THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE PEACEKEEPING

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Summary

Peacekeeping is one of the most common tools used by the international community to address threats to international peace and security. It involves the use of civilian and military personnel by the United Nations (UN) to maintain or restore peace in an area of conflict. It was “invented” nearly fifty years ago and has continued to evolve over time. It was used to some degree of success during the Cold War based on principles such as impartiality, self-defense, and consent of the parties. The most intense period of peacekeeping came in the years immediately after the end of the Cold War. The international community found itself with the political will to respond to a wide range of interstate and intrastate conflicts that required multidimensional solutions. In some cases, traditional peacekeeping was supplemented by more heavily armed peace enforcers. Unfortunately, this sense of euphoria was short lived. These conflicts turned out to be far more complicated than was expected, and the UN entered a period of retrenchment during which the use of peacekeeping was drastically reduced.

Recent years have seen an expansion in peacekeeping. While these missions remain challenging, there is a general consensus that the need for effective peacekeeping is greater than ever. How to best provide for this is the subject of a recent report on UN peace operations completed by a panel of eminent persons. Their recommendations represent a useful blueprint for reform; the future of peacekeeping, however, hinges on the political will of the international community to provide the necessary resources.

1. Introduction

Peacekeeping is an indispensable tool for addressing conflict, both between and within states. What began as an innovative UN response to the Suez crisis nearly five decades ago has expanded into a robust and frequently used approach for controlling violence. From 1948 to the beginning of 2001, fifty-four peacekeeping missions have been deployed by the United Nations (UN) covering every continent of the globe. During this time, UN statistics indicate that peacekeeping has cost an estimated 21 billion dollars and resulted in the deaths of 1672 military and civilian personnel. Peacekeeping, however, has also been credited with saving millions of lives by either preventing the outbreak of violence or, as is more frequently the case, stopping the killing once hostilities have escalated to the level of armed conflict.

As the new century begins, there are fifteen current UN peacekeeping missions; five are deployed in Europe (including the former Soviet Union), four in Africa, four in the Middle East, and two in Asia. These missions are estimated to cost between 2.6 and 3.0 billion dollars a year and are staffed by 38 800 military personnel and police who are assisted by an additional 12 600 civilians, both international and from the local communities. Two of these missions date to the earliest days of peacekeeping in the late 1940s (Middle East and India/Pakistan). Three of the ongoing missions were established in the 1960s and 1970s (Cyprus, Golan Heights, and Lebanon). The remainder are all post-Cold War operations from the previous decade, with five established in the early and mid-1990s (Iraq/Kuwait, Western Sahara, Georgia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, and Croatia), four established in 1999 (Kosovo, Sierra Leone, East Timor, and the Congo), and one established in 2000 (Ethiopia/Eritrea).

This extensive use of peacekeeping is rather surprising given the fact that it is not even mentioned in the UN Charter written in 1945. Although the maintenance of international peace and security is seen as the primary objective of the organization, the statesmen of the time envisioned the UN achieving this goal through the use of peaceful settlement (Chapter Six) and collective security (Chapter Seven). As was the case with other elements of the Charter, these provisions relating to peace and security did not live up to their potential, due largely to the ideological polarization of the Cold War. Even in cases where the great power veto in the UN Security Council was avoided, collective security was seen as problematic. One dramatic example of this concerns the Korean War, which is often cited as a successful case of collective security. Due to the Soviet decision to boycott the Security Council (in protest over the exclusion of Communist China), the US-led action in Korea nearly brought the UN to exactly the situation it was designed to avoid, acting against the direct interests of one of the great powers and thereby risking a new world war.

In the years following the conflict in Korea, the UN was not able to use collective security as a means of responding to potential or actual conflict. As events unfolded across the 1950s, this inability became a source of increasing frustration. The final straw occurred during the Suez Crisis in 1956 when British, French, and Israeli forces invaded and occupied Egypt. Due to British and French vetoes, the Security Council could not take action. The General Assembly was able to draw on the 1950 Uniting For Peace Resolution when it approved a novel initiative by Lester Pearson, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs. The UN Secretary-General at the time, Dag Hammarskjöld, was authorized to prepare a plan for an international emergency force to

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supervise the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel, and to monitor the necessary troop withdrawals at the appropriate time. Peacekeeping was born.

2. Traditional Peacekeeping

In retrospect, several UN operations from the late 1940s have been classified as peacekeeping. Most UN observers, however, identify United Nations Emergency Force I (UNEF I), the result of Hammarskjöld's efforts to respond to the Suez Crisis, as the mission during which the basic principles of UN peacekeeping were formulated. In the years since, peacekeeping has been used to refer to a UN operation, usually involving both military and civilian personnel, undertaken to help maintain or restore peace in an area of conflict. Since this type of activity falls between collective security and peaceful settlement, it has been labeled as "chapter six and a half." For the Secretary-General, these types of operations were central to his vision of "preventive diplomacy" whereby local disputes and power vacuums would be prevented from escalating into the tensions of the Cold War.

Based on the experiences of UNEF I, as well as other Cold War peacekeeping missions, it is possible to identify six principles for what is now considered to be "traditional," "classic," or "first generation" peacekeeping:

(i) The force is established only by authorization of the General Assembly or the Security Council (most frequently the Council), but is under the political control of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat.
(ii) The force must have consent to be deployed on a state's territory (and at least the acquiescence of other parties directly involved in the conflict).
(iii) The force should remain politically neutral and avoid taking sides among the various contending parties.
(iv) The force is lightly armed and is permitted to use force only in self-defense.
(v) The force is composed of troops voluntarily contributed by member states; these troops are drawn largely from medium powers and rarely from great powers.
(vi) The force is financed by member states based on capacity to pay; this scale includes a premium for great powers and discounts for developing states.

Missions constituted and deployed based on these six principles were well suited to perform a variety of useful tasks including acting as a buffer between belligerent parties, monitoring borders under contention, policing fragile cease-fire agreements, and monitoring troop withdrawals. In addition, traditional peacekeeping missions on occasion moved into more problematic duties such as monitoring the conduct of elections and providing services to maintain domestic order during a period of transition.

Because traditional peacekeepers were deployed based on consent and were only used in situations where there actually was a "peace" to be kept, the size of the missions was generally quite small. Of the 15 peacekeeping missions deployed before 1988, five involved less than 100 personnel at their peak, and another five involved less than 1500. Four of the remaining missions were in the 6000 to 7000 range, and only one (the Congo) approached 20 000. Not surprisingly, the large number of troops in the Congo

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from 1960-1964 was required because the UN went beyond both the six principles and the non-confrontational tasks discussed above.

While it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a summary of each traditional peacekeeping mission, the reader may find it useful to think of Cold War peacekeeping in terms of different periods. In her book, *Towards a Theory of United Nations Peacekeeping*, A. B. Fetherston identifies three: the nascent period from 1946 to1956, the assertive period from 1956 to 1967, and the resurgent period from 1973 to 1978. During the first of these, the foundations for later peacekeeping missions were laid with four observer missions. During the second period, traditional UN peacekeeping became a standard tool for addressing conflict in eight post-colonial situations around the globe, and during the final period the three missions reflected a renewed focus on the Middle East. It is interesting to note that no new peacekeeping missions were established from 1967 to 1973 and from 1978 until the rebirth of peacekeeping at the end of the Cold War in 1988.

3. Evaluation of Traditional Peacekeeping

Paul Diehl, in his article *Conditions for Success in Peacekeeping Operations*, has observed that traditional peacekeeping missions generally have two goals. The primary goal is to halt armed conflict or to prevent its recurrence; the secondary goal is to create an environment for negotiation so that the underlying reasons for the conflict can be resolved. After a careful study of six peacekeeping operations, Diehl concludes that peacekeeping has not been particularly effective in achieving its secondary goal, creating an environment for negotiation. One persuasive explanation for this concerns the fact that peacekeeping often is successful at its first goal, halting the fighting. As a result, peacekeeping is able to stop the killing, but this in turn removes some of the impetus for the belligerent parties to sit down and negotiate in good faith.

In his analysis, Diehl examines a variety of internal and external factors that can contribute to the ability of a peacekeeping mission to achieve its first goal, halting the fighting. For internal factors, he considers financing, geography, clarity of the mandate, command and control, and neutrality; for external factors, he investigates the role of a variety of different relevant actors including the primary disputants, third party states, sub-national groups, and the superpowers. He does find some support for the conventional wisdom that clarity of mandate and the role of the superpowers are crucial for the success of the mission. He argues, however, that these are by no means the most important factors. Instead, he concludes that opposition from third party states and from sub-national groups has been the main reason for failure in traditional peacekeeping. Furthermore, the internal characteristics of the missions were seen to have relatively little impact on their success, although favorable geography and the ability to maintain neutrality were certainly helpful.

So what do these findings mean for the overall success of traditional peacekeeping? Many observers have argued that, whatever its limitations and shortcomings, peacekeeping was an invaluable tool for the UN during the Cold War because it allowed the international community to play a role in conflict prevention and resolution when peaceful settlement had failed and collective security was not possible. Some would

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even say that the absence of a new world war during a period of such tension and hostility is dramatic evidence in support of the effectiveness of UN mechanisms for maintaining international peace and security, including (or especially) peacekeeping.

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Biographical Sketch

Courtney Smith has been an Assistant Professor at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University since the fall of 1999. Dr. Smith's teaching and research interests center on

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international organizations, specifically on the United Nations system. He has conducted extensive interviews with UN delegates and officials, and has published in the journal Global Governance on the topic of consensus building in international organizations. His current research investigates the changing relationship between the United Nations and its leading member, the United States. Dr. Smith has presented numerous papers at academic conferences covering both the International Studies Association, where he won an award for best paper in 1998, and the Academic Council on the United Nations System. Prior to joining the School of Diplomacy, he received a Ph.D. from the Ohio State University where he worked as an instructor of Political Science and International Studies.

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