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CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

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Interagency Security Classification Appeals
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ISCAP Appeal No. 2017-191, document 11
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Supplying Illicit Arms and Air Transport to African Conflicts: Victor Butt and His Network

September 2000

~~SECRET REL UAE~~

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Summary

◆ Victor Butt has been the largest supplier of illicit arms and air transport services in Sub-Saharan Africa, since the mid-1990s.

- His ability to attract a large clientele is based on the ^{distinguished by} large scale of his operation and the breadth of services he provides.

* Has 60 aircraft, 200 personnel, facilities in several countries. ^{Including very large craft such as ST-76}

^{BasSEC business} : * Brokers sales, delivers arms and ^{+ fuel ferries} combatants. + more, as described below

- USG attention to Butt is based on: ^(including larger arms + aircraft mil. aircraft)

* His role in supplying several of Africa's bloodiest military conflicts.

* His flaunting of UN efforts to halt these conflicts through sanctions.

Contributes significantly to frustration of USG foreign policy objectives in sub-Saharan Africa

◆ ~~The scale and full-service nature of his operation are potential vulnerabilities as well as strengths:~~

- As an air cargo operator, he needs secure facilities for his aircraft.

- His largest and most important are in the UAE

- operations center in Sharjah + Ras al Khaimah

- he ^{1.4(c)}

- does business under: Transavia Air, Air Cess / Cessavia, Centrafrican, Co. Air

/ many others

^{bases aircraft + crew} → also maintain facilities

• Flaunting of the will of the intl community in violating a host of UNSC sanctions regimes in place w/ UN Security Council

Weapons, Ammunition, Fuel, Aircraft, Communications equipment

UNITA Sanctions Violations

UNSC 864 - oil +
arms embargo
on UNITA

- ◆ 1.4(c) [redacted] indications of Butt's role 1.4(c) [redacted] in 1996
1.4(c) [redacted] supplying weapons to UNITA,
which has been under an arms embargo since 1993.

- Butt was flying UNITA arms from Bulgaria via Kinshasa.

1.4(c) [redacted]

- ◆ After Mobutu's ouster, flights via Kinshasa were halted.

1.4(c) [redacted]

1.4(c) [redacted]

1.4(c) [redacted]

1.4(c) [redacted]

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Support to DROC Rebels

- ◆ ^{1.4(c)} [redacted] Butt sets up Centrafrican Airlines
 - Airline registered in CAR; most of the planes are in Kigali, Rwanda.
 - ^{1.4(c)} [redacted] flights ^{1.4(c)} [redacted] to DROC rebels carrying small arms, ammunition, and troops.
 - Butt acts as a military advisor to Rwandans and rebels.
 - Centrafrican planes also noted in Sharjah and Ras al Khaimah.

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Liberia: Weapons Embargo Violations

UNSCR 171 -
army
embargo
of concern
RUF

- ◆ 1.4(c) [redacted] Butt has been working to deliver military cargoes to Liberia, despite an arms embargo on Monrovia that has been in effect since 1992.
 - July 2000, Butt delivered several Mi-8T military helicopters and associated rockets to Liberian President Taylor.
 - Also in July, Butt and his associates were arranging to ship air defense equipment, bombs, and ammunition to Monrovia.
- ◆ The ultimate recipient of some weapons is the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone.

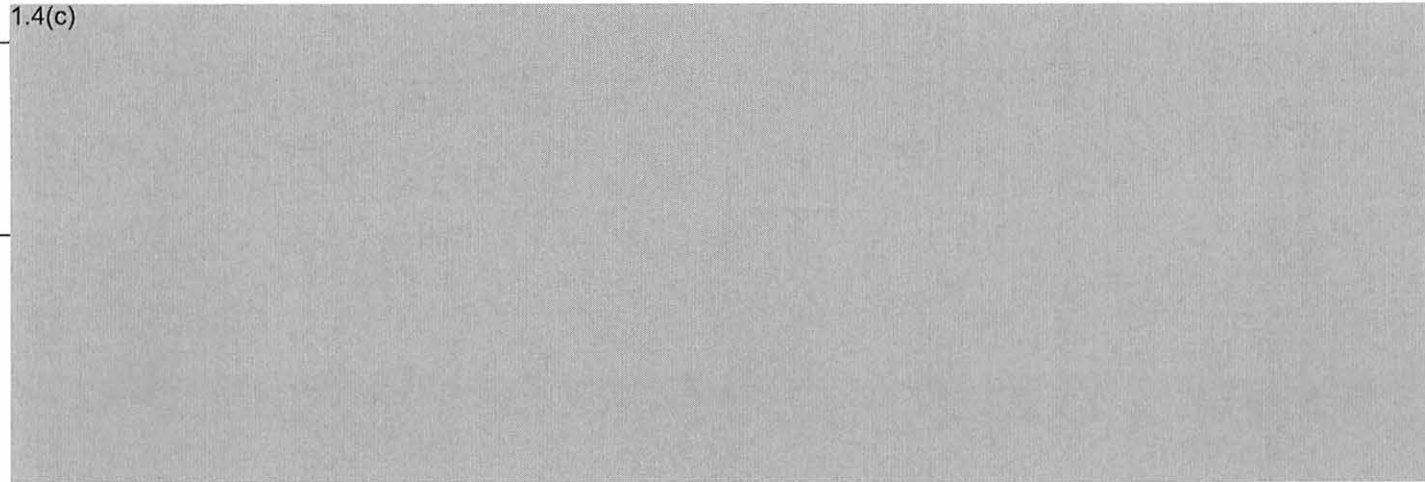
UNSCR 1306 -
Sierra
Leone
army
ban

SAM_{jr}

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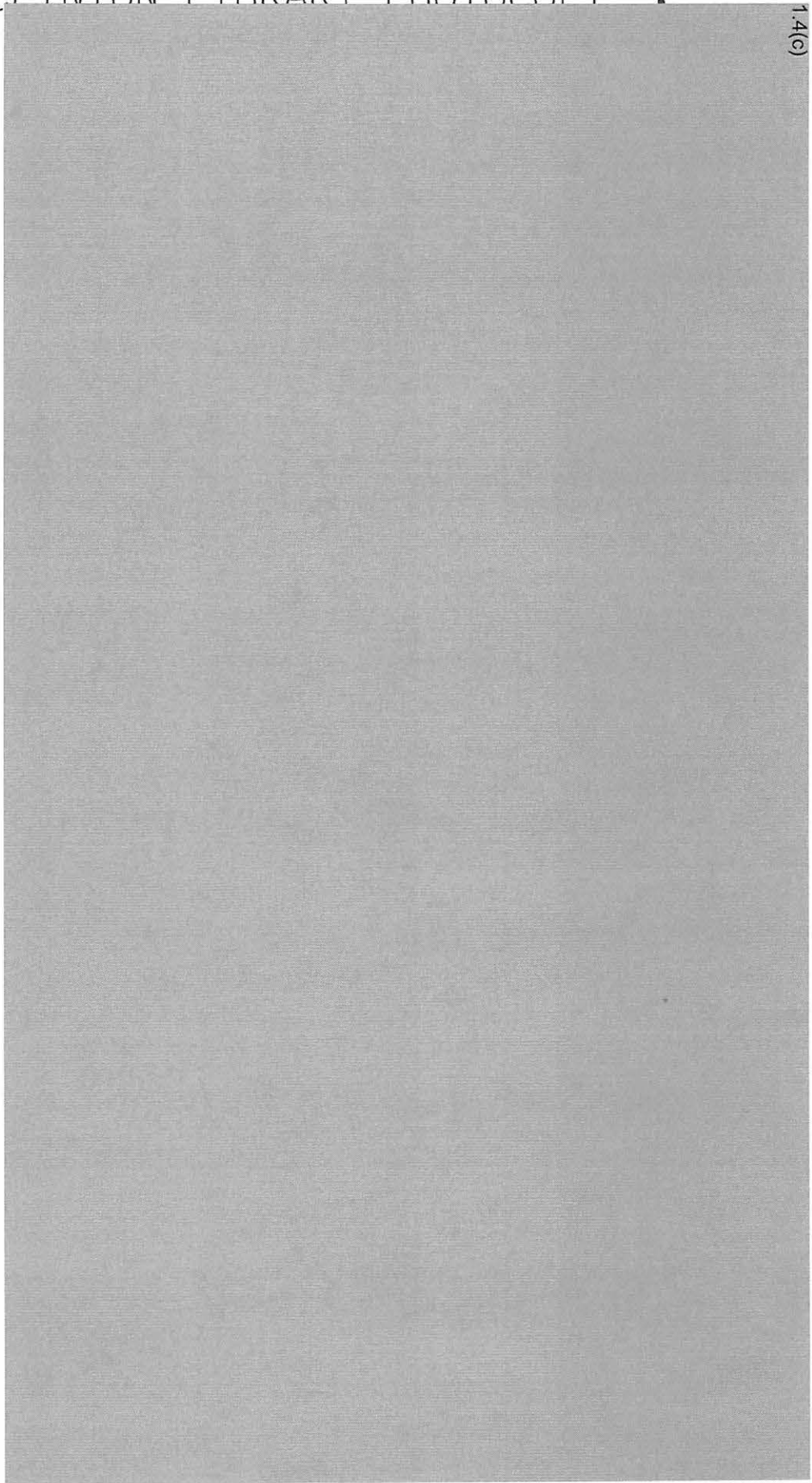
Trafficking in Illicit Diamonds

- ◆ Butt has become a key player in smuggling African diamonds:
 - Illustrates involvement in a disturbing trend that UN seeks to counter by working with legitimate diamond industry.



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1.4(c)



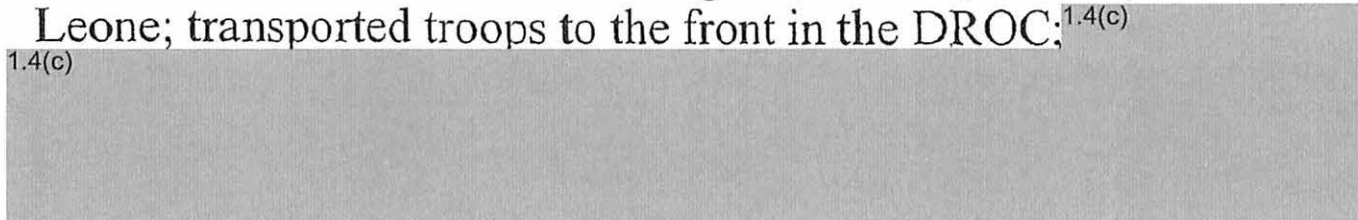
~~SECRET-REL UAF~~

*significantly contributed to human misery
on a devastating scale*

Exploiting Africa's Bloodiest Civil Wars

- ◆ Butt's actions in Africa prolong the carnage associated with the fighting in Angola, the DROC, and Sierra Leone.
 - Since the mid-1990s, the Angolan civil war has resulted in some 300,000 deaths and displaced 2.3 million people.
 - In Sierra Leone, civil conflict has forced 850,000 people from their homes; the main rebel group is notorious for torturing and mutilating civilians—including children.
 - Since mid-1998, some 6,000 combatants have been killed in the DROC and 1.6 million people have been made homeless.
 - Butt has armed combatants in Angola , DROC, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; transported troops to the front in the DROC;^{1.4(c)}

1.4(c)

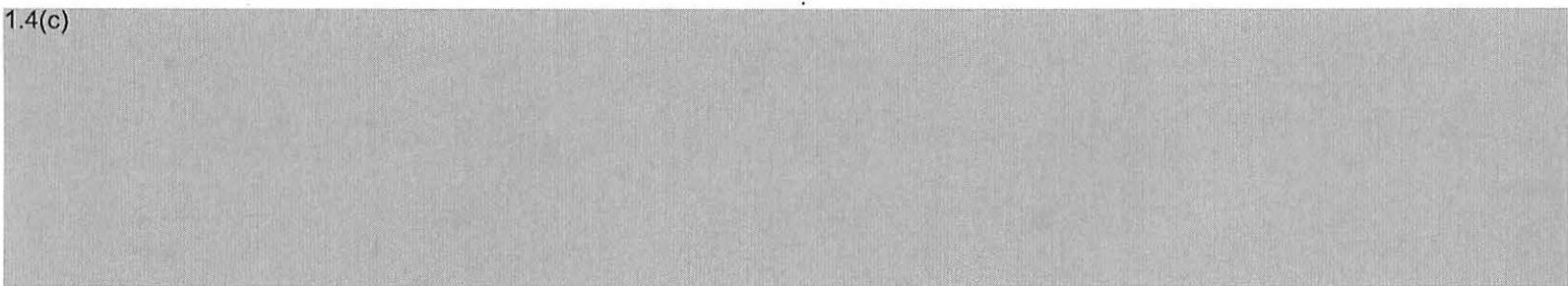


Size of Butt's Organization: A Vulnerability and a Strength

- ◆ Operates about **60** aircraft, maybe more
- ◆ Has at least **200** employees
- ◆ ~~Operating about half a dozen firms~~

◆

1.4(c)



- ◆ UAE facilities are the most important.
 - ~~Loss of license to operate there would be a crippling blow.~~

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Unlikely To Withstand Official Scrutiny

by UAE

①

- ◆ Aircraft registration often acquired by bribery/
 - Butt in 1997 bribed a Swazi CAA official for a license and to register 50 aircraft... license and registrations revoked in 1998

or TS
fraudulent
or has
been
revoked

1.4(c)

1.4(c)

②

◆

1.4(c)

~~SECRET DEL IIAE~~

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Butt's Firms

1.4(c)

◆ Main Firms

- Transavia Travel and Cargo
- Air Cess
- Centrafrican Airlines
- San Air General Trading

1.4(c)

1.4(c)