Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement, and UN Reform

Lise Morjé Howard

The United Nations has the largest deployed force in the world today. More than 110,000 UN peacekeepers are charged with keeping the peace in 16 operations across the globe. In both scholarly work and in American public opinion, UN peacekeeping has been assessed as largely successful.[1] Peacekeepers have patrolled borders to prevent states from going back to war, and they have helped to knit many countries back together after civil war. In a very few but horrific and memorable instances, UN peacekeepers failed miserably to implement their mandates (in Somalia, Rwanda, and during the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina). As a result of those failures, peacekeepers have been granted more robust "peace enforcement" mandates to protect civilians. However, in far more but less-noted places—Namibia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Cambodia, Croatia (Eastern Slavonia), Timor Leste, Burundi, and Sierra Leone—peacekeepers have successfully implemented complex mandates, without using force, even when faced with armed resistance. These countries are not uniformly model democracies today, but full-scale civil war has not returned, and all of them have benefitted from the deployment of large, multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations that have helped to implement

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long-negotiated peace accords.

That peacekeeping has been successful is undisputed, however, in recent history peacekeeping missions are not and might better measure success and failure. In my assessment above, I used "mandate implementation" as the standard, coupled with an evaluation of

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progressing as well as they have in the past. Whereas for many years after the Cold War, the UN was successfully ending missions at a rate of about one every other year, the last peacekeeping operation that ended in successful mandate implementation was in 2006 (in Burundi). Currently all complex peacekeeping missions have the mandate, but not necessarily the capacity, to use force. In other words, the UN has moved from post-conflict peacekeeping and toward deploying in the midst of conflict with the authorization to use force to protect civilians (but not necessarily end conflict). Thus, the questions this study will address are how to assess UN peacekeeping today, how to understand the differences between peacekeeping and peace enforcement, and what might need to change in order for UN peacekeeping to regain better success rates.

Defining and measuring success in peacekeeping. It is notoriously difficult to measure success and failure in peace operations. In 2010, Paul Diehl and Daniel Druckman published a 234 page book entitled Evaluating Peace Operations, elaborating the myriad ways in which scholars can

how the country developed in the years after the peacekeepers departed. Most UN Peacekeeping mandates result from peace accords arrived at by the warring factions and the UN Security Council. The Council then charges the UN Secretariat's Department of Peacekeeping Operations to implement the mandate.

There are two basic types of wars—between and within states—and two broad types of peacekeeping operations to match them. For the inter-state wars, "traditional" peacekeeping missions monitor troop demobilization and cease-fires along borders. Since the wars are between states, there is less of a need for externally-supported state building upon the war's conclusion. Civil wars, however, are much more complex to end because the basic question is not how to separate, but merge warring parties. Intra-state mandates mirror this complexity. Peacekeepers are charged not only with monitoring troops, but also with human rights monitoring, protecting and delivering humanitarian aid, demobilizing and retraining troops, reforming police forces, protecting civilians, reforming legal systems, assisting in economic reconstruction, and sometimes administering the entire state until a new gov-

ernment can take over. In other words, after civil wars, peacekeepers are often charged not only with military monitoring duties, but with reforming the essential institutions of the state.

Many scholars have contended that mandate implementation is a fair standard by which to evaluate UN peacekeeping.[2] Others have argued that peacebuilders should be held to a higher bar of liberal economic and political reforms.[3] A third group set the bar lower, maintaining that protecting civilians or delivering humanitarian aid is enough to claim success.[4]

To assume that the UN and other peacebuilding entities ought to accomplish more than the expectations set because only the successful operations end. In contrast, the missions that are generally failing in mandate implementation linger. For example, instead of calling it quits in Haiti, Kosovo, or the Democratic Republic of the Congo—multidimensional operations that have passed their 15-year anniversaries—the missions drag on (though acronyms may vary). More importantly, in most of the current operations in civil wars, the UN is trying to keep the peace where a peace accord has not yet been signed—in other words, there is no peace to keep. Thus the UN winds up trying to fight to protect civilians and maybe, one day, reach an accord, rather than being sent to provide cred-

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out in mandates could be considered unreasonable. Yet setting the low standard of civilian protection removes the urgency and necessity of ending the civil war. The mid-rage bar of mandate implementation appears fair and justifiable. However, the essential problem with this standard is that the evaluator must wait until the end of the peacekeeping operation in order to assess, and peacekeeping missions are not ending as they once did. In the early years of post-Cold War peacekeeping, foundering missions were permitted to fail, pack up, and go home. Now, however, when a peacekeeping operation is not going well, the operation simply continues. Therefore, if we select cases based on completed missions, we will inevitably see a broad picture of success ible guarantees once an accord has already been negotiated.[5] Nevertheless, it remains important to at least attempt to evaluate the UN's progress toward implementing mandates, but this measure should be supplemented.

If we seek to measure peacekeeping progress in terms of trends, rather than as fixed and concluded events, there are four essential indicators by which ongoing operations might be assessed.[6]

1. Violent deaths. The first measure concerns the number of deaths from violence. It is important to evaluate deaths among combatants, as well as civilians, in order to determine whether the operation has a conflict-dampening effect, and whether it is successful in its civilian protection mandate (all mul-

tidimensional UN peacekeeping missions now have a civilian protection mandate).

2. Conflict containment.

The second important factor to measure is conflict containment. Conflict containment may be gauged both in terms of the proliferation of armed participants and the geographical spread of conflict.

3. Conflict resolution.

The third important measure is conflict resolution, and whether the conflict ended in negative or positive peace. Negative peace entails a cease-fire and the absence of violent fighting. Positive peace involves deeper moves toward normalizing political, social, and economic relations between previously warring groups.[7]

4. Mandate implementation.

Finally, we can also attempt an assessment of progress toward mandate implementation. Some of the indicators above are listed in mandates, but not always.

In an ideal world, UN peacekeepers would manage to fulfill all four of the standards, though we of course do not live in an ideal world. While it is not possible to give precise details of how all 16 current UN missions measure in each of the categories in a short article, below I provide an overview in broad brush strokes.

Evidence of current peacekeeping success and failure. The UN is fielding complex missions in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Darfur (Sudan), Kosovo, Haiti, Libe-

ria, Cote D'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and South Sudan.[8] The traditional operations are deployed in Western Sahara, Kashmir, Abyei (between Sudan and South Sudan), the Middle East, and Syria. Broadly speaking, the traditional operations have been largely successful in two of the four categories outlined above: reducing the number of deaths and stemming conflict spirals between states.[9] Their mandates tend to be open-ended (for example, in Lebanon, the UN is charged with some tasks that do not have obvious end points, such as monitoring "the cessation of hostilities" and assisting "the Government of Lebanon in securing its borders"). Thus, the point at which the mandate is fulfilled is intrinsically difficult to assess.[10] In terms of the third measure, "conflict resolution," none of the inter-state conflicts is moving toward positive peace. They all remain in a state of "negative peace;" in other words, the neighboring states are not actively fighting, but neither do they have standard, cordial inter-state relations. Some scholars have even argued that the presence of peacekeepers may prevent conflict resolution because peacekeepers remove the imperative to end conflict decisively.[11]

In terms of the multidimensional operations, as of this writing, only UNMIL in Liberia has been working steadily toward mandate fulfillment, although it remains under threat by Ebola. UNOCI in Cote d'Ivoire may also be on the path toward eventual mandate implementation. However, the remaining operations in the Central African Republic (CAR), Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC), Haiti, Kosovo, Malí, and South Sudan, are not progressing well toward mandate implementation. As for our other indicators, since the arrival of peacekeepers, the number of violent deaths has not consistently declined in CAR, Darfur, DRC, Mali, or South Sudan although many argue that in the absence of peacekeepers, there would be greater casualties.[12] Conflicts have spread geographically in CAR, DRC, Darfur, and South Sudan even after the arrival of peacekeepers, and the number of warring factions has increased in DRC and South Sudan. A negative and fragile peace is holding in Haiti and Kosovo, but progress toward positive peace remains elusive.

In all of the current, complex conflicts, contrary to peacekeeping doctrine, peacekeepers have deployed before there is an agreed peace accord, accompanied by a "peace to keep." Peacekeepers deploy with the limited goal of protecting civilians, shifting aside the larger goal of reaching a peace accord and decisively ending the conflict. In current practice, the principles, purposes, and means of peacekeeping and peace enforcement have been conflated. However, peacekeeping and peace enforcement are two

explicitly mention peacekeeping, although Article I of the charter charges the UN to "maintain international peace and security," and the charter's Chapter VI, concerning the "Pacific Settlements of Disputes," lists a variety of diplomatic strategies. Chapter VII, "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression" outlines coercive measures, including sanctions and the use of force, to stop aggression. Peacekeeping operations are thus authorized under Chapter VI or VII, and peacekeeping has become the UN's largest task despite its absence in the official charter.[13]

In the absence of a formalized international agreement governing the conduct and purposes of peacekeeping, the UN developed three doctrinal "rules": 1. missions may use *limited force* (only in self-defense); 2. missions must obtain the *consent* of the warring parties before commencing peacekeeping; and 3. peacekeeping operations must maintain *impartiality* in the implementation of agreements (akin to the functioning of a judge, who is not necessarily neutral or passive, but delivers judgments impartially).[14] The rules were devised at the advent of peacekeeping in the

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entirely different enterprises. Each is explained below, in addition to peacekeeping doctrine.

The differences between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The UN Charter does not

late 1940s and were meant to establish peacekeeping as a separate type of endeavor from war fighting—one that was intrinsically political and humanitarian in nature, rather than military.

Aside from legal and doctrinal distinctions, peacekeeping and peace

enforcement have generally differed in three major respects: purpose, means, and actors. First, a peacekeeping mission's basic purpose is to implement peace accords that have already been agreed upon by warring parties, regional actors, and the UN Security Council: peacekeepers are tasked with implementing existing peace agreements, not creating peace. As a former commander of UN peacekeeping troops explains, "If there's no peace to keep, then there's no purpose in sending peacekeepers. If you go, you will be a part of the war." [15] The purpose of *peace enforcement* is to end fighting by means of military force. Although peace enforcers do not 'fight and win wars,' as in traditional military campaigns, they do use force to induce non-complying parties to sign peace accords.

Second, the *means* at peacekeepers' and peace enforcers' disposal have often been very different. UN peacekeeping troops hail from dozens of different countries, and often spend little time training together before being sent to the field. Their armor is often light and not necessarily inter-operable between units of different nationalities, and they do not always share common languages. They are capable of tasks like monitoring cease-fires, and re-training troops, but generally they cannot wield military force except in self-defense. Unlike peacekeeping troops, peace enforcers must be able to fight as coherent units. They must speak common languages, have equipment that is battle-ready and inter-operable, and undergo common training in order to conduct operations that are akin to war fighting.

Third, in terms of *actors*, the UN is tasked with the vast majority of traditional and multidimensional peace-keeping operations. In contrast, peace enforcement has often been the domain of single states or small coalitions of the willing (such as the operations of the British Special Forces in Sierra Leone, the U.S. in Liberia, the French in Cote D'Ivoire, and the Australian-led coalition in East Timor). Regional organizations have also often played the role of peace enforcer, such as NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo; the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali; and the African Union in Burundi and Somalia. Generally speaking, single states, small coalitions, and regional organizations have been fairly successful at peace enforcement.

Thus, while we can distinguish peacekeeping from peace enforcement along a number of dimensions, these distinctions have been fading. As one drafter of peacekeeping mandates noted, "today there's genuine confusion between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement."[16] Mandating UN peacekeepers to enforce the peace, even if only to protect civilians, is highly problematic: it opens peacekeepers to attack because they can no longer claim to be impartial; it opens humanitarian workers to attack because they often rely on the UN for transportation; and it creates the false expectation that UN peacekeepers can stop spoilers and end wars by military means.

Policy recommendations.
Despite the current UN Security Council deadlock over how to respond to the wars in Ukraine and Syria, UN

peacekeeping around the world continues to expand both in the overall number of troops, and in the forcefulness of peacekeeping mandates. In the past two years, the UN launched a new complex peacekeeping mission in the CAR; the UN's intervention brigade in the DRC has used offensive capacity to "neutralize" M-23 forces; and in Mali, UN peacekeepers are faced with the myriad challenges of counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics, and counter-terrorism against Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and similar groups.

Looking back, in 2000 the UN issued the famed "Brahimi Report" on peacekeeping reforms.[17] Many of the report's lessons were taken from the failed operations, rather than analyzing the sources of success in the many successful missions and seeking to build on those. The two most important reform suggestions were to expand the size of the overall UN peacekeeping bureaucracy, and augment the "robustness" of peacekeeping mandates. Both reforms have been implemented; but unfortunately, they have not correlated with increased success in peacekeeping.

Today, on the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, and the 15th anniversary of the Brahimi report, the UN

tending toward success by the measures set forth above, in part because all multidimensional peacekeeping missions are now mandated with Chapter VII peace enforcement provisions, even though the missions do not have the corresponding capacity to use force.

The UN is not designed or equipped to fight its way to a peace accord. While the UN is widely considered to be the only international institution that may *legitimize* the international use of force, it does not hold the normative legitimacy or capacity to wield force itself.[18]

The UN has a proven track record of successfully implementing peacekeeping mandates without resort to the use of force, when there is a peace to keep. In all of the successful operations, UN peacekeepers were given the leeway on the ground to learn from locals—both elites and average citizens—in societies recovering from civil wars. Such freedom allowed peacekeepers to devise novel solutions to different and changing problems on the ground.[19] Increasing the size of the UN headquarters machinery and relying more on force than communication, negotiation, and frequent, low-level interaction, will only inhibit the UN's ability to adapt to new environments and actively learn

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is again conducting a comprehensive review of its peacekeeping operations. While some prominent voices are calling for increased robustness in peacekeeping, such calls reflect the focus on failure rather than success. UN peacekeeping as a whole is not currently

how to implement mandates in creative ways. If the ultimate goal is an effective end to civil wars, other actors must step forward to enforce the peace, while allowing UN peacekeepers to do what they have done best—implementing the peace after there is a peace to keep.

NOTES

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3 Roland Paris. *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

4 Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (2013):875–891; Jacob D. Kathman and Reed M. Wood. "Stopping the Killing During the 'Peace': Peacekeeping and the Severity of Postconflict Civilian Victimization." *Foreign Policy Analysis,* April 2014.

5 On credible guarantees, see Barbara Walter, *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 20

6 These indicators are modifications of the suggestions presented in Paul F. Diehl and Daniel Druckman. *Evaluating Peace Operations.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2010.

7 Johan Galtung. *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research, Vol. II.* Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1976.

8 United Nations Peacekeeping Factsheet, January 31, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/bnote0115.pdf

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10 Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNIFIL Mandate. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/mandate.shtml

11 Nicholas Sambanis. "The united nations operation in Cyprus: A new look at the peacekeeping-peacemaking relationship." International Peacekeeping 6, no. 1 (1999):79-108; and Edward Luttwak. "Give War a Chance." *Foreign Affairs,* July/August (1999): 36-44.

12 Lisa Hultman, Jacob Kathman, and Megan Shannon. "United Nations Peacekeeping and Civilian Protection in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (2013):875–891.

13 The UN's annual operating budget is about $5 billion, in contrast to the separate, roughly $8 billion annual UN peacekeeping budget.

14 http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peacekeeping.shtml

15 Author interview with Brig. General Paul Opoku, Ghanian Mission to the UN, New York, June 15, 2012.

16 Interview with Malcolm Green, First Secretary, Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping, Mission of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, New York, March 29, 2012.

17 United Nations. "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects." A/55/305–S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

18 Ian Hurd. "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council." Global Governance 8, no. 1 (2002): 35-52; Erik Voeten. "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force." *International Organization* 59, no. 3 (2005): 527-557; Martha Finnemore. *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004.

19 Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars.*