

The following is an excerpt from a fully referenced compilation of information from various sources, largely (re)published on the internet, and a few archival sources. Latest information: January 2004.

JOHN ARNOLD BREDENKAMP
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[Photo by Bob Martin, Golfweb, services.golfweb.com/si/1996/0903/bredenkamp.html]

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Born in South Africa in 1940 and raised in then Rhodesia. After UDI transferred to the Netherlands to work for the Niemeijer tobacco company 1967–1976. While in the Netherlands took on Dutch citizenship;¹ today said to hold ‘a dual Zimbabwean-Dutch passport’.² Lived in Belgium from 1976. Moved to the UK in the 1980s. Said to have moved his HQ to Zimbabwe in 2000.³ Residences in the UK (Sunningdale, Berkshire) and Zimbabwe (Thetford House, Mazowe near Harare).

Started his own firm, *Casalee*, in 1975/76. Casalee, principally a tobacco company, was also engaged in various other types of trading. Bredenkamp later admitted to having violated Rhodesia sanctions, including the arms embargo, prior to 1980. Reportedly also involved in arms dealings with Iran and Iraq after 1980. Sold his Casalee tobacco business in 1993 (reportedly, the boss of Casalee UK remained Jacobus Coetzee, former chief of Armscor, the South African apartheid era state armaments corporation), and soon created the **Breco Group of Companies**. Today active in a range of sectors, from the sports management business to military supplies.

Bredenkamp’s activities were exposed in several TV documentaries and press publications (1979 and onwards).

Controversy

In recent years questions have been raised about Bredenkamp on a number of accounts: his past record and present role as an embargo buster and arms dealer, his role in present-day Zimbabwe, more specifically in helping prop up Mugabe’s dictatorship, and his role in the plunder of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

His role has been exposed, questioned and investigated, among other places, in the media, in reports of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and on a parliamentary (UK House of Lords and Commons, 2000–’03; Belgian Senate, 2002), government (US DIA, 2000; UK, 2002) and multilateral (UN, 2000–’03; EU, 2002–’03) level. Highlighted in reports of UN panel on the illegal exploitation of resources in the DRC (2001–’03).

Blacklisted as a Mugabe supporter by the US and others (2002); punitive measures in connection with role in DRC recommended by UN (2002–’03) and discussed in EU (2003).

Role in present-day Zimbabwe

A Breco company, Petraf Ltd, ‘has continued to supply products to the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe Limited, when its competitors had ceased supplying because of lack of foreign currency. In the current economic climate, the role of Petraf is critical to the Zimbabwean economy’ (1999 and onwards). (*Breco website*)

During the elections of 2000 and 2002 Bredenkamp openly supported Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government.

In 2001 Bredenkamp masterminded a plan to solve the land invasion crisis, according to which white farmers were to surrender land voluntarily for resettlement in exchange for an orderly and non-violent resettlement process, while dropping all legal cases against Mugabe’s land seizures. His own Thetford farm was listed for seizure and delisted, to be listed again by March 2002. Bredenkamp himself has objected to being considered one of ‘the cowardly whites who help Mugabe’ and ‘a ZANU-PF crony’.

Bredenkamp’s name was tainted by stories about the source of his wealth also within Zimbabwe, as when he donated money to his former school for the construction of the ‘John Bredenkamp Music and Computer

¹ Recorded as a Dutch national in: [1] Aliens Register, Municipality of Kapellen (Belgium), 1976, on his family’s taking up residence in Belgium; [2] in British and Swiss company registers in 1979 (Casalee Commodities (U.K.) Ltd, and other Bre-den-kamp companies) and 1989 (Orell Füssli 1989/’90: Casalee AG), respectively. The year he took on Dutch citizenship was said to be 1970 by Michael Bamberger, who interviewed him for *GolfWeb* (‘Strongman: John Bredenkamp, a rich and power-ful former arms dealer, has muscled his way into golf’, *GolfWeb* 1996 services.golfweb.com/si/1996/0903/bredenkamp.html).

² Paul Farrelly MP in British House of Commons on 8 November 2001, and again (quoted) on 6 November 2003.

³ However, on 6 November 2003 Paul Farrelly MP still stated that Bredenkamp’s ‘business empire is firmly based in this country-in Berkshire’. Conducting part of his operations from Harare was just a way to ‘cleverly organise [his] affairs to outwit legislation and to make a mockery of [UK] arms control legislation’.

Centre' (1998 and onwards), and when Zimbabwean activists called for a boycott of his Sanyati Lodge in the Zambezi Valley as a tourist destination (2002).

Most controversial has been his role as an arms supplier to Zimbabwe and his involvement in Zimbabwe's military and commercial adventures in the DRC.

Bredenkamp, Zimbabwe & DR Congo

Africa Confidential seems to be the first to have exposed, in 1999, the central role of two white Zimbabwean businessmen, Billy Rautenbach and Bredenkamp, in procuring and transporting military supplies for Congolese and Zimbabwean troops in the DRC, and at the same time setting up financing schemes to exploit mining concessions granted to Zimbabwe by the Kabila government in return for its support. A great number of press reports have followed. Bredenkamp also featured extensively in reports of the ***United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo***, established in 2000 by the UN Security Council:

- First report: April 2001 presented to UN Security Council; published May 2001
- Addendum to first report published December 2001
- Final Report published October 2002; mandate extended
- Further report published October 2003.

In its reports the UN panel has outlined the DRC/Zimbabwean 'elite network' of military, politicians and businessmen involved in the exploitation of the DRC's natural resources. A UN IRIN press release accompanying the publication of the Final Report said the Panel had concluded that despite the withdrawal of foreign forces from the DRC, 'elite criminal networks' had become 'so deeply entrenched that continued illegal exploitation of the country's natural resources is assured, independent of the physical presence of foreign armies'.

Arms to Zimbabwe and war-torn DR Congo – Contravention of sanctions

Bredenkamp is an investor in the Aviation Consultancy Services Company (ACS). In its Final Report, the panel said it had confirmed that ACS represented British Aerospace (now BAE Systems), Dornier (France) and Agusta (Italy) in Africa. 'Far from being a passive investor in ACS (...), Mr. Bredenkamp actively seeks business using high-level political contacts. In discussions with senior officials he has offered to mediate sales of British Aerospace military equipment to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.' An arms embargo was imposed on Zimbabwe by the UK (May 2000) and the EU (February 2002). The report alleged that BAE spare parts for Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF) Hawk jets were supplied by ACS in 2002 in breach of those sanctions. In addition, the UN said it had obtained copies of invoices from Raceview Enterprises, a company controlled by Bredenkamp, to ZDF for deliveries worth \$3.5 million of camouflage cloth, batteries, fuels and lubricating oil, boots and rations.

According to press reports, Bredenkamp himself has claimed to be the leading arms supplier to Zimbabwe and the DRC. South African intelligence sources have been quoted as saying he is Zimbabwe's main arms procurer and has provided arms, helicopters and pilots to the DRC. A classified DIA report on the arms flow to the DRC written in preparation for US Defense Secretary Cohen's African tour in February 2000, said Bredenkamp had been granted an 'arms monopoly' by Mugabe. His role as a British-based arms broker to Zimbabwe and other African countries came up for discussion in the British House of Lords in April 2000, one month before the UK imposed its embargo on Zimbabwe. In a more recent debate in the House of Commons (November 2003), one MP described Bredenkamp as 'one of the Mugabe regime's biggest arms suppliers, from small-calibre weapons right up to - it is reliably understood - MiG Hind attack helicopters from parts of the former Soviet Union.'

Elite network Zimbabwe / DR Congo

Many commentators have stated that notwithstanding Mugabe's anti-whites rhetoric, his government would collapse were it not for the backing of Bredenkamp and other shadowy, wealthy white businessmen. Related to their role as arms suppliers is their involvement in the Zimbabwean/DRC 'elite network'. In the Final Report, the UN Panel pointed at the example of one other businessman in the network, a Belgian national in the DRC, George Forrest, who 'pioneered the exploitative joint venture agreements between private companies and Gécamines [Congolese state-owned copper and cobalt company].' 'In a flagrant conflict of interest', the UN Panel wrote, Forrest, who, among other things, owns a leading Belgian weapons manufacturer, 'was appointed Chairman of Gécamines from November 1999 to August 2001 while his

private companies negotiated new contracts with the explicit intention of using Gécamines' assets for personal gain. During that time he built up the most wide-ranging private mining portfolio in the [DRC].’ The techniques used by Forrest, the Panel went on to say, ‘have since been replicated by Zimbabwean-backed entrepreneurs John Arnold Bredenkamp and Mr. Al-Shanfari.’

Central position of Emmerson Mnangagwa and his allies

A Zimbabwean member of the network, businessman Billy Rautenbach, was for some time Managing Director of Gécamines. In its Addendum the UN Panel related how Kabila, when he met with Mugabe in 1998 to discuss ways of ensuring Zimbabwe's military support to his government, put Rautenbach (‘a man with no mining experience but with close ties to the ruling ZANU-PF party in Zimbabwe’) in charge of Gécamines at the request of Mugabe. According to a Helen Suzman Foundation report from 2000, Rautenbach's Wheels of Africa transport company had been involved in ferrying arms and supplies between Zimbabwe and the DRC, as had the private Zvinavashe Transport company of the head of the Zimbabwean army, General Vitalis Zvinavashe. Rautenbach, Zvinavashe and Bredenkamp are known to have close relations with the present Speaker of the Zimbabwean parliament, Emmerson Mnangagwa. According to the Addendum, Mnangagwa, who is close to Mugabe, is ‘the architect of Zanu-PF's commercial activities’ and the ‘key figure in Zimbabwe's commercial involvement [in the DRC]’. He is chairman of Zidco Holdings, one of Zanu-PF's major commercial companies.

Bredenkamp linked to DRC operations

UN and press reports contained more details on the intricate links of the Oryx Diamonds company with Zidco / Mnangagwa, and on relations with Bredenkamp. Contrary to Oryx's claims, the UN Panel stated it had obtained documentary evidence that Oryx was being used as a front for the ZDF and OSLEG, the company seen as the economic wing of the Zimbabwean armed forces. General Zvinavashe is a director of OSLEG. The UN also said it had a document detailing a \$1.5m loan agreement signed by Bredenkamp and Oryx CEO Thamer Bin Said Ahmed Al-Shanfari. Bredenkamp figured also as the owner of an aircraft leased by Oryx from Breco and seized by Congolese military in March 2000, loaded with Congolese francs bound for Harare in contravention of the DRC's exchange rate policy; Bredenkamp's pilot was arrested on that occasion.

When it was revealed in 2001 that DRC president Kabila had also given diamond-mining rights to *Namibia* as a reward for military support, and Namibia had set up a front company to handle the rights, Namibian newspapers linked Bredenkamp with the affair. A Namibian businessman, Walter Hailwax, who was involved in the front company's holding company, was said to be on the board of directors of Bredenkamp's ACS company. The Namibian Defence Minister denied there was a link between Namibia's DRC diamond interests and Bredenkamp.

Bredenkamp in Zimbabwean/Congolese mining joint-venture

Millions of dollars are said to have been plundered in 1998 and 1999 during Rautenbach's stint at Gécamines, but the DRC government later fell out with the Zimbabwean. In January 2001, again under Zimbabwean pressure according to the Addendum, a new agreement, now with Bredenkamp, was struck. It is unclear whether Rautenbach was again involved; this was denied by Bredenkamp's partner, Colin Blythe-Wood, but the UN said in its first report that Rautenbach, together with Bredenkamp and Mnangagwa, had been involved in discussions with the late President Laurent Kabila on the contract. Bredenkamp's Tremalt Ltd formed a joint venture, the *Kababankola Mining Company* (KMC), with Gécamines. In the agreement, KMC acquired rights to a concession representing the richest Gécamines holdings. Bredenkamp is the chairman of KMC; his old-time partner Blythe-Wood – who already worked for Casalee in Belgium and the UK around 1980 – Managing Director.

Under the heading ‘*Strategies and sources of revenue: Asset stripping of State mining companies*’, the UN Panel's Final Report gave the following description: ‘39. Tremalt Ltd., represented by Mr. Bredenkamp, holds the rights to exploit six Gécamines concessions containing over 2.7 million tons of copper and 325,000 tons of cobalt over 25 years. Tremalt paid the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo just \$400,000, but the estimated worth of the six concessions exceeds \$1 billion. The joint venture running the concession is the Kababankola Mining Company, in which Tremalt has an 80 per cent share to Gécamines' 20 per cent. Under this agreement, the Panel has learned that Gécamines derives no direct financial benefit. Although Tremalt representatives told the Panel that they have invested \$15 million to date, there are no signs of substantial investments having been made on the concessions, nor has any schedule of investment in the form of a business plan been released to Gécamines. 40. Like Oryx, Tremalt insists that its operations are not linked to ZDF or the Government of Zimbabwe. However, the Panel has obtained a copy of the

confidential profit-sharing agreement, under which Tremalt retains 32 per cent of net profits, and undertakes to pay 34 per cent of net profits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 34 per cent to Zimbabwe. This profit-sharing agreement was the subject of a confidential memorandum from the Defence Minister, Mr. Sekeramayi, to President Mugabe in August 2002.

Tremalt also undertakes to provide the Congolese and Zimbabwean militaries with motor vehicles, trucks, buses and cash payments as necessary. These are to be subtracted from the two countries' part of the profit share. A forum has been established between Tremalt and ZDF to plan strategy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and "look after the interests of the Zimbabweans". Meeting monthly, the forum's main members are General Zvinavashe, Brigadier Moyo, Air Commodore Karakadzai, Mr. Bredenkamp, the Managing Director of KMC, Colin Blythe-Wood, and the Director of KMC, Gary Webster. 41. Gécamines officials told the Panel that the National Security Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mwenze Kongolo had pressured their negotiators to agree to the joint venture contract despite its negative implications for the State company's finances. The ultimate owners and beneficiaries of Tremalt are hidden behind a web of trusts and private holding companies registered in the British Virgin Islands and the Isle of Man to whose records the Panel was not allowed direct access.' (According to a 'Company Profile' on the KMC website, 'Tremalt Ltd is 100% owned by Brecon Mines Limited, whose shares are held in trust. The sole beneficiaries under this trust are Mr. John Bredenkamp and his immediate family.')

Reacting to allegations on KMC in a British newspaper ('Mr Bredenkamp's mining operations in the Congo benefit greatly from the incursion of Zimbabwean troops, which is a kind of joint-stock venture by ZANU-PF and its business friends'; *The Spectator*, 13 April 2002), Bredenkamp stated the joint-venture was 'a transparent arrangement, which has been legally validated by the Mining Convention to which the DRC government is a party (...). It is incorrect to say that the Zimbabwean government is a party to any of these agreements. It is not and never has been. Furthermore, the continuation of the project in no way depends upon Zimbabwe continuing to have troops or any other presence in the DRC. The mining operation has no connection with ZANU-PF. It is a private venture.'

'Perfectly legitimate activities'

'It is important to note', according to the UN Panel in its Addendum, 'that the Government of Zimbabwe views these exploitation activities as legitimate commercial ties with a neighbouring sovereign State, to whose aid it had come under the SADC Treaty's collective security provision. The Government of Zimbabwe in fact went to great lengths initially to promote these commercial ventures to its citizens, at times exaggerating their profitability in order to justify the continued Zimbabwean presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the immediate threat to the Kinshasa Government had subsided. The revenues from these ventures have yet to have a positive impact on Zimbabwe's weakened economy, however. The reason for this is that Zimbabwe's holdings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo seem to be controlled by top military and party officials who are also the direct beneficiaries.'

One group distinguished by the Panel was those individuals and companies involved in natural resource exploitation in a way which could be linked directly with funding the conflict and the resulting humanitarian and economic disaster. Many of these were either members of one of the elite networks described or enjoyed close business relations with them. As stated by the Panel in its October 2003 report: 'Even where business activities involved the payment of taxes to rebel administrations and therefore might seem to be legitimate, none of those funds were used to benefit the communities in which mineral exploitation was occurring. Instead the taxes went to fund the elite network's military activities.' The second group distinguished by the Panel was 'those parties that, while having only indirect commercial ties to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, still bore a responsibility to ensure that those links did not, albeit inadvertently, contribute to funding and perpetuating the conflict.' Bredenkamp was placed in the first group.

Companies mentioned as part of Bredenkamp's business empire:

Aviation Consultancy Services Company
(ACS; Zimbabwe) [arms]
Breco Services, Breco Group of Companies
[master company]
Brecon Mines Limited
Kababankola Mining Company (KMC; DRC)
Masters International [sports management]
Midwest Aviation and Trading ? [arms]

Petraf Limited, Petraf (Zimbabwe) (Pte) Ltd
[petroleum products]
Python Services Ltd. ?
Raceview Enterprises [military supplies]
Scottlee Resorts [tourism]
Tremalt Limited
Zimalzam [petroleum]