



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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

Oral History Program

Series: Policing
Interview no.: I14

Interviewee: Richard Moigbe

Interviewer: Arthur Boutellis

Date of Interview: 6 May 2008

Location: Freetown
Sierra Leone

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BOUTELLIS: Today is the 6th of May, 2008 and I am now with Mr. Richard Moigbe who is the Assistant Inspector-General for Operations and National Security at the Sierra Leone Police. We are today in Freetown, Sierra Leone. First thank you for your time.

MOIGBE: *You are most welcome.*

BOUTELLIS: Thank you. I'd like to start the interview by asking you a little bit more about your personal background and maybe your history within the Sierra Leone Police.

MOIGBE: *Well, as you heard my name is Richard Moigbe, I'm the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of operations and national security. A little bit about my background in the police. Just after university in 1987, the first of February, I joined the Sierra Leone Police force as a cadet officer. I went through the training and at the end of my training I was what they called on what they call on-the-job training for three years in various formations, the CID (Criminal Investigation Division), prosecution, general duties, administration, learning on the job. After that I was then confirmed and sent to the CID. I started work at the anti-smuggling squad for some time, then I was sent to the forgery and fraud squad, dealing with fraud issues, and from there the operations department dealing with robberies and burglaries. From there to homicide. So in fact I worked in all the areas, the branches of the CID. I spent most of my time there from 1989 I have been working in the CID. I left there in 1996. In 1996 I came to police headquarters and I was given a special task to do a head count, a census of the police and I did that.*

After that I was sent to the police training school as a commandant of the training school. I was there for some time, came back to police headquarters, was in charge of the research and planning department. After that I was given a special assignment to be in charge of what they call the special investigations bureau at police headquarters here to deal with high profile state investigations and report into the Inspector-General. In 1998 the Commonwealth Taskforce came and the police restructuring reform started in Sierra Leone with Mr. Keith Biddle and others, other experienced officers from all over the world came. Then they set up a team at police headquarters to support the police restructuring team, a senior command team of the police and I was one of those officers that was nominated.

So in fact, we were a counterpart in the entire restructuring and now we are managing the changes. So I am quite experienced in how to—a failing force, because by then it was like a force in crisis. How that one was resurrected today to be an envy of the nation and the international community and even being acclaimed as a force for good. So I have worked in areas of operation, investigation, and administration. In fact at a strategic level here at police headquarters the AIG position, I was the AIG (Assistant Inspector-General) who set up the discipline department. We call it the Complaint Discipline and Internal Investigation Department (CDIID). I set up that department and after that I worked in the support services for some time. From there I went to police staff college in England to do the UK strategic command course and the International Strategic Leadership Program, both in the police staff college at Bramshill, Scotland and then Cambridge University. Then I came back.

When I came back I was tasked again to set up an integrated department that brings together CID, the Criminal Investigations Department and the Special Branch and the other intelligence assets in the police to be called the Crimes

Services Department under one strategic leadership. So after setting that department up, AIG Crime Services, I was moved again to Personnel, Welfare and Training Department as AIG in charge looking after personnel issues, welfare issues, training issues in the police, both national and international.

On the 10th of January 2006, I was transferred to the Operations Department where I am still as the substantive head of the police operations. My responsibilities really are coordinating all the work of operation and commanders force-wide, coming out with operational policies and direction and given strategic focus and direction to all commanders. I look after operations of national character like the general elections or high profile, heads of state coming to this country, anything that is national I am in charge of that. Ensuring the security and the proper planning and implementation.

So briefly, that is my background in the police service. Maybe I should add last year amidst the heavy work around the elections, putting the election security, I was also doing part time Master's in Business Administration and I graduated with an MBA last December.

BOUTELLIS: Congratulations. Can you describe a little more in detail the history of the set up of the Joint Coordination Center (JCC) where you're working, how it functions and what are the different stakeholders?

MOIGBE: *Like I was saying, after the war when constitutional order was restored, in fact there were reforms, both in the police, the military and then there was a national security sector reform because what the international community that came to support the government and also the government reflecting on the old security arrangement in the country before the war, it was found to be really highly flawed. All the institutions working on their own, the police were working on their own, the military on their own. In fact it was only the military and the police that were considered to be security institutions. So institutions like immigration, other ministries, departments and agencies, they were considered to have nothing to do with security at all. But the reform considered that for you to have a holistic national security, even the Ministry of Finance has a stake because when you plan operations for you to carry out the activities, they have resource implications, funding implications. So it was at that point they started recognizing the importance of other institutions.*

So there was this national security sector reform and that reform brought about a new national security architecture. Now the new national security architecture, which is all-inclusive, brings together the police, the military, the international agencies here like UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone), IMAT (International Military Advisory Team), certain ministries, departments and agencies, now at the highest level. I'll start from there before I come down to the Joint Coordination Center, which I chair.

At the highest level in the new security architecture in this country, which is governed by an act of Parliament, they call it the Central Intelligence and Security Act of 2002; it establishes the following architecture organogram. At the highest level which we call the platinum in security terms, and that platinum also has two layers, that is the National Security Council, NSC, and then the National Security Council Coordinating Group, (NSCCG). Now the NSC brings membership from all ministries, departments and agencies that have something to do with security like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Internal Security.

Then the head of the police, the Inspector-General, the chief of defense staff for the military. They meet monthly at the State House and it is the President himself that chairs the National Security Council meeting.

They meet us and when need be but under normal situations it is monthly they meet. When they deliberate on security issues about the country, the outcome is a Policy Security Directive or Decision. That is the outcome of their deliberation, looking at all the issues, either food or education and their impact on security and the outcome is a policy decision, which they take. Now they pass that policy decision to the next layer within the platinum, which is the NSCCG, the National Security Council Coordinating Group. This is chaired by a retired brigadier, Kellie Conteh. We meet fortnightly on Tuesdays at State House. The membership also is drawn from the police, from the military, from other ministry departments and agencies, from UN, from IMAT and we meet fortnightly at State House. Representing the police is the Inspector-General and the AIG Operations and that is myself and my counterpart in the military, the Joint Force Commander and the Chief of Defense staff.

So we meet and deliberate on this security policy decision or directive, hand it down to this body by the National Security Council. So at this level again, the final outcome is operational policy directive. This operational policy directive or decision here is then passed to what I will call the operational wing of these two layers, this policy decision layer, that is the National Operations Center which is called gold in police command, that is the highest and it is the Joint Operations Center at Mauritown and it is police led. The AIG Operations, which is me, I chair it. We meet weekly on Thursday, 11 o'clock. Within the Joint Coordination Center it is split into two layers, there is JCC level one which meets on Thursdays weekly, and then there is JCC level two which meets weekly on Mondays at the same National Operations Center, Mauritown.

This body now with the level one will go and look at this security policy decision taken by these two top layers to discuss and see how it can be operationalized. So we then discuss and try to operationalize it. Since I am in charge of all the regional police commanders nationwide, we have four regional commanders, in the western area, the southern province, eastern province and the northern province. I pass on operational directive guidance to them. So discussing at level one and level two, we then pass it with specific directions, instructions, how it can be implemented. So we operationalize those decisions. Then we have feedback again coming through JCC one and two into NSCCG, into NSC, the National Security Council if need be.

Like I said, the security arrangement in this new architecture is all embracing. Even the provinces have been brought into the security architecture at the provincial levels, up-country. We have what we call provincial security committee PROSECs. That is Provincial Security Committees. There again this body, they meet fortnightly to discuss security affecting the region, say like the eastern region, the northern region. There you have membership coming again from the police. The head of the police in that region is a member, the military, other ministries, departments and agencies and the meeting is chaired by the Resident Minister.

So, they discuss security issues. If it is something that is very urgent, police need to action it, they then pass that instruction or information to the police

commander there and necessary action is taken. We are then informed through the chain. The commander will inform me, I also inform NSCCG and NSC.

Then below that in the province you have districts. Districts again we have what we call District Security Committees, DISECs. This also brings together membership from the police. The police at the district level there. The general commander there, the district level, the military there with the battalion commander and all other government agencies there and other NGOs working in that district, they are all part of that security committee. They meet weekly or fortnightly as and when they want to discuss security issues, development and other issues about the district, issues that can deal with. If they cannot, they then pass it on to the PROSEC, the Provincial Security Committee. They look at it. If they can deal with it they handle it and they inform the chain. If they cannot, they then send it to the NSCCG that meets at the State House. So it is discussed at the highest level. If the NSCCG cannot handle, it is then sent to the NSC, the National Security Council until the appropriate remedial action is taken.

So, as you can see, this is the new security architecture. It is all embracing, all-inclusive. This was never before. Every department was working on its own. There was not that coordination. But here there is proper coordination. Like all that I have explained, this you will call the division and operational aspect. There is also the intelligence side of this security arrangement. You have the intelligence people from the police, from the military, from other agencies. They also meet at State House, it is called the JIC, Joint Intelligence Committee. There you have also the JAT, Joint Assessment Team. They meet at State House. They bring together all information, intelligence, and process it. If they see merit in that, then they pass that intelligence to the NSCCG. If it needs to be actioned, it is then passed to the JCC for it to be operationalized. So you can see most of the operations are intelligence-led because of resource constraints. You cannot be willing to do [Indecipherable] for arms and ammunition all over the city. If it is intelligence-led, you do targeted operations.

So the new architecture, it has policy decision layer and it has operational layer. It also has intelligence layer. There is very good harmony and coordination and integration. Probably it is because of this architecture, that it is responsible for our success in policing the 2007 Parliamentary and presidential elections. Every day or every week we would discuss the election at the highest level. We would go down to JCC, we would discuss at the provincial, at the district level we would discuss. There is ongoing threat assessment, risk analysis. We would see where there would be problems. We take proactive, preventive actions. So this is how we have been working together on that. That is why we succeeded. Again, we will be having the local government elections on the 5th of July and it is the same thing. In fact, there is ongoing threat assessment and planning and discussing together. During electoral times when we have say a month or so to any public election, the head of the National Electoral Commission is also co-opted as a member of the NSCCG to be briefing on electoral matters, where the risks are, where the security is threatened so that we can come in to support the commission, to make sure that proper security is provided for the elections.

BOUTELLIS: *If you wish we will come back to some of the challenges on the operation side but I'd like to come back for a second to one of your first roles as part of the restructuring which was the census that you mentioned in 1996, the headcount of the police. If you could give us a short account, a brief account of how did that*

go. The decision was made and how did you go about the task of conducting a census, a national census of the police?

MOIGBE: *By then we had, '96, we had a democratic government in place and government was concerned about the welfare and salary conditions of police officers. At that time the record section I would say it was chaotic. Every time you asked for the actual strength of the police force they give you one today. Tomorrow is another one. Government was not happy. If I'm going to make some effort to see if I can improve your conditions, add accommodations, barracks, I need to know the exact number of officers. So that was why, how the need for a census came about, for the government to know the exact number of police officers.*

Also the police administration by then, to know the exact number of police officers by location, so that efforts could be made to see how they can take care of their welfare and other conditions. So I was given that task. By then the war was also raging in the provinces so it was a very challenging task because some of the locations were behind rebel lines. You go there, it is only God's grace that you do not fall in an ambush. So I tried very hard and I was able to do that with my team, to get the exact number of police officers, men and women, even laborers by location. I prepared the report and submitted the report.

Unfortunately by the time I finished the whole exercise it was now early 2007. I submitted the report and before it was forwarded to government to have a look at and see what could be done then we had the coup. The coup was the 25th of May 2007. So the government was overthrown. Then you had the rebels come in—.

BOUTELLIS: 1997.

MOIGBE: Yes, 1997. By the time I finished, 1996 had gone.

BOUTELLIS: So it took a year. Were you going to each—?

MOIGBE: *Yes, each police location nationwide and physically counting them, taking their bio data on a special form which I designed, a questionnaire and their work experience and all details on them. It took four or five months to do that. But it started late 1996. By the time—.*

BOUTELLIS: Were there pictures taken of the officers or were there other modes of identification?

MOIGBE: *There was more than identification. We have our force number. That is very unique, everybody has a force number. Even the PIN number, the payroll PIN number is very unique so we are doing that. There were uniforms. Those that were not in uniform, they have their police ID to be identified. So that was completed, but the government did not action it because that military coup came in 1997, May and it was protracted. The rebels came and merged with some of the military. So it was never actioned.*

Again, that compounded the problem. By the time the war was declared over in 2002 most of our police officers, some had been displaced as refugees in other countries, quite a lot of them had been killed. So in fact at the moment, management we have decided that we should get a project team together to do a core review, to do an establishment review, alongside with another headcount.

BOUTELLIS: That was in what year?

MOIGBE: *This is what we are planning now.*

BOUTELLIS: To do a new headcount.

MOIGBE: *That's right. We've taken that decision at the management meeting last week to do a core review, do an establishment review, because after the war a lot of new communities have come up and everybody wants a police post, police station here and there. So we want to do that core review, to know our actual core functions, to know the establishment, number of police officers we need in each community so that we can then approach government for funding to recruit more police officers. Also, alongside that the personnel, my colleague Chris Charlie Oin charge of Personnel, to get a team to do headcount so that we know the current number of, the exact number of officers. The attrition is really giving us problems. Every now and then police officers die, more so the rainy season is here, the cold, from pneumonia. Also we are really losing quite a lot. Again, some are leaving the organization because the salaries are very small, conditions are not quite attractive, so when they see jobs elsewhere they leave. So the attrition is really high.*

BOUTELLIS: Another area where you've had a lot of experience is enhancing external accountability of the police. You mentioned that under Police Commissioner Keith Biddle, back then you were tasked to set up the CDIID.

MOIGBE: *That's right.*

BOUTELLIS: The internal investigation department and complaints. Can you tell us a little bit more about that experience and the lessons maybe learned from this?

MOIGBE: *When Keith Biddle and his colleagues came to do—were given the task to reform, the restructure the police—they also appointed a handful of senior officers including myself. What we did was to do an analysis, a reflection on the past policing environment in Sierra Leone and the current situation. From those analyses it was found out that on reflection the police had lost the public confidence, the public had no confidence in the police and we had lost our corporate image. In fact the public did not want to work with the police.*

What was responsible for that? During the war time there was massive lack of discipline. Most of the police officers were unprofessional, some even were maltreating people and they were very brutal and very unprofessional. So that angered the public and we lost the public confidence and support. So the restructuring team then thought that an institution or department or some mechanism should be put in the reform process that would really show the public that the police is now changing and is going to be a people friendly police and not that one that was partisan, undisciplined and was out there harassing and abusing the human rights of people. If people want to complain to the police what can they do? Where can they go? So that is how the idea came about. So I was given that task.

With some advice from the UK, again they were working with me, Peter Hughes. We set up this police Complaint, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department. Basically it was to look after force corruption because we

recognized that there was in the past massive corruption in the force. That was again responsible for the unprofessional conduct of officers and being unfriendly to people. When they want money from them and they do not want to give them, they force them. So it was looking after force corruption, corruption in the police force and also looking after discipline in the police force and also to provide a friendly, easily accessible platform for members of the public who have been aggrieved, who have been offended by police officers to come and make complaint. So that system was set up.

When it took off, we did a massive sensitization, informing the public about this department, that they should not be afraid, they should come forward to make their complaints against unscrupulous police officers. So a few started coming, like an experiment on the part of the public. They came, they saw, we investigated, and we kept informing them of the progress of the investigations. At the point when we were convinced there was adequate evidence some were tried in our police discipline court and the claimants would come and give testimony. They would testify and they would listen to the hearing. Some of the police were reduced in rank, some dismissed. Those complaints again from the public, at the end, if it was that serious and criminal in nature, we tried the police officers in open criminal court. We charged them to court and the complainants would go and testify.

At the end of the day, even very senior police officers by then, some were even more senior assistant commissioners, superintendents, were charged to court, to open criminal court. They are tried, convicted, sent to prison. So that started bringing the public confidence. They'd say, "Oh yes, the police is changing."

BOUTELLIS: In what year?

MOIGBE: *It all started in 2000. Then we started growing, the public reassurance and confidence was building. We even came in with a discipline regulation. So they saw that those infractions that did not amount to criminality but there was incivility, we tried in our discipline court. We disciplined the officers. Some were reduced in rank. The outcomes, the statistics we informed the nation every week at a press conference. That was one thing again that we did. We engaged the media. We were very transparent. We informed the nation what was happening. There were reports made, the outcomes and the officers, we published their names. So that started building back. We started regaining the public confidence, the corporate image. Then the people started accepting us.*

Then we said okay, we'll change our policing style. Before now we are reactive and sit down policing. If you have your problem you should come to the police station, you come and complain. When you come the police officers will ask you for money to buy a pen, to buy paper or to buy this or for money to get transport to go the scene. So we said no to all of that. We wanted to ensure that government provided. So you come to the police, don't give money to any police officer to buy pen and paper, to transport. Don't give money. If any police ask you, come and report it.

So we maintained that and the public saw we were providing all of this. Fortunately DFID (Department for International Development) project, we had by then provided us huge vehicle fleet so we had a lot of vehicles, operational vehicles taking care of that. So the people then became very confident. We said, okay, now, we'll work with you. We will not just wait for you. We will now go to

your doorsteps, to your communities, sit and discuss policing issues with you, the problems you have in your communities. We'll all sit together, brainstorm and see how we can address them with things you can also can do to support the police.

We then said local needs policing, which is a form of community policing. That is policing that meets the needs and expectations of the locals but reflect national standards. So we started having a lot of community forum, going to the communities, discussing with them. We have information officers engaging with the community. We even made it a policy that every local command unit, every police unit, the head of that unit should, on assuming duty, scan his environment, identify those institutions or personalities, and try to bring them to form what we call the Local Policing Partnership Board.

This body brings members of that community. They decide on the time whether it is fortnightly or monthly. They come and sit with the local unit commander, with the police and discuss problems in their community. These are crime problems and other issues. They see how they can work with the police to make sure that their communities are safe and secure.

So, it has been the policy all nation-wide. All the police formations they have this arrangement. Some have even gone further to break it down to smaller groups, what they call Area Policing Partnership Board, smaller groups so as to create more opportunity for a wider public engagement and involvement in policing issues.

So all of that have convinced the public who said, "Oh, now the Sierra Leone Police is a changed police, is a force for good, is a friendly police." They saw we are not compromising on complaints made to us and we are disciplining our own officers. In fact, every year we do a perception survey. We do an internal—we get some NGO, sometimes CARE International or some other outside organization to do it for us because we do not want to do it and for the result not to be given credence. So we pay some external institution come and do an internal perception survey of the organization, talking to junior officers about service delivery, about corruption, how is this level of corruption, the level of discipline, supervision, command and control, everything. Then they go to the public now. At the end of the day they put together a very comprehensive report for us. Crime stats and the perception survey, what do people feel about us, how are we performing.

Where we think we are not doing well then we try to improve on it because every year we do what we call a strategic development plan. We keep building on that. We build that into our strategic development plan areas we did not cover well, where the public says we are falling short. So in our next strategic development plan we have what we call strategic priorities. So those areas of shortfall then become our strategic priorities so that we try to put more resources and build on them so we try to provide better quality service.

BOUTELLIS: In your current position, in operations, what are some of the strategic priorities? What are some of the tasks that you prioritize for the next year or two years or even longer?

MOIGBE: *One of the strategic priorities, and it has certain activities for short-term, certain activities for medium term and certain activities for long-term. The strategic priority which in fact is in the national strategic goal, number one, that is to make*

the people of Sierra Leone safe, to provide security and safety for the people of Sierra Leone. Since I'm in charge of operations and national security and all the operational commanders are under me, looking at making the people of Sierra Leone safe and secure. We look at various crimes of concern and the fear of crime.

If I may give you one example. Late last year until about January this year also, there was high incidence of armed robbery. So that was creating a lot of fear in the communities, the lives of people and the fear of crime was growing. So that became one of the short-term activities under this strategic priority of making people safe and secure in Sierra Leone. So I called all my commanders. We had several meetings to discuss and we strategized. We have to bring armed robbery to zero. That is our—it may be ambitious but we have to do it. So we all worked together, the intelligence was supporting our operations. For the past four months no armed robberies. The city is quiet, the provinces are quiet. A lot of resources were put into that. Currently there is one operation, we call it Operation Zero Tolerance. Again we realized that that was affecting the safety, the security and the convenience of people and that is the increase in lawlessness on the part of drivers, commuters, and antisocial behavior. We have made this a very present priority in the short-term. Teams have been set up, special task forces. Every week now you can see when you move around you see high deployment of traffic officials in all the place, arresting people moving with vehicles without registration plates, reckless driving, drunk driving, dangerous driving. People were parking against the traffic, you park against traffic other commuters would be—the road becomes narrow and it is a recipe for accidents. So all of these we're arresting. So that is ongoing. In fact, some of the drivers were complaining that we are being heavy-handed on them, but we told them no, we cannot tolerate indiscipline; we cannot tolerate this sort of lawlessness. And you can see zero tolerance. Every month, every week there are the statistics of arrests made, charged to court, Operation Zero Tolerance because we want to cut down on this indiscipline and lawlessness in the country. Also again coming on the safety and security of people and communities in Sierra Leone.

We have very recently, about two months back, come to realize that cannabis, whatever, marijuana, now is growing nationwide in all the regions, in all the districts, so we took that as a strategy priority again, quick one, because we know the social and economic effect and the crime implications of people smoking cannabis and even some students now. Again, people transiting some hard drugs. We know that they can be complimentary to each other. The way the farms are growing, every drug business is so lucrative, the fear is that if they're allowed to continue, they become highly capacitated financially, they can even raise their army, their own security like we see in Colombia. Then they can challenge the security. They can even bring down government. So that is a threat to the safety and security of people in Sierra Leone. So operationally we made it a priority. I have drawn a national timeline action plan and I rolled that out to all the commanders as operational instructions because we have done research nationwide identifying where the farms are, where the cannabis is grown and ghettos are.

So giving that information to all the commanders, a timeline with specific instructions and background activities, like sensitization, awareness in their various areas of operation, targeted destruction of the farms, destruction of the ghettos, arrest and prosecutions and monthly sending statistics to me because I put in performance indicators to monitor them within the timeframe. Then I also

report to the National Security Council to see how this matter, which is impacting on safety and security, how we are addressing it. So that one is really ongoing. It is doing quite a lot.

If you remember, I was telling you about crime stats and perception surveys. So this we are doing every year, to inform the public to tell us, because the public is like our mirror. They can really tell us what is wrong with us, where we are failing. So these are the priorities that strategically the safety and security of everybody in Sierra Leone should be enhanced at all times. Where we see new crime trends starting, organized crimes or trans-national then that becomes a subset operational priority and strategies are put in place to address them very quickly.

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any final comment before we have to wrap up the interview?

MOIGBE: *Well, the final comment is one to thank you Arthur Boutellis and your institution for giving me this opportunity to be part of the archive you are developing now and to give our own experience of our police force in Sierra Leone, how it degenerated into a force in distress, then a force in crisis and how we were able to bring it around and today people are saying it is a force for good. And how our entire national security has been restructured and to have this new architecture which is all embracing and coordinated. That is really a happy note. So my appeal here is to my colleagues in the diaspora in some other nations who do not really have this novel coordinated security architecture to see how they can also bring that in their security arrangement. Today the world is a global village. If there is a problem in one country, no matter how far away from Sierra Leone, it has some effect, we are in a global village. So we are ready at all times to share our experience. Personally I am ready to share my experience with anybody.*

I am now working on the local government elections and security and operations and safety of everybody in Sierra Leone is my concern. Sierra Leone is very stable, is very peaceful now, we are consolidating the peace. Investors are wanting to come, to invest in Sierra Leone, let them come. Security is here. The country is very peaceful. So thank you very much. If the Princeton University or DPKO UN, if they want to maybe tap into my experience I am at their disposal at any time to work in the UN Mission anywhere. I am sure the government and the head of the police here can give sometime off for me to work and share this experience in the UN mission or some other organization. Thank you very much.

BOUTELLIS: Mr. Richard Moigbe, thank you.