

Making UN Peacekeeping More Robust: Protecting the Mission, Persuading the Actors

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Cover Photo: The envoy of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Military Adviser General Babacar Gaye (left) and Abdul Hafiz, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) Force Commander General, visit the troops providing security at the Hotel Golf in Abidjan, where President Alassane Ouattara and his prime minister, Guillaume Soro, were residing. December 21, 2010, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. © UN Photo.

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Executive Summary

The debate about robust peacekeeping pits the enthusiasm of “diplomats,” who believe in peacekeeping but worry that it might not succeed in violent situations, against the scepticism of the “military,” who see its failures as proof that the proper role of military forces is war fighting.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the use of the military in peacekeeping operations encountered setbacks that destroyed the confidence that the leaders of the great powers had invested in it. Yet, the last of these misfortunes occurred almost ten years ago, so we might well ask whether the UN has not already resolved the problems related to “robustness.”¹ It is also true that, since that time, the heaviest lifting in crisis-management situations has been done by coalitions that are both more homogenous and more powerful, especially NATO, leaving the UN with lower-risk missions.

However, during the same period, the United Nations has invested a great deal of effort in the development of doctrine, from the Brahimi Report in 2000² to the *Capstone Doctrine*³ in 2008, and more recently by the *New Horizon* discussions, all of which show a concern for robustness. Even strong coalitions like NATO have encountered difficulties, and have been obliged to decide between trying to overcome them by adopting some approaches drawn from peacekeeping, or by simply abandoning the mission. This suggests that the UN may be called upon to face difficult situations again in the future, and that it would do well to prepare itself for that possibility.

It is true that peacekeeping will always be a matter of consent rather than compulsion, of political processes rather than force, but robustness will increase the ability to control the area of operations where a crisis is taking place, protecting

those who are working toward peace, the local population, and the peace process. Neither imposing by force, nor yielding to force, but protecting and persuading is the objective and the doctrine of such a policy of robustness.

The pages that follow are not intended as a critique of the doctrinal work carried out in the past few years; on the contrary, this report is meant to build on past achievements, to review the weaknesses of peacekeeping, and finally to consider ways to increase its robustness. These ways will not be found without calling into question some fundamental taboos of peacekeeping. Thus, I will propose that *self defence* should no longer be the criterion for the use of force, but that it should be accepted for any action *to protect* peacekeeping forces, their mission, and the population, including a policy of protection that permits temporary and localized offensive action.

I will attempt to show that the UN should continue to devote a great deal of effort to doctrine in order to increase the coherence both of the conception and the conduct of its operations, and also to communicate in a language that is more meaningful to UN member states and their public opinions. This doctrine should further enhance the unity of the actors around the Security Council, and, on the ground, increase the military’s ability to control the areas affected by crisis, by increasing the mobility of the forces. The UN’s second concern should be to compensate for the structural weaknesses of its operations, their extremely diverse multinational nature, and their excessive dilution. Finally, I will attempt to begin a debate about the technological innovations that peacekeeping could give rise to, and which would be over and above the materiel designed for large-scale symmetrical conflicts.

1 One could cite various difficulties encountered in peacekeeping operations since the start of this century, like the Kivus crisis in 2008, as qualifications to this statement. These difficulties should not be ignored, although in the case of the Kivus, we should note that over and above the indisputable problem of robustness, in this case the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was not able to avoid becoming involved in combat operations, even though its capabilities were already inadequate for peacekeeping. As I will explain at greater length, robustness consists above all of the capability to keep the peace in a context where recourse to force is not ruled out.

2 United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* [Brahimi Report], UN Doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809, August 21, 2000.

3 United Nations Departments of Peace Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS), “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines [Capstone Doctrine],” New York, January 2008.

Introduction

Peacekeeping is the result of the contradiction between the rejection of war and the need to keep peace by force. Still based on the idea of the consent of the parties—a concept that had lost some of its weight by the end of the twentieth century—peace operations use the term robustness to designate a concern for the safety of their members or the local population. When the safety of these is threatened, peacekeeping is impelled to go beyond an exclusively defensive posture, and allow itself limited and local offensive actions, with the proviso that they are not diverted toward coercive ends that remain beyond its remit. This more robust attitude cannot be legitimated by the concept of self-defense alone, on which the (purely defensive) use of force was previously based. It now seems necessary to base it on a duty to protect, a task that the international community gives to peacekeeping missions.

FROM THE REJECTION OF WAR TO ROBUST PEACEKEEPING

The UN Charter, which is based on the idea of preventing war, does not envisage peacekeeping. Yet this method of crisis management has of course been built on the fear of a war breaking out, over the course of fifty years of vicissitudes in the Security Council. It is on this basis that Dag Hammarskjöld and Lester B. Pearson “invented” peacekeeping in 1956.⁴

In Chapters VI and VII, the UN Charter provides for political and military procedures for resolving conflicts. The idea was relatively simple: establish a means for dialogue (Chapter VI) and, if the situation becomes a threat to international peace, take military action (Chapter VII). The wording of the second option did not exclude the first and vice versa. To deal with the technical aspects of the military option, a Military Staff Committee was to assist the Council. This committee never really saw the light of day,⁵ as with the other measures provided for in Chapter VII.

It is commonly asserted that the Cold War prevented the development of procedures and mechanisms provided for in Chapter VII, but it is more accurate to say that it was first and foremost

the fear of war, a fear heightened by the spread of nuclear weapons, that explains why it was impossible to implement Chapter VII provisions in the spirit anticipated by its authors. Due to the fact that first two, and subsequently all, of the permanent members of the Council, held the ability to devastate the world in their hands, any recourse to force involved the risk of an escalation to extremes, thus completely negating the very spirit of the Charter. So, in the same way that nuclear weapons explain why the war between the two power blocs remained “cold,” they justified the lack of application of Chapter VII as it was originally intended.

The Invention of a Crisis-Management Mechanism

As it could not apply Chapter VII as intended, the Security Council, actively backed by the Secretary-General in search of status, used the powers that Chapter conferred, but in the spirit of Chapter VI: use of force in the service of the negotiation of a political solution, which had become not only the objective, but also the means, of conflict resolution. It is no exaggeration to assert that nuclear weapons thus forced the “international community” to gradually invent a method of dealing with—if not resolving—certain conflicts more effectively than diplomacy alone, or even the use of force in itself. This method was peacekeeping.

The first steps were timid, involving only military observers. Then it became clear that they had to be protected and that it would be useful if forces were interposed between the parties to a conflict. A first stage in peacekeeping had been reached, which lasted until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Its success depended on the assumption that the belligerents would respect their commitments, compelled as they would be to do so by their patrons on the Council, and that they could more or less control their forces, which remained the case as long as the conflicts involved national armies. Very soon however, Congo, and then Lebanon, demonstrated the limits of such an approach.

Such a limited use of force did not require significant military capability, and this justified the Military Staff Committee being kept on ice. In the amicable struggle waged by the chancelleries and

⁴ Lester B. Pearson, “Force for UN,” *Foreign Affairs* 35:3 (April 1957): 395-404.

⁵ Alexandra Novosseloff, “Le Chapitre VII, le recours à la force et le maintien de la paix,” *Guide du maintien de la paix*, Montréal, 2008, pp. 85-102.

military headquarters of all of the great powers, the first, masters of both the Council and the General Assembly, kept the second well away from the “glass tower” on First Avenue. The diplomats considered that the militaries of the major powers, fresh from a pitiless war, were not ready for the more subtle uses of force. They also feared that the military would become involved in arms control, or, even worse, disarmament, both tasks enshrined in Article 47, but also traditional and fundamental tasks for diplomats. Finally, and most importantly, the Security Council willingly let the Secretary-General take responsibility for, and suffer the adverse consequences of, implementing the military decisions of the member states. And so it was that the United Nations Office for Special Political Affairs of the Secretariat took charge of the deployment, direction, and support of the troops deployed on the ground, soon to be assisted by a military adviser, carefully kept at a distance from the Secretary-General’s office.

The Setbacks of the Post-Berlin Wall Era

From 1990 onward, the disintegration of some states and their escape from the dominance of the great powers undermined an essential condition of peacekeeping: the consistency and effectiveness of the commitments made by the parties to a conflict. Jean-Marie Guéhenno has described how “in the confusion of a civil war, the commitment of non-state actors to a peace agreement can never be assumed; consent becomes a relative and evolving concept: it can be ambiguous, and it can be withdrawn.”⁶

Therefore, the protection of observers and peacekeeping troops requires the occasional exercise of force and the provision of assets to direct and support that use. These lessons were only learned at the cost of deplorable humanitarian failures that made people doubt the relevance of UN peacekeeping: Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda in particular. At first, attempts were made to resolve the problems with more resources: increasing the manpower in the field, protecting units more effectively, strengthening the directing body into the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), whose hesitant formation was marked by

oscillations between civilian management and military dominance. The department then improved its procedures, notably by introducing the notions of planning and rules of engagement.

In Search of a Doctrine

But as difficulties persisted, it slowly became clear that there was a doctrinal gap, which led to the Brahimi Report.⁷ That report did not seek to set out a doctrine that was not yet mature; rather, it astutely limited itself to posing a number of questions with the maximum clarity. It asked questions about the role of the Security Council, particularly about its support for the troops deployed on the ground, and for the Secretary-General, about the robustness of the force deployed, about its rules of engagement and about the missions assigned to it.

Through its control of the political process, the Council was able to evade these questions and concentrate the debate on the way in which UN operations were becoming increasingly multidimensional. In practice, under the general rubric of peacekeeping, UN operations had gradually brought together all of the components of international action likely to contribute to the search for peace. There was the political element, naturally, but also the humanitarian one and soon the civilian one, in the form of police and justice, then little by little all of the key functions that contribute to the rebuilding of the state. Needless to say, all of these functions required protection, and this gave rise to the debate on the robustness of operations. This debate was sharpened by the alternative, warfighting solutions that the Western nations, disheartened by the UN, employed for resolving the problems that affected them directly: Bosnia, Iraq I and II, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Peacekeeping or Counterinsurgency?

However, in Iraq and Afghanistan, the limitations of these warfighting doctrines quickly became clear, and even though NATO did not turn directly to the UN, it did adopt some of its methods. In particular, there was a cautious attempt to gain the consent of the parties, a clumsily executed limitation of the use of force, and an attempt to structure the operation around a peace process. At the same time, conflicts

⁶ Jean-Marie Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping: Building Political Consensus and Strengthening Command and Control,” in *Robust Peacekeeping: the Politics of Force* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, November 2009), p. 8.

⁷ United Nations, *Brahimi Report*.

less vital for the great powers began or continued, and the UN had to deal with them with the limited resources and narrow focus that still typified peacekeeping. Finally, a new player, the European Union, with large budgets and a political orientation close to that of the United Nations, hesitantly tried its hand at crisis management, borrowing its substance from UN peacekeeping and its procedures from NATO.

The events of September 11, 2001, did not immediately portend a threat to peacekeeping forces: only American, or possibly Western, power was seen as being threatened. The attack in Baghdad on August 19, 2003, with the death of Sergio Vieira de Mello along with twenty-one other persons revealed the extent to which, even independently of their relations with the parties in conflict, the agencies of the United Nations could be threatened by terrorist actions. The peacekeeping operations felt that they were first in the line of fire.

It was in this situation of convergence between the concerns of the UN, NATO, and the EU that a real doctrine, called the Capstone Doctrine, was established in 2008. This forms the framework within which the discussions today about “a new horizon for peacekeeping operations” and especially about robustness, are taking place. Two years earlier, the reinforcement of UNIFIL provided an opening for the difficult return of European nations to UN peacekeeping, demonstrating the need to provide it with a more definite operational doctrine.⁸

THE WEAKNESSES OF PEACEKEEPING AT THE START OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Today, peacekeeping has weaknesses at every level of its implementation: tactical, operational, and strategic. These weaknesses are threefold: physical vulnerability for the local population and the actors in the peace process, legal and moral vulnerability for those involved in operations and, finally, media and political weaknesses of the UN Secretariat, the members of the Security Council, and the troop-contributing countries. These different weaknesses together comprise a single one: the weakness of the

mere notion of peacekeeping, which risks rejection by the international community each time it brings them more worry than reassurance.

The root cause of all of these weaknesses is physical vulnerability at the tactical level. It has become worse as states have become weaker and thus less able to guarantee their consent. It has increased since terrorism has become global, even though this threat has remained more abstract than real with regard to peacekeeping. Any failure at the tactical level—a setback such as casualties among the local population or the peacekeeping force—filters upward and calls into question the robustness and the competence of the operational commander and headquarters in New York. Subsequently, the moral or legal responsibility of the main players in such a failure may be invoked.

In the face of such criticism, existing problems may be aggravated by a sense of discouragement, as was the case in Kigali in 1994, or, on the contrary, may produce an over-reaction causing casualties among the civilian population. This latter problem has never actually arisen in UN operations, but other peacekeeping operations have been criticized for this reason, some of them when they were supporting a UN operation.

The last, and in the end most serious, vulnerability of UN operations is the possibility that, out of concerns about their own weaknesses, they might abandon the fundamentals of UN peacekeeping, exceed their remit, and cross the threshold into war-fighting.

BEING MORE ROBUST WITHOUT ABANDONING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PEACEKEEPING

UN peacekeeping is not an unproblematic concept, but it is conceived in the spirit of the UN Charter: only use force as the last resort and, if that happens, do everything possible to prevent an escalation that might once more send a region or even the whole world into disaster. The touchstone of fidelity to the Charter, is the consent of the parties. This consent, which is inseparable from the renunciation of the exercise of force as the means of achieving the operation’s aims, however, does not exclude the use of force completely, which, we will see, it should be

⁸ Alexander Mattelaer, “Europe Rediscovered Peacekeeping? Political and Military Logics in the 2006 UNIFIL Enhancement,” Egmont Paper, Brussels: Royal Institute for International Relations, October 2009.

possible to extend beyond self-defense without undermining the spirit of the Charter.

For a long time, there has been a questionable distinction between operations “kept under Chapter VI” and those “placed under Chapter VII.” It has been easier to invoke this distinction than to talk in terms of the spirit of the Charter. Now this purely formal distinction has become increasingly threadbare, even though it still features in the conventional discourse of certain commentators, it is possible to make progress on the discussion of fundamental issues. This is all the more true because for some time now operations have employed methods and procedures that only have to be incorporated into doctrine for their legitimacy to be recognized.

Peacekeeping and the Spirit of the Charter

Because the Charter was born out of the paroxysms of World War II, especially the Holocaust and Hiroshima, and the indiscriminate bombing of German cities such as Dresden, its authors imagined that any use of force would ultimately be taken to extremes. Therefore, the general idea was the substitution of law for force.⁹ But, when it envisages the use of force to put an end to the most dangerous situations, Chapter VII seems to imply the resolution of problems by force, and not through what was to become peacekeeping.

Therefore, the circumstances of the post-war period forced the international community to conceptualize its crisis-management activities within a triangle of “force-law-peace,”¹⁰ which led to a major innovation: peacekeeping. It certainly envisaged the use of force, but within the spirit of the Charter, and therefore with the intention of bringing peace. Thus, this “hybrid product of diplomatic and military conflict resolution techniques (...) and principles of international development applied to situations of conflict”¹¹ was

born; an operational mechanism with no explicit legal basis and that was unable to find a doctrinal formulation in the fifty years before the Brahimi Report.¹²

Its creation and its development—both essentially pragmatic—have continually raised legal issues,¹³ but those involved have borne in mind the fact that they were the inheritors of a prudent strategy of getting what benefits they could from the use of force without the risk of an escalation which could lead to disaster. Our task is indeed to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping, and certainly by making it more robust; but we also have a duty, above all, not to allow it to turn into war fighting.

The Consent of the Parties Limits the Scope of Peacekeeping

In the beginning, seeking the consent of the states in conflict was a diplomatic device, intended to make up for the absence of the physical force that the Security Council had not agreed to provide. If the parties to the conflict did not accept it they risked triggering measures in Chapter VII of the Charter, at a time when that still only meant war, and war against industrial powers with massive stocks of weapons and hardened by five years of global conflict. It is worth noting that the first two operations (observation missions, in fact), were conceived in this way. They were known as UNTSO¹⁴ and UNMOGIP¹⁵ and they are still ongoing, as there has been no solution to the conflicts, and the consent of the parties has also been maintained.¹⁶ This consent gave the observers and interposition force troops only a symbolic role, of no real military value.

Nevertheless, the seeking of consent quickly became a fundamental element of crisis management, making the warring states themselves responsible for managing their own crisis. This consent not only meant that they accepted the

9 Anne Rainaud, “Réflexion sur l’usage de la force, le droit et les opérations de maintien de la paix,” *Perspectives*, N° 1 (2003), available at <http://revel.unice.fr/pie/document.html?id=41>, § 2.

10 *Ibid.*, § 4.

11 G. Wirick and R. Miller, cited by Rainaud, “Réflexion sur l’usage de la force,” § 17.

12 United Nations, *Brahimi Report*.

13 Pineschi, “L’emploi de la force dans les opérations,” p. 1.

14 UNTSO is the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the UN body responsible for monitoring the ceasefire in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinian Territories. It was established by Security Council Resolution 50 in May 1948.

15 UNMOGIP is the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan, set up in Kashmir in March 1951 by Security Council Resolution 91. It replaced the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan.

16 Should we criticize peacekeeping because it has been unable to find a solution, or praise it for its persistence in preventing war in spite of the obstinacy of the parties?

peacekeeping force but that they also adhered to the plan for the settlement of their conflict as proposed by the international community, and that they would cooperate in its implementation. The safety of the peacekeeping operation thereby guaranteed was no more than a by-product of this consent.

So the UN's firm attachment to preserving the consent of the parties demonstrates not just its own determinedly peaceful orientation, but also and most importantly, an essential part of the organization's crisis-management technique. This commitment distinguishes peacekeeping from peace enforcement, because "the coercive nature of an operation is not determined by the authorisation to exercise force but by the fact of acting while disregarding the consent of the host state."¹⁷ It is not desirable, nor would it be responsible, to encourage the UN to renounce this indisputable advance in the international practice of conflict resolution. On the contrary, we should hope that it survives the current difficulties.

However, "by definition, consent cannot be imposed."¹⁸ The single word "consent" excludes the exercise of force by the international community to settle disputes. It limits the scope of peacekeeping solely to those crises where it can be obtained;¹⁹ at a minimum, broad consent is required, which does not preclude local and short-lived outbreaks of violence, which are dealt with firmly, but without overstepping the limits of consent. For a long time, the Security Council has been looking to blur the distinction between Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the Charter, but had to give it up in 2006, during discussion of the reinforcement of UNIFIL.

Chapter VI vs. Chapter VII: The End of a Myth?

In August 2006, in order to get the United States to accept a compromise on the reinforcement of UNIFIL,²⁰ the Secretary-General of the United Nations had to convince the American delegation to the Security Council that a robust mandate could be drawn up without referring to Chapter VII of the Charter. It was a break with more than ten years of instrumentalization of the text of the Charter by the

Council that had long prevented peacekeeping operations from becoming more robust. Many experts already believed that placing an "operation under chapter VI" was a contradiction in terms. Others even doubted that "placing something under" a Chapter had any legal significance.

UN Security Council resolutions are traditionally divided into preambular and operational sections. The first of these sections frequently cites normative, prescriptive, or legal documents that have the effect of legitimizing or interpreting the actions to be taken. In its resolutions, the Security Council has never failed to "reaffirm" some of its previous decisions and to "recall" the duties and powers conferred on it by the Charter, especially by citing a particular Chapter or Article. Until the beginning of the 1990s, the Council often cited Chapters VI and VII of the Charter as the basis for its decisions to deploy, use, or threaten to use force. But the idea that the Council could decide to make use of one Chapter of the Charter, excluding the arrangements of another Chapter, is nowhere to be found in the text.

It is also true that the idea that peacekeeping operations could not use force, except in exercising the right of self-defense, had become established in doctrine. Faced with the difficulties arising from this constraint, UN doctrine continually expanded the definition of the right of self-defense to include resistance in any form, or even any attempt to oppose by force the mandate of the peacekeeping force.²¹ After the disappointments in Somalia and the Former Yugoslavia, diplomats (rather than legal experts) tried to convince member states that this limitation only existed under Chapter VI of the Charter, but that Chapter VII gave permission to go further in the use of force. A legally dubious practice then came into being—one that also proved not very effective on the operational level. Operations that were supposed to be "robust" were "placed under chapter VII," as opposed to those "left under chapter VI," which were considered less robust. It was as if invoking one of the chapters of the Charter made the other disappear—an outcome

17 Pineschi, "L'emploi de la force dans les operations," p. 10.

18 Guéhenno, "Robust Peacekeeping," p. 8.

19 Pineschi, "L'emploi de la force dans les operations," p. 10.

20 UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (August 11, 2006), UN Doc. S/RES/1701.

21 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 425*, UN Doc. S/12611 (March 19, 1978).

nowhere envisaged in the Charter.

Although it was intended to address the hesitation of some states on the Council regarding certain UN operations, this distinction had no effect on robustness on the ground. In practice, invoking Chapter VII was a political gesture with no consequences in terms of material resources and orders—consequences that would have demonstrated that the Council had assumed responsibility alongside the Secretary-General and the troops deployed on the ground.

There is no basis for attempting to place the distinction between peacekeeping and coercion in the differences between these two chapters. Furthermore, peacekeeping is not referred to in either of them. It derives from the spirit of Chapter VI, but it is only in Chapter VII that the tools of force that it uses are considered. Naturally, the authors of Chapter VII considered that it thus legitimized a use of coercion by force, but it would be very difficult to show that they meant to prohibit a more moderate use inspired by Chapter VI, as long as the conditions that they had set for deploying it had been met.

Thus, the real distinction is the level of the threat to peace at stake. A resolution may or may not cite Chapter VI; nevertheless the conceptual and legal foundation for the resulting operation is found within it. Whether it is cited or not, it is only the existence of Chapter VII in the Charter that confers legitimacy on the deployment of a force, even in support of the objectives of Chapter VI, so long as peace is threatened. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the cautious drafting of this Chapter goes so far as to cite demonstrations of force, or blockades, as examples of the use of force, but takes refuge behind “all necessary measures,” a vague expression often used in Council resolutions, to evoke more-determined actions. In fact, the two chapters form a whole that considers two ways of resolving conflicts that are not alternatives, but complementary, depending on the situation. It is in these two chapters that the legitimacy of any deployment of force, whatever its robustness, should be found, without any need to cite them explicitly.

The Non-exercise Rather than the Non-use of Force

As we saw, “by definition, consent cannot be imposed,” and force cannot be deployed to obtain it.²² We prefer “non-exercise” to “non-use,” if this semantic nuance has any meaning. The UN has long accepted the necessary and legitimate use of force to ensure the safety of an operation or population. Conversely, in no case can the exercise of force become the mechanism by which the operation achieves its objectives, notably among them the consent of the parties. The practice of peacekeeping already frequently makes use of mechanisms and procedures that reconcile robustness and the non-exercise of force. They now need to be incorporated into doctrine in order to make them more easily understood by public opinion, more legitimate, and more easily handled by the Security Council.

- *Force is not the decisive tool in peacekeeping*

As we have seen, one consequence of the principle of consent of the parties is that this type of crisis management cannot make use of force to achieve its objectives. This principle is fundamentally misunderstood by international public opinion, some politicians, and almost all military personnel. It could even be argued that it is called into question by the UN itself since the *Capstone Doctrine* clumsily asserts: “The ultimate aim of the use of force is to influence and deter spoilers working against the peace process or seeking to harm civilians; and not to seek their military defeat.”²³ Those who make an ideology out of the writings of Clausewitz would suggest that it is stupid, dangerous, or useless to deploy forces without getting the most out of them. Realists make this distinction in theory, but mostly acknowledge that it is an impractical one in reality.

A much smaller group considers this an example of progress made during the twentieth century—a period that can reproach itself with many crimes in the matter of the use of force—and that it should be preserved at all cost. Only the latter see any interest in the discussion about robustness, but they also ask the question: can such a limited use of force lead to robust peacekeeping?

²² Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 8.

²³ DPKO and DFS, *Capstone Doctrine*, p. 35.

- *The weakness of peacekeeping without force*

The refusal to exercise force in order to achieve their objectives gives peacekeeping operations a profile which does not deter, and which may effectively tempt troublemakers. Independently of the consequences for the security of the mission, it gives Council mandates an ambiguity that Laura Pineschi sees as “not constructive but destructive.”²⁴ In practice, deploying force without exercising it makes the mandate of operations difficult to understand if there is no doctrine to inform it.

On the other hand, today’s asymmetric conflicts, in which the West uses a high level of force, demonstrate that the use of force itself can confer vulnerability, and even demonstrate that vulnerability to adversaries using less force. So, the debate is still in progress between the Secretariat and the majority of the military community: what sort of use of force is necessary and acceptable in peacekeeping operations?

- *Legitimacy and ambiguity of self-defense*

As we have seen, the legitimacy of the use of force was recognized quickly in cases of self-defense and its acceptance was gradually extended to the protection of populations, then to the fulfillment of the mission itself. In 1978, the Secretary-General’s report requested by Resolution 425 (1978) and approved by Resolution 426 (1978) gave this self-defense a wide legitimacy that remains the rule today.²⁵ It should be noted that it is precisely this definition of the right to self-defense that a strengthened UNIFIL retained in 2006.²⁶ Is it sufficient to achieve the robustness that is the subject of debate today? It seems not, and it also seems that we can go further without leaving behind the ethos of peacekeeping.

Even interpreted expansively, self-defense is inadequate to provide the necessary robustness. The extreme overstretch of peacekeeping forces is a constant of peacekeeping, making any notion of self-defense inapplicable: the parties to the conflict can, when and where they want to, overmatch the

isolated units of the peacekeeping force, which would be incapable of defending itself. Their protection can only be ensured by deploying powerful intervention forces, held at a distance but able to provide them with help as quickly as possible, even if not instantly. However the term “self-defense” contains the notion of a local reaction by the aggressed party to an immediate attack. The intervention of remote assets contains the idea of “retaliation,” often thought to be very different from self-defense, especially in France where this notion is also complicated by the “*légitime défense*” of the French criminal law.²⁷ More seriously, even when the intention of these interventions is the defence of outnumbered peacekeeping forces, the way in which they are carried out is necessarily an aggressive act against those threatening them, and this aggression is far from the idea of “self-defense” and even further from the “right to self-defense.” If these interventions are necessary for protecting the forces, then the aggressive acts they involve must be explicitly authorized.

In Africa, the theater where forces are most thinly spread, these ideas have already been implemented operationally in their most muscular form, which is the use of armed helicopters in Sierra Leone and the DRC. However, these practices are not recognized in doctrine and not supported by Security Council resolutions. Very early on, Resolution 836, adopted by the Council on June 4, 1993, to expand the mandate of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) provided an example of this lack of clarity. The resolution authorized “UNPROFOR (...) in carrying out [its mandate] (...) *acting in self-defence, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force*, in reply to bombardments of the safe areas by any of the parties, or to armed incursions into them or in the event of any deliberate obstruction in or around those areas to the freedom of movement of UNPROFOR or of protected humanitarian convoys.” (Emphasis my own.) It was a question of protecting itself, in the fulfillment of its mission, in response to an attack. Contrary to

24 Laura Pineschi, “L’emploi de la force dans les opérations de maintien de la paix des Nations unies ‘robustes’: conditions et limites juridiques,” in *La sécurité collective entre légalité et défi à la légalité*, edited by M. Arcari et L. Balmond (Nice: Institut du Droit de la Paix et du Développement, 2008), p. 8.

25 “The force will be provided with weapons of a defensive character. It shall not use force except in self-defense. Self-defense would include resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council.”

26 Resolution 1701 (2006) authorized FINUL to “resist attempts aimed at using force to prevent it from carrying out obligations in the context of the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.”

27 Article 122-5 of French criminal law demands, on the one hand, that the right to self-defense is exercised “within the same time period” as the “unjustified attack” that it responds to and, on the other, that it does not use “disproportionate force with regard to the means of defence used and the seriousness of the attack.”

normal usage, the French version took care not to translate the English “self-defense” by “*légitime défense*.” The French *légitime défense* is the correct translation of the English “right of self-defense.” To translate “self-defense,” *auto-défense* would have been used. As it was expressing a more extensive requirement than simple self-defense, the French version rightly used “*pour se défendre*” (“to defend itself”), opening the way to developments that are not available with the restrictive connotation of “self-defense” and even more the invalid idea of *légitime défense*.

At that moment, the formulation and its translation were necessitated by the demand for consensus among the members of the Security Council who saw the need for a thorough-going protection of the force, and those members who worried about a slide into war. This “masterpiece of diplomatic drafting” then seemed, in the doctrine of the time, like a “confusing, contradictory and unimplementable” mandate.²⁸ When studying this resolution, and unaware of the nuance in the French translation, Laura Pineschi was vexed by the contradiction between “all of the measures necessary” and the limitation of their use to “self-defense.”²⁹ Yet the resolution was responding to the awareness that if force must not be the means of managing a crisis, (it can only be used in self-defense) it must be the basic way of ensuring the safety of the mission.

LEGITIMIZING ROBUSTNESS BY THE DUTY TO PROTECT RATHER THAN THE RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

Very early on, the United Nations was able to define a concept for use of force that avoided the exercise of that force leading to warfighting. Conversely,

today, the issue with regard to robustness is the legitimization of a method of using force that, while remaining clearly limited to peacekeeping, has the physical and legal capability to ensure the safety of the local population, the soldiers, and the peace process. We have seen that, given the low density both of population and the peacekeeping force, the safety of either can only be ensured, if they are locally or temporarily overmatched, by the use of an external intervention force. However, these operations cannot be considered legitimate by reference to the current justification for the exercise of force in peacekeeping operations, which amounts to the right to self-defense.

To justify the recourse to these interventions, the legitimacy of the duty to protect should be substituted for that of the right to self-defense. This step forward should be established in a doctrine, which I will outline below, which establishes the notion of an intervention force as part of the missions; and gives the Security Council and the Secretariat the tools to limit its use to the protection of the force, its mission and the local population and exclude its use for pursuing the objectives of the operation. By definition, self-defense can only be defensive. Protection, on the other hand, can be seen as temporarily and locally offensive, when an outclassed unit of the peacekeeping force has to be relieved by an intervention operation. If protection is recognized as being a duty that justifies temporary and locally offensive actions then two things that have for a long time been seen as contradictory can be reconciled: giving the operations robust means of reacting against any aggression and prohibiting them from using those means to force the consent of the parties.

28 James Sloan, “The Use of Offensive Force in UN Peacekeeping: A Cycle of Boom and Bust?” *Hastings International and Comparative Law Review* (2006-2007), p. 420.

29 Pineschi, “L’emploi de la force dans les opérations,” p. 7.

The Objective of Robustness: Protecting to Persuade

When the media, politicians, military experts, or researchers recommend the setting up of “robust” operations, what they usually have in mind is protecting the population or the peacekeeping mission itself. Failure to meet these objectives effectively is unacceptable and always highly visible. Sometimes more robustness is demanded in the hope that the mission will thereby be more effective, but this argument is an ambiguous one. We must keep in mind that peacekeeping does not attempt to achieve its objectives by force, and that therefore more force does not mean more effectiveness, or at least not directly. Nevertheless, peacekeeping must retain its freedom of action to control the area where a crisis is unfolding in order to support the political objective, which is the first objective of robustness.

PHYSICAL AND LEGAL PROTECTION OF THE PEACEKEEPING OPERATION

For the most part, members of peacekeeping operations are outsiders to a conflict. They are often brought into a crisis by the wish to help populations in danger. The UN’s first responsibility is to prevent those that it involves in these conflicts from becoming victims themselves, and this responsibility is of a higher order than that of protecting the local population. To a lesser degree, the UN also has a duty to protect the installations and equipment provided at their expense by the international community for carrying out its mission. The first objective of the robustness of operations is thus the physical safety of the operation itself.

There is another, too-often neglected, objective of robust peacekeeping operations, which is sometimes in opposition to the preceding one. This is the legal, and to a certain extent moral, protection of their members, and this legal and moral protection can have contradictory aspects.

On the one hand, the simple fact of being involved in a peacekeeping operation creates an obligation to achieve results, at least in terms of

protecting the population, on the part of the peacekeeping troops. They will be criticized for any failing in this area, morally at least and perhaps legally. We can all remember the attacks on UN officials after Srebrenica and Kigali, for example. The UN has the duty to stipulate the rules of engagement for those involved and provide them with the means of a robustness that enables them to escape from such accusations.

On the other hand, the very exercise of robustness constitutes a legal and moral risk for the peacekeeping soldiers since their own actions may endanger a population. It is true to say that the UN has not suffered from serious accusations in this area in the past, but we should not ignore the fact that the reason why the UN has not deserved this type of criticism is because it lacked robustness, due to a lack of resources and inadequate rules of engagement.

A difficult compromise must be made between the physical safety of the members of a peace operation and their legal protection. What is at stake here is the success of the mission and the physical safety of the local population.

PROTECTING ORDINARY PEOPLE

Though it is not the first duty of a peacekeeping operation, protecting the local population is nevertheless the one that is easiest to conceptualize and most often demanded by public opinion. Obviously, this means protection against the factions in conflict but it also means protection against the collateral effects of the exercise of its own force. First and foremost, physical protection is what is meant, but moral and social protection, which enable both individuals and human groups to retain their dignity, are also important.

The United Nations Charter is an international relations document that leaves all of the responsibilities for implementation in the hands of states, especially the safety of ordinary people. When Article I refers to “the respect for Human Rights,”³⁰ its aim is to get them promoted within states and by them, but nowhere does it confer on the United Nations a duty to substitute itself for states should they fail to do so. If the organization has sometimes lacked vigilance in these areas, it is because its

30 *Charter of the United Nations*, Article 1, §3.

member states were expected to be the ones responsible.

Faced with its frequent failure in contemporary crises, the UN has had to progressively supplement the Charter, if not in law then at least in doctrine, with what the international community has called the “responsibility to protect.” But, in reality, it soon became clear that recognition of this responsibility seldom permitted the UN to obtain from the international community the practical or legal means to provide it.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno has cautioned against the illusion that this protection can be provided without forces suitable for the size of the populations concerned,³¹ and, he could have added, to the area they occupy, not to mention their physical environment. In many cases, there is a contradiction between these variables, and the capabilities provided to the peacekeeping mission. For instance, the direct protection of 70 million inhabitants of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has never been within the capacity of the few thousand soldiers deployed by MONUC in a country of forests, marshes, and high plateaus.³² Therefore, it has only been achieved, more or less effectively, as an indirect effect of MONUC’s progress in implementing its mission.

I will not consider measures aimed at preventing the peacekeeping force’s abuses of their position with regard to the population, notably in sexual matters, as part of robustness, in the sense in which I deal with it here. However, it is certain, as Jean-Marie Guéhenno admitted before the Security Council,³³ that this behavior dishonors and therefore reduces the robustness of peacekeeping operations.

Conversely, as we saw above, part of robust peacekeeping is ensuring that the use of force does not work against the local population. In practice, it

is rare for the use of force not to be accompanied by “collateral effects” on the surrounding population. Therefore, in the following paragraphs my concern will be to develop a concept of robustness that remains sufficiently in control of its force, by its doctrine, procedures, organization, and methods, to limit undesirable effects. This point is particularly crucial when peacekeeping forces are required to control an agitated crowd being manipulated by the parties to the conflict.

MAINTAINING THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE’S FREEDOM OF ACTION

The concepts of “robust peacekeeping” and “responsibility to protect” seem to be closely related and the first seems on the face of it a condition for the second. Yet, Jean-Marie Guéhenno has warned against making the concern for the protection of civilians,³⁴ or, we should add, military personnel, the sole reason for the robustness of peacekeeping. In practice, the first objective of robustness should be the freedom of action, the pre-condition for the success of its missions: protecting itself, protecting the populations, and retaining control of the crisis area so that political progress is possible. This freedom of action is all the more necessary because it is normal for a peacekeeping force to lack both numbers and resources. This means that it must retain a mobility that enables it to exert its control of the situation and to protect itself where and when it wants without hindrance.

Peacekeeping must indeed not let itself become coercive; this is what distinguishes peacekeeping from enforcement. But it must not give way either, and this is why it should be robust. Whatever violence may be taking place between the parties, it must continually keep open the space needed by the political process to bring peace nearer; neither giving way nor coercing, but protecting to persuade.

31 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 2.

32 A few more than 5,000 initially, in 1999; a few more than 20,000 today for an area of more than 2,200,000 km², or less than one peacekeeping soldier for 100 km². Without counting its police forces, France has a twenty-five times greater density of *gendarmes* in a country at peace and with a smaller population.

33 Security Council meeting on February 23, 2006.

34 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 2.

A Doctrine of Robustness: Neither Coercing Nor Giving Way

The term “doctrine” means a group of concepts that enables planning of a coherent program of action by international players, to present it to global opinion in terms that are universally understood, and, as necessary, to evaluate the legal responsibilities of the various actors, in terms of what they understand their mission to be.

Having attempted to define under what conditions and to what end force might be exercised for peacekeeping, it has been concluded that this might be to protect peacekeeping soldiers and the local population, but not to achieve the objectives of the operation, since, being political, they can only be achieved by political means. However, I have not yet demonstrated how such objectives can be reached, or how to use force to attain objectives based on a desire to protect without risking the gradual escalation of such an intervention toward warfighting.³⁵

This section tries to suggest a number of elements that need to be introduced into the doctrine of peacekeeping, enabling the Secretariat to devise, the Council to mandate, and the troop-contributing countries to carry out operations that are robust but that do not contravene the principles of the Charter nor lead to actions that are outside the parameters of peacekeeping. Such doctrine should also enable the public to understand the mandates, to see how suitable they might be for the situations in question, and to assess their execution on the ground, whether at the operational or tactical level. In fact, the doctrine of peacekeeping should enable any actor involved to explain their decisions in the light of their mission and the circumstances at the time.

STRATEGIC ROBUSTNESS THROUGH THE UNITY OF THE ACTORS

When analyzing the setbacks of peacekeeping operations, not enough attention has been given in

reports to the evaluation of structural weaknesses and uncertainties at the highest level of operations, in order to understand areas of weakness when in the theater. Global public opinion still has a confused view about the failures that occurred in Bosnia, Kigali, or Mogadishu.

Ad hoc reports analyzing these three failures notably failed to demonstrate that a superficial and contradictory understanding of crises had prevented a common approach to finding solutions to them. On the other hand, these analyses often pointed to a certain lack of robustness in the mandates as being the main reason for a lack of robustness in the operations themselves. I will attempt to demonstrate that it was not so much robustness in the mandates that was lacking—a robustness which could only come from the words used—as a clear manifestation of the solidarity of the Council with the troops engaged on the ground in the form of a specific response tailored to the crisis in which they were engaged.

Clarity and Agreement in the Analyses of Crisis Situations

It is no doubt true that the diversity of approaches among members of the Security Council, and within international organizations and even within the Secretariat, is itself a strength. When the moment comes to act, however, this should not result in an uncertain, let alone contradictory assessment of the nature of the crisis and the solutions to be applied. When there are contradictory points of view, the result is a kind of forced unity around a weak and minimalist consensus. This no doubt assists the production of communiqués, but it hardly facilitates the search for an understanding of the true sources of the crisis, which remain unaddressed, obscured by the confusion of different assessments. In order to achieve any clarity in any assessment leading to action and a harmonization of the various approaches that would enable action to be taken collectively, there has to be a shared analytical framework, tailored to the actions to be taken. As regards current crises, this particular framework might include three main analytical components:³⁶

35 “It is therefore essential that the application of the adjective “robust” to peacekeeping does not lead us to confuse legitimate robustness with regard to peacekeeping with an imposition of peace that in fact constitutes a change in the nature of the intervention.” Alexandra Novosseloff and Patrice Sartre, “Réflexions sur un maintien de la paix robuste,” in *Guide du maintien de la paix 2010*, edited by Jocelyn Coulon (Québec: Athéna Editions, Septembre 2009).

36 A thorough analysis of major components is one of the main methods of statistical data analysis. It is reserved for numerical data, and the term is only used here by analogy to indicate that crises can be studied according to three perspectives analyzed independently as an initial approach, with their correlations or interdependencies studied by a second approach.

- The first perspective is a consideration of the basic parameters of the crisis. In any country undergoing a crisis, these are access to power, access to wealth, and identification with a specific group identity. Any analysis needs to identify conflicts in each of these three areas, and the points where they overlap, thus causing fractures within a society that produce social tensions, themselves a motive force behind crises. An awareness of these factors will enable us to avoid making errors in crisis management that turn local people irreparably against a peacekeeping mission. It will also make it easier to identify the most appropriate points of leverage for dealing with the tensions that exacerbate the crisis and threaten the peacekeeping mission. Finally, it will enable us to identify the divisions that the mission will need to address in order to achieve peace.
- The second perspective is that of the structures of the crisis, particularly structures involving violence (regular forces and armed groups), the distribution of wealth (both the official economy and trafficking), and structures that have a symbolic importance (parties, religions, ideologies, etc.). It is necessary to understand how these structures are embedded in the foundations previously described, how they interrelate (whether through collusion, competition, or synergy) and, above all, who are the major individuals involved in the crisis. If the links between the mafias and certain armed Bosnian Croat organizations had been recognized earlier, acts of violence against the civilian population could have been avoided; likewise, if the UN had had a better understanding of the link between diamond trafficking and armed groups in Sierra Leone, it would have better understood the risks its troops were running when approaching mining sites.
- The third perspective is a thorough and openly-shared analysis of the roles of the various actors in the crisis: their role in its origins, their place in the structures relevant to the crisis, their personalities and behavior, and even their networks of personal relationships both within and outside the immediate crisis. It is here that the UN needs to apply the most innovative approaches to manage crises more effectively and promptly, and also to provide better protection for peacekeeping

missions and the local population. It needs to become more realistic, perhaps even more cynical, in the way it treats the real actors in the crisis, those who will benefit from it continuing. Equally it should identify and support those who can help it foresee threats and resolve the crisis. Because such a difference in approach goes against the principle of impartiality, it needs to be based on a shared analysis conducted by all parties so that a vital difference between the people who are actually to blame for the troubles, the promoters of peace (even potential), and the victims can be established and taken into account. If an international consensus in terms of personality and conduct had been reached at a very early stage on individuals such as Radovan Karadžić, Foday Sankoh, Charles Taylor, and today Laurent Gbagbo and Joseph Kabila, the attitude of the international community to them would have engineered a narrower field of maneuver at an earlier point. The acceptance, now almost universal, of international criminal tribunals, makes individuals the subject of international criminal law, legitimizing a shared analysis and stigmatization of their responsibility for the crises.

Naturally, the objective is not to agree on a single, monolithic analysis, unchanging over time, which would deprive the crisis managers of that freedom of judgement, which permits a spirit of initiative. Rather, any analysis of the situation needs to aim at a consensus on the basic realities of the crisis, a consensus that is required for any action to be cohesive and robust. This analysis must be based on talking to experts, conducting inquiries on the ground and hearing witnesses—all procedures already widely used by the UN and member states. But, in order to be effective in the time likely to be available and to achieve a coherent vision, it needs to be based on the three perspectives described above.

Such an analytical framework can and must be the same for all crisis situations in order to form a single point of reference for the main parties involved in peacekeeping. Conversely, the result of each analysis will be specific to each crisis, and give rise to specific solutions for each. In fact, the aim is to provide all crisis managers with the means to manage the cultural interface between themselves and the actors in the crisis.

The cultural interface is the dioptr³⁷ that weakens and distorts the exchange of information between two cultures. It is a major problem in terms of crisis management, as much for the understanding of the crisis as any for the influence it has on the way it unfolds. UN officials normally have access to experience that enable them to be particularly aware of the cultural interfaces of crises, and their effects, even if it does not permit them to master such interfaces completely. On the other hand, military observers and peacekeeping troops, often thrown into crises about which they know nothing, and without serious preparation, are very vulnerable to such effects, and even totally ignorant that these cultural differences exist. The application, even if only in summary form, of the analytical framework proposed above, would enable them to avoid the most serious errors in assessment, behavior, and action when they arrive in the theater; moreover, it would encourage them to initiate attempts to understand the crisis very early on, and to continue to deepen this understanding throughout their mission. Ultimately, it is also a factor in harmonizing understanding between contingents often with very different cultural origins.

MANDATES NEED TO BE SPECIFIC RATHER THAN ROBUST

Such specific analyses have to be based on specific mandates, and the suitability of a mandate for a crisis situation is a primary condition for its robustness. In terms of a mandate, robustness does not mean strong language, but language that is appropriate to the situation, conveying directives that respond effectively and show that the Council accepts part of the responsibility for the consequences.

Too often, the Council uses slogans that are far too general to be suitable, such as “all necessary measures.” However, the appropriateness of the mandate and the certainty that the Council is fully behind it constitute the first manifestation of robust strategic management.

Such robustness is not limited to the mandate

itself. If not actually denying the importance of the mandate in the robustness of the operation, Jean-Marie Guéhenno nevertheless insists on “building political unity among member states through broader participation in both decision-making and operational implementation, and in strengthening command and control arrangements.”³⁸ Reports on the dramas in Srebrenica and Kigali clearly show the divisions, hesitations, and ultimate indecision of the Security Council. One is therefore amazed to learn that the commander of Belgian troops in one instance and Dutch troops in another were criticized, when the situation they had to manage was to a considerable extent the result of the decisions (and then indecision) of the Council, whose consequences they managed as best they could.

It is not surprising to learn that members of the Council, especially the major powers, have a wide range of interests in and opinions on crises around the world. It is regrettable, but also understandable, that the simple awareness of their responsibilities for resolving global crises and protecting local people is not sufficient to overcome these divergences. I noted earlier how the application of a shared analytical framework would probably enable them to agree on joint diagnosis and action. But it is hard to understand how, having exposed the men and women on the ground to serious physical, legal, and moral risks, they can lose interest in what happens to them, leaving the Secretariat, denuded of resources, to do what it can to extract them from situations of insurmountable difficulty.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno has a clear vision on this subject, and he expresses it so clearly and with such authority that, unsurprisingly, much of what follows is based on one of his recent texts, already cited.³⁹

It would be unfair to claim that all members of the Council are indifferent to maintaining unity within the Council. France in particular, whose membership on the Council is an important component of its position in the world, is particularly concerned by this issue. However, too often this unity is to be found in declarations, which only

³⁷ A dioptr is a concept from optics that designates the surface separating two areas of different refraction indices. On crossing it, one beam of light is *reflected*, and the other *refracted*. Here, the analogy is used to indicate that, in passing from one cultural environment to another, information is both weakened and distorted.

³⁸ Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

achieve unanimity in the most anodyne of terms, because the Council cannot, or will not, overcome the differences about possible courses of action, and which conceal the fact that it is actually resigned to any action it takes being without significance. This lack of shared impetus is even more shocking in that it reflects a lack of commitment by the members of the Council to the countries that contribute troops for operations.

That said, **solidarity between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries is an essential element of robustness.** Having shown that successful and robust operations require taking risks, Guéhenno considers that “there is much less willingness among troop contributors to take risks if the risks that they are expected to take are not shared by those who make the decisions.”⁴⁰ It is well known that none of the permanent members of the Security Council were among the top ten troop-contributing countries for UN peacekeeping operations, and only China and France are in the top twenty.⁴¹

“While developed countries can give political support to a UN mission through non-military means, their systematic absence in UN military deployments undermines and weakens the message of universal commitment that such deployments should convey, and can be construed as a lack of strategic commitment to the success of the mission (...) Burden-sharing is not only necessary to gather the necessary resources, it is necessary to make robust peacekeeping operationally and politically viable.”⁴²

“The tendency to adopt resolutions with an ever-increasing list of tasks does not ensure good strategic direction. The only way for the Council to maintain its legitimate and necessary authority is to be more directly involved in the execution and implementation of its decisions. Only through direct participation in challenging operations can the imperative of flexibility and operational decentralization be reconciled with the need for strategic control by the Security Council.”⁴³

It is utterly detrimental to the smooth functioning of peacekeeping operations that the decision-makers and financial supporters of such operations should remain almost totally absent from them.⁴⁴ Not only does such an absence imply a degree of political distrust toward the country in crisis and toward the troop-contributing countries, but it also deprives Council decision-makers of valuable information required to make decisions. Those countries actually contributing troops on the other hand, generally not members of the Council itself, see the latter make decisions that have little connection with reality. This weakness, a serious one in terms of traditional “static” peacekeeping, can be fatal when peacekeeping becomes, or is obliged to become, “robust.”⁴⁵

In this regard, it is notable that, contrary to NATO and EU decision-making mechanisms and the proposals made in the Brahimi Report, the results of planning work carried out by the UN are not put to the Security Council for its approval, and so that body is never asked to show its support for the methods of conducting the operations that it has decided should be carried out.

40 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 9.

41 In April 30, 2011, 2037 from China, mainly in Africa, and 1,467 from France, mainly in Lebanon. See www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/apr11_1.pdf. It cannot be said that the presence of these two countries has no correlation with their foreign-policies.

42 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 9.

43 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 10.

44 Only three of the top twenty financial backers of peacekeeping initiatives are also among the top twenty providers of troops (Italy, China, and France).

45 Guéhenno makes a distinction between “static” and “robust” peacekeeping, and quite rightly, as I will attempt to show.

Cohesive Management at the Strategic Level

Robust peacekeeping “has to be based on a genuine strategic unity of vision among the triad of the Security Council, the troop contributors, and the Secretariat, which will implement the strategy. That unity of vision obviously depends on the political choices made by member states, but it can be nurtured by bringing this triad closer to the mission.”⁴⁶ For the triad to be a cohesive whole, two initiatives can be envisaged as part of a more thoroughgoing reform.

The New York headquarters must promote a commonality of views among the troop-contributing nations, that will lead national capitals to give their units on the ground instructions that are consistent with the ones that strategic managers will be giving to their commanders in the theater. With regard to the UN itself, where the troop contributors are not always represented in the body making decisions about the crisis (the Council), an essential element when devising a peacekeeping operation should be the early constitution in New York of a well-organized structure to consult with the troop-contributing countries. This was the aim of the Military Staff Committee set up by the Charter but stifled by diplomats on the Council. DPKO took on the task of planning and managing the operations of this committee with undeniable effectiveness, and it would not be fair to claim that, in private, it does not concern itself with the opinion of the troop-contributing countries. However, only the formalization of explicit consultation at strategic level can establish a coherent chain of military command at operational level.

Once coherence between the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries has been achieved, the issue of involving the Council naturally arises. Some suggest that the Military Staff Committee should be reactivated, but this would mean upending a structure only intended for the military, in order to introduce police-contributing nations, and still leave humanitarian and statebuilding elements out of the equation. Moreover, the purpose of the organization would have to be changed, as it would

be difficult to take away from the Secretariat the role of strategic management, that it is generally thought to be doing well. It might be useful to draw inspiration from the role of the Military Committee and the Committee for the Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom) at the European Union, and their relationships with Political and Security Committee (PSC) in order to get this relationship right.

A ROBUST MEDIA APPROACH

During the peacekeeping dramas of the 1990s, troops deployed on the ground had only limited access to the media, and that meant that they had little information about what was being decided in New York. Today, however, both mass media and direct personal communication mean that images of the debates and problems in New York find their way to the field, even if they only occupy a limited place in the Western media. The same can of course be said of the local populations in all but the poorest crisis areas. The media can thus create currents of panic, discouragement, and ill-feeling between UN headquarters and the local level, both with the peacekeeping forces and the local populations, which can greatly exacerbate the fragility of peacekeeping operations.

Therefore, great attention should be paid within the Secretariat and the Council in New York to how the media report discussions and votes in the Council, planning work, and declarations made by the Secretary-General. It is particularly important that this image is consistent with the orders received by the troops and the relationships between the peacekeeping operation and the parties to the conflict. An important element of this consistency is the dissemination of a peacekeeping doctrine that enables various players to share a common language and be understood by the public.

ROBUSTNESS WORKS BY CONTROLLING THE AREA OF CRISIS

The *New Horizon* nonpaper makes an observation that has so far not been sufficiently recognized, developed, or reflected upon: “Peacekeeping is

⁴⁶ Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 10.

⁴⁷ United Nations Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Field Support (DFS), “A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping,” New York: United Nations, July 2009, p. 4.

largely an ad hoc system. Each operation is developed and financed separately.”⁴⁷ Each operation is organized in a particular way in response to a specific situation. Each one needs to be robust in its own specific way, and the level of the theater is the key to this.

Nevertheless, there is a relatively fixed approach to the issue of robustness, which can be used to analyse, resolve, and explain it, and this is an approach based on the control of the area. It consists of envisaging a peacekeeping operation as a political operation, which requires an area to be controlled by the military if it is to succeed. The military’s role in the theater is to ensure this control, so as to support any action taken by the political head of the mission, most often the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

If we understand robustness in this way, the concept is one of deploying actors in the crisis area who endeavor to control the physical, human, and technological elements. Except for rare cases like that of UNIFIL, these actors are always very few in number, and therefore vulnerable. To guarantee their protection, we might imagine a mechanism based on punishing the spoilers, but this would undermine the spirit of peacekeeping and to its associated political constraints. Such protection is better obtained by control of exit from and entry to the area, thus reducing dangers from outside; continuous in-depth research into information that can be used to understand the situation and anticipate risks; and, finally, deploying intervention resources that are flexible enough to re-establish local and temporary military superiority each time the parties contest it with a unit from the peacekeeping force.

“Area Control” is a generic term used to describe all of the missions constituting the *raison d’être* of peacekeeping missions: interposition, interdiction of areas, protection of the local population, prevention of outbreaks of violence, control of movement and access, etc. This area control poses tactical problems that are not within the remit of this study, but there are also issues of vulnerability, given how astonishingly few troops are usually deployed on peacekeeping operations.

Retaliation: An Effective Mechanism for Robustness, but One That is Hard to Accept

At the theater level, the weakness brought about by the scarcity of peacekeeping forces might lead the crisis manager to threaten the spoilers with measures involving retaliation in cases of aggression. However, such measures pose humanitarian, legal, and political problems that are difficult for the UN and even the European Union, even if this option seems quite natural to NATO.

The last fifteen years of peacekeeping operations have shown us the extent to which crises often bring to prominence those who are insensitive to international legitimacy, and who respect force alone. Yet peacekeeping operations seek to end crises using the lowest possible level of force. This contradiction can only be resolved by providing peacekeeping forces with a mechanism enabling them to put pressure—if possible in person—on those leading the factions involved in the crisis. This would be a clear threat, which would constitute a radical departure from the principle of using the lowest possible level of force. This is not the same as a reaction capability, which, as we will see, all peacekeeping operations should have, so as to come to the aid of any of units in danger. It is rather a case of real punitive measures, which were shown to be essential in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and even Ituri.

The European Union does not currently have, and the UN will doubtless never have, such methods of retaliation at its disposal. Only NATO or an ad hoc coalition can supply such resources, since they are perceived as third parties quite distinct from the peacekeeping forces. Srebrenica also taught us that such methods need to be carefully articulated at the political level by the head of operations, and at the military level by the commanders of the peacekeeping forces. It is therefore advisable that, when analysis of the spoilers recommended above proves it to be necessary, the development of peacekeeping operations will then explicitly include deterrence measures, which will be submitted to the approval of the Security Council, and born by implementation procedures tailored to the object in question and the peacekeeping doctrine put in place.

A Capacity for Mobile Intervention: A Key Factor of Robust Peacekeeping

While it is politically difficult for the UN to punish acts of aggression, it must find ways of preventing them, and of rapidly strengthening the rather fragile screen of observers and interposition units each time they are in danger, by temporarily and locally outclassing those who threaten them.

This is what Jean-Marie Guéhenno means when he says that “the peacekeepers cannot afford to be in a static reactive posture, which would quickly reveal the limitations of the force, but have to take a proactive posture, to keep the initiative, and contribute to the gradual emergence of a stable and accountable state.”⁴⁸ Since air mobility has become a common feature of UN peacekeeping operations, such methods of intervention no longer pose any real problem at the theater level. On the other hand, they pose tactical problems that we will assess later.

This mobility of the means of intervention will have to be used less often, but more safely and efficiently, if force is not left vulnerable to surprise attacks from outside the crisis area. Hence the need to confine it.

Control of Entry and Exit from the Theater

It is strange that sealing off crisis areas has never been a condition for managing a violent crisis, or even a factor essential for its robust management. Without doubt, various embargos and sanction regimes imposed on conflict areas have achieved a certain level of control over what enters and what leaves. Quite recently, the UN mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) almost officially obtained this buffer function in the management of the Sudanese crisis. But there is no doctrine or procedure at the UN, EU, or NATO that would enable a team mounting an operation to respond clearly to the questions: what can we do to know who or what is entering and leaving the crisis area? What types of movement do we absolutely have to control? Which ones do we not need to control, and what palliative measures do we take within or outside the area of operations? Even the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon—for which sealing off the area is an essential requirement for success, and which saw the necessity of

managing maritime limits—was unable or unwilling to control the border between Lebanon and Syria in a systematic fashion, which are even more important to the success of its mission.

There are many examples of problems arising from a lack of surveillance of traffic going into and out of crisis areas, and on the other hand much evidence that such controls were effective as soon as they were carried out: weapons and fighters between Guinea and Sierra Leone; diamonds between Sierra Leone and Liberia, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; coltan between Ituri and Uganda, combatants between Casamance and Guinea-Bissau, etc.

Thus, it is impossible to claim to control a crisis at the lowest possible level of violence without having first reduced the risk of that one party becoming unexpectedly strong at the expense of the other; without interrupting the flow of goods fueling the crisis and sustaining its leaders; without depriving armed factions of the space they need to maintain safe areas and logistics bases, which give them greater endurance than the peacekeeping force. It is high time that the crisis-managers’ club—the UN, the EU, and NATO—adopt a doctrine, procedures, legal instruments, and, above all, techniques for sealing off a crisis area, and integrate them into the design and planning of their operations.

Of course, such a policy, which is always expensive, will never be complete, and is usually only partial, so it needs to be continued intensively and for a long period, using internal intelligence-sharing procedures on which the safety and the predictive ability of the mission depend.

Political and Military Perception and Understanding of the Crisis Area

For fifteen years now, the UN has been developing its “observers,” the only peacekeepers at the outset of a peacekeeping mission, as an information-gathering network within the crisis area, which MONUC, for example, has shown to be valuable on a daily basis. Beyond this, there is a contradiction between the clandestine, or at least secret, nature of “intelligence” as national armed forces see it, and the transparency and loyalty that the global organization owes to its member states at all times. At the UN, this contradiction has inhibited any progress

48 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 2.

beyond the open management of “information-gathering” by its “observers.” On the other hand, a truly military alliance—NATO—has no qualms about gathering intelligence by any means, and the risk of terrorism provides justification for such an attitude.

Because it is responsible for the safety of its troops in the face of new threats, the UN is looking for a similar strategy, but without a clearly defined doctrine, and without resources. In the conception of an operation, information gathering has to occupy a central, integrated position, and must not be limited to purely military issues. It must first be concerned with an analysis of the situation: the evolution of the crisis, what the structures involved in the crisis, as well as the actors, are doing. It then needs to address the information-gathering strategy: the balance between human collection (overt, yes, but perhaps clandestine also?) and technical collection; a balance between information protection as regards the parties to the conflict and transparency with regard to member states: at least the members of the Security Council, and where possible all states contributing to the operation in question. The operational concept also needs to address the means of gathering and using information: should these belong to the UN itself? Through an internal structure or by materials purchased from private entities? Or “leased” from member states? Unless the information itself—or even the product of its exploitation—is to be a service “bought in” from the most powerful members... but perhaps not the most impartial.

In all these areas, the UN still needs to demonstrate substantial progress in order to achieve a credible level of robustness, and some of these areas have inherent contradictions that raise doubts about how successful it will be. Such contradictions are, quite properly, a worry to the NAM,⁴⁹ who tolerate them as a risk inherent in having to accept information forced upon them by wealthy countries, who are its only beneficiaries, since they have cryptoanalytical capacities poorer countries lack. So, does the UN see itself as authorized to build a truly intrusive network within the societies where it operates in order to prevent terrorist

attacks? Or are the host countries of such operations or host headquarters like the United States disposed toward accepting that the UN may protect its information using cryptography that their own services could not break?

Delivering Robustness Through Cybernetic and Media Strategies

The issue of cryptography warrants discussion. The UN is the club to which all nations belong and was not formed to protect its intelligence against any of them. Moreover, there is no method similar to those in articles 413-9 and following under the French criminal law that would enable the UN to prevent violations of UN confidentiality.⁵⁰ The principle of confidentiality is therefore illusory and wrong here. However, there are operational situations, particularly in peacekeeping, where protection of information, be it only temporary, is a necessity: conducting negotiations, preparing for action, looking for war criminals on behalf of the International Criminal Court, inquiring into the conduct of UN agents, protecting the resources of one faction against another, protecting sources of information, etc. This is a contradiction that is inherent in any global organization, which needs to be resolved if it is not to have a serious effect on the robust quality of certain difficult operations.

The case of Radio des Mille Collines in Kigali convinced operators, historians, and researchers of the necessity of controlling any media capable of calling for the deaths of peacekeeping soldiers. However, this conviction has not been transformed into operational doctrine at the UN. It is true that the control of mass communications, *a fortiori* control of interpersonal communications, poses serious ethical, legal, and political problems. But it would be to ignore reality—and even irresponsible—to ignore them. It is up to the Security Council to give them legitimacy, from information provided by the Secretariat or member states on the risks and requirements for such control, while still restricting it via resolutions. This is an example of the solidarity that the Security Council needs to show with troops on the ground, even if it has a political cost.

49 Non-Aligned Movement, an informal group of UN member states with its origins in the Cold War. The NAM often expresses the developing world's suspicions regarding both the rich Western nations and eastern powers.

50 Articles defining and punishing breaches of defense secrecy.

TACTICAL ROBUSTNESS AND THE NEED FOR HIGH-QUALITY TROOPS

At the tactical level, peacekeeping forces will remain fundamentally vulnerable. Only the readiness of well-trained and well-equipped means of intervention to support them can compensate for such fragility.

We have already seen that troops controlling an area, those charged with core peacekeeping missions (interposition, protection, escorts, etc.), are also exposed to the greatest security risks. Because forces are so small, such risks are made worse by the fact that they often have to operate on foot, in static missions, or with restricted mobility on restricted routes, providing little opportunity to escape attackers hidden in prepared positions.

It would be hard to find a doctrinal solution to this problem. It is better to rely on high-quality training and leadership, points that will be referred to further on. I will also address technical solutions, which, as we will see, often involve weighing the troops down, and so limiting their operational capacity.

Speed, Discrimination, and Tactical Restraint in Interventions

Peacekeeping forces, which are thin on the ground, can only be protected effectively by the availability of intervention forces to provide protection for them as soon as they are in danger, and Guéhenno makes such mobility an essential element in order for robustness to be achieved, since he instinctively differentiates between robust and static intervention.⁵¹ The speed of any intervention depends on the tactical resources available for projection, as well as the organization and above all the training of the forces themselves.

However, the *Capstone Doctrine* is concerned that such interventions might slide into warfighting: “robust peacekeeping should not be confused with peace enforcement, as envisaged under Chapter VII of the Charter. Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict.”⁵²

The rules of engagement corresponding to such a posture of restraint can only be applied effectively by forces that have had training to enable them to use force in a controlled and limited fashion, without undermining that determination that enables them to behave robustly.

Aggressiveness and Restraint: The Contradictory Virtues of a Robust Approach

Peacekeeping has been accused by Western militaries of having caused troops to lose their aggressiveness, making them ill-suited to actual combat. This judgement is often misunderstood outside the armed forces, where the attitude of “aggressiveness” is generally understood in a pejorative fashion, a connotation derived from the word “aggression.”⁵³ In the military, however, the term denotes a quality that means both combativeness and promptness in the capability to confront.

From the point of view of the UN, the systematic quest for the consent of the parties and the non-use of force are seen as a means of peacekeeping avoiding the undesirable effects of aggressiveness for which the military is generally criticized. But such attitudes are also quickly seen by the parties to the conflict as a lack of combativeness and reactivity in response to external aggression. In this respect, they undermine the robustness of the force.

Therefore, it is wrong to attempt to blunt the aggressiveness of peacekeeping units, especially those in charge of interventions to support units in difficulty. Rather, it is advisable to compensate for this by using strict combat discipline, keeping it within the limits of the rules of engagement. Any aggression against a peacekeeping unit must receive an immediate and appropriately severe response to gain the respect of the parties to the conflict. A unit held under pressure between combativeness and restraint will not lose its aggressiveness, and will remain fit for combat.

Police or Army: What Level of Robustness is Required to Maintain Order?

In Kosovo, Côte d’Ivoire, and elsewhere, peacekeeping forces have often had to confront crowds.

51 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” pp.15 and 16.

52 DPKO and DFS, *Capstone Doctrine*, p. 34.

53 In 2010, the Review Conference of the Rome Statute defined aggression as the use of armed force by one state against another state without the justification of self-defense or authorization by the Security Council.

The difficulty is now well understood: the military traditions of the armed forces make it difficult for these units to manage situations that entail serious risk to local populations. These armies have already reluctantly accepted to limit their aggressiveness to make it more suitable for peacekeeping; many find it difficult to go further, and to abandon the use of armed force totally. Conversely, most police forces, who know how to carry out these tasks, are not trained or equipped to deal with situations where there is a risk of a return to a state of conflict at any moment.

Henceforth, therefore, the design of peacekeeping operations needs to prepare for “heavy policing” tasks at an early stage, tasks that traditional military forces can no longer perform but which are carried out in contexts where stability is still precarious, and where the issue of the involvement of civilian police is a delicate one.

Some countries with a police force that has a military status, like the French gendarmes or Italian carabinieri, see these situations as an opportunity to use them; others, such as India, are able to deploy police forces organized and trained on military lines. Only when major crisis management organizations such as the UN, EU, and NATO have produced a doctrine to cover such situations, will countries be able to choose and adapt appropriate mechanisms.

The Cost of Robustness

A specific feature of UN peacekeeping is the severe financial constraints impacting on both planning and deployment. The fact that the organization is an international one, and of a diplomatic nature, gave rise early on to fears of a certain lack of financial rigor. This led to the implementation of a strict system of financial controls, extending down to the level of the operations themselves. This mechanism was strengthened at the beginning of this century to overcome the reluctance of the United States Congress to finance UN operations. Is this financial straitjacket compatible with reinforcing them? This raises a number of further questions:

- *Operations at a discount?*

The result of such rigor is a very tight budget compared to those for operations conducted by other coalitions or alliances. The 2009-2010 annual budget for all UN peacekeeping operations⁵⁴ was \$7.75 billion.⁵⁵ Over approximately the same period, the US budget for the Global War on Terror (operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and neighbouring theaters of war) was around twenty times greater,⁵⁶ for a little over double the number of troops.

An in-depth study would be required to identify the part played in this cost difference by expensive resources such as Western naval and airborne forces, which are not included in peacekeeping operations. It would also have to establish the role of the difference in standards accepted by the peacekeeping forces that often come from developing countries, in terms of comfort and health services.

- *Should we hand the role of “intervention” over to Western forces?*

Nevertheless, we can still see that such modest budgets would be very vulnerable to any widespread use of equipment, such as light-armored vehicles, attack helicopters, and artillery. Some of the most delicate peacekeeping operations already use them (MONUC and UNIFIL). Others have intervention forces supplied by countries acting on behalf of the UN, such as the French Operation LICORNE for ONUCI and the European operation EUFOR DR Congo, which provided, over the horizon, the role of strategic reserve for MONUC during the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006.⁵⁷

A solution consisting of making a Western intervention force available for a UN operation has a number of benefits. It supports the operation via powerful and reliable resources, and constitutes an opportunity to involve the West in operations that they are generally reluctant to join. On the other hand, this can be interpreted badly by forces controlling an area if they continue only to be made

54 Fifteen operations involving around 100,000 troops, police, and military observers.

55 Information dated January 31, 2010, on UN peacekeeping operations. See www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml.

56 \$150.4 billion according to Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, September 28, 2009.

57 Authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1671 (April 25, 2006), EuFor DR Congo had a forward element at N'Dolo Kinshasa, but most of the forces were on standby in Libreville.

up of troops from developing countries. It also makes the conduct of interventions more problematic, where the smallest friendly fire incident can assume dimensions that are very difficult to control, and which can be a fatal blow to the cohesion of an operation.

- *Could a robust approach be privatized?*

US operations in Iraq have made considerable use of civilian contractors in combat operations.⁵⁸ This was disturbing to many at the UN, often quite rightly, but it is sometimes forgotten that the UN was largely responsible for setting the example long ago of using private actors on the battlefield. True, its goal was peace rather than war; true, it only started with NGOs with humanitarian aims, then logistics companies, then came protection tasks and then transport helicopters operated by private military companies, whose members have all the characteristics of what are normally called “mercenaries.”

The conditions under which some armed helicopters lent by other governments were deployed recently leave us in some doubt about the true status of their crews. And as for the police supplied by a major country for the UN mission in Bosnia, the majority were quite openly employed by a large security firm. Most of them no longer had any connection with a public institution; some, indeed, may never have done so. In human rights terms, the results were disastrous.

However, it would be wrong to overlook what the private sector can contribute to delivering robust peacekeeping. It is recognized to be unacceptable to give area-control tasks, in permanent armed contact with populations, to any units for which government does not unequivocally vouch for their status as military or police operatives trained for public tasks. In spite of the precedent set by using armed helicopters, we might well be concerned about the dangers inherent in putting highly capable intervention assets into the hands of mercenaries. On the other hand, we might consider assigning perimeter control tasks, notably the customs function, which is a substantially privatized role in a number of countries. And why not also some intelligence-gathering tasks, namely surveillance, even so-called military observers? In

order to answer these questions, it is necessary to determine the precise legal status of the civilian private sector involved in a peacekeeping operation, depending on the level of contribution to a military or police role.

- *Should we pay for safety?*

If we do not have the resources or inclination to ensure a proactive robustness for operations, we might consider “buying” safety from the factions in conflict. It is odd that it should be during NATO operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, which are meant to be robust and even aggressive, that the issue of paying the spoilers to buy safety from them and protect international forces was first raised. One is incredulous when considering the inadequacy of the cultural, political, and operational thinking revealed by the way in which these dealings were conducted.

An analysis of the crisis situation, such as the one suggested above, would make crisis managers aware, on the one hand, of the conflicts based on access to wealth that form the basis of the crisis and, on the other, any links there might be between structures supporting violence and the profit-making structures fueling it, and finally the players within these structures and the profit they make from it. It is only after such an analysis that we can consider measuring the possible benefit of “buying safety.” In most cases, there would be agreement to envisage the purchase of temporary safety, but that this would be at the cost of strengthening a potential adversary in the longer term. In most cases, therefore, this would not be the right thing to do.

It should also be noted that the UN will hardly ever have the funds to enter into such transactions under legally acceptable conditions, and that, more often, it would be the countries providing the troops that would be tempted to do so, without the knowledge of UN commanders, with negative and unpredictable results.

A ROBUST APPROACH MEANS ACCEPTING RISKS

The doctrine of the control of crisis areas, as it has just been defined, which aims to have a powerful

58 Patrice Sartre, “Soldats privés,” *Etudes*, 152 (April 2008): p.452.

effect on the political situation while also accepting a considerably reduced number of peacekeeping forces compensated by robust, rapid, and discriminating intervention resources, entails risk: risk for forces that are spread too thinly, risk of friendly fire and collateral damage to the local population during the intervention phases. “To perform such difficult tasks, peacekeepers will have to take more initiative; they will also incur significantly greater risks.”⁵⁹ Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that robust peacekeeping can present more risks than “good-guy” peacekeeping. True, the risks are more manageable, but they are risks all the same, and only the solidarity of the Council with the troop-contributing countries will enable the latter to be accepted.

COHESION PRODUCES ROBUSTNESS

Peacekeeping operations must perform complex and delicate tasks robustly, although they are necessarily made up of extremely varied people and units from all over the world. This challenge, which was identified long ago by DPKO, has led to a major effort directed at the unification of doctrine, and training the personnel and units engaged in peacekeeping.

Success does not depend only on the cohesion of the contingents, but also on the consistency between the various elements involved in the operations. There is still progress to be made in these areas, both as regards their vertical cohesion (between the different levels of the hierarchy) and as regards their horizontal coordination (between the components of multidimensional operations). And this is especially true in relation to their consistency over time, as contingents succeed each other.

The Horizontal Cohesion of the Military and Humanitarian Chains

Horizontal coordination is what allows the various chains of command (which are now numerous and continuously changing in “multidimensional” peacekeeping efforts) to cooperate, on every level, to achieve the common political objective. The coordination of the national military chains of command at the level of the theater of operations is a permanent challenge. Many countries only

delegate the “operational control” of their forces to the UN, while retaining the “operational command.” Their contingents are thus connected, not only to the operational headquarters of the peacekeeping force in the field, but also to the headquarters of their own countries. Moreover, in critical situations, the heads of national contingents often have better reasons to obey their national command (which continues to pay them and assess their performance) than to obey the UN command. In 2000, a Canadian officer of UNAMSIL was removed by his government for having obeyed a strict order by UNAMSIL contrary to the equally strict directives from Ottawa. To be manageable in the field, this type of parallel hierarchy must be dealt with on the strategic level. Only the unity of the troop-contributing countries, the Council, and the Secretary-General will enable us to get the national command chain to issue messages consistent with those of the UN chain of command.

Horizontal cohesion not only presents problems between military contingents, but also between the other components of the operation. I have tried to show above that the key to this horizontal cohesion is also found above the theater level, at the level of what we have called the “strategic triad.” The cohesion of this triad is essential for getting cohesion between the national contingents, but also for keeping humanitarian activities within the limits of an operation’s general strategy and under the protection of its armed assets.

The inherent natural legitimacy of humanitarian action has sometimes meant that it has escaped the control of the political management of the operation, and thus produced unanticipated effects. These effects—sometimes seen as a lack of robustness in the operation—include misappropriation of aid, strengthening of the positions of the factions entrusted with distributing it, attacks on distribution points, etc. Because the humanitarian activities of the UNPROFOR in Sarajevo had escaped from political control and became an end in themselves, they became one of the causes of the UN’s failure in Bosnia, justifying the intervention of NATO, itself free from having to worry about humanitarian issues. The fact that undeniable humanitarian legitimacy can have uncontrolled effects, imposes a political responsibility on those leading the

59 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 9.

operation. They have to provide, at each level of the operation, effective coordination among the political, military, and humanitarian strategies, so that the humanitarian activities substantively and safely contribute to the objectives set out by the international community. This cohesion can only be obtained in the field if there is a similar cohesion in New York between DPKO and the various UN agencies that are responsible for the supervision of the humanitarian actors in the field.

Vertical Cohesion: Managing the Whole via the Local

Vertical consistency is what allows the decisions taken at the highest level to have the desired local effects, and what allows the summary of the local reports to generate an accurate view of the situation at the level of the decision-maker. In the military area, the first mechanism for this cohesion is the upward transmission and progressive synthesis of intelligence reports; in addition, the “rules of engagement” chain is especially important in enabling the individual players to take initiatives in conformity with the general policy of the operation. Finally, it is the chain of the command that enables the field headquarters to launch and to control operations.

The military chain of command in the UN is not homogeneous, and varies according to the subjects dealt with. In matters of planning, strategy, and rules of engagement, the summit of the chain is located in the New York strategic headquarters. On the other hand, for control of the operation the chain of command ends in the theater, with the strategic level playing only a guiding role. While this situation is often criticized, it can improve the reactivity of operations, which have to respond to feeble signals by carrying out actions that are always limited and often delicate. It would be impossible to effectively manage most of the crises that make up the daily life of a peacekeeper from New York. On the other hand, the same situation is unfavorable for the vertical cohesion of the operations. We know that one of the causes of the Srebrenica drama was this lack of cohesion of UNPROFOR, not only as highlighted by the media, due to the lack of external coordination with the NATO air forces, but also, as highlighted by the

report of the Secretariat,⁶⁰ due to the lack of internal consistency within the UN operations, in particular in regard requests for air support.

Consistency Over Time: Preserving the Memory of Past Crises

A particular weakness of the management of extended crises is the lack of continuity in the actors, which produces instability in the handling of the peacekeeping operations, and is unquestionably a handicap when confronted with long-standing factional leaders. The management of the Yugoslav crises was a disastrous example of the lack of continuity of those in charge when faced with the permanence of Slobodan Milošević, Alija Izetbegović, and Franjo Tuđman, as well as their main lieutenants. The robustness of the crisis-management institutions can certainly compensate for this frequent change, but only if they are capable of developing a strategy and mechanisms, which provide consistency over time. Such consistency would involve capitalizing on all aspects of the history of the crisis, in order to ensure that those responsible for managing the crisis should understand the situation in its historical context. This would enable the leadership to make decisions at each stage, not only in full awareness of past decisions but also with a view to safeguarding the freedom of decision for the future. It would establish a true continuity between the prevention, management, and exit strategy of the crisis, each of these stages being conducted with awareness of the preceding ones and in anticipation of those to follow.

This consistency over time is based first of all on the continuity of the understanding of the conflict throughout the various “generations” of its managers. It should be capable, from the earliest efforts at prevention, up to the exit strategy for the crisis, of distinguishing the permanent factors from the contingent ones. This continuity must of course include an understanding of the society in crisis; but it must also keep each new crisis manager up to date on the history and the development of the crisis structures, to reveal strategies and to anticipate their reactions; it must finally, and most importantly, include the actors in the crisis: with each change of a crisis manager, a complete report

60 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35: The Fall of Srebrenica*, UN Doc. A/54/549, November 1999.

must be given to him or her on the personality, past, alliances, and interests of each of the main actors in the crisis.

It is important to stress the need to develop management tools of this type for the continuity and stability of crisis management. DPKO has gradually built up, in particular through the Best Practices Unit, a collective set of lessons learned that is essential for carrying out peacekeeping operations. But it is a doctrinal corpus, capitalizing on the experience gained from one operation for the benefit of another. Henceforth, the concern

must be to formalize an organization and procedures for both accumulating and disseminating operational experience specific to each operation, which gives crisis management the consistency over time that is essential for its effectiveness. Information technology offers capabilities that cannot be ignored in this area, even if the diplomats in the crisis-management framework do not turn to it instinctively; those in the military, conversely, sometimes have a tendency to expect too much from it.

Capabilities and Robustness

The notion that peacekeeping operations lack robustness often leads to the use of equipment designed for combat in an attempt to achieve it. To think that equipment designed for war will offer this robustness is an illusion that Western militaries are gradually, albeit reluctantly, abandoning. Moreover, before seeking robustness through weaponry, it is advisable to look for it in the correct organization of forces and command structure.

WHAT KIND OF ORGANIZATION PRODUCES ROBUST COMMAND?

The structure of the UN command system is often debated, and cited as a cause of weakness in peacekeeping operations. I do not propose to take a position in the debate regarding the autonomy of the theater command and the civilian character of the mission leaders, limiting myself to pointing out the advantages of these solutions and proposing ways to address their disadvantages.

A Strategic Level to Control and Support an Autonomous Theater

While it would help to make more inspirational choices when selecting mission leaders and force commanders, it is also clear that the current autonomy of the theater command does not mean that it does not need to be controlled, and, especially, supported at the strategic level, in particular by the Security Council.

UN peacekeeping operations are currently not commanded, in the military sense of the term, from the strategic level. Admittedly, two departments of the Secretariat in New York implement the Council decisions regarding peacekeeping: the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is in charge of directing the operations, and the Department of Field Support (DFS) is in charge of their support. DFS is a true strategic logistic service, which centralizes some of the support in New York with the intention of keeping the costs under control. On the other hand, in the military domain, DPKO is only capable of planning, generating forces, and keeping abreast of a situation; it lacks a true capacity for appraisal, and even less so one for

control, which remain the prerogative of the field.

For a long time, Jean-Marie Guéhenno patiently put up with the argument of Western militaries “that the operational structure of UN command and control should more closely resemble the more centralized structures of the EU or NATO.”⁶¹ It was France that publicly began the debate in 2006 by making the presence in New York of a true UNIFIL strategic military command a condition for its participation in the operation.

As well as a strategic level of command, Western militaries have been aiming, since the failures of Sarajevo and Kigali, for the provision of a complete military chain, bypassing the SRSG, the true head of the mission on the field. The case of UNIFIL was not the most convincing, since it is one of the few United Nations missions⁶² directed by a member of the military, but this characteristic in itself made things acceptable to the diplomats in New York: a Strategic Military Cell dedicated to UNIFIL was created, mainly staffed with officers from nations contributing troops to this operation. Even before it could fulfill the strategic role France had hoped for, it was marginalized by the UN system, but it permits us to speculate about what effect its wider use might have on robustness in peacekeeping operations.

In essence, it seems to have been accepted that the current decentralization allows considerable local consistency between political and military management of a crisis. If problems arise, it offers an appropriateness and a response time that could not be guaranteed by a command at a distance, and so is a major contributor to robustness. On the other hand, it offers less redundancy in unforeseen situations; when this local command system crumbles, as was the case in Freetown in May 2001, there is no organized higher-level mechanism to regain control. Above all, in the event of serious difficulty, strategic centralization would allow the decisions that are currently made by the local command alone, without reference to the international context, to be placed under the authority of the Council. In other words, a strategic command would undoubtedly improve the robustness of operations at the international level, while maintaining the military command solely in the

61 Guéhenno, “Robust Peacekeeping,” p. 10.

62 With UNDOF (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force) and UNMOGIP.

hands of the theater, generally agreed to provide robustness at the local level.

It is true that if a strategic level of military command were to be created, UN headquarters would have under its command more than 100,000 blue helmets across fifteen to twenty operations in the four corners of the world. It would have to equip itself with significant technical and human resources as regards communication, both in situational awareness and assessment and decision-making, to carry out operations on a ridiculously small scale, even if they produce locally significant results. It is impossible to imagine the major financial backers of the United Nations, always critical of the size of the organization's Secretariat, letting such a system to be constructed. No doubt also it would be seen as an element of the "world government," whose prospect horrifies an influential part of American opinion.

A Strategic Level Concerned with Robustness in the Theater and Explicitly Supported by the Security Council

While, a true strategic command is undoubtedly not very practicable, and perhaps not desirable, it is clear, however, that the strategic level must be more concerned with the robustness of the operations deployed. Information technology would enable it to provide the theater with scarce resources to assist those in the field: for example, image analysis, document translation and analysis, continually updated future planning, and monitoring of the progress of relief of national contingents.

UN headquarters structures the preparation of the mounting of operations through the **Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP)**, which takes into account the various components (political, military, humanitarian, peacebuilding) of the operation. This process leads to relatively simple products, primarily articulated around three topics covered in a report by the Secretary-General:

The **Concept of Operations (CONOPS)** at the UN often amounts to a deployment plan. Operations with a political rather than a military leadership, and including a strong humanitarian component, cannot directly transpose concepts such as the end state so dear to NATO planners or the *center of gravity*, the philosopher's stone of

Jominian strategic reasoning. More pragmatic than its Brussels equivalents, the Secretariat of the United Nations did not consider it to be useful at this stage to develop equivalent concepts adapted to peacekeeping. It has not been shown that the robustness of the operations is thereby compromised, but the Strategic Military Cell of UNIFIL, almost entirely staffed with NATO officers, tested it there; it would be worth trying it more widely.

The **Force Requirements** are an important document for the robustness of an operation. If these needs are well assessed, the force can be equipped with adequate resources for the threats that it will encounter.

The **Rules of Engagement (ROEs)** describe the conditions under which force will be used, and who will have the authority to take those decisions. It is an essential document for the robustness of the operation. It is there that the fundamental responsibility of the strategic level lies, and it is a matter of considerable concern that it has not been assumed by the Security Council.

The complexity of multidimensional peacekeeping operations dissuades the Secretariat, unlike the NATO and EU headquarters, from carrying out detailed *contingency planning*, which would enable it to study and avoid situations capable of threatening the force or the course of its mission. Note that the UNIFIL Strategic Military Cell had, fortunately, carried out such planning in depth, in close collaboration with the theater force commander, considering possibilities going from simple hostile acts to a return to larger-scale combat between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, including even the consequences of Israeli strikes on Iran.⁶³ The wider use of such procedures, and their continuation at the New York headquarters throughout the operation, in anticipation of the interaction between the theater situation and the international situation, would provide substantial support from the strategic level to maintain the robustness of the local operation.

This support would be of a piece with the logistic support that the UN keeps centralized in New York, mainly for cost control and the prevention of financial dishonesty, for which the United Nations was unfortunately infamous in the past.

63 Mattelaer, "Europe Rediscovered Peacekeeping?" p. 22.

We saw above that one of the conditions for the robustness of an operation is the solidarity of the Security Council with the forces deployed in the field. One of the weaknesses of the New York headquarters is the offhand way in which the Security Council treats the fundamental documents of an operation, in particular compared to the behavior of its counterparts in Brussels. I therefore propose that the EU's operating methods for the start of operations and the recommendations of the Brahimi Report should be used as models, resulting in two resolutions:⁶⁴

- A first Security Council resolution would set the operation's objectives and mandate.
- A second resolution would approve the modalities, through its approval of the Secretary-General's report, including the CONOPS and the ROEs, once the Secretariat states that it can assemble the resources.

The above is not just a condition for the effectiveness and physical safety of a peacekeeping operation, but also a condition for the legal safety of its members. Only the Security Council can provide those who take part in operations with the certainty that their actions comply with the law, and this certainty is a condition for the determination and thus the robustness of their action.

Can a Theater Military Command Under Local Civilian Authority Be Robust?

As we saw, military command of UN peacekeeping operations is traditionally provided from the theater. Western nations worry about this decentralization of the military chain of command, and about allowing initiative at the local level. As France pointed out during the reinforcement of UNIFIL in the summer of 2006, Western countries have associated this lack of strategic command with the lack of robustness of certain peacekeeping operations in the past. In fact, the real reason is more fundamental, if more discreetly expressed. The military of these same nations cannot resign themselves to military command being placed at local level under the authority of the civilian head of the peacekeeping mission, the SRSG.

- *A structural problem?*

Certainly some peacekeeping dramas, like those of

Kigali in 1994, Srebrenica in 1995 or even Freetown in 2000, were to a large extent due to the weakness of the local command, or in any case to a combination of errors or inadequacies at the strategic and operational levels leading to local failure. Are these failures, the consequence of the civilian nature of the local management at the operational level? Or of the lack of a military strategic level? Or even the combination of these two factors?

A summary analysis of these three failures leads to great circumspection about their fundamental causes. In the case of Rwanda, it is true that the force commander complained afterward that he did not get any reaction on the strategic level concerning its warnings about the preparation of genocide. However, the reactions he expected were of a political and not a military nature, and from this point of view, both New York and his SRSG always allowed him a free hand. In the case of Srebrenica, we can only wonder about the discretion of the SRSG, but it is clear that one of the reasons for the failure was the inability of the military chain of command to transmit the requests for air interventions made by the Dutch tactical command up the chain of command, and then retransmit them to NATO. Finally, in Freetown, it is true that the SRSG would have been of no help to an incompetent force commander, but it was definitely the military component itself that broke, both because of lack of preparation (one can cite deficiencies of planning at the strategic level), and the collapse of the theater headquarters, a collapse that had nothing to do with any ill-timed intervention of the SRSG.

- *A people problem?*

In the history of the UN's mistakes in peacekeeping operations, the SRSG can often be roundly criticized for his political management of the parties to the conflict, and we might sometimes wonder about the appropriateness of the people chosen. In particular, we might question the systematic recourse to diplomats, a body of people better prepared for representation and negotiation than for leadership and confrontation. Senior civil servants, such as prefects or their equivalents, could be used more often, or better still politicians, by nature oriented toward leadership if not manage-

64 United Nations, *Brahimi Report*, Recommendation 4-b.

ment. On the other hand, while they are sometimes meddlesome, importunate, or inappropriate in their daily relations with the force commanders, it is difficult to convincingly defend the idea that the SRSGs were the source of military mismanagement during the great peacekeeping dramas.

In the case of Freetown, in 2000, the Jordanian contingent, cut off for two days from its theater commander, no longer obeyed orders other than those from Amman. We might think that it would have been better if it could have contacted a strategic headquarters in New York, although we might also wonder what this headquarters could have contributed, given the amount of confusion in the theater. At the time of the Srebrenica affair, each contingent was as attentive to the instructions from its capital as to those from Sarajevo and Zagreb, but that was not the cause of the failure. In this case, we can accept the idea that the existence of a true strategic headquarters would have detected the deficiency of the close air-support chain. As for Kigali, the force commander always retained authority over his contingents, and it is difficult to say whether a strategic headquarters would have made better decisions. They would have been taken on its evaluation, but their long-term consequences would have perhaps been better evaluated. In short, in every case from the point of view of robustness, we cannot see a way of demonstrating that these local command failures are the result of a structural problem more than of personal errors or the lack of procedures.

- *A problem of consistency, inherent in peacekeeping*

As for the origins of the chief of the mission, from the moment we admit that peacekeeping is a political operation in which force is not a means of action but only a safety device, having it directed by a member of the military can be only a solution employed on occasion. This might be because of the personality or the experience of the individual, or in a very difficult security situation, or if the multidimensional aspect is reduced to an essentially military one, as is the case with UNIFIL. However, in all cases, the robustness of his or her actions requires that the military force commander finds in the civilian mission leader a courageous and solid personality, who understands the security issues and politically protects his or her force commander. Discussion with former force

commanders shows that this has not always been the case. We should recognize that the opposite criticism can be made of many force commanders of past UN operations; some have had a dangerous level of independence from the political line of the operation, and others have been engaged in a permanent search for detailed instructions from the SRSG to provide them with cover for what they did militarily.

With regard to subordination at the strategic level, we saw above that the robustness of the local command must be rooted in the solidity of the strategic triad in New York, made up of the Security Council, the troop-contributing countries, and the Secretariat. This cohesion will ameliorate the centrifugal effects of their multinational composition, but on the other hand it is not immediately obvious what advantages over the current situation micro-management of local actions from New York could provide, as these actions are always slight both in scope and in intensity, and guided much more by political and social concerns than by the principles of war.

ROBUST ORGANIZATION OF THE FORCES THAT COMPENSATES FOR THEIR STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES

The diversity of nationalities participating in UN operations and their dispersion in the field are weaknesses that must be compensated for by organizing them properly.

Control of the National Diversity of the Troops

The national diversity of peacekeeping forces is often denounced as contributing to their weakness. Such criticism is excessive: diversity, on the contrary, frequently offers a better capability for understanding and adaptation than restricted and mono-cultural coalitions. In Sarajevo, the triad of the Egyptian, Ukrainian, and French battalions was well-suited to accommodating the sensitivities of the three ethnicities of Bosnia. It is clear, however that, poorly controlled, diversity can equally cause misunderstandings and even tensions and thus weakness. In Sierra Leone, cohabitation of Indian and African English-speaking contingents proved to be effective for understanding and managing the situation, but less so for harmonizing the rival sensitivities of British ex-colonies to their highly

charged common history.

This diversity is first of all managed by a suitable proportioning of the level of national homogeneity. A higher level of homogeneity than the battalion can lead to independent national behavior and thus fracturing of the operation; a lower level of homogeneity brings the feeling of isolation and thus of psychological weakness, at least. The issue of the national diversity of the contingents is particularly delicate when they must operate in the same area, especially when one of them must intervene to help the other with more powerful and deadlier capabilities. There is then a considerable risk that any incidents, particularly those of friendly fire, will be badly interpreted, a risk that is multiplied by the language difficulties. The intervention of Ukrainian armed helicopters supporting African troops attracted this kind of criticism.

National diversity is then managed by the exchange of liaison officers. Vertical liaison detachments (from the national subordinate toward the multinational superior) and lateral liaison detachments, between contingents of different nationalities that can be made to cooperate. Such detachments, and the communication resources with which the UN equips them, help to ensure information sharing, better analysis, and avoidance of ambiguities that could be fatal.

A Suitable Organization for Area Control and in Particular for Intervention

As we saw above, the control of the area provided by any peacekeeping operation to assist the political process of crisis management is based on four functions: the control of the area, the gathering of information, intervention, and perimeter control. It is best if the operation's organization is structured around these functions, in order to optimize them.

The **perimeter control function** is, as we have seen, the most neglected function, and it would be useful to henceforth identify it as a specific branch of any peacekeeping operation, combining the functions of military, police, customs, and financial control. Furthermore, we might consider whether this function should be under the authority of the chief of the mission or not, considering its international impact, far beyond the borders of the crisis, or whether it should be under the direct authority of DPKO. In any event, the latter should create a new perimeter control section, to control such

operations under way in the world, in order to coordinate them, and to keep them in contact with the various border police forces, organizations for combating transnational crime, financial police forces, customs, etc. As these areas of activity are already largely represented within DPKO, this direction could take the form of a new *Integrated and Shared Capacity*.

The **collection of information** has long since become the main function of the UN observers, the "blue berets" of the history of peacekeeping. In most operations they constitute a specific branch, and it would be useful to improve their organization and skills by the addition of those with information-gathering skills in the civilian sector, such as policemen and experts on local cultures. Their protection will be a permanent concern; the more so, as we have seen, as the ability of the United Nations to security-protect their information is very limited.

Area control is the main task of the "blue helmet" contingents, often called "interposition" forces, who were for a long time the only organized peacekeeping troops. Nowadays, they are generally organized into the largest component of any peace operation. They usually include in their force-structure their own means of intervention, and this confusion is often the cause of a lack of robustness.

Toward the end of the UN Bosnian operation, the creation of a **rapid-reaction force** (RRF) based on artillery assets, began a trend that was subsequently followed by many other types of intervention forces. As explained above, their mission was to restore, locally and temporarily, a favorable balance of power each time one of the conflict parties had taken advantage of the low density of the area-control forces to stop them from carrying out their functions. This intervention function has been entrusted to light-armored units or to armed helicopters more often than to artillery. It has been integrated into the UN forces as is currently the case of MONUC or UNIFIL, or entrusted to forces that remain external, as is the case of LICORNE in Côte d'Ivoire, or as was the case of the EUFOR DR Congo in 2006. Whatever the solution adopted, it is essential that the peacekeeping force has available to it a prompt, effective, and discriminating intervention capability, to provide the robustness that cannot be conferred by its deployment in the

field, always limited given the space to be controlled. Moreover, because an intervention force is more likely to cause collateral damage than the area control forces, its involvement limits the responsibility of the (more vulnerable) area control forces, in the eyes of the populations in the event of damage to them. On the other hand, such an organization increases the probability of friendly fire incidents among the intervention force, and the consequent psychological effects.

THE TECHNOLOGIES OF ROBUSTNESS

We commonly hear that “the capabilities that exist within the armed forces of the richest nations (intelligence, mobility, targeted firepower) would lessen the risks involved in robust peacekeeping and could make it more effective.”⁶⁵ This assertion is debatable. Indeed Western forces are still equipped for war, and primarily still for symmetrical war. The majority of the technologies they possess remain, despite recent but overly slow progress, designed to impose outcomes by force, and not to control crisis areas to assist a political process.

So far, military staffs have put little thought into designing specific equipment for peacekeeping⁶⁶ and they have not been encouraged to do so by the United Nations. Current asymmetrical conflicts, even if they are not managed like peacekeeping operations, are nevertheless inspiring the development of more effective and more discreet means of protection, in particular for the infantry; of better methods for gathering information such as drones; and of combat equipment which is more discriminating, such as high precision air-to-ground projectiles, or more restrained in its effects, such as controlled lethality weapons. All this progress is what peacekeeping needs.

When thinking about technology, we normally describe the organization and the resources of the forces by means of large-scale “capability functions,” which will be used to structure the rapid analysis of technologies below.

Protective Technologies: Not Much Change

The first of these capability functions seeks to protect the forces and the local population, whose

low density is a major challenge. Their individual protection is often understood as a protection against direct fire. In this area, the power of the anti-personnel weapons (in particular the infamous Kalashnikov) and anti-tank rocket launchers (the RPG series) requires heavyweight passive protection not easily acceptable except for static situations and missions such as checkpoint surveillance, nontactical transport or the protection of civilians. For its part, active protection can only at present offer expensive and equally heavy solutions, with dangerous collateral effects for friendly troops and the population.

Therefore, protection of the forces can only be collective, and the technologies that will make it possible will be those of the mastery of information, providing advance warning and a more effective coordination between the forces attacked and intervention forces.

Information Technologies Under Full Development

Already in wide use by conventional combat forces, information technologies deserve to be adapted to peacekeeping.

Acquisition technologies, based on radar for traditional conflicts, must turn to the use of infrared sensors, which are better suited to the monitoring of human activities, something that is at the heart of peacekeeping. In this type of operation, the surveillance drone is the most widely deployable platform for such sensors.

Today, decision-making support technologies are suitable for handling maneuver units by managing quantifiable entities whose location is known. To be of help to peacekeeping, they must adapt to social data which is more diffuse and more qualitative. This underlines the requirement mentioned above to develop tools for managing the continuity and stability of crisis management despite the rotation of personnel and of units. The need to formalize organizational structures, and the procedures for the collection and dissemination of the internal operational experience for each operation, must be supported by the development of suitable software tools.

⁶⁵ Guéhenno, "Robust Peacekeeping," p.3.

⁶⁶ Patrice Sartre, "Les armes du maintien de la paix," *L'Armement*, Décembre 1999.

To the extent that the Security Council might authorize it, interpersonal communication interception technologies, as well as mass media neutralization technologies, already employed against insurgents by NATO forces, could be adapted to the needs of peacekeeping forces.

As we saw above, secrecy is an illusion, and anyway not legitimate at the UN, but the protection of operational information may be necessary—at least temporarily—in operations. Suitable concepts and means of information protection must be developed, giving the Security Council strict control and the troop providers and even the host countries controlled access, but well and credibly protected from the conflict parties.

Kinetic and Combat Technologies Remain Unsuitable

Peacekeeping does not seek to engage in combat, but it may be forced into it: often defensively for its area control forces, sometimes offensively for its intervention assets. These commitments are undertaken with strong limitations: effectiveness, discrimination, reversibility. Effectiveness: the peacekeeping force must not fail, or it will discredit the international action, which is often the last recourse in situations of serious injustice. Discrimination: the peacekeeping force must not engage in friendly fire, especially by one national contingent on another, or to inflict any collateral damage to the population, or it will negate the very reason it has been sent there. Finally, reversibility: it must be possible to stop the force's action at any moment, both to recognize that the offender has thought better of his actions and to avoid a slide toward war.

Any weapon finds its combat effectiveness in two main parameters: mobility and destructive power. Land mobility requires special vehicles, called all-terrain vehicles. In this field, “4X4” technology has made affordable vehicles available to the area control forces, although they do not offer any ballistic protection. But today, “4X4s” are also available to the parties in conflict, and at low cost, forcing peacekeeping “intervention” forces to call upon much swifter helicopters. Swifter but also more expensive and requiring maintenance to a degree that the United Nations finds difficulty in supporting logistically.

Destructive power is a condition of the effective-

ness of peacekeeping, but it is moderated by the limitations of discrimination. In this field, the combination of localization technologies and optronics, both inspired by counterinsurgency operations, has made important progress in the capacity to distinguish and spare friendly forces and populations. This progress remains limited by the lack of reversibility of the effects of the weapons.

True mobility, for instance the speed of systems such as armed helicopters, offer great operational reversibility. On the other hand, the effects of contemporary weapons remain largely irreversible. The dream of nonlethal weapons, with controlled and reversible effects, is not for the moment a reality, except to a limited extent for light weapons alone. It is not possible to see a real avenue for progress that would allow us to dream of peacekeeping with fully reversible force.

Under the impetus of the needs of the war in Iraq, infantry equipment has recently been the subject of significant progress, which could be applied to peacekeeping. The Western infantryman, the foundation of area control and thus also of peacekeeping operations, is now better protected, communicates more closely and discreetly with his comrades, knows and reports his position with more precision and reliability, operates at night with the same ease as during the day, and finally is able to fire in a more discriminating fashion, less likely to produce collateral damage and harm friendly forces. It is regrettable that this equipment is not yet available to the armies of developing nations, which are those with the greatest presence in peacekeeping today.

Is Automation a Way to Achieve Robustness in Peacekeeping?

The appearance of remotely operated machines is a major factor in the development of the contemporary battlefield. Unmanned air vehicles (UAVs), in particular, have been omnipresent in some major crises such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. These UAVs are sometimes entrusted with ground attack missions but more often surveillance missions. In this surveillance role, UAVs would be an invaluable asset for peacekeeping and would contribute to its robustness by the endurance and ubiquity of their vigilance: perimeter control and information gathering over the entire area, security

of the approaches to the area by the area control forces, and coordination of the means of intervention.

At present, the cost and lack of maturity of the UAVs has dissuaded peacekeeping operations from their systematic use. But their costs are decreasing, while their technology is becoming more mature, and their use could spread, as is already the case in NATO operations. The more so since these resources are well suited, legally and operationally,

for use on a rental basis, possibly provided by civilian operators. Other means of battlefield automation are too expensive today to interest the United Nations, and often run counter to the fundamental principles of peacekeeping. Armed drones in particular, which provide an effective and invulnerable use of force, at present offer insufficient discrimination and thus present a risk of too significant collateral damage to be employed in peacekeeping operations.

Conclusions

ROBUST PEACEKEEPING AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

These pages have tried to determine the objectives, doctrines, and mechanisms that would make peacekeeping more robust. Peacekeeping ought to be robust enough to convince two or more belligerents to stop a conflict and to be able to protect the political initiatives of the international community, its actors, and the local population without showing weakness. This level of robustness should still not necessarily include force, but it should henceforth include the will, the organization, and the resources to never have to yield before violence and to have the capacity to react offensively each time the peace process or its actors are in danger.

Arriving at this point, we might ask what separates robust peacekeeping from counterinsurgency operations (COIN) as practiced in Iraq and in Afghanistan. After the display of air-land operations in 2001 in Afghanistan and 2003 in Iraq, the American forces in these two theaters gradually moved toward methods that resemble those of peacekeeping in many particulars: the introduction, then the primacy, of the political process, respect for, then cultivation of, the populations, discrimination followed by restrained use of force. To do this, Americans, followed by the Allies, have curiously borrowed the methods of colonial wars and then decolonisation, held in contempt a few years earlier. Hubert Lyautey and David Galula suddenly became more popular in the USA than in France, at the price of a certain idealisation of the humanism of the first and an unquestionable overestimation of the effectiveness of the second.

Like peacekeeping, COIN strives to convince, and to convince it endeavors to protect. However, its purpose is not only to be unyielding to *insurgents*, but to coerce them. While it agrees to restrain this force when doing so may be effective, it reserves the right to express it fully when it thinks it necessary, including by targeted assassinations, which the Security Council could not authorize.

Over and beyond its objectives and methods, COIN remains a Western action fueled by Western preconceived ideas, which *insurgents* rise up against. The latter are enemies who must be held in check, if not destroyed. The population is the target

of a “hearts and minds” campaign by Western forces to lower support for insurgents. On the other hand peacekeeping aims to be an action without enemies, an effort of the whole international community to convince the antagonistic factions to live together in peace. Finally, and no doubt most importantly, *counterinsurgency* is a war of the rich, with the means of the rich against threats to the interests of the rich, whereas peacekeeping tries, with very limited means, to protect and reconcile the poor.

In spite of these international challenges, peacekeeping remains an irreplaceable tool. It must undoubtedly become more robust, if only to preserve its credibility. But it cannot do so to the detriment of the undeniable progress of the second half of the twentieth century, which is the possibility of using force for something other than war. Just as it is now common to use police forces to preserve social peace in the domestic life of states, without seeking to coerce protestors by violence, in the same way there are now many situations that can be regulated by persuasion on a global scale, supported by force but not achieved by violent means. It is our duty to preserve this type of progress, and to strengthen it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concepts and Doctrines

1. Make the **duty to protect** the **criterion for the use of force** in peacekeeping, rather than just self-defense.
2. Develop **standardized crisis-situation concepts and analytical procedures** that can be used to highlight the risks and distinguish the key security factors.
3. Develop concepts and training that will enable peacekeepers to **master the cultural interface**.
4. Make the **securing of the perimeter of the crisis area** a structuring element for the design of peacekeeping operations.
5. Make **intervention capabilities**, which may be internal or more often external to the mission, a systematic component of peacekeeping operations.
6. Set up a system ensuring **cohesion among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries, and the Secretariat**, both at the start of,

and during, the operation.

7. Incorporate a media strategy as an element of area control, to assist the peace process.

Organization, Procedures, and Mechanisms

8. At the strategic level, improve procedures and mechanisms for **contingency planning**, to permit reaction in the field to military risks that could impact at any stage on the security and the progress of the operation.
9. Launch operations through a double Security Council resolution process, which would include:
 - a **first resolution** establishing the **objectives** and the mandate of the operation; and
 - a **second resolution** validating the **modalities by approval of the report of the Secretary-General**, in particular including the Concept of Operations and the ROEs.
10. Develop **procedures and mechanisms for protecting information**, striking a balance between, on the one hand, the UN's duty of transparency with respect to the international community, and, on the other, the protection of peacekeeping forces and their sources of information and planning.
11. Reinforce telecommunications procedures and capabilities in order to **improve inter-contingent cohesion** and the multidimensional cohesion of the peacekeeping operations at the theater level.
12. Strengthen telecommunication procedures and resources in order to improve the **vertical cohesion** of peace operations.
13. Develop information-systems procedures and capabilities to ensure **cohesion of the operations over time** despite changes of personnel.
14. Develop **intervention capabilities minimizing friendly-fire incidents** and collateral losses, including issues of organization, procedures, and technology.
15. Increase the use of **surveillance UAVs** in peacekeeping.
16. Make the most recent technologies for the **individual and collective protection** of soldiers available to **contingents from less-well-off nations** engaged in area control.

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