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THE WATCHDOG- The Peacekeeping Forces of Urth- Striving for Peace, with Overwhelming Force

Special Issue of the Watchdog, edited by David Rezendes

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In a world lacking of humanitarian law, a handful of nations have taken up the burden of risking their own forces for innocents, in order to protect the human rights of people in all nations. The handful of nations form the PeaceKeeping Forces of Urth (PK-FU), a group they hope will empower the downtrodden and caution those who would abuse the unarmed. Just which are these nations, and what is it they are seeking to advance by being part of the PK-FU? That is what this article is concerned with. For it is more than just a simple matter of protection; their other motives may be self-serving.

History.

The PK-FU has been in the works as an organization for more than a year, but really took more of a central role in politics after the explosion in Osnek, Latianburg. The nation of Furnifold tasked several vessels to deliver humanitarian aid to the nation, but lacked many of the transit vessels and supplies that other nations possessed. This is where the PK-FU stepped up. Early on, the nations of Kuthernburg, Latianburg, Furnifold, and Xargrug increased their involvement in the organization, committing money, material, and troops to the peacekeepers. Their first test, distributing aid to Latianburg, the nation that asked for their committal of peacekeepers for aid distribution and to assist the rebuilding efforts. This came after the terrorist group Al-Jaheed claimed influence in the region of Litop, and currently still have a sizable presence in the region. Currently the PK-FU and their mission in Latianburg, called PKFUOL, has committed 17,700 troops and a number of military vehicles. Their job: protecting civilians, administering aid to the survivors of the Osnek explosion, supporting the implementation of cessation of hostilities agreement, and assisting with the social and economic rehabilitation of the region.

Figure 1: The PK-FU Headquarters in McLendal

Challenges.

Questions remain about how important their involvement is in the nation. Latianburg, and by extension its protector Kuthernburg, is not a poor nation. It would have the military resources to handle the relative weakness of the terrorist forces. Humanitarian aid to citizens is one thing, and that is an area no one will deny the PK-FU is well suited to assist with, but humanitarian aid comes with medical supplies and comfort, not battle tanks, attack helicopters, and aircraft carriers. According to sources within the PK-FU, the organization has also looked at procuring aircraft which are largely used for offensive actions, such as close air support, attack helicopters, fighter jets, and even UAVs. These are indicative of missions that involve special operations and targeted strikes, which would seem at odds with the founding beliefs. When pressed for comment, organization representatives stated that the fighter aircraft, which are equipped with missiles and other guns, are used for electronic warfare, to jam signals. Furthermore, these aircraft would not be used for offensive actions, as the organization is emphasizing to each of its member states that they are to only retaliate if attacked first. However, each unit has their own rule of engagement, casting doubt upon this mandate by the organization and its ability to handle its own forces, especially with so many active and reserves.

Figure 2: PK-FU consult educational materials amid a Staff Training Event in Furnifold

It is not only in the aspect of peacekeeping that the PK-FU seem to be unable to handle. Currently journalists have not been allowed access into Latianburg, so as to have correspondence on the ground, besides what comes out of the military releases and whatever sources in the country can get off the mainland. To their credit, the PK-FU are looking into this, and will be pressing the Latianburg government for journalists to be allowed entry into the state. But since the PK-FU involvement, there have been sources in the Litop region claiming that forces have set up brothels in many of the towns, apparently as a way to incentivize economic development. While not illegal, there is the obvious question: are the women and men in the brothels doing so out of their own volition, or are they being coerced, forcefully or through other means? We do not know, because journalists are not able to enter into the country, and the PK-FU member states have denied any of these from taking place. Also noticeable is the country of Furnifold, which pays the least amount of any member state but composes about 12 percent of the force number, has recalled all but one thousand of its troops from the country. When asked, representatives of Furnifold stated that it was time for mandatory military drills and inspections, and these forces would be needed back in their country. The remaining troops in Latianburg represent those continuing with humanitarian aid assistance as well as economic development.

Sovereignty and national interest.

There is also the matter of national interest within the organization. Furnifold recalled its forces, but is also increasing its presence in the organization in terms of monetary donation and aircraft sales. According to Furnifold Flight Works representatives, their Mirage F1-E has been procured for sale by the PK-FU, but was unable to give details about aircraft specifics or intentions. The representatives from the nations of Xagrurg and The Oan Isles stated that joining the PK-FU will advance their nation's foreign policy objectives, foreign assets, and economic interests. The nations were quick to respond upon follow-up that countries not in conflict and turmoil are better served increase the market size of these nations. Currently we do not have information as to economic ties between these nations and the country of Latianburg and how it is being impacted by the conflict. Also of note, polls in the nations of Furnifold and the Oan Isles have found that the public, and even some members of the government, are against involvement of the PK-FU, finding it to be tantamount to an occupation by a cabal of countries. The public finds it important to assist humanitarian efforts, but are not positive how spending money on an organization as armed as the PK-FU will foster these efforts. No polls have been conducted in Latianburg, but that will be one of the first questions journalists will ask when they arrive in the country.

Figure 3: PK-FU and local security move an injured man to a medical tent in Latianburg

So, the PK-FU, what is it? On one hand, it is an organization achieving a noble effort of humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. On the other hand, it is plagued by lackadaisical rules and regulations, an obsession with offensive armament, and relative inexperience on the world stage. To some, the involvement in the nation of Latianburg might be one step forward in terms of humanitarian aid and reconstruction, but two steps back with an escalation of war materials and possible human rights abuses. The public is ultimately left with a final thought: what can we expect of organizations who seek to advance peace, when so many nations of the world may be antithetical to peace?

GFCM Prices

- by Uche Markopolos

Here are the current prices of goods:

Current prices (in SHD):

Corn- 0.64 per bushel (up 18 percent)

Okra- 19.87 per bushel (up 20 percent)

Rice- 14.83 per bushel (up 24 percent)

Soy- 2.91 per bushel (down 18 percent)

Sugar Cane- 6.73 per bushel (up 2 percent)

Index total: 44.97 (up 15 percent)

Non-Index Commodities (in SHD):

Cotton: 0.60 per pound (down 25 percent)

Endemic Fruits: 9.99 per carton (up 12 percent)

Meat: 12.47 per pound (down 4 percent)

Milk: 57.43 per hundredweight (up 21 percent)

Endemic Vegetables: 13.95 per hundredweight (down 12 percent)

Wheat: 4.10 per bushel (down 20 percent)

Analysis: A strong bounce back from the market after a disappointing previous week. Especially important, sales of okra and rice have increased in price, while the other indexed goods stayed largely constant. Also, noticeable, engaging in purchasing in Futures of milk will pay off, as investors have been rewarded with positive growth for almost a month. Hopefully this will increase demand for more selling of milk.