



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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BOUTELLIS: My name is Arthur Boutellis. I'm an interviewer with the Institutions for Fragile States at Princeton University. I am now sitting with Chief Superintendent Dave Beer at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Gendarmerie royale du Canada, in Ottawa, Canada. Today is the 15th of January, 2008. First, thank you for your time. Before we start the interview, I'd like you to please confirm that you've read, understood, and signed the informed consent as well as the legal release forms.

BEER: *I have read it and signed it.*

BOUTELLIS: Without further ado, I'd like to start the interview by asking you maybe a little bit more background about yourself, your latest position, particularly the work you've done overseas, and how did you come about getting involved in this police work and if you have any specialty within this involvement.

BEER: *I have 34 years' service in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. My education background, I've had a Bachelor's degree in sociology and anthropology and a graduate degree in international relations, political science. I've been involved in international activity almost continuously now for the last twelve or thirteen years. I first became involved in 1995 when I was approached by my own organization to participate—to lead actually, the first bilateral justice development or policing development mission in Haiti in 1996, and that was in association with our (Canadian) International Development Agency, called CIDA—or ACDI (Agence canadienne de développement international) en français. That was particularly because of my training. I had a training background at that particular time and was bilingual and was recommended for that particular position. That was my first venture internationally.*

Since that time I've served for four year-long missions, including this one I've spoken about in Haiti. I've actually served almost four years in Haiti total, including twice on behalf of my own government and once as a police commissioner for the UN in Haiti. I've served with the US State Department and Foreign Commonwealth Office of the UK in Iraq. I've done assessment missions and reconnaissance missions for the UN in Liberia, Central African Republic, and Haiti. So I've come to accumulate a bit of experience generally as a practitioner combined with my academic background.

Currently, I'm the Director General of International Policing for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and that includes our peace operations deployments, INTERPOL, our liaison program, our international operations branch, and visits and travel branch, as well as international affairs and policy branch. Essentially anything to do with international work falls under my responsibility.

BOUTELLIS: So I understand your longest and most recent involvement in a UN peacekeeping mission was in Haiti? Can you tell us a little bit about the history of the mission and—

BEER: *Actually, my last UN work was in Liberia. I did an assessment for the UN in Liberia last year.*

BOUTELLIS: An assessment?

BEER: *That's right. The last full mission was in Haiti.*

BOUTELLIS: So, in the last few missions, whether you want to talk about Haiti or Liberia or others, can you tell us about maybe the status of public order and crime when

you first got there? What were the major challenges you faced? And how did you go about reforming, working with the local police?

BEER: *Well, the nature of interventions has changed actually, significantly, since I first started into this sort of work. Interstate conflict has essentially been replaced by intra-state conflict much more frequently, and the UN and other multilateral organizations are more ready to intervene in localized and regionalized conflicts, many of which are permeated by organized crime activity and even terrorist activity to certain degrees.*

Haiti is a particular example where a failed or fragile—perhaps, as someone suggested, a failed state—had been permeated by criminal activity and political unrest, certainly different from the traditional notion of peacekeeping. In fact, the first policing missions related to international intervention were very much peacekeeping, monitoring and advising, election security, that sort of specific operation. Today, it's almost exclusively that the first steps in any mission are to establish peace and security and then combine that stable environment, hopefully, into a capacity-building plan that goes forward, often for many years.

BOUTELLIS: Thank you. You mentioned a diversity of experiences in various regions and areas. I'd like to ask you about more of the daily routine, particularly as it comes to whether you have any specific advice for officers in similar roles as you would have. For example, did you have any record left from your predecessors? How did the transitions work out? Also, if you could talk a little bit more about the situational awareness, your ability to adapt to new environments. You mentioned earlier also that you were selected for Haiti first because of your language ability, being bilingual in French and English.

BEER: *Right.*

BOUTELLIS: I was wondering, how did that translate in environments maybe where the language would be more of a barrier, in Iraq or other places?

BEER: *Well, the most recent experience in Haiti was particularly interesting for me because I'd already spent almost three years in Haiti during the early '90s. So the recent experience, the recent deployment was particularly interesting. I actually started the policing mission following establishment of the UN mandate in 2005, early in the spring of 2005. So I had an opportunity not only to view first-hand the situation on the ground, the insecurity on the ground, but also to be able to draw comparisons between that and what I had remembered from only two or three years before, having been in Haiti previously.*

I guess it gave me a leg up. I not only knew some of the political players, but some of the players on the security side from the Haitian government's perspective. I had also participated in the security restructuring and capacity-building in the '90s. So I had seen what progress had been made and how far they had slipped backwards. So it was particularly interesting from that perspective.

Clearly, if our underlying responsibility here in this interview process is to try and establish information and lessons learned for those who will come ahead, Haiti provides a particular example where political will had been absent throughout the early stages of international intervention and development in the 1990s. That was the first thing that I was going to be looking for from my own perspective—a new enthusiasm by the government of the day to take the appropriate decisions, take

the hard decisions that might be necessary to deal with corruption issues. As a particular example, to make fundamental changes in the justice system that were going to be necessary for sustainable development.

BOUTELLIS: What was your assessment when you got there, in the second involvement, in terms of the political mood?

BEER: *Shortly thereafter, it became clear to me that it was very much more of the same that we'd experienced in the 1990s. There was an interim government by a Prime Minister who was essentially approved and appointed by the international community. There were plans in place for an election process to come in the first year of the international community's intervention and, as usual, that would have been a benchmark for progress and success of the international community. But it was very clear that there wouldn't be elections in that first year—there were all sorts of political shenanigans going on, and there was an insecure environment as well, that was preventing elections from moving ahead as they might be anticipated.*

What was absolutely clear to me—and as I say, one thing that I was looking for fundamentally from the outset was indications of political will, indications that the government was prepared to take hard decisions, fire people that needed to be fired, start training programs where they may not be particularly welcomed in the justice sector and in the policing sector, have a vetting process where there was clear accountability and transparency on who was hired and who was being paid, and how was money going to be handled—and unfortunately, it was clear within a matter of weeks that there hadn't been a whole lot of change from some of the difficult political realities that we'd experienced in the 1990s. Little had changed from that perspective.

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned that of course your first experience in Haiti was very helpful in apprehending the situation on your second deployment. This is not the case for many of your colleagues who were deployed in the past or who will be deployed in the future. Whether it be within the UN framework or in your other experiences, did you receive any prior briefings or trainings that would help you apprehend the situations?

BEER: *This was actually my first full mission with the UN, so it was particularly interesting. I'd had a lot of experience with the UN in smaller missions and with other governments, etc., but this was my first full mission. So I did have briefings in New York. Going in as police commissioner, you essentially have a high position in the organizational chart of the mission, so it's particularly important that you're well aware of the UN systems and realities, from issues of cultural balance to how the budgets work and what the specific goals of the mission are, etc. So there was an adequate training process. What was interesting was that some of the fundamental lessons learned over twenty years of police deployments where the UN had been in the business for a couple of decades or more—that many of the lessons learned of decades past hadn't been instituted in terms of setting up the mission.*

I actually set up the mission, which is to say there was essentially not much there by the time I had arrived. This means establishing your own police organization that will provide some security in the country and take the steps to make the training programs, etc. But there was no template to follow, no standard operating procedures already established—which I found absolutely incredible in a system that had already been in existence for a couple of decades. Now, since

that time there's been a lot of work done in terms of creating standard operating procedures and utilizing templates so that there is standardization both in process and policy in UN missions. But it was particularly evident that nothing was in place and nothing had been considered when I arrived. In fact, there were 200 people on the ground and we occupied an office of about 10'x10', not different from this particular office—that's what we had on the mission. Nothing else: no vehicles, no radios, no pens, paper, anything of that nature.

At the same time, the Haiti mission was considered to be perhaps the most complex that the UN had ever undertaken. They had a complex dual mandate; there were 40 or 45 countries represented on the policing mission; there were two official languages at work because there weren't sufficient francophone speakers, and they were required to operate in English but provide a francophone service; a very, very small percentage of the police deployment actually spoke French; a security environment that amounted to guerilla war; and a military that was less than enthusiastic about getting engaged in something that was really nontraditional conflict for them. It was a highly difficult environment. But we've moved forward since then, and a lot of work has been done by DPKO, so I know that the lessons were certainly learned from that particular experience.

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the progress made in preparation for deployment and the actual mandates and procedures. Is this from your personal experience, comparing 1995 and 2006?

BEER: *No. 1996 was a bilateral program with my own government, so I was well prepared. I actually established that program from the ground up. So I was solely responsible for its failure or its success. It wasn't exactly the same as the UN mission where I spent time in New York and got to know the authorities in New York and learned the systems and understand exactly what the mandate was and the objectives before I actually went to Haiti, so it was a little bit different environment. But given the circumstances and understanding the realities of DPKO and peace operations, the training and the preparation that I had was as expected, but it wasn't sufficient. Today I think it would be much more sophisticated, and a commander going in would be much more prepared than I was.*

BOUTELLIS: Are there any specific areas that you wish you had received more training in or you wish you would have heard more about, that you realized once you were deployed?

BEER: *Yes, absolutely. At that particular time the role of formed police units was unknown to me; albeit that I had a long tactical background in my own country, I'd never worked with or experienced formed police units. Ultimately, there would be eight formed police units in Haiti which comprised almost 60 percent of our strength. I think more awareness of the limitations, the limitations of the mission. There were certain expectations given to me, or provided me as a commander in the field which weren't met. I think that that had to do with professional staff, personal staff, everyone from chiefs of staff to professional staff—what the UN call professional staff as opposed to deployed staff, people who are experienced permanent UN employees. There were certain expectations and promises made in terms of that staff; those were never fulfilled. So preparations from that, being able to build your management or your executive team before you went down on the ground. Meeting people and actually working with people for a few days before you actually hit the ground would have been advantageous.*

I don't think that there was anything unknown in terms of the cultural realities and the language realities; and certainly I was aware of the Haitian culture. I had spent a lot of time there previously, so that wasn't at all new to me. But I think in terms of the UN systems and operating procedures, much more could have been accomplished in a much shorter period of time had we been able to go down there as a management team as opposed to me just alighting on the ground and trying to filter through the people that had already been deployed to find out who had expertise and who didn't, and where you might get a desk to sit at, and things of that nature.

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the role of formed police units as a major change since the first time you were deployed. We understand that in your second time out in Haiti, you were under Canadian government mandate and not under the UN police umbrella.

BEER: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: You probably have first-hand experience with these, and do you have any particular comments—

BEER: *Well, I had no experience with formed police units until this experience in Haiti.*

BOUTELLIS: Do you have any observations that you'd like to make?

BEER: *Yes, well, I think the formed police unit is a sort of necessary evolution in response to a conflict environment where you may have—it's a delicate situation and one that we wrestled with in Haiti all the time, where the situation was beyond the capacity of the normal police response, where it needed to have a military response, but where it was nontraditional and where the military was somewhat apprehensive to intervene against gangs, against armed gangs and insurgent-like activity, where they felt a stronger police role was required. The other side of that coin is having the police properly trained to deal with that situation. So learning the capabilities of the FPUs—which weren't the same from country to country, by the way; some were far more capable than in other countries. So learning the general capability and the application of the formed police unit and its operational capacity, then understanding from country to country what could be done, what were the political limitations that they had put on their particular units which might hamper how they were going to be deployed in Haiti, was also—*

BOUTELLIS: You mean different rules of engagement, for instance?

BEER: *Well, different interpretations of the rules. Everybody had the same rules of engagement, but at a political level it's pretty common that home governments will put certain restrictions on interpretation of the rules, if you will.*

BOUTELLIS: All right, I'd like to move on now to the technical areas. I'd like to start by asking you if you have first-hand experience in recruitment for international policing and how did you go about—well, first, did you have any first-hand experience with recruitment?

BEER: *You mean recruiting our people to work on international missions?*

BOUTELLIS: Recruiting national police for the forming of a national police service.

BEER: *Oh, absolutely—well, mind you, at arm’s length. In my particular experience, we didn’t have executive authority, so anything that we did was at the behest of the government, in this particular case the Haitian government, or the Iraq government, or wherever else I may have worked—which is to say, we helped execute the recruiting standards, the vetting process, things of that nature, but didn’t have sole responsibility for it.*

BOUTELLIS: To what extent were the procedures determined, whether by the UN in Haiti or the State Department, in Iraq or others? And how much did you actually have to design the procedures yourself when you got to the field, in collaboration with the local authorities?

BEER: *The recruiting process is somewhat generic, but of course there are local considerations, particularly when you talk about the level of education. So you can imagine any experienced commander going in with a basic expectation of the absolute basic requirements which can be attained in a given culture—and it might be a certain level of education, a certain level of literacy, it may simply be a certain age, good physical condition.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you speak of the specifics for Haiti and Iraq, maybe, or take whatever example you wish?

BEER: *The person’s physical condition, of course; they would have to be healthy. They may have to do a short physical test for their physical fitness.*

BOUTELLIS: Are you talking about Haiti or Iraq?

BEER: *Both. It’s pretty much standard. Be of good character. Now in most of the—in the case of Haiti there were no records, so you would do a kind of community outreach, and try to make sure that the person who had presented themselves as a candidate didn’t have a bad reputation in the community, something like that. That’s basically all you can do for a background check.*

BOUTELLIS: How did you go about this?

BEER: *You actually go and you talk to community leaders, talk to church leaders, talk to people who seem to be elders in the community. Essentially that’s all you could do where there were no records or where the person may not have a work history. Something that might be sort of standard background checks in a western culture, that sort of procedure wasn’t possible. So, actually going out into the community, meeting community leaders. Publishing in the local newspaper; here are pictures of the recruits. Posting a bill in a local community; here are people from your community, or who claim to be from your community who want to be police officers. Do you think they are suitable citizens to do that kind of work? That sort of outreach is sometimes all you can do.*

As I say, health standards—they might be a very, very basic test of literacy. But it depends on the culture, and it depends on the environment, what the expectations are. Frankly, much of this comes from the recommendation of the local government, the local Ministry of Education, or whoever you might work with.

Depending on the culture, in the case of Haiti there were strong programs that tried to encourage women to join the policing organization in a very macho culture. It was extremely difficult. But, by the same token, I saw really classic

examples, in Liberia for example, where strong representation had been made by the government to encourage women. These were done by the government—not by the international community—which displayed not only a lot of creativity and a desire to have much more gender balance, but it was a real indicator of political will to make some substantive change. That sort of thing would have been useful in Haiti as an example, where they were looking for real gender balance in the police organization, but where there was no strong representation among women in the cabinet, and where women had a much more difficult time being heard and influencing decisions. So they didn't have quite as much role in the recruiting process. But discussions with the cabinet, with the government, with police officials that are already on the ground.

Mind you, in the case of Haiti, there was an established police, albeit still fledgling; it was only ten years old, created in 1994. So it was only ten years old at the time and inundated with problems. There were standards and procedures already in place that it considered acceptable, so the recruiting process in Haiti was not that much of an issue. There are always things that can be done to get the local flavor and take into consideration local realities—cultural, political, social, and otherwise.

BOUTELLIS: You mentioned the importance of working with the local governments, with the communities, and the importance of political will. I was wondering, in cases where there is less of this, less of the government's will, are there any models from other countries that were brought in? And which major obstacles did you face when trying to bring effective recruitment strategies?

BEER: *It was particularly problematic in Haiti. Any representation by the international community is not widely accepted in Haitian culture, or, for that matter, any foreign culture does not readily accept its own notions and ideas being dismissed. It is an axiom, I think, of this world of international development that you have to find local solutions led by local individuals supported by the local government for it to be either a) instituted, b) successful, and c) sustainable. You're not going to have any one of those three unless it's a locally-created program. So you can bring ideas to the table, you can suggest plans and solutions, but unless it's accepted and incorporated into a local way of doing business, it's just not going to work. I think there's ample evidence through the ages of imposed development ideas that simply floundered. It's got to be locally culturally acceptable and sustainable and enforceable, and unless you're prepared to be flexible in terms of the models that you present and how you do business, you're just not going to be successful. There's no other way of putting it; might as well be blunt—you can come in with all the experience in the world, but it will be the local influence that carries the day, always.*

BOUTELLIS: I'm curious. You talked about Haiti, and not necessarily a successful process for the reasons you've mentioned. What ways did you go about evaluating the programs? We're still talking specifically about recruitment.

BEER: *About recruiting? Well, if you focus uniquely on recruiting, I think you can use the same benchmarks, ultimately: Is it accountable? Is it transparent? Is it sustainable? If those three markers can be put down, then you're going to have a successful program.*

If we're talking about recruiting, are the people that you're recruiting into the organization, are they the ones that the community want? Do they have a criminal history? Are they politicized? Were they corrupted? Can they be

influenced by other people in the organization either higher up in the organization or political elements at work on the outside? Accountability—are they going to be paid on time? Are they going to be paid what it is that they deserve to be paid? Is money going to be held back from them? Are there other programs in place to ensure that they are being paid? Or, to ensure that people don't enter and rise through the system on something other than a meritorious system—and once you have a system in place where there is a proper vetting of the recruits, a proper promotion system within the recruiting and the basic training, is it transparent in terms that the meritorious are the ones that move ahead? That's the sort of thing that will not only sustain the program but give it strength internally—but it's also very important for the public to see this sort of accountability and transparency for it to be sustainable. So, really, those three benchmarks have got to be in place.

It doesn't matter whether your people need to be literate or whether they need to run 100 meters in 12 seconds or whatever; that's irrelevant, that's totally irrelevant. Does the community at large have confidence in the people that are being presented to them as their policing organization, or not? And if they don't, it doesn't matter who they are; it's not going to be a sustainable system. Is the government taking the program seriously? Is it going to be an independent program? Are you holding out hope to the public that this policing organization will be the foundation of security? And if so, are you going about the fundamental steps of hiring people, recruiting people, training people, in a very, very transparent and accountable way? If you're not, all else will fail. So, you can't hold out the police as the foundation of your security system without making it very, very transparent and accountable going in—who you've got there, and why they're there.

BOUTELLIS: Two further questions: You put community acceptance in the broadest sense, above literacy in terms of importance, but was literacy at any time a criterion for recruitment? And my other question is related—you mentioned the vetting process, and I was wondering, if there was an existing national police in Haiti—

BEER: *Well, here, sorry—before I forget, those are two good examples. Literacy was—a certain level of literacy, was a requirement in Haiti, and an ability to speak French was a requirement; albeit that Creole is the national language, a certain capacity in French was required. Now, that was particularly among the officer corps. In Afghanistan, as an example, literacy is not a requirement, because you just wouldn't have any recruits. So you have to find a way to develop a program in an environment where the vast majority of the people are illiterate. You just can't transmit the messages in the same way, the training in the same way. The expectations have to be different from the policing perspective.*

BOUTELLIS: Would that be accepted in the context of Afghanistan by the communities, for instance?

BEER: *Sure.*

BOUTELLIS: Is an illiterate police force credible?

BEER: *Well, at some point in time—it's a long-term process—for Afghanistan, it's a couple of generations where you could expect to have an entirely literate police force at some point; it's probably 20 years away. But in the meantime, it's not unreasonable to say, you have a police force that is essentially a security body where certain individuals within that are literate, have different roles for*

investigation, for report writing, etc.; where others may have uniquely a security role, be weapons-trained and much more militaristic in their demeanor and role; where certain individuals might have traditional policing roles, or policing roles as we know them in a civilian environment. So there's quite a contrast. In Haiti, there was at least a certain basic level of academic accomplishment that could be called upon for recruits.

BOUTELLIS: Was there any attempt to retire ghost workers or also existing officers that tried to push them out as well, while recruiting new ones in?

BEER: *Yes, this was the vetting. The vetting process exists, of course, for the recruits coming in, the new people, but also vetting of people who were existing in the system. That happens almost universally now, where the international community intervenes into intrastate conflict situations. Very often, there's some sort of policing organization or some sort of security force that is head of policing, where people have positions of responsibility that then need to be vetted out. Are they human rights violators? Are they corrupt? Are they capable? Do they meet the current standards? So, programs like DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) are much more common in vetting processes where people have to meet the new standards; they're far more common. In the case of Haiti, it was a little bit different in that, albeit the international community had been there for a period of about six years before the change in government—the (Jean-Bertrand) Aristide government returned in 2000 and actually fired and dismissed all of the executives of the organization—the people that the international community had worked with for the six previous years or seven previous years. All of them are gone. The Aristide government instituted, or injected, their own people in at executive levels and senior levels, people that didn't have training or didn't have experience.*

So, when we returned in 2004, it was incumbent upon us to get those people out. Frankly, there wasn't full and unfettered cooperation by the government of the day to get all those people out. There were a lot of political realities that were being taken into consideration; who got fired and who didn't, and who met the standards and who didn't. There were a lot of issues about the former military being brought into the ranks of the police as a way of influencing political decisions around the country—so all sorts of intrigues going on at the same time.

BOUTELLIS: It's interesting because this is—

BEER: *The same sort of environment is in Afghanistan, as an example; indeed, wherever there are all sorts of tribal influences on who gets hired and who has responsibility and who is able to take control. It's the same issues of transparency and accountability, simply applied from a different perspective.*

BOUTELLIS: One of the particularities of the Haiti case is probably that there was no army beyond that, right? There was a police force and no army.

BEER: *Yes, the army actually hadn't officially existed since the early '90s; it had been disbanded in the early '90s. But the ex-FAd'H (Forces Armées d'Haïti) still existed; and the ex-FAd'H consisted of people who had been in the military at the time it had been disbanded, who felt that they—many of whom, frankly, had been wronged in terms of what they had been paid in compensation, in pensions, or never received—so they were very politically active as the ex-FAd'H. But because they were politically active, and because they had a certain measure of control and influence in political circles around the country, they also had a little*

bit of credibility; and disenfranchised youth, unemployed youth tended to migrate to them, considered themselves part of the FAd'H, uniformed themselves, armed themselves, and would drill like they were members of the military, albeit that there was no official military. The ex-FAd'H started to gain some political influence, and its ranks actually grew among the young and unemployed while we were there. So, getting people who filtered into the police organization through the FAd'H or people who had been young when the FAd'H had been disbanded, there was a lot of influence in getting those people into positions of authority and responsibility in the police.

There's somebody at the door. Do you want to take a break?

BOUTELLIS: Okay, let's take a break.