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'Not business as usual':
changing realities and the transformations in peace operations

Abstract: *The paper highlights the major transformations in global peace support operations led by the United Nations at present. In light of these trends, this paper asks how these trends affect today's peace operations and what affect they may have on future operations. In attempting to answer these questions, the paper conducts a comparative historical analysis of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations – their scopes*

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and legal mandates. This paper explores the local security and legitimacy implications of the expanded will of the United Nations to use peace enforcement. Furthermore, it examines the major challenges – both doctrinal and operational – of peace operations in the contemporary period. Finally, the paper sheds light on three crucial features of contemporary trends of UN peace support operations – (a) technological development and its impact on UN peacekeeping, (b) the growing trend of regionalism in peacekeeping operations, and (c) the UN's role in countering violent extremism (CVE). The paper argues that technological changes, regional powers in peacekeeping and threats of violent extremism are critical factors to understanding the complex nature of peace support operations. The changing patterns of peace operations highlight that robust peace enforcement as opposed to conventional peacekeeping is the emerging trend. Enforced peace requires cautious, but also a positive approach by the stakeholders to accommodate changing patterns of peace operations.

Introduction

Peace support operation (both peacekeeping and peace enforcement)[1] is one of the major flagship ventures of the United Nations. After World War II, peace missions have arguably been an essential tool to keep peace, enforce peace and ensure sustainable peace in post-conflict countries. It must be mentioned that the international order and the understanding of [in]security have experienced trans-formations since the UN deployed first peacekeepers in 1948. New conflicts have emerged along with new actors and challenges to international security. Hence, the UN has redefined the scope of its mandates and uses a different legal frame- works to conduct its peace support endeavors. More recently, the UN has used Chapter VII (peace enforcement) and often conducted mixed-mandated operations more than Chapter VI (peaceful settlement of disputes).[2] Moreover, the number of peacekeeping missions has significantly increased under the auspices of the United Nations. From 1948 to 1978, the UN deployed thirteen peacekeeping mis-sions, and over the next ten years, no single mission materialised, due to tensions between United States and former Soviet Union. Following the end of Cold War, the number of peacekeeping missions dramatically increased with more UN mis-

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[1] This paper uses the terms 'peace operations' and 'peace support operations' interchangeably to indicate both peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding activities. For further conceptual understanding, read: A.J. Bellamy, P.D. Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, London: Polity, 2nd edition, 2010; J.A. Koops, N. MacQueen, T. Tardy, P.D. Williams (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015.

[2] Ch.T. Hunt, *All necessary means to what ends? the unintended consequences of the 'robust turn' in UN peace operations*, «International Peacekeeping» 2017, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 108–131.

sions between 1991 and 1994 than in the previous forty-five years combined[3]. With changes in the nature of conflict in the 21st century enormous challenges have emerged for international peace and security. Undoubtedly, peace operations have faced many of these challenges. Local conflicts in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic have been compounded by the fact that often the contending parties are supported by foreign state and non-state actors, which have impacts on the efficacy of peace operations. Argu- ments are put forth that constraints on resources, ethical conundrums, and a lack of clarity in the political and strategic purposes of a mission, may have adverse implications for the UN peacekeepers who operate in such missions[4].

With this backdrop, this paper examines – what factors are transforming today's peace operations, and what affect they may have on future operations. In attempting to answer these questions, the paper conducts a comparative historical analysis of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations – their scopes and legal mandates. Three major trends – (a) technological development, (b) regional organisation, and (c) the UN's role in countering violent extremism (CVE) – are discussed to shed light on the patterns of future UN-led peace support operations. The paper employs a qualitative approach to examine the changing nature of peace operations, by the extensive analysis of primary and secondary literature relevant to UN peace support activities. Statements of critical stakeholders from secondary sources have also informed the findings of this paper. The analysis is organised in four sections. After introducing the research problem, section two offers a historical analysis of peace missions since World War II. The next section (three) discusses the contemporary trends in peacekeeping missions. Based on the discussion in these two sections, section four analyzes the changing patterns of peace support activities. The last section (five) discusses the challenges facing contemporary peace missions with a special reference to enforcement activities. Finally, the paper argues that the use of new technologies, the emergence of regional powers in peacekeeping, and the threat of violent extremism, are critical factors to understand the complex nature of today's peace support operations. These changing patterns of peace operations demonstrate that peace enforcement as opposed to conventional peacekeeping is the emerging trend and peace opera- tions will be more robust in the days ahead. Enforced peace may require cautious,

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[3] P. Schori, *UN Peacekeeping*, [in:] A.F. Cooper, J. Heine, R. Thakur (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, p. 782.

[4] See: R. Uz Zaman, N. Ranjan Biswas, *Bangladesh and United Nations Peacekeeping Missions: The Quest for a National Policy to Meet the Challenge of Uncertainty*, «Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)» 2017, Vol. 62, Issue 2, pp. 155–181; J. Karlsrud, *The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace-enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali*, «Third World Quarterly» 2015, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 40–54.

but optimistic steps from the stakeholders to accommodate the changing patterns of peace operations.

UN Peace Support Missions – Historical Context

The United Nations – built on the ravages of World War II – sought global governance and international peace and security from the outset. The word 'peace-keeping' is not mentioned in the UN Charter, but it was invented to meet the exigencies of time. Since its first mission in 1948, the UN generally has followed three cardinal principles – conflict prevention and peacemaking; peacekeeping; and peace-building[5]. On 2 November 1956, Lester Pearson's initiative trig- gered the advent of modern peacekeeping, when the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was deployed as armed, but neutral, troops to interpose themselves between the belligerents. This act was based on a combination of Chapter VI on the *Pacific Settlement of Disputes* and Chapter VII on *Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression* of the UN Charter. It led to the emergence of three guiding principles of UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs) namely, "consent of the parties to the conflict, impartiality, and the use of the force only in self-defense"[6].

With the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) only authorising a few limited 'traditional peacekeeping' missions during the Cold War, with thirteen traditional peacekeeping missions were established between 1948 and 1978, and none between 1978 and the end of the Cold War. Indeed only once did the UN authorize a Chapter VII peace enforcement mission in 1950 in Korea. On one other occasion (1960–1964), it allowed the peacekeeping mission in the Congo to turn into peace enforcement. The Congo mission allowed a third party presence to monitor and verify peace agreement among the warring factions and had the authority to alert the UN in case of any breach of the agreement[7]. The peacekeeping mission in Congo set the framework for future operations particularly in the post-Cold War era.

The nature of UN peace operations thus traversed from an era of 'peacekeeping' to 'peace enforcement' which gradually *naturalised* the use of force from self-defense to variegated use of force. While the use of force itself is prohibited in the Charter of the United Nations[8], the changing nature of conflicts in the post-Cold

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[5]   *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (2000), A/55/305, S/2000/809, p. 2.
[6] A. Sitkowski, *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality*, Praeger 2006, p. 2.
[7]   S. Ahmed, P. Keating, U. Solinas, *Shaping the future of UN peace operations: is there a doctrine in the house?*, «Cambridge Review of International Affairs» 2007, Vol. 1, p. 13.
[8] See articles 2(4), 24(1), 39, 42, 48(1) and 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

War era demanded a revisiting of the application and mandate of peacekeeping operations. This was primarily due to the internal, intra-state and transnational characters of conflicts that drew attention towards a changing mandate of peacekeeping operations. This was reflected in several UN documents, such as *An Agenda for Peace*, *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* and the *Brahimi Report*[9]. These UN reports identified the realities on the ground that created unfamiliar terrain for peacekeeping missions, such as – political patrons; arms vendors; buyers of illicit commodity exports; regional powers that send their own forces into the fray; and neighbouring states that host refugees, who are sometimes systematically forced to flee their homes[10].

It was therefore deemed as unrealistic to carry on with the traditional peacekeeping missions; instead, the newer challenges required its transformation. While *An Agenda for Peace* provided the initial outline for such shifts, the *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* stated,

> Nothing is more dangerous for a peacekeeping operation than to ask it to use force when its existing composition, armament, logistic support and deployment deny it the capacity to do so.[11]

However, the same report also stated how problems in a society are deeply rooted with both political and military dimensions, and therefore, cannot be resolved easily. Despite this, it suggested the use of force with cautionary notes such as:

> Peace-keeping and the use of force (other than in self-defence) should be seen as alternative techniques and not as adjacent points on a continuum, permitting easy transition…[12].

By emphasizing the finding of a political solution to conflicts, the *Jose Ramos-Horta* report of 2015 identifies four key aspects that UN should prioritise in its peacekeeping operations: the primacy of politics, responsive operations which would be tailored to the context, stronger partnerships between international and regional actors, and field-focused and people-oriented[13]. Since the use of force received UN validation, five distinct phases can be identified (see Table 1)[14].

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[9] United Nations, *An Agenda for Peace*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/47/277, 17 June 1992; United Nations, *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, A/50/60, 3 January 1995; United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/54/2000, 2000.

[10] *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, p. 3.

[11] *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, Paragraph 35.

[12] Ibidem, Paragraph 36.

[13] Information note on High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (2015), http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/High-Level-Independent-Panel.pdf (12.01.2020).

[14] J. Sloan, *The Evolution of the Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping*, «Journal of Strategic Studies» 2014, vol. 37, No. 5, pp. 674–702.

Table 1. The five phases of UN peace missions

Phases of Use of Force	Missions	Mandates
Phase 1: Peace Observation Missions	United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMO-GIP) in the late 1940s	Smaller in terms of composition, less extensive mandates and tend to be unarmed
Phase 2: UNEF I	United Nations Emergency Force in the Suez (UNEF 1)	Larger in terms of composition and mandate; the changing nature of PKO is recognised for the first time; the three principles of UNPKO emerges with this PKO; self-defense of peacekeepers conceptualised by UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld
Phase 3: Defense of Mandate Operations	UN Emergency Force in the Suez (UNEF II) in 1973	Peacekeepers were to take positive actions to defend their purposes; however, it was reluctantly used by peacekeepers considering the ground realities
Phase 4: Non-Forceful Peacekeeping Operations which Become Forceful when Confronted with Crisis (Mission Creep)	The UN peacekeeping operation established in the Congo in 1960 (ONUC), the UN operations in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia established in 1992 and the UN operations in East Timor established in 1999	Authorised for limited use of force; however, due to changing ground realities, UN Security Council authorised them to use offensive forces
Phase 5: The Brahimi Report and the Invocation of Chapter VII from the Outset	The current phase of peacekeeping missions	The difference with all the other phases lies in the UNSC invoking Chapter VII from the very outset of missions

Source: Authors' own study.

Limited traditional peacekeeping operations have given way in the post-Cold War era to larger, more complex, and more ambitious peace operations. A shift in warfare whereby 'traditional' concepts such 'victory' and 'defeat' have given way to 'war amongst people', in which adversaries are to be dissuaded and not destroyed, and in which military activity should incorporate reconstruction and peace-building in war zones is noticed. Likewise, trends in global politics – the increased prevalence of intra-state over inter-state warfare – exposed the flaws in a peacekeeping model that had largely evolved in a cold war context, where belligerents were usually state actors.

Today's peacekeepers have the challenging task of operating in civil conflicts which often have multiple actors. They perform a myriad of tasks – separating warring factions, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), providing aid to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and supporting civilian administrators. The mandates from the UNSC often change, without any reference to the size, force structure and rules of engagement of the missions. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) II' rules applied to UNPKO's from the aftermath of the Ramadan War (of operating only with the consent of the belligerents, using force only is self-defense and being completely impartial) are often not applicable to contemporary peacekeepers. Such changes often place peacekeepers in dangerous situations. This was epitomised by the grim fate of ten Chadian peacekeepers of UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), who were ambushed and killed by unidentified terrorists in January 2019[15]. Peacekeeping often contravenes one or more of the four principles of war – objective, unity, mass and surprise.

Peacekeeping to Peace Enforcement: Understanding Trends of Transformation

This section illustrates the differences between peacekeeping and peace enforcement in UN peace support doctrines. Peacekeeping, as it is framed in the UN Charter, is defined by three core principles – consent, impartiality, and the minimum use of force[16]. First, actors in a conflict environment need to provide unanimous consent in favor of UN assistance either to formulate a ceasefire or

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[15] D. Andone, *Ten UN Peacekeepers killed in Attack in Mali*, «CNN Online» 21 January 2019, https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/20/africa/un-peacekeepers-killed-mali/index.html (25.01.2019).

[16] C. de Coning, *Peace enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal distinctions between the African Union and United Nations*, «Contemporary Security Policy» 2017, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 145–160.

a peace agreement among them. Therefore, a consensus is the ideal requirement for the United Nations to send its support. However, since the post-Cold War era, the UN has been obliged to conduct peace support missions in contexts, where there was no cease-fire or peace agreement in place, in order to protect civilians, and this has reduced UN reliance on the consent of the host nation[17]. This has led to a discussion on the principle of impartiality, which is considered to be an obligation, i.e., the UN must treat all parties in conflict equally. However, as researchers have observed there is a thin line between impartiality and neutrality[18]. The UN must be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict; however, it need not be neutral in the execution of their mandates, which is fixed in consensus[19]. In peacekeeping, blue helmets are allowed to use the minimum force necessary to protect themselves, the mandate of the mission, and mission's ability to achieve its mandate[20]. Researcher have been skeptical in quantifying the utility of peacekeeping operations based on Chapter VI of UN Charter in contemporary complex operational environments[21]. One may wish to remember the UN's experience in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia to understand the loopholes in traditional peacekeeping operations. In this regard, General Sir Michael Rose, Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in former Yugoslavia, observed,

> Rather than lose faith in the whole peace process, we need to analyze the changed operational circumstances and try to determine new doctrines for the future.[22]

Peace enforcement, therefore, is considered as operations that are approved by the United Nations Security Council, and it does not necessarily require the consent from the belligerent parties or the host-nation to the conflict[23]. It is based on chapter VII of the UN Charter, which depicts *Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace*, *Breaches of Peace*, and *Acts of Aggression*; hence, it proposes the UN to take enforcement actions. As per another United Nations policy document, peace enforcement originally meant, 'an aggressor(s) has(ve) been designated by the UN Security Council, and that the use of force has been authorised to impose the will

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[17] Ibidem.

[18] E.P. Rhoads, *Taking sides in peacekeeping: Impartiality and the future of the United Nations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016.

[19] Ibidem.

[20] United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and guidelines*, New York, NY 2008.

[21] R. Thakur, *From Peacekeeping to Peace Enforcement: The UN Operation in Somalia*, «The Journal of Modern African Studies» 1994, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 387–410.

[22] T. Woodhouse, O. Ramsbotham (eds.), *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution*, London: Frank Cass Publishers 2000, p. 1.

[23] C. de Coning, *Peace enforcement in Africa…*

of the Council on the aggressor(s)'[24]. Unlike peacekeeping, which is considered to be a defensive posture to protect peace; peace enforcement offers an offensive standpoint in sustaining peace. Since 1999 with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the UNSC has invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter with increasing frequency to authorize peacekeepers to use 'all means necessary' to protect civilians from harm. Since then, civilian protection and the authorisation of 'all means necessary' to that end have gradually become core aspects of UN peace operations and central to many of its new mandates, such as those for the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mali (MINUSMA), and South Sudan (UNMISS). Moreover, Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the UN Stabilization Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is a significant example of peace enforcement operation. This has the mandate to neutralize the M23 and other rebel groups, thereby, the UN has decided to take the side against a perpetrator[25]. Special reports and panels have been critical of the UN's involvement in peace enforcement operations. In 2000, the *Brahimi Report* recommended that the UN should not deploy peace operations where there is no peace to keep[26]. In 2015, after fifteen years, the *UN High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations* (*HIPPO*) reaffirmation that the UN is not well suited to go beyond peacekeeping and recommended that the UN Security Council turn to the Afri- can Union (AU) and others when it goes for peace enforcement[27]. However, the *HIPPO* report also highlights that the global demand for UN blue helmets has increased and the UN inability to deploy sufficient troops, police and civilian peacekeepers in accordance with its demand[28]. Moreover, a perceptible 'robust turn' in UN peacekeeping has presented a series of dilemmas and issues that must be addressed if the long-term credibility of UN peace operations is to be retained and enhanced.

It is crucial to observe that changing peacekeeping mandates include new tasks, such as policing, counterinsurgency and promoting national reconcilia- tion. Moreover, the UN acknowledgement that violence, asymmetric threats, and unclear political situations have led to a greater number of 'robust mandates', which already challenged the non-use of force, i.e., traditional peacekeeping mis-

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[24] United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, 2008; cited from Coning, Peace enforcement in Africa, 2017, p. 147.

[25] M. Peter, *Between doctrine and practice: The UN peacekeeping dilemma*, «Global Governance» 2015, Vol. 21, pp. 351–370.

[26] United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, New York: UN 2000.

[27] United Nations, *Uniting our strengths for peace: Politics, partnership and people: Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, New York: UN 2015.

[28] United Nations, *Uniting our strengths for peace: Politics, partnership and people*, 2015.

sions[29]. Therefore, it has become a reality that contemporary peace operations aim to enforce peace by using 'all necessary means' to protect civilians, to prevent violent disruptions of the political process, and to assist authorities in maintaining law and order.

The Challenges of Peace Enforcement

This section highlights the major challenges of the transformation from peacekeeping to peace enforcement and the robust mandates in peace support operations described in the previous section. The challenges are manifold in nature. First, peace enforcement operations with robust mandates are missions, whose aims are to protect, stabilize and sustain peace by the United Nations, and these have increased the expectations of the stakeholders. Researchers have observed: *At one level there are international expectations about what peace operations ought to be able to achieve in terms of protecting vulnerable communities, preventing violent conflict, delivering lifesaving relief, supporting the establishment of legiti- mate and democratic states that respect human rights, and building sustainable peace. When missions are asked to achieve these goals in contexts where there is no peace to keep, no tradition of democratic government or respect for basic human rights, and little goodwill between the parties, it is hardly surprising that they fall short. UN peacekeepers and international peacebuilders cannot achieve these long-term and structural goals by themselves*[30].

Second, the impartiality principle, which was discussed earlier in this paper. It is important to observe whether and how diluting the concept of consensus in the contemporary peace operations, will affect the impartiality principles for the actors involved in the conflict. This obviously will encourage the asking of the question, as posed by Thierry Tardy, concerning the extent to which robust peacekeeping is politically acceptable and operationally viable[31]. It is important to remember the primacy of politics, as identified by the *HIPPO* report, which indicates that the UN peace support operations are obliged to acknowledge and support a political strategy to sustain peacebuilding efforts[32]. In the history

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[29] H. Ladsous, *New Challenges and Priorities for UN Peacekeeping*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 17 June 2014.

[30] A.J. Bellamy, Ch.T. Hunt, *Twenty-first century peace operations*, «International Affairs» 2015, Vol. 91, issue 6, pp. 1283–4.

[31] T. Tardy, *A Critique of Robust Peacekeeping in Contemporary Peace Operations*, «International Peacekeeping» 2011, Vol. 18, No. 2, pp. 152–167.

[32] United Nations, *Uniting our strengths for peace: Politics, partnership and people*. Also, see: J.-M. Guéhenno, [in:] *The fog of peace: a memoir of international peacekeeping in the 21st century*, Washington DC, Brookings Institution Press 2015.

of UN peace support activities, the political viability of peace enforcement is more complicated than ever.

Third, there may be confusion understanding the nexus between security and development, while trying to resolve the anxiety between the idea of robust peace-keeping and humanitarian principles. Undoubtedly, both these issues consider political support and sufficient resources; however, it is still a challenging task to successfully build a bridge between peace enforcement and humanitarian activities. It is recognised that humanitarian agencies usually depend on the consent and cooperation of governments, communities and armed groups for any kinds of access[33]. However, in peace enforcement operations, the lack of consent and insufficient political support might adversely influence the activities of humanitarian groups.

Fourth, securing funding and the length of time that contributions need to be made could be a challenge for the donors and troop/police contributors respectively. There is a strong possibility of the reduction or the drying-up of UN peace-keeping missions as the US administration under President Donald Trump has announced that they plan to reduce the US's contribution to UN peacekeeping missions by about US$2.2 billion annually[34]. As of September 2018, the United Nations owes 76 countries a total of US$221 million for their troop contributions[35]. The reduction of funds will also influence the commitments of the troop contributors. As peace enforcement missions require more time and resources with clear and achievable strategic plans, a reduction in the budget will leave these missions with an uncertain future.

Finally, peace enforcement operations with robust mandates are directly challenged by the perennial constraints, such as weak political support, the scarcity of quality troops with the required resources, and the reservations of top troop contributors to embrace a robust approach[36]. To narrow down the discussions on the challenges, this paper, in the later sub-sections, focuses on the three most critical issues – technological advancement, the role of regional organisations, and the UN's CVE role – to highlight the potential set of effective responses to the challenges identified earlier. This is not only required to ensure the success

[33] A.J. Bellamy, Ch.T. Hunt, *Twenty-first century peace operations…*

[34] H. LaFranchi, *Trump Team submits UN peacekeeping to scrutiny. Is it worth a bargain?*, «The Christian Science Monitor» 05 April 2017, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/For-eign-Policy/2017/0405/Trump-team-submits-UN-peacekeeping-to-scrutiny.-Is-it-a-bargain (28.04.2017).

[35] Ch. Sudan Kasturi, *The UN Owes Millions to Ethiopia because the US Won't Pay Up*, «The Daily Dose» 27 November 2018, https://www.ozy.com/acumen/the-un-owes-millions-to-ethiopia-because-the-us-wont-pay-up/90588 (25.01.2019).

[36] T. Tardy, *A Critique of Robust Peacekeeping…*

of current missions, but also offers a set of valid propositions to sustain the UN's endeavor to support peace.

Technology and the UN's Peace Support Operations

In the present period, peace enforcement missions require more technological capabilities than ever. This has resulted in a series of sophisticated technological innovations for activities supporting peace. The UN has already made a significant step forward in aerial reconnaissance with the deployment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013. In discussing the significance of technology in UN missions, Walter Dorn observes,

> Remotely piloted or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) provide new platforms for both cameras and (controversially) missiles. The revolution in artificial intelligence and robotics makes possible a new generation of devices for field operations.[37]

However, a recent report on the *Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping* highlights that the, "missions frequently lack a wide range of the very capabilities now considered by most militaries, law enforcement agencies and international organisations to be minimally necessary to operate effectively"[38]. It is important for both the troop contributing states and the host states that the mission is sufficiently equipped with the necessary resources. This is particularly crucial when contemporary missions are focused on the protection of the lives of civilians. Therefore, peace enforcement missions cannot overlook the need for technological sophistication.

Technological advances cover all areas of peace support operations, such as communication devices, weapons systems, surveillance and so on. It is expected that there will be a joint effort to introduce innovation in this case which would benefit both donors and contributors. However, a few critical factors exist, which have hindered the introduction of technological innovation, and its transfer among the nations who support UN peace endeavors. First, cost is a prime issue for the delay in this case. Developing nations, who often are the major troops/police contributors in UN missions, often cannot afford up-to-date technologies and equipment. Second, it is unfortunate, but true that the developed nations often hesitate to provide advanced technologies to developing nations because the transfer of technologies may cause a loss of their monopoly over the technological sophis-

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[37] A. Walter Dorn, *Smart Peacekeeping: Toward Tech-Enabled UN Operations*, Providing for Peacekeeping No. 13, NY, International Peace Institute, 2016.

[38] United Nations, *Final Report: Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping*, NY: UN 2014, p. 3.

tication[39]. Finally, one needs to also consider the influence of complex legal and ethical concerns about certain advanced equipment that is already employed in peace operations.

One might further ask: how would the UN prohibit itself from using a combat drone in the future? Furthermore, questions may also include: should drone data collected about disasters be shared with humanitarian organisations? Could the sharing of this data now, risk the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian work in the future? In addition to this, it also requires sophisticated training to decode the data that are received from drones. Therefore, another question arises – how do peace support missions acquire the means to properly analyze all the data gathered by drones? Finally, it is also very crucial to monitor whether surveillance drones create a false sense of security among people, and if this is the case, what is the extent of this issue. Undoubtedly surveillance drones have brought a new dimension to peace support operations. However, one can- not deny that having drones covering an area can have two contradictory effects – (a) recording human rights violations or armed attacks may be a deterrent to warring parties; and, (b) without the capacity to deploy personnel to stop the violence, it may severely harm the reputation of peacekeepers[40].

Regional Organisations and Peace Support Operations

Regional organisations have become an integral part of peace support operations in collaboration with the United Nations. They have demonstrated their significance to peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding missions. As a strong demand exists for coherence and interoperability between the contributing actors in peace missions, it is expected that a strategic partnership between the UN and regional organisations is a necessity to improve the collective impact of such endeavors[41]. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter stipulates that the aim of involving regional arrangements will be, 'to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements or by such regional agencies before referring them to the Security Council'[42].

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[39] M. Piesing, *Why are UN Peacekeepers so badly equipped for modern conflict?*, «The Independent» 8 August 2011, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/why-are-un-peacekeepers-so-badly-equipped-for-modern-conflict-2334052.html (12.01.2018).

[40] A. Walter Dorn, *Smart Peacekeeping*…

[41] H. Ladsous, *New Challenges and Priorities for UN Peacekeeping*, NY: The Brookings Institution, 17 June 2014.

[42] See Article 52.2 and 53.1 of Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements of The UN Charter, available at http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-viii/index.html (06.01.2018).

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Since 2004, the African Union has mandated nearly sixty-five thousand uniformed peacekeepers in Africa[43]. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also conducts a minute un-mandated mission in Guinea Bissau[44]. It is important to remember that no Asian states has taken part either through a regional arrangement or a regional peace mission with UNSC approval.[45] The Organization of American States (OAS) has conducted small-scale civilian peacekeeping endeavors in Americas[46]. Usually, these regional organisations have the potential to offer niche capabilities, and respond rapidly to a conflict environment. Moreover, these organisations often enjoy a comparative advantage on two grounds – (a) they possess a standing armed force as opposed to the UN, and (b) they are more familiar with the socio-political contexts of the region. Therefore, the growing role of regional organisations has influenced the UN with an expanded set of options.

The UN Charter, as argued by Angel Angelov, does not mention the term regional organisations, which instead refers to regional arrangements and agencies[47]. It, therefore, does not provide a clear definition of regional organisation that would be able to contribute in peace support operations. Confusions may also arise regarding the lack of clarity on exchanges of support between the UN and regional peace operations. Moreover, having a geographic proximity to countries affected by conflict, does automatically generate a consensus on how to respond to the challenge of regional peacekeeping. Neighbouring states have different views on how a local conflict should be resolved, which often makes the deploy- ment of peace operations complicated. Evidence exists that local hegemons have often used regional arrangements to legitimize their activities and self-interests in conflicts. It may be worth examining the Nigerian-led ECOWAS operations in Liberia (1990) and Sierra Leone (1997), the Russian-led CIS operations in Georgia (1994), and the Australian-led Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) operation in the Solomon Islands (2003) to understand the role of big regional powers in peace operations[48]. NATO and PIF lack the provisions in their charters that

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[43] D. Renwick, *Peace Operations in Africa*, cfr backgrounders, 15 May 2015, http://www.cfr.org/peacekeeping/peace-operations-africa/p9333 (09.08.2015).

[44] Ibidem.

[45] M. Eriksson, *Towards Selective Regionalization? The Intervention in Libya and the Emerging Global Order*, [in:] P. Wallensteen, A. Bjurner (eds.), *Regional Organizations and Peacemaking: Challengers to the UN?*, Routledge 2014, pp. 217–232.

[46] For details, see: OAS Peace Fund, *OAS Peace Missions*, available at http://www.oas.org/sap/ peacefund/PeaceMissions (09.08.2015).

[47] A. Angelov, *Regional Involvement in Peace Operations: an Analysis of the Debate within the UN Security Council*, «Conflict, Security & Development» 2010, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 599–623.

[48] A.J. Bellamy, P.D. Williams, S. Griffin, *'Regionalism', Understanding Peacekeeping*, Cambridge, Cambridge Press 2010, p. 312.

would instruct peace operations as opposed to humanitarian interventions. In comparison to the United Nations, these organisations lack experience in conducting peace operations. Therefore, there is a question whether or not franchising UN responsibilities to regional organisations will ensure international peace and security.

UN and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

Violent extremist or terrorist groups have rapidly increased their activities, with the number of fatalities caused by terrorism rising steadily. A UN report highlights that 195 personnel in UN missions were killed by acts of violent extremism in the period 2013–2017, more than during any other 5-year period in its history[49]. This increase in the number of casualties has been mostly associated with the rise of Islamic State, Al Shabab, Boko Haram, and Peacekeepers often find themselves thrust into the front line when armed groups target civilians. For example, on December 2017, fifteen UN peacekeepers were killed in a terrorist attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is alleged that the attack was carried out by a militant group: Allied Democratic Forces. In addition to the UN peacekeepers, five members of the DRC armed forces were also killed, and a further 53 people were injured in the attack[50].

Mali is an important example of CVE, and examining it can help us to understand the threats of CVE to the UN. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is one of the most dangerous missions in the history of UN peace support operations. As mentioned earlier, in January 2019, ten peacekeepers were killed in Northern Mali[51]. Prior to that, from 1 July 2013 to 31 August 2016, Mali suffered 69 fatalities due to hostile acts[52]. In August 2017, terrorists attacked two neighboring UN camps in Douentza in the Mopti region of central Mali, killing a Malian soldier and a UN

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[49] United Nations, *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business*, 19 December 2017, https://peacekeeping. un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf (25.01.2019).

[50] A. Brookes, *DRC: 15 UN peacekeepers killed in terrorist attack*, «East Africa Monitor» 10 December 2017, https://eastafricamonitor.com/drc-15-un-peacekeepers-killed-terrorist-attack (09.01.2018).

[51] TRT World, *Are the UN peacekeepers in Africa sitting ducks to terror groups?*, 23 January 2019, https://www.trtworld.com/africa/are-the-un-peacekeepers-in-africa-sitting-ducks-to-terror-groups-23527?utm_source=other&utm_medium=rss (25.01.2019).

[52] J. Karlsrud, *Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?*, «Third World Quarterly» 2017, Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 1215.

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peacekeeper, and wounded another peacekeeper[53]. MINUSMA is also the first multidimensional peacekeeping operation to be deployed in parallel with on-going counter-terrorism operations, the French *Opération Serval* and *Opération Sabre*, which later transitioned into the current *Opération Barkhane*. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM), *Ansar Dine* and *al-Mourabitoun* (a branch of AQIM) are major terrorist actors in West Africa. Although MINUSMA was mandated, 'to stabilize the key population centres, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas, the UN is not officially mandated to counter terrorist groups. Despite this, the blue helmets have often become the target of the terrorists for their support to the Malian government in this conflict[54].

There are legitimate concerns about the UN direct or indirect CVE engagements or counter-terrorist operations. The emergence of non-state actors and violent extremists has exacerbated the vulnerability of the peacekeepers. Under these circumstances, the safety and security of peacekeepers have become a matter of heightened concern in light of new and evolving threats[55]. It further raises two crucial but opposing questions. First, will it be possible for the UN to avoid an engagement in counter violent extremism operations? Second, will the direct UN engagement in CVE actions undermine the UN legitimacy internationally and its role as an impartial conflict arbiter?

With the changing nature of conflicts and terrorism, and considering that there will be more cases, such as Syria and Yemen, in future; there is no consensus on the role the UN peace support operations should have in countering or/and preventing violent extremism and terrorism. In 2016, a high-level debate of the UN General Assembly on peace and security observed that there was a need,

> to further reflect on tools and means for the Organisation and the Secretariat to respond in meaningful ways to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in various contexts where the United Nations is confronted with this increasingly complex phenomenon, particularly where peace operations are deployed.[56]

The *HIPPO* report identifies the UN "lack[s] specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialized military preparation" which needs to

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[53] E.M. Lederer, *"Terror attack" on UN Peacekeeping Headquarters in Mali kills 7*, «Global News», https://globalnews.ca/news/3669909/un-peacekeeping-headquarters-terror-attack/ (09.01.2018).

[54] J. Karlsrud, *Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?…*, p. 1215.

[55] A.J. Bellamy, Ch.T. Hunt, *Twenty-first century peace operations…*

[56] UN General Assembly, 'Conclusions and Observations by the President of the Seventieth Session of the UN General Assembly.' cited from A. Boutellis, N.C. Fink, *Waging Peace: UN Peace Operations Confronting Terrorism and Violent Extremism*, New York: International Peace Institute 2016.

be reformed, if the UN should be given counter-terrorism tasks[57]. However, policymakers must be cautious about the UN's CVE role as this would be an enormous challenge for contributing states, and may potentially tarnish the impartial image of the United Nations.

Where is the Future – A Context-driven Approach?

This paper has primarily described how the context and content of UN peace support operations have changed significantly in recent times. With the changing nature of conflicts, post-conflict mission environments and the actors involved in the conflict, all experiencing transformations. These have become so diverse that rigid mission mandates fail to capture the changing nature of the context, which can jeopardize the lives of the peacekeepers. The paper discusses how the United Nations, in practice, has transformed its global mandates from peacekeeping to peace enforcement to accommodate the changing nature of regional and local conflicts. The United Nations' missions in Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic serve to prove the veracity of this statement. However, there is the need for careful consideration at the academic and strategic levels, as to how the UN peace support missions will deal with these challenges.

As was discussed in the previous sections, this paper has illustrated how various challenges, with specific emphasis on technological development, the growing trend of regionalism, and the UN's CVE role are inevitable realities, and they may pose existential threats to UN-led peace support endeavors in the future. The United Nations may need to reconsider its role as an investor in new technologies in collaboration with affluent member states. It should emphasize the importance of the transfer of technologies from developed to developing countries, who contribute more troops and police on the ground. At the same time, the UN should be caution about the use of these technologies in peace support operations. It should not exacerbate any controversies with regard to the unethical use of technologies.

Regional and sub-regional organisations are increasingly participating in peace missions under the mandate of the UN. There is an argument that competent regional peacekeepers should be offered more roles in robust peace enforcement operations, whereas the UN could focus on situations where there is a peace to keep. This seems highly unlikely in practice for two reasons. First, it is very difficult to make a clear separation between peacekeeping and peace enforcement situations in the contemporary period; and second, deep UN engagements

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[57] J. Karlsrud, *Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?…*, p. 1221.

in multidimensional and robust peace operations, such as in Mali, Congo and Central African Republic. Returning the UN to its classical peacekeeping job and technological advancement to equip the UN for future missions are two contradictory policy options, which needs to be avoided. However, the UN must involve regional actors and individual contributing states in the formulation of mandates for peace operations.

Finally, it is the litmus test for the direct UN participation in a mission that mandates countering/preventing violent extremism and counter-terrorism operations. Counterterrorism has not been as considered one of the UN mandates; however, it could not save itself being a victim of a hybrid mission that addresses counter-terrorism by other actors. Again, the UN experience with peace enforcement in hybrid missions suggests that one should not be utopian in drawing a clear separation between the United Nations and countering violent extremism. This is particularly when the other UN agencies (e.g., United Nations Development Program) are deeply engaged with CVE activities in many countries. This paper has demonstrated that new technologies, regional powers and violent extremism are trends that are affecting contemporary peace operations. It further suggests that these are also factors crucial to understanding the complex nature of future peace support operation. The changing patterns of peace operations reflect on the nature and necessity of peace enforcement, which is a recognized trend. Furthermore, it may be critical to understand the challenges that face robust peace operations, because this may require cautious, but optimistic steps from the stakeholders to accommodate changing patterns of peace operations.

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