



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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BOUTELLIS: Today is the 13th of May 2008 and I am now with Mr. Ulrich Schiefelbein who is with the UNPOL (United Nations Police) in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). He is Liberian National Police Administration Advisory Team Leader. We are now at the headquarters at the Pan African Plaza in the capital of Liberia, Monrovia.

First, thank you for your time. Before we start the interview I'd like you to please confirm that you have given your consent for the interview.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, I have given my consent to the interview voluntarily.*

BOUTELLIS: Thank you very much. I'd like to start by learning a bit more about your personal background, particularly the positions you held before coming here with the mission in Liberia. How did you get involved in policing work overseas?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I started with the beginning of my police career. It was around 30 years ago I started working for the police right after high school in Germany. During the stages of being a patrol officer, I became Deputy Chief of a Drug Investigation Unit. I was Chief of an administration unit. The last six years I was working as a spokes person for a regional government in Germany and in between I was on two UN missions before, both times in Bosnia and here with UNMIL is my third.*

BOUTELLIS: So you were in Bosnia in what years?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *In 1997 and 1998.*

BOUTELLIS: And you arrived in the mission in Liberia?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *On the 13th of May, 2007.*

BOUTELLIS: Excellent. Can you briefly describe for us the mandate of the mission here and the main objectives, particularly in your specific function.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *The main objective is to implement Liberian National Police, to reconstruct the Liberian National Police meeting international standards. Of course, as in each peace mission, to keep the peace in Liberia.*

BOUTELLIS: What was the status of public order and crime when you first arrived in the mission and your assessment of it?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *This mission is running since 2003, so when I arrived one year ago there were not so many differences like it is now. It was quite peaceful. We didn't have any attacks on UN personnel, but here in Liberia you still have a lot of riots so we need riot control units to protect, especially the LNP officers because they are unarmed. Our riot control units are formed police units, they are the only ones carrying weapons. But in total, in this one year that I'm here, it was quite peaceful. You mentioned something else?*

BOUTELLIS: What are the major challenges facing the Liberian National Police?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *The major challenge for us is to train the LNP in the field. The officers are trained at the National Police Training Academy in a six month course. They come to be police officers, they don't have any clue about the practice of police work; they just learned the theory. That is a huge challenge because you need to train them in everything. In my unit administration they don't know anything about record keeping, they don't know anything about what kind of template they need,*

what is helpful for them, they don't know how to arrest someone, they don't know how to make traffic control. So they need to learn everything with our assistance. They don't know to write operation plans, they don't even know who is going to make deployment orders for personnel.

So every chief in this police thinks that he can do that. That creates a big mess because if you are an ordinary police officer, for example, the LNP Chief of Personnel tells you to change your deployment, you go to another place and you don't like it, you may just go to another Chief you know and ask him and he says okay, it's not necessary, just stay here. So that's created a lot of confusion inside the LNP in the past. Right now they don't even know exactly where their officers are. We started, for that reason, an operation called Verification of LNP Data. We are going to make a headcount, take photographs for new ID cards and make new personal data files for them.

This is a thing that takes a long time and it shouldn't be necessary but we didn't pay too much attention to this before so it keeps us busy right now.

BOUTELLIS: We'll get to different functions of reforming and restructuring the national police but before that I'd like to ask you a few questions on your current role as a UNPOL. Can you describe for us what is the daily routine like, what is the typical day for you?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *A typical day for me starts with meeting my team members, we are going to discuss what are we going to do during the day. After that we are starting co-location with our LNP counterparts. My team is divided into advisors for personnel, advisors for finance, and advisors for logistics. I, as a team leader try to assist my team members on these tasks. I have to report to my supervisors and to review the reports (of my team members) that they do after the co-location every day and of course to define our goals and work on it.*

BOUTELLIS: So you start your day in the UNMIL headquarters and then you go to the LNP headquarters?

SCHIEFELBEIN: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: So you're based in the Liberian National Police headquarters.

SCHIEFELBEIN: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: And spend the day there. Has there been any major staff change since you got here in your unit in terms of the number of UNPOL officers? Has the mission been rather stable?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *In my unit there was no change, we always were six officers. Now is the draw down phase we've started but I don't think that they will reduce the number of officers working (in the administration advisory team).*

BOUTELLIS: If you had a predecessor in this job did that person leave you any records and was there a handover period?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Actually there was no good record management before. From my predecessor I didn't receive any computer files. The hard copies were not well organized so we had to start -actually to reorganize this office.*

BOUTELLIS: So when you came your team was already in place or some came later?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *There was, from the former team there were only two members left and they, soon after I was there they also left the mission so I formed a new team.*

BOUTELLIS: A whole new team. Do you have any advice for others who are moving into similar, this role or similar role for Liberia or also from your experience in Bosnia, do you have any advice?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I just talked about that we didn't find good records. We have all possibilities here that the work that someone has started can be continued after he left. We have for example shared drives where we can put all the reports together on the computer. The UN requires also hard copies so we are filing all of our reports so that anyone who comes after my team members and I have left this mission, they can follow up what we've done here. This is very helpful for each UNPOL officer who is coming to replace someone, (to find all records) to continue with the work and that he doesn't have to start right from the bottom (again and again). It is especially very bad in your relation to the Liberian National Police because if you're coming for the tenth time to ask the same question they're not very happy about this as everybody can imagine.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe for us the predeployment training you may have gotten as well as the induction training once you got into the mission.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *You're talking about predeployment training here?*

BOUTELLIS: In Germany, predeployment training if you got any and then the induction training once you got on the mission.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *In Germany of course first it is a selection process. After you finish this you are going through two weeks basic training, get familiar with the UN system, the standards of operation, and then all this UN bureaucracy. (There is also practical parts constructed with experience from former missions like) role plays to get familiar with this and then especially for my African mission I got another one week training in Germany only talking about this mission.*

When I came to Monrovia I went for one week induction training that gave me some information about the history of the conflict, about the UN organization, about sexual harassment, about other topics that are very important for the UN. Because I had this training before in Germany I was quite well prepared. So we are using the same training that is issued here, we are using it for our training in Germany.

BOUTELLIS: Now in regards to the time you spend here on the job, is there anything you wish you would have gotten during the induction training or predeployment training that you were not prepared for?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I had the feeling that I was quite well prepared for this mission.*

BOUTELLIS: Now I'd like to move to focus on the Liberian National Police or the national police that you have been working with prior in Bosnia. We're going to go through different areas of reform and restructuring. If you don't have particular experience we'll just move to the next one. The first area is recruitment. Have you been involved in recruitment strategies?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *No, I was not involved in recruitment.*

BOUTELLIS: The second is training and professionalization of the police force. Can you describe some of the training programs you've been involved with?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *As administration advisors, we are only doing field training. That means we are working with our counterparts to improve their skills. We are mentoring, assisting, advising and monitoring what they do. We try to find conclusions together to bring the professional standard of their work to a higher level.*

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the co-location, the advisors, how many of these advisors are there and how many counterparts in the Liberian National Police do they work with generally?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *We are working with three sections, personnel, finance and logistics. In the personnel section of the LNP we are working with 23 officers, they are our counterparts.*

BOUTELLIS: How many UNPOLs do you have as advisors?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Our team is consisting of six.*

BOUTELLIS: Are there any other training programs going on at the same time. We mentioned that all the LNPs go through six months of training in the academy, basic training. You're doing follow up in-service on-the-job training. Is there any other training going on?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, there are different types of training. There's all kinds of training in the police academy like Criminal Investigation Courses, Forensics, Middle Management Courses, Senior Management Courses, all kinds of police courses. But we are not involved in this. What we do from time to time, when we recognize that there is a need to train our counterparts, we are organizing workshops together with the police academy on a special topic just like about record keeping for example, then together with the police academy, also with civilian staff of UNMIL, if we have specialists here. We tried to organize workshops to train these officers.*

BOUTELLIS: So how well do you think the training that you're doing, training and mentoring, is meeting the objectives and how do you evaluate progress in terms of transfer of competence and so on?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Each of my team members is writing daily reports about what he has done, what he has seen, what he has observed. We are going to review these reports, we are making our analysis, we regular meetings with my supervisors. We are always using the information to see where we are and where we have to go. The aim is definitely always to transfer the responsibility as much as we can to the LNP.*

BOUTELLIS: How far along are you in this process?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *You mean how far we are in—?*

BOUTELLIS: The process of handing over? Are there areas where a lot of training has been done and maybe some areas where a lot more needs to be done?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I can only talk about my work environment. It is different. In the personnel section they definitely need to learn more about making proper documentation of all the things that they do. They failed in the past to keep the*

records updated about the officers. They failed to create proper duty rosters. They failed to make proper attendance records so there is still a long way to go. I would say they may be able to do the work now by 50 to 60% on their own.

In the finance section we have a different problem. They are able in the meanwhile to do that job but to get proper payment for police officers in this country there is a lot of improvement necessary that is not influenced by the police. For example we don't have commercial banks everywhere. So you cannot start a payment on a bank account because you don't have a commercial bank. That makes it very complicated. It means here the procedure is that Liberian National Police finance section is preparing a payroll every month. This payroll is forwarded to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance is printing checks. These checks are sent through the country and then a cashier from the Liberian Central Bank, with the money, has to go around the country and cash the checks. That takes a long time every month and it is quite complicated.

We have started actually to convince LNP officers where it is possible to open a bank account voluntarily so that at least part of them we can pay through the bank account. That makes the job much, much easier for the LNP that have to go around and pay them. This is outside of the police but we are trying to solve this problem that all the officers get their pay on time.

In the logistics section we are facing again different problems because they are having the problem that they don't have enough equipment. They don't have cars. Places where they have cars maybe they don't have fuel. They don't have stationary equipment, they don't even have electrical power, they don't have paper in some places. So these are basic things.

BOUTELLIS: Do they have police stations?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, they have police stations but, for example, donations coming in—they have a lot of computers but if you don't have electrical power what is the use of a computer? For this mission here it would have been much, much better in the beginning to get mechanical typewriters for them and not to start on such an advanced level trying to train them on computers. This country is far away from computer technique. If you have computers maybe you have electrical power for two hours, most of the police officers are not able to use a computer.*

BOUTELLIS: So when you were talking about payroll you mentioned the issue of reaching the rest of the country. In the three sections you mentioned where your unit is working, personnel, finance and logistics, are all the—so the support officers basically—are all the LNP based in headquarters in Monrovia or are there some decentralized branches of these support units?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *So far all the administration is done here in headquarters. People who are dealing with this in the country are the station commanders and the regional commanders if they have. But again, there is no good communication because they don't have any—besides mobile phones- there is no way to get in contact with these people. So it starts, for example, sending attendance sheets to headquarters to get the people paid, it is usually not possible. So we are trying to assist them in sending it through our communication channels, but definitely right now there could not be any transfer of responsibility to LNP because they don't have the communication equipment to talk to each other, to share information, to send documents or whatever.*

BOUTELLIS: One of the stories of the LNP is this hot line where the public can call the police.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Emergency calls.*

BOUTELLIS: How do they operate this without communication?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *It is not really functioning. We have this 911 number, but it is not functioning. (Even if it would function) there is another problem. If someone makes an emergency call, if you do not have a car, if the LNP does not have a car -it depends where you are- if they do not have a car to come to your place, how can they react on an emergency case? That's a big, big problem.*

BOUTELLIS: Coming back to the training. You train, the illiteracy rate is over 70% in this country, how is this reflected in the police? What are the minimum criteria of literacy for the police officers?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *They need to have a high school diploma.*

BOUTELLIS: So all know how to read and write.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *They know how to read and write but a lot of them are not very good at that. So right now the UN is encouraging females to apply for the police. We have a special training program for girls who did not get their high school diploma so far but they have some school education like eighth class degree or something. So there is a chance, they can apply, if they are elected they have a chance in a three-month school training to be prepared for the high school diploma.*

BOUTELLIS: Training programs in general, some you may have been involved in and you might have witnessed a number of others, are considered very expensive when the international community are doing it. Do you have any cost-saving suggestions or some things you know of that were particularly successful but maybe don't require as much money.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *No.*

BOUTELLIS: The next area is the integration and amalgamation of services. Is this something that is potentially going to be part of restructuring of the Liberian National Police and particularly how does this relate to your areas of responsibility in terms of personnel and finance particularly?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I don't see.*

BOUTELLIS: You're not involved in amalgamation of services. The next area is internal management. We've been discussing some of the areas. What are some of the other key areas where internal management needs to be strengthened?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *We need to, in the LNP we need to pay attention to every level of management. Still there is no, there hasn't been any proper promotion policy in place. So the officers who are in charge, commanders or whatever just have that temporarily. We started last year in October writing the policy, the policy is signed, promotion policy and we wanted to start, there was an institution called LNP Promotion Board which was consisting of UNPOL officers and LNP Senior Officers but we couldn't get along with them where to start. We wanted to start from the higher levels, that means Deputy Commissioner but the Inspector-General of Police wanted to start from the lower levels, what is in our understanding the wrong way. Because if you have selected the high ranking*

police officer and the one who is not selected can at least apply for the next lower level. But if you do it vice versa it is not working. But she insisted on this and so far we don't have any results so we are stuck. That is the reason why we don't have in every place really qualified leaders in the LNP.

BOUTELLIS: On every level you mean?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Right, on every level. We have this promotion policy describing all the requirements you need to have to get this or that rank, but so far it is not practiced.*

BOUTELLIS: So when the new police, the new Liberian National Police was created after the war, all the previous LNPs were deactivated?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *No, not all of them. The UN has made a background check on all of them. If they were involved in some war crime or whatever they were deactivated.*

BOUTELLIS: A vetting process.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes a vetting process. I don't know the number but a lot of them were police officers before but I don't know the exact number.*

BOUTELLIS: So the middle ranking officers are some of the officers from the previous force that have passed through the vetting process.

SCHIEFELBEIN: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: But there is still a gap in the middle management.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes there is a gap, even in somehow it happens, that even experienced police officers got a very low rank after that.*

BOUTELLIS: Because all ranks were—.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, all were reestablished. It was done by the LNP. We are not involved in this. We are trying to get involved in this with the LNP Promotion Board and with the promotion policy that was signed by the Inspector-General of the Liberian National Police but as I described before so far it is standing still, nothing is moving.*

BOUTELLIS: What are some of the other significant management problems you are confronted with?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Management problems, in that case, we are still hearing every day that there is corruption in the Liberian National Police. For example if you don't like to work in some places, you just give your commander some money and he will mark you present, things like that. This is a management that cannot be called management, it is not working.*

BOUTELLIS: Is this due to a lack of supervision?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, if you see this country in the rural areas, some places are hard to access. It is not easy to check on this everywhere, even not for the Liberian National Police management. They don't have the overview as we said before because of lack of communication, because of lack of possibility to reach these*

places and so on. The quality of the police service here is very different. It depends from place to place. If you have a skillful leader and a responsible manager for the police then in this place it is quite good, but in other places it is really, really poor.

BOUTELLIS: So you described the census, sort of census identification that has started or will start?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *It has started.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe the different steps and the rationale on how this has been decided along with the LNP?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *We discovered, it was discovered before, that there are a lot of problems in the payroll, that officers that were on the payroll were mentioned to be in a specific place. You couldn't find them in that place, they were working somewhere else. Nobody had records about this. So that brought us to the idea that we need to make this kind of census to find out where are all the officers that were trained in the police academy, where are they working now? Who of them may have quit the job? Who is not in their proper working place? Things like that. So the reason for this was just to fix the payroll, to get a real figure or real idea of how strong is the operational strength of the LNP in different parts of this country and of course to install a personnel data filing system. One is not existing.*

We started to negotiate with the LNP about that in October. We brought it up to the level of the Ministry of Justice because the Minister of Justice in Liberia is the head of the police. With his support we could manage to start on the 3rd of March. We verified all police officers in Monrovia, it has a number of 2177, but since the 25th of April we are on standby because the Minister needs to provide the LNP with a car that they can travel and with a generator so we can use the computers and of course with some money for the officers for overnight stays and for food. This was promised for a long time, even before we started the whole operation but we didn't receive it. So from the 25th of April we are standing still.

We just carried it out in Monrovia, we couldn't go out of Monrovia.

BOUTELLIS: Only in Monrovia you found 2177?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Yes, 2177. The total strength should be around 3600.*

BOUTELLIS: There is definitely a problem with lack of logistics, means, and vehicles. Here UNPOL is supporting the police with lots of their own vehicles and taking along some of the LNP. Why isn't UNPOL working on the census with the LNP?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *We are working with them. We have a team, a joint team to do it. We don't have actually the money to feed these officers or to pay their guest house overnight stays or whatever is necessary. We cannot do that.*

BOUTELLIS: You could provide the car?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *Of course, they can go with us in our car. That would be a possibility. We don't have generators, that would be another problem, to find a donor who is giving us a generator that we can use for this purpose. But this was all discussed before in several meetings in the Ministry of Justice and the Minister always said, "Okay, we will provide you with everything," but so far we didn't receive it.*

BOUTELLIS: In terms of operating budget of the Liberian National Police, what has been the trend and can you give us rough ideas of what the operating budgets are and maybe what part goes to salaries? What percentage of the budget?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I have a draft of this budget but I don't have these numbers in my head.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you know—

SCHIEFELBEIN: *There is a lack. They are having too many police officers on the payroll. It was a miscalculation. They don't have enough money or they're getting close to the—they're trying to refund other money to pay the additional officers they have on the payroll. This money they're taking from this fund, it's missing there. That is the reason why we don't have electricity most of the time, because all the budget they had for fuel is already gone and the new fiscal year will start in July so we just have two or three hours electricity in the headquarters per day. There are things like that. So obviously there are two options. One is they haven't calculated the right way or they misused the money somehow.*

BOUTELLIS: We've discussed a number of different areas and I'd like to take a step back, looking at the broader reform process. Of course there are lots of challenges. What are some of the tasks that should be prioritized in your opinion?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *In my opinion and in my working field, the main lack is that we don't have electricity. We want to teach them modern policing using the computers like it was planned so we definitely need electricity. We are always stopped by everything we try to get them reports or getting lists from them, we are always stuck when it comes to how can we print them out. We cannot because we don't have electricity. That is the main obstacle in our work. We also have tried to convince the UN to provide the fuel so we can get better working results, but we are talking about \$500,000 and that is a lot of money and it is not so easy to get.*

BOUTELLIS: What kinds of allies in the host country are essential for success?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *What do you mean with this, giving donations?*

BOUTELLIS: To make things happen and get progress, maybe this is not happening at the level you are working at?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *What countries?*

BOUTELLIS: No, in Liberia, what allies do you need, what are the key elements of making things happen when you have all these issues to resolve. Who are the people that you're working with towards progress?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *It should be the government, but the government always has a lack of money. In fact, most things work when you have an international donor. If you don't have an international donor it is always hard to push something. Like I described, it was the Minister of Justice giving us support for the verification operation. If you can find an international donor for this it would be much, much easier to do it.*

BOUTELLIS: Are there any innovations, again, either in Liberia or in your previous work in Bosnia maybe, any innovations or experiments that you know about, either small projects or parts of the reform process that you think have been successes and you think we could learn from, things that merit more attention or that we could learn from because they were not successful?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I don't know how to answer this. In Bosnia the biggest progress is that there is peace and that the living conditions have grown during the years and now it is also getting better with relations between the entities. But here in Liberia we are far from that. Of course we have peace, that's nice, but we have an unemployment of 80-85%. The main goals in my understanding should be to develop the economy. But for this there is one key factor, a stable and capable police force. Everybody who is going to make an investment in Liberia can feel safe and we don't have this so far.*

BOUTELLIS: Now turning to the UN and the donor community. If you could create a wish list, what would be two or three changes in terms of UN internal policies or management that you would want to allow you to be more effective in your job?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I would prioritize the installation of proper communication channels. I would definitely increase the community policing activities, because the relation between the Liberian National Police and the Liberian people is bad. We are having a lot of cases of mob justice. In my opinion, community policing would be a good policy to improve this relation and to bring trust for the police officers from the people living here, that would be the main thing.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any suggestions or lessons from working with the host country personnel, with your counterparts in the national police that you'd like to share in terms of what are good practices and maybe things that should be avoided?

SCHIEFELBEIN: *My experience is that whenever you get an idea to change something and want to make a new project. Let's take an example, record management system. You want to install a record management system, what we internationals sometimes do wrong is that we are starting to create these things and going with a prepackaged deal. You go to your counterparts and they are getting disappointed or annoyed because they were not involved. So the first thing that I can recommend is before you start any kind of project talk to the people who should use it, who should work with it because they might have different ideas than you have. I cannot come with my German experience and say, "Hey, I have all the keys here, let's do it like this." This country has a different culture, they have a different experience, we have to share it before we make any kind of project.*

BOUTELLIS: To conclude maybe do you have any final comments on the way forward or maybe some of the achievements, modest though they may be.

SCHIEFELBEIN: *I just mentioned what I would like to change or what I think should be changed. There is one more thing. Inside this UN mission I guess we can improve ourselves in sharing information. We are not all on the same level and we're not sharing our information the best way we could do it. We have the possibilities of using shared drives, we have e-mail and internet access so it should be easy to inform each level of UNPOL officers we have and feed them with all the information they need to do their job properly. I guess we are failing at this.*

BOUTELLIS: Ulrich Schiefelbein, thank you very much.