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The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping (1): Hybrid Missions

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Summary

The planned UN-AU hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur (UNAMID) will be the largest UN peacekeeping operation ever. Whereas UNAMID's success will largely depend on the political circumstances on the ground, its evolution also demonstrates how the UN tries to muster its limited resources in response to an increasing need for peace operations.

Quantitative Expansion

Although the Charter of the United Nations does not have provisions for peacekeeping operations (PKOs)¹, peacekeeping evolved into one of the UN's primary tasks. After the end of the Cold War, intrastate conflicts gave rise to an increasing number of PKOs. And while this trend had been interrupted in the mid 1990s by the failures of peacekeeping missions in Rwanda and the Balkans, current UN peacekeeping has reached an unprecedented level (see Table 1).

Today the UN commands the second largest number of deployed troops in the world after the United States. Being in charge of over more than 83000 uniformed personnel from 117 countries, the UN peacekeeping system is strained by various asymmetries. To begin with, 75 percent of the soldiers are deployed in Africa, whereas three South Asian nations (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) account for almost one third of the military personnel. More than half of the financial burden for PKOs is shouldered by the United States (26.7%), Japan (19.5%), and Germany (8.7%).

PKOs suffer from UN member states' lack of fulfilling their promises as countries stopped short of providing some 42000 already authorized troops in 2006. PKOs are furthermore stifled by the funding gap. While the annual UN peacekeeping budget has reached a record high of currently US\$ 5.3 billion – almost twice as high

as the regular UN budget - the outstanding contributions of member states to the peacekeeping budget have reached US\$ 1.9 billion.

Table 1: UN-led Peacekeeping Missions (1947-2007)*

Year	Number of PKOs	Number of Troops	Expenditures (US\$ million)
1947	0	30	0
1948	1	600	4
1956	3	700	9
1957	3	6800	26
1960	3	26200	76
1963	5	12600	127
1970	3	7200	24
1978	6	16700	202
1982	5	12500	141
1989	10	17900	635
1992	15	52200	1767
1993	19	78500	3059
1995	18	68900	3364
1998	18	14600	995
2004	18	64720	3645
2007	16	83,326	5290

*Numbers do not include peacebuilding or political missions

Sources: Globalpolicyforum and DPKO.

Finally, the increasing demand for UN peacekeeping puts a severe strain on the UN Secretariat's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which is in the process of reform to better carry out its mission².

Qualitative Changes

The first PKOs, the UN Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO) and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), both authorized by the Security Council

¹Neither Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes), nor Chapter VII (Actions to Maintain International Peace and Security) were meant to justify the creation of PKOs or forces.

²See the FESNY Fact Sheet: "The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping (2): Reforming DPKO."

(SC) in 1948, helped define the three core principles of traditional peacekeeping: consent of conflict parties; impartiality; and use of force only for self-defense. They were well-suited for the many decades during which the UN's main purpose was to observe a peace accord between states after the fighting had ceded and peace had been established. In these circumstances UN troops would serve as a buffer between two parties.

The end of the Cold War led to new geopolitical realities, such as intrastate conflicts by far succeeding interstate conflicts. In particular, the UN has been called to the rescue of so-called failed states. Such missions required a broader, multidimensional approach to peacekeeping. Peacekeepers were being sent to areas of conflict earlier (before peace was established) and stayed longer. Missions engaged not only in peacekeeping but also in state-building and peace-consolidation. As the need for such multidimensional, integrated missions has increased, so has the share of civilian personnel in peacekeeping missions. During the most extensive of such integrated missions, the UN took over quasi-sovereign tasks, such as in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, or Kosovo, and has acted as a transitional authority.

Robust Multidimensionality

Concomitant to multidimensional peacekeeping is the notion of "robust" peacekeeping which implies that PKOs enforce peace against the consent of the conflict parties and, if need be, by armed means. Such peace enforcement missions, authorized by the SC under Article 42 of Chapter VII have become important for intrastate conflicts. Traditional peacekeeping mechanisms are particularly prone to fail in situations of civil strife when there are several factions that are hard to distinguish and do not act as stable negotiating partners. However, the failures of "robust" PKOs in Somalia and Bosnia in the 1990s demonstrated the limitations of the UN peace enforcement activities.

From Peacekeeping Partnerships to Hybrids

Alternatively, therefore, during the past years the UN has increasingly shared the burden of peacekeeping operations with regional organizations. UN-mandated missions are being carried out by regional bodies such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). As a result, in some regions (e.g. DR Congo, Kosovo, Afghanistan) there are now more than one international PKO deployed. In Sudan, where the UN already has a multidimensional operation to support the north-south peace agreement (UNMIS), the fighting in Darfur made necessary another international peacekeeping effort. Towards this end, the AU established in May 2004 the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). AMIS has been aided by air lift capacity from NATO and US\$540 million in funding from the EU. Yet this cooperation between troop

providers, enablers and financiers, stopped short of ending the fighting in Darfur.

On July 31st, 2007 the SC authorized the creation of a hybrid UN-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, SC Resolution 1769 called for a force of nearly 20,000 military personnel and more than 6,000 police officers. Once fully deployed, this will not only be the largest peacekeeping mission the UN has ever launched, it will also be the most expensive one. The AU/UN hybrid will cost a projected US\$ 2.6 billion in its first year alone, which is roughly half of the entire current peacekeeping budget of DPKO.

Unlike other collaborative PKOs, UNAMID is planned as a joint inter-organizational mission with one command structure. The hybrid operation will be lead by the AU and have a predominantly African character as the troops should, as far as possible, be sourced from African countries. Conversely, the UN is going to supply enabling capacities, such as funding, logistics, as well as equipment.

Challenges Ahead

Whether UNAMID turns into a successful example for future hybrid PKOs depends in part on the specific conditions in Darfur and in part on the general environment for PKOs:

- Hybrid hubris: Logistically, for the AU as a relatively young organization, the hybrid could turn into a valuable learning exercise to build its own peacekeeping capacities. At the same time, UNAMID is unprecedented for merging two international peacekeeping bodies into one line of military command and accountability. Efficient deployment of such a hybrid peace force will depend on the establishment of clear-cut procedures, and whether it will be feasible to divide labor between African troop providers and the enabling capacities of predominantly Western UN member states.
- Political quagmire: Ultimately, the solution to the conflict in Darfur has to be political. It will hinge upon the collaboration of the conflicting parties to engage in a peace process that is likely to take many more rounds of negotiation.
- Peacekeeping overstretch: Many of the main donors and troop contributors to UNAMID are already overstretched. The full operationalization of the mission has already been postponed from December 31st, 2007, to early 2008.
- Security Council insecurities: The SC approves an increasing number of PKOs without endowing them with the necessary resources. Financing is further complicated by the General Assembly's 5th Committee as well as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) are going to have a say in the allocation of these resources.