

A stylized globe is centered in the background, showing the continents of North and South America. The globe is rendered in shades of blue and green, with a dark blue background. The text is overlaid on the globe.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Robust Peacekeeping: The Politics of Force

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It is now widely agreed that the world faces old and new security challenges that are more complex than our multilateral and national institutions are currently capable of managing. International cooperation is ever more necessary in meeting these challenges. The NYU Center on International Cooperation (CIC) works to enhance international responses to conflict, insecurity, and scarcity through applied research and direct engagement with multilateral institutions and the wider policy community.

CIC's programs and research activities span the spectrum of conflict insecurity, and scarcity issues. This allows us to see critical inter-connections and highlight the coherence often necessary for effective response. We have a particular concentration on the UN and multilateral responses to conflict.

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Preface

Dr. Bruce D. Jones

Director and Senior Fellow

Center on International Cooperation

“Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical.”

–Blaise Pascal

United Nations officials and diplomats in New York often argue that the central comparative advantage of the Organization is its intrinsic legitimacy. This legitimacy derives from its universal membership, the legal standing of the Security Council, and the values embodied in the UN Charter.

But the UN's field officials will be the first to stress that on the ground, the legitimacy provided by the Charter and by Council mandates are ephemeral. What really lends a UN mission legitimacy is not the intrinsic features of the organization but the actual functions of the operation. It is both the perceived legitimacy of the project itself – the principles from which it is derived, their resonance in national politics – and the effectiveness with which those principles are translated into practice that make or break an operation's credibility.

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, UN peacekeepers had a comparatively easy case to make. The passing of superpower rivalry allowed some proxy wars to end, often assisted by international mediators. UN and other peacekeepers, secured and extended the duration of the settlements agreed – though some regions relapsed into war when peacekeepers left. The basic dynamics of peace settlement in those early post Cold War years played well to the UN's comparative advantages: the parties were more-or-less ready to lay down their weapons; the UN could stand impartially behind an agreement all the major parties had signed; and the geopolitical interests of the superpowers were in at least temporary abeyance.

But the UN went on to learn the hard way, that principles without power were insufficient, through the tragedies of Angola, Rwanda and Bosnia. Force, too, was required to implement peace agreements where all parties were not fully on board or spoilers threatened. The size of peacekeeping forces grew. And as the Cold War receded, and new humanitarian space opened, the UN started to extend its reach beyond the demobilization of armies to the protection of civilians – often with wholly inadequate resources.

As failures of protection mounted, the UN was simultaneously exploring a related concept, that of the responsibility to protect, now doubly encoded in General Assembly resolutions and more hesitantly in the Security Council. Although as Jean-Marie Guéhenno points out in this collection, the protection of civilians and the responsibility to protect are conceptually and operationally distinct, they confront similar constraints in this sense : they must be backed by robust force, properly conceived and authorized. Having failed to mobilize the requested robust force in Sudan, and arguably in Lebanon, or Sri Lanka, the R2P concept risks becoming merely justice without force – powerless.

Elsewhere, to complicate things, the UN has found itself intervening or re-organizing its interventions to protect *governments* and extend their authority. This mode of action was mandated for instance in Lebanon, where the UN's force was re-organized, not just to create a buffer between Israel and Hezbollah after their brief war, but also to extend the authority of the Lebanese state into the south. That function involved, *inter alia*, assisting the government in disarming all non-state armed groups – a function complicated by the fact that the government of Lebanon now includes Hezbollah itself.

Protecting and extending state authority has also been the goal in Haiti, where neither civil war nor peace agreement triggered the latest UN intervention; rather, the steady deterioration of state capability and legitimacy drew the UN into a protective response, one made vivid by the UN's decisive use of force in Cité Soleil to extend the state's purview and the rule of law. The UN mission in the DR Congo has also evolved in this direction. There, the UN deployed to help implement a long-awaited (if seriously flawed) peace agreement, helped organize two elections and – with the EU's help – tamped down two major episodes of renewed violence. Now, the UN is for all intents and purposes fighting a war in the east alongside the elected government, a government whose political program is at best uncertain and whose army's human rights record is abysmal – but whose opponents have shown an even more callous disregard for human life or humanitarian law.

Because extending state authority can place a premium on the effective use of force, both the concept and practice have generated substantial controversy inside the Organization – nowhere more so than in Somalia, where the outgoing US administration drove through the Security Council a resolution establishing first an African Union mission and then a UN mission of support to the AU to reinforce the government, such as it was, in Mogadishu. Absent anything remotely resembling a political strategy, the idea of deploying peacekeepers into Mogadishu to defend a figment of a government struck many governments, north and south, as foolhardy in practice and problematic in principle.

As a matter of principle, the converse can be justifiably argued: that the function of protecting governments and extending their authority is a job rather close to the founding purposes of the UN. The UN Charter is, after all, a document of mutual self-protection by its signatory governments. And while governments can be beastly and brutal, so can anarchy. Protecting governments from unjust insurgency, terrorism, and other threats is a well-grounded function of the Security Council, whose primary responsibility is not to the welfare of members' populations but to deter threats to international peace and security. Peacekeeping has been shown to be a useful part of broader responses to those challenges.

But to return to the opening point: legitimacy lies not just with the authorizer but also in the eyes of the beholder. Backing a government against its opponents may be a perfectly legitimate action in Charter terms, but how does it square with the broader principles and politics of peacekeeping? Is the goal of extending state authority a legitimate arrow in peacekeeping's quiver?

Much depends on this variable: does the government in question command internal and external legitimacy and support? That is not a matter of principle but of politics – but the value of UN action derives precisely from the fact that it blends principles and politics, the one without the other being either feckless or dangerous. Where a government commands widespread legitimate and credible authority, action to protect it, alongside a political program to reduce the risk of renewed conflict, looks like a viable approach – one that seems likely to survive the test of action in Somalia and elsewhere.

The question of who decides is another critical factor: Is it merely a matter for the Security Council to determine whether a given government warrants protective support from the UN? If the P5 can reach consensus, as they eventually did in the case of Somalia, does that constitute adequate deliberation? On what set of publicly defensible principles could the Security Council make this determination?

Here, the practice of the UN is more workable than its structure. For whereas the rules of authorization would leave this decision in the hands of the Security Council, and unaccountable for it, practice leaves the decision to a far wider debate – mainly among peacekeeping contributors but also other actors, like neighbors, who have the capacity to either disrupt or facilitate a peace process. The Security Council can authorize whatever it likes on whatever basis it chooses but if no troop contributors will participate, then the Council is left with the sound of one hand clapping – all intent and no implementation. Troop contributors have the most important vote of all; they can 'vote' simply not to participate. (Financial contributors it is true have rather weaker options.) And they will choose

not to send troops, as they have in past and as they did in 2008 in Somalia, if the mandated task is risky and if the government in question does not command regional and international support. In most regions, most of the time, only governments with a broad base of support are going to be met with action from both the Security Council and peacekeeping contributors. A messy answer, true; but not all messy answers are wrong.

Even then, the UN is left with this quandary: is it workable to have the same tool, wielded by the same managers, operating under the same basic framework, deployed to do two different tasks: protect populations from their governments (as in the protection of civilians and R2P); and protect governments from their opponents (as in the extension of state authority)? Of course, civilians just as often require protection from non-state groups and building state authority is not simply about protecting governments from armed opposition. But the tension remains no less valid.

All these issues and more are in play in the current peacekeeping 'reform' debate. As ever, the word "reform" misleads. At issue is not merely the question of how to make UN peacekeeping a more effective tool. A more fundamental issue is this: on what basis and through what mechanism do the UN's member states want to protect themselves, each other, and their people against evolving threats – and in so doing meet the basic requirements of a humane international system?

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Robust Peacekeeping: The Politics of Force

J. Nealin Parker

Center on International Cooperation

Introduction

Robust peacekeeping and, in particular, protection of civilians garnered significant attention in 2009. In January, the Australian and Uruguayan governments hosted a conference on civilian protection designed to convince wary member states. In November, the Security Council's open debate on protection of civilians in armed conflict considered the findings of an independent panel on implementing protection mandates. Looking ahead, the Council's mandate renewal for the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), scheduled for December 2009, is expected to strengthen the mission's protection capacity. Furthermore, in April 2010, the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations in Australia will also focus on protection issues. These discussions have taken place against the backdrop of a number of reform efforts, including the Department of Peacekeeping/Department of Field Support "New Horizon" project and the French/UK initiative in the Security Council – itself motivated by the siege of Goma in 2008.

As this activity suggests, major questions remain concerning the conceptual underpinnings of robust peacekeeping, its outer limits, its relationship to broader – and evolving – political dynamics at the United Nations, and its operational implications for the field. Over the past several years, the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) has produced a body of work on robust peacekeeping that addresses dimensions of these critical gaps. CIC's work has explored UN and non-UN peacekeeping operations, military and police dimensions of robust peacekeeping, and incorporated headquarters and field perspectives. This publication presents new material by former UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno and CIC Director Dr. Bruce Jones, with previous contributions from Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed, William Durch, Madeline England, Ian Johnstone, and CIC staff.

This introduction draws together this research around four themes: (i) **concept**: what robust peacekeeping is, and why it is important; (ii) **headquarters**: what approach at the United Nations headquarters level will contribute to the effective use of robust peacekeeping as a tool; (iii) **field**: how robust peacekeeping fits effectively in the broader context of a peacekeeping field operation; and (iv) **alternatives**: what alternatives are available and how they might be used to decrease the burden on an already overstretched UN Secretariat.

Conceptual Underpinnings of Robust Peacekeeping

Lack of consensus on an accepted definition of what actions fall legitimately into robust peacekeeping is part of a larger strategic debate over peace operations at the United Nations. When Ralph Bunche established the principles of peacekeeping in 1947—impartiality, consent, and the minimum use of force—he was applying them to a much smaller peacekeeping office in a nascent United Nations, in a world with very different expectations of the institution. Importantly, he was applying them prior to the tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica from which more robust peacekeeping mandates and doctrines of protection of civilians emerged.

Peacekeeping has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. Of the 17 UN peace operations deployed in 2009, only five (UNFICYP, UNIFIL, UNDOF, UNTSO, UNMOGIP – all of which were originally deployed prior to 1979) adhere to the original monitoring model of peacekeeping (Sherman and Tortolani, 4). The initial principles governing engagement of peacekeepers remain relevant today, but do not offer clear guidance to force commanders in certain circumstances—where, for example, the minimum use of force to protect civilians is not “no force,” or even force only in self defense. The appropriate use of force is central to the peacekeeping debate because it challenges each of the principles. Using force challenges the UN's ability to be recognized as an impartial player; the definition of “minimum force” can become subjective once it passes beyond the threshold of self-defense; and the use of force has increased difficulties in gaining consent in places like

Sudan, where force is seen as a challenge to the sovereignty of the government (Johnstone).

Forging a common understanding of robust peacekeeping and doctrine of the use of force is increasingly urgent as missions employ ad hoc approaches to the new challenges in the field. This increasingly presents negative consequences. Elsewhere, Gowan has noted how inconsistency can both impede streamlining command and control, and also increasingly complicate efforts to form unified doctrine. Johnstone also suggests a further concern of how this leads to “uncertain expectations among the parties to a conflict, local populations, and the multiple participants in complex operations” that the traditional principles of peacekeeping “were developed in part to manage.”¹ (Johnstone, 66).

Despite these drawbacks, robust actions are increasingly demanded and mandated. Durch and England note that by mid-2008, mandates for over 80% of both troops and police in UN operations were Chapter VII (the chapter mandating peace enforcement) (42). Johnstone’s “Dilemma’s in Robust Peacekeeping” begins with the understanding that robust peacekeeping is already a given in today’s post-conflict toolbox. Member states and others demand it, and DPKO has responded with more robust peacekeeping. It explores four peacekeeping operations between 2000 and 2005 – Sierra Leone, East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti – that illustrate this trend. In each, Johnstone highlights how the Security Council provided a Chapter VII mandate, but that missions each began with a less forceful response and grew to use a more forceful one as the crisis escalated. As this trend is likely to continue into the future, the challenge is to acknowledge the demand for robust peacekeeping more cohesively and strategically.

CIC has argued, however, that demand is but one part of the equation, and that critical to answering questions of what robust peacekeeping should look like in the future, one must focus on the supply of resources for robust peacekeeping. All of CIC’s writing on robust peacekeeping

recognizes the serious constraints the UN faces in composing peacekeeping. Gowan and Tortolani note, “In the short to medium-term, the UN will of necessity have to work with military resources broadly comparable to those it has at present – and in some cases, even less.” (50) As neither the demand nor the supply of robust peacekeeping is binary, however, finding equilibrium between the two requires a closer look at the measurement of degrees of robustness.

Measuring Robustness

As there is diversity in the understanding of the term robustness, so too are there myriad ways of measuring the “robustness” of a force. CIC and others have used two categories of measurements. First, “nominal robustness” – the price of the mission in numbers of troops, armored personnel carriers, and other materiel – and second, what might be viewed as “real robustness,” the measure of how much effort the mission is capable of exerting in relation to what is required. In the “Limits of Robust Peacekeeping,” Gowan and Tortolani measure nominal robustness by (i) the number of troops per person and per square mile, and (ii) the resources made available to a force, such as combat vehicles and attack helicopters. Acknowledging that each measurement represents an oversimplification, they compare four missions, Sierra Leone, the DRC, Haiti and Liberia, to illustrate the diversity in resources (human and capital) between missions asked to take on ‘robust’ activities. As Jean-Marie Guéhenno concludes, “protecting a population – as opposed to fighting an enemy – requires sizing the force in proportion to the population. UN peacekeeping forces are massively below the ratios commonly discussed for such tasks” (8).

The third measure of robustness Gowan and Tortolani use is what a peacekeeping mission can accomplish – measuring robustness in relation to potential effects of its efforts rather than merely how much the UN financial contributors pay. This measurement acknowledges that missions are increasingly sent to more complex areas, in large countries with difficult logistical obstacles, and more sophisticated spoilers (Jones, Gowan, and Sherman; Gowan and Tortolani; Johnstone). Over the past years, peacekeeping missions are

¹Richard Gowan, *The Future of Peacekeeping Operations: Fighting Political Fatigue and Overstretch*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and The Century Foundation, April 2009, p. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/06238-20090331.pdf>

increasing in nominal robustness, but in some cases, not fast enough to meet the increase in effort required. When this occurs, in places like DRC and Sudan, a mission may appear nominally robust, but be less capable in real terms of executing a robust mandate. This distinction becomes important in the management of expectations of local populations, who may alter their behavior, believing that a peacekeeping force is sufficiently robust to protect them.

Ian Johnstone uses the same principle of measuring “real” robustness of both police and militaries by examining case studies of UN peacekeepers efforts to achieve two robust activities: protection of civilians and filling the security gap (Johnstone, 69-73).

Neither more robust mandates nor increased resources can alone match supply to demand in real terms. Measuring robustness needs to incorporate a much more comprehensive analysis that includes, *inter alia*, human and capital resources, strength and breadth of mandate, the degree to which the UN dictates and controls the security playing field, operational complexity of a mission, political space to operate in the field and at headquarters, potential (and efficacy of) partnerships with other peacekeeping and security forces both regionally and locally, expectations of robust action by local population and spoilers, number and power of spoilers, size of country (both in terms of people and land), complexity of conflict, and nature of security gap.

Origins of Effective Robust Peacekeeping at Headquarters

Many scholars, CIC’s included, have commented on the importance of clarity of doctrine. A unified doctrine of peacekeeping is an early step in diminishing some of peacekeeping’s long-suffering ills in the field—coordination and unity of purpose. The lack of clarity of doctrine, however, is part of a larger issue facing DPKO: the need to build trust between key players in peacekeeping. Effective peacekeeping is predicated on trust and political cooperation at headquarters among the Security Council, the Secretariat, and troop contributors. Notably, defining a common doctrine can be a reinforcing exercise in building

this trust, supporting a virtuous circle (Sherman and Tortolani, 14).

Jean-Marie Guéhenno focuses on politics at headquarters and issues of command and control, arguing that “the key to credible, implementable ‘robust’ peacekeeping mandates lies in building political unity among member states through broader participation in both decision-making and operational implementation, and in strengthening command and control arrangements”(8). Guéhenno highlights two reasons Security Council engagement is a critical condition of success: first, to promote burden-sharing and collective engagement of decision-making nations; and second, to provide uniform strategic guidance from HQ to the field given the complexity of robust operations (9).

Gowan has argued that restoring trust at headquarters will require addressing three imbalances: “A basic factor underpinning governments’ desire to transfer peacekeeping risks to one another and spread them across international institutions is their own lack of resources. Compounding the lack of investment in peacekeeping capacities, peacekeepers are being asked to take on increasingly challenging tasks. In addition to financial and operational difficulties, international organizations are constrained by political divisions over the principles of peace operations reducing the chances of effective strategies.”² Sherman and Tortolani focus specifically on the process of negotiating mandates, concluding, “a collaborative mandating process appears to be the most promising way to ensure that the political consensus that supports UN peacekeeping operations is maintained” (18).

CIC’s paper “Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty” suggests several mechanisms to improve the strategic approach to peacekeeping and ameliorate tensions between the UN Secretariat and Member states, including a focus on alternatives, logistical and procurement capacities, tactical mobility, sufficient robust units and “investment in informal and semi-formal modes for strategic dialogue.” Specifically, that

²Richard Gowan, *op. cit.*, 2009, p. 5

“political and military advisors of Member states could perform a vital “challenge” function to secretariat drafts of missions’ concept of operations;” provided it included key troop contributors and allowed the secretariat to propose, reject, accept, or ‘accept with caveats’ drafts for missions. Importantly, the report stresses the importance of these reforms within the context political bargains that will improve trust and share decision-making (19-33). Guéhenno suggests two more, namely a two-step approach to peacekeeping mandates recommended by the Brahimi report and further strengthening the Office of Military Affairs of DPKO (10).

New mechanisms exist that both suggest we may be making progress, and give opportunity for future cooperation. Gowan, in a separate report, notes five inter-governmental initiatives: a “Heads-of-government conference on the peacekeeping system which included the top 25 TCCs; joint development of military and police resources for peace operations—especially a pool of helicopters, and police units; rapidly deployable reserves; investing in knowledge management and communication across international organizations—to build “shared concepts and doctrines” available to all, and an international pool of civilian peacekeeping staff.”³

Robust Peacekeeping in the Field

Robust peacekeeping has achieved positive results in specific instances. Critically, when a mission does engage in robust action, it must do so as part of a wider political strategy (Guéhenno, 8). The example of Haiti—where robust peacekeeping in areas of Port-au-Prince cleared out gang strong holds, but national political and security forces must work together to prevent backsliding—demonstrates how important it is for sustainability to concentrate on political engagement.

Gowan and Tortolani highlight the importance of robust action toward the broader goals of security and justice. Practically, this means balancing robust action against the challenges to justice that the violence might cause—a dilemma that Johnstone explores more thoroughly.

Richard Gowan, *op. cit.*, 2009, pp. 6-7.

Johnstone reviews two peacekeeping activities in the field that can require both police and UN troops to use force: protection of civilians and filling the security gap. He notes a series of dilemmas that peacekeeping operations must resolve in the field. Related to the responsibility to protect, he reinforces the concern that a nominally robust peacekeeping missions and robust mandates raise the expectations of local populations, and failure to live up to these expectations can have deadly consequences (also emphasized by Brahimi and Ahmed). He notes that robust protection of one area may spark reprisals in a less well-protected area, as has been seen in the DRC, and that peacekeepers should have guidance regarding preemptive force to protect civilians versus an action of last resort. He couches all these issues within a greater discrepancy between the timeline for installing security, which is very short, and achieving justice, which is both much longer and may be undermined by a forceful installation of security (Johnstone, 65-76). In the provisions of public security, Johnstone charges the UN to address issues of coordination among the military, constabulary and individual police forces that may each be necessary to tackle the complex security issues in the post-conflict environment. He notes that this may require deciding whether joint operations should be under military or police control. While the latter makes operational sense, Johnstone cautions that robust policing by national actors may send the wrong message to a nascent police force meant to be engaged in “community policing,” and send the wrong message to communities who may associate the new police with “paramilitary groups” that “have been part of the problem” previously (Ibid., 73).

Alternatives

Given the difficulty in operationalizing effective robust peacekeeping, the high risks and costs, it is important to explore alternatives. Noted by Gowan and Tortolani, but expanded upon significantly in “Building on Brahimi,” alternatives can be useful, may be necessary, and should always be considered prior to deployment of a robust force.

Building on Brahimi notes ten alternatives to deployment of a robust peacekeeping force:

1. mediation missions (Middle East);
2. mediation and coordination missions (Afghanistan);
3. civilian observers (Nepal, Nuba Mountains in Sudan);
4. civilian observers with over-the-horizon protection (OSCE in Kosovo);
5. military observers (Israel-Syria);
6. police, training and rule of law missions (Balkans);
7. logistical support to and oversight of national police capabilities (Chad);
8. preventive deployments (Macedonia);
9. either in partnership with multi-national forces (Timor-Leste)
10. Member state supported forces under UN command (Lebanon summer 2006.) (Jones, Gowan and Sherman, 20)

Brahimi and Ahmed expand upon the role of mediation both as an alternative to and central component of peacekeeping missions. They draw out seven mistakes in mediation that can fatally compromise a mission's attempts to reach its objectives: ignorance, arrogance, partiality, impotence, haste, inflexibility, and false promises. Whether a mission engages in robust action or not, however, it will need the robust support of headquarters and rapid deployment (Jones, Gowan and Sherman, 25; Sherman and Tortolani, 14).

Conclusion

Three elements affect the current discussion of UN peacekeeping: the continued and even increasing *demand* for peacekeeping missions, including robust action in difficult terrain, for longer periods of time with more ambitious mandates; the constrained *supply* of peacekeeping, even more so those elements required for robust peacekeeping; and *trust* that is fundamental to effective responses to post-conflict operations, whether robust peacekeeping or an alternative (Jones, Gowan and Sherman, 21).

Beyond management of expectations and promotion of alternatives to UN peacekeeping, the United Nations can do little to affect the *demand* for robust action. Member states have shown themselves to be currently unwilling to increase resources necessary to dramatically change the *supply* for peacekeeping, and the financial crisis may even decrease contributions. *Building trust* among the Security Council, Secretariat, troop, and financial contributing countries, however, is fundamental, achievable, and necessary for effective peacekeeping.



**Robust Peacekeeping:
Building Political Consensus
and Strengthening Command and Control**

Jean-Marie Guéhenno

Introduction

Considerable attention has been devoted in recent years to robust peacekeeping, particularly in the context of protection of civilians – what it means in conceptual and operational terms, what capabilities are required for the UN to effectively do it, and what its potential risks are.

Unfortunately, much of this attention has been misplaced. As Richard Gowan and Benjamin Tortolani rightly observe elsewhere in this collection of essays,¹ debate on robust peacekeeping is either “legalistic” or “unrealistic.” In the first instance, it is concerned with nuances of language – in Security Council mandates, in DPKO concepts of operation and rules of engagement – that are politically important at UN Headquarters and in capitals, but have much less operational relevance on the ground. In the second, it is concerned with altering rules of engagement and providing greater offensive capacity that will enable missions to enforce peace.

Rather, the key to credible, implementable “robust” peacekeeping mandates lies in building political unity among member states through broader participation in both decision-making and operational implementation, and in strengthening command and control arrangements.

Historical Context

Robust peacekeeping emerged after the failures of the UN to prevent the massacres of Srebrenica and genocide in Rwanda. For the past 15 years, the collective memory of the UN and its member states has interpreted these tragedies as the result of overly restrictive rules of engagement, and unwieldy “dual key” procedures requiring authorization by both NATO and the UN for military decisions. While clear, flexible, achievable mandates play a crucial role in empowering the Secretary-General’s Special Representatives to act effectively on the ground, Srebrenica and Rwanda were not tragedies a mandate allowing for the most robust rules of engagement could solve independently. Missing then was the political consensus necessary to use robust

force, clarity on the strategy, and adequate capabilities -- a critical factor that arguably may be once again in jeopardy. Commemorating Rwanda and Srebrenica as issues of weak mandates has led us to legalistic solutions. Understanding these events as failures of political will should push us to see mandates as merely an important but small step in a much larger effort to support a political process and build trust between key stakeholders in peacekeeping.

The discussion around the emerging norm of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has further complicated understanding of robust peacekeeping. It appeared in response to the same tragedies as robust peacekeeping. There is confusion between, on one hand, R2P as defined in the 2005 summit, which refers to extreme situations of genocide and mass atrocities, and considers the use of force as a last resort if a state is unable to protect its people, and the obligation introduced in several resolutions of the Council, for troops to provide, within capacities and in the areas where they are deployed, protection to civilians in imminent danger, which is often understood as the primary goal of robust peacekeeping. The two are often conflated, and peacekeepers are then expected to perform as some sort of international police that would enforce law and order in places where they are absent.

Goals for “Robust Peacekeeping”

Clarity is needed on what robust peacekeeping can and cannot achieve. In the confusion of a civil war, the commitment of non-state actors to a peace agreement is never a solid guaranty; consent becomes a relative and evolving concept: it can be ambiguous, and it can be withdrawn. By definition, consent cannot be imposed. Peacekeepers cannot become a full-fledged counter-insurgency force chasing those who reject a peace agreement. The forces deployed would have to be much larger than what the international community can provide. As the literature on counter-insurgency shows, protecting a population – as opposed to fighting an enemy – requires sizing the force in proportion to the population. UN peacekeeping forces are massively below the ratios commonly discussed for such tasks. At the same time, by raising the threshold that spoilers need to cross

¹Richard Gowan and Benjamin Tortolani, *Robust peacekeeping and its limitations*, Paper given at US-UK-Canada-Australia “Quad” talks on peacekeeping, NYC 10/12/08

to derail a peace process, a robust UN peacekeeping force can discourage dissent, prevent some spoilers from taking a peace process hostage, and help create a space for the process to take roots, all of which can provide an interim source of trust to make up for the lack of trust between the parties. The choice between the use of force and mediation will always be a difficult one, dependent on the dynamics of a particular situation. By a selective and politically savvy use of force—picking fights that it can win and thus discouraging others who would be tempted to use force—it can help create a political momentum that provides some limited protection to civilians, while a broader political strategy unfolds.

This more modest definition of the goals of “robust peacekeeping” does not make the concept easier to implement: on the contrary, recognizing the inevitable gap between, on the one hand, what would be needed to effectively protect, via military deployments, an endangered population and, on the other, the military and police resources available raises difficult operational and ethical issues. Hard choices will have to be made, based on a solid appreciation of the tactical situation and an understanding of the overarching political strategy. It implies 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 pro-active posture, to keep the initiative, and contribute to the gradual emergence of a stable and accountable state: in the end, this is the only effective and sustainable answer to the challenge of protection. To perform such difficult tasks, peacekeepers will have to take more initiative; they will also incur significantly greater risks.

The implications of robust peacekeeping for Security Council members, troop contributors, and command and control arrangements

Robust peacekeeping requires solid political backing and engagement from the international community: peacekeepers have to be prepared to do more, in ever more challenging situations. This means more risk for the troops, and difficult decisions for commanders, greater interaction between troop contributing countries, and

among members of the Security Council, the secretariat and the missions.

The first critical condition of success is burden-sharing and collective engagement. Today, the United Nations depends heavily on South Asian and African troops foisting on just a few countries an undue share of the risks of participation in peacekeeping.² Meanwhile, the only significant deployment of western countries in a potentially challenging environment is in Lebanon. While North American and European militaries are major troop contributors to the Security Council-authorized NATO mission in Afghanistan, their absence in most UN-led missions has three major negative consequences for robust UN peacekeeping:

- (i) First, 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.
- (ii) Second, the capacities available in the armed forces of the richer nations (intelligence, mobility, targeted firepower) mitigate the risks of robust peacekeeping and would make it more effective.
- (iii) Third, robust peacekeeping can work only if it is imbedded in a broader political strategy. 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. Conversely, the predominance of western countries in Afghanistan or Lebanon also undermines a message of universality, which is essential for the legitimacy and success of any peace operation. Burden-sharing is not only necessary to gather the necessary resources, it is necessary to make robust peacekeeping operationally and politically viable.

²Of the top ten troop contributors to UN missions, all but one are from developing countries, and of the top seven, four are South Asian, and three are African. United Nations Peacekeeping Fact Sheet, April 30, 2009, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/factsheet.pdf>

Secondly, participation by members of the Security Council is needed because of the complexity of robust peacekeeping. In the fluid environment of a robust peace operation, many decisions will have to be made in theatre, and tactical situations can have strategic implications. While the strategic guidance given by headquarters to the mission should be strengthened, and the flow of information among the field, headquarters, and the Security Council amplified, the effective conduct of a robust peace operation requires that commanders in theatre be empowered with a much greater authority to take initiative than would be the case in static peacekeeping. The Security Council cannot and should not expect to have the same degree of control and oversight through its resolutions on a fluid and robust mission that it exercises on a more static mission. The tendency to adopt resolutions with an ever-increasing list of tasks³ 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.

Thirdly, robust peacekeeping, because it entails many difficult decisions, cannot succeed on the basis of ambiguity and divisions. It 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 bringing this triad closer to the mission.

Two possible mechanisms to encourage more unity of operation are being debated. One, the two-steps approach recommended by the Brahimi report for the adoption of resolutions might be a way to ensure that the vision of the

³Indeed, these tasks occasionally compensate for a lack of overarching political strategy in the Security Council on the most difficult environments. "Protection of civilians," while a moral imperative, does not provide a clear strategic direction for those tasked with implementation. Instead, the UN is left to translate this mandate into operational priorities. But due to the unwillingness both of the UN to be transparent about its limitations and of troops to make open-ended commitments, as well as to the lack of detailed pre-deployment knowledge regarding the political-military situation on the ground, priorities are determined by circumstances rather than methodic analysis.

Council and the understanding of the troop contributors are truly aligned. It would not delay action, since effective action happens only if all troop contributors are fully on board. Meanwhile, troop contributors need to have full confidence in the strategic level, and further strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs of DPKO might open the way to a better interaction with them, for example by giving their officers a greater role in the planning process of specific missions through secondment in a proportion that would not overwhelm the core structure. Any such reinforcements, however, would also need a parallel strengthening of the political-military interaction in DPKO, and, where formed police units are deployed, the police division. While the Office of Military Affairs reforms enjoy greater consensus than the two-steps mandate reforms, the question remains whether those reforms have gone far enough to meet the requirements of operational oversight.

The relationship between the strategic level and the mission, and within the mission between civilian and military sides needs to be further clarified. Furthermore, a consensus needs to be developed so that all troop contributors, notwithstanding different military traditions, are comfortable with UN command and control arrangements. Western militaries argue that the operational structure of UN command and control should more closely resemble the more centralized structures of the EU or NATO. Other troop contributors are comfortable with the more decentralized model of the UN—where Force and Police Commanders answer to a civilian Special Representative of the Secretary General. This model allows a mission to tailor military posture to political goals in a much more flexible and adaptive manner than those to which most militaries are accustomed. But too much decentralization in high-risk environments may lead to circumstances where the authority of the Force Commander is challenged, implicitly or explicitly, by the assertion of national chains of command. It may also put too much responsibility on the Force Commander and the special representative, with the risk that bad decisions may be taken before the Council has a chance to alter the course.

Conclusion

The discussion on robust peacekeeping needs to be complemented by a discussion on the command and control arrangements of the United Nations. The objective should be to strengthen the grip of UN Headquarters on missions, above all for peacekeeping missions with robust mandates, without losing the flexibility of a decentralized approach. This discussion should be approached with an open mind: complex peace operations are relatively new, and while the United Nations has the greatest experience in that type of operation, no organization—UN, NATO, EU, AU—has the full answer and the pros and cons of various arrangements need to be carefully assessed. But if the trend toward more robust peacekeeping is to continue, enlarging the pool of troop contributors to include the armed forces of developed countries is a high priority; a common understanding needs to be built among nations on the nature and scope of robust peacekeeping, and the specific command and control arrangements that its successful implementation requires. Complex and robust peace operations can succeed only if they have solid political and operational support from all member states.



Implications of Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in United Nations Mandates¹

Jake Sherman and Benjamin Tortolani

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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping has been predicated on broad political support among key groups of Member States: the Security Council, major troop and police contributing countries (T/PCCs), and leading financial contributors. Shared political vision among members of the Security Council enabled it to authorize ambitious multidimensional and, of late, robust operations. T/PCCs were largely willing to deploy the troops and police to implement increasingly complex and high-risk mandates. Financial contributors, with few exceptions, were willing to pay the rising costs necessary to sustain these operations.

Today, however, the broad coalition of support is deteriorating, threatening both individual peace operations and the effectiveness of peacekeeping as a tool for maintaining international peace and security. The practice of the Security Council of increasingly mandating peacekeeping operations where there is no accepted peace agreement, or where “robust” tasks like protection of civilians and supporting government forces are central to the mission, is a principal cause of this breakdown. In *A New Partnership Agenda*, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support call for revitalizing the reforms and reemphasizing the principles identified by the “Brahimi Report”, as well as for a long-term effort to build a new coalition of support among Member States and the Secretariat to ensure the success of future missions.

Acknowledging this need, the Security Council has taken a number of steps during the latter half of 2009 to strengthen consultation with T/PCCs on mandate renewals.

Considerable – and necessary – attention has been placed on achieving greater clarity and consensus on robust peacekeeping, conceptually and operationally. At issue among major T/PCCs is the equity of participation in high-risk environments – like Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo – and the opportunity to influence dimensions of mandates concerning application of force. In other words, it is about whose troops are on the ground,

reaching consensus on what they are being asked to do, and the means in which they do it.

There is another dimension of contemporary multidimensional mandates where further political consensus and institutional alignment is also needed, however: peacebuilding and statebuilding activities. Both are increasingly frequent and central elements of mission tasks. As the UN struggles to deliver in high-profile peacekeeping environments like Darfur and the DR Congo, it is encountering pressure where it has established stability, as in Haiti and Liberia, to transition from heavy and costly security-oriented peacekeeping operations to lighter, peacebuilding-oriented missions. But, for many Member States, peace-building and state-building activities—particularly security and justice sector reform—are controversial ones. Moreover, the expansion of peacekeeping into these areas has de facto extended the authority of the Security Council, with political, financial, institutional, and bureaucratic implications that have yet to be fully addressed.

Multidimensional Mandates

Between 1945 and 1990, the Security Council mandated just 18 missions. With the exception of the UN Operation in Congo (ONUC), mandating peacekeeping operations prior to 1990 was a relatively straightforward exercise. During this era of “traditional peacekeeping,” UN missions were mostly unintrusive operations, deployed to monitor cease-fires and peace agreements and rarely straying from the core peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality, and non-use of force. As William Durch notes, these missions were mandated by the Security Council to serve three sets of functions:

- a. As *fair witnesses* to peace accords, observing and reporting on compliance, but with no ability to impact events on the ground;
- b. As *referees* to a peace accord, overseeing compliance with some nominal authority to enforce it, and;

c. As *police* to a peace agreement, endowed with the power to impartially implement the agreement with the option of using force in the short term, but leaving long term political decisions to other actors.²

The era of traditional peacekeeping is over, however. Of the 17 UN peace operations³ currently deployed, only five (UNFICYP, UNIFIL, UNDOF, UNTSO, UNMOGIP) can be considered “traditional” operations. All six predate the end of the Cold War. Of the 50 UN peace operations deployed after 1990, the overwhelming majority have followed internal conflicts. Most of these conflicts have occurred in weak states without credible or effective state institutions.⁴

In order to re-establish peace and stability, the range of mandated mission functions rapidly expanded in scope and the complexity in response to the needs of devastated post-conflict states. Tasks like disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), electoral assistance, human rights monitoring, and police monitoring were once anomalous, but set precedents for mission structures and mandates. Multidimensional operations are now the rule rather than the exception, with UN peacekeeping operations currently tasked to implement some 300 individual functions that fall under 21 broad categories (See table below).

Categories of Mandated Tasks for Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations

a. Ceasefire, Monitoring	h. Institution building and support	o. Protection of UN personnel
b. Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration	i. Mine action	p. Provide support to state security
c. Deterrent operations	j. Mission logistics, support and training	q. Public Information
d. Development, coordination and assistance	k. National Dialogue/ Reconciliation	r. Public order/ support to police operations
e. Elections	l. Peace process management/good offices/ Political	s. Rule of Law
f. Human Rights/Protection	m. Police reform	t. Security Sector Reform
g. Humanitarian support	n. Protection of civilians	u. Support and extend of State security and control

Whereas traditional missions were impartial observers and occasional enforcers, peacekeepers in multidimensional operations missions are frequently mandated as *state-builders*, helping to create legitimate, functioning state structures in the aftermath of violent conflict. In certain instances, missions also function as *state surrogates*, extending the authority of fragile states challenged by spoilers to the peace.⁵ This includes both civilian functions to support the states administrative authority and military/police functions to assist (re)establishing a monopoly on force.

Extension of State Authority. Although there are parallels between civilian and military/police operations to extend state authority, there are also clear differences between the two. The use of force implies a different level and form of international commitment. At present, the concept is being stretched to its limits, as the UN is being asked to face increasingly daunting opponents, often with insufficient means.⁶

Recent experience has demonstrated that effective operations to extend state authority cannot be undertaken without substantially advanced capabilities. The militaries of Western countries disproportionately possess the requisite force multipliers and enablers relative to the majority of UN military and police contributors. Western militaries do participate in UN-authorized peace operations—notably the NATO mission in Afghanistan—but have been largely absent from UN-led missions outside of Europe. This has contributed to the recent setbacks in UN peace operations, including the UN-backed African Union mission in Somalia.

Advanced capabilities are necessary, but not sufficient. Force must be used in support of a viable political framework. The centrality of “a peace to keep” and its implications for what a peace operation might realistically achieve was a core lesson of the Brahimi Report. Meanwhile, the global peacekeeping landscape has changed dramatically since 2000. As peacekeeping has grown in size and complexity, so too has the nature and organization of spoiler groups –

²William Durch in Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009).

³Including BINUB and UNAMA.

⁴See Bruce Jones, Richard Gowan, Jake Sherman et al., *Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty*, Center on International Cooperation, 2009.

⁵Durch, op cit.

⁶*Building on Brahimi*, op cit.

from comparably rag-tag rebel groups to organized armies or fighters using asymmetrical tactics. In cases where there is no adhered peace agreement, UN peacekeepers are increasingly the object of spoiler violence – including from the state itself. This trend gives pause to existing T/PCCs, as well as to Western militaries concerned that UN command and control arrangements are insufficient for the task at hand.

One factor in the willingness of Member States to support extension of state authority mandates is whether the state in need of support is perceived as legitimate and viable. The Security Council will not authorize such mandates for a state without sufficient international legitimacy. This is also important for T/PCCs, who will not commit forces to undertake such an operation if the dangers of the operation outweigh the support that the state enjoys, or if the viability of the state is in doubt. The legitimacy of a state may evolve over time – or may be contested, as Afghanistan demonstrates. The imperative of securing peace—combined with the state-oriented bias of the UN (as an organization of states)—may, at times, place the UN mission in a delicate position, particularly in the latter instance. How close should the organization be to the “legitimate” state, versus reaching out to non-state actors and encouraging them to join the political process? Statebuilding and, more so, extending state authority requires a degree of alignment with the state. But too much proximity may compromise perceptions of impartiality, with implications both for the security of UN personnel, as well as the integrity of the mission – particularly if the legitimacy of the state wanes. Reaching out to non-state actors may help the state become, through inclusivity, more legitimate – but also poses dilemmas concerning the UN’s relationship with the state. In several contexts, the nature of non-state actors –the Taliban, for example – may have international implications, as well. How the balance is struck, and how it is managed over time must depend on the specific context.

In the absence of consultations that would permit design of mandates based on available resources, the Secretariat has tended to recommend large forces, conscious of the fact that numbers may be required to make up for a lack

of mobility and capacity to employ deliberate force. The consequence of this, however, has been increased costs, and a Security Council that is often wary of DPKO’s military estimates. This is not to imply that more mobile forces will result in cost-savings, but may be more cost effective – an important distinction.

Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. Several UN missions are deployed in contexts where the government does not have the capacity to project its authority across the entire country and so does not have the capacity to ensure the rule of law and protect civilians across the entire countryside. In such contexts, military operations can play important roles in extending state authority (though setbacks on the ground also demonstrate the difficulty facing the UN). In the longer term, rebuilding and reforming national institutions responsible for upholding rule of law (among other functions) is necessary for consolidating peace – and for enabling the drawdown of both UN military and police forces and civilian personnel.

These tasks are more complex and, thus, more challenging to successfully implement (and to gauge the progress thereof) than the bulk of multidimensional tasks added during the 1990s – organizing and monitoring elections, coordinating assistance, demining, delivering humanitarian aid. They are also overwhelmingly political in nature (if too often addressed technically), directly concerning state sovereignty and the maintenance of power.

Further, the time-span required for many of these tasks—reintegration of ex-combatants, security and justice sector reform, rebuilding administrative institutions, transitional justice—exceeds that of security-oriented peacekeeping operations, while the competencies required have necessitated additional expertise, mostly civilian and mostly in short-supply.

By authorizing peacekeeping missions to undertake many peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks, the Security Council expanded peacekeeping responsibilities into the realm of immediate post-conflict peacebuilding. In the process the authority and competence of the Council were de facto extended beyond traditional boundaries

of “peace and security.” The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change acknowledged this trend and expressed concern that the Security Council did not have sufficient relationships with IFIs necessary for broader post-conflict recovery, that strategic coordination among UN and non-UN actors was insufficient, that timely financing – especially for rule of law activities – was absent, and that medium term political attention to countries emerging from conflict was absent.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was intended to explicitly address the nexus between security and development and remedy these gaps. Within DPKO, the creation of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (ORoLSI) capacities to develop policy and provide mission guidance on the “security side” of the rule of law. The Security Council has also begun authorizing smaller, longer-term, peacebuilding missions – both to situations where a large security-oriented peacekeeping force is no longer warranted – like Sierra Leone, and to those where a large peacekeeping force may be unwarranted – like Guinea Bissau. This transitional marks a significant change in the means by which the UN supports consolidation of the political process – from the strategic use of security to the strategic use of development and institution building.

De Facto Expansion of Security Council Authority

Authorizing UN operations to undertake peacebuilding tasks generally is widely accepted. Nonetheless, as peacekeeping has become more multi-dimensional, the integration of longer-term peacebuilding tasks, and de facto expansion of the Security Council’s competence has had political, financial, institutional, and bureaucratic implications that have yet to be addressed.

Politically, the UN Charter provides the Security Council with “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.”⁷ What tasks fall under “peace and security”? At present, there is no consensus among Member States. Many members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 have reservations

regarding the intentions of Western countries with respect to state-building; concerns that exist despite the fact that most mandates are intended to *reinforce* the authority and effectiveness – if also accountability – of state institutions.

Financially, the budget of a peacekeeping operation is no longer determined solely by the size of the force on the ground. Discussions in the Ad hoc Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly (GA) – the budgetary organs of the UN – now have a much greater policy impact. Detailing tasks in the mission mandate provides DPKO with a means of balancing the increased role of the budgetary organs on peacekeeping policy, but has also led to increased financial scrutiny.

Financing mechanisms for the increased diversity of peacekeeping activities is another issue linking the policy debate and financial debate: for example, how much of Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) activities – or security and justice reform, or institution building – should be funded through assessed contributions versus how much through voluntary contributions? One logical division would be to fund mission-critical tasks from assessed funds, non-critical from voluntary – but defining what is critical depends on an agreed definition of success – something so far lacking.

Institutionally, as the above demonstrates, there is disconnect between the policy discussion in the Security Council and the financial discussion in the General Assembly – not to mention non-UN sources of funding that may be critical for success of a mission.

There is also a gap between the evolution of UN policies and that of its institutions. With the establishment of the PBC and the Peacebuilding Support Office, there is a need for further discussion, clarification, and agreement on the relationship of these institutions with the Security Council. As CIC has noted elsewhere, earlier engagement by the PBC might provide a means for the Security Council to explore an earlier but still sustainable exit from the military phase of peacekeeping. This would require a more engaged stance by the Security Council – above all by the P5 – on

⁷Charter of the United Nations, Article 24.

the role and agenda of the PBC, as well as a more genuine partnership with its non-Security Council members.

Once a mission is mandated, how does the Security Council know when the political and security situation has stabilized sufficiently for it to hand off to the Peacebuilding Commission? How does the Peacebuilding Commission know when its engagement would be productive? Even when there are no or very few troops, the fact of being on the agenda of the UNSC creates some leverage, although less and less as troops withdraw. In establishing the PBC, the Security Council and the General Assembly also authorized the creation of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), explicitly mandating it to “measure progress towards meeting short and medium-term recovery goals.”⁸ There are several obstacles for measuring “success” through benchmarking, however. First, there is a diverse, if converging, understanding of what constitutes minimum progress towards stability.⁹ Second, there is a substantial risk that benchmarks driven by the political imperatives of the Security Council (and of donors) result in goals that have no national ownership, are unrealistic in content, and/or ambiguous enough to declare success when political and donor fatigue sets in. Third, the critically relevant measures – emergence of a viable national political process – is both fluid and, not unrelated, exceedingly difficult to measure.¹⁰

Bureaucratically, multidimensional mandates are predicated on integration of efforts, both in the field and at UN Headquarters – but the extent of actual integration within the UN (or among the UN, IFIs, and lead donors) is woefully inadequate. Neither DPKO, the PBC, PBSO, nor any other UN entity has sufficient bureaucratic leverage – or control of financial resources – to coherently orchestrate the various actors within the UN and beyond. This is problem without ready solution; one that significantly weakens the leverage of the international community in a post-conflict situation.

⁸For UNSC Resolutions see S/RES/1645, 20 December 2005, and S/RES/1646, 20 December 2005. For UNGA Resolutions see A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005; A/RES/60/180, 20 December 2005, and; A/RES/60/287, 21 September 2006.

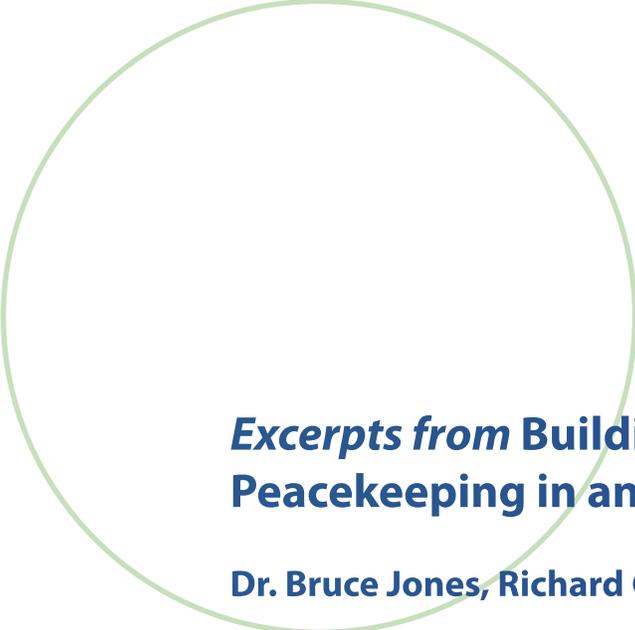
⁹See USIP manual.

¹⁰CIC has suggested elsewhere that the Security Council and DPKO, along with the PBC and PBSO – and possibly the World Bank and other non-UN actors, should examine the feasibility of regular, in-country stock taking against key political and security/stability goals, rather than approaching “benchmarks” in a metric sense. *Building on Brahimi*, *op cit*.

Conclusion

Multidimensional missions, especially those that extend state authority or have explicit protection of civilian tasks, have raised fundamental questions about the purpose of peacekeeping, its limits, and the appropriate use of international resources.

In both cases, a collaborative mandating process appears to be the most promising way to ensure that the political consensus that supports UN peacekeeping operations is maintained. Nevertheless, overcoming the current dysfunctional mandate-making process will require a distinct change in attitude on all sides and an overall commitment to making peacekeeping meet its stated aims.



***Excerpts from Building on Brahimi:
Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty***

Dr. Bruce Jones, Richard Gowan, and Jake Sherman¹

¹With contributions from: Rahul Chandran, Victoria DiDomenico, Benjamin Tortolani, & Teresa Whitfield.

Introduction

This report forecasts some aspects of the likely future of UN peacekeeping over the next five to seven years. It is necessarily speculative and raises issues not easily discussed in formal settings. The paper is not normative or prescriptive. It sets out a series of politically charged challenges and choices, but aims to be as objective as possible in its assessments.

In projecting high demand for peacekeeping, this report identifies factors that are likely to complicate operations in the next three to seven years, including:

- A particular need for the UN and other organizations to undertake operation, sometimes in large-scale theaters with limited infrastructure, requiring robust “expeditionary” capabilities;
- Likely opposition from hardened and sophisticated ‘spoilers,’ often with international backers (state and non-state) in both internal and inter-state contexts;
- Further pressure on peacekeepers to play a primary or supporting role in extending the authority of weak or contested governments;
- Complex and divisive politics not only within conflict settings but also at the regional and international levels about conflicts and the interests and values involved in resolving them;
- Major financial and political obstacles to increasing supply among existing troop contributors to the UN, requiring reinforcements from diverse sources;
- The fact that NATO’s operations in Afghanistan will, likely for the next 3-5 years, sharply constrain the capacity of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) contributors to mount or lead Multi-National Force (MNF) operations, limiting the alternatives to robust UN peacekeeping.

The convergence of these trends requires a multi-track response from the UN Secretariat and Member States. Alternatives to peacekeeping, drawing on political and civilian options, must be fully utilized where conditions allows. When peacekeeping operations are needed, they must be sufficiently resourced and mobile to operate in challenging environments – and have the political sophistication and coherent mandates to assist states to extend their authority responsibly, respecting international norms. Flexible models that combine UN, Member States and regional capacities (while maintaining unified command) will be increasingly relevant. The Secretariat will need to develop the managerial and logistical structures necessary to sustain more complex missions running in parallel.

A strategic approach to UN peace operations must take into account three overarching contextual factors highlighted in this report. First, peacekeeping can only ever be one part of the response to conflict. This study looks beyond the internal dynamics of peacekeeping. Second, when it comes to peacekeeping itself, a focus on the UN should not detract from the fact that the organization operates in the context of a multi-actor system encompassing NATO and regional organizations. Developments in the politics, ambitions and capabilities of these actors will affect the UN’s role. Third, for the past decade, peacekeeping has run on a coalition based on three premises: that the Security Council has the shared political vision to authorize ambitious and robust operations; that financial contributors are willing to pay the rising bill; and that troop contributors will continue to contribute troops. All these premises are now in doubt.

Fortunately, there is still a general desire to make peacekeeping work across the full spectrum of UN members.

We argue that, in addition to revitalizing reforms rooted in the Brahimi Report, UN operations require a new coalition between Member States – with the Secretariat as a proactive partner. This should involve joint responsibility for three aspects of peacekeeping:

- *Effectiveness* – there is no point in peacekeeping if it does not perform against clear goals;
- *Efficiency* – the financial crisis will add significantly to a pre-existing demand for more targeted use of peacekeeping resources, and more efficiency within operations;
- *Equity of response* – maintaining political support for peacekeeping over time will require sharing the burden more consistently and more closely aligning decision-making to risk-taking.

These conclusions derive from an assessment in four parts. Drawing on these four sections, finally, we propose a way forward: a three-pronged strategy that would address the immediate challenges to current operations; allow for a resumption of institutional reforms; and lay the foundation for a strategic transformation of peacekeeping to ensure that future UN operations are operationally robust and politically credible.

The politics of peacekeeping: Crisis and opportunity

The functions and value of peacekeeping

During the Cold War, the UN launched 18 peacekeeping missions. Since 1990, it has launched 50, alongside an even greater number of mediation efforts. Some of these efforts ended in failure, most horrifically in Rwanda. But UN and non-UN operations alike have scored successes, primarily through performing three sets of functions: (i) assisting countries transition from civil war to stable governance; (ii) reducing tensions across borders; and (iii) mitigating humanitarian crises. These sets of functions are not mutually exclusive, and are often mutually reinforcing.

In fulfilling these tasks, UN and non-UN peacekeeping have been recognized as a strategic tool in the maintenance of international peace and security. Peacekeeping has also grown exponentially – collectively, peacekeeping organizations have almost 200,000 troops in the field. Indeed, contributing to peace operations has become a

sign of international responsibility. Despite the importance of these efforts, peacekeeping currently faces a crisis of confidence. Some of this is warranted, some of it a reflection of other failures. Improving the performance of peacekeeping necessitates distinguishing the symptoms of this crisis – in various forms of overstretch – from its causes, which lie as much in political as operational problems.

Symptoms of the current crisis

Throughout the last year, some of the largest UN and non-UN peace operations faced challenges that posed new questions about the viability of peacekeeping. It is not surprising that individual peace operations are required to handle serious crises. That is their purpose, even if international institutions and governments play down the risks. But there have been enough common factors in the crises of the last year to suggest that the whole peacekeeping system (including UN and non-UN operations) has become dangerously overstretched, and is underperforming.

Peacekeeping overstretch can be broken down into three main sets of challenges: (i) personnel overstretch; (ii) financial overstretch; (iii) headquarters overstretch.

Personnel overstretch. The military dimensions of overstretch are the easiest to quantify. Currently, nearly 80,000 military personnel – and a further 12,000 police – are serving in 18 UN missions worldwide. The organization has nearly ten times as many personnel as it did a decade ago. But the UN is finding it increasingly difficult to find and deploy the personnel necessary for new missions.

Financial overstretch. Although UN operations are cheap relative to those of an advanced military alliance such as NATO, which cost five times as much per capita,² their total cost has risen steadily. The budget for UN peacekeeping

²The per capita cost of operations is a different metric than cost effectiveness. Here, there are more questions. A 2006 GAO study on UN operations in Haiti is widely cited in the UN for its note that UN operations cost roughly half of what a US-led operation would cost. However, a careful read of that report highlights the second part of the argument: that a US-led operation would deliver roughly twice as much. That part of the argument is less often cited at the UN. See, United States Government Accountability Office, *Peacekeeping: Cost Comparison of Actual UN and Hypothetical U.S. Operations in Haiti*, Report to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives (February 2006) at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06331.pdf>.

reached a record US\$8 billion in 2008-2009.³ This marks a ten percent increase over the previous year and a five-fold increase in just under a decade. These costs with the financial crisis and political obstacles to funding in Member States is complicating the UN's peacekeeping finances. The UN's peacekeeping budget must be set in context of rapidly rising costs at the EU, the AU and NATO, as well, since many of the large contributors to the UN budget also underwrite these organizations.

Headquarters overstretch. The hardest dimension of overstretch to quantify is its effect on command and control structures. The UN has a decentralized command structure, with decision-making powers vested in the mission leadership in the field. This arrangement of autonomous political and military control, with modest backstopping from New York, was designed in response to traditional operations where the challenges faced were largely political in nature. In empowering Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) to craft context-specific strategies, the system has often served the organization well.

It is not certain, however, that this system is well adapted to sustaining large-scale missions in complex threat environments. SRSGs and force commanders sometimes struggle to maintain authority over large forces. Decisions on high-risk operations are often taken without sustained discussion with headquarters, and thus without sufficient political support if they go wrong. Although Secretariat capacity has expanded in recent years, its growth has been outpaced by the number and size of operations in the field, and even more so by the territorial scale of those operations. Although the Secretariat bears the brunt of this form of overstretch, the Security Council is not unaffected.

Causes of the crisis: Operational problems

Although military, financial and secretariat overstretch are all symptoms of the current peacekeeping crisis, but they are not its causes. The roots of the crisis can be divided

into two sets. The first is operational, concerning how missions are mandated and run. The second set is political, concerning how operations are legitimized on the ground and internationally.

The operational causes of the crisis include: (i) stalled reforms at UN headquarters; (ii) the scale and complexity of the UN's operating environments; and (iii) a failure to devise effective exit strategies for peace operations, linked to the UN and international community's lack of effective strategies to promote early recovery.

Incomplete reforms. In 2000, the Brahimi Report set out an agenda of reforms for UN peacekeeping that remains only partially complete. Reforms aimed at enhancing personnel quality, logistics, and command and control have stalled at Headquarters, while efforts to develop "integrated missions" by linking all elements of the UN family to peace operations have been frustrated on the ground. More recent reform efforts, such as the "Peacekeeping 2010" agenda and the fundamental reorganization of peacekeeping machinery launched by the Secretary-General in 2007, have yielded some initial benefits, though it remains unclear whether these reforms will gain traction over time.

The problems are compounded by the perception that the Security Council has also forgotten to observe the "rules" of Brahimi: the need to match politics to peacekeeping, and resources to mandates. After a period of improvement in Security Council performance on mandates and resourcing, some lessons have gone unheeded in recent Security Council debates, resulting in a negative attitude among UN staff towards the mandates they receive.

Problems of scale. Delivering on mandates in the field is increasingly complicated by the nature of the operational theaters involved. The growth in the number of UN peacekeepers, and especially those in large-scale missions, has been offset by the size and logistical difficulty of the environments to which they deploy.⁴ In cases like the DRC, Chad and Sudan a lack of infrastructure exacerbates the

³Except where noted otherwise, figures in this report are derived from the Center on International Cooperation's Annual Review of Global Peace Operations series (Lynne Rienner, 2006 onwards).

⁴For example, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) at the start of this decade deployed 17,500 troops in a country of 28,000 square miles – a ratio of one soldier for every 1.6 square miles. The UN now has a similar number of troops in the gigantic DRC, with a ratio of one soldier for every 50 square miles.

problem of scale. Implementing complex mandates in such environments often leads to an excessive dispersion of forces, reducing the chances of effective responses to military challenges, especially where quick reaction forces and air assets are lacking – a problem not confined to the UN, as NATO experience in Afghanistan shows.

The strains on the UN are magnified by the fact that many states with advanced military capabilities deploy under its command highly selectively or not at all. Today, fewer than 2% of UN troops in Africa come from Europe or North America. Many countries' limited role in UN forces is offset by major contributions to UN-mandated missions through other organizations. But in purely operational terms, it constrains the UN's access to specialized military assets, and places a burden on a number of large contributors – most obviously South Asian – to fill the “asset gap” in an increasing number of missions.

Exit strategies: Transitioning to peacebuilding and development, the challenges facing UN peacekeeping are not of peacekeeping's making alone. Limited as reforms to the peacekeeping system have been, they have outpaced efforts to overhaul parts of the UN and wider international architecture to foster economic recovery activities vital to sustainable peace. The consequence is that early initiatives to build a functioning government and to jump-start economic activity are frequently not launched. Local confidence in both local leaders and the international community suffers. In some cases, the mismatch between peacekeeping and ineffectual recovery efforts creates a situation in which the peacekeepers cannot leave without renewed violence – a very poor reward for risk-taking by blue helmets.

Causes of the crisis: Political problems

The operational causes of overstretch are acute, but they reflect deeper political causes of peacekeeping's current malaise. Those include (i) a failure to link peacekeeping to effective political processes, not least by the Security Council; (ii) problems of consent around UN missions, challenging long-standing assumptions about how UN peacekeeping functions; (iii) divisions between states and

the Secretariat over the goals, limits and management of peacekeeping.

Political process failures. That peacekeeping cannot substitute for an effective political process was a central lesson of the Brahimi Report. Many missions – DRC, Sudan, Georgia, Afghanistan – have had to operate in the absence of effective political processes. In the cases of Darfur and DRC, the UN decided to hand responsibility for mediation processes to teams separate from the peacekeeping missions reducing the peacekeepers' leverage. Such divisions of responsibility can be problematic in that political judgments should determine the overarching strategy for UN operations, rather than being on a separate track.

The challenge of consent. The greatest single conceptual challenge for UN peacekeeping today may be defining how the principle of consent applies to modern operations. Consent, along with impartiality and non-use of force, is a core principle of UN peacekeeping doctrine, derived from Cold War operations – and reaffirmed in DPKO's 2008 “principles and guidelines.” Yet over the last decade, Security Council mandates have grown increasingly ambitious, especially around the use of force, and peacekeepers are deployed in theaters where they cannot expect the consent of all parties.

More problematic still is the question of consent by host states themselves. Some UN missions have had to operate in the face of explicit withdrawals of consent by governments, as recently seen in Ethiopia/Eritrea. Others have had to contend with constraints on their actions as a price for continued consent, as in Darfur and Chad.

Such cases raise the problem of how far the UN can operate contrary to the will of a host government. This is not merely an operational problem, but a political one that goes to the heart of UN peacekeeping. It highlights divisions between states that emphasize the importance of sovereignty (including major troop contributors) and those that give humanitarian concerns and human rights precedence in some cases. These divisions are exacerbated by wider tensions over international intervention, which

have poisoned debate at the UN since the Iraq War, eventually infecting what had been a strong consensus on peacekeeping. In particular, debates over Darfur were affected by a false but potent analogy between the idea of a UN presence in Darfur and the role of Western forces in Iraq – and the UN's peacekeeping role there has since been complicated by arguments over the International Criminal Court's indictment of President al-Bashir.

Indeed, the Darfur operation has encapsulated virtually all the obstacles to effective peacekeeping noted above. It is deployed in a vast space, lacks sufficient forces to handle that space, is overshadowed by international differences over its role, has no credible peace process to maintain – and does not enjoy the genuine consent of either the host state and many non-state actors. The consequence is that the UN has found itself in a strategic muddle, operating neither in an enforcement mode nor with a political basis for consent-based peacekeeping. Even with weak consent from the state the mission was able to mitigate the humanitarian crisis – but the limitations on even that mode of operation have been highlighted by the fact that it has not stopped Sudan expelling many NGOs from Darfur.

The extension of state authority

Divisions over peacekeeping and sovereignty are misleading because *the majority of large-scale UN operations are deliberately designed to extend rather than limit the authority of states*. While diplomatic debate at the UN is still shaped by the legacy of Iraq, the Security Council is normally in the business of strengthening governments rather than changing regimes. This fact, often overlooked, is essential to explaining some recent successes and failures of peacekeeping – and may help guide future deployments.

The evidence shows that the extension of state authority, through military means and policing as well as civilian assistance, has become a core function of the UN peacekeeping. The UN's large, multi-dimensional missions now frequently use (or at least project) force not merely to fend off direct attacks from spoilers, but as part of

deliberate strategies to expand and secure the authority of a government in contested territories.

In Haiti, for instance, UN operations in Port-au-Prince have successfully given the government authority across the capital. Missions often shift over time from having the implementation of a peace agreement as their baseline stance to extension of state authority as the central mission goal. This was certainly true of MONUC in 2006-7, after elections. Nor is extension of state authority a new phenomenon: (1999 in Sierra Leone).

Military and police operations to extend a state's authority fit with wider UN thinking on "statebuilding." The concept of extending state authority and capacity is now widely accepted on the civilian side of operations and post-conflict peacebuilding (although the terminology is confused). Unfortunately, neither UN missions nor the wider international community are well organized to rapidly and coherently deploy civilians in theatre to support this function.

While there may be a parallel between civilian and military/police operations to extend state authority, there are self-evident differences between the two. The use of force still represents a different level and form of international commitment. And in the present moment, the concept is being pushed to its limits, as the UN is being asked to face increasingly daunting opponents, often with insufficient means.

Current debates about a possible UN peacekeeping operation for Somalia present an extreme case of what the extension of state authority may require. There are roughly 80,000 armed individuals in Somalia, but their loyalties are fluid, and it is unlikely that they will ever form a coherent coalition for or against a UN mission. Yet at the present time, factions deemed hostile to the UN control a large swathe of Somali territory, while the government (with an army of approximately 2,000 only) has control primarily in and around the capital. Additionally, there is a substantial threat from foreign fighters using Somalia for a proxy war. While deployment of a peacekeeping operation to extend the authority of the Somalia government is a conceptual

possibility, it faces three key obstacles: the scale of the challenge would require UNIFIL-scale resources; a lack of international and regional confidence in the viability of the current Somali state has meant that no such concentration of troop contributors is available; and in the absence of a broader political settlement, there is some evidence that international forces would not just encounter resistance but exacerbate it.

Conversely, the last year has seen halting yet real progress towards a political settlement. It is possible that a viable peace – and, by extension, a viable Somali state – could emerge on two conditions. The first is sufficient political support to a national government from domestic actors, the UN and international community. The second is the deployment of a substantial international force against the backdrop of that political settlement to protect that government from inevitable spoilers and deter revolts. So long as those conditions do not apply (as they do not at present), the question of whether the Security Council decides to authorize a UN force for Somalia is secondary; the primary reality is that no one will contribute forces.

The odds of such an outcome remain doubtful. Yet it is striking that, if these conditions were met, the political basis for a successful mission would be stronger than that now prevailing in Darfur. The Security Council's decision to deploy a force to Darfur without a sustainable peace deal or true consent of the state has left the UN in a worse quandary than its still-incomplete debates on Somalia.

The fact that earlier missions were able to use force decisively (or at least project it), while the mission in Darfur has been far more troubled, suggests that rather than talking about a 'Mogadishu line' in peacekeeping (deploying where there is no consent from some non-state actors) we should identify a 'Darfur line' that the UN peacekeeping cannot afford to cross: deploying where there is no (real) consent by the state. With only weak consent of the state missions may be able to mitigate humanitarian crises, but they will not be able to establish or sustain a political or security framework. Lack of consent by a non-state actor does not necessarily undermine the logic or support for peacekeeping, if there is a recognized

state and a broadly supported political framework for that state's extension of its authority in the country. Haiti's gangs did not consent to the use of force to clear them from the slums of Port-au-Prince – but the operations against them have still contributed to peace.

The politics of peacekeeping: A new coalition?

Operationally, effective extension of state authority operations cannot be undertaken without substantial advanced capabilities. In Haiti, Brazilian troops led by a Brazilian force commander were in the lead for Cité Soleil. In DRC, the rapid deployment of Operation Artemis in 2003 created a window for stability in the east of the country – although it also created false hopes of European support in all future DRC crises. Instead, India and Pakistan have played the role of military enablers – providing attack helicopters and conducting offensive operations – alongside African troops. In UNIFIL, European nations have provided logistics and intelligence, twinned with large Asian infantry contingents. This is true also of missions deployed to help implement peace agreements and/or protect civilians in large-scale territories where states have limited capacities.

Such combinations of forces are not available to all UN missions all of the time. They are glaringly absent from any potential mission to Somalia. However, cases from Haiti to Lebanon show that the UN should not fall prey to low expectations: the UN can provide the framework for ambitious missions with diverse troop contributors. The opportunities for them to do so will depend on two elements. First, it will depend on the extent to which the Security Council, UN Secretariat and wider international community can establish a viable political framework, either for support to the extension of state authority or in the form of peace agreements that are genuinely sustainable through peace operations. Second, it will depend on the balance between demand for such operations and the supply of forces.

In resolving the range of challenges described in this section—from the purely operational to the deeply political—this report argues for (i) a revitalization of reform

processes rooted in the central arguments (if not all the technical details) of the Brahimi Report; and (ii) a longer-term effort to build a new coalition combining states and the Secretariat to deliver efficiently and effectively on future missions. The logic for a new round of institutional and political reforms is set out below, with two main sets of priorities:

- **Secretariat reforms**, especially in the management of personnel, command and control, and logistics/procurement/IT – reforms that allow the UN to become a more effective enabler of Member States’ forces;
- **Renewed UN Security Council attention to the lessons of Brahimi** – especially in matching peacekeeping to political process; and in matching mandates to resources.

Connecting these two is the need for more flexible interaction between key stakeholders in UN peacekeeping, especially in the design and oversight of operations, to more closely align decision-making with risk-taking.

The need for this interaction also points to the broader need for efforts to form a new coalition around peacekeeping, with goal of delivering effective operations through: (i) greater attention to alternatives to peacekeeping, including political and civilian operations (ii) sufficient logistical and procurement capacities for the rapid deployment and longer-term sustenance of peacekeeping missions; (iii) sufficient tactical mobility and specialized assets to give missions freedom of movement; and (iv) sufficient robust units and force protection.

Creating a coalition committed to these goals cannot be achieved through updating UN systems alone, but requires a series of political understandings and bargains if it is to succeed. These include a bargain between the Secretariat and Member States by which the Secretariat improves its peacekeeping mechanisms in return for an increased investment of resources by governments – and a bargain between current core contributors to UN missions and states currently absent from them, to ensure a sufficient

supply of specialized assets and other necessary units to new missions.

Beginning on Page 31, we lay out reforms we believe are essential for the Secretariat to meet its side of the first bargain with Member States. Although these are complex, they essentially fall into three categories (i) developing more expeditionary and robust capabilities to support missions; (ii) overhauling staff systems to ensure the quick deployment of top-class civilians to support missions; (iii) encouraging Member States to engage more flexibly in mission management issues. However, it must be clear that the necessary reforms are not a matter for the Secretary-General, but require the active approval and support of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The second bargain – between Member States – must address the imbalances in UN forces that result in the UN’s recurrent lack of specialized assets. This requires both the ongoing enhancement of current troop contributors’ capacities – in many cases requiring multilateral or bilateral assistance – with new commitments to the UN by countries that have largely stayed away from its operations in recent decades. In blunt terms, this means increased African capacity building and increased western and major power involvement. But the UN also requires continued engagement by (and political incentives to) those states, especially from Asia, that lead in filling the “asset gap” at present.

We also believe that future operations require a renewal of the basic political consensus at the UN about the uses and limits of force – in defense of the mandate; mission; civilians; and, crucially, in the extension of state authority. This might ultimately be encoded in a ‘strategic concept’ for UN peacekeeping – perhaps building on DPKO’s Capstone Doctrine process.

Peacekeeping and the alternatives: Strategy, mandates and resources

In much of what follows, we examine the performance and requirements for peacekeeping operations with substantial military components. First, we explore lighter

models. The decision to deploy a peacekeeping operation should follow a considered discussion of strategic options, reflecting country and region-specific realities. That strategic discussion should include rigorous analysis of the alternatives – including political missions, lighter operations and partnership operations. These options are not always available, however, and function only under certain circumstances.

Credible strategy grounded in political realities must in turn be reflected in the mandate of an operation – and resources matched to it. In some recent cases, Security Council mandates have been detached from realities on the ground; the Secretariat or Security Council have pursued strategies that have lacked political credibility; and missions have mustered resources insufficient for their tasks, especially during crucial initial deployment phases, when security functions of the mission may be in highest demand. The resulting tensions are particularly significant where large-scale military and police deployments are at stake.

Strategy: Political and military factors

If almost everyone agrees that UN peace operations must be based on coherent strategies, there is much less agreement over who should design those strategies. Within the Secretariat, as is in all bureaucracies, turf wars at times displace or distort strategic discussion of options (though recent innovation in strategic assessment through the Policy Committee may help). More seriously, between the Secretariat and the Member States, UN strategy is a product of multi-tiered negotiations between the Secretary-General (who will have to implement it); the Security Council (which will have to authorize it); General Assembly bodies (who will have to agree to pay for it); and relevant regional and international powers (who will have to back it if it is to work).

This process is further complicated by the fact that resources for operations and headquarters are split between the assessed budget (which pays for Security Council mandated operations), the peacekeeping support account (which pays for headquarters capacities to

backstop peacekeeping), the regular budget (which pays for established political missions) and voluntary funds (for which the smallest, and least expensive responses – like political envoys – have to scramble.) Different scales of assessment for different types of action lead Member States to lobby for or against one mode of operation or another based on their relative scale of payment; lead departments to compete for lead roles in part on the basis of resources that then accrue to them; and result in the fact that mission support units housed in one department (e.g., Electoral Affairs Division, Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions) are not properly resourced to backstop missions led by another department.

The most important factor in deciding the success or failure of any peace operation is the credibility of the political strategy it is meant to serve. Political strategies evolve over time. Later, we discuss integrating all aspects of post-conflict strategy around the objective of establishing or re-establishing national political processes and state authority – the only sustainable exit strategy for large-scale operations. When considering whether to deploy at all, however, the Security Council should keep in mind that the most effective political strategies for concluding conflicts may be implemented through mechanisms other than a peace operation.

The last several years have witnessed a trend towards large-scale peace operations, both in the UN and other organizations. But cases from the Sudan to Afghanistan have shown the limits on what troops can achieve when the credibility of national political process or national government is weak. Recent research has emphasized that, in many positive cases, *peace operations succeed thanks to effective mediation by their civilian leaders rather than simply by their military presence*.⁵ Of course, a military presence is sometimes a precondition for mediation, deterring ex-combatants and creating “political space” for cooperation. Yet in some cases, political negotiation can result in self-sustaining peace deals, removing or reducing the need for troops.

⁵Lise Morje Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Credible political processes and military presence should reinforce one another. Ideally, they are inversely related: the more credible the political process, the less the need for a military presence.

Three factors complicate this equation. First, spoilers: as the Brahimi Report established, even where there is broad support for a political process, splinter groups, rogue actors or individuals may use violence to undermine the process, and missions must be able to respond to them. The spoiler problem is greater when (i) there are several parties to the conflict; (ii) spoilers include groups motivated by factors outside the immediate conflict, such as international terrorist networks; or (iii) spoilers include factions of a recognized government.

Second, politics is unpredictable. Even where there is broad support for a peace process up front, delays in implementation (a common feature of peace agreements), deferral of tough decisions, and unforeseen complications (such as a leader's death) can erode support for peace agreements, creating temptations for parties to return to war. An international military presence can deter them, and extend the chance of political negotiations resuming. In such circumstances, the need for military presence could be partially met on a 'surge' or over-the-horizon basis, rather than in-country capacity – but only if that presence is credible and predictable.

A third factor in the relationship between politics and international peacekeeping is legitimacy. Where forces are deployed as part of a peace agreement or political settlement (either a national process, or a Security Council process with broad support) that is widely viewed as legitimate, this will defuse potential tensions around their presence. Where this is not the case, forces may generate greater resistance and hostility.

Beyond these three factors, potentially present in all missions, lies the question of operating where "there is no peace to keep:" situations in which one or more party on the ground is implacably opposed to negotiated solutions. This may be true of rebel forces that profit from natural resource exploitation and have no conceivable political

future in an organized government; terrorist organizations; or gangs and gang-lords. Our projection of demand for UN operations suggests that such opponents will be common in the future.

We do not believe either that it is viable that such groups should be given a permanent veto over political processes - or that the Security Council will sit idly by in circumstances where such a group threatens the integrity of a recognized state or that state's civilians. Indeed, the Security Council and UN peacekeepers – as argued before – have already shown both the willingness and an ability to shift from 'implementation of a peace agreement' as a baseline stance towards the 'extension of state authority'.

Put differently: there are two forms of "a peace to keep:" (i) a viable political settlement between opposing forces; and (ii) international support to a recognized state, whose authority (within the framework of the rule of law) can be defended and extended. Either one has been shown to constitute a viable political strategy within which the UN can operate. Many missions shift from one mode to the other, especially after elections.

The second type of operation is obviously harder. In each case where the UN has pursued "extension of state authority" mode as its baseline stance, its forces have been either led or supported by states with advanced military capabilities.

This mode of operation is not always viable. Although it is exceedingly difficult to identify the precise characteristics of where it will and will not work, an essential factor must be the international community's belief in the legitimacy and long-term viability of a state in need of support. The Security Council will not consider authorizing such options if the state in question does not enjoy a degree of international legitimacy. But this is also a question for troop contributors, who will not volunteer to undertake such an operation if they do not believe the state involved can ultimately cohere, or if the support that the state enjoys is outweighed by the dangers of the operation. Thus it is not only the Security Council, but also troop contributors that have an effective veto over such operations - reinforcing the argument for a broad political coalition for peacekeeping.

Mandate-making and matching resources to mandates

When the Security Council authorizes an operation of whatever type, the mandate given to the operation will shape its performance; and matching resources to the mandate is a vital factor in shaping its likelihood for success.

Formally, strategy is embedded in the mandate, although mandates are closer to goal-statements than strategy documents. Only rarely, as in the most recent mandates for MONUC, do they provide developed lists of mission priorities. At the outset of a mission, ensuring that mandates reflect the realities of a specific peace agreement or political framework, and are matched to in-country realities, requires advanced planning. Here, an example of best practice comes from South Sudan, where the lead negotiators (the US, UK and Norway) ensured that DPKO sat in on negotiation sessions where the option of an international force was discussed, to allow DPKO to engage in pre-planning and ensure that Secretariat and Security Council strategies aligned.

Unfortunately, less collaborative planning is the norm. Among the consequences has been a failure by both the Security Council and the Secretariat to observe three central tenets of the Brahimi Report: that the deployment of forces should be tied to a viable political strategy ('a peace to keep'); that mandates should be linked to the reality of available resources (or, better, that resources must be matched to mandates); and that when one or both of these conditions is not met, the Secretariat should say "No."

Recent UNSC and Secretariat decisions that have deviated from these concepts have caused a great deal of strain in the current peacekeeping system. These central tenets of the Brahimi Report still hold – with some adaptation. What has been absent has been the kind of strategic dialogue between the UNSC, the Secretariat, and troop contributors to translate these guidelines into concrete action.

The Brahimi Report recommended that the Security Council leave resolutions authorizing large-scale missions in draft pending confirmation by the Secretary-General of firm troop commitments. While the merits of a two-step mandating process remain a subject for debate, the underlying rationale is sound. Earlier and more substantive consultation by the Security Council with troop and police contributors would enable the design of mandates based on a clear picture of available troops and police, providing realistic options for what can – and cannot – be achieved. Resulting mandates would have earlier buy-in from troop contributors, hopefully limiting the exercise of national caveats by contingents in fluid environments. The Secretariat should thus aim to say, "Yes, if..."

The Security Council has begun considering ways in which it could improve the quality of its military advice and judge Secretariat proposals. Some of this discussion has been framed as the re-purposing of the Military Staff Committee (MSC): using regular, if informal meetings of its military advisors to pre-vet Secretariat military plans, and/or meetings of political directors to review political strategy with the Secretariat.

We see some merit in this thinking, with two important caveats. First, we believe it would be more effective if it operated – again, informally – in active consultation with major troop contributors. If the Security Council activated a version of the MSC without troop contributors it would actively undermine the cooperation necessary to actually implement any of the Security Council's decisions. Second, we believe it essential that the Secretariat retain the right to make independent recommendations to the Security Council, notwithstanding advice of Security Council military advisors. Responsibility for mission design would rest with the Secretary-General. The Security Council would retain the right to reject that advice.

In addition to providing a stringent test to Secretariat proposals, this kind of informal strategic dialogue could have a second merit: that of validating Secretariat plans for more robust operations where those were warranted. Sound technical advice from military advisors of the Security Council and non-Council troop contributors

would presumably reaffirm the case for robust, mobile, and advanced capabilities when missions are intended to be deployed to challenging environments, logistically or politically or both. Potential troop contributors would have a particularly strong interest in realism in these plans.

All this being said, the Security Council will have to take into consideration the fact that asking DPKO to engage in this kind of strategic dialogue with Member States, while potentially warranted, will *add* to not subtract from Secretariat overstretch in the short term. This kind of strategic dialogue is personnel intensive.

Other factors: rapid deployment and P5 participation

In matching resources to mandates and mandates to political realities, two additional, inter-linked factors warrant discussion: contributions to UN operations by the P5 and other major powers; and rapid deployment. One of the sources of political strain on UN peacekeeping in recent years has been the tendency for Western states not to deploy in African operations.

Reviewing those cases where deployment or reinforcement has been rapid, two factors recur: contributions by states with specialized assets usually absent from UN forces (such as Canada, the Netherlands and Denmark in Ethiopia/Eritrea and the Europeans in Lebanon) *balanced by significant commitments from core troop contributors*. Within the first six months of UNMEE's deployment, Jordanian, Kenyan and Indian forces moved in alongside the European contingent.

Such rapidly deployed, diverse forces create the ability to shape the tactical environment on the ground at the most important, most fluid moment – that when peace deals have just been struck, or missions just authorized. Rapid deployment capacity also creates options for over-the-horizon and surge operations, which can add flexibility, credibility and protection to light missions, and add deterrence in contexts of drawdown. As the Security Council explores alternatives to 'heavy peacekeeping,' it will find that it has far more options in terms of mixing political tools and light military tools if it has sophisticated and mobile forces on offer.

Diversity of forces is not guaranteed to deliver rapid deployment, but does bring a range of benefits. Governments are more likely to commit specialized assets if they are confident that other states stand ready to take their place as a mission evolves, ensuring that they will not have to carry the burden indefinitely. The delivery of large infantry formations, as well as police and civilian staff, may only be possible if smaller, more robust forces can secure initial entry-points.

Nonetheless, a fairly small number of countries – primarily India, Pakistan and more capable African militaries – are increasingly being asked to provide the bulk of specialized assets across the majority of large UN missions. It is no disservice to governments that make up the bulk of UN forces to say that greater contributions are required from other states if (i) a sufficient supply of specialized assets is to be maintained; and (ii) a political consensus on peacekeeping at the UN is to last. There are additional arguments for P5, Western and other major power contributions to UN peacekeeping. Even small contributions from major powers, especially the P5 and key regional powers, provide important political multipliers to missions. Participation of major powers in operations signals to potential spoilers that opposition to the mission carries real political costs.

This question also points to the UN's main comparative advantage as a peacekeeping organization: it is the only organization through which the forces of the P5 and all the major powers, including the rising and regional powers, can jointly participate in providing stability. The P5 and other Western states are making major contributions to UN-mandated operations – especially in Afghanistan. The UN would be well-served if discussions of peacekeeping in New York took more account of UN-mandated and not just UN-commanded operations. Nevertheless, it is only in UN-commanded operations (or mixed UN-commanded, Member State supported operations like UNIFIL II) that major powers from all regions can cooperate.

Delivery on the ground and preparing for exit

Once a mission has been authorized and deployed to the field, it has to deliver. Mission functions have proliferated in recent years, partially to help coordinate a similar proliferation of other post-conflict actors. Priority activities differ by function of the mission—whether to implement a peace agreement, secure inter-state borders, mitigate a humanitarian crisis or extend state authority in contested areas. And they differ – or should – from case to case: the specific national and regional circumstances of an operation must shape mission priorities. But this does not mean that it is inadvisable to plan; two decades of mediation and peace operations do allow for some generic discussion of priorities.

Mission priorities

One result has been a gradual loss of attention to what experience suggests should be the three foci of peacekeeping operations: (i) providing security for the consolidation of peace agreements and national political process; (ii) directly supporting those political processes through facilitation and substantive support; (iii) reducing the risk of recourse to arms by demobilizing forces and helping national authorities articulate the rule of law.

Transitional security: Creating and securing space for politics. To say that a peacekeeping operation (or political mission, or variant) should focus on the consolidation of national political process and authority does not mean that its actions will all lie in the political arena, narrowly construed. As we argued in “Peacekeeping and the Alternatives”, even the strongest political settlement can be tested by rogue actors, spoilers and sudden shocks. Security functions play critical roles in protecting the political settlement.

While robust, mobile forces are often most needed at the outset of operations, ongoing stabilizing forces – or an over-the-horizon surge capacity – may also be necessary. Several UN missions are deployed in contexts where the government does not have the capacity to project its authority across the entire country and so does not have

the capacity to ensure the rule of law and protect civilians across the entire countryside. In such contexts, missions can play important roles in extending state authority. These functions may be the visible focus of an operations activity; but at core they are – or should be – designed to secure space for the central task involved in ending conflict: resuscitating national politics.

Transitional politics: Implementation of the peace agreement, or extension of state authority. Conflicts are triggered by political factors (ethnic grievance, resource competition, elite competition, religious tension), and short of outright victory for one side, political solutions must always end them. Across the entire range of circumstances —from ceasefires with little political credibility to comprehensive agreements—it is essential to foster a *domestic* ability to lead and manage sustainable political processes after war’s end.

This message has been lost in recent years. Containment efforts in counter-terrorism contexts gave rise to a notion of ‘security first’ – the idea that a situation must be secure before political negotiations. But the empirical record shows that the reverse is often true: political settlement is frequently a pre-condition for security.

Helping parties to a conflict forge national political stability requires several things: helping to consolidate national political process; frequently assisting national authorities articulate political arrangements within the framework of revised constitutions; and often helping states build the capacity of their political institutions. By and large, UN peacekeeping operations have been good at the first (mediation), reasonably good at the second (supporting national process), but are totally ill-equipped for the third (capacity building for national political institutions). That is a problem, because the more a political process is *institutionalized*—through inclusive and responsive structures—the more likely it is to manage challenges and avoid new violence.⁶

⁶OECD-DAC, *From Fragility to Resilience: Concepts and Dilemmas of Statebuilding in Fragile Situations* (OECD, 2008) at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/51/41100930.pdf>, especially p. 34 onwards.

Peacekeeping operations need five things to perform their political functions effectively. First, they need strong political teams backstopping the political functions of SRSGs – which they frequently have. Second, they need effective substantive backstopping from headquarters – which they increasingly get. Third, because all politics is local, they need effective political presence outside of capitals – a capacity that is sometimes denied by budget decisions. Fourth, missions need a way to spend money against these political activities, especially as regards capacity building, and this they do not have. Fifth, they need force contingents able to interpret and adapt to local political conditions. This is most difficult – even well-led force contingents are frequently deployed without adequate situation awareness or local political knowledge (an issue we address in our discussion of the pre-training of forces in the next section.)

More than all of this, however, UN field presences need to be linked to and supported by broader political mechanisms, at the Security Council and beyond, that can reinforce their political role and bring weight and authority to bear on UN messages. Consolidating national political stability also often means corralling regional political actors – a task not often suitable for heads of missions, but one that must be closely coordinated with them. In many recent cases, UN missions have not been tied to effective regional processes.

Managing and supporting operations: Speed, security and supervision

If the UN is to contribute to the creation of sustainable political processes within and between states, it must be sensitive to the specific characteristics of every mission environment. But if the UN is to deploy missions rapidly, sustain multiple operations simultaneously and ensure oversight consistently then it must also have standard operating procedures that are robust and have the faith of Member States.

At present, the UN's systems for field support, command and control and oversight suffer from significant weaknesses – but debates on those flaws are highly politicized and

frequently poorly informed. DPKO and DFS are too often required to choose between operational necessity and political expediency in making administrative decisions. This distracts the Secretariat from resolving very real gaps in its capabilities that have been exacerbated by the high tempo of operations in recent years. This demands a bargain between Secretariat and Member States to ensure UN resources are better applied in the future.

Among the consequences of gaps in capabilities is the slow deployment of both forces and civilians that has bedeviled recent UN operations. Looking ahead, two additional concerns loom: protecting staff in an era of enhanced threat to personnel; and adapting command and control systems to the realities of expeditionary, higher-risk, and often trans-boundary conflicts – the likely future.

Improving capabilities in three areas – rapid deployment, staff security and command and control – would allow the UN to serve as a more effective *force enabler* for Member States. These are essential at a time when both advanced and less developed militaries lack expeditionary capabilities; the UN plays a poorly appreciated role in enabling deployments by forces that could not manage them on their own.⁷

In this section we review the innovations required to meet these goals. Refining them will require a greater degree of realism in debates between the Member States and Secretariat as well as within the Secretariat itself. But it is also necessary to acknowledge the financial context for innovation.

The financial context

In the present financial crisis, it is essential that UN mechanisms are cost-efficient – with “efficiency” defined according to operational realities as well as financial pressures. One impact of the crisis has been to slow down the UN's cash flow. In the past, the UN has relied on a number of medium sized financial contributors paying their entire

⁷ The UN's enabling role is not always necessary. In 2006, European forces deployed to Lebanon using their own logistics. In 2008, the European Union deployed into Chad for the first year, creating time for the UN to assemble its follow-on force. In our conclusion we suggest further exploration of such partnership and ‘green/blue’ arrangements.

assessed contribution at the outset of the year, creating a cushion while other contributors work their payment authorization through legislative bodies. Already in 2009, fewer contributors have been able to disburse funds this rapidly. Negotiations in fall 2009 over the assessed budget will likely be tense, partly because some reliable developed countries are feeling an acute short-term pinch from the financial crisis exactly as UN peacekeeping costs are ballooning. The absence of measures for short-term relief, deferred payments, or loan arrangements hamper effective management of the immediate impacts of the crisis.

As we argued in the first section, it is necessary for the Secretariat and Member States to confront the financial crisis together. Indeed, in some areas there is a case for 'counter-cyclical' spending by Member States on UN capacities – with the aim of reducing the much greater costs associated with ineffectual missions dragging on or states reverting to conflict.

In the meantime, we believe that the priority areas for investment within the UN system during the financial crisis should be the following issues:

Speed – Training, logistics and procurement mechanisms for rapid deployment

The first months after the signing of a peace agreement or adoption of a Security Council resolution are a critical period in which to consolidate new political arrangements and lay the foundations for new security arrangements. But UN peacekeepers are rarely present in bulk during that timeframe.

The UN deploys and supports more troops in the field than any actor in the world other than the US Department of Defense – more than the UK, France, China and Russia put together. But shrinking the gap between what is possible when militarily capable governments self-deploy and what the UN can do on a routine basis is a critical goal for enhancing the performance of UN operations.

To go from authorization to deployments of forces on the ground requires: identifying willing and suitable troops; training them; procuring transport to move them to the mission; and procuring the various logistics and support facilities on which the mission will rely. The relevant UN systems (for force generation, training, logistics and procurement) have all been on a path of steady improvement – and have all been outpaced by the tempo and scale of demand. On the civilian side, the logistics and support requirements are lighter, but the pools of available capacity much thinner – and the problem of large-scale, low-infrastructure operating environments are still significant.

Improving the effectiveness of future operations will mean shrinking the deployment gap. This will require, *inter alia*:

Pre-training of forces and force generation. In theory, troops contributed to UN peacekeeping operations are supposed to be trained, fully equipped and able to support themselves. In practice, none of these characteristics routinely apply. A critical weakness in UN peacekeeping, in contrast to NATO and EU operations, is that there is little or no centralized pre-deployment training of forces – and while many force contributors take training very seriously there is little *joint* pre-deployment training of the various national contingents that make up a mission. This substantially reduces the effectiveness of UN operations, especially on the most challenging and critical elements, such as the use of force in defense of the mandate.

Training has traditionally been seen within DPKO (including within specific missions) as a routine, cyclical event, rather than as a tool to influence skills in the field, build necessary competencies, or implement a course correction in mission-specific implementation. Some recently authorized changes – including Integrated Mission Training Cells (which handle induction training rather than pre-deployment training) new web-based platforms for mission-specific information, and an Operational Advisory Team – should begin to improve this, though the scale of training resources at the UN is still miniscule by comparison to scale of operations (to say nothing of contrasts to NATO, EU, or national military comparisons).

Both in the area of pre-training and pre-equipping forces (as well as providing some airlift) the G8+ 'Global Peace Operations Initiative' (GPOI) has been making a substantial contribution. Bringing GPOI to scale (and broadening the burden-sharing; at present, the US provides the bulk of GPOI contributions) would be one important way to address the train-and-equip gap for UN peacekeeping. Partnership with better-resourced organizations (in particular NATO) could be another. DPKO and DFS might also explore the question of facilitating country-to-country partnerships for UN peacekeeping, in which countries with advanced military logistics and support capabilities could agree (subject of course to national decision-making) to consistently co-deploy with countries with more available infantry but less advanced support capacity.

Advanced procurement and budgetary authority. The existing mission procurement is unable to respond to immediate demands placed on it by the Security Council, as with authorization of a support package to AMISOM. DFS has attempted to expedite the process through outsourcing – but even the competitive bidding process involved can be so lengthy as to negate any added advantage. The process is also limited financially. Lessons learned in the 1990s led to the creation of a Peacekeeping Reserve, but the per mission limit for draw-downs from that account is fixed at US\$50 million – irrespective of whether the mission in question involves 4,000 troops deployed in an area with good infrastructure or 20,000 troops deployed in an area with none.

This is especially true when large-scale transport is required to move troops into place. Commercially-provided transport, especially airlift, is expensive and in scarce supply. Slow procurement procedures added to intrinsic limits on the commercial transport market translate into long gaps in deploying forces. Increasing the predictable availability of Member State airlift would substantially loosen the bottlenecks to rapid deployment. This would require overhauling regulations affecting contracts with Member States for airlift.

Improving performance will require the UN to come to grips with the fact that its procurement model is fundamentally

unsuitable for rapid military and civilian deployment. UN peacekeeping operations are subject to the same rigid rules for procurement and contracting as the rest of the UN Secretariat – these are fundamentally unsuitable for the purposes of DFS in supporting missions in the start-up phase.

Advance procurement authority for some predictable components of the mission start up phase is the sine qua non of speedier deployment. Other issues like using sole source suppliers are also relevant. Trying to move quickly in insecure environments often means that there is nothing like the panoply of potential suppliers that a competitive bid system assumes. However, DFS has been criticized by the General Assembly for using single source contracts even in the early phases of missions – leaving UN officials the choice of risking operational paralysis but avoiding criticism, or keeping operations moving but taking political flak for it.

Better performance will thus require revisiting the question of procurement rules and regulations as they pertain to peacekeeping. This may or may not mean revisiting the division of authority between DFS and the DM. The Brahimi Report recommended that “responsibilities for peacekeeping budgeting and procurement be moved out of the DM and placed in DPKO.”⁸ The Secretariat explored the option of revisiting this question during the DPKO/DFS split, and decided that the politics weighed against it.

Logistics done strategically. UN logistics are designed for mature theatres with infrastructure and security, as well as local contracting providers. DRC, Sudan, and Chad, however, highlight a growing trend of expeditionary missions, for which the UN must bring in all materiel. The fundamentally civilian logistics system of the UN is not keeping pace with the demands of mission startup in these harsh environments.

A management system for rapid deployment. The UN's management systems lag behind the scope and scale of its operations. DFS has lacked modern IT infrastructure

⁸UN General Assembly and Security Council, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000. This document is commonly referred to as the Brahimi Report.

commensurate with supporting UN operations, though some new systems are being introduced. DPKO and DFS have developed policies to ensure the proper handling and sharing of information at headquarters and in operational theatres. Among the goals of such systems should be to enable the Secretariat to present to Member States not just mission-specific resource information but data about overall resource flows at a regional and global level. This would enable the Member States to make judgments about priorities, and where necessary shift resources to missions under stress. Such decisions to allocate resources will and should remain those of Member States; but the Secretariat needs the tools to present Member States with an accurate picture of resource gaps and constraints. The Secretariat's systems should also be able to make operational and performance indicators accessible to decision-makers at headquarters and in the field.

Security – Staff security and information technology

Information technology systems are important not just for management, but also staff security. The UN also faces considerable day-to-day managerial challenges, concerning the safety and security of personnel and applying modern IT to peacekeeping.

Safety and security of personnel

Robust mandates, limited consent of parties, difficult operating environments, and deployments along side other military actors expose United Nations personnel to comparatively greater risks than more traditional peace operations. The Independent Panel on Safety and Security of UN Personnel and Premises Worldwide (IPSS) undertook the most recent and thorough evaluation of the UN security management system. The recommendations of the Panel are being implemented by a high-level steering committee chaired by USG for DFS. Priorities are likely to include: replacing the security phase system in favor of the Security Risk Assessment; and shifting to a security culture that enables safe delivery of program activities by all parts of the UN system. Here, commensurate measures are needed to mitigate the risks faced by national staff in

environments deemed too dangerous for internationals, as well as the moral dilemmas associated with employing contractors.

Information technology systems and security

Information Technology, commercially available and relatively affordable, has the potential to revolutionize UN operations. Such technology would permit, for example: (i) monitoring and jamming of combatant communications; (ii) infrared or satellite tracking, enabling preventive engagement to protect civilians or pursuit of combatants even in dense forests, as well as to track mission personnel or refugees; and (iii) advanced GIS mapping to guide military and civilian convoys.

While these technologies are increasingly accessible to the UN, the ability to utilize them as a force multiplier is dependent on technical proficiency that incoming national contingents and UN personnel will not have unless properly trained. Incoming senior mission management likewise may be unaware of the potential application of IT to their work. Briefings and trainings are thus required at all levels to make UN missions fully aware of how IT can help them.

Central to information sharing in operations is the development of Joint Mission Analysis Cells (JMACs) and Joint Operations Centers (JOCs). Day-to-day situational awareness (in the case of JOCs) and the medium and long-term analysis of trends (in the case of JMACs) are critical inputs to threat and risk assessment. The effectiveness of JMAC/JOCs has often been undermined either by mission leadership who do not share their analysis within the mission and/or with the UN country team, or by internal rivalries and competition over their purpose.

Supervision – Command and control and oversight

UN command, control and oversight mechanisms must keep pace with the scale of operations. The UN has moved from the scattered missions of the late 1990s to a series of regionally inter-connected operations that requires a

new level of strategic command and control – capable of (i) addressing political and security problems that cut across missions and (ii) overseeing support systems that, as we have noted, are now at an unprecedented level of complexity.

Command and control

In military terms, the UN continues to vest command and control of troops in individual force commanders and police commanders, answerable in most cases to civilian SRSGs. The relationship between commander and SRSG increases the chance of an effective politico-military strategy. Far from the standard perception, UN command and control systems have shown substantial merit.

But this decentralized command system displays a number of flaws relative to the high tempo of UN operations. One is political: troop contributors find it hard to track events through UN headquarters, although DPKO does provide myriad and regular briefings for TCCs. Governments and missions in New York are nonetheless liable to rely on diverse and conflicting news from the field. Second, adjacent mission operations have resulted in inter-mission friction. An *ad hoc* coordination system has emerged, and force commanders hold frequent joint conferences – but the case is indicative of how regional crises complicate country-level command. A third danger in devolving command and control to the field level is that SRSGs and Force Commanders may initiate high-risk operations without sufficient consultation. Given the risks inherent in such operations, the view that headquarters is not consulting sufficiently exacerbates political concerns.

In an effort to mitigate these concerns, DPKO has expanded its Office of Military Affairs (OMA), giving it greater capacity to generate situation reports and monitor events in the field. However, OMA's capacity is still small relative to the scale of UN operations. This is all the more salient if the changing character of operations compels further robust operations, more mobile missions and/or over-the-horizon reserve capacities to reinforce lighter operations. If these formations were authorized, deploying them in a crisis could not be the responsibility of a hard-pressed Force

Commander alone, but would require back-stopping from Headquarters.

A further risk is that gaps in strategic perspective between the Security Council and TCCs may erode compliance with command. On the one hand, this means that it is incumbent on TCCs to recognize that UN command is real, and ensure that their forces in the field follow Force Commanders directions. On the other, it means that the Security Council has to take seriously the requirement for consultation with troop contributors, lest they be confronted with a proliferation of 'caveats'.

It would be detrimental to curtail the UN's decentralized command system too much – the flexibility and civilian-led qualities of the system cannot be sacrificed lightly. However, it may be necessary to increase the ability of Headquarters to adjudicate decisively in inter-mission disputes and green-light high-risk operations. Vesting these rights in headquarters would not substantially reduce the day-to-day autonomy of Force Commanders, and might have additional positive benefits: strengthening headquarter's role might give the UN a greater chance of managing the regional dimensions of operations and sustaining political support for higher-risk operations.

Appointment of leaders: SRSGs, DSRSGs and Force Commanders

If the UN is to maintain a modified but credible version of its decentralized command and control, it must ensure that field-level mission leaders are capable of taking on all the tasks imposed upon them. Choices of SRSGs will always be political – they are political roles. The key for the UN is to expand its network of contacts to ensure that it has access to the best-qualified candidates, especially in the developing world.

The selection of Force Commanders has been politicized at points as well. Here, the consequences are more problematic. Whereas an SRSG will always be different nationality to the majority of his/her staff, the connection between a Force Commander and large contributors can be a vital tool in exercising effective command and control.

Because national contingents frequently look to national decision-making systems even within mission structures, having the Force Commander of the same nationality of the largest contributor can make an important contribution to mission effectiveness. In all mission contexts, greater attention needs to be paid to the key senior posts that support the SRS. Training has recently improved, as has pre-selection. But more priority could be given by DPKO, DPA, UNDP and other parts of the system to develop a cadre of seasoned Deputies, Chiefs of Staff, and senior mission staff.

Oversight (1): The relationship of Member States to mission command structures

Given the operational and political risks that the UN faces in cases like the DRC, it is natural that Member States (and especially TCCs and major financiers) want an increased say in how operations are run. Member States and the Secretariat alike thus have reasons to promote more constructive engagement by governments with how missions are run—but it is essential that these do not compromise the integrity and flexibility of UN command structures. There have been a number of experiments with how to include Member States more effectively in monitoring and sustaining missions, of three types:

- *Groups of Friends.* The most frequent mechanism for allowing governments to interact with the UN on a country hosting a peace operation is a “group of friends.”⁹ However, the utility of different groups to different missions has varied widely – and the members of these groups are usually distinct from troop contributors to the missions involved, although there have been exceptions (Haiti and Sierra Leone). In considering new mechanisms, one option would be to enlarge the number of TCCs included in groups of friends.

⁹ A study for the Center on International Cooperation in 2006 noted that such mechanisms had been involved in a majority of post-Cold War peacekeeping cases. Specifically: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and the Western Sahara. See, Teresa Whitfield, *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict* (United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).

- *Higher-level political conferences.* In cases where long-term peace operations require political attention and ongoing negotiations to maintain force levels, Member States can facilitate talks through regular conferences such as the “Two Times Seven” talks on Haiti. The political convening power of such events helps increase public political clarity over the goals and needs of peacekeeping.
- *Formalized operational advice.* An alternative to political mechanisms for monitoring and sustaining peace operations is the creation of mission-specific operational support elements, separate to normal UN structures, like the Strategic Military Cell (SMC) for UNIFIL, set up in 2006.

The structures noted here are not necessarily incompatible—nor are they essential in all missions. The variety of mechanisms underlines that the UN is more flexible in creating or accepting routes for Member States to track missions and influence them. The UN should maintain this degree of flexibility in the future: no one model is likely to be appropriate for each mission and environment.

Oversight (2): Managing the peacekeeping system

This report has covered a wide range of complex problems confronting future peace operations. None, however, is as politically thorny as the question of oversight of the peacekeeping system as a whole. The oversight system has been driven in recent times by two issues: the “oil-for-food” debacle; and the scandal of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. On the later, several initiatives, including the introduction of management training modules and the launch of a misconduct tracking system in mid-2008 have yielded early, if mixed, signs of minimizing misconduct through better monitoring and reporting.

However, the concept of ‘oversight of the peacekeeping system as a whole’ is misleading. Official oversight systems are not specific to peacekeeping but rather cover the Secretariat as a whole. Moreover, reporting on peacekeeping by the Secretariat to Member States

is undertaken on a mission-by-mission basis, not on the basis of the system as a whole. There are two results:

The first is that Member States do not have a global picture of the peacekeeping system. Decisions about allocation of resources (troops, logistical assets, money, etc.) are made on a case-by-case rather than a comparative basis. There is some logic to this, in that the mandate and resourcing of a specific mission is inevitably the result of a political bargain between Security Council members and others, and interests differ dramatically from mission to mission. Nevertheless, the lack of information flow to the Security Council or the General Assembly about the global picture in peacekeeping limits the ability of Member States to gain an adequate appreciation of overall strains in the system, or to prioritize.

This is a comparatively easy problem to fix. With modest investments in staff time and IT, DPKO/DFS could prepare regional and/or global reports on peacekeeping, providing Member States with an overview of mission capacities and requirements, costs, staffing and gaps. While there should be no pretence that this would diminish the bargaining that surrounds specific missions, at the very least it would ensure that decisions were made with some degree of reference to the implications for the system as a whole.

The second result of the existing oversight system is that DPKO/DFS labor under management, procurement and oversight rules are designed for a headquarters Secretariat providing political/economic advice and conference services—not for the management of 100,000 troops in 20 missions in the field. The unsuitability of existing procurement rules for rapid deployment of missions is but one example. A senior DFS staff member recently characterized the situation like this: “We can perform, or we can follow the rules; not both.” That is an accurate depiction of an unacceptable reality. It is a particularly bizarre reality given that expenditure under the peacekeeping budget is now triple that of the rest of the Secretariat.

This is much harder to fix. And this report is not the place to wade into the broader management reform miasma that would be necessary to do justice to the oversight

question. But this examination of the current state and likely future demands on peacekeeping does suggest that a reexamination of oversight of peacekeeping will be necessary, and that a more effective, more efficient system for oversight would be (a) based on a more realistic assessment of the specific requirements of peacekeeping, as distinct from those of the rest of the UN Secretariat; and (b) provide for greater latitude for rapid mission start-up. A move towards a management oversight and accountability framework that is specific to peace operations should not be ruled out.



The Purposes of Peace Operations

William J. Durch and Madeline L. England

Ever since the United Nations started asking its member states, in the late 1940s, for military officers to observe cease-fires and, in the 1950s, for armed troops to monitor borders and supervise force separations, the purposes of these activities have been dictated case by case, heavily influenced by prevailing global and regional politics and by the national interests of countries on the UN Security Council—the five permanent members in particular. Peacekeepers have been deployed to act as *fair witnesses* (observing and reporting the facts but without the duty or ability to alter the situation on the ground other than through such reporting); as *referees* of a peace accord (judging compliance but relying on larger powers to enforce it); as “*police*” (impartially enforcing an accord through their own authority and means in the short term, using force as necessary, minimally and proportionately, but leaving the long-term verdicts and results to others); as *state-builders* (in collaboration with the local parties, shifting primary emphasis from security to development as circumstances and local capacity permit); or as *state surrogates* (responsible for reconstruction of the apparatus of governance, and for governing until such apparatus, and the human capacity to run it, can be prepared to supplant such outside support).

Practical considerations and precedent—likely traceable to UN envoy Ralph Bunche¹—established local consent, mission neutrality, and non-use of force (if there was an option) except in self-defense as the de facto principles of peace observation and traditional (border zone) peacekeeping. As defining terms for peace operations, however, they proved inadequate for more complex peace operations like the UN’s involvement in the former Belgian Congo (1960–64). There, a mixed civilian military force became deeply embroiled in both Congolese and Cold War politics, protecting those trying to build a new political consensus, protecting at least some civilians at risk from violence, ousting mercenary troops (albeit haltingly) from a secessionist province, and otherwise far exceeding the purposes of peacekeeping established to that date. The new definition—new essence—of peace operations that this experience offered was rejected, however, by both UN

¹Bunche supervised the setup of the UN Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East in 1948. See Brian Urquhart, *Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 161, 169.

professionals and UN member states; and not regenerated until two decades later when fading Cold War tensions ushered in a whole new generation of peace operations.

This essay traces the evolution and adaptation of peace operations, first to the Cold War and then the post-Cold War environment, and more recently to a new post-9/11 era in which the ever-expanding purposes of peace operations is blurring the line between peacekeeping and war-fighting, posing a threat to its identity as a security-related military function that is honorably separable from war. It concludes with some thoughts on why that separation should be restored and how that might be done.

Operations before *Agenda for Peace*

The first UN operations were fair witnesses. The UN Security Council authorized deployment of the first unarmed UN military observers to assist the work of the Consular Commission monitoring a shaky cease-fire between Dutch and Indonesian forces on Java in August 1947 and authorized similar support in April 1948 for the Truce Commission established to monitor the Armistice Agreements between Arab and Israeli forces.² The term “peacekeeping” was not coined to describe the tasks of UN-mandated troops or observers, however, until the Suez Crisis of 1956 and only gained some official status when the UN General Assembly set up the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in February 1965, just after UN forces finished their operation in the Congo.³

Peacekeeping became a strategic tool by which the United Nations Security Council could help keep conflict-prone parts of the international system from shaking the stability of the Cold War standoff. Peacekeepers were

²The Middle East observer force still exists. See Mona Ghali, “The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization,” in W. Durch, ed., *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1993). The observer mission on Java is less well known. The Consular Commission was established there by UN Security Council Resolution 30 of 25 August 1947. At its first meeting, on 1 September 1947, the commission called upon its constituent states (Australia, Belgium, the Republic of China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to provide a total of 24 military officers to observe the ceasefire lines between Dutch and Indonesian forces, later expanded to sixty. For extensive documentation, see Peter Londey, *Other People’s Wars: A History of Australian Peacekeeping* (New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 2004), pp. 16–28. For a discussion that takes a longer look at peacekeeping and peace observation, see Alan James, *Peacekeeping in International Politics* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990). See also Birger Heldt and Peter Wallensteen, “Peacekeeping Operations: Global Patterns of Intervention and Success, 1948–2004,” 2nd ed. (Sandoverken, Sweden: Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2006), p. 4.

³Indar Jit Rikhye, *The Theory and Practice of Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1984), p. 1. For a good history of the evolution of terminology, see Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1–2.

allowed to bear arms for self-defense beginning in 1956 when Lester Pearson, Canada's Minister of External Affairs, imagined a force in the Middle East "large enough to keep these borders at peace while a political settlement is being worked out"—although the United Nations remained averse to using the arms that its forces could now bear.⁴

UN peacekeepers were used as "police" in the early 1960s in the former Belgian Congo but thereafter fell back to fair witness mode. They became referees again in the late 1980s, in Namibia (1989–90), Central America (1988–94), Angola (1991–98), and Mozambique (1992–94). The referee role worked well enough except in Angola, where it failed to keep war at bay, twice, with disastrous local consequences. Greater nominal authority was given to the mission in Cambodia (1992–93) to manage and safeguard processes—including elections—intended to end the country's long civil war and give it legitimate government. It succeeded in part, conducting the elections but lacking the power to enforce the results when the governing party disagreed with them.

From *Agenda for Peace* to the Brahimi Report

In January 1992, the first Security Council summit asked the new UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to report on ways to strengthen UN capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. By that time, peacekeeping already had been repurposed, case by case, as a tool to help implement internal political settlements (as in El Salvador, Cambodia, and Angola) and referee determinations of post-colonial status (Western Sahara). In his July 1992 report to the Council, the secretary-general attempted the Secretariat's first working definition of peacekeeping, but so tepidly that one could not guess from reading it the momentous shifts in purpose then underway.⁵

Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* thus missed an opportunity to bind peace operations to purposes consistent

with its traditional essence and left the Council freer than it might otherwise have been to keep adding new purposes. These included remaking the Somali government over the objections of powerful local faction leaders, and intervening in Bosnia on a very large scale, in an ongoing war, to mitigate suffering—but not end it. This continued until peacekeeping failed not only in Somalia and Bosnia but also in Rwanda, failing either to anticipate or to stem the genocide of April–June 1994. In January 1995, the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* cataloged the new purposes but finessed the discussion of their failure and especially the high human costs of that failure.⁶

These results discredited complex UN operations for a time, and most peacekeepers in the latter 1990s deployed under the banner of NATO and sub-regional organizations, not the United Nations. It came as a surprise, then, to the UN Secretariat in particular, when the revival of complex UN peace operations by the UN Security Council began at the largely untried higher end of the peacekeeping hierarchy—as "state surrogates" and "state builders" in Kosovo and East Timor, the former with an undefined political end-state and the latter with an ill-trained population previously subject to a quarter-century of Indonesian domination and four centuries of Portuguese colonial rule. Thus came unprepared new administrators to govern populations that were either resentful but ambitious (Kosovo) or dogged but unprepared (Timor).

Shortly after these missions deployed, the Brahimi Report revisited the definitional issue: "Peacekeeping is a 50-year-old enterprise that has evolved rapidly in the past decade from a traditional, primarily military model of observing ceasefires and force separations after inter-state wars, to incorporate a complex model of many elements, military and civilian, working together to build peace in the dangerous aftermath of civil wars."⁷ A complex peace operation, according to the report, represented the joining of peacekeeping with peace-building ("activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and [build] ... something that is more than just the absence of war").⁸

⁴Findlay, *Use of Force in UN Peace Operations*, p. 20.

⁵"Peacekeeping is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peacekeeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace." Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Nations, January 1995), p. 45 (The July 1992 definition). This definition is anything but essence-focused, being so bland as to mention only one of the three ostensible "pillars" of peacekeeping, and then in a way that suggests its imminent obsolescence. Do peacekeepers watch, report, fight, run fast? We aren't told.

⁶Boutros-Ghali, *Agenda for Peace*, pp. 9–11, 14–19.

⁷United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/55/305–S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, para. 12.

⁸*Ibid.*, paras. 13, 18.

The Brahimi Report addressed peacekeeping's past and on-going failures (the operation in Sierra Leone appeared to be falling apart as the report was being written) and insisted: that troop contributors send well-equipped forces to UN operations; that mandates allow military initiative in dangerous environments; and that "impartiality" be redefined to mean "adherence to the principles of the Charter and to the objectives of a mandate that is rooted in those Charter principles," rather than arms-length neutrality. In dangerous situations with "obvious aggressors and victims," peacekeepers, it argued, "may not only be operationally justified in using force but morally compelled to do so," and should therefore be equipped with "robust rules of engagement." Conversely, the Secretary-General and his team needed to give the Security Council the unvarnished version of conditions in the field, telling their political bosses what they needed to know, not what they wanted to hear.⁹ That worked for awhile, but the Council soon tired of hearing regularly that it was trying to force the United Nations to perform beyond its innate capacity in places like Darfur, Chad, or Somalia.

From the Brahimi Report to Afghanistan and Darfur

The sentiments in the Brahimi report, minus the tiresome advice about brutal honesty in assessing prospects for success, were embraced by the Security Council for virtually every new UN peace operation authorized in the new century. By mid-2008, over 80% of the troops and police deployed in UN-led operations functioned under mandates that invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter (the enforcement chapter).

Although the Brahimi panel stressed that "the United Nations does not wage war,"¹⁰ the reality of robust peacekeeping is such that the institution now finds itself in situations where it must take forceful action if its robust mandates are not to be forfeited. Such was the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in the summer and fall of 2008, where peacekeepers

found themselves caught between rebel forces, former Rwandan genocidaires, and an incompetent but predatory national army that they were supposed to be supporting. Meanwhile, in Darfur, Sudan, government obstruction and harassment of the UN force continued well into its second year of attempted deployment, risking general mandate failure and certainly a failure to protect Darfur's victims of violence.

Continuing a decade-long trend, developed states and institutions were willing to fund, advise at a distance, and provide a degree of logistical support to such beleaguered UN operations, but not willing to contribute troops, tactical transport, or air cover. They can make these choices and still look in the mirror daily because their troops, transport, and air power (some of it) are engaged in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, or Afghanistan.

The UN Secretariat did manage to argue its way out of leading international peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan in 2001, before the Council had grown inured to carefully-documented arguments about a new mission being too hard, or half-measures being too risky. Instead, it authorized the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)—initially coalition-based, later NATO-led—to undertake peacekeeping in the capital, Kabul, and separately authorized a UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to provide political support and coordination of other international assistance. While ISAF patrolled Kabul, UNAMA was responsible for helping the country's interim government implement a peace process agreed to in Bonn, Germany, in December 2001. That process culminated in a new constitution and elections by fall 2006 but Afghanistan was far from stable thereafter, with a peacebuilding process that moved ahead unevenly, parceled out by sector amongst seven lead donors. The country's formal economy faltered as its opium-fueled shadow economy took off. The ousted Taliban meanwhile regrouped in the borderlands of Pakistan, learned lessons and borrowed technology from the war in Iraq, and gradually built back their fighting strength. Peacekeepers in Afghanistan were therefore increasingly confronting an insurgency.

⁹Ibid., paras. 48–50, 55, 64d.

¹⁰Ibid., para. 53.

From Robust Peacekeeping to War-Fighting?

Peace operations are most often born and built in crisis, and function in a realm of partial control and competing priorities intrinsic to multinational or multilateral organization. Their lack of innate organizational coherence reflects their practice-based, case-driven history and the locus of primary political-military power in states rather than in the organizations that most frequently sponsor these operations. Every actor involved in post conflict reconstruction efforts, large and small, official or not, is both independent and protective of its own turf.

These characteristics make peace operations poor templates for the sort of unified command and unified action required by war-fighting. This does not mean that peacekeepers never have to fight, only that they are, structurally, not very good at it. Yet major power military doctrines have been evolving almost in lockstep with one another, over the past fifteen years, toward just such a melding of peace-keeping and war-fighting. Over the same interval, however, national interests in taking the risks entailed by more robust peace operations have not changed that much. The result is a series of operational, doctrinal, and interest-based dilemmas for robust peace operations.

Operational Dilemmas

Peace operations work best when they are not only authorized internationally but also invited to deploy under the terms of a peace agreement, offering both local and international legitimacy. A regional or UN mandate can be reassuring both to the host state (as a political barrier to unlimited outside interference) and to the provider (as a tool to prevent mission creep or the growth of unrealistic local expectations regarding outside aid). If and when the going gets rough, an international mandate is also a license to canvass for additional international help.

Complexity creeps in, of course, in conflict zones that are only partly pacified, that fall back into violence as a peace process stalls, that harbor parties who resist constraint on their illicit income, or that generate splinter groups who try to muscle their way into a share of political power. Part of

a peace operation may need to adopt a combat “stance” in which defeat of such an opposition force may be temporarily required. Such has been the case periodically for UN forces deployed in the eastern Congo. UN operations elsewhere in the Congo, however, involve little or no proactive use of force, and are broadly invitational, deriving their welcome from a series of national-level peace accords as well as Security Council mandates.

NATO operations in Afghanistan benefit similarly from Council mandates. However, as all international military activities there coalesce under a single command and political stability falters, areas that have until recently been largely free of orchestrated violence are experiencing increased risk, and it is increasingly difficult to distinguish NATO-ISAF’s peacekeeping role from NATO’s growing counterinsurgency role in the southern and eastern parts of the country.

At least in Afghanistan the central government is playing on the same side as the peace enforcers. In Darfur, the UN-AU Hybrid Mission (UNAMID), which has a clear UN mandate, faces willful opposition from a virulently anti-UNAMID Sudanese government that banks on other states’ reluctance to challenge its sovereignty, even to halt the violent surrogate campaign that it wages against segments of its own people. To mount such a challenge directly, the sponsoring organizations and troop-contributing countries would have to cross a line that few are willing to cross except when at war—coercing Sudanese compliance with international resolutions, using military force to resist government obstruction of UNAMID deployments, and otherwise taking actions difficult to distinguish from warfare and military occupation.

These examples illustrate that robust peace operations can only be so robust before the distinction between peace operations and warfare begins to break down. The distinction is not semantic, but strategic, in that peace operations have not traditionally had declared enemies—defined and identified to be legitimate targets of lethal military force wherever encountered, and toward whom the operational objective is *victory*. By this light, NATO forces in southern Afghanistan that attack identified

Taliban targets with lethal force without waiting to be fired on first or even necessarily to be targeted first are waging war, not participating in a peace operation: the enemy is generically defined and targeting is generically legitimated. Rather, peace operations have been intended instead to vanquish *conditions* that contribute to conflict or human suffering. This objective may require a forceful defensive response when an operation's work is challenged, and may require taking the initiative if tactical intelligence indicates that this is the best way to preempt an imminent attack, especially one that is likely to cause, or is aimed at causing, considerable civilian casualties. But for peacekeepers, these are last rather than first resorts.

Finally, peace operations have not traditionally conducted what the US military would call "opposed entry," or intervention against armed opposition. Such action may well be necessary to protect a population at risk, but it constitutes war. A duly authorized peace operation may well be the follow-on to such a war, as was the case in Kosovo, but the two do not equate. (There was a partial exception in East Timor, where a UN-mandated multinational force, the International Force in East Timor [INTERFET], fought against local armed opposition to enter the island—but only after the consent of the far larger Indonesian armed services had been secured through a diplomatic process.)

Doctrinal Dilemmas

Military doctrine is the compilation of experience and belief about "the best way to conduct military affairs." Its level of focus can range from abstract principles of warfare to "organizational doctrine" about the roles and missions, current objectives, and current best practices in the employment of forces by a particular military organization for a particular purpose or in a particular setting.¹¹ Doctrine for peace operations is about such specific functions and settings, as well as basic principles and strategic objectives. Although the outcomes of wars are often determined by high-level military decisions and large operations, in peace operations the actions of even small groups of soldiers (led by the canonical "strategic corporal"),¹² can have major

implications for local stability and achievement of the mission. Doctrines for peace operations, then, lay out how key organizations and entities recommend handling such a strategic burden, including at the lowest, tactical levels of deployed forces. Examining how they have changed in response to field experience can yield important insights into how key security providers view the changing strategic environment of peace operations and fit it into the larger mix of military missions.

Fifteen years ago, peacekeeping was doctrinally and operationally segregated from war-fighting by major powers, perhaps to protect peacekeeping from association with war-fighting, perhaps to protect the war-fighter's ethos or skills from being weakened by rapid or frequent exposure to the more restrained world of peacekeeping. Today, however, key major power doctrines, including those of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and India, give peace-keeping a place on a continuous spectrum of tension that has war-fighting at the other end. The motivation now, as defense resources in many countries thin out, seems to be the construction of an omni-competent force that can spin on a dime—physically, operationally, and psychologically—from peacekeeping to war-fighting, including counterinsurgency or counterterrorist operations, as complex circumstances dictate.

It is not at all clear, however, that soldiers are collectively capable of doing as much role-shifting, and as rapidly, as doctrine now seems to require. One could envisage such adaptation in a thirty-four-year-old special forces sergeant with fifteen years of experience and special education and training in winning local support for his campaign. One has more trouble seeing it in a nineteen-year-old line infantryman with a high school education and at most a year of field experience of any sort under his belt. In all armies, the latter type of personnel far outnumber the former.

The recent evolution of major-power doctrines for peace and stability operations suggests that the old walls that initially segregated peace operations from war-fighting are crumbling. The more difficult and risky of peace

¹¹Dennis Drew and Donald Snow, *What Is Military Doctrine?* in *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems* (Montgomery, Ala.: Maxwell Air Force Base, Air University Press, 1988).

¹²Gen. Charles D. Krulak, *The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War*, *Marines Magazine*, January 1999.

operations and the lower ranges of war-fighting are increasingly viewed as differing in degree more than in kind. Rather than buying into the relatively humble, if risky, world of peacekeeping as a confidence-building measure, a temporary security presence, or a support agent for the voluntary dismantling of belligerent factions and restructuring of host-state security forces, these powers reconceptualize peace operations as low-intensity conflict with a hearts-and-minds annex. Rather than relying on local consent, going in, as a source of operational legitimacy, these doctrines posit that firm and fair implementation of postconflict reconstruction in an atmosphere of growing public security and tranquillity will generate local consent. After years of missteps, the United States may be demonstrating this proposition in Iraq, but few operations of any sort have the resources of the entire US defense establishment on which to draw. More likely they will have far too few resources and, as in the Congo, find themselves not only outnumbered by local fighters but also the object of civilian anger as the goal of civilian protection remains unmet.

Experience in the new decade suggests that there is yet life in the notion of consent, in some form, as a prerequisite to peace operations and as a feature that distinguishes them from other military action. This is the definitional direction in which the United Nations has tacked most recently, against the flow of doctrine from the great powers and responsive instead, one might argue, to the interests and fears of its majority membership. *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*, the most recent UN effort to define peacekeeping, takes a more conservative, contrarian approach to doctrine, arguing that “robust” peacekeeping is permitted at a “tactical level with the consent of host authorities and/or the main parties to the conflict,” but that such action is different in kind from peace enforcement at a “strategic or international level.”¹³ In taking this approach, it fights the contemporary trend toward doctrinal and operational

¹³Issued in January 2008 by the Best Practices section of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, this “capstone” document (so called because it sits atop a large framework of more specialized guidance and operating procedures) defines peacekeeping as a “technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has halted, and to assist in implementing agreements put into place by peacekeepers.” Peace enforcement, on the other hand, “involves the application . . . of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force” as mandated by the Security Council. United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, January 2008), p. 18, http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpps/library/capstone_doctrine_eng.pdf

convergence, fencing off peace operations as a distinctive enterprise with distinctive purposes.

Mission Objectives vs. National Interests

A further complication of the blurring line between war-fighting and peacekeeping arises from differences in the motivations of contributors to peace operations. In the United Nations, at most fifteen countries decide to go forward with a peace operation (although the membership at large must agree to fund it). In NATO or the European Union, slightly more than two dozen states, give or take, make the decision; in the African Union, it is ten to fifteen (the members of the Peace and Security Council). Those decisions are based on staff work that has laid out the structure and objectives of an operation. That work may or may not be based on close consultation with potential troop and police contributing countries. Even if based on such consultation, the states that agree to contribute personnel will not all see the world alike, and they will place differing political constraints on the personnel they contribute. This has been the historical burden of multilateral peace operations, but as their purposes become broader, less predictable, and more risky to execute, these differences matter more. States’ calculus about risk to troops and sustainability of domestic support is likely to change, and the availability of troops and police and the coherence of missions—and not just UN missions—are likely to suffer.

This would matter less if there were dozens of troop contributors willing to take these risks, but that is not the case. In most regional organizations, a minority of larger powers tends to contribute the bulk of peacekeeping troops, as well as the bulk of the organization’s funding. An even smaller minority may be willing to put its troops in harm’s way on behalf of a peacekeeping mission. Thus, in NATO, the principal fighting forces come from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, and now perhaps France, while other members, although fielding troops, strive to minimize their exposure to combat. In European Union field operations, the main combat risk thus far has been borne by France. In African Union operations, Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, and South Africa have been key troop contributors. The United

Nations similarly relies on a comparative handful of states to fill out its uniformed ranks: fifteen states contribute 75% of UN forces. Loss of any of the major South Asian contributors would hurt UN capacity badly, as would loss of any large African contributor. Because so many large UN operations are in Africa, African troop and police contributions are at least as important politically as they are operationally.¹⁴

UN operations offer unusual opportunities for field experience to the developing countries that contribute most of the troops and police. There is also prestige associated with international deployments, perhaps a sense of competition with regional rivals, and UN troop reimbursements may offer a net financial gain to the contributing government. Given the increased risk associated with many current UN operations, such gain might be considered the equivalent of hazard pay.

However, none of the above motivations necessarily incline a contributor to take risks with those it sends to UN operations. The more democratic the state, the less inclined it may be toward such risk, given the potential for domestic political backlash should national personnel be lost. Wealthy states also stress loss-avoidance, and most of their commitments to UN operations are monetary in nature, plus logistical support, sometimes through private sector contractors.

These tensions look likely to be played out, and not for the good, in the contemporary mission that potentially most conflates peacekeeping and war-fighting, in Somalia, where Ethiopia and Eritrea have waged a proxy war, the former with tacit US support. Huddled near the Mogadishu airport, recreating a scenario that played out previously in the fall of 1992, is a small force of peacekeepers—then from the United Nations, now from the African Union—who are largely powerless to defend even themselves.¹⁵ Now, as

¹⁴Four European states (France, Italy, Poland, and Spain) provide over half the troops for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (and 7 percent of total UN forces); European troops are scarce among UN operations in Africa, however. Latin American countries that contribute over a thousand troops each include Uruguay (to the Congo and Haiti) and Brazil (to Haiti). China sends troops and police to several venues in Africa, to Lebanon, and to Haiti, while Indonesia deploys to Lebanon and the Congo. The Latin American and East Asian contributions represent about 4 percent of the total UN deployments apiece. Together with the top fifteen, these states account for 90 percent of deployed UN troops and police. United Nations, *Ranking of Military and Police Contributions to UN Operations* (New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, August 2008); see also Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations, 2008* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008).

¹⁵As of November 2007, there were an estimated 5,000 Ethiopian troops in Somalia; the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) had an estimated 2,500 troops on the ground, about one-fifth of its total proposed strength. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2008* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 313.

then, a replacement force is in the wings; it is to be UN-led and is to replace both its weak multilateral predecessor and the Ethiopian army. It will face, however, even tougher collective opposition and lower prospects of success than did the 1993 UN operation, and since that mission failed almost completely, these prospects are low indeed.

Conclusion

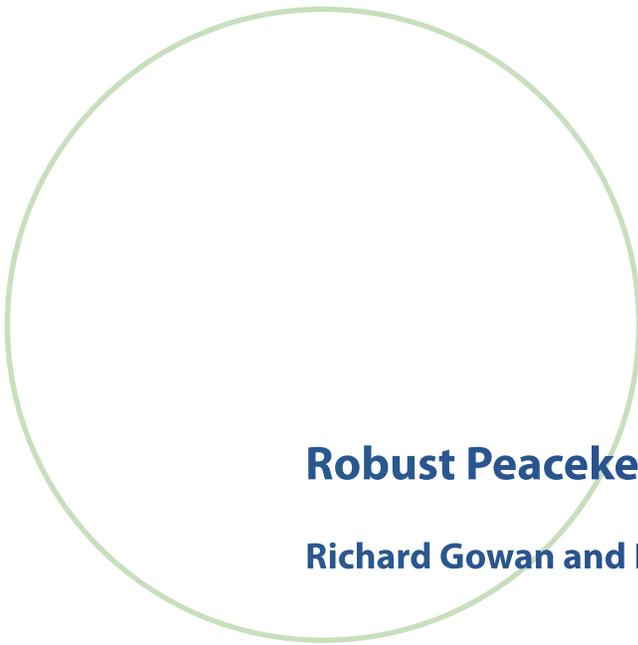
Peacekeeping is a very useful tool of international politics, but an inherently limited tool. It can and must take on violent local challenges to peace implementation, but only at the margins of a peace process. Should the core of that process lose cohesion, a multinational operation will itself have insufficient cohesion—and likely insufficient military strength—to make the center hold. This is the main risk of repurposing peace operations as a low-intensity variety of war-fighting, especially if those who most vigorously tout the new purpose are not willing to put their own forces where the Security Council votes to invite others to deploy.

Peace operations, especially UN operations, therefore should be distinctly conceptualized. A peacekeeping operation should be one that has international legitimacy derived from an international mandate, and local legitimacy derived either from invitational language in a peace agreement or from its actions in implementing such an agreement: curbing deadly residual violence and protecting the population. Ideally, it should enjoy the consent of all local parties initially, but should be able to work with partial absence of consent and should be prepared to deal with decayed consent.

Legitimacy and consent are, to a peace operation, what body armor is to an infantry soldier: something to reduce the probability of catastrophic system failure. At the same time, there are limits to the use of force in peacekeeping operations, and the UN capstone document recognizes those limits: groups of soldiers are not the same as an army. To the extent that the great powers define their own military activities in terms of limited warfare that does not entail the calibrated use of force or a need for international endorsement, they are describing something other than

peace operations. The US government is therefore correct to define the supplemental functions of forces in combat zones as “stability” operations instead of peacekeeping or peace operations.

Although a peacekeeping force may need to undertake combat activities in certain places and at certain times, combat is not and cannot be its baseline “stance.” Should combat become a routine preoccupation, then the operation has transitioned to something else, regardless of who mandated it or what that initial mandate said. That is not to say that stability operations or authorized war-fighting operations will not be needed. But peacekeeping operations should be kept honorably distinct from this range of tasks that they are inherently ill-suited to conduct.



Robust Peacekeeping and its Limitations

Richard Gowan and Benjamin Tortolani

Context: peacekeeping in hard times

While the crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia have stimulated interest in “robust” peacekeeping (missions employing “the use of force at the tactical level”) discussions tend to be of two types: the legalistic and the unrealistic.¹

The legalistic approach focuses on the wording of mandates, distinctions between Chapter VI and Chapter VII missions, and the principles of impartiality, consent and the non-use of force. These remain politically important. But as the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change noted, their operational importance can be exaggerated.²

By contrast, unrealistic analyses assume a mission like that in the DRC can rapidly become a full-scale peace enforcement operation - if only its rules of engagement are changed and “more offensive capability” added.³ These analyses are often well-intentioned. They overlook the political and operational obstacles to changing a mission in mid-crisis.

UN missions can adapt in response to crises where there is sufficient international will for them to do so: Sierra Leone in 2000 and Lebanon in 2006 saw such transformations. But these cases remain unusual, involving injections of Western forces not typically available to the UN (whether outside UN command as in Sierra Leone or under it as in UNIFIL).

UN planners and force commanders usually have to construct and implement operations, robust or otherwise, using much more limited resources. This has proved true of both the DRC crisis - during which calls for a Western intervention to reinforce MONUC have fizzled out - as have efforts to identify potential force contributors for a Somali mission. To date, nearly sixty countries have turned down the opportunity to sign up for the latter.

¹ DPKO's new “principles and guidelines” define robust peacekeeping as “involving 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” (p34). They note the risk of this being “blurred” with peace enforcement (p19).

² Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (New York, 2004), p68.

³ The phrase is Bernard Kouchner's. *Call to Boost UN DR Congo Powers*, BBC, 3 November 2008.

Unless a remarkable change in how the international community mans and mandates peace operations is looming, an analysis of robust peacekeeping has to begin from the assumption that the UN will continue to operate under very severe resource limitations.

A number of foreign policy intellectuals associated with the next U.S. administration have called for a major overhaul of UN operations, including greater P5 involvement.⁴

However, the current international context - generalized military overstretch mixed with economic contraction - is unpromising. Many governments are liable to look for cuts in both their defense budgets and contributions to the UN in response to the financial crisis.

The outlook for strengthening UN operations is arguably worse than it was four years ago, when the High-level Panel called for “standby high-readiness, self-sufficient battalions that can reinforce United Nations missions” - and diplomats in New York seriously considered approving the proposal in the 2005 World Summit negotiations.⁵

The overall trends against developing more robust peace operations are exacerbated by political challenges to specific UN missions. There has been a rash of efforts by host countries to block certain types of troops deploying on their territory. They include Eritrean and Sudanese objections to Western forces and the DRC's recent refusal of new Indian units. Such maneuvers often exclude precisely the forces capable of robust tactics.

This paper thus assumes that, in the short to medium-term, the UN will, of necessity, have to work with military resources broadly comparable to those it has at present - and in some cases, even less. If this pessimistic starting-point helps stimulate serious political debate about overcoming the UN's recurrent resources deficiencies, we will be delighted.

⁴ See Morton Abramowitz and Thomas Pickering, *Making Intervention Work*, *Foreign Affairs*, September 2008; and the Managing Global Insecurity Project's *A Plan for Action*, November 2008.

⁵ High-level Panel, *op.cit.*, p69.

If it does not, we identify three trends of concern for robust peacekeeping:

- * Although there is a trend towards robust UN operations, in terms of goals and capabilities, they are often unequal to their theaters of operation. As a result, UN peacekeeping may be growing less robust in terms of its strategic effects.
- * Giving UN missions the military tools necessary to take on basic spoilers lets them handle limited direct threats, but it may make UN operations more vulnerable to more sophisticated types of disruption and internal incoherence.
- * Given the military limitations of the UN, robust operations can still only be effective as a limited tool as part of a much wider political strategy.

Robust capabilities and reduced effects

There is currently a significant gap between the UN's apparent capacity for robust peacekeeping and its actual ability to use force to defend and advance its operations.

Of the 90,000 uniformed personnel (military and police) currently under UN command, 70,000 are in missions under a Chapter VII mandate or a Chapter VI mandate that permits the use of military force to protect civilians (like UNIFIL and UNMIS). It is now standard for the Security Council to direct peacekeepers to protect civilians if they can.

Analysts have feared for some time that this general injunction is typically not connected to any assessment of force requirements, and can create false expectations among both the vulnerable and outside observers.⁶ There are disparities between the military capacities of Chapter VII missions, exacerbated by the differing threats in their theaters.

These can be demonstrated by contrasting the UN missions in Haiti, Liberia and the DRC (prior to its recently mandated expansion).⁷ These comparisons demonstrate that MONUC's ability to act robustly is much more limited than many analysts had believed prior to this year's violence around Goma. This has lessons for future UN deployments. In Haiti – a country of 11,000 square miles and 9 million people, MINUSTAH has 7,000 troops. In Liberia (43,000 square miles but only 3,500,000 people), UNMIL has 11,500 soldiers. MONUC has 16,600 troops for 905,000 square miles and 62,600,000 civilians. The resulting ratios of peacekeepers to population and area vary wildly (see table below). It should be noted that all three missions compare badly on at least one of these measures to the former UN mission in Sierra Leone, which struggled to contain rebel attacks in 2000 - a turning point in UN thinking about robustness. UNAMSIL eventually deployed 17,500 troops (2002) relative to a population of 6 million and 28,000 square miles.

Country	Mission	Troop/population ratio	Troop/area (sq. miles) ratio
Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL	1:343	1:1.6
DRC	MONUC	1:3748	1:54
Haiti	MINUSTAH	1:1285	1:1.6
Liberia	UNMIL	1:304	1:3.7

These ratios massively over-simplify the challenges in each case - MONUC is not evenly spread through DRC. Near Goma, its ratio of troops to territory is around 1 to 3.5 square miles, comparable to Liberia, if still short of the standards set in Sierra Leone.⁸ And no two square miles are alike. In Haiti, the primary demand for robust tactics has been in Port-au-Prince, with urban operational problems very different to those in the eastern DRC. But excessively wide dispersion is a constant risk for missions in large theaters. A more effective guide to each mission's capacity for robust action may be equipment. A rough-and-ready shorthand for this is numbers of combat vehicles and attack helicopters. Again, we see significant disparities between the Liberian, Haitian and Congolese cases:

⁶See Ian Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Robust Peace Operations*, in Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2006*.

⁷All current troop and equipment figures are based on the Center on International Cooperation's *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009*.

⁸See Erin Weir, *Give Peacekeepers Political Support and Achievable Mission*, 6 November 2008.

Country	Mission	Combat vehicles	Soldiers per combat vehicle	Attack helicopters
DRC	MONUC	360	46	8
Haiti	MINUSTAH	233	30	0
Liberia	UNMIL	219	52	6

Given its high overall manpower, MONUC's armory looks limited relative to MINUSTAH in terms of combat vehicles and UNMIL on attack aircraft (the comparison with UNMIL is even more striking because the latter is well into drawdown mode).

If the sheer scale of the eastern DRC (not to mention the need for some presence in the west of the country) presents the UN with the challenge of troop dispersal, this is not compensated by equipment. If "the use of force at a tactical level" requires the concentration of forces in the face of an attack like that on Goma, the odds are not good.

This does not necessarily mean that a UN mission like MONUC cannot use force effectively against lower-level violence—as MONUC has indeed done in the eastern Congo in recent years. But it remains vulnerable to substantial and sustained violence.

While UNMIL, MINUSTAH and MONUC have all acted robustly at times, a further difference between them is that the spoilers encountered in both Liberia and Haiti have been comparatively unsophisticated, if brutal. In both cases, the UN has also not had to contend with politically powerful national armies, its major burden in DRC.

These factors mean that robustness in Haiti and Liberia-type cases *can be decisive*: as the only real military force around, the UN can genuinely shape its strategic environment.

By contrast, MONUC exists in a context of increasingly effective spoilers, has had to live and operate with the disastrous Congolese army, and cannot resolve the outstanding military issues in eastern DRC with its current resources. In this sense, MONUC is arguably *less* robust than the other two missions, and certainly less so than UNAMSIL.

The UN is currently developing or considering missions in Darfur and Somalia that are sadly more likely to look like the DRC than Liberia or Haiti. Both are large theaters with highly effective spoilers present (discussed below). The UN has moved fewer than fifty combat vehicles into Darfur so far – even at full strength it will not be equal to its theater. A similar dynamic would emerge in Somalia without an extremely large force in place.

A further difficulty arises from the fact that only certain troop contributors can provide the assets necessary for robust operations. In Haiti, Latin American states (led by Brazil, Argentina and Chile) play this role, whereas in DRC and many other African operations, South Asian countries do so. In the DRC, India not only provides a quarter of the UN's infantry but all its attack helicopters and much of its other aviation – additionally, Indian and Pakistani troops are most heavily represented in the high-risk east of the country.

This creates a systemic problem for the UN. Assuming that there are upper limits on the forces that a country like India (with growing problems on its own borders) can supply, it will be hard to find robust units for new large missions while current operations continue.

Robust operations, disruption and indiscipline

If robust peacekeeping requires sufficient equipment, this will not have its desired effect if a mission's opponents can disrupt its use – or tensions *within* a force do the same.

Counter-intuitive as it may seem, an ostensibly robust force may be more vulnerable to some forms of disruption than a more traditional peacekeeping operation. This is because the spoilers the UN faces are changing. UN officials still tend to view spoilers in terms similar to those of the early part of this decade: thugs, militias or semi-coherent rebel movements similar to those in Sierra Leone. The *modus operandi* of these old-style spoilers is to attack peacekeepers and civilians – and robust peacekeeping is an answer.

The UN now faces a new generation of more sophisticated spoilers. The recent attack on MONUC in Goma again provides a useful example: the forces of Laurent Nkunda demonstrated unexpected tactical sophistication against MONUC, having been beaten off by the peacekeepers before. This was because they had either learnt past lessons or been trained (and/or joined) by allies from neighboring Rwanda. They also showed strategic restraint, cornering peacekeepers in Goma but refraining from overrunning the town.

This restraint arguably left the UN with fewer options than an outright assault – the sight of dead or captured peacekeepers might have initiated a stronger international reaction, just as UNAMSIL's 2000 crisis sparked a British intervention. But Darfur shows how a spoiler (the Sudanese government) can disrupt a UN operation without overt violence.

Sudan has obstructed UNAMID by slowing the deployment of those units necessary to lay the groundwork for a robust force, like engineers. Through tactics such as limiting helicopter flights, they have also aimed to contain or neuter essential operational assets. Sudan has also used the media, encouraging warnings of Iraq-style terrorism in Darfur.

Most outside observers also suspect that the government has abetted (at least) some covert violence against UNAMID, which has also been attacked by other parties. This mixture of bureaucratic-technical harassment and limited violence has had its desired impact. UNAMID's deployment, although gathering pace, has been much delayed.

Sudan's tactics partially resemble those used by Eritrea against UNMEE, and appear to be being copied in turn by the Chadian government as it negotiates the UN's deployment.

Such harassment can be directed against any sort of peace operation (UNMEE was a traditional border monitoring exercise). But because a robust mission requires a greater array of vehicles, aircraft and base facilities, it is easier to complicate.

This is a paradox. Robust peacekeeping may be the answer to old-style opponents (still all too present in Darfur and DRC) but it is particularly vulnerable to new-style spoilers.

A further difficulty facing robust operations is that the introduction of comparatively heavy units with poor oversight can lead to indiscipline and sour relations with locals.

Indiscipline may involve excessive or sadistic use of force – as in the well-recorded cases of Belgian and Canadian units in Somalia in the 1990s. But units meant to deter spoilers may also adopt a cautious live-and-let-live attitude to potential opponents: Indian units reportedly fraternized with rebels in the DRC in the summer before the current crisis.

Meanwhile, troops in the region also found themselves increasingly targeted by rock-throwing civilians, dissatisfied by the UN's failure to resolve remaining local conflicts. Such incidents can undermine a unit's reputation for robustness, as soldiers will rightly not fire back – but this creates an impression that their firepower is essentially for show.

Robust peacekeeping and the primacy of political strategy

This paper has set out three propositions: (i) the UN is going to have to get by with current or reduced peacekeeping resources; (ii) in large-scale theaters like the DRC, Darfur and Somalia, these resources represent a reduction of robustness relative to operations like those in Sierra Leone and Haiti; (iii) the technical and organizational requirements of robust operations are susceptible to deep interference by sophisticated new-style spoilers.

These are all aspects of one core problem: the UN does not have sufficient resources to pursue a policy of "force first". In all high-profile cases facing it today, an excessive emphasis on the military dimensions of peacekeeping will lead to disruption or to defeat.

That is not an argument against robust peacekeeping per se. The tactical use of force remains an essential tool if the

UN is not to stand by as atrocities bloom. And there may be other Sierra Leones and Liberias ahead: relatively small countries where the UN will be able to deploy sufficient forces to establish itself as the decisive military force locally.

Those cases aren't easy to resolve either: the UN kept troops in Sierra Leone until 2005, is still in Liberia and will probably be in Haiti for a long time to come. Nonetheless, these difficulties are dwarfed by the geographical and military challenges of a Darfur.

In such cases, it is necessary to ask the following question: if robust peacekeeping cannot shape the strategic environment of a country or region, do the UN or member-states have an alternative? Alternatives may include mediation, a heavier (non-UN) peace enforcement or – unpleasantly but perhaps necessarily – letting violence take its course.

In the case of mediation, peacekeeping may well be a necessary (and robust) form of support – in the other two cases, it may follow on after the fighting has passed. It is up to politicians and diplomats to decide which route to take. But in these circumstances, peacekeeping is not a strategic option – and calling it “robust” will not alter this reality.



**In Pursuit of Sustainable Peace
The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation**

Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed

One of the most important roles played by the civilian leadership of a peace operation is to help the parties to a conflict resolve their fundamental political differences through dialogue and compromise, rather than through violence. This role can be described in various ways: diplomatic efforts, mediation, peace-making, political facilitation, political process management or, simply, as the “political role” of the operation.¹ It is an extremely difficult undertaking by any name, where success is difficult to achieve, but mistakes come easily. Some of these mistakes can have fatal consequences for the peace process in which the operation is embedded, and are referred to here as “The Seven Deadly Sins” these are: ignorance; arrogance; partiality; impotence; haste; inflexibility; and false promises.

The Context

The opportunity to commit one of these seven deadly sins arises in a number of different contexts, from diplomatic efforts to prevent an initial outbreak of fighting to the negotiations that seek to stop a conflict that is underway. The need for effective mediation is also required after the conclusion of a peace agreement and the deployment of a peace operation.

It is easy to lose sight of the connection between mediation and peacekeeping, once attention shifts to the deployment of military, police and civilian personnel and the individual tasks they are expected to support, such as: restoration of security and basic services; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of soldiers; return of displaced persons and refugees; the holding of elections and adoption of constitutions; promotion of the rule of law and human rights; repair of infrastructure and rebuilding of institutions; and, revitalization of the economy. These are all crucially important activities to be sure, but the manner in which they are conducted can threaten the core interests of any one of the parties leading them to reconsider agreements they have made. Skilled political

¹The role of a third-party to help warring parties reach a negotiated political settlement to a deadly conflict is often described as one of “mediation” or “peace-making.” the management of the political aspects of that settlement, often with the assistance of peacekeepers (military, police and civilian peacekeepers), can be referred to as “political process management” or, the “political role” of the operation. Where political settlements are being negotiated and implemented concurrently, it is easy to get into a debate about terminology, the terms are used interchangeably in this essay.

process management is critical to keeping the parties engaged and effective mediation is also needed to broker additional political agreements between the parties, as one agreement is seldom enough.

Most peace agreements that call for the deployment of peace operations to assist with their implementation only partially address the underlying political problems of the conflict. In some instances, agreements signed in bad faith unravel and have to be renegotiated (Sierra Leone, 1999). In other cases, those who have signed the agreement represent only a fraction of the actors whose consent and cooperation is required to bring peace to a war-torn area (Darfur, 2006). Unresolved political problems rather than technical difficulties can account for delays in the implementation of key provisions of an agreement, for example, the disarmament of soldiers or registration of voters (Côte d’Ivoire, 2002). Constitutional or electoral processes can create a new set of political problems, especially if one or more of the parties are not willing to accept the result (Angola, 1992). Latent political tensions can surface even after the successful installation of a democratically elected government (Timor-Leste, 2006). In other cases still, the operation might have been deployed before a political agreement has even been reached (Kosovo, 1999).

The circumstances will vary, but one thing remains constant across peace operations: the political role is vital. It manifests itself at many levels, from the high politics to conclude formal agreements, to low-key engagement with those parties that might rethink the wisdom of the concessions they have made.

In the case of the United Nations (UN), the political role may be entrusted to the Special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) who also serves as the civilian head of the peace operation on the ground. SRSGs in charge of the larger multi-disciplinary operations are responsible for: mediating political disputes among the parties to the conflict; overseeing international military, humanitarian, human rights and peace-building in a particular theater; and, ensuring that all these and related international efforts contribute positively to the political

process (in DRC, Liberia, Haiti, Timor-Leste).² But in many other cases, these responsibilities are divided among several individuals and organizations, (in Lebanon, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Kosovo), the consequences of which are highlighted in a thematic essay on inter-institutional arrangements found in the *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008*.³

The effective exercise of the political role of SRSOs and other international mediators is acutely needed now in several conflict areas where over 160,000 peacekeepers are already on the ground under the flag of the UN, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and NATO. Fundamental political problems – be they disputes over power, territory, resources or spheres of influence – in Lebanon, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eritrea/Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia/Abkhazia, Somalia, Chad, Nepal, Afghanistan and Kosovo have yet to be fully addressed. The parties concerned are not in a position to resolve these political differences without third-party mediation. The unresolved political problems in any of these countries may well present formidable challenges in the coming year. The various SRSOs and other international mediators concerned might not be able to effectively meet all of these challenges, however, for reasons that are not entirely within their control.

Challenges to the Effective Exercise of the Mediator's Role

First, the SRSO's and other international mediators' political room for maneuver and leverage increases when (s)he is acting on behalf of a United Security Council and with the backing of key regional players. In several of the conflict areas where peace-keepers are presently deployed, divisions within the Security Council and between the regional players remain, in some cases due to competing strategic national interests. Divisions are arguably growing. The current geopolitical landscape is far more fragmented than in the immediate post-Cold War "honeymoon" period when the international community brokered political

solutions to the problems that had plagued Namibia, Lebanon, South Africa, El Salvador, Cambodia and Mozambique. The international consensus required for political solutions to several current crises is not remotely as strong today. As a result, recent operations have deployed not only without the benefit of a comprehensive peace agreement in place, but also without the necessary leverage in hand to overcome political dead-lock during the implementation phase.

Second, as implied earlier, the proliferation of peacekeeping partnerships such as "hybrid operations" has obscured responsibility for the political role in many situations, for example, in Afghanistan and Sudan. The increasing role played by regional organizations and high-level ad hoc arrangements in conflict management is a very positive development, not least because it has increased the level of attention and expertise certain crises receive. At the same time, having multiple high-level mediators and several international organizations with a large operational presence on the ground can create confusion about who is in charge of the political role.

Third, modern day peace operations are remaining in theater longer than those created in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. This is a positive development, insofar as more resources, time and attention are now being afforded to help rebuild the institutions of war-damaged states. At the same time, there may well be an inverse relationship between the longevity of the peace operation and the room for it to play an effective political role. As the host government rebuilds its legitimacy and strength over time, it understandably and rightfully might see international mediation as undermining its authority. Ideally, the ground should be prepared with the host government long in advance to assure them that the objective remains for the peace operation to phase out, as quickly as possible, including on the political front, and that mediation assistance can be provided in more discrete ways that pose no threat to the government's authority. When that does not happen, however, the host government can seize the opportunity of a new SRSO's arrival to curtail the political space available to him or her at the outset.

² With exception of life-saving humanitarian assistance, which should be delivered on the basis of need and not as reward for participation in the political process or punishment for lack thereof.

³ See A. Sarjoh Bah and Bruce D. Jones, *Peace Operation Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements in Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Co 2008) pp.21-30.

Fourth, there is a tendency to change the profile of the leadership of operations from a politically-oriented to a more developmentally-oriented one over time, on the assumption that the conflict has moved out of the political crisis phase. Key members of the international community, likewise, might down-grade the seniority or switch the profile of their “point persons” on the conflict, at capital and country level. This transformation can help to assure the host government that its authority is being respected. And it makes perfect sense when the fundamental political problems have, indeed, been solved. But, it can pre-maturely deplete political expertise and capital when that is not the case.

Fifth, today's peace operations continue to grow in breadth and complexity, placing enormous demands on their leadership. SRSGs ignore at their peril the administrative and logistics aspects of missions comprised of tens of thousands of military, police and civilian personnel, with budgets of up to one billion dollars per annum. SRSGs cannot shirk their leadership responsibilities to ensure good order and discipline of personnel, proper management of mission assets and effective integration and unity of effort across components. Attention to the managerial role, however, can come at the expense of the political role, and vice versa. A single Principal Deputy responsible for overseeing daily management of the mission, in all its aspects, can help an SRSG to do justice to both roles. But few UN peace operations are presently designed and staffed accordingly.

For these reasons, among others, the SRSG's political role is more difficult than ever. Meanwhile, the direction (s)he receives in its performance remains scant. Security Council resolutions do not provide a road map on how the role is to be conducted and there is still no official political doctrine upon which to rely.⁴ General blue-prints, in any event, can only go so far in navigating one through the treacherous waters of any specific conflict. SRSGs and other interna-

⁴While no official UN political doctrine currently exists, the newly created Mediation Support Unit in the Department of Political Affairs has assembled a very useful on-line database of past political agreements and various lessons learned during their negotiation. The Best Practices Section in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has developed on-line systems for collecting and disseminating lessons learned on all aspects of peace operations, including those related to political processes. UNITAR has developed some relevant training material on the role of SRSGs. NGOs have also produced some useful guidance material. For example, the Henri Dunant Centre has recently produced a useful guide for Mediators. And Fafo's 1999 report, *Command from the Saddle*, continues to provide nuggets of insight that remain relevant today.

tional mediators are thus left to define and conduct the political role as best they can. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is such variance in the manner in which different SRSGs approach the job.

The Seven Deadly Sins

Each conflict is unique but at the same time, based on bitter personal experience in the management of several political processes and close observation of the work of others, there do appear to be certain recurrent traps that materialize in many different situations, across the spectrum of crisis response, and regardless of whether if the mediator is operating with a small team or heading an operation comprised of thousands of personnel. Seven of the traps can be fatal to the ability of an SRSG or other international mediators (terms used interchangeably) to conduct the political role effectively. These are: ignorance; arrogance; partiality; impotence; haste; inflexibility; and false promises.

IGNORANCE

In order to be in a position to help the parties identify and reach solutions to their political problems, the SRSG obviously must have a basic understanding of the country in all its facets, from the history and culture to the economy and social structure. They need to be aware of the different explanations for why the violence erupted in the first place, why the conflict has persisted for as long as it has, and what solutions have already been tried and discussed. And, they need to understand the motivations, interests and strengths of those with whom they must work. Namely, they must have what one might call “the political map” of the area.

A detailed political map requires answers to key critical questions, which among others include: Who are the national actors with the power to stop or re-start the war and from where are they acquiring external support (e.g. arms, financing, and recognition)? Do they believe they can still prevail militarily, or have they accepted the need or desire to reach a negotiated solution? Which key constituencies can they legitimately claim to represent?

Which key constituencies are unrepresented in the current political process? Which actors have opted or been left out of the process, why and what capacity do they have to disrupt or derail it? To what extent are the relevant members of the international community—neighbors, key regional players, big powers—united or working at cross-purposes with one another? Do they consider their strategic national interests to be at stake? Which of the domestic and international players welcome, are undecided about or actively oppose the mediator's role?

It can be a daunting challenge for SRSGs and other international mediators to confront these questions when they are deploying to regions unfamiliar to them, with an insufficient complement of seasoned regional specialists on their political staff, inadequate knowledge management systems in the field or at headquarters on which to rely, and interlocutors who have an obvious incentive to feed them with biased or deliberately misleading information. The odds are that it will take far longer than they might wish to alleviate their ignorance of the political map. They do not have the luxury of waiting several months to take key decisions on the political process, however. As a result, they may end up in the position of making misinformed and misguided choices early on, only to then spend much of the remainder of their tenure trying to recover from them. Arguably, this ignorance-based decision-making process is the norm rather than the exception in post-conflict environments and is the original sin of mediation.

ARROGANCE

The first step in alleviating ignorance is for one to openly acknowledge that "I do not know enough" and to ask for help. Many SRSGs and other international mediators are keenly aware of their ignorance and the need to seek the view of others, particularly the people of the country themselves. One challenge is to know which individuals to approach and what to ask them. An easy trap to fall into is to depend heavily on 'the 50 people in the country who are most fluent in English' who readily say exactly what the mediator wants to hear. It is both naïve and arrogant, and often a recipe for failure, to rely almost exclusively on the views of those who flatter us and appear to most resemble ourselves.

To compound matters further, the temptation is great to conclude that: "I have seen this all before," the problems in this country are "just like x" (where one happened to have served previously); the views of the belligerents should not be taken too seriously because "they caused the problems in the first place," the particularities of the conflict in question are not that relevant because "we already know what works and what doesn't" (which is certainly questionable); and/or "there is no point exploring all these options because the donors and implementing agencies have other priorities." Of course, an entirely custom-tailored approach is not always realistic, particularly when narrow windows for peace have to be capitalized on quickly. Certain dynamics and trends can be discerned across a variety of conflicts. General lessons learned in previous experiences should be taken into account. It is true that, in the aftermath of war, the parties to the conflict do not have all the answers themselves and require third-party assistance. And institutional and donor interests cannot be ignored, as discussed subsequently.

Nonetheless, the people of the country concerned—the educated and the illiterate, the governors and the governed, the suspected perpetrators of the violence and the victims, the men and the women, alike—understand their own country far better than the foreign mediators who have just arrived on the scene. They will have to live with the consequences of the political process long after the mediator has departed. They also can help the mediator to identify where a potential course of action could lead to a dead-end, fail to command domestic support, or worse, exacerbate political divisions in the country and potentially provoke violence. It is therefore not only a question of shrewd diplomacy, but good sense and basic respect to listen to a diverse range of views in the host country.

The combination of arrogance, which takes many forms, coupled with ignorance, can be a particularly deadly combination for a mediator's credibility with the parties and for the viability of the political proposals (s)he makes.

PARTIALITY

One of the mediator's indispensable contributions to the political process is the ability to tell the parties when they do not appear to be 100 percent right or their adversaries 100 percent wrong; where their arguments are not supported by evidence or their previous commitments are not being honored; how their actions are inconsistent with the wishes of the vast majority of the population or violate international law; and why the time has come to contemplate politically sensitive compromises that had hitherto been declared off-limits or taboo.

Some mediators are listened to seriously when they deliver these most difficult messages, but many others are ignored, met with active hostility or declared *personae non grata* not long after. Why? Much depends on whether the substance of the message is informed by a sophisticated understanding of the issues. The deftness of the diplomacy plays a part: how, where and when something is said matters as much as what is being said. Perhaps most of all, the parties' perception of the messenger and his or her motivations can be decisive.

The mediator can say a great deal and be heard when (s)he is accepted as an impartial and honest broker. An impartial and honest broker is seen to be—and is—able to work with everyone who can contribute to the peace, without creating the impression that (s)he is doing so on behalf of or actively against any one of them, or in pursuit of any agenda other than to help all the people of the country concerned attain a sustainable peace.

The trap one quite easily falls into is to begin delivering the tough messages to the parties, even publicly, prior to having been accepted by them as an honest and impartial broker. What might otherwise be received as constructive criticism instead is perceived as evidence of partiality.

Before the mediator even arrives in theater, assumptions are made about his/her partiality on the basis of nationality, religion, prior public pronouncements, organizational affiliation, past associations, international reputation and hearsay. These prejudices can work both for and against

the mediator. Sometimes the negative prejudices can be assuaged, on the basis of assurances from trusted intermediaries, but not always or entirely.

The mediator does well to assume that one or more of the parties consider them to be partial and motivated by various personal and external agendas from the outset; they will have to work hard to prove otherwise through everything they say and do, throughout their tenure. The mediators commit a deadly sin when they take their status as impartial and honest brokers for granted.

IMPOTENCE

A well-informed, honest and impartial broker plays an indispensable role in the political process, but within limits. Just because the parties are willing to listen to the mediator with an open mind does not mean that they will do what the mediator suggests or even what they themselves promise to do. Parties that believe they are 100 percent right do not opt for a negotiated solution because they are inclined to make painful concessions, but rather because circumstances might have left them no other choice. Their continued participation in the political process often depends on the negotiated option being the least unattractive option available to them.

The SRSG or other international mediator is entirely reliant on the relevant members of the international community to make the negotiated option more attractive to the parties relative to the alternatives. Thus, an honest broker can be an irrelevant broker as well if (s)he does not carefully manage his or her relations with the relevant members of the international community. The parties need to see a tangible connection between the recommendations the mediator makes and the decisions and actions these members of the international community take, especially in the face of refusal to compromise or unwillingness to abide by commitments.

Naturally, the key members of international community will not back the mediator if they perceive (s)he is indifferent to, or working against, their legitimate concerns and interests. Security Council members need to be constantly

consulted and assured that the courses of action the mediator proposes are faithful to the mandate that they have authorized (and carefully calibrated to reconcile points of disagreement among them). Countries in the region, neighbors in particular, have an understandable interest in the kind of government that will emerge in the post-conflict period, particularly where there has been a legacy of hostile relations, the flow of illicit arms or drugs, or destabilizing refugee movements across porous borders. Troop contributing countries have a legitimate interest not to be drawn into a role for which they did not sign up. Donor countries have a legitimate concern in their financial contributions being used as intended.

These various interests and concerns cannot be ignored. To the contrary, the mediator has to help satisfy these external stake-holders' interests in a way that contributes positively to the political process, or at minimum, helps to avoid the stakeholders working at cross-purposes to it. If the mediator fails to take these interests into account, then (s)he will quickly find himself or herself impotent to stave off the death of a political process in the face of impasse.

HASTE

In order to obtain a clear picture of the political map, gain the confidence of the parties, build their sense of ownership of the process, and identify common ground among domestic and relevant external actors, the SRSB or other international mediators will need to consult with hundreds of actors, over and over again. Even if working at the pace normally demanded of mediators, and depending on the number of parties involved, this may require several months of effort.

No matter how sound an SRSB's or other international mediator's proposals might be, they risk being rejected if they have not emanated from a process that enjoys the confidence of all the parties to the conflict and is considered legitimate in the eyes of the population at large. The process matters and it takes time. A particular peace conference itself might conclude an agreement in days or weeks, but rarely without the months or years of consultations prior to convening it. The failure to recognize

this crucially important point can be deadly to a political process. The best way to kill a potentially viable political solution is to float it prematurely.

In the rush to conclude an agreement or implement its key political provisions—such as the demobilization of soldiers, the adoption of a constitution or the conduct of an election—the mediator can simply forge ahead with only some of the parties on board. It is tempting to exclude the most difficult hold-outs, especially if the leaders concerned are considered to be irrational. A small group of individuals should be not allowed to hijack a process, especially if they may be motivated more by personal gain rather than legitimate grievance.

The SRSB or other international mediator must resist the temptation to rush to judgement, however. Sometimes the individual leader's unwillingness to compromise is motivated by a genuine belief—rightly or wrongly—in the justness of their cause. Even when it is not, it is one thing to side-line individuals and another to deny large key constituencies their rightful role in the political process. The peace will not be sustainable without these constituencies, especially if they remain well-armed and easily mobilized to use them. It should not come as a surprise when these processes run aground or are actively attacked by those excluded from them.

Haste partially explains why the agreements referred to earlier failed to resolve crucial underlying political issues and subsequently unraveled. Sometimes such haste is unavoidable simply to stop the fighting and to prevent the slaughter of thousands or tens of thousands. This cannot be discounted by any means. The sin in such instances is to treat agreements borne out of such haste as conclusive and comprehensive, rather than for what they are, namely elaborate cease-fire agreements or interim political arrangements.

INFLEXIBILITY

Once an SRSB or other international mediator has constructed the political map, after several months of consultation, and has carefully said and done all the right

things vis-à-vis the internal and external players to establish himself or herself as an honest and serious broker, then (s)he might be in a position to propose the contours of the political process and even secure agreement on it.

It is crucial to remember, however, that the situation on the ground has not been frozen during this time. Skirmishes or full-blown fighting might have been occurring in parts of the country all along, as the parties seek to bolster their hand at the negotiating table. Old alliances might have been broken and new ones forged. Old leaders might have departed the scene and new ones taken their place. The contest for power within particular constituencies can be as fierce as the one that occurs between them. Whether “moderates” or “hard-liners” emerge from that struggle can transform the dynamics of the political process. The mediator must be aware of this at all times.

Meanwhile, developments elsewhere in the world could have altered external actors’ perceptions, stakes or positions on the conflict concerned. For example, change of governments in major troop or financial contributors also can mean a decrease or increase in resources and attention available to respond to that particular conflict. On a more profound level, the start of new wars can transform the context for international action entirely. The start of the Gulf War in 1991 understandably took attention away from addressing the regional implications of the taif Agreement on Lebanon brokered one year earlier. The events of 9/11, on the other hand, led to renewed attention to the festering problems in Afghanistan, only to be partially diverted again by the onset of the Iraq War in 2003.

Constantly evolving developments can create new opportunities to be exploited or new formidable obstacles to be overcome. The SRSNG or other international mediator does not have the luxury of being indifferent to the change in context, simply because (s)he has invested too much time already in a process conceived in a different set of circumstances. Inflexibility to adjust course in response to major changes in the political map or on the international scene can lead a peace process down a dead-end or away from new avenues to take it forward.

FALSE PROMISES

The preceding discussion should hopefully make clear that the SRSNGs’ and other international mediators’ political role is a perilous one. At a minimum, this should lead them to constantly reinforce a few basic messages: progress will be slow; mistakes will be made; setbacks will occur; periodic review and course correction will be required; technical problems can be resolved through technical solutions but political problems need political solutions; painful compromises and concessions will be expected of everyone; there is no short-cut to sustainable peace in the aftermath of war; it will take several years if not decades to re-build a war-torn State and achieve reconciliation; and this is just the beginning of the process.

This message should be repeated loudly when the peace operation arrives in theater and often throughout its presence. Unless expectations are managed, the peace operation’s welcome can wear thin and calls for its departure can grow surprisingly quickly. Tens of thousands of peacekeepers might be able to prevent poorly organized and ill-equipped “spoilers” or criminal gangs from hijacking a political process or threatening some population centres. Even if such peacekeepers are well-armed and well-trained, however, they will be no match for much larger and well organized forces intent on destroying the peace or committing mass atrocities. It has to be said upfront that the military forces, civilian police, human rights experts and international aid workers will not provide security, protection, justice, social services and jobs for all of the millions or tens of millions of inhabitants of the country. The peace operation can make only a modest contribution, at best, relative to the expectations and demands of the host population.

This modest contribution can provide the parties with the time, space and assistance required to contemplate, discuss and eventually put into effect the political compromises required for the peace to be sustainable. It cannot, however, obviate the need for these compromises to be made. The SRSNG commits the seventh and final deadly sin when (s)he fails to counter false expectations or promises that a peaceful and prosperous democracy

will emerge relatively quickly from the ashes of war, even where it never existed previously, simply because the peace operation has appeared on the scene.

Concluding Observations

The inherent caution underlying the foregoing analysis of the “Seven Deadly Sins” is neither new nor revolutionary. It bears repeating nonetheless because the sins keep getting committed, especially in peacekeeping contexts.

Fundamental political problems are seldom fully addressed prior to the peacekeepers’ arrival, despite expectations to the contrary. Given the unprecedented numbers of peacekeepers now deployed throughout the globe, in particularly volatile areas, the role of effective mediation in peacekeeping contexts needs to be given more attention, urgently. It is becoming considerably more complicated to manage these political problems—before and after peacekeepers arrive—due to evolutions on the geopolitical landscape and in the practice of peacekeeping. Some of these complications limit from the outset how effectively the civilian leadership of peace operations can play the political role expected of them.

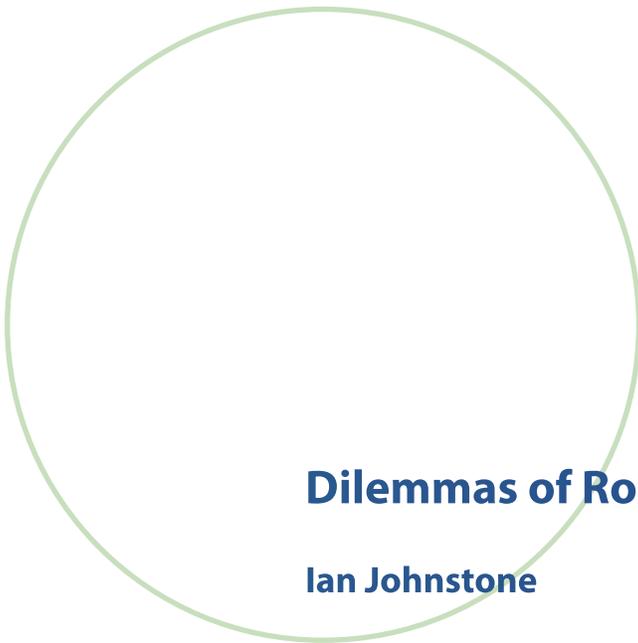
The year ahead promises to be a particularly challenging one for the UN and regional organizations engaged in peace operations. The unaddressed political problems are accumulating faster than they are being solved. This presents a number of policy dilemmas that will need to be confronted, sooner rather than later. Three dilemmas are alluded to in the essay and warrant policy discussion in the coming year.

First, there is strong appeal for humility throughout this essay. The description of the sins concludes with a plea to diminish expectations as much as possible. In contrast, the mandate for each new operation appears to be even more ambitious than the last. Has the time come to declare a moratorium on new tasks until such time as capabilities and expertise are adequately built on the ones already assigned?

Second, it needs to be recognized that the SRS’s exercise of the political role while sitting atop a mission comprised of tens of thousands of personnel should not necessarily rely on exactly the same approaches and techniques employed by mediators operating with a small team prior to the mission’s deployment. This essay has focused on the similarities. What are the differences? Presumably, the SRS has much greater leverage at his or her disposal when (s)he can direct the mission’s efforts in a way that informs, generates and underpins political solutions to the underlying problems in the country concerned. Does the SRS really have that authority, or is it in name only? What needs to be done to better synchronize the mediation efforts with all the other activities undertaken by a peace operation? Is such synchronization even realistic in those situations where there is no designated over-all lead, such as in the “hybrid” arrangements, where responsibilities for the political process, military activities, and development efforts are divided between different organizations?

And finally, given the existing exposure to operational risk, it would be preferable if no new peace operations were deployed in circumstances where a durable and comprehensive political settlement has yet to be reached. Unfortunately, that is wishful thinking. If anything, recent precedent and prevailing geopolitical dynamics point to trends in the opposite direction. At least some peace operations will be called upon to deploy into situations where mediation efforts have not advanced the discussion very far on the core political issues, where there is only a partial peace to keep, and consent of the parties is ambiguous. The lessons of the mid-1990s would suggest that the deployment of peacekeepers in such circumstances can be a recipe for failure. Where should the line be drawn?

There are many more difficult policy questions that need to be confronted. They will not have easy answers. Even if the mediator can avoid the deadly sins mentioned in this essay, there is no guarantee of success. Failure is inevitable, however, when we throw peacekeepers at conflicts or cast stones at the mediator, as a substitute for facing the painful political compromises still to be made by all sides to achieve a sustainable peace.



Dilemmas of Robust Peace Operations

Ian Johnstone

I am very grateful to a number of people for their thoughtful comments on drafts of this essay: Rupert Smith, Lakhdar Brahimi, John Ruggie, Salman Ahmed, Bruce Jones, Paul Keating, Richard Gowan, and Laura Sitea. Many of their suggestions have been incorporated in the final text. Any errors in judgment, of course, are my own.

Peace operations have become more robust in recent years. While the trend is apparent in UN and non-UN operations, the departure is both less pronounced and more striking in the former. It has not been linear, nor without controversy, but the Security Council has asked UN missions to use force for a range of purposes beyond self-defense, including the protection of civilians and maintenance of public security.

Reflection on the challenges and dilemmas thrown up by this new practice has occurred in the UN Secretariat, blue-ribbon panels, and national capitals, but not in a sustained way at the intergovernmental level.¹ Practitioners lack an agreed doctrine for robust peace operations—an interpretive guide to help manage the dilemmas they regularly face in the field. Lacking institutionalized guidance, they improvise. Creative improvisation has been a hallmark of peacekeeping from its earliest days, and adaptability is often the key to success of an operation. But ad hoc responses can produce incoherence and inconsistency within a mission, as well as uncertain expectations among the parties to a conflict, local population, and the multiple participants in complex operations. The traditional principles of peacekeeping—consent, impartiality, and the use of force only in self-defense—were developed in part to manage those expectations. They emerged from practice in order to guide future practice. Given the scope and variety of contemporary peace operations, the time is ripe for renewed multinational attention to their conceptual and doctrinal foundations.

This chapter begins with brief descriptions of four crises that illustrate the trend toward a more robust approach. I then turn to two pervasive functions of contemporary peace operations—protecting civilians and providing public security—which raise a number of dilemmas that implicate the guiding principles. Next is a review of the evolution of thinking in the UN about the basic principles and the development of doctrine elsewhere. The proliferation of approaches and attendant risk of inconsistency underline the need for common understandings at the multinational level. I suggest four areas that warrant

special attention in any effort to develop those common understandings as part of an integrated approach to the complexities of modern peace operations.

The Trend Toward Robust Peace Operations

The period 2000–2005 is book-ended by four crises. The crises differ, both in nature and in magnitude, but threads run through all of them to suggest they are part of a more general pattern associated with modern peace operations.

Sierra Leone, 2000

The first was in Sierra Leone in 2000. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) had a Chapter VII mandate to use force to protect civilians and, after the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) withdrew, to provide security at designated locations for specified purposes, “within [the mission’s] capabilities and areas of deployment.”² As UNAMSIL contingents began to deploy to diamond-producing areas in early May 2000, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) tested the force first by denying freedom of movement and then by taking hostages. Determined not to withdraw, as the UN had done in Rwanda in 1994, the Secretary-General called for a further expansion of UNAMSIL and the deployment of a rapid reaction force. The United Kingdom dispatched 800 paratroopers (though not as a rapid reaction force) and a substantial naval presence offshore. This, along with UNAMSIL and government counterattacks against the RUF, staved off a rebel assault on Freetown and deterred further provocations. It also bought time until well-trained and well-equipped troops from Jordan and India could arrive. Some of the UN hostages were released through negotiations, but in July a 222-strong Indian unit plus others remained surrounded. UNAMSIL successfully launched a robust military operation to restore their freedom of movement.

In August the Security Council ratcheted up the pressure by authorizing UNAMSIL “to deter and, where necessary, decisively counter the threat of the RUF by responding

¹See United Nations, *Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report)*, August 2000. United Nations, *Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change: Our Shared Responsibility*, December 2004. The UN Secretariat has been developing training manuals and modules, generic directives and standard operating procedures, model rules of engagement, and other “guidance” documents that reflect the more threatening environment in which peacekeepers operate.

²S/RES/1289, 7 February 2000.

robustly to any hostile actions or threat of imminent and direct use of force.”³ Not all the troop-contributing countries supported this shift and indeed the decision of India and Jordan to withdraw later in the year was due in part to differences over interpretation of the mandate.⁴ Other troop contributors responded to the Secretary-General’s call for “a very strong military presence with the necessary force multipliers,”⁵ and by March 2001 UNAMSIL was the UN’s largest peace operation, with an authorized strength of 17,500, a deterrent capability, and a dominant presence throughout the country. British marines remained offshore to add to the deterrent. This, combined with active political engagement with the RUF (after its leader Foday Sankoh was arrested) and gradual improvement in the capability of the Sierra Leone army, resulted in voluntary disarmament and successful elections in April 2002.

The UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations Best Practices Unit drew positive lessons from UNAMSIL’s shift to a more robust posture, but also highlighted the difficulties in getting there, including uncertainty about the mandate, confusion about rules of engagement, and command and control problems.⁶ As the mandate was augmented, consultations between troop contributors and the Security Council were less than ideal, which caused particular problems in view of the fact that no developed countries were willing to provide troops to the mission directly. A Security Council mission to Sierra Leone acknowledged that UNAMSIL’s mandate was imprecise and that differences of interpretation had still not been resolved by October 2000.⁷

East Timor, 2000

Meanwhile, a smaller-scale crisis was occurring in East Timor. To bring an end to the violence sparked by the Timorese vote on independence in August 1999, the

Security Council authorized the deployment of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) to restore peace and security. Its functions were taken over by the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in February 2000, which had a sweeping Chapter VII mandate to administer the territory.

Despite the authority to use “all necessary means” to fulfill its mandate, the 8,000 well-armed soldiers of UNTAET initially operated under restrictive rules of engagement (ROEs).⁸ The mission was soon tested by militias infiltrating from across the land border with West Timor, leading in one case to the displacement of up to 3,000 East Timorese. A large militia group ambushed a New Zealand contingent on 24 July, killing one soldier; a Nepalese soldier was killed in a well-planned attack on 10 August; and three UN staff members were murdered in Atambua, West Timor, on 6 September. UNTAET sought a revision of its ROEs, citing language in Security Council Resolution 1319 (2000) that called on it to “respond robustly to the militia threat.” The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) approved an “amplified” concept of self-defense, which became the basis for coercive action without warning if necessary. In a number of operations, elements of the UNTAET force were deployed in the southwestern sector to disarm militias and restore security. There were significant militia casualties in operations through the remainder of 2000, and the groups had largely ceased their organized military campaign by early 2001.

Democratic Republic of Congo, 2004–2005

As the temporary French-led, EU-blessed intervention in Bunia was coming to an end following the crisis there in the summer of 2003 (Operation Artemis), the Security Council adopted Resolution 1493 (2003), which gave the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) two separate Chapter VII mandates: one for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a whole, and one for Ituri and the Kivus, in the east. The former included the authority “to take all necessary measures within the limits of its capabilities and areas of deployment”

³S/RES/1313, 4 August 2000.

⁴United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, *Lessons Learned from UN Peacekeeping Experiences in Sierra Leone*, September 2003, p. 41.

⁵S/2000/832, 24 August 2000.

⁶United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, *Lessons Learned from United Nations Peacekeeping Experiences in Sierra Leone*, September 2003. A DPKO assessment mission to Sierra Leone in the midst of the crisis came to similar conclusions. United Nations, *Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Mission in Sierra Leone*, S/2000/455, 31 July 2000. The problems were exacerbated by a damaging public rift among the senior leadership. Trevor Findlay, *The Use of Force in UN Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 308.

⁷United Nations, *Report of the Security Council Mission to Sierra Leone*, S/2000/992, 16 October 2000.

⁸Dale Stephens, *The Use of Force in Peacekeeping Operations: The East Timor Experience* (Melbourne: Asia-Pacific Centre for Military Law, 2005), pp. 51–52. Stephens was the legal adviser to the UNTAET force commander.

to protect civilians and humanitarian workers. The latter included the right to use “all necessary means to fulfill its mandate in the Ituri district and, as it deems it within its capabilities, in North and South Kivu.” Thus from July 2003, MONUC had Chapter VII authority for its entire mandate, full enforcement power in Ituri, and limited enforcement power “within its capabilities” for the protection of civilians and in the Kivus.

The mission faced a serious crisis in May – June 2004 when Laurent Nkunda marched on the town of Bukavu in support of Jules Mutebutsi, a suspended commander of the DRC armed forces. The city fell and more than 100 people died, provoking violent reactions in Kinshasa and elsewhere. The UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations Best Practices report on the Bukavu crisis faulted MONUC on various grounds, some of which related to the guiding principles of peacekeeping: the senior leadership appeared “to confuse impartiality with neutrality and was reluctant to confront individuals or groups who were clearly working to undermine the transition process”; there were sharply divided opinions—and mixed public signals—about using force to disarm Mutebutsi and stop the advance of Nkunda; and there was confusion among different MONUC contingents about the rules of engagement. The result was a serious loss of credibility for MONUC and a damaging setback for the fragile peace process.⁹

The Bukavu crisis ultimately led to a new mandate for MONUC, embodied in Resolution 1565 (2004), more MONUC troops to Ituri and the Kivus, and the establishment of an eastern divisional headquarters. The more robust approach signaled by these developments was put to the test in Ituri in early 2005. In response to serious violence against civilians in late January, MONUC launched several security operations and itself came under direct attack, resulting in the death of nine peacekeepers. The UN reacted with armed personnel carriers and attack helicopters, killing 50 to 60 militia members in an intense exchange of fire.¹⁰ Soon thereafter, 15,600 Ituri militias laid down their arms, leaving behind a diffuse group of about 1,500.

⁹United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, *MONUC and the Bukavu Crisis*, March 2005.

¹⁰S/2005/167, 15 March 2005, paras. 11–19.

Haiti, 2005

The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established in mid-2004 with a partial Chapter VII mandate. Its functions included the authority, “in support of the Transitional Government,” to ensure a secure environment and to assist with the restoration of public order in Haiti. This deft diplomatic drafting was the product of compromise within the Security Council. It seemed to invite a robust approach, but only in support of existing institutions—specifically, the Haitian National Police (HNP), which was of questionable competence and legitimacy. There were differences of opinion within the mission and the Security Council about how forcefully to act against the armed gangs that controlled the poorer districts of Port-au-Prince. Amid accusations that MINUSTAH was too passive, the Security Council signaled its approval of a more robust approach in the report of a mission all fifteen members took to Haiti in April. This was reinforced by Resolution 1608, adopted on 22 June 2005, which authorized an increase in the mission’s strength and addition of a “rapid reaction force.”

MINUSTAH had engaged in security operations earlier, but the tide against armed gangs turned in late June and early July of 2005, when joint operations by the military and formed police units culminated in the death of gang leader “Dread” Wilme, who had been dominating Cité Soleil. This was followed by the establishment of a permanent security presence in Bel Air, intensive mobile patrolling, cordon and search operations, and a warning that anyone seen carrying a weapon would be shot. The result was a relative return to normalcy in Bel Air, with signs of renewed economic life and the UN able to carry out civilian functions. Later in 2005, attention turned again to Cité Militaire, where similar military tactics were employed. As the year end approached, robust action was also being contemplated for Cité Soleil, though embedded in civilian-led confidence-building measures aimed at winning the support of gang members and trust of the broader population within the district.

Common Threads

Three threads run through these quite different crises. First, in all four cases the Security Council provided a Chapter VII mandate and some enforcement authority, but with enough ambiguity to leave room for differing interpretations as to when force should be used and for what purposes. Second, when crises erupted (as in Sierra Leone and the DRC) or long-standing problems boiled over (as in East Timor and Haiti), there were arguments within the missions, the UN Secretariat, and/ or the Security Council about how to respond. Third, in all cases the UN operations started with a less forceful approach (either due to a lack of capacity or will) and then escalated as the crises expanded.

Contemporary Challenges

The threads are not confined to the four cases. Similar situations have arisen in UN and non-UN operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, and Darfur. And they are likely to arise again as long as peace operations continue to be tasked with performing two functions: protecting civilians and providing public security. These mandates create conceptual and operational challenges for peacekeeping, with not only military but also political, humanitarian, human rights, and normative implications.

Since late 1999, no less than ten peace operations—both UN and non-UN—have been authorized under Chapter VII “to protect civilians under the imminent threat of physical violence,” often qualified by the words, “within capabilities and areas of deployment.”¹¹ This builds on practice that began in the early post-Cold War operations and gained momentum after the tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica. While the term “protection of civilians” was not used for the earlier operations, the mandate was implicit.¹² Today, it is standard language in every Security Council resolution

¹¹For UN operations, see Security Council Resolution 1270 on Sierra Leone (1999); Resolution 1291 on the Democratic Republic of Congo (2000); Resolution 1509 on Liberia (2003); Resolution 1528 on Côte d'Ivoire (2004); Resolution 1542 on Haiti (2004); Resolution 1545 on Burundi (2004); and Resolution 1590 on Sudan (2005). For non-UN operations, see Security Council Resolution 1464 on both the French-led Operation Licorne and ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire (2003); and Resolution 1564 on the African Union in Darfur. A compilation of the precise language in these resolutions can be found in Victoria Holt, *The Responsibility to Protect: Considering the Operational Capacity for Civilian Protection* (revised), discussion paper (Washington, D.C.: Henry Stimson Center, January 2005).

¹²For example, UNPROFOR, then IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia (Resolutions 836, 1031, and 1088); UNITAF and then UNOSOM II in Somalia (Resolutions 794 and 814); Operation Turquoise in Rwanda (Resolutions 925 and 929); KFOR in Kosovo (Resolution 1244); INTERFET and then UNTAET in East Timor (Resolutions 1264 and 1272).

Box 1.1 The 2005 World Summit and Peace Operations

The 2005 World Summit adopted (and in some cases adapted) a number of recommendations made by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change and by the Secretary-General himself in his report *In Larger Freedom*, which was designed to build on previous reforms of peacekeeping. Among the main conclusions of the summit were:

- Recognition of the “vital role” played by peacekeeping in helping parties to end conflict.
- The need to mount operations with adequate capacity to counter hostilities and fulfill effectively their mandates.
- Endorsement of the creation of an initial standing policy capacity to provide coherent, effective, and responsive startup capability for the policing component of UN peacekeeping missions.
- Support for the European Union and other regional entities' efforts to develop capacities for rapid deployment and standby arrangements.
- Support for the development and implementation of a ten-year plan for capacity building with the African Union.
- A call on regional organizations with capacity for the prevention of armed conflict or peacekeeping to consider placing these capacities in the framework of the UN Standby Arrangements System.
- A reaffirmation of the commitment to the protection of children in situations of armed conflict.

The summit did not adopt in whole the High-level Panel's recommendation that the UN establish a strategic reserve for peacekeeping—an idea designed to address the recurrent problem of the need to bolster the defensive and offensive capacity of peacekeeping forces in the face of hostility. The design of a strategic reserve is similar to that of “over-the-horizon” reserve forces commonly used in national deployments. However, the summit did urge further development of “enhanced rapidly deployable capacities to reinforce peacekeeping operations in times of crisis.”

The summit also adopted a carefully but strongly worded “responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

Source: UN General Assembly, Resolution 60/1, 2005 *World Summit Outcome*, NY: 20 September 2005.

that authorizes an operation where civilian lives are likely to be in danger.

This mandate for protection of civilians is part of a normative shift reflected in general statements by the Security Council¹³ and the Secretary-General.¹⁴ The Brahimi panel argued that “UN peacekeepers who witness violence against civilians should be presumed to be authorized to stop it, within their means, in support of basic UN principles.”¹⁵ The normative shift is also reflected in the report of International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which introduced the “responsibility to protect” principle,¹⁶ later picked up by the High-level Panel in its report,¹⁷ and by the Secretary-General in his.¹⁸ The reference to a “responsibility to protect” at the 2005 World Summit¹⁹ was an important step in this evolution, marking the first time it was endorsed in a universal forum. While there is no consensus on the practical applications of the concept, the protection of civilians in peace operations is a way of putting the principle into practice, a step toward giving meaning and content to an inchoate norm.

Yet there is a large gap between the mandate given to peace operations and formal knowledge about how to execute it. In a careful study, Victoria Holt found that even fully developed national peace operation doctrines lack clear guidelines on how to go about protecting civilians.²⁰ Inevitably, responses are improvised. Thus senior officials of the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) wrote rules of engagement that gave their troops authority to protect civilians, even though that was not in the mandate.²¹ MONUC failed to protect civilians during the Bukavu

crisis, after having raised expectations that it would do so by announcing formation of a new Kivus brigade.²² It subsequently did better in Ituri, but to this day MONUC’s areas of operation are so large that it cannot protect civilians wherever it is deployed. The same is true for the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), and the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), despite its force of almost 7,000, is struggling to protect civilians in Darfur.²³ The UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) and Operation Licorne can intervene in small-scale crises, but would have difficulty doing so in the face of systematic attempts at slaughter in ethnically divided areas. Even the large NATO military and UN police operations in Kosovo have been inconsistent in carrying out their protection mandate—most notably during the riots of March 2004.

These improvised responses highlight a number of dilemmas. First, a mandate without adequate capacity can generate expectations that will not be fulfilled. The qualifying words “within the limits of the mission’s capabilities” are aimed at lowering expectations, but is it reasonable to suppose that all concerned—including vulnerable populations—will read the fine print? Removing civilian protection language from resolutions altogether is no solution, because the mere presence of a peace operation generates expectations. After Rwanda and Srebrenica, peacekeepers cannot simply stand by as civilians are massacred, claiming that action to protect them is not in the mandate. On the other hand, if peacekeepers are to be held responsible for every death they fail to prevent, the number of countries willing to contribute troops or police may decline dramatically.

A second dilemma is that the qualified mandate could draw people to where peacekeepers are deployed in order to fall under the protection umbrella. This can quickly overwhelm the capacity of a mission, and expose it to manipulation by those who want either to see the operation fail or to invite robust action from the peacekeepers in the hope that it will go to work to their advantage. A third dilemma arises when protective action in one location leads to reprisals against civilians elsewhere, a deeply disturbing pattern

¹³See, for example, *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: S/1999/957*, 8 September 1999. This report provides a detailed overview of tasks relating to protection of civilians that UN peacekeeping operations had engaged in, some of which required a “coercive or enforcement role” though not always on the basis of clear mandates. The Secretary-General alludes to the possibility of military action to separate armed elements from civilians in refugee and IDP camps, and to create “temporary security zones and safe corridors for the protection of civilians.” Paras. 35 and 39. Subsequent SG reports on protection of civilians shy away from that kind of language. See, for example, *S/2002/1300* (26 November 2002) and *S/2004/131* (28 May 2004).

¹⁴*Brahimi Report*, para. 62. *The Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* backs away from that position by stating, “in specific circumstances, the mandate of a peacekeeping operation may include the need to protect a vulnerable civilian population from imminent attack,” implying the obligations should not be presumed. United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*, 2003, pp. 7–8.

¹⁵International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, December 2001.

¹⁶United Nations, *Report of the High-Level Panel*, para. 199–203.

¹⁷United Nations, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security, and Human Rights for All*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/59/2005, 21 March 2005, para. 132.

¹⁸UN General Assembly Resolution: *2005 World Summit Outcome*. A/RES/60/1, 20 September 2005, para. 138.

¹⁹Holt, *The Responsibility to Protect*. It is not clear why this is the case. It may simply be because the practice is too new. Or it could be because protection of civilians is so sensitive that national political authorities prefer to deal with the issue at the highest level on a case-by-case basis, rather than developing a more standardized approach.

²⁰Kristina Powell, *Opportunities and Challenges for Delivering on the Responsibility to Protect the African Union’s Emerging Peace and Security Regime*, Monograph no. 119 (Ottawa Canada, The North-South Institute, May 2005), p. 35.

²¹United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, *MONUC and the Bukavu Crisis 2004*, March 2005, p. 12.

²²*Darfur’s Despair*, *The Economist*, 15 October 2005, p. 47.

Table 1.1 Formed Police Units, as of December 2005

	UNMIK	UNMIL	UNOCI	MONUC	MINUSTAH	Total
Bangladesh	-	-	125	250	-	375
China	-	-	-	-	125	125
India	-	-	-	250	-	250
Jordan	-	120	250	-	290	660
Nepal	-	250	-	-	125	375
Pakistan	115	-	-	-	250	365
Poland	115	-	-	-	-	115
Romania	115	-	-	-	-	115
Senegal	-	-	-	250	85	335
Ukraine	140	-	-	-	-	140
Total	585	495	375	750	1,000	3,345

Source: DPI (DPKO Website)

that is playing out in the DRC. A fourth dilemma relates to timing and scale. Should peacekeepers act pre-emptively to protect civilians, or is the use of force always a last resort? Taking on the spoilers only after they have done their worst is no help to civilians who die while all other measures are first exhausted. On the other hand, pre-emptive action can provoke a reaction, and there are limits to how far most peace operations can escalate. Even the international coalition in Iraq and the NATO-led operation in Kosovo have struggled to seize and keep the initiative throughout their areas of operation. Is it reasonable to expect MONUC to do so in the DRC, UNOCI and Operation Licorne in Côte d'Ivoire, AMIS and UNMIS in Sudan, or even MINUSTAH in relation to the lesser security threats it faces in Haiti?

All of the above highlight a deeper dilemma: the protection of civilians is a goal of both order and justice. While military action can create order quickly, achieving justice takes longer and requires a more comprehensive approach.²⁴ Viewing protection of civilians as a public order task may produce quick results, but can undermine more long-term, multidimensional efforts to achieve justice. On the other hand, waiting for those efforts to bear fruit while civilians die can fatally undermine the legitimacy of a mission and jeopardize the local and international support it needs to succeed.

²⁴See General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), pp. 377–387.

Public Security Gap

A second challenge for contemporary peace operations that has raised difficult questions about roles, responsibilities, and expectations is the so-called public security gap.²⁵ The gap arises when there is a need to perform public order functions that fall between providing a secure environment (a typical military function) and crime control, civil disturbances, and general lawlessness (typically viewed as civilian police functions). It occurs when local security forces are incapable of maintaining law and order, the military component of a peace operation is unwilling to do so, and multinational civilian police forces are unable to do so, either because they are deployed in insufficient numbers or because the magnitude of the challenge exceeds police capabilities. The issue is sharpest in “executive policing” operations, like Kosovo and East Timor, but it arises wherever the peacekeepers are expected to help provide public security.

Specialized forces have been used to fill the gap in a number of places. Various called “formed police units,” “integrated police units,” “constabularies,” “police with military status,” “gendarmierie-type forces,” “multinational specialized units” and “special police units,” these forces

²⁵See generally, Robert Oakley, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Eliot M. Goldberg, eds., *Policing the New World Disorder* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1998); Alice Hills, *The Inherent Limits of Military Force in Policing Peace Operations*, *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 79–98; Annika Hansen, *Supporting the Rule of Law in War-Torn Societies: Tasks and Comparative Advantages of Civilian and Military Police Forces*, FFI/RAPPOR no. 2005-02099, November 2005; Renata Dwan, ed., *Executive Policing: Enforcing the Law in Peace Operations*, SIPRI Research Report no. 16, 2002; and Robert Perito, *Where Is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America's Search for a Postconflict Stability Force* (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 2004).

are designed for crowd and riot control, high-end law enforcement, combating organized crime, and protecting key locations and VIPs. In Haiti in the early 1990s, the public security gap was filled by military police and special units who engaged in joint patrols with Haitian security forces. These 920 international police monitors from twenty-six countries carried sidearms, had arrest powers, and could use deadly force to prevent violence.²⁶ They were replaced by 870 UN civilian police who were also armed, including a 150-person Argentinian SWAT team. The first multinational specialized unit (MSU) was deployed in Bosnia in 1998, as part of the NATO-led force, after a riot in Brcko demonstrated the limitations of the military for crowd control.²⁷ The lesson was applied in Kosovo, where both an MSU under Kosovo Force (KFOR) command and a special police unit (SPU) under UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) authority were deployed with mandates that included the handling of civil disturbances and threats to public order. Gendarmerie-type units were deployed in East Timor, and today there are formed police units in the UN missions in Haiti, the DRC, Kosovo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia.

Reliance on these units has not been without controversy, pointing to a tension among contributing states about the respective roles of military, police, and constabulary forces. In Bosnia, the MSU's list of functions (public order and safety, intelligence-gathering, crowd control, protection of returnees, security during elections, fighting organized crime, and stopping smuggling) was a "veritable smorgasbord of all the issues SFOR and IPTF were struggling with."²⁸ In Kosovo, the similar mandates of the MSU and SPU revealed a lack of clarity about the gap they were meant to fill, and the inadequacies of the response to the riots in March 2004 were partly a result of poor coordination among the military and police.²⁹ In Haiti, MINUSTAH military and police units have been engaging in joint security operations in the slums of Port-au-Prince, but poor coordination and misunderstandings about functions prompted the Security Council to call for a new sector headquarters for the express purpose of

ensuring more efficient and better integrated operations.³⁰ MONUC's authorized strength was enhanced by five formed police units (625 officers) in 2005 partly to assist the national police in providing crowd control, but their main function will be to protect UN facilities and sites during the electoral period.

This history highlights some of the dilemmas associated with the public security gap. First, security cannot be divided neatly between "military" and "police" functions in peace operations. Debate continues between those who argue the military is not trained, equipped, or otherwise suited for postconflict policing, and those who argue it is an essential part of the military's security responsibilities.³¹ Constabulary forces may help to fill the vacuum, but they are not a panacea because numbers are limited and the ability to deploy quickly is constrained, although some initiatives are under way to enhance global capacity.³² Moreover, there is no standard, formed police unit. Formed police are trained, structured, and deployed to meet the domestic security needs of their countries.³³ They cannot simply be transplanted to a peace operation and expected to perform any task deemed to fall in the "public security gap."

The second dilemma arises where the gap can only be filled by a mix of military, constabulary, and individual police forces. Coordination is exceptionally difficult. The three types of forces often arrive with different operating styles, rules of engagement, and attitudes about the use of force. And it is precisely in the operations where the use of force is most likely that coordination is most difficult.

A third dilemma follows from the second. If military and formed police units engage in joint operations, should they be under a military chain of command? This would seem to make sense from an operational point of view, at least in high-intensity operations. But if the police units are

²⁶Perito, *Where Is the Lone Ranger*, p. 110.

²⁷Renata Dwan, *Civilian Tasks and Capabilities in EU Peace Operations*, paper commissioned by the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, September 2004.

²⁸Hansen, *Supporting the Rule of Law*, p. 17.

²⁹For more on the UNMIK special police unit and KFOR multinational specialized unit, see Chapter 2.

³⁰S/RES/1608, 2005, para. 2(b).

³¹Dwan, *Civilian Tasks and Capabilities*, p. 4. See also Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Military Forces and Public Security Challenges," in Michael Pugh and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, eds., *The United Nations and Regional Security: The UN and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 137–153.

³²The Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) was established in Vicenza, Italy, in 2005 as part of the Group of Eight's action plan for expanding global capability for peace and support operations. CoESPU is co-located with the recently established EU Gendarmerie Force headquarters, which is developing concepts of operations and functions for what the EU refers to as "integrated police units."

³³Hansen, "A Civil-Military Cooperation: The Military, Paramilitaries and Civilian Police in *Executive Policing*," in Renata Dwan, ed., *Executive Policing: Enforcing Law in Peace Operations*, SIPRI Research Report no. 16 (Oxford: Oxford University Press/SIPRI, 2002), at 71.

seen as paramilitary, this can be problematic in societies where such forces have been part of the problem rather than solution. Moreover, the ability of international civilian police to do and teach “community policing” may be compromised if their formed counterparts are engaged in coercive action under a military chain of command.

The above dilemmas highlight the normative dimension of public security and its connection to the broader goal of rule of law promotion—an increasingly important but under resourced aspect of modern peace operations. To assume law and order responsibilities, either directly in an executive policing mandate or indirectly through support of local forces, is to assume one of the most basic state functions. Effective policing is based on a social contract between state authorities and the population, which requires a degree of respect and understanding, if not trust. Foreign forces are not part of this social contract, but nevertheless transmit values in how they go about their work. Community policing is such a value, as is respect for human rights. In post-conflict environments, the police are often the most visible manifestation of a transformed society—they are the face of both order and justice.³⁴ Thus greater clarity about the roles of military, police, and constabularies will not only contribute to public order, but can also contribute to the restoration of justice.

The Search for Conceptual Clarity

The traditional principles of peacekeeping— consent, impartiality, and the use of force only in self-defense— emerged from the first UN Emergency Force (UNEF I) in 1956 and understandings about those principles have been evolving ever since. Throughout the Cold War era and with few exceptions, a sharp line was drawn between Chapter VI peacekeeping and Chapter VII enforcement action. The changed nature of the missions at the end of the Cold War led to a blurring of the line between “peacekeeping” and “enforcement action,” highlighted by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali’s *Agenda for Peace* of 1992, wherein he proposed “peace enforcement units” to occupy a halfway house between the two.³⁵ But failures in Bosnia,

Somalia, and Rwanda prompted the Secretary-General to backtrack in his 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, in which he insisted that “peacekeeping and the use of force (other than in self-defense)” were alternative techniques and not adjacent points on a continuum.³⁶ In other words, there is no halfway house between peacekeeping and enforcement, and the two should not be mixed.

The sharp line the supplement tried to draw was blurred again by the Brahimi Report, which was inspired by UN reports on the fall of Srebrenica and the genocide in Rwanda, as well as an Organization of African Unity (OAU) report on Rwanda. The Brahimi Report affirms the “bedrock principles of peacekeeping,” but then qualifies all three: consent is often unreliable and subject to manipulation by the parties; impartiality does not mean neutrality, but rather “adherence to the principles of the Charter and to the objectives of a mandate that is rooted in those Charter principles”; and UN operations must be prepared to deal effectively with “spoilers,” with forces able to pose a credible deterrent and “to project credible force.”³⁷ The blurring of the line was forthrightly acknowledged by the High-level Panel in 2004 when it stated that the distinction between Chapter VI peacekeeping and Chapter VII peace enforcement is “misleading” and that the usual practice is to give both types of operation a Chapter VII mandate, on the understanding that even the most benign environment can turn sour.³⁸ The 2005 World Summit outcome document says little about the use of force by peacekeepers, other than to reaffirm that missions should have “adequate capacity to counter hostilities and fulfill effectively their mandates”³⁹—a hint at robustness, but without elaboration.

Thus the UN does not have a peacekeeping doctrine beyond what is reflected in training modules, standard directives, generic standard operating procedures (SOPs), a “master list” of rules of engagement, and publications like the 2003 *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping*. An important initiative is currently under

³⁴A/47/277–S/24111: 17 June 1992, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, para. 44.

³⁵Supplement, paras. 35–36.

³⁶Brahimi Report, “Executive Summary” and paras. 21, 48, 50–51.

³⁷United Nations, *Report of the High-Level Panel*, paras. 211–213.

³⁸2005 World Summit Outcome, para. 92.

³⁹Rama Mani, *Contextualizing Police Reform: Security, the Rule of Law and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in The Cass Series on Peacekeeping: Peacebuilding and Police Reform* (2000, Vol. 7), pp. 9–27.

way in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to launch a “guidance and policy management system” for the conduct of operations. This represents a serious effort to provide operational guidance to practitioners by assembling the various lessons learned and relevant DPKO documents into a more coherent whole. It is not an effort to formulate or declare new doctrine, but rather to build on existing principles in offering flexible and continually evolving guidance on how to train and prepare for missions and how to carry out mandated tasks. While this is an important exercise, it can only go so far without greater consensus at the inter-governmental level about the conceptual foundations of modern peace operations.

The development of multinational doctrine is difficult but not impossible, as the case of NATO demonstrates.⁴⁰ No other regional organization has gone as far, but the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have begun addressing doctrinal issues in the context of the standby forces each is establishing.⁴¹ At the national level, most NATO countries have developed doctrines for peace operations, some of which have gone through several iterations in the post–Cold War era.⁴² Many of the leading troop contributors from the developing world refer to peacekeeping in their military doctrines. There is also diffusion of peacekeeping training centers where basic concepts and techniques are taught.

Doctrinal developments at the national level inevitably affect multinational missions, often in a positive way. But the proliferation of approaches can be problematic. Clashes between national approaches and those of the organization under which they operate, or among national approaches within a mission, can lead to an incoherent and ineffective peace operation. Without common or at least congruent understandings about the basic principles, mandates will be interpreted, directives and SOPs developed, rules of engagement drafted, decisions made, and action taken

⁴⁰NATO, *Peace Support Operations*, Unclassified Document no. AJP-3.4.1, 2002. NATO’s peace support operations doctrine was crafted painstakingly over a period of years. NATO members presented over 500 comments and amendments to the fourth draft of AJP-3.4.1. Henning A. Frantzen, *NATO Peace Support Operations 1991–1999: Policies and Doctrines* (New York: Frank Cass/Taylor & Francis, 2005), p. 78. A new NATO peace operations doctrine has been drafted but had not been released as of the time of writing.

⁴¹Current thinking in ECOWAS is reflected in ECOWAS Workshop, *Lessons Learned from ECOWAS Peacekeeping Operations: 1990–2004*, February 2005. East Africa has taken steps to establish a standby brigade for East Africa, and its “policy framework” states that its doctrine shall be consistent with that of the UN. IGAD Secretariat, *Policy Framework for the Establishment of the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG)*, 11 April 2005.

⁴²One of the most recent is UK Ministry of Defense, *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations*, 2nd ed., Joint Warfare Publication (JWP) 3-50 (Swindon, UK: Ministry of Defense, June 2004).

either in a conceptual void⁴³ or based on assumptions that find their way into peace operations through the back door (i.e., through influential contributors to an operation or strong-willed individuals within a mission).

Recent experience suggests that the time is ripe for renewed multinational reflection on the fundamentals of peace operations. The question is not so much whether the core principles of consent, impartiality, and the minimum use of force are still relevant, but whether practitioners need a more fully developed interpretive guide to ensure that those principles are applied effectively. Four areas in particular would benefit from greater conceptual clarity: the management of expectations, the meaning of consent and impartiality, the use of force, and the broader normative context in which peace operations occur.

First, the deployment of a peace operation creates expectations at many levels. The mandating authority (e.g., the UN Security Council) expects the mandate to be fulfilled, the contributors to an operation expect the resources and political backing to fulfill it, the parties to a peace agreement expect reassurance that the other parties will not cheat, and innocent civilians expect their physical well-being to be protected. Shared understandings about the nature, objectives, and underlying principles of an operation help manage those expectations—of ensuring that the parties know what steps the peacekeepers will take to ensure compliance with the mandate, and that civilians know what the operation will and will not do to protect them. The effective management of expectations requires specificity in a mandate, as well as consistency and transparency in its execution. If force is used, it must be for understandable reasons; if force is not used, the reasons should be equally understandable. This requires good public information and effective communication with the parties and the broader population about the mission’s aims and operational activities.

As important, the contributors to a peace operation—military, police and civilian organizations—must know what they are getting into. This requires overcoming the

⁴³For a prescient comment on the doctrinal void that existed in peace operations in the early 1990s, see John Ruggie, *Wandering in the Void: Charting the UN’s New Strategic Role*, *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (Nov.–Dec. 1993): 26–31.

knowledge deficit that plagues many missions, so troop and other contributors do not find themselves in situations they did not expect. If they are likely to take casualties, that should be understood from the outset. If the troops or police are likely to inflict casualties, that also must be well understood—especially in chaotic environments, where the line between combatants and civilians is often hard to draw. Moreover, the actions of one component of a peace operation impact the others: military action can inhibit or enable progress on the civilian front, the imperatives of political or humanitarian action may dictate a certain military posture, and so on. Shared understandings can help ensure harmony of effort among the various components.

Second, there is a need for clarity about the meaning of consent and impartiality. These principles have stood the test of time, but how they play out in practice is far from self-evident. If there is consent to an operation, it is often qualified in one of three ways: either it is (1) unreliable, (2) brought about under outside pressure, rendering it something less than a pure act of volition, or (3) open-ended. No peace agreement implemented over an extended period can provide for every contingency, so even genuine consent, in effect, is a gesture of faith that unforeseen problems can be worked out on a consensual basis. Underlying all these qualifications is the basic question: Whose consent matters? Is it only or primarily the parties to the conflict, or is the consent and cooperation of the broader population as important? Often local spoilers are supported by foreign backers; in many circumstances, their “consent” to end that support is critical to the success of a mission.

Impartiality, meanwhile, was defined in the Brahimi Report to mean adherence to the principles of the Charter and objectives of a mandate, a conception that is found in many national peace operation doctrines. It assumes a clear enough mandate that all concerned know what impartiality in its execution entails, which relates back to the need for transparency and good communication. More broadly, consent and impartiality connect to the notion of legitimacy. In modern operations, consent is an important source of legitimacy, but may not be the only source.

A principled mandate from an authoritative institution executed impartially can also bestow legitimacy.

Third, in its 2005 report, the UN’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations added to its standard endorsement of the principle “non-use of force except in self-defense” a reference to “defense of a mandate,” and it identified the need for “an appropriately strong military and civilian police presence . . . in order to deter spoilers and establish the credibility of the United Nations.”⁴⁴ The 2005 World Summit outcome report states peacekeepers should have “adequate capacity to counter hostilities and fulfill effectively their mandates.”⁴⁵ Debate and dilemmas arise when the main protagonists to a conflict formally consent to an international security presence and yet lesser armed groups oppose that presence or threaten aspects of its mandate. The dilemmas are especially acute when it is hard to tell whether these lesser groups are acting as proxies for the main protagonists. This suggests that there is not necessarily an inverse relationship between the use of force on the one hand and consent and impartiality on the other. The judicious use of force can enhance the credibility of a mission and create conditions that will both induce overall consent and reinforce the perception of impartiality. There is no formula for determining how much force is appropriate and indeed one of the fault lines of debate is what constitutes “proportionate” force. The Brahimi Report raised this issue squarely in venturing that “rules of engagement should not limit contingents to stroke-for-stroke responses but should allow ripostes sufficient to silence a source of deadly fire.”⁴⁶ This raises the further question of whether the peacekeepers can ever shoot first. Did the generalized threat presented by the militias in East Timor in the year 2000 justify the preemptive use of force against them? Can force be used against illegal armed groups in eastern DRC today because they pose a constant threat to civilians, or must the peacekeepers wait until a particular incident has occurred before reacting? A consensus is emerging that appropriate force should be measured in relation to objectives sought rather than absolute terms. The objectives may be achievable with a robust *presence*, obviating the need to actually use force

⁴⁴United Nations, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping and Its Working Group at the 2005 Substantive Session, A/59/19*, 1 March 2005, paras. 30, 46.

⁴⁵2005 *World Summit Outcome*, para. 92.

⁴⁶Brahimi Report, at para. 49.

as long as there is a credible threat that it will be used if necessary.⁴⁷ However, there are limits on the credibility of that threat based on the capacity of a peace operation to escalate and its ability to gauge how far the cycle of escalation is likely to go. The danger of ratcheting up as crises get worse is that a mission's limit may be reached and the deterrent effect lost. The UN's proposal for a strategic reserve is designed to address this problem—an "over-the-horizon" arrangement available at short notice when a crisis escalates beyond the capacity of peacekeeping forces on the ground.⁴⁸ Conversely, the threat of overwhelming military force may not be credible if the security threat is of a lower order, such as street disturbances during an election period. This suggests that a flexible presence with a range of capabilities, involving military, constabulary, and police assets, can be more credible than massive military firepower that is not likely to be used.

In many operations, how robustly external forces act turns on the stage of development of national forces. In Haiti and eastern DRC, the question is not simply how much force MINUSTAH and MONUC should be using, but whether they should be leading, supporting, or operating alongside the Haitian National Police and Armed Forces of the DRC respectively. In the normal course, national forces assume primary responsibility for security (internal and external) as soon as they have the capacity—and legitimacy—to do so. Until then, sensitive decisions must be made about how the peacekeepers should associate with those forces.

Fourth, peace operations do not occur in a normative vacuum, nor do decisions about the protection of civilians and maintenance of public order. If nothing else, expectations are affected by these normative considerations. The basic norms that guide UN peace operations are those embodied in the Charter. Sovereignty and non-intervention are among those principles, as are

self-determination and respect for human rights. The constitutive acts of various regional and subregional organizations contain the same mix of norms.⁴⁹ Concepts like the "responsibility to protect," human security, and the rule of law are starting to infuse peace operations practice. They are controversial and expose deep divisions in understandings about the nature of the enterprise. Is it fundamentally an instrument parties to a conflict use to help resolve their differences on the basis of consent? Or, is it a more proactive enterprise, in which external actors help to rebuild war-torn states on the basis of international norms and standards?⁵⁰ That there is no global consensus on how to answer those questions is not an excuse for ignoring the normative dimensions of any peace operation. Decisions about whether and how to protect civilians or provide public security, or engage in any of the myriad other tasks peacekeepers are charged with, involve not only operational but also normative choices. And acting on those decisions shapes the normative climate in which similar choices are confronted in the future.

Conclusion

Excessive guidance can smother creative improvisation in a peace operation, but ad hoc responses to recurring challenges leave too much room for internal argument, inconsistency, and unmet expectations. The complexity of modern operations, the multiplicity of actors, and the range of partners involved dictate the need for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary strategy. While robust action is often necessary, a purely military approach is never adequate in contemporary peace missions, which by definition are not about winning a war or defeating an enemy but facilitating a peace process. Military action, if and when necessary, must be in the service of a broader political strategy. That strategy should in turn be guided by common understandings, not only about the objectives of the mission but also the principles that underlie decisions about how to achieve those objectives. The principles have evolved and will continue to evolve in light of experience. Sustained multinational reflection on that evolution is necessary if this valuable instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security is to respond effectively to contemporary challenges.

⁴⁷There is a difference between using force to compel an action and using it to deter, and the requirements are hard to gauge when more than one actor needs to be compelled or deterred. See John Ruggie, *The UN and the Collective Use of Force: Whither or Whether*, *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 1–20.

⁴⁸The 2005 World Summit did not endorse the UN's strategic reserve proposal per se, but it did urge development of "enhance rapidly deployable capacities to reinforce peacekeeping operations in times of crisis." UN General Assembly, Resolution 60/1, *2005 World Summit Outcome*, 20 September 2005.

⁴⁹The Constitutive Act of the African Union endorses the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention while granting the AU a right to intervene in a member state "in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" and, since 2003, "a serious threat to legitimate order." See *Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4(h)*; and *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, Article 4(j)*, as amended in February 2003.

⁵⁰Alex Bellamy, Paul Williams, and Stuart Griffin, eds., *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), pp. 11–33.

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**New York University
418 Lafayette Street, Suite 543
New York, NY 10003
(212) 998-3680
cic.info@nyu.edu
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