ABSTRACT

UN Peacekeeping Operations – Are They Still Needed? Current and Future Challenges

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The eruption of many violent conflicts after the end of the Cold War forced the "Blue Helmets" not only to conduct peace-keeping operations but also peace-enforcing, which are far more difficult and controversial. But is highly politicized organization without independent military capabilities and budget capable of undertaking such difficult but needed tasks? Many failures, such as those in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia and now in Africa, shows that it is not. However, no other international organization does have such capabilities, as well as political and moral mandate to engage in conflict resolution.

The main goal of this paper is to present and analyze an issue of UN peacekeeping operations – their evolution, current state and challenges, both current and future. This international tool was helpful many times – it helped to resolve countless violent conflicts and defuse many international and intra-state crises. However, in current turbulent and highly complex world the UN peacekeeping operations are in a deep crisis. Is there any way to revive them? In this article I will try to find an answer to the question of a future of UN peacekeeping operations as a tool of a conflict resolution.

Keywords: Conflict, UN, Blue Helmets, Peace-keeping.

THE UN PEACE OPERATIONS – ARE THEY STILL NEEDED? CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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The end of the Cold War in 1989 did not lead to the fruition of the concept of a democratic peace or, using Immanuel Kant's terminology, a perpetual peace. On the contrary – many places in the world became arenas of brutal and violent internal conflicts. Many of them, on almost every continent, especially in Africa, became "de-frozen". The data vary, but according to some sources at least 100 major armed conflicts erupted after the end of the Cold War, with 80 of them being internal conflicts.(1) These are generally much more complex than the international conflicts of the Cold War (usually between sovereign states) – they often have a religious or ethnic background, and many parties (also sub-national), are involved.

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Usually contemporary conflicts and crises generate massive displacements of people and extensive inter-ethnic violence. In response to this eruption, the international community naturally focused its attention on the United Nations – the most important and largest institution of the modern world with a legal and moral mandate for conflict resolution.

In the new international reality the Blue Helmets have been forced, despite an unchanged political and military mandate, low capabilities and often insufficient strength, to engage not only in peace-keeping,[2] but in much more difficult and controversial peace-enforcing operations[3] – often in environments where there was no peace to keep. For a highly politicized organization, under-funded and treated objectively, without its own military capabilities, this has proved too challenging. The result has been a series of painful defeats, from the Balkans to Rwanda, which has undermined faith in the Blue Helmets. Therefore, do UN peace operations still make sense?

IMPACT OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE 1990S

The 1990s brought new challenges and problems, and represented an extremely important period in the history of UN peace-keeping operations. This period was, as Jacek Reginia-Zacharski put it, "an emotional see-saw (…) from enthusiasm, through deep discouragement and withdrawal from ambitious objectives, to realising the necessity of significant reevaluation and setting new challenges in the increasingly complicated international situation".[4]

The UN entered this period with a rich baggage of conflict resolution experience dating from the late 1940s. The first ever peace-keeping operation undertaken by the UN was the UNTSO (*UN Truce Supervision Organization*) agreed in 1948 in the Middle East. This was followed a year later by the UNMOGIP (*UN Military Observer*

Group in India and Pakistan). Both missions were focused on observation and monitoring.[5] In 1956, the UNEF (*UN Emergency Force*) was created to end the Suez Crisis. According to Frederick H. Fleitz, this was when the traditional UN peace-keeping concept was born.[6] Afterwards, operating within the tight constraints of the Cold War, the UN deployed various peace-keeping forces and in 1988 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Although these missions were very important in terms of conflict resolution and prevention, usually they were not challenging for the troops involved – many of the UN military observers were unarmed.[7] Peace-keeping operations were also never given a homogenous doctrinal form.[8] According to Stephen Ryan, this lack of a coherent doctrine in a changing and more complex world after 1989 resulted in "drift and uncertainty".[9]

During the early post-Cold War era, the UN carried out several old-pattern operations, including Namibia (1989–1990), Cambodia (1991–1993), El Salvador (1991–1995), Mozambique (1992–1994) and Guatemala (1997). However, very soon traditional forms of peace-keeping, consensual in nature – mainly cease-fire observation and force separation – became obsolete. New conditions emerged under which there was no peace to keep. Missions, now mainly humanitarian interventions, became much more difficult.[10] The complexity of the conflicts themselves, as well as their dynamics and multidimensionality, increased. Many conflicts were driven by ethnic and sectarian factors, making them particularly difficult to solve, especially when genocide and ethnic cleansing were present. What is more, due to a trend of erosion of state sovereignty – very visible after 1989 – there was a noticeable shift from inter-state conflicts towards intra-state conflicts and civil wars. As a consequence, in many situations, such as in Somalia, there was no recognized or recognizable government that could agree on the presence of UN troops.

What is more, the Blue Helmets were forced to operate in previously unknown situations – in hostile environments in which neither party (sometimes more than two) was prepared to stop fighting. This meant a completely new situation – classic peace operations were conducted, according to UN policy, "with the consent of the parties", increasing the relative ease of operations and ensuring the safety of UN forces (missions were sent at the invitation of sovereign parties in a conflict). The new generation of peace operations were in this respect more difficult, because at least one of the parties involved had no interest in the presence of Blue Helmets in the area. This raised a problem, because the UN is based on moral strength and the pressure of international opinion, not on military power.

There was also an increased demand for the UN's services. After the end of the Cold War there was a proliferation in peace-keeping missions.(11) While during the first 40 years of UN peace-keeping just 13 operations were conducted, 55 have been deployed since 1988.(12) In 1988 the UN had 10,000 troops involved in five peace-keeping operations; in just five years this number grew to almost 80,000 in 18 missions around the world.(13) Between 1989 and 1994 the UN Security Council authorized a total of 20 new operations.(14)

The evolution of the international environment and the need for a new approach was recognized by the UN in *"An Agenda for Peace"* report by the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992–1996), published in June 1992. This was the first major document focusing on the issue of strengthening capabilities in terms of preventive diplomacy,(15) peace-making,(16) peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.(17) The document had a dominant positive undertone. It pointed out mainly the opportunities presented by the end of the Cold War, rather than the threats and challenges. *"An Agenda for Peace"* recognized a tendency towards democracy in the

world and the development of a free market. It stated that "a conviction has grown, among nations large and small, that an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the Charter – a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights".[18] Threats, such as unchecked population growth, drugs, the growing disparity between rich and poor, debt burdens, ecological damage, disruption of family and community life, were accorded relatively little space.

"An Agenda for Peace" presented a series of recommendations on how to strengthen instruments for conflict prevention and resolution, including the establishment of a system based on early detection of conflict situations and diplomatic means of resolving these; achieving and retaining effective peace-making capabilities, peace-keeping tools able to preserve a "fragile" peace and peace-building instruments. That document also recommended fighting the causes of conflicts, including economic despair, political oppression and social injustice.[19] From the point of view of the Blue Helmets the recommendation regarding the utilization of peace-enforcement units was of particular importance. Unlike traditional peace-keeping forces, the peace-enforcement units were recommended to receive heavy weapons. These would allow them to operate in a more dangerous environment, without the consent of both parties. Such troops were to be deployed if the task of maintaining a cease-fire was beyond the capabilities of traditional peace-keepers. An illustration of the existing will to reshape and remodel peace operations was given by the establishment of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which began its operations in 1993.[20] Unfortunately, fundamental questions over how and when to use military force and what rules of engagement to observe have still not been answered.

The years after 1993 brought a series of painful failures seeming to prove the ineffectiveness of the peace-keeping forces, which were

loudly criticized for "doing too little, too late".[21] A visible increase in demand for the Blue Helmets' services and more complex situations in conflict zones did not go hand in hand with an increase in operational capabilities and freedom, broadened mandates and greater political support from states. The Blue Helmets had to keep operating in accordance with the mechanisms forged at the beginning of the Cold War in the late 1940s, yet were faced with the necessity to conduct peace-enforcement operations instead of traditional peace-keeping (observation) missions. The Blue Helmets were simply not prepared for this. It quickly became clear that ambitions were exaggerated and the peace-keepers had no authority to impose peace. The euphoria of the early 1990s faded away.

The litmus test that shocked the international community was an operation in Somalia.[22] This started in April 1992 with UNOSOM I (*United Nations Operation in Somalia I*), which was responsible for relieving starving Somalis. Although quite promising in the initial phase (also in terms of mitigating the effects of the famine), and enjoying overwhelming public support,[23] in the end the operation was a great trauma, shock and humiliation, mainly for the United States, which led the UNITAF (*Unified Task Force*). The United States lost 18 soldiers in the region, which was of no importance to the Americans. This showed that conducting peace operations without the consent of the parties involved is extremely difficult and dangerous. This failure, more prestige-related and psychological than military, made the United States and other Western states less keen to allow their troops to take part in challenging operations in the Third World. New, tighter conditions for the US participation were set.[24]

The emerging problems of peace-keeping became distressingly visible once again soon afterwards in Rwanda, where in October 1993 the UNAMIR (*UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda*) was established.[25] This mission was responsible for several tasks,

including disarmament and demilitarization in accordance with the so-called Arusha Peace Agreement.[26] However, the UNAMIR merely passively watched the shocking ethnic genocide of 1994, in which over 500,000 people were killed.[27] Although it is tempting to blame the UN for its inactivity, it is hardly justified to consider the Blue Helmets, led by General Romeo Dallaire (from the Canadian Army), who was a commander of a military contingent, responsible for the atrocities. In the Rwandan drama both the Tutsi people and the UN contingent were victims – the latter were victims of a painful lack of strength, a narrow mandate, and non-existent political support. If anybody was to blame it was the world powers, particularly the United States, which refused to apply the term "genocide" or allow the UN troops to act.[28]

The third big failure and humiliation that raised questions of the utility of the Blue Helmets came in the Balkans.[29] In April 1993 the UN Security Council passed a resolution to convert Srebrenica into a safe area for civilians. However, helpless UN troops were unable to respond to the increasing tensions from mid-1994. Thirty Dutch soldiers were taken as prisoners, which was both a great shock and a huge humiliation.[30] Except for a short aerial operation, there was no reaction due to concerns about the security of the UN troops on the ground. In the end, the Blue Helmets failed to protect civilians. The Srebrenica genocide took place 1995, in which approximately 7,000–8,000 people were murdered.[31] It was the biggest massacre of civilians on European soil since World War II.[32] Without any exaggeration, it is justified to say that UN peace operations ended up in deep crisis.

This period triggered a discussion on the future of UN peace operations. Many experts loudly spoked out about the need to strengthen the capabilities of the Blue Helmets. One of them was the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Kofi Annan

(1993–1996), who in 1993 pointed out that contemporary crises are much more complex that those of the past. What is more, he noted, expectations of the UN had increased. Annan said that, "today's conflicts in Somalia and Bosnia have fundamentally redrawn the parameters. It is no longer enough to implement agreements or separate antagonists; the international community now wants the United Nations to demarcate boundaries, control and eliminate heavy weapons, quell anarchy, and guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid in war zones".(33) According to Annan, this called for "teeth and muscle" to enforce a peace.

This was followed by a report published in December 1995 entitled *"The Comprehensive Report on Lessons Learned from United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) April 1992–March 1995"*. This publication criticized several elements of the UN mission, highlighting poor flexibility and lack of a precise legal mandate. Interesting, the authors underlined the necessity of retaining a traditional division between peace-keeping operations and peace-enforcement.(34) The Secretary General, who gave up on his ideas of 1992, believed that peace-keeping operations should not be mandated with peace-enforcement tasks.(35) Very similar conclusions were drawn in a report about the operation in Rwanda.(36) As a result, some recommendations were implemented, including the establishment of a special group responsible for monitoring agreements covering national stand-by troops and other capabilities for potential contributions to UN peace operations.(37)

The last major attempt to reshape the concept of peace operations and form a new approach was the *"Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations"* of August 2000, published by a group of experts chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi. This report showed great disappointment at the inability of the Blue Helmets to stop violence and protect civilians. It was recommended that peace operations

should be bigger and better-funded, and the troops better trained and equipped with a clear and feasible mandate. Following that document, several changes have been implemented, for example in the *"Capstone Doctrine"* (2008), which outlines the most important guidelines for peace-keepers.

HOW TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY?

It is hard to deny that the concept of UN peace operations is still in a very deep crisis. There are many associated problems and reasons for the Blue Helmets' weakness, and the sources cannot be reduced only to the extension of the scope of peace operations from peace-keeping to peace-enforcement, although of course this remains an important and unsolved challenge. A permanent and independent military staff, able to plan and then execute operations, is also missing. Even the end of the Cold War has not changed this pathological situation – the UN still has to almost beg member states for troop contributions to peace operations. In 1992 Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali lamented that the UN is "resource-starved".(38) This was seen in Bosnia and Herzegovina – whilst the Secretary General requested 35,000 troops to prepare and secure "safe areas", member states authorized only 7,600 and it took one year to provide them.(39) In 2013 it was reported that the MINUSMA operation in Mali (*United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali*) lacked essential units, including two infantry battalions and a special-forces company.(40) The UN peace-keeping operations now face a shortage of helicopters (transport, assault, MEDAVAC/CASEVAC(41)), armoured personnel carriers, night-vision equipment (also for helicopters), and command and control assets.(42) Furthermore, the initial contribution tends not to equal the actual availability of forces in a crisis. As Richard C. Longworth writes, this was shown for example in Rwanda: "Nineteen

nations had joined the stand-by force when the Rwanda crisis broke out, but after hearing that UN troops from Belgium were being macheted on the streets of Kigali, all 19 reneged".[43] Growing expectations with insufficient means is a sure recipe for failure, for which the UN itself cannot be held responsible.

If the current system of UN "contingents building" is invalid, a new one needs to be found. Perhaps the most feasible concepts are: stand-by army directly under UN command (not dependent on national governments), hired contractors, and "outsourcing". The first concept is not new. The idea was backed by, for example, John Foster Dulles, who served as US Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953–1959).[44] In 1993 some US politicians proposed the creation of a UN rapid reaction force of between 5,000 and 10,000 troops for peace-keeping and peace-enforcing operations.[45] Such stand-by arrangements were also suggested by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, discussed by some experts[46], introduced in the US House of Representatives[47] and advocated by Kofi Annan, who argued for the "absolute necessity" of such a rapid response force for the UN.[48]

However, this concept seems unrealistic in the current international system, which was observed by the Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld (1953–1961) when he said that the "legal restrictions imposed by national sovereignty" make this project impossible.[49] Nobody in modern history has ever been able to establish a functional, transnational standing army. The painful failure in 1954 of the European Defence Community (EDC) with a pan-European military is a good example.[50] It is highly doubtful whether anything will change, either in the short or long term – at least not until a sovereign world government is established. Change is even less likely if a second factor is taken into account: in times of financial austerity, decreasing military budgets and lack of manpower, no state would allocate its troops to the "UN army". For the same reason, i.e.,

financial, establishing UN forces based on private contractors also seems highly unlikely. Such a solution would be very costly. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to use private companies to a greater degree in such areas as transport services, for example.

The most feasible idea, and that which should be followed, is to use assistance from regional organizations. Such "outsourcing" would be particularly helpful in the case of peace-enforcement operations because the United Nations does not and cannot wage wars. Of course not every organization would be helpful, as some do not have either the capabilities to conduct peace operations or such ambitions. NATO could be a positive example of such ambitious organization in Europe and neighbouring areas. After 1991 this transatlantic alliance declared its willingness to participate on a case-by-case basis in peace operations – both peace-keeping and peace-enforcing – outside the area of Article V of the Washington Treaty of 1949.(51) Involvement in the Balkans – from Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–2004) to Kosovo (since 1999) – and recently Libya (2011) has given examples of this approach and an illustration of NATO's ambitions as a stabilization force. Such a role was advocated by Kofi Annan, who said that, "with its existing military structure, resources and political weight, NATO has a lot to contribute to the concept of peacekeeping, particularly in its more muscular form".(52)

In Africa a useful organization could be, if not the European Union under French leadership, the African Union. This organization was established in 2001 as a replacement for the inefficient Organization of African Unity. In its founding act it reserved the right to intervene militarily where violations of human rights are at stake. The African Union established the African Standby Force, with headquarters in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).(53) It comprises military personnel, policemen and civilians. These forces are to be based in regional brigades, which are currently being formed. It is particularly

important that the Western powers support African activities and help them to achieve higher standards, also in terms of operational capabilities and efficiency. A good example of such assistance is the EUTM Somalia[54] operation conducted by the European Union and the French-led RECAMP (*REnforcement des Capacités Africaines en Maintien de la Paix*) project.

African states from time to time carry out armed peace operations. It is enough to mention the deployment of 60 observers and 300 troops in Darfur in July 2004 by the AU. Over the years, the size of the mission has grown to 12,000 troops (mainly from Uganda, Kenya and Burundi).[55] In 2008, despite the objections of South Africa, African states (more than a thousand soldiers mainly from Tanzania and Sudan) carried out a little known, yet ultimately successful, military intervention in the Comoros. In November 2011, Kenyan troops entered Somalia to fight Islamist radicals from the Al Shabab group. Chronologically, the first military mission was in Burundi (April 2003–May 2004).

While deliberating on this concept an attention should be paid to a trivial yet very important fact. It is politics and selfish national interests, not idealistic will to stop injustice, that determine the actions of each state involved in a particular crisis. The Blue Helmets were deployed to Haiti or the Balkans, but were insensitive to the tragedy of Rwanda and Sudan for many years; this should not be a surprise – Haiti is located near the border of the United States, which is a direct sphere of Washington's influence and interests. Continued destabilization in this Caribbean country could have led to an increase of illegal refugees to the United States. The Balkans, in turn, is an important region for the European states, so they had a good reason to impose a peace there. Rwanda and Sudan proved completely irrelevant from the political point of view of Western states.

This brutal fact must be understood – after all, every state willing

to contribute to a UN operation faces significant costs, especially political and military. Hence, there is always a calculation of profits and losses from the point of view of a country's own national interests. Hopes that national egoism will be ousted and nations will behave selflessly would be naive – the idea of Realpolitik is still very strong. Therefore, the only way to revive a concept of the UN peace-keeping is to use regional organizations to a higher degree, which more than any other entity are interested in the stabilization of neighbouring regions or a sphere of their influence. A particular state could also be asked to act on behalf of the UN, like France in Mali, Chad, or the Central African Republic, or the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone. It is understandable and logical that Uganda and Kenya, for example, are more interested in the security of Somalia than Germany, which was more focused on the security of the Balkans. The involvement of regional organizations is a pragmatic response to two trends of the modern world, which cannot be reversed – the first is the above-mentioned declining interest of world powers in supporting the Blue Helmets under UN command. The second is the very visible trend, started after the end of Cold War, of the increased involvement of regional organizations in the maintenance of peace, and the increase in the number of such organizations engaged in regional security.

The use of regional organizations most interested in the solution of a particular conflict is not a novelty. Such an approach, designating a legal UN mandate to a regional organization or an individual member state of the UN, was advocated by Kofi Annan. It was also presented in *"The Comprehensive Report on Lessons Learned from United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) April 1992–March 1995"*. Such a relationship between the UN and regional organizations, in terms of preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peace-building and peace-making, can also be found in the *"An*

Agenda for Peace" of 1992.[56] In this document ECOWAS's involvement in Liberia was praised. A new era was hailed in which "regional arrangements or agencies can render great service".[57]

Such "outsourcing" is already possible within the UN Charter, which establishes a framework for a decentralized system of peace maintenance. Furthermore, it even encourages regional entities to deal with regional problems. Chapter VIII empowers regional organizations to settle disputes and resolve conflicts by peaceful means (preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peace-building, peace-making).[58] Peace-enforcement is also possible, but only, which is understandable, through delegated authority given by the UN Security Council.[59] Such use of military power, or "marching behind the UN flag to crack heads for peace" as Richard C. Longworth put it,[60] is possible thanks to Chapter VII of the UN Charter.[61]

The UN has a very long history of avoiding monopolization of conflict resolution efforts. It is possible to name several positive examples of such "franchising". One is the US-led MFN (*Multinational Force*) under UN auspices (in cooperation with Organization of American States) that landed in Haiti in September 1994 and took over control of that state.[62] Another example is the Abkhazian conflict, which was taken over by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (1992–2008) and, less successfully, the Liberian crisis taken over by ECOWAS (1990–1998). All these conflicts are an illustration of the thesis that the organizations associated with the region or regional powers are usually the most interested in stabilization. This also applies to peace-enforcement operations, for which it is sometimes possible to "hire" a particular state – like the United States, which under the UN mandate (based on Chapter VII) removed Saddam Hussein's troops from Kuwait (1990), or stopped the aggression of North Korea towards South Korea (1950–1953). Other positive examples include the

operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the UN received military assistance from NATO (including a peace-enforcement operation *"Deny Flight"* between 1993 and 1995 and a punitive *"Deliberate Force"* in 1995). Later, the UN Security Council authorized the NATO-led IFOR (*Implementation Force*), active between 1995 and 1996 and replaced by the SFOR (*Stabilization Force*), which was deactivated in 2004. In Kosovo, after Serbian withdrawal from this province following NATO's bombing (operation *"Allied Force"*), the UN Security Council authorized the KFOR (*Kosovo Force*), still present in the theatre, for peace-keeping duties with peace-enforcing capabilities if necessary.(63) These are in fact Blue Helmets without blue helmets.

This "outsourcing" was also used with success in 2003 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. That year the European Union dispatched a 1,800-strong French-led force which, with a legal mandate from the UN Security Council, assisted the MONUC (*United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo*) operation. This concept was repeated in 2006 in order to support MONUC during the elections. Another example is East Timor, where peace-enforcement troops led by Australia were deployed in 1999. This mission, known as INTERFET (*International Force in East Timor*), had a peak strength of 11,000 troops and restored peace and security.(64) There are many more examples, including European Union troops in the Democratic Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic under the MINURCAT mandate (*United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad*) between 2008 and 2009, ECOWAS troops in Mali since late 2013 under the AFISMA mission (*African-led International Support Mission to Mali*) or the joint UNAMID (*African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur*) operation.

The multinational nature of international organizations can reduce

the risk of dominance of one state, driven by its own national and egoistic interest. Of course, there will always be a risk that "a regional organization may perpetrate or promote a new regional hegemony, whereas the United Nations traditionally deploys troops from member states half a world away from the conflict, in which the governments of the UN peace-keepers have no direct stake".(65) Obviously, abuses cannot be ruled out and regional organizations might in some cases try to enforce their will without UN Security Council's required authorization – but it will never be possible to oust this threat. Abuses exist already – for example in the form of politically-driven vetoes at the UN Security Council. Possible flaws and infringements, which sometimes occur,(66) do not mean that we should give up on this idea, although an effort should be made to neutralize them. However, it would be required to forge clear and coherent regulations of a regional organization's activities on behalf of the UN and of relations with the UN itself: these, as Ademola Abbas rightly points out, are missing.(67) It is very important that even if a scenario of decentralization of collective security is worked out, also in terms of peace-enforcement operations, the dominance of a framework within the UN Charter must remain.

The use of the "outsourcing" approach might also neutralize the negative trend of the decline in the quality of Blue Helmets, which results in a decreasing efficiency and operational value. As remarked on above, the Western states, which have the most professional armed forces and military means, including logistics, are no longer interested in dispatching their troops to difficult operations under UN auspices. Given this reluctance, the UN has to rely on second-class peace-keepers, mainly from developing countries, sometimes serving for economic profit.(68)

Table: UN peace-keeping troop contributors (December 2013)[69]

Position	State	Amount
1	Pakistan	7,597
2	India	6,815
3	Ethiopia	6,485
4	Bangladesh	6,065
5	Rwanda	4,251
6	Nigeria	4,134
7	Nepal	3,653
14	China	1,865
27	France	888
43	United Kingdom	289
62	United States	22
78	Russian Federation	5

CONCLUSIONS

A deep reform of the UN peace operations is necessary and inevitable, because nothing indicates that crises, conflicts and humanitarian disasters will disappear in the near future and thus a necessity to conduct operations with "human security" and "responsibility to protect" agendas in the background. Nor is there any indication that the currently inefficient system of UN peace operations will suddenly become effective. But this does not mean that the UN system should be considered a fiasco. No other international organization has such capabilities, as well as the political and moral mandate to engage in conflict resolution. In the history of mankind there has been no similar institution that has so often deployed troops to stop atrocities and conflicts on behalf of the international community. It is obvious that it is not possible to be victorious in every case and it will never be, especially if expectations are beyond capabilities. UN peace-keepers need proper and adequate tools – otherwise it is like sending a fire-fighter into action with an umbrella.

It is obvious that in some conflicts, even with a mass scale of atrocities, as in Chechnya, it will never be possible to intervene due to

geopolitical constraints. Sometimes, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where MONUC unsuccessfully tried to stop violence in 2001, we might fail too. To work effectively, the UN needs to know about limits and potential. However, at the same time we must remember that the UN and its peace operations are not to be blamed for everything – they are often a victim of a rough international politics, a hostage in a struggle for power and national interests between the world powers. It is the fault of nations, not the UN, that the organization is full of paradoxes and hypocrisy. The UN was established in order to cope with conflicts and crises caused by sovereign states and nations – the same states and nations that founded and now direct the United Nations. It this case a policeman is also a villain. The Blue Helmets often serve as a good excuse to strengthen the hypocrisy of member states. They are evidence of the involvement of those states in a struggle for international peace, while these states at the same time violate this peace, treat the Blue Helmets objectively and dump all responsibility onto them. They often regard the UN as a whipping boy, always ready to take responsibility for every war that breaks out.

No matter how many failures we suffer as an international community, we need to tirelessly try to reduce the scale of global and regional violence. This is in the interest of every nation. As General Sir Michael Rose, commander of UN Protection Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1994–1995) simply put it, "if the world loses faith in peacekeeping, and responses to the new world disorder are limited to the extremes of total war or total peace, the world will become a more dangerous place. Rather than lose faith in the whole peace process, we need to analyse the changed operational circumstances and try to determine new doctrines for the future".[70] Therefore, the opinion that "the United Nations should get out of the humanitarian intervention and peace enforcement business before humanitarian intervention and

peace enforcement put the United Nations out of business" does not seem to be valid.[71] There is no way back – the UN needs to be actively engaged.

The best illustration of this need is provided by numbers – the surge of UN peace-keeping personnel to almost 98,000 at the end of 2013.[72] This clearly shows that the demand for the Blue Helmets remains high, and the near future will not change this. What is more, given all current trends and the growing complexity of the international system, including decreasing sovereignty of states, it is justified to say that at least some percentage of future operations will be more coercive than consensual, and might not be able to observe the basic principles enumerated several years ago by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali: "the consent of the parties, troops provided by member states serving under the command of the secretary general, minimum use of force".[73] Peace-enforcing operations will still be important in the future, although they are likely to remain controversial due to the fact that such interventionism violates the above-mentioned national sovereignty, which is, since the peace of Westphalia (1648), a fundament of the international system.

Keeping in mind current trends (decreasing interest of the Western powers in UN-led operations, financial austerity, still-high number of conflicts, increasing interest of international organization in stabilization and security duties, etc.) it is vital that the tasks of peace-keeping and peace-enforcing are not delegated exclusively to the UN. A designated mandate can facilitate the decision-making process at operational level. One of the current problems of the UN-led Blue Helmets stems from the decision-making paralysis: each state – and sometimes dozens are involved – wants to decide. A system of "franchising" might bring a remedy through an increase of efficiency of peace-keeping and, particularly, peace-enforcement operations, which are usually conducted in remote and uncertain environments.

However, all operations, whether peace-keeping or peace-enforcement, and whether led by the UN or a regional organization, need a clear and obtainable political goal. It must also be ensured that a decision to start an operation, particularly with use of military and thus lethal force, comes as often as possible as a result of the UN Security Council's authorization.

Of course, nobody should think that this approach will allow the prevention or resolution of every bloody conflict around the world. Even the best system is not a panacea for every international and intrastate crisis. For that to happen something more than a group of even the best-equipped and trained troops with a broad mandate would be needed. First of all, a true will to find a peaceful solution is required, as well as an eagerness for reconciliation and a compassion for the suffering of civilians and other nations that should replace national calculations. But would then peace operations be needed at all?

A situation where there is no good will and compassion can be seen now in Syria, where the civil population is paying a tremendous price for a geostrategic game being carried out above their heads. The will to obtain the fastest possible cease-fire, and subsequently peace, is missing. The difficulty of imposing a strong peace without consent and will for reconciliation is shown by the examples of Afghanistan and Kosovo: despite the almost unlimited budget, freedom to dispose of the funds, political will and operational freedom, also in terms of rules of engagement, the Americans and NATO as a whole are powerless. The same is true in Iraq. As the RAND Corporation noted, in 2005 the United States was spending some USD 4.5 billion per month in Iraq, which was more than the United Nations spent to run all 17 of its missions around the world.(74) Why then do we expect miracles from the undermanned and underfunded UN?

We should underline once again that various problems, setbacks

and shortcomings do not mean that the whole system of UN peace operations should be considered a disaster and discontinued. Failures are always included in every action – especially in very difficult and challenging crises, in which no one else wants to get involved. There have been some successes that without the UN would not have been possible. And without the UN's efforts some conflicts would may have become chronic. The UN contributed, for instance, to the factual end of the war on the Korean Peninsula. Thanks to the UN, aid was delivered to the people of Somalia, Saddam Hussein was expelled from Kuwait, and the conflict in Sudan was relieved. We have also seen stabilization in East Timor, Sierra Leone and Haiti, as well as Namibia, El Salvador and Cambodia. The UN has undoubtedly saved thousands of lives across Africa.

If the UN did not exist there would be no international platform for discussions, negotiations and peaceful conflict resolutions. Though full of flaws and shortcomings, UN peace operations are for now the only tool of the joint struggle against injustices around the world. And this struggle seems increasingly successful. While during the 1990s there were 200,000 victims per year in armed conflicts around the world, in 2003 that number came down to 27,000.[75] It is not perfect, but one can be certain that if the United Nations system, together with its peace operations, did not exist, it would be necessary to create it as soon as possible. ❖

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such regional agencies either on the initiative of the states concerned or by reference from the Security Council".

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