundbreaking work and you've also mentioned experiments done in Timor with Sergio de Mello. I was wondering if there are any other innovations, experiments or even home-grown successes that you think merit more attention that we haven't touched on.

MILLER: *Home-grown as—like here in Canada?*

BOUTELLIS: That could be, but I was thinking more on the site of the indigenous police that you've been working with or you may have witnessed in your work as the head of RCMP, as you mentioned visiting a number of peacekeeping missions. Is there anything we learned from the field also?

MILLER: *One of the things that I'm learning from the field is that—my objective obviously is really doing capacity building, we don't want to have to go back over and over again to Africa. So everything I do is with that lens on, capacity building. How am I building their capacity? So I'm not only working with the weak police forces in making them stronger, but I'm trying to identify some of the best elements in Africa and work with them so that they can assume the leadership role in Africa. South Africa for example, they are going 100 miles per hour and they are doing very well. They're just getting into peacekeeping, they're very new, but I see them as a good role model for others.*

*I see Ghana and the work that they're doing with having women in peacekeeping and their very strong tradition of community policing. So I'm trying to reach out to some of those best elements in Africa and help them build African capacity to provide people for mission, good people and so forth. So I work with Senegal as a very strong country as well. This is one of the new things that we're doing now, trying to build that African capacity to assume leadership roles.*

*We're also looking, and when I speak to an audience of Africans, I said, "I worked in several missions and I visit many missions and one thing that I regret very much when I visit African missions is that we don't see very many Africans as the police commissioner. It's some guy from Canada or some guy from France, or an Australian or wherever they're from." I said, "I'd like to see more African leadership." So we really want to focus on leadership as well, leadership skills, also the promotion of women into leadership positions. This is what I see down the road coming. The whole area of medical, the whole medical side of things, pre-deployment medicals, post-deployment medicals, psychological testing to post traumatic stress debriefings are so important. These are all areas that are neglected very much. If you do not pay attention to these issues, you will end up with your returning officers experiencing problems. The reintegration of the police officer back into your force. So these are other areas, we're constantly trying to make it better.*

*Of course we're an NGO, we're funded by the Canadian government, DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). There is so much work to be done, but it's not only in Africa. I foresee us in the next few years doing the same thing in other major contributing countries. We not only help them develop pre-deployment training, but you know what they also don't have, they don't have a structure. They don't have a department of peacekeeping within their police force, most of these organizations. It is done on an ad hoc basis their deployments. It is maybe their HR department that handles it part time. Then*

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*they send people off on mission. Guess what? They leave them in mission then for a long time so they don't have to do more work to identify replacements. So that's not good.*

*When we go into Africa, when we go into a country we look, are you interested? I visit with ministers, minister of foreign affairs, minister of the interior, minister of defense for the gendarmerie and try to find out if the interest is there, to send people on mission. Then if the interest is there, then we help them do it right, do it the right way. That is to put a structure in place, a department of peacekeeping operations, and develop pre-deployment training. We even give them an organization chart. Based on the number of people you want to have in mission here's an appropriate organization chart. They love it. So it's a good thing.*

BOUTELLIS: Right. On this note Peter Miller, thank you for your time with us.