The Global Peace Operations Review is an interactive web-portal presenting in-depth analysis and detailed data on military peacekeeping operations and civilian-led political missions by the United Nations, regional organizations, and ad-hoc coalitions. The web-portal is a product of the New York University Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and a continuation of its long-standing print publications the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations and the Review of Political Missions.

Providing the most comprehensive overview of multilateral contributions to peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and post-conflict peacebuilding, the Review aims to initiate and inform discussions on the comparative advantages and appropriateness of different missions, and through constructive analysis to further strengthen existing partnerships necessary for them to succeed.

Through the Country & Regional Profile pages, the Review provides background information and regularly updated key developments on peace operations and the contexts in which they operate. The analysis is further enhanced by the provision of detailed data on each of the UN's peace operations, and headline data on missions fielded by regional organizations and ad hoc missions, which can be accessed in full through the Data & Trends section. Data on non-UN peace operations was compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). For more details, please see our Data guide. The Strategic Summary provides an overview of main developments in mission settings over the past year and presents analysis on trends and the impact these may have on shaping peace operations of the future. Thematic essays presented in the In Focus section unpack issues critical to peace operations, providing analysis and guidance on possible approaches.

The Library section enables readers to download full text .pdf files of past editions of the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations (2006-2012) and the Review of Political Missions (2010-2012). For those interested in conducting their own analysis using the data generated for these publications, we have provided spreadsheets of all the statistics used to compile these reports.

Scope of the Global Peace Operations Review

The Review covers more than one hundred multilateral peace operations active in the previous year including missions fielded by the UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, OSCE, OAS and coalitions. It uses a broad definition of peace operations that includes multilateral and ad hoc military and police missions, as well as civilian led political missions. Neither type of mission has a simple definition. Alongside more straightforward peacekeeping missions, the Review, mindful of the need for peace operations to adjust to the changing nature of conflict, also includes peace enforcement operations that employ the use of force and engage in active combat.

Under political missions, we include multilateral civilian-led missions that have political engagement in the form of launching and supporting political processes at their core. This includes, for example, the EU’s Special Representatives and the African Union Liaison Offices that support the implementation of peace agreements and accompany political processes. We have excluded missions, such as EU delegations and other liaison offices that may engage in political activities, but as their core function serve more as regular diplomatic or developmental presences. Along the same reasoning, we have also excluded election observer and human rights monitoring missions.

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CHANGING REALITIES: NEW DIMENSIONS OF PEACE OPERATIONS

ALISCHA KUGEL

STRATEGIC SUMMARY

One month before launching the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to examine the state of UN peacekeeping operations and political missions, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon remarked the time had come to take stock of the lessons we have learned. “The world is changing and our support to peacekeeping, and indeed all peace operations, must keep pace.”

The nature of conflict is shifting with the inter-state confrontations that led to the creation of the world body giving way to internationalized civil wars. Peace operations today are deployed into complex operating theaters, intractable political situations and high-risk environments. This summary details four main trends of this pivotal moment for multilateral peace operations during 2013 and 2014 including:

• Innovation around peace operations;
• Surging African peacekeeping;
• Proliferating peacemaking initiatives by regional organizations, and;
• Increased risk for peacekeepers and civilian staff.

Trends in Peace Operations

In 2014, 230,797 troops, police and civilian personnel were deployed in global peace operations.3 Both UN and non-UN peacekeeping deployments increased after a period of contraction in 2012. [Not accounting for the ongoing reductions of NATO’s ISAF troops in Afghanistan. The total number of troops, police and civilian personnel (in UN missions only) in 2012 excluding ISAF was 152,474 personnel.] UN peacekeeping deployments grew by 8.5 percent, while non-UN forces (excluding the NATO mission in Afghanistan) increased by 60 per cent. This underlined the role regional organizations play in fielding peacekeeping missions as this growth was primarily driven by deployments by African organizations.
Civilian deployments in field-based military and civilian-led peace operations totaled 29,266 personnel. While UN missions experienced a six percent decrease in civilian deployments since 2012, civilian components in UN missions still comprise 77 percent of the total civilian deployments in field-based global peace operations.

Events in 2013-14 have shown the wide breadth of international crisis management responses to new challenges. Despite the continued demand for hefty military deployments in cases such as Somalia and Mali, another notable feature of the last two years has been a high level of innovation in response to new challenges:

- The UN launched two highly unusual missions to manage the dismantling of the Syrian chemical stockpile (2013-2014) and the Ebola crisis (2014-2015);
- The African Union has increasingly engaged in civilian as well as military crisis management, launching six new political missions in this period;
- The European Union experimented with its first land-based military mission in Africa for almost a decade (in the Central African Republic) as well as a number of national and regional security sector/training missions across the continent, and;
- The OSCE launched its first monitoring mission in more than a decade in Ukraine.

These initiatives reflect a larger pattern of innovation around peace operations. This includes the Security Council’s experiment with the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the Democratic Republic of Congo and efforts by the UN and OSCE to use drones and other technologies in their operations.

The international peace operations system is adapting and evolving to a complex security environment. But the UN and its partners are struggling to find sustainable political and security solutions to many of the challenges they face in cases including Mali, Libya, South Sudan and Syria. It is possible that these challenges will grow further, with demands rising for new international presences in Libya and, possibly, Ukraine.
The period under review was also notable for the surge of African peacekeeping deployments. In Mali (2013) and the Central African Republic (2013-14), African regional actors fielded military bridging missions until larger-scale UN operations were able to deploy. While these African-led operations received additional military support from France and the EU, the deployments point to an increased capacity by African regional actors to field larger peacekeeping deployments. At the same time, the need for such bridging operations highlights the ongoing difficulty the UN has in deploying its missions in a timely manner.

Regional organizations also took on a greater role in fielding political missions, particularly in Africa. Seventeen out of the twenty-four political missions launched by regional organizations in 2013-14 are based on the continent. Beyond large players such as the AU, EU and ECOWAS, it includes less dominant institutions such as ECCAS that lead the mediation effort in CAR. IGAD fielded envoys in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The OIC deployed a mediator for Mali and the Sahel.

The proliferation of mediation efforts also further increased parallel deployments by different institutions in the same country or sub-region. In the two Sudans, ten envoys and mediators from five different institutions are working to support political processes alongside three UN peacekeeping operations (see graph below). In CAR, three envoys from different institutions work on mediation efforts next to an equal number of military operations. This operational reality requires enhanced coordination between organizations fielding peace operations to avoid duplication and/or counterproductive processes. It also offers opportunities for regional organizations and the UN to discuss how to jointly manage increasing risk levels that their missions face in countries of operation.

**FIGURE 2: PARALLEL PEACE OPERATIONS IN CAR, MALI AND SAHEL, AND SOUTH SUDAN AND SUDAN**

Peace operations increasingly operate in highly volatile environments where there is no peace to keep. In 2014, UN peacekeepers were deployed in four high-intensity conflicts in CAR, DRC, Mali and South Sudan. A once benign operating environment in the Golan Heights has become dangerous after spillover from the Syrian civil war. Terrorist groups frequently target the UN mission in Mali. With 33 fatalities up until April 2015, this has become the second deadliest UN peacekeeping operation on record after...
Somalia twenty years ago. [Latest available data on fatalities in UN peacekeeping missions is as of 30 April 2015, see Fatalities, UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations.]

While the fatality rates in South Sudan and CAR are considerably lower, peacekeepers in these theaters are presented with multiple armed state and non-state actor groups that defy negotiated settlements. In the Golan Heights, military observers were attacked and kidnapped by extremist rebel groups operating in Syria, leading major troop contributors to withdraw their personnel. At UN headquarters discussions ensued about providing troop contributors with a “risk premium,” a financial incentive aimed to acknowledge the work of some units under challenging circumstances.

Non-UN missions of different types are also increasingly deployed to such environments and often accept a high degree of risk. Regional or ad hoc missions deployed peace operations in eight of the eleven high-intensity conflicts in 2014. The African-led missions to Mali and CAR incurred significant casualties (see below), although still far below those of the ongoing AU mission in Somalia.

The EU and France fielded missions in high risk areas in Mali and CAR, although these interventions raised concerns in Paris and other European capitals. Through AMISOM as well as the missions in Mali and CAR, the AU demonstrated that it may be politically better positioned to field peace enforcement and counterinsurgency missions. While less risk adverse than the UN or EU, the AU still needs assistance in funding, equipment, training and logistical support to field its operations.

**FIGURE 3: FATALITIES BY MALICIOUS ACTS INCURRED IN A ONE-YEAR PERIOD IN AFRICAN-LED AND UN-LED PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS IN MALI AND CAR**

Civilian staff as well as troops face higher levels of risk. A recent UN University study found that almost 90 per cent of UN political missions are operating in high-intensity conflicts, increasing the level of risk for non-uniformed personnel. In Somalia on 19 June 2013, only two weeks after the deployment of UNSOM, the UN compound housing the mission suffered a devastating attack killing 22 people. Additional attacks on the compound since then caused further casualties. In Libya, the UN and EU were forced
to relocate their missions’ staff indefinitely after the deterioration of the security situation. In Ukraine, civilian OSCE monitors were abducted and held for almost 30 days.

The UN has had to innovate to address these challenges. In 2014, it deployed two guard units of up to 560 troops to CAR and Somalia to protect UN civilian personnel. [The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq has had a guard unit comprised of Fijian and Nepali troops since 2004.] A third deployment to Libya was scrapped due to concerns by the Libyan authorities about the effect the guards’ effect on the volatile security situation. Questions about the deployment of guard units and their legal and normative operational bases are shared by the wider UN membership. While some concerns regarding the mandate and responsibilities of guard troops are addressed through Status of Mission agreements between the UN and host governments, broader questions remain on the legal protection of guard troops and their obligations to act in the face of grave crimes. Given the proliferation of regional organizations’ political missions, these actors will also have to find effective measures to protect their staff in high-risk environments.

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

UN OPERATIONS

With the launch of three new peacekeeping operations in 2013 and 2014 – the Force Intervention Brigade in the DRC, MINUSMA in Mali and MINUSCA in CAR – military and police deployments to the sixteen UN peacekeeping missions in 2014 stood at 105,173. Expenditure on UN peacekeeping continues to rise. The peacekeeping budget for the fiscal year 1 July 2013-30 June 2014 was $7.83 billion and rose by 8 per cent to $8.47 billion for the 2014-15 period.

Bangladesh, India and Pakistan remain the top three leading troop and police contributing countries. African countries comprised twelve out of the top twenty troop and police contributing nations, with Ethiopia in fourth place. Measured by troop contributions alone, Ethiopia would move ahead of Bangladesh as the leading TCC in 2014. Among European countries, Italy and France took the lead on the 25th and 26th place respectively, followed by Ukraine on the 35th spot.

The role of gender in peace operations has received renewed attention in 2015 as this year marks the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The UN has made efforts to mainstream gender into peacekeeping operations by providing guidance and policy directives, but the data shows there is still work to be done.

In 2014, the organization appointed the first female force commander to its mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP). General Lund’s appointment also makes UNFICYP the first UN peacekeeping operation with a dual female leadership. While these are important steps, the staff composition in UN peace operations demonstrates that more has to be done to ensure a more equal gender balance (see graphs below). [The years 2010-2014 include figures on UN special political missions, including military and police personnel from UNAMI and police personnel from UNIOGBIS, UNSMIL, UNAMA and UNSOM.]

Most striking is the gender gap for military personnel. In 2014, women accounted for three per cent of military staff. The figures for police is higher, but still only account for 10 per cent of those in UN peace operations.
FIGURE 4: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF TROOPS AND POLICE IN UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

TROOPS

POLICE
Female representation among civilian staff in UN peace operations is higher at 21 per cent, although down from a decade ago when it was 23 per cent. The upcoming High-level Review of Resolution 1325 in October 2015 will highlight the obstacles to increasing women’s participation in peace operations as well as their role in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding.

**FIGURE 5: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF CIVILIAN STAFF IN UN PEACEKEEPING AND POLITICAL MISSIONS**

Most missions still struggle to reach full deployment. With an authorized strength of 12,640 and 11,820 respectively, MINUSMA and MINUSCA should be the UN’s fourth and fifth largest peacekeeping operations. As of December 2014, they were at 75 and 69 per cent respectively of their authorized strength. The Security Council remains willing to authorize large scale deployments, but member states are not always prepared to supply them with the required personnel and capabilities.
The deployment gap is most pronounced in high risk environments. Responding to the 15 December 2013 political crisis and the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in South Sudan, the Security Council authorized the increase of the overall troop and police strength of UNMISS from the initially authorized 7,000 military and 900 police personnel to 12,500 troops and 1,323 police. Six months later, the mission was only at ¾ of its authorized strength. In 2013, the Council also authorized higher troop levels for the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) from the initially authorized 4,200 to 5,326 military personnel. By the end of 2014, the mission's military component stood at 3,942 or at 74 per cent capacity.

Not all missions are increasing in size. Force reductions in four long-standing UN operations offset the increase of troop levels and deployment of new operations in UNMISS and UNISFA. In the Darfur region of Sudan, UNAMID continued its force reduction with
further decreases planned for 2015. These cutbacks, taking place despite a considerable deterioration in the security situation, are happening in response to both pressure by the Sudanese government to withdraw the mission and criticisms of the mission's effectiveness by some UN member states, particularly in protecting civilians.

In West Africa, UNOCI began its troop drawdown in 2014 with the aim of reducing its military component from 7,137 to 5,437 by 30 June 2015. In neighboring Liberia, UNMIL in February 2014, began the second phase of a three-phase troop drawdown, which was completed in June. Due to the Ebola outbreak, the Security Council in December 2014 decided to halt the last phase of the drawdown and keep the force strength at 4,811 military and 1,795 police personnel with a possible resumption of the drawdown process in 2015.

Following the consolidation plan of March 2013 for the UN mission in Haiti that foresees the complete drawdown of MINUSTAH in 2016, the mission continued to lower its force strength with the aim of reducing its presence to 2,370 troops by June 2015, depending on the situation on the ground. The mission's police component remained close to its authorized level of 2,601, reflecting the mission's efforts to strengthen the national police force ahead of the 2015 elections.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Non-UN peacekeeping deployments increased significantly during the period under review. Most notable were the ECOWAS and AU-led short-term bridging operations in Mali and CAR. Both actors also maintained longer-term operations in Guinea-Bissau and Somalia respectively. ECOWAS provided the bulk of troops of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and saw its military deployments increase fivefold in 2013.[Based on troop and police contributions from ECOWAS member states to ECOMIB and AFISMA.]

The AU operated its second larger-scale peacekeeping operation with the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), which had just over 6,000 military, police and civilian personnel. The organization's principal peacekeeping mission, the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), neared full deployment by the end of 2014, following an increase of its authorized troop strength from 17,731 to 22,126 military personnel. Uganda, Burundi and Ethiopia were the largest troop and police contributors in missions fielded by the AU and ECOWAS.

The EU in 2014, deployed its first military mission in six years in the Central African Republic.[The mission, EUFOR RCA, came to an end in March 2015.] Though authorized with unusual speed in February, the EU experienced difficulties in generating the close to 800 troops and the equipment to launch the operation. This was in large part due to member state concerns about the risk of deploying troops in a volatile environment. The EU's two other field missions authorized in 2013 and 2014 respectively are training missions in Mali.[EUTM Mali is a military training mission, while EUCAP SAHEL Mali is a civilian CSDP mission.]

France overshadowed the EU's effort. Paris fielded two military operations in Mali and the Central African Republic in 2013. In January, France launched Operation Serval, a 1,600 strong counter-terrorism mission alongside Malian forces that engaged in offensive operations against rebel and Islamist groups in Mali's north. It was also mandated to intervene in support of MINUSMA when under imminent threat. In August 2014, Operation Barkhane, a 3,000 strong anti-terrorist operation with a larger regional scope, replaced Serval. The new operation still carries out support functions for MINUSMA. In December, France deployed 2,000 troops to the Central African Republic as part of Operation Sangaris to support MISCA and later MINUSCA in the discharge of its mandate.
POLITICAL MISSIONS

UN POLITICAL MISSIONS

In Africa, where the UN fielded about half of its field-based political missions and special representatives, the organization closed four long-standing field missions in Somalia, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic and Burundi in the course of 2013 and 2014. In June 2013, the UN Political Office in Somalia completed its mandate after accompanying the country’s political transition for almost two decades. Its replacement, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), provides support to the newly formed Somali government. In Sierra Leone, following the country’s successful elections, UNIPSIL in March 2014 ended its operation and handed over responsibility to the UN Country Team. The mission’s closure concluded more than fifteen years of UN peace operation support to the country.

In the Central African Republic, following the December 2012 outbreak of violence that required the redeployment of peacekeeping forces, BINUCA was subsumed in MINUSCA in April 2014. In December 2014, after repeated requests by the government, the UN Office in Burundi transferred responsibilities over to the UN Country Team, amid political tensions ahead of the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for May and August 2015.

In addition to the new mission in Somalia, the UN also established the position of the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, aimed to stabilize the DRC and the region.

In the Middle East, where the UN remains an important institutional player, Staffan de Mistura was appointed as the new Special Envoy for Syria after the resignation of Lakhdar Brahimi as Joint UN-Arab League Envoy for Syria in May 2014. The position is no longer institutionally shared, largely because of tensions between the Syrian regime and the Arab League as well as deep divisions among its membership on the approach to the crisis. This leaves the AU-UN Chief mediator for Darfur the sole institutionally combined political mission.

The approved budget for field-based UN political missions and envoys for the period covering 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013 was $565 million. The budget increased by 4 per cent to $590 million in 2014. The 2014 budget reflects larger decreases in several missions due to drawdown of operations as well as staffing reductions in the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan’s (UNAMA) as part of operational rationalization efforts. These budget savings were offset by a 60 per cent increase in the budget of the UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), primarily driven by the enlargement of the mission’s security section by 80 new positions, as well as the inclusion of UNSOM’s budget, which with over $50 million is the fourth highest grossing political mission.
REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A host of regional organizations established new political missions over the last two years, with eight regional organizations deploying twenty new envoys to mediate various conflicts.[These are envoys and mediators fielded by the AU, EU, OSCE, IGAD, ECOWAS, OIF, OIC and LAS as detailed below.]

For the first time in over ten years, the OSCE in March 2014 launched a field-based civilian observer mission in Ukraine. With an initial strength of 100 observers, the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has since then become the largest OSCE field operation with an authorized strength of 1,000 monitors and more than 700 support staff. The organization also launched three other new civilian missions in 2014, focused on addressing the conflict in Ukraine, including two representatives of the OSCE Chairman in Office and one Personal Envoy, all of whom deal with the conflict’s political dialogue aspect.

The EU and AU both launched six new missions, including three missions that deployed alongside each other in the Mali/Sahel region and three in Libya.[These are for the Sahel/Mali: AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the EU Special Representative for the Sahel and the EU CSDP Mission in Mali (EUCAP Sahel Mali).For Libya: the AU Special Envoy for Libya, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) and the Special Envoy to the EU HR/VP for Libya.] In addition to the new EUSR post in the Sahel and two new Special Envoy positions in Libya and Central Asia, the EU also deployed three smaller scale field missions in Libya, Mali and Ukraine. These focus on border monitoring, capacity building of internal security forces and civilian security sector reform, respectively.[The EUSR posts for the Middle East Peace Process and Central Asia were abolished in January and April 2014, and each replaced with Special Envoy positions.]

The EU Envoy to Libya, Bernardino Léon, was appointed to head the UN Mission in Libya in August 2014, and the Libya Envoy position was not filled again. The AU established a civilian field presence, the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) in August 2013, and further appointed three Special Envoys for Burkina Faso, Libya, Western Sahara and Tunisia. It also established a High-Level Panel for Egypt mandated to work with Egyptian stakeholders on a political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation.

IGAD established four civilian presences all focused on South Sudan: the Office of the three IGAD Special Envoys for South Sudan and the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism that monitors compliance with the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the government of South Sudan and SPLM/A.

ECOWAS appointed a Special Representative to Burkina Faso following the November 2014 political crisis in the country, as well as a Special Representative to Liberia who will provide support to the government’s peace and stability consolidation efforts. The International Organisation of La Francophonie, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States established Special Envoy positions in CAR, Mali/Sahel and Libya, respectively.

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NEW TOOLS FOR BLUE HELMETS

John Karlsrud

The United Nations had entered the 21st century", Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Hervé Ladsous told troops at a 2013 ceremony for the first deployment of observation drones in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2014, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched an expert panel review of technology and innovation in peacekeeping. When it delivered its report in February 2015, it advised that missions could “benefit from ongoing technological innovations in a systematic and integrated manner in the longer term.” The momentum to give peacekeeping some new tools is set to continue with the release of the report from the UN high-level panel of peace operations.

Better use of technology can improve peacekeeping at every level of operations. But it is the use of drones and other information-gathering tools that grabs the headlines. Peace operations, including MONUSCO in the DRC, have been embarrassed as armed groups have committed atrocities near their compounds. UN contingents need to better know what is going on around them and be able to share that with field commanders and headquarters officials. New technologies have the potential to help protect civilians and deter threats as well as contribute to peace and stability in the longer term.

In the complex political environment of peace operations, these new tools are potential double-edged swords that can exacerbate tensions between northern and southern member states over the direction of UN peacekeeping. Some richer countries have them, while many poorer nations do not. There is a fear that deploying drones will involve spying on host countries. Understandably, local populations are often mistrustful of the UN gathering data and information on their day-to-day lives, especially if they do not know how it is used.

If the UN is to add to its toolkit, there needs to be a more compelling internal and external explanation as to how new technologies benefit mission objectives. There also needs to be clear guidelines for their operational use, along with protocols for protecting the information they gather. The political aspect of their adoption needs to be addressed as much as the tactical innovation of how they will be deployed.
OPPORTUNITIES

Experiences from a decade of network-centric warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan are also slowly permeating into UN peacekeeping. In the network-centric paradigm, information flows rapidly to individuals on the battlefield. Western countries active in these theatres that contribute to blue helmet missions rotate staff with battlefield experience through permanent missions and UN headquarters in New York. This approach offers radical new potential to plan and execute peace operations, with the aim of enabling the right type and amount of force to be employed at the right level, at the right place and time.

Technology can help to improve situational awareness and better protect at-risk civilians and peacekeeping forces alike. It allows tracking of movement of personnel and capabilities on all levels in real time, providing the precise location of each soldier, vehicle and unit. While it may be impractical to track individual soldiers, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has experimented with Ushahidi software to map security incidents in real time.

Visual presentation of information is more intuitive and is often a better tool for decision-makers at tactical, operational and strategic levels than long written reports where patterns are easily missed. Information can be layered according to type and classification, with access to sensitive layers being password protected. UN peace operations have available to them a wide range of sources, including personnel on the ground, local partners and open source material.

Commercial satellite imagery can provide up-to-date images at low cost, enabling missions to monitor evolving situations on the ground. In Darfur, for example, the Satellite Sentinel and Enough projects purchased imagery from DigitalGlobe, whose experts analyzed data in conjunction with volunteer technology communities (VTCs). They showed that satellite images could be used to monitor violence on the ground, document human rights violations and provide early warning of impending attacks.

The UN system gathers vast amounts of data on a daily basis and is currently investigating how it can improve data collection for sustainable development. The Secretary-General set up the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (IEAG) in 2014. IEAG has since advised how the UN can better make global use of new technologies and the data deluge.

UN peace operations could also engage with the volunteer technologists that habitually support NGOs during disasters and in conflict situations such as Libya. Since 2010, thousands of these volunteers have responded to earthquakes in Haiti and Chile and flooding in Pakistan. They have processed large volumes of data and created valuable information by plotting it on maps.

Volunteer networks such as Crisismappers are a new class of actors with their own set of advantages and challenges. They can bring a significant mass of intellectual power to bear in a crisis. In Haiti during the 2010 earthquake, they were able to fill the information void and turn the country into one of the most accurately mapped places in the world in a matter of hours. As volunteers, they can act much faster than multilateral organizations. But while their intentions are good, they do not always adhere to accepted standards. Umbrella groups coordinating them are seeking to professionalize their activities by establishing codes of conduct and guidelines to ensure that any unintended negative consequences of their involvement can be avoided.
In the DRC, peacekeepers have handed out mobile phones to the local population as part of an effort to create Community Alert Networks (CANS). These are intended to alert MONUSCO when a potential conflict situation is emerging. The networks can also be used for simple perception surveys, improving the mission’s ability to capture, understand and integrate local observations into daily decision-making. The hope is that this can also enhance its ability to protect civilians. Elva, a similar network set up by Saferworld and the Caucasus Research Resource Center in Georgia, incorporates a tool to map security incidents and infrastructure issues, and to request assistance in emergency situations.

For peace operations, social media offers yet another channel to improve engagement with local populations, especially when viewed as a tool of discussion rather than just information. Social media outlets can be invaluable ways to communicate mission objectives, receive feedback on performance, answer queries and address misinformation.

CHALLENGES

These technologies accentuate the need to update the doctrinal framework guiding UN peace operations to better reflect a changing operational environment. The UN has developed guidelines to better understand local perceptions. There now follows a critical need for mission leadership to “take full advantage of opportunities to collect systematically and effectively analyse, information on local perceptions to enhance missions’ situational awareness, inform confidence building, and support inclusive post-conflict governance.” While this is a good first step, the UN secretariat needs to ensure that these principles are also reflected in the planning and funding of future missions.

The UN is also deploying new systems for gathering information. In Mali, Dutch troops taking part in MINUSMA have started making use of signals intelligence (also known as electronic eavesdropping), listening in on telephone conversations of armed groups. Observation drones – or unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in UN parlance – in the DRC have received much attention since their deployment in December 2013. They have found use in operations of the Force Intervention Brigade and the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against the M23 and Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). They also identified a sinking boat on Lake Kivu and aided the UN mission in rescuing a number of civilians. The UN’s airborne surveillance program is a first for the organization. It is currently finalizing general and country-specific guidelines for the program’s implementation.

Such tools can enable the UN to radically improve its situational awareness. Aerial observation allows large areas to be surveyed for troop and population movements, including at night and in forested terrain. Conflict-affected areas in the DRC are otherwise inaccessible due to the dense jungle and poor infrastructure. UAVs may also improve the security and safety of UN troops and local civilians by ensuring forces are deployed in the right place in situations of emerging violence. Drones could aid in the pursuit of belligerent groups and avoidance of ambushes. With the right adaptions, they could even scan roads for IEDs.

The UN considers the deployment of drones in the DRC a success. The capability was being sought for missions in CAR, Mali, and South Sudan and the Central African Republic. In Mali, the UN aims to include longer-range UAVs, drawing upon their experience from the DRC.
But not every host country wants UN missions to have aerial surveillance capability, particularly not when a government is engaged in an ongoing conflict. **South Sudan rejected the proposal outright.**" After the OSCE deployed two short-range drones to eastern Ukraine, combatants attempted to thwart their use with electronic countermeasures and shoot them down. **Under such conditions, the effective use of drones is limited.**

The use of drones also raises a number of difficult questions: how long should data be stored and who can require access post facto? Can the ICC request the UN to share the data at a later date? Going forward, the UN must address these questions and develop an institutional framework not only at the mission level, but also at the global level.

**SURF, NOT TURF**

Adding these new capabilities to UN peace operations risks creating a data deluge. The challenge will be sifting through rapid data streams, analyzing them and producing actionable information in real-time. Managing this without overload will require new ways of decision-making at all levels, and the ability to overcome intra-organizational turf wars. New technology and tools will shift the relationship between the field and UN Headquarters in New York as well as between mission headquarters and staff at the tactical level." (Bandwidth here refers to the amount of data that can be transferred to and from UN peace operations) One good recent example was the establishment of the **UN Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC)** in New York. (UNOCC includes the Secretariat organizations as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Development Programme. Unfortunately the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) chose to remain outside the structure)

Most UN peace operations rely on satellite links to connect the field and headquarters. Access to high-speed optical fibre networks or using local providers is rarely an option. Increased data flows require more bandwidth. If a host country’s telecommunications infrastructure is inadequate, the deployment of these tools will require the UN itself to pay for upgraded data transmission capabilities for its own missions.

These new systems require highly qualified technicians to run them. The **Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping** suggested member states could provide network engineers to set up efficient and secure communication at an early phase of mission deployment. The panel proposed establishing of a mechanism to furnish the UN with technological expertise as Civilian Contributing Countries (CCCs) and Technological expertise contributing countries (TechCCs). This new measure, a practical follow-up to the civilian capacities reform initiative rolled out in 2009, would parallel existing arrangements for police and troop contributing countries (PCCs and TCCs).

Inter-organizational cooperation also needs further strengthening. The integration of operations and crisis centers at the UN in the UNOCC is matched by similar initiatives at the global level. The European Union has taken the initiative by encouraging collaboration between the crisis rooms of, among others, the UN, NATO and OSCE, as well as regional organizations such as the African Union and the **League of Arab States**. But closer cooperation is needed. Organizations must ensure inter-operability and enable real-time exchange of data to make this collaboration useful to decision-makers. However, concerns about sharing sensitive information remain. The UN is perceived by others to have severe difficulties safeguarding confidential data.
Increasing convergence between information platforms raises another difficult question: how should UN peace operations cooperate with humanitarian actors? In the humanitarian field, common operational datasets (CODs) were developed by NGOs and the UN agencies under the leadership of OCHA. CODs ensure that common standards are followed during the collection and storage of information, and enable easy exchange of information between organizations in the UN system. UN peace operations have access to this information, and increasing convergence between data platforms allows real-time information sharing and swift decision-making. But humanitarians insist on their neutrality and are wary about sharing more sensitive information with peace operations, especially those with robust mandates. Humanitarian partners are also reluctant to use information gathered by observation drones and other new technologies. While OCHA has developed guidance for humanitarian workers regarding drones, UN peace operations are still lagging behind.

Cooperation with the private sector is increasing, but more can be done. Leaders in information technology, such as Google and Microsoft, can and do help the UN increase its effectiveness in sorting through the vast piles of data it gathers. Military components, Civil Affairs, Human Rights officers and other civilians in the field send written reports up the chain of command each day. How can this information be formatted, quantified, presented and analyzed for longer-term trends? The UN expert panel suggested more military, police and civilian peacekeepers should be equipped with smart phones and tablets to enable real-time and geo-tagged reporting.

Data provided by local populations through social media, twitter messages and other forms of communication must be crosschecked in real-time with other sources to ensure validity as well as relevance and possible actionability for decision-makers.

Digital ‘exhaust’ can be useful to detect macro trends. For example, group geo-tagging of mobile phones can detect population movement, while sudden spikes in remittance transfers can help detect geographical locations where tension is looming. Discussions should take place with banking, telecom and remittance industries to determine how they might be able to share their data without compromising business secrets or personal details.

**BEWARE OF TECHNO-HUBRIS**

While new technology opens up many possibilities, its use does have skeptics. More information does not automatically lead to better actions to protect civilians or troops. Observation drones and other tools can have a potential deterrent effect on would-be perpetrators by making it clear that they are under surveillance, hopefully raising the bar for committing atrocities.

However, the use of drones in particular must be accompanied by strong public information campaigns. Host populations need to know the rationale for their deployment, and understand the limits of what drones can and cannot do. UN drones are only used for observation, for example. They are not intended to carry offensive weapons. In eastern DRC, the local population has dubbed the drones “loud mosquitos” as if they were an unwanted annoyance, rather seeing them as the eyes of a mission sent to protect them.

With collection of personal data and information comes concern about balancing the right to privacy. To increase the accountability and effectiveness of aid, vulnerable and affected populations must often share personal information before receiving support. In the wrong hands, this data could be used against the very people its collection was intended to help.
Satellites can provide detailed images of private property. Tapping phone calls infringes on private conversations. Such information needs to be gathered for a clear purpose, in a regulated and legal way, and stored in a secure manner. Management systems need to be developed with checks and balances to ensure UN peace operations gather this information in a responsible and respectful way. Populations in host countries should not be treated as second-class citizens simply because the legal frameworks protecting their privacy may not be as well developed as in more advanced countries.

After data is gathered, new questions arise concerning where it will be stored, whether it will be secure, and for how long it will be kept. There are also jurisdictional concerns about control, access and redistribution of this information. Can it be obtained by member states, the International Criminal Court (ICC), or NGOs? Is it considered admissible evidence and can it be used in court? Who pays for the long-term data warehousing, archiving and management of information collected from a mission of limited duration? Will it be kept if it reveals UN inaction in the face of blatant violations of international law? The UN, moreover, is not immune from offensive cyber-attacks. The more sensitive information it holds, the more likely it will be the target of such intrusions.

WAY FORWARD

The exit of Western troops from Afghanistan and return to UN peacekeeping could be mutually beneficial, creating new sources of capabilities. The UN can offer Western member states theatres where troops can continue to deploy and maintain their capacities. These peace operations can be an arena for sharing of experiences between traditional and new TCCs. But suspicion persists because “new technologies” is typically thought of as a catchall euphemism for “intelligence gathering.”

UN peacekeeping vitally needs new technology far beyond just observation drones. UN missions need community alert networks, partnerships with crisis mappers, and new ways of managing the relationship between the field and headquarters. A strong case must be made that these tools are not just about making missions more robust, but also better informed, more efficient and increasingly connected to the communities with whom they work.

New tools will require new capacities. More highly-trained experts, technicians and decision-makers will be required to implement and operate them, rather than the generalists often sent to missions or staffing headquarters. Mission budgets will need to spend more funds on capital-intensive equipment and satellite bandwidth to make the most out of new systems.

But the push for more technology should do no harm to the populations peace operations are sent to serve. There are legitimate concerns about privacy that will have to be addressed. Legal frameworks, management systems and internal security will need to be reviewed and adjusted to prevent negative and unintended consequences. Many of these new tools offer the promise of building bridges and opening channels of communication with local populations. SMS-messaging and social media feedback gives missions a better understanding of what local populations are thinking, while allowing them to communicate mission priorities. New technologies can help missions achieve political, not just military, objectives.

Implementation of new technological capabilities needs to be less ad hoc, and set more firmly into the doctrinal framework of the UN. These innovative tools provide opportunities for more informed decision making in military, police and civilian components. If used sensibly and sensitively, they offer an opportunity to create people-centred peacekeeping.
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10 TRENDS IN PEACE OPERATIONS

Richard Gowen

The last two years have seen a surge in peace operations. As the data in this review shows, UN deployments grew by 8.5% in 2013 and 2014 to involve over 100,000 soldiers and police officers. In the same period, NATO drew down its presence in Afghanistan but the number of personnel deployed by other regional organizations – primarily in Africa – leapt by 60%. There has also been a proliferation of political missions and special envoys dealing with conflicts: the UN and regional organizations appointed over 20 new high-level mediators in the last two years to deal with crises from Burkina Faso to Ukraine.

The first edition of the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations, published in 2006, opened with a statement that “the start of the twenty-first century has seen the resurgence of peacekeeping as a strategic tool.” The UN and its partners had recovered from the disasters of Srebrenica and Rwanda to mount a new generation of operations from Timor-Leste to Liberia. It was possible that this was a temporary phenomenon, but the Annual Review correctly predicted that this would not be the case: “there is every reason to believe that the demand for effective peacekeeping will rise, not shrink, in the years ahead.” Similarly, the first edition of the Review of Political Missions in 2010 argued that civilian crisis management operations “are a diverse tool, and demand for them is likely to increase.

“As the Global Peace Operations Review website goes live for the first time, it seems safe to say that demand for peace operations will remain intense for the foreseeable future. Our strategic summary and global statistics on UN and non-UN operations illustrate major patterns in current deployments in more detail. Reviewing these figures, it is possible to identify ten key trends shaping peace operations landscape:

1. THE UNITED NATIONS REMAINS THE LEADING FORCE IN PEACE OPERATIONS.

Multiple organizations have contributed to the recent surge in peace operations. The AU and African sub-regional organizations have not only deployed emergency missions in Mali and CAR, but also expanded their political missions.

The EU has also expanded its role in Africa – launching its first military mission on the continent since 2006 in CAR – and the OSCE has leaped into the breach in Ukraine.

Yet the UN has remained the leading mechanism for managing peace operations. Globally, the UN is the largest single deployer of uniformed peacekeepers after NATO’s drawdown in Afghanistan. It has taken over the African missions in Mali and CAR, as its financial and administrative missions for running long-running missions remain more robust. It is also responsible for three-quarters of civilians deployed in peace operations worldwide.
These deployments do not always give the UN leverage: other actors have displaced it in orchestrating political process in Mali and South Sudan, despite the presence of thousands of blue helmets. But the UN's leading role in peace operations remains resilient.

**FIGURE 1: TOTAL MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS BY SPONSORING INSTITUTION, 2000-2014**

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**2. AFRICAN STATES AND ORGANIZATIONS ARE SETTING THE AGENDA ON THEIR CONTINENT.**

Despite the UN’s continued institutional leadership, African governments and organizations are increasingly shaping peace operations on their continent, both through the UN and other channels. Their overall numbers of boots on the ground has expanded to 70,000.

The AU has sustained its mission in Somalia, gradually rolling back al-Shabaab in major population centers, and also took the lead in Mali and CAR alongside France while waiting for the UN to deploy. In the DRC, three African nations (South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi) contributed to troops to the innovative Force Intervention Brigade to neutralize militias.

African officials frequently argue that UN missions are too cautious and unwilling to use force. Both inside and outside the UN, African governments are likely to push for more robust and ambitious peace operations in future.
While heavily engaged in Africa, the UN has had central role in the aftermath of the Arab revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which have been a huge strategic challenge. Although it has blue helmets in Lebanon, on the Golan and Israel/Palestine, the UN’s primary contribution to the recent wave of crises has been political, through field-based political missions (as in Libya and Yemen) and the work of envoys (as for Syria).

These mediation efforts have often made frustratingly little progress. The Arab League has questioned the UN’s continuing role in the region, and proposed forming a stabilization force of its own. In Yemen, Arab states have opted military action over diplomacy.

Nonetheless, the UN’s central role in the MENA region has highlighted the importance of its civilian crisis management efforts and the need to strengthen them.
4. ROBUST MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS HAVE PROVED EFFECTIVE BUT HARD TO SUSTAIN.

There is increasing political pressure for peace operations to use significant force to create stability. There is also evidence that they work.

In the CAR joint French-African operations probably prevented a genocide in late 2013 and early 2014. The African Union has continued to make advances against Islamist extremists in Somalia, creating space for the national authorities and UN to build a sustainable political system. In the Eastern DRC, the FIB succeeded in reversing militia advances in 2014.

These successes parallel recent academic research that shows that the presence of peacekeepers significantly limits fatalities even where violence continues, and can successfully limits violence against civilians (see Ben Oppenheim’s essay). One recent academic study based on data from past missions concludes that the deployment of a force of around 7,000 peacekeepers can, on average, reduce civilian casualties to near zero:

**FIGURE 3: INCREASING TROOP PRESENCE LEADS TO DECREASING CIVILIAN DEATHS**


However, peace operations often struggle to sustain these military successes. An internal UN report in 2014 found that many UN peacekeepers have not fulfilled their obligation to protect civilians in immediate danger. Extremist groups have inflicted frequently casualties on the UN operation in Mali despite France's initial strong intervention. The FIB encountered difficulties in 2015 due to political differences over new campaigns and frictions with the Congolese army. It is clear that both the Security Council and troop contributors need to clarify their vision of the conditions for the effective use of force.
5. CIVILIAN POLITICAL MISSIONS ARE OFTEN GIVEN THE HIGHEST-RISK CASES.

Despite the relative effectiveness of robust military mission, it often falls to light-weight civilian political missions to handle particularly dangerous cases. The Security Council has increasingly turned to political missions in recent years to respond to new crises.

**FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF NEW MISSIONS PER YEAR, 1995-2014**

![Graph showing number of new missions per year, 1995-2014](image)

**TABLE 1: POLITICAL MISSIONS IN COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING MAJOR CIVIL WARS, 2009-2010 AND 2013-2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of SPMs</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of SPMs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>Somalia</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
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In Ukraine, civilian OSCE personnel have had to monitor a series of fragile ceasefires, and a number of OSCE teams have been kidnapped. In Somalia, Syria and Yemen UN civilian teams have also remained on the frontline of rapidly deteriorating conflicts – although the UN had to pull most of its staff out of Libya.

As the **strategic summary** notes, the Security Council has resorted to sending military guard units to protect civilians in cases including Somalia and CAR. There is a significant risk of “bunkerization”: UN personnel unable to fulfill their tasks due to security concerns.
6. THE UN IS STRUGGLING TO BALANCE ITS PORTFOLIO OF NEW AND OLD MISSIONS.

The UN has also had to face the dilemma of launching new missions while sustaining large-scale pre-existing deployments. From 1945 to 1990, the UN launched 18 peace operations: an average of just under one every two years. Since 1990, it has launched an average of over three every year, (including both peacekeeping operations and special political missions). In recent years the overall number of UN peacekeeping operations has remained fairly steady – with roughly 15 in the field at any one time – while the overall number of political missions has risen (see Figure 6). But in the last two years the UN has had to launch two large-scale military missions (in Mali and CAR) while sustaining large-scale existing operations, including those in the Sudans, the DRC and West Africa. The average duration of both peacekeeping operations and political missions has notably lengthened in this period.


Over half of all troops on UN missions are based in theaters where the organization has had a presence for over ten years. But many of these “legacy” missions are not ready to close.

The persistence of serious violence in cases such as South Sudan and DRC raise questions about the purpose of peacekeeping in these areas. Nonetheless, the Security Council and UN officials will need to search for alternative security mechanisms to large-scale open-ended peace operations – such as over-the-horizon forces able to deploy in a crisis.
7. PEACEKEEPERS ARE TAKING TOO LONG TO DEPLOY TO UN OPERATIONS.

With the UN so heavily deployed, there are worrying limits to its ability to respond flexibly and quickly to new crises. These include a mix of political and procedural obstacles to deploying new forces at speed. The UN mission in Mali, formally launched in July 2013, took six months to reach even a quarter of its planned strength. The Security Council mandated the UN to add 5,000 troops to the UN Mission in South Sudan in December 2013 – but the mission remained well below this target a full year later, severely limiting its credibility.

The UN has always had problems deploying its largest, infantry-heavy missions, but it can do better. When the Security Council mandated the reinforcement of the UN force in Lebanon in 2006, European nations got the troops on the ground in a matter of months.

FIGURE 6: TROOP DEPLOYMENT IN FIRST SIX MONTHS AFTER AUTHORIZATION

The slow processes in Mali and CAR highlight the need for the UN to develop more consistent rapid strategic deployment capabilities, both to launch new missions and reinforce old ones in crisis – or alternatively assist better-placed regional organizations to strengthen their rapid deployment systems as a precursor to blue helmet missions. While the AU was able to play this role in Mali and CAR, many of its units were short on the equipment they needed in the early phase of operations, and the missions were also prey to funding problems. These should not be allowed to hinder future deployments.
**8. WESTERN POWERS ARE NOT PULLING THEIR MILITARY WEIGHT IN PEACE OPERATIONS.**

As NATO has drawn down in Afghanistan, many analysts have hoped that Western countries will do more for UN peacekeeping or support it indirectly through alternatives such as EU deployments. This support could fill many of the UN's technical gaps.

There have been some positive steps in this direction: The Netherlands and Nordic countries have sent intelligence specialists and other high-end assets to Mali, and the EU has not only sent troops to CAR but also launched a number of civilian mission in the Sahel and East Africa.

Ireland has played an important role in keeping the UN mission on the Golan Heights alive despite a series of kidnappings of peacekeepers by Islamist groups involved in the Syrian war. However, the overall trend in European deployments – both in UN missions and across all organizations -- remains downwards. European nations are sending fewer peacekeepers to the Middle East and still avoid large-scale deployments in sub-Saharan Africa.

The US has recently called on its European allies to reverse this trend, and do more for the UN as part of broader transatlantic security cooperation. But the US still has fewer than 200 soldiers and police under UN command itself.

**FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN TROOPS AND POLICE DEPLOYED IN UN AND NON-UN MISSIONS, 2010-2014**

While Western governments consider their peacekeeping options, South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) remain leading deployers of blue helmets.

China has deployed its first combat battalion to the UN (in South Sudan), expanding its overall contribution to the UN by 50%, and other regional powers including Indonesia and Vietnam have expressed their desire to increase their deployments. But for now their combined forces remain relatively limited – it will take a concerted strategic push by Asian powers to increase their participation in UN missions to match their rising global weight.
9. THE UN IS STILL STRUGGLING TO GET THE RIGHT GENDER BALANCE IN PEACE OPERATIONS.

Despite a strong push for gender equality and mainstreaming by the UN Secretariat, a review of staff composition in UN peace operations reveals a continued gender imbalance. The gender gap is most pronounced for military personnel, where women in 2014 only accounted for three per cent of military staff in peacekeeping operations (see graph below).

Gender representation fared slightly better among police in UN missions, but women still only account for 10 per cent of police personnel. With 21 per cent, the most equal representation is among civilian staff in UN peace operations, although 10 years ago this number almost reached one quarter.

A more equal representation is also an issue among senior leadership in UN peace operations. Out of the 28 field-based peacekeeping and political missions active in 2014, only 7 were headed by women. There are improvements. The past year marked the first appointment of a female force commander to a UN peacekeeping mission (UNFICYP) as well as the occurrence of the first UN peacekeeping operation with a dual female leadership (also UNFICYP). With the High-level Review of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security commencing in October 2015 there is hope that the UN Secretariat and UN member states will recommit to increasing women’s participation in peace operations both on the working and leadership level.

FIGURE 8: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF TROOPS IN UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS
10. THERE IS A NEW SPIRIT OF INNOVATION IN PEACE OPERATIONS.

Despite the many obstacles to existing and new peace operations, the UN and its partners have also shown a surprising capacity to innovate. The UN has mounted unique missions such as the UN-OPCW operation in Syria in 2013-2014 and the emergency relief mission to fight Ebola in West Africa in 2014. The UN has also made advances in using new technologies in its operations (see New Tools for Blue Helmets essay). The OSCE has shown a high degree of flexibility in monitoring the Ukrainian conflict. Peace operations are adaptable strategic tools.

There is still a political opening to strengthen peace operations of all types in 2015, and ensure that they can continue to meet the new burdens placed upon them.

Ban Ki-moon’s High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations lays out a framework for boosting UN peacekeeping operations and political missions, with an emphasis on conflict prevention and making mission more flexible, as well as improving cooperation with partners.

The High-Level Panel’s work has stimulated policy-makers in other organizations, including the AU and EU, to review their own thinking on peace operations in light of recent challenges.

In September President Obama will convene a summit on strengthening UN operations in New York, focusing top-level attention on the issue.

These initiatives offer a chance to address some of the main challenges to peace operations – including deployment times, robustness and the vulnerabilities of political missions – head-on. The recent surge in peace operations has demonstrated their continued importance to international security. It is now time to give them the support they deserve.

DOWNLOAD THE 10 TRENDS IN PEACE OPERATIONS INFOGRAPHIC

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THE UN PANEL ON PEACE OPERATIONS: GETTING THE POLITICS RIGHT?

Jim Della-Giacoma

All peace operations are political. Ian Martin wrote an essay with that title in CIC’s first Review of Political Missions in 2010. It is unsurprising, then, that the report of the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations of which he has been a prominent member has the same starting point. When the United Nations intervenes, it is not using diplomacy and the threat of armed force in a vacuum: the goal is to stop violence caused by a struggle over power. The use of internationally mandated armed force, if at all necessary, is only one means and not the sole end of any UN peace operation.

But what are the politics of this latest attempt to reform the way the world body addresses conflict? How should we understand this detailed effort to analyze the challenges of making peace or keeping it? What change are the words on paper trying to effect on the ground or at UN headquarters? And what are its chances of success?

A brief survey of the world should make it clear these are urgent questions that need clear answers. The mission of the United Nations captured in the first line of its charter, reproduced on the front cover of the Panel’s report, remains as relevant today as it was when founded in 1945: the purpose of the UN is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. This is as much a challenge for the organization in 2015 almost 70 years after its creation.

As the UN celebrates its birth on 26 June, it has more than 128,000 uniformed and civilian personnel in 39 missions. Peace operations flying under the blue flag or those of other groupings are undergoing a surge. Africa is the numerical center of gravity for peace operations, but they are also spread across the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Displacement, mostly caused by conflict, is at an all time high. Since the year of the landmark Brahimi Report released in August 2000, the numbers of those forced to flee their homes has more than doubled from 20 million to 51 million at the end of 2014.

At the center of this massive movement of people is the intractable Syrian civil war, directly impacting the region and infecting the globe. It acts as a beacon alerting the people of the world to the impotence of “their” organization. This report in its substance and between its lines is firstly a story about the limits of the United Nations. It is a humble effort in a complex strategic environment.

“UN peace operations can and do make important, and at times decisive, contributions to conflict prevention and resolution, but they cannot and should not be asked to respond to all threats.” [Paragraph 17]

Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership And People is the formal name of the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations set up by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in October 2014. It defines these strengths broadly as activities that span from peacekeeping to special political missions, good offices and mediation initiatives. It makes the case for what it calls four essential shifts. First, it calls on the UN system to recognize that politics must drive peace operations.
Second, it argues that the full spectrum of peace operations should be used more flexibly. Third, it makes the case for partnerships to be a greater part of the future. Fourth, it urges those in the Secretariat charged with implementing them to become more field-focused and people-centered.

The report argues that change is required across four of the most important areas of UN peace operations: conflict prevention and mediation need to be remade a priority; the protection of civilians must be regarded as a core obligation of the UN; the use of force by UN peace operations and others must be clarified; and greater attention must also be given to sustain peace after an agreement has been signed or an election held.

But more than “a call for change,” this report is a reminder of how many problems remain the same since the last big review. The ten-member Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi first addressed many of these issues in August 2000. It proved to be something of a blueprint for the former Algerian foreign minister. He had the opportunity to put his ideas into practice, especially the concept of the “light footprint” mission, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Afghanistan. Re-reading the Brahimi report’s executive summary should be a pre-requisite before tackling the 321 numbered paragraphs of Uniting for Peace. The external and internal challenges for UN peace operations are uncannily similar.

While not as revolutionary as Brahimi was in its time, this report does propose some new ideas for old problems. To be ready to act, a UN standing capacity was first proposed in 1948, but Member States have never embraced this idea. For decades, it has been lamented that peacekeepers take too long to deploy to UN operations. Brahimi proposed targets for rapid deployment of 30 days for a “traditional mission” and 90 days for a “complex one”. This has proved too demanding a standard for the system to meet. Uniting for Peace now advances the idea of a “small UN vanguard capability” to allow quick response to a new mission or provide reinforcements to an existing operation. These units could be deployed from a regional hub and equipped to be self-sustaining for three months. The cost of maintaining this strategic reserve could be shared by a group of missions, but once deployed their costs would be charged to the mission budget where they were sent. The Panel urges the Secretariat to come up with the plans to make this standby option a reality.

The Panel resurrects recommendations from buried reports that it believes still make sense. Drawing from the December 2008 Prodi report on AU-UN peace operations, it proposes more concrete partnerships with regional organisations should become a more important part of UN peace operations. It refloats the idea that assessed contributions usually used for UN peacekeeping could be applied to missions led by regional organisations such as the African Union. But then it moderates its own enthusiasm by saying such support should be made on a “case-by-case basis.”

There is a real need to provide more support to African peace operations. A UN force can take time to be mandated and deployed. Regional countries can react more quickly to crises, but they face challenges providing long-term support to their forces dispatched to deal with conflict in their own neighborhood. Data from the Global Peace Operations Review illustrates the scale of the problem and its possible cost if this idea is taken up. In 2014, more than 48,000 African troops served with UN missions on their own continent. Meanwhile, in excess of 36,000 troops were sent to take part in non-UN missions.

Such arrangements in financing missions could lead to conceptual shifts. In many deployments, including in the UN mission in DRC and AU-led operation in Somalia, African contingents have been much better prepared to use force in robust operations than their South Asian comrades who are the biggest UN troop contributors. But shifting the burden onto AU troops by sharing
the cost of deployments does not equal UN disengagement. Monitoring interventions derived and funded under such mandates will still be a challenge for the UN system, which puts a premium on the protecting of civilians, human rights, and preventing sexual abuse and violence.

*Uniting for Peace* tries to draw a red line over the UN's involvement in counter-terrorism operations: UN peacekeeping missions are not suited for such operations. They lack the equipment, intelligence, logistics, and training required. This is all true. But such a demarcation may be in vain. Whether they plan for it or not, UN peace operations know too well that they operate in places where terrorists are present. The organization once thought its impartiality would be its shield, but since the 2003 bombing of its Baghdad headquarters, the UN increasingly finds itself a target. The way this issue is framed in the report suggests that the UN Secretariat, its bodies and its Member States can choose whether to cross this line. But the challenge of countering violent extremism is not going away, particularly in large swathes of Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

There is another dimension to the inability to ignore the problem: when it comes to peace operations, the organization's real politik dictates that the Secretariat must go where the Security Council sends it.

In another attempt to set limits, the Panel drives to make exceptions for offensive operations such as those in Somalia in 1993 and DRC in 2013. The report’s position is more like a red smudge than a clear line, perhaps illustrating differences of opinion within the diverse group of experts.

Extreme caution should guide the mandating of enforcement tasks to degrade, neutralize or defeat a designated enemy. Such operations should be exceptional, time-limited and undertaken with full awareness of the risks and responsibilities for the UN mission as a whole. [Paragraph. 118]

A number of points in the report regarding mission needs and member state contributions, when taken together, should prompt a discussion about how to better match supply and demand. Should the UN Security Council scale back ambitious missions if troops cannot be found to staff them? Or should Western countries contribute more forces to present and future operations? African troops are already the major peace enforcers in Somalia and DRC. A Nigerian-led coalition recently confronted Boko Haram. Is the UN being bypassed for the hardest jobs on the continent?

While not strangers to the system, the members of the Brahimi and Prodi panels were more outsiders looking in than the sixteen “eminent personalities” of this latest body, many who have decades or, in some cases, entire careers working inside the system. Chairman Jose Ramos Horta, a former president of Timor-Leste, is one of the relative “outsiders,” but even he has been a beneficiary of one of the most successful series of UN peace operations that brought his country to independence and made it the 192nd member of the UN. After leaving national politics, Horta headed a UN political mission in Guinea Bissau. His deputy, Ameerah Haq, served in Afghanistan as a deputy SRSG before leading a later mission in Timor-Leste. Haq then served as Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Service (DFS), the UN headquarters group supporting all peace operations. This collective experience gives *Uniting for Peace* a level of bureaucratic detail not found in *Brahimi*.

These insiders lived with the problems they are trying to resolve with this report. After a decade and half between reviews, the laundry list of required fixes is still lengthy. UN peace operations need improved analysis, planning and more realistic mandates. They need faster deployment, better administration and clearer communications with those communities they are sent to help.
There are many changes that the Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and DFS would like to do. But they are blocked from doing them, or simply have not yet got around to them. The report’s contents will not surprise those within the house.

Such closeness can also be a weakness. For those struggling with lack of coordination inside the system, the proposal to create an additional Deputy Secretary-General position responsible for peace and security is a reasonable option. It is explicitly drawn from the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004, another review stacked with eminent people. The proposal is a peace offering, rather a declaration of internecine warfare that the revolutionary idea of a merger of DPKO and DPA would provoke. Rearranging the Secretariat’s organizational chart excites those who work in Turtle Bay, the New York neighborhood around the UN’s iconic headquarters. It means nothing to those who think it is a resort in Vanuatu.

There are a number of such instances where the report does not seek to reinvent the wheel when it feels a good idea has been too long ignored. It calls on the General Assembly to adopt a 2011 report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) to, among other things, establish a separate account for the funding of special political missions. Such frequent references to older reports reflect poorly on the glacial pace of change at the UN. They also raise red flags about obstinate forces arraigned against systemic change. But Uniting for Peace has modest objectives. It is incrementalist, not revolutionary; more a notable milestone than a Brahimi-like landmark.

In coming months, a joint team from the Secretariat will produce an implementation report providing some “low hanging fruit” for the Secretary-General in the twilight of his ten years in office. In September, the Obama-Biden peacekeeping summit will provide Ban Ki-moon with a ready-made platform to talk about the future of UN peace operations. If this report is to endure, then his successor will need to see some merit in its recommendations and adopt them as their own. There will be two other overlapping reports in coming months to digest: the Review of UN Peacebuilding Architecture, chaired by former Guatemalan Foreign Minister Gert Rosenthal, as well as the High-Level Review on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, headed by Panel member Radhika Coomaraswarmy.

To assess whether Uniting for Peace might succeed will take time. It will also require a more comprehensive response from member states. As the permanent representatives in New York are never shy of pointing out, it is their organization and they are the ones running the show at the United Nations. Most crucial will be the P3 – the U.S., Britain, and France – who pay the largest share for peace operations. Other potential spoilers include the G77, particularly if they see the report as being too Western. African Member States pushed for the proposal to pay for their operations from the UN peacekeeping budget, but can they marshal the support of wealthy nations to pay for it? The Panel is attuned to the reluctance of Member States to pay more for peacekeeping. It makes a pitch that with the planned winding down of some peace operations through sequencing, its recommendations could be cost-neutral. But can the Security Council restrain itself, and will Member States buy this argument?

In calling for change, the report urges others to act and uses many synonyms for the UN's Member States including the Security Council, regional organizations, troop contributing countries, host countries, and the ever-amorphous “international community.” A reader is left with a sense that the report’s authors are disappointed with their relative inertia in the face of so many crises. “Member states have not sufficiently invested in addressing root causes of conflict,” the report says. “The protection of civilians is a national responsibility,” it notes. “Member States should provide the necessary resources and lend their influence,” it urges.
The report treads a fine line between chiding and chastising. The panel is an advisory body and its recommendation can simply be ignored – but how will member states react if they feel they are being lectured to?

Brahimi had something of this tone, too. “The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear,” is one standout line. “When recommending force and other resource levels for a new mission, ... it must set those levels according to realistic scenarios that take into account likely challenges to implementation.” These strident lines were written when the world was unipolar and led by the United States, a simpler time that a senior Secretariat official describe recently as “a golden age of peacekeeping.” But we now live in a time of multiple centers of power. This is only a problem for those who got used to getting their own way. Those able to now veto or simply obstruct feel empowered.

With the U.S. and Russia once again using the organization as a proxy battlefield, the “challenges to implementation” are numerous. NATO’s perceived over-reach in UN-sanctioned operations in Libya, for example, created the mistrust that has led to inaction in Syria. Then again, as Jean-Marie Guéhenno has written in The Fog of Peace, his memoir of peacekeeping in the 21st century, we still have not overcome the “lingering damage to the idea of collective action” caused by the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

As a young man, Jose Ramos Horta was known from the 1970s as a fearless and blunt advocate for his country’s independence. He walked the corridors of the UN as an outsider for more than two decades. In releasing his panel’s report to the Member States, he sounded like one of those polite New York diplomats he once railed against, whose careers were made in meeting rooms. “We heard your call to reform not only the system’s instruments but also the mindset required to deliver them,” Horta said. But neither now nor a decade and a half ago is there a consensus among Member States that a more assertive, effective, or efficient Secretariat is a desired outcome. As he noted in the same speech, Member States and regional organizations made almost 60 submissions. In other words, the majority did not contribute.

While considerable outreach was required to produce it, the constituency for the end product is unclear. Is this document preaching to the converted, or is it a persuasive argument for some Member States to stop sitting on the fence? Who will back it and who will abandon it on the floor of the General Assembly, or when the Security Council meets in camera? Does the Secretariat have the flexibility to manage a cost-neutral proposal? How will its demands for more resources resonate back in the cash-strapped capitals? Fifteen years ago Brahimi identified the challenge to reforming the system in its first paragraph:

Without renewed commitment on the part of Member States, significant institutional change and increased financial support, the United Nations will not be capable of executing the critical peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks that the Member States assign to it in coming months and years.

Brahimi, too, was humble in its expectations and yet we are now revisiting some of the same topics. “The Panel believes that the above recommendations fall well within the bounds of what can be reasonably demanded of the Organization’s Member States,” Brahimi’s team wrote in August 2000. Has Jose Ramos Horta’s panel learnt lessons from the predecessors? The subsequent fifteen years of bloody history have demonstrated the limits of the power of the United Nations “to prevent all tensions and violence and end wars,” Horta wrote in his cover letter transmitting the report to the Secretary-General on 17 June. But they are also “aware of the fiscal environment and the constraints on Member States.”
In its modesty, *Uniting for Peace* may be laying the foundation for its own success. It is a practical technocratic document that has eschewed ideas that are too big or frightfully expensive. It is a sensible blueprint for what needs to change, and will be with us for some years to come. It can be a primer for the next secretary-general. But like *Brahimi*, the biggest challenge for *Uniting for Peace* comes with implementation. This Secretary-General and the next must be more leader rather than conference organizer. They will need to build a consensus among member states that these reforms are crucial for more efficient peace operations, and it is in their interests to support them. In this handover from one SG to the next, there is a window where change again seems possible at the United Nations. With the right leadership, the next report on peace operations can be less déjà vu and more a progress report.

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Can U.N. Peacekeepers Fight Terrorists?

Richard Gowen

Can peacekeepers fight terrorists? Last Friday, Islamist militants killed thirty Burundian soldiers serving with the African Union’s mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The incident was overshadowed by the news of further terrorist attacks in Tunisia, Kuwait, and France. But it is an ugly reminder that multilateral peace operations, often relying on poorly equipped troops from developing countries, are in the front line of the battle against Islamist extremism across North Africa and the Middle East.

AMISOM has, by some estimates, lost over 3,000 personnel in its struggle to stabilize Somalia (the AU disputes this figure, but is cagey about its losses). In Mali, Islamist insurgents have waged an effective guerrilla campaign against African troops serving with the United Nations. In Syria, the Al-Nusra Front has taken time off from its fight against the Assad regime to take U.N. troops hostage on the Golan Heights.

At a time when the U.S. and its NATO allies are wary of putting boots on the ground, the African, Asian, and Latin American forces that make up most multilateral peacekeeping forces will almost certainly be asked to take on an even greater role in countering terrorism in future. U.N veterans find this profoundly disturbing. An expert panel convened by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reported earlier this month that blue helmet missions “lack the specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialized military preparation required” to handle violent extremists.

This is one of those pieces of policy advice that is right but liable to be ignored in a crisis. U.N officials have talked about sending blue helmets to Libya and have plans for a post-conflict mission of over 10,000 soldiers in Syria, should it ever be needed.

As my colleague Jim Della-Giacoma notes, “whether they plan for it or not, U.N peace operations know too well that they operate in places where terrorists are present. The organization once thought its impartiality would be its shield, but since the 2003 bombing of its Baghdad headquarters, the U.N increasingly finds itself a target. The way this issue is framed in the report suggests that the U.N Secretariat, its bodies and its Member States can choose whether to cross this line. But the challenge of countering violent extremism is not going away, particularly in large swathes of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.”
YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

UN peace operations, and regional alternatives such as AMISOM, are relatively cheap crisis management tools. As the Global Review of Peace Operations, a new website launched by the Center on International Cooperation, shows, the U.N has over 100,000 soldiers and police in the field—a record—at an annual cost of under $9 billion. That is a lot but vastly less than it would take to fund U.S. or NATO forces.

So it is tempting to ask these largely non-Western forces to take on increased risks. African governments are keen to mount more robust operations against regional threats such as Al-Qaida in the Maghreb, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. African officials are critical of the UN’s caution and have heartily supported France’s robust military responses to the crises in Mali and the Central African Republic. There is likely to be a further blurring between peacekeeping, stabilization missions, and counter-terrorism operations in Africa—most likely under a mix of U.N and regional mandates, whatever the UN’s qualms.

Yet this could also be a recipe for disaster if the peacekeepers continue to lack the specialized equipment and training highlighted by Ban Ki-moon’s panel. In Mali, for example, U.N units deployed without the kit or knowledge needed to handle roadside bombs, leaving their convoys highly vulnerable to the insurgents. This is symptomatic of a far broader set of capacity gaps—including shortages of military helicopters, medical units, and engineers—that plague many U.N. and AU operations.

If the U.S. and its allies want these operations to play a substantial part in countering terrorist groups, they need to give them greater direct and indirect support. NATO members including the Netherlands and Nordic countries have sent intelligence experts and commandos to Mali, although this relatively small presence has not been enough to offset the mission’s wider deficiencies. The U.N hopes that increasingly capable Asian militaries, including China, will send more units—but the demand for high-end contingents and assets continues to outstrip what is available.

The Obama administration has said that it wants to rectify this problem, although not through sending soldiers of its own (the United States currently has 80 personnel in U.N missions worldwide, just behind Zimbabwe.) This September, the president will convene other world leaders for a special meeting on boosting peace operations in New York. Helping the blue helmets may sound like a fairly benign legacy project for Obama—but it is also an important of the global drive to contain international terrorism.

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EUROPEAN MILITARIES NEED TO PULL THEIR WEIGHT

Richard Gowan

Germany and its European allies are overburdened with problems ranging from the Greek crisis to the Ukrainian conflict. It is understandable that strengthening United Nations peace operations in remote trouble spots such as Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan is not very high up their agendas. But there are growing calls for European powers, and Germany in particular, to consider offering the UN more troops and military assets. These calls don’t just come from inveterate peaceniks and lovers of the UN.

Earlier this month, a commission led by former German Defense Minister Volker Rühe published a report on German military deployments. The focus of the report is parliamentary oversight of the Bundeswehr. But it also raises concerns about the growing demands on UN operations. The UN has over 100,000 troops in missions worldwide. Most come from Africa and South Asia, and many lack advanced military equipment. This has been a major problem in places such as Mali and on the Golan Heights, where Islamist extremists have targeted the UN, killing peacekeepers or taking them hostage. If European governments want the UN to limit the rise of chaos in North Africa and the Middle East, it needs reinforcements.

The Rühe Commission predicts “the United Nations’ need for high-value military capabilities will tend to rise further.” It calls for a serious strategic debate on whether and how Germany should offer more forces to the UN. Similar debates are underway in other parts of Europe. The Netherlands and Nordic countries have already contributed intelligence officers, attack helicopters and transport aircraft to the UN mission in Mali. Britain is also exploring ways that it can do more for the UN.

Germany has itself experimented with new ways of supporting peacekeeping. It only has 200 personnel, including soldiers and police, on UN service. But it has also sent transport aircraft to Mali and established a field hospital near the capital, Bamako, as part of a small European Union mission operating alongside the UN.

“NOT PULLING THEIR WEIGHT”

Yet, as the Global Peace Operations Review, a new online survey of UN and non-UN missions launched by the Center on International Cooperation this week, notes, many European militaries are still “not pulling their weight” in peacekeeping after Afghanistan. No NATO country figures among the top 25 contributors of personnel to blue helmet missions (Italy is number 26). European governments pay 40 percent of the costs of UN deployments - and nearly 100 percent of African Union operations such as the stabilization force in Somalia - but they could significantly boost these missions by offering their own drones, engineers, medical teams and other specialized assets.

Last week, the UN released a report by a high-level panel on peace operations that emphasizes that “it is crucial to reverse the decline in contributions from many high-capability countries.” It is of course not surprising that a UN-backed panel should ask for more resources for UN missions. But other players, including the Obama administration, are also putting pressure on Europeans to raise their game.
STRENGTHENING THE UN

Washington has been shocked by the UN's inability to handle crises like the rapid collapse of South Sudan in 2013, and angered by repeated reports that peacekeepers have failed to protect imperiled civilians in places like Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo. But, conscious that there are often few alternatives to blue helmet missions, President Barack Obama and his team have made strengthening the UN a priority for his final period in office. It hardly ranks alongside securing a nuclear deal with Iran, but the US is still investing political capital in the issue.

Last September, Vice President Joe Biden convened a summit in New York to encourage capable countries to boost their contributions to the UN. This September, Obama will host another meeting on the same theme. In a speech in Brussels previewing the summit earlier this year, US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power praised the Dutch-led effort in Mali but lamented “the reality that European countries have drawn back from peacekeeping.”

Strikingly, Power argued that European countries should not see UN peacekeeping as purely humanitarian endeavor or a “soft” alternative to NATO operations, but as part of the broader picture of transatlantic burden sharing. If Germany and its allies want continued American assistance in securing their eastern flank from renewed threats from Russia, they can surely do more to help stabilize Europe's southern flank through relatively light weight and low cost UN peacekeeping deployments.

OUTDATED AND INEFFICIENT

This may make sense strategically, but it is still hard to persuade many European generals and politicians to take UN deployments seriously. The legacy of the disastrous missions in the Balkans and Rwanda remains strong. Even those European countries, such as Ireland, which have kept up their contributions to the UN over the years have long lists of complaints about the organization. A recent survey of Irish officers by Edward Burke and Jonathan Marley found that most see UN command and control systems as inefficient, peacekeeping force structures as outdated and UN doctrines as inferior to those of NATO and the European Union.

If European nations want to deploy more peacekeepers they will have to work through, or work around, these problems with the UN. It is possible to overcome such obstacles, even if it is not always easy. The Dutch-Nordic intelligence effort in Mali follows a NATO model, for example, as there is no UN template for such a unit.

But if countries like Germany want to have a strategic debate about their future role in UN peace operations, they should not get too bogged down in technicalities. The real question that faces them is whether they believe, in an increasingly unstable international environment, UN operations can make a credible contribution to their own security. Conflict zones like Mali and the Golan may not pose direct threats to German security, but instability in Africa and the Middle East is also linked to international terrorism, organized crime and uncontrolled migration flows. If Germany and its allies want to live in a stable neighborhood, UN missions can be part of the answer, and European militaries need to do more to make them succeed.

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THE ENDURING LEGITIMACY OF UN PEACE OPERATIONS

Jim Della-Giacoma

A decade ago, there were some critics ready to predict a downturn in international peace operations. The start of the 21st century had seen a return of peacekeeping from East Timor to Liberia, but critics saw this as a temporary phenomenon. The first Annual Review of Global Peace Operations published in 2006 wasn't the product of one of the skeptics. ‘There is every reason to believe that the demand for effective peacekeeping will rise, not shrink, in the years ahead,’ it predicted. It shouldn't be a surprise, then, that the latest findings show peace operations continue to surge even as NATO and its allies—including Australia—withdraw from Afghanistan. In a world of intractable conflicts and limited good options, peacekeeping is still a valuable strategic tool.

The report of the UN Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on peace operations—Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, released on 17 June argues for the primacy of politics, more responsive operations, stronger partnerships, and missions that are field-focused and people-centered. While not as revolutionary as August 2000 Brahimi Report, this ‘insiders’ document’ does propose some new ideas for old problems as well as contain a long list of technocratic fixes.

As the Annual Review migrates online to become the Global Peace Operations Review, the latest data shows that UN deployments have grown by 8% in 2013 and 2014 to involve more than 100,000 soldiers and police. The number of personnel deployed by other regional organisations, especially in Africa, leapt by 60%.

The new website data on global peace operations isn't just limited to uniformed personnel. In the same period, the UN and regional groupings have appointed more than 20 new envoys to head special political missions mediating crises from Burkina Faso to Ukraine.

The first edition of the Review of Political Missions in 2010 was recognition of the value of ‘blue suits’ in resolving conflicts, which are always political problems before they turn violent. Civilian crisis management operations, it said, ‘are a diverse tool, and demand for them is likely to increase’.

The reviews published over the last decade weren't crystal-ball gazing. They gathered data from the statistics visible in the rear view mirror of history. They didn't foresee the turmoil resulting from end of the Gaddafi regime, state fragility in West Africa, or civil wars in Syria and Yemen.

But looking backwards, the pattern of special political missions has been clear: where there's war, there will be peacemakers—even if those are battlegrounds where armed peacekeepers fear to tread. By this metric, more peacemakers demonstrate that conflict is on the rise and are more numerous now than those of 2005. NATO's drawdown has also restored the UN as the leader in peace operations. Compared to most regional groupings, the UN is more capable of mobilising and managing the deployment of multinational forces.
A decade on from when Australian troops packed up from the Timor–Indonesia border, peacekeeping has also evolved. In Liberia, peacekeepers were recently deployed to help combat Ebola. There are new doctrines; such as one covering the protection of civilians, and old debates; such as the limits of the use of force, especially surrounding the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC.

Such innovations court controversy. To many, the new tasks look like mission creep. In DRC, unarmed drones have been deployed to conduct surveillance, raising issues of invasion of privacy. In the Mali mission, Netherlands signalers have eavesdropped on the phone calls of armed groups, special forces have conducted long range patrols, and Apache attack helicopters have prowled the skies. Interventions like this come close to a red line for some member states. The last thing they want is to empower overly aggressive UN missions or ones that might spy on them.

Robust UN missions are seen as effective but are hard to sustain. Key troop contributors, especially the South Asian countries that form the backbone of UN peace operations, are reluctant to sign up for such duties.

New Asian contributors are increasingly filling the blue helmets’ ranks, but they share similar reservations. China started slowly, but has now deployed its first combat battalion in South Sudan. Indonesia has pledged to become a top-ten contributing country by more than doubling its current contribution to 4,000 personnel by 2019, but worries the FIB might be ‘seen as a party to the conflict and perceived partial’. It is a delicate line to walk and probably can only really be avoided by UN peacekeeping operations avoiding robust mandates. Panel chairman Jose Ramos Horta said that enforcement tasks, like those given to the UN in Somalia in 1993 and in DRC in 2003, must be ‘exceptional’ and ‘implemented with extreme caution’.

But despite such additions, there's still a deployment gap. UN missions mostly struggle to reach mandated strength. Where this isn't so much a problem, such as in UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), it's because there's a diversity of contributors, especially from Europe, but also from peacekeeping aspirants like Indonesia.

Some small European countries, such as Ireland, are proud of their tradition of UN peacekeeping. In 1997, two-thirds of Irish soldiers had served on UN peacekeeping operations—70% of these more than once. But US ambassador to the UN Samantha Power has argued that all European nations must do more. It’s a message that should be heard in Australia too.

UN deployments aren't a distraction from NATO's core mandate, Power says. On the contrary, they add to collective security. Perhaps, inadvertently, she also explained why they endure and the UN Security Council turns to them when 'something must be done'.

‘Blue helmets carry the unique legitimacy of having 193 Member States behind them – from the global North and South alike,’ she said. This mattered when Australian forces went to Timor in 1999: it meant InterFET wasn't an invasion and UNTAET not an occupation. They were missions to enforce and support peace of behalf of all nations. In some fights, it pays to have the world on your side.

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KEEPING PEACE AMONG PEACEKEEPERS

June 30, 2015

WPS SIDHU

The word peacekeeping does not appear anywhere in the Charter of the UN. Yet, ever since the first peacekeeping operation was launched in May 1948 in the Middle East, that one word evokes the very raison d’etre of the world body. Since then the UN has deployed 70 peacekeeping operations with some significant triumphs (East Timor) and spectacular tragedies (Srebrenica and Rwanda).

Despite 67 years of experience UN peacekeeping has been in distress for the past few years.

One reason for this is the serious disconnect between the changing nature of conflict and the ability of UN to respond to them. In earlier missions UN peacekeepers merely had to observe or monitor peace agreements or ceasefires that had been accepted by belligerent states. Today, they are increasingly deployed in areas where there is little or no peace among warring parties.

Another reason is the deep divide between countries that mandate and fund peacekeeping operations (the five permanent UN Security Council members (P-5) and large donors, such as Japan and Germany) and the biggest troop contributing countries (TCCs, such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) whose personnel actually carry out the operations in the field. As the mandates have got tougher without a commensurate increase in funding or equipment TCCs are demanding a greater say in making the mandates and more funding. This so-called gold versus blood contest further stymied UN peacekeeping.

A third factor is the institutional divide within the UN between the department of peacekeeping operations—who lead the military operations—and the department of political affairs—who seek political solutions to the conflict. Additional factors, such as sexual abuse by peacekeepers and the inability to deal with violent extremism and terrorist groups, highlighted the deep crises in UN peacekeeping.

Against this backdrop the much anticipated UN report Uniting Our Strengths for Peace—Politics, Partnership and People released last week is significant. Prepared by a 16 member high-level panel led by former Timor-Leste president Jose Ramos-Horta the report is both candid in its critique and bold in some of its recommendations.

The report calls for “four essential shifts” in UN peace operations: first, peace operations should be designed with politics and political solutions in mind rather than the other way around; second, instead of a one-size fits all, peace operations should be tailor-made for each specific situation; third, there needs to be greater collaboration, consultation and integration within the UN system to prevent conflict and ensure peace; fourth, the focus of the UN secretariat should shift from the headquarters to the field so as to carry out the mandates.
The report also puts protection of civilians front and centre but also calls for greater convergence between “expectation and capabilities”. It categorically calls for UN troops not to undertake counter terrorism operations and also separate themselves from other non-UN military operations in the area. Additionally, the report stresses the need to hold peacekeepers more accountable for sexual abuse. In recognition of intra-secretariat tussles, the report proposes the creation of additional positions and offices, notably that of an additional deputy secretary-general for peace and security and a single “peace operations account” to finance all peace operations and related activities in the future.

While it is unlikely that all the recommendations will be accepted in the politically charged UN, many of them are likely to find wide support among UN members.

For India, the report offers a unique opportunity to leverage its peacekeeping credentials (which are strongest in the field) to play a leading role in determining the nature and scope of future peace operations.

However, India should not use the report only to confine itself to peace operations. If India plays its cards well the report would also be very useful to strengthen its case for reform of the Security Council and permanent membership. The new Indian leadership is certainly up to the task.

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