

Intelligence in African Peace Operations: Addressing the Deficit

By *Mark Malan*¹



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¹ Mark Malan heads the Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Department at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. This paper is a revised version of an earlier draft presented to the International Intelligence Fellows Program, Joint Military Intelligence College, Washington D.C. on 27 June 2005.

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INTRODUCTION

Peace operations have become a common mode of international third-party intervention to address protracted social conflict. Peace operations have become increasingly dynamic, involving a growing number of professionals from various disciplinary and experiential backgrounds – military, aid and development, conflict resolution, diplomatic, and academic. Broad political mandates such as Security Council resolutions need to be converted into comprehensive campaign plans, and appropriate concepts of operation supported by the means for their implementation. The input of the combination of key implementing actors and agencies during the mission planning phase would enhance both the overall concept of operations as well as commitment to effective implementation. At a minimum, planning should be based on accurate and integrated information on the conflict and the mission area.

Intelligence contributions from member states have been invaluable to the planning and conduct of peace operations. Secret intelligence can also be extremely valuable and have a critical impact on the operational and tactical level of peace operations. However, it is extremely difficult to keep things confidential in an organization such as the UN, which is designed to be transparent. Many states are therefore prevented by national laws from providing intelligence to the UN as an organisation.²

It is therefore widely accepted that peace operations should rely primarily on open source information. Much information is indeed readily available from open sources – including the various UN departments, agencies and associated organizations working in a mission area.³ It may indeed be argued that there is too much information; that the peace operations information community must make sense of vast, overwhelming quantities of non-secret information. Moreover, UN desk officers and decision makers have at their disposal a proliferation of code cables, daily situation reports, daily news feeds and informal connections to keep informed of events in their areas of responsibility.⁴

In past operations, however, there has been a marked scarcity of operational and tactical level intelligence. In fact, there has been no agreed assessment procedure, and the intelligence picture is frequently based on opinion rather than the product of analysis. There has therefore been a lack of warning of potential crises and an ineffective approach to crucial issues such as arms embargos and security threats to mission personnel and host populations. At the operational level, ongoing UN missions in African countries such as the

² Patrick Cammaert, *Conceptual, organizational and operational issues facing the United Nations in providing strategic information and peacekeeping intelligence for its peace support operations*, paper delivered at the 2nd Annual Peacekeeping Intelligence Conference, Ottawa, 4-5 December 2003. Major General Cammaert is the Military Advisor to the UN Secretary General.

³ At headquarters level, a number of UN departmental units have policy and information analysis roles related to peace and security, including: the Policy Analysis Unit and the Situation Centre of DPKO; the Policy Planning Unit of DPA; the Policy Development Unit of OCHA; the Media Monitoring and Analysis Section of the Department of Public Information (DPI); the Strategic Planning Unit of the Office of the Secretary-General; the Emergency Response Division of UNDP; the Information Analysis Unit of OCHA; the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator; and the Monitoring, Database and Information Branch of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

⁴ Patrick Cammaert, *op cit*.

DR Congo, Sierra Leone and Liberia have shown that there is a strong requirement for a broad spectrum of military information and intelligence products.

Although the Brahimi report recommendations on establishing a strategic peacekeeping intelligence capability at headquarters have not been implemented⁵ (largely because of Member State “sensitivity”), the growing operational requirement for intelligence hit home with the tragic loss in 2003 of the Special Representative and the other UN personnel killed in the bomb attack on the UN mission headquarters in Baghdad. UN Member States are at last recognizing that at the operational and tactical levels, the mission leadership needs accurate, relevant information – or intelligence – on armed groups and former warring factions in order to be pre-emptive and neutralize destabilizing influences and “spoilers”. The need has now clearly emerged for accurate, in-time information - specifically, the analysed product that is generally known as intelligence. Sound planning must be based on the realities of the situation and be flexible enough to deal with possible conflict escalation. Whether it is called military information, mission information, or by any other name, there is the need for a sound, ongoing analysis of the political, military, humanitarian, socio-economic and security situations in order for missions to function effectively.

The aim of this paper is to highlight some of the more salient requirements for intelligence in African peace operations, and to provide insights into how these needs are (or are not) being met. It does so with specific reference to intelligence needs related to civilian protection, arms embargoes and DDR, and to the role played by Military Observers, Political Affairs Officers and appointed experts in peace operations. The paper concludes with an overview of ongoing efforts to establish Joint Mission Analysis Cells as a solution to current intelligence deficits.

INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS IN AFRICAN MISSIONS

In early 2005, there were seven UN missions deployed in Africa, with a total authorised strength of 51,163⁶, representing 76% of the global authorized total of UN peacekeepers. In addition, the African Union was busy building up its peacekeeping forces in the Darfur region of Sudan and expanding the scope of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS). The parties to the conflicts in countries such as Liberia, Ivory Coast, DRC and Sudan have not hesitated to present their own, partial view of incidents to the peacekeeping missions, as well as to the UN Security Council and the AU’s Peace and Security Council. It is therefore up to the peacekeeping forces themselves to develop an impartial and accurate picture of the operational situation in the mission area. The Force Commanders in these missions are also faced with enormous challenges in getting the type of intelligence to enable them to remain

⁵ In particular, that the Secretary-General should establish an entity, referred to as the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS), that would support the information and analysis needs of all members of ECPS; for management purposes, it should be administered by and report jointly to the heads of DPA and DPKO. See United Nations General Assembly/Security Council, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305, S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, par. 75.

⁶ MINURSO 237, MONUC 16,270, ONUB 5,445, UNAMSIL 3,622, UNMEE 3,335, UNMIL 16,017, UNOCI 6,237. As of 28 February 2005, figures from <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/>

ahead of the power curve of the “armed groups” and “warring factions” through appropriate military operations, rather than merely maintaining a reactive “UN presence in the field”.

At the operational level, it is clear that there is a strong requirement for a broad spectrum of military information and intelligence products. Where civilian protection is seen as an essential part of the mandate the need for a clear intelligence picture is particularly salient. Moreover, there are some very basic military information needs related to disarmament and demobilisation processes that are not being particularly well met in African missions. These points are illustrated below, in the context of two missions that are facing enormous challenges to providing civilian protection – the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) and the AMIS in Darfur. The challenges of information in DDR processes are illustrated with reference to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which has led a recently-completed but controversial disarmament and demobilisation programme.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) estimated in April 2003 that the Congo-wide death toll since the beginning of 1999 was between 3,100,000 and 4,700,000 people, and indicated that most of the deaths resulted from war-related famine and disease. Within this broader humanitarian catastrophe, international attention increasingly focused on the Ituri region of the DRC, where gruesome reports of direct massacres of civilians had emerged on a regular basis since September 2002, when Lendu fighters took control of Nyankunde, some 50km south-west of Bunia. The month-long massacre of more than 1,000 Hemas in Nyakunde district became one of the worst atrocities of the entire war.⁷ Drugged fighters butchered civilians over a month and five days of occupation. The town hospital saw some of the worst bloodshed, with militiamen murdering dozens of patients in their beds.⁸

On 27 May 2003, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported that:

*"The humanitarian impact of the armed conflict for the 4.6 million inhabitants of Ituri has been catastrophic. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, between 500,000 and 600,000 internally displaced persons - many of who remain in hiding and cannot be accounted for - in addition to nearly 100,000 refugees from Uganda and the Sudan, are dispersed throughout the area. Since the first major onslaught of violence in June 1999, the death toll has been estimated at more than 60,000, and countless others have been left maimed or severely mutilated."*⁹

The report of a UN team of investigators, published on 01 August 2003, confirmed that rebels operating in Ituri used looting, killing, violence against women, and cannibalism as premeditated tools of war. The investigators took testimony from 503 people during their mission to look into acts of cannibalism and other human rights abuses that took place between October and December 2002 in the area between Mambasa and Beni. According to the UN investigators, 173 killings and executions were reported, including 12 incidents of

⁷ *Peacekeeping in Congo: Is protection a mirage?* The Economist, 12 June 2003.

⁸ Declan Walsh, *A prayer for the dying*, The Independent (London), 10 June 2003.

⁹ United Nations, Second Special Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 27 May 2003.

cannibalism. When fighters of the Congolese Liberation Movement and the Congolese Rally for Democracy-National fought for the town of Mambasa on 12 October 2002, there were massive rapes, as well as systematic lootings, destruction of health infrastructures and forced labor. At the end of November, when rival groups took back Mambasa and advanced toward Beni, systematic looting continued along with frequent rapes as well as systematic violence against Pygmies.

The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) began as a modest observer mission in 1999. It has since mushroomed into an operation with 16,500 UN soldiers on the ground, with most of the troops provided by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1493 (2003) of 28 July 2003, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo, for an initial period of 12 months, which required all member states, including the DRC, to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and any related materiel, and to desist from providing any assistance, advice or training related to military activities to all foreign and Congolese armed groups and militias operating in the territory of North and South Kivu and of Ituri, and to groups not party to the Global and All-inclusive agreement, in the DRC.

Shortly prior to the imposition of the arms embargo, there was a noticeable upsurge in arms supplies to armed groups in the border areas of eastern DRC. These supplies supplemented the pre-existing stock of arms, including residual weapons that remained in the eastern DRC after the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops. However, with the intervention of the Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) and its conduct of “Operation Artemis” in mid-2003 in Ituri province, regular supplies by air, water and land were curtailed. Artemis deployed the necessary reconnaissance, information and interdiction assets to enable it to limit re-supply in its theatre of operations.¹⁰

The replacement of IEMF by a less combat-capable MONUC force created, at first, an environment more propitious to the resumption of weapons trafficking and other logistical support to warmongers in Ituri and the Kivus. With the gradual deployment of the Ituri Brigade outside of Bunia, MONUC forces were better positioned to fill the power vacuum in the more remote areas. However, under resolution 1493, MONUC was tasked to monitor the arms embargo at a time when it lacked both human resources and technical assets to face its own operational priorities and deployment constraints, particularly in Ituri and later in the Kivus. Under these conditions, MONUC’s limited arms monitoring capability was clearly inadequate, although the mission leadership fully appreciated the importance of this task. It is in this context that a three-tier monitoring mechanism was established under resolution 1533 (adopted on 12 March 2004).

¹⁰ The 1,400-strong IEMF, led by France and authorised by the European Union, had a UN mandate under Resolution 1484 (2003), which states, among others, that: “[The Security Council] *Acting* under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, [a]uthorises the deployment until 1 September 2003 of an Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia ... to ensure protection of the airport, the internally displaced persons in the camps in Bunia and, if the situation requires it, to contribute to the safety of the civilian population, United Nations personnel and the humanitarian presence in the town. ... [The Security Council] authorises the Member States participating in the Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia to take all necessary means to fulfil its mandate.” UN Security Council, Resolution 1484, S/RES/1484 (2003), 30 May 2003, par. 1 and 4.

Under the first tier, MONUC would collect and categorize relevant information in accordance with its capabilities. Under the second tier, a group of technical experts would collect and conduct preliminary investigations of information both within the DRC and in other countries, and report this to the third tier, a sanctions committee. Resolution 1533 requested the Secretary General, in consultation with the Security Council sanctions committee to appoint, for a period expiring on 28 July 2004, a group of experts to perform the following tasks:

- To examine and analyse information gathered by MONUC in the context of its monitoring mandate;
- To gather and analyse all relevant information in the DRC, countries of the region and, as necessary, in other countries, in cooperation with the governments of those countries, on flows of arms and related materiel, as well as networks operating in violation of the measures imposed by paragraph 20 of resolution 1493;
- To consider and recommend, where appropriate, ways of improving the capabilities of interested member states, in particular those of the region, to ensure the measures imposed by resolution 1493 are effectively implemented;
- To report to the Council through the Committee, on the implementation of the measures imposed by paragraph 20 of resolution 1493, with recommendations in this regard; and
- To provide the Committee in its reports with a list, with supporting evidence, of those found to have violated the measures imposed by paragraph 20 of resolution 1493, and those found to have supported them in such activities.

On 21 April 2004, Kofi Annan informed the Council of the appointment of four individuals to carry out these tasks.¹¹ In line with the three-tiered approach, this small group of experts considered information provided to it by MONUC as a springboard for some of its further investigations. Given the fact that they had only a ten-week mandate, the experts opted for a case study approach and conveyed that their report should be considered as a foundation report, focused on a set of specific cases, rather than as a comprehensive and all-encompassing account of arms flows and related activities in the DRC.

Time constraints also limited the geographic scope of the group's work. Given the proximity and alleged involvement of Rwanda and Uganda in Ituri and the Kivus, they decided to prioritize their focus on the border areas between the eastern DRC and western Rwanda and Uganda. On this premise, the group assessed 21 primary and ancillary border areas, and surveyed Lakes Albert and Kivu extensively. Aerial surveys were also conducted in the area around Bunia, Fataki, Mahagi and Boga in Ituri and in areas surrounding Beni and Walikale in North Kivu. All assessments and surveys were backed by photographic evidence.

In accordance with its mandate, the group of experts only examined and analysed information pertaining to suspected violations of the arms embargo as from 28 July 2003. In particular, they set out to investigate the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms

¹¹ By means of a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2004/317). The members were: Mr. Leon-Pascal Seudie, police expert (Cameroon), Ms. Kathi Lynn Austin, arms trafficking expert (USA), Mr. Victor Dupere, air navigation expert (Canada) and Mr. Jean Luc Gallet, customs expert (France). The Panel was to be assisted by a UN Political Affairs Officer.

and any related material; the encroachment of foreign government troops into the DRC; the provision of assistance, advice or training related to military activities; the unimpeded access of leaders of Congolese armed groups to neighbouring countries (in particular to recruit demobilised combatants or civilians); the passage through neighbouring countries to outflank opposing troops in the DRC; the use of neighbouring countries as a retreat, rear base or safe haven; and the illicit internal movement of weapons within the DRC.

During their time in the field, the group of experts identified numerous channels through which direct and indirect assistance was being provided to armed groups operating in Ituri, the Kivus and in other parts of the DRC, both by neighbouring countries and from within. This assistance included the supply of arms and ammunition. They therefore recommended the extension of the embargo, and, among others, the improvement of MONUC's monitoring and interdiction capacity by providing the mission with the appropriate maritime patrol and air surveillance capabilities, including appropriate nocturnal, satellite, radar and photographic assets. In addition, the need was identified to provide relevant MONUC personnel with specialized training, including on how to monitor and track illicit air movements.

Despite such recommendations, and the systematic build-up of the Ituri Brigade to full strength, the situation in the east of DRC has not stabilised. Indeed, between November 2004 and the end of February 2005, there were some 50 attacks by rebel militia on local communities in the Ituri region. Nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed in an ambush in February 2005. According to reports, the rebels were well-trained and organized, and it was evident that they were still getting weapons from neighbouring countries despite the arms embargo. The UN has itself publicly admitted to a huge and ongoing intelligence deficit. For example, in a media interview on 4 March 2005, Margaret Carey (deputy head of the DPKO's Africa Division) said: "Exactly who's training them, I don't have that kind of intelligence, but we do know that they are being supplied from across borders and that there are contacts and links between them and elements in Kinshasa and in the neighbouring countries."¹² Carey, echoing the findings of the group of experts, added that MONUC needs air surveillance, electronic warfare and listening capabilities to be able to better monitor the arms embargo in the North and South Kivu provinces and Ituri. Despite the ongoing intelligence gaps, however, MONUC has recently embarked on military operations that are more akin to a rural counterinsurgency than peacekeeping.

Much of the DRC's South Kivu region is under the control of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR), many members of which are accused of responsibility for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Although MONUC insists that these rebels disarm and return to Rwanda, they refuse to go back unless they are granted amnesty. In July 2005, MONUC launched *Operation Falcon Sweep*, a joint initiative with the Congolese army, to push these forces back over the border. At the start of the operation, MONUC made contact with the FDLR's political wing and senior commanders, in their main base in the eastern village of Miranda, and warned them to pull out of the area. After they failed to comply, the UN

¹² UN *peacekeeping official seeks more intelligence capability in Congo*, The Star Online, 04 March 2005 <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2005/3/4/latest/21791UNpeaceke&sec=latest>.

deployed some 1,200 troops by helicopter on 20 July to flush them out. About 800 rebels fled into the surrounding mountains as the UN forces torched the village.¹³

The fact that MONUC troops have been performing combined arms operations with the newly trained DRC Army is important militarily and politically. The strategic result is that MONUC will no longer be viewed as being neutral and their impartiality will also not be accepted by the forces they are pursuing. Beyond the obvious political and military implications, there will be humanitarian consequences, as the ability of humanitarian assistance agencies and NGOs to access and aid the Congolese that live near rebel groups will be impaired at a time when local villagers remain vulnerable to revenge attacks for the joint operations.¹⁴

Darfur

In Sudan's western region of Darfur, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed and over a million people displaced in a well-coordinated campaign that some have labelled 'genocide'.¹⁵ Although the United Nations passed a resolution on 30 July 2004, with a one-month deadline for compliance (30 August), calling on the Sudanese government to "identify and declare those militias over which it has influence, and instruct them to cease their activities forthwith",¹⁶ Khartoum failed to end the massive violations of human rights and rein in the militia. However, it agreed that an AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) could be deployed to monitor the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement of 8 April 2004 between the government and two rebel groups.

By the end of August 2004, the AMIS had 305 soldiers on the ground in Darfur as part of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism, and the UN was working with the AU on a plan that would raise this force level to about 3,500. AMIS has reported since its deployment that all parties to the conflict have routinely violated this ceasefire. While there is little doubt that the initial AMIS deployment was useful in drawing attention to the ongoing violations, the mission's effectiveness was constrained by its small size as well as logistical challenges. The 68 observers that were initially deployed were clearly too few to provide meaningful monitoring coverage to an area that is roughly the size of France.

By mid May 2005, the AU had 2,372 troops on the ground and was continuing to build up an expanded mission in Darfur. However, the role of the AMIS troops is to protect AMIS military observers and other personnel, equipment and installations. Protection of the civilian population is regarded as the responsibility of the Government of Sudan. As has become accepted practice in the UN missions in the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote

¹³ BBC News, *UN forces flush out Rwanda rebels*, 20 July 2005. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4700769.stm>

¹⁴ Correspondence with Colonel Timothy Cornett, US Army PKSOI, 22 July 2005.

¹⁵ According to United Nations estimates there are 1,65 million internally displaced persons in Darfur, and more than 200,000 refugees from Darfur in neighbouring Chad. For a concise account of the origins of the crisis, see Lansana Gberie, *The Darfur Crisis: A Test Case for Humanitarian Intervention*, KAIPTC Paper, No. 1, September 2004. www.kaiptc.org

¹⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1556 (2004), S/RES/1556 (2004), 30 July 2004.

d'Ivoire, the AMIS protection element would only be in a position to protect civilians “under imminent threat and in the immediate vicinity of AU forces, within the resources and capability” of these forces.¹⁷

The force remains patently too small, and the projected rate of deployment of more troops too slow, to properly protect civilians and to take active measures to reverse ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region. Moreover, even if there was an accepted doctrine and concept of operations for effective civilian protection (which there clearly is not), their application would require substantive combat-capable military forces, and *effective intelligence* for operations that could pre-empt the ongoing attacks on villages and IDP camps by the Janjaweed and other militias. The AU mission, like UN missions, has no intelligence apparatus, nor much collection capability beyond the erratic reporting of its military observers. It certainly does not actively analyse or disseminate intelligence.

AMIS is therefore unable to give critical information to sector commanders that would permit them to pursue their mandate proactively – even though intelligence gathering and the monitoring of government, militia and rebel forces are two of the key responsibilities accorded the mission under the Abuja Security Agreement of November 2004.¹⁸

Even with a far larger and more combat capable force, the ICG notes that civilians can only be adequately protected if there is a sound intelligence capability. The acquisition of aerial and ground surveillance devices, including night vision and thermal imagery, would greatly enhance awareness and force responsiveness and give AMIS the advantage over local forces that do not have these assets. However, there is a risk of overwhelming the command system if such assets are not accompanied by the creation of an adequate information analysis cell.¹⁹

Disarmament and demobilisation

Since 1989, an essential element of almost all peacekeeping operations has been the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and the success of an entire peace process can hinge on the degree to which warring factions are effectively disarmed and demobilized. Disarmament has been one of the most difficult tasks for peacekeepers to implement. Attempts at coercive disarmament, such as in Somalia, have failed and it has become widely accepted that DDR must be a voluntary process that requires absolute cooperation and compliance from belligerent parties. Such compliance has often been shaky, since even at the end of an armed struggle, the remaining conditions of societal

¹⁷ AU Commission, *Enhancing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in the Darfur Region of Sudan*, Working draft document, 22 September 2004.

¹⁸ “Protocol between the Government of Sudan, the SLM/A and the JEM on the enhancement of the security situation in Darfur in accordance with the N’Djamena agreement.” For a detailed analysis of the challenges confronting AMIS and the people of Darfur, see International Crisis Group, *The AU’s Mission in Darfur: Bridging the Gaps*, Crisis Group Africa briefing No. 28, 6 July 2005.

¹⁹ Now that AMIS has succeeded in reducing violence during the daytime in a number of locations, most violence in Darfur occurs under cover of darkness, particularly in the pre-dawn hours. International Crisis Group, 6 July 2005, p.11.

insecurity create high incentives for the maintenance and acquisition of small arms and light weapons by former combatants and the community at large.

Over the past fifteen years, there has thus been an evolution in the conceptualisation and implementation of DDR programmes by the wide range of actors who are drawn into such activities: broadly speaking the United Nations and its agencies, donors, technical assistance organizations and non-governmental organizations. Africa has been a testing ground for new planning and implementation of DDR programmes. From Mozambique in the early 1990s to Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire today, the learning from each mission has influenced the outcome of the next. Some countries, such as Liberia, bear witness to earlier failures of DDR, but despite attempts to not repeat the mistakes of earlier efforts at DDR ahead of the August 1997 elections, there are also many lessons to learn from the disarmament and demobilization conducted there in 2004.

DDR is a complex process; not least because of the range of human attitudes and motivations present among those to be disarmed and local communities. Ex-combatants are suspicious and often susceptible to manipulation and agitation by cross-border, national, and local actors with vested economic and political interests. Former leaders are anxious about the loss of their power-base and authority, while community members who were the victims of the conflict are often polarized and vexed by the thought that the perpetrators of the violence and terror are to benefit inordinately from the DDR process.

One of the key challenges lies in the specification and identification of exactly who should be disarmed. Over the long term, a strategy of disarmament and arms management should encompass everybody bearing arms without legal authority. However, during DDR processes, necessary prioritisation means that belligerents as defined in a peace agreement must be the primary focus for disarmament efforts.²⁰ Community arms collection programmes can later be brought into consideration in order to disarm those who were not specified in the peace agreement.

DDR processes were originally conceived for the demobilization of formal military structures or 'formed units' operating within well defined, disciplined military command structures, and normally in a situation where there is bureaucratic evidence of service. The central idea was to conduct disarmament and demobilisation through existing command structures, in order to prevent units from dispersing with their arms and to retain them under command until the process is completed. Retaining command structures in place during the 'DD' element would (i) ensure that rogue elements did not emerge (ii) ensure that no one was missed, and (iii) maintain military discipline among armed elements during the critical, and often lawless, immediate post-war period. Reintegration would be a 'community-based' activity, supporting ex-combatants in their home communities to re-enter civilian life, often with the assistance of veterans' organisations.

²⁰ Because of the generalised and non-specific language of most peace agreements, this has rarely been clear until disarmament is actually underway. For example, agreements may specify that particular armed movements or factions must be disarmed, but they are not specific as to whether or not DDR includes individuals who do not actually bear arms but nevertheless played key roles in sustaining the combat capability of armed groups.

However, these concepts and processes do not readily apply to internal conflicts in Africa, where conflict between military actors is a relatively minor component of a conflict system that is predominantly based on the violent exploitation of the wider population for economic gain. Bureaucratic evidence of either units or combatant service is highly unlikely, and during DDR the lack of formal structures offers a distinct opportunity to the commanders of such forces. It enables them to present personnel registers that can manipulate the process by avoiding the demobilization of core combatant groups and hijacking demobilization resources to distribute as patronage to potential supporter groups.²¹

The lack of accurate data for numbers of combatants is a constant problem. Commanders of armed groups may not declare the number of combatants under their command, and it is easy for the number of individuals registering for reintegration benefits during disarmament and demobilization to mushroom. The lack of accurate data also complicates the collection of arms and ammunition, as up to six people may claim to share one weapon, simply to benefit from the DDR programme. Military Observers have therefore had to improvise tests in the field, in an attempt to screen those presenting themselves as combatants – for example, stripping a weapon to show basic military competency.²²

Excluded groups and individuals can be spoilers of the peace process, raising insecurity among parties to the peace agreement and stalling activities – as has happened in the Great Lakes and West African regions, where former combatants in one war have increased regional destabilisation by simply joining another war rather than participating in DDR processes.

A good test of whether DDR is focussed on the real combatants, or has been harnessed to distribute political patronage, is to compare the wartime estimates of military strength with the number of combatants that enrol in the DDR process. For example, the number of ‘hardcore’ combatants engaged in Liberia’s conflict from 1999-2003 was relatively small, in all probability around 10,000 fighters.²³ However, in early 2004, UNMIL came up with an initial planning figure for a DDR process that would accommodate 38,000 combatants – a

²¹ James Fennel, Background paper for the ISS/KAIPTC workshop “Identifying Lessons from DDR Experiences in Africa”, Accra, 10-12 August 2004. Fennel is the UK Regional Conflict Prevention Advisor for West Africa.

²² In Sierra Leone, this sometimes had perverse consequences. Where UNAMSIL improvised tests such as stripping and assembling rifles, local “entrepreneurs” soon set up training classes to teach non-combatants these basic skills, so that they could qualify for DDR. New ideas for simple but effective testing therefore need to be considered.

²³ It is evident that the Liberian DDR process, failed this test. The Liberian Post reported in 2002 that while LURD commanders uniformly claimed around 14,000-15,000 combatants, this was likely to include carriers, spies and other unarmed members. Based on the numbers known to travel to Lofa from other parts of the region, the figure was probably closer to 2,000-3,000 real combatants operating in Liberia. See www.liberia.tripod.com, an internet site closely linked to LURD. A detailed RIIA investigation into LURD during February 2003 similarly found that LURD’s total number of men under arms numbered around 2,500 to 3,000 with an additional 500 or so unarmed logistical assistants. James Brabazon, *Liberia: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)*, Royal Institute for International Affairs, February 2003. On the other hand, the International Crisis Group estimated in November 2003 that the total number of forces loyal to Charles Taylor was between 7-11,000 (including some former RUF fighters), and that MODEL numbered around 1,000 fighters. See *Liberia: Security Challenges*, ICG, Brussels, November 2003.

high estimate that was constantly revised upwards in response to pressure from the warring factions through the NCDDRR.²⁴ A total of 102,990 ‘combatants’ were eventually ‘disarmed’ and demobilized. It is clear that NCDDRR’s estimates were not verified at the outset and during the various phases of the process by UNMIL. While this points to the lack of relevant information available to UNMIL, it must also be recognized that there were also political and other interests impacting on the mission that contributed to the large discrepancy in numbers.²⁵

However, the challenge of combatant identification remains the principal intelligence gap in DDR processes. If missions continue to rely on lists generated by the commanders of the armed groups, there will always be a high risk of great disparities between the number of weapons surrendered and the number of registered ex-combatants. ‘Bureaucratic’ evidence must be replaced by intelligence that enables verification of commanders and their ‘lists’ before DDR is initiated, to ensure that factions are not using DDR to disburse political patronage, and to be certain that demobilization is focused on hard core combatants.²⁶

EYES, EARS AND ANALYSIS

In the absence of a dedicated operational intelligence capability, UN and African peace operations have hitherto had to rely primarily on military observers and political affairs officers for the collection, analysis and processing of information to guide both operations and to keep higher headquarters in the picture. Where there remain clear gaps in the resultant product, the UN has also increasingly resorted to appointing “panels of experts” to investigate and report on situations that are deemed to be halting or spoiling progress with the peace process – such as non-compliance with UN arms embargoes. The following section outlines the successes and limitations of these practices.

Military Observers

The nature of contemporary peace operations is obviously one of heavy involvement with the local populace, government officials, police, and military factions – which means that information collection is human intelligence (HUMINT)-intensive. Human intelligence is often the only source of reliable information about the situation. On the other hand, while HUMINT gathering and factual and impartial reporting is seen as the cornerstone of successful peace operations, the reality is that most contingents that have been contributed to UN or regional operations in Africa have not comprised soldiers that are very skilled at accurate observation and reporting.

While the value of deploying numerous HUMINT teams in an area of operations is fairly evident, UN missions in Africa rely almost exclusively on Military Observers (MilObs) for operational and tactical level military information gathering, and for Military Information

²⁴ National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (composed of representatives from the factions, the NTGL, ECOWAS and UNMIL)

²⁵ See Sarah Meek and Mark Malan (eds.) *Identifying Lessons from DDR Experiences in Africa*, ISS Monograph No. 106, October 2004.

²⁶ James Fennel, op cit.

Officers (MIO) and Political Affairs officers for the processing thereof. Military Information in peace operations is essentially intelligence gathering by another name. MIOs collate the information contained in reports from MilObs and analyses it to identify the details that would provide a district perspective to the larger 'mission' picture. Reports need to be timely and succinct and provide a local interpretation of facts.

Much of the organic intelligence capability provided by MilObs at the sector level satisfies mainly the tactical "force protection" requirement of the contingents, and seldom provides the scope and quality of intelligence required by senior mission management as a whole. Moreover, information tends to flow haphazardly into military operations staff and other departments according to who gathers it or who wants to be first to break it. Incidents can occur when uncorroborated information is passed upward as fact and embarrassment can be the result. There is nevertheless a marked tendency to contribute raw information without any accompanying filter or commentary. Sometimes, information is not passed at all, which can be even more damaging. Whilst the mission headquarters may be well placed to set information supplied from the sectors into a wider context, the sectors normally have better local knowledge and reports should not be forwarded without some degree of initial assessment from the sector headquarters.²⁷

It has been found that a significant factor that adversely affects the nature and quality of information being passed to mission headquarters relates to the need for back questioning to confirm details. Much of the information derived in the field comes from one-off meetings that may be difficult to verify. To reduce this inefficiency, it has been recommended that more comprehensive formats be developed for observation reports, violation complaints and debriefings. There should also be proper evidence gathered for complaints (essentially witness statements) that formally record the nature of alleged incidents. However, complaints are often delivered verbally and repeated as hearsay in MilObs reports, which satisfies neither the proper recording of the incident, nor the individual making the complaint.²⁸

It should therefore not be surprising that the content of reports has not always been digested by higher headquarters, analysis has not always been accepted, and national interests have been placed above the need for objectivity. Inadequate understanding of the MilObs role, and an inability to structure and report clearly, means that reports are sometimes little more than travel diaries. It has also been found that as areas of responsibility become more benign, the motivation for MilObs to produce accurate and insightful reports tends to diminish. Patrols often fail to venture beyond bland and easily extracted information on health and general living conditions.²⁹

Indeed, lessons learned indicate that there is general tendency in missions to gather information for its own sake, passing it on randomly no matter what the relevance. It has therefore been recommended by the UN Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) that a document should be produced that defines Mission Information Requirements (MIR). This document should be disseminated as a directive to Sector HQs.

²⁷ UN DPKO, JMAC SOP 1/05, 31 January 2005, Annex A.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Correspondence with a former UN Military Observer with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), October 2004.

It should be accompanied by a requirement for Sector HQs to supplement the MIR with their own documents, Sector Information Requirements (SIR). The MIR should be reviewed periodically, to establish what information requirements have been met, what requirements need to be refined, and what new requirements should be added. A weekly or supplementary list of Priority Information Requirements (PIR) should be published fortnightly.³⁰

The DPKO Training and Evaluation Service has made some progress in determining selection criteria and training guidelines for MilObs, in consultation with member states and a variety of national peacekeeping training centres. However, the current UN Military Observers Handbook³¹ pays scant attention to information collection, evaluation, analysis and reporting skills. It consists of nine chapters, which cover the basics of serving in a UN mission – in essence, a “Peacekeeping 101” syllabus. In short, there is nothing in the extant training that would really prepare Military Observers for their unique responsibility as the eyes and ears of the mission.

Political affairs officers and panels of experts

Political affairs officers are expected to understand the dynamics of the armed conflict that created the requirement for a peacekeeping operation, to follow closely the evolution of these dynamics and to develop strategies to help the parties in conflict resolve disputes through peaceful means. Regardless of the size or scope of the operation, political affairs officers are required to always keep sight of the larger national and international political context. They are supposed to be capable of dissecting whose interests are served by the perpetuation of the conflict and, within the confines of the mandate, devising innovative solutions for changing the underlying dynamics. The job typically includes the following tasks, under the overall direction of the Head of Mission:

- Compiling profiles of key players in a conflict or peace process;
- Analysing political developments;
- Establishing contacts with parties to the conflict at all levels;
- Developing strategies to achieve or implement peace agreements;
- Working with diplomats to use the leverage of Member States;
- Developing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes with military colleagues and humanitarian and development organizations;
- Providing policy advice to government officials, including the development of roadmaps for political progress;
- Conceptualizing, planning and establishing new political institutions under a transitional administration mandate; and

³⁰ UN DPKO, JMAC SOP 1/05, 31 January 2005, Annex A.

³¹ UN DPKO, *United Nations Military Observers Handbook*, Second Draft, July 2001.

- Interacting with donors to mobilize resources for peace negotiations or peace-building activities.

The profiles of political affairs officers have become as varied as the tasks they are expected to undertake. An academic grounding in political science or international relations, as well as knowledge of the country or region, is often preferred. The main requirements are versatility and an ability to analyse and communicate clearly.³²

At least one senior serving political affairs officer is of the opinion that such competencies cannot be taught in a course of instruction:

“For me, political analysis (a bit like creative writing) is something that is not really – cannot really – be taught (despite the proliferation of creative writing courses). It is something that one picks up from reading and discussing history, politics, local conditions etc. ... I have always been very sceptical of my colleagues who think they are very important because they do ‘political work’, and only they are in a position to make political points, unlike those poor souls who are not ‘political officers’ and therefore haven’t a clue. In my experience, military, human rights and humanitarian officers are just as likely to have a feel for the political reality as political affairs officers.”³³

On the other hand, according to the UN DPKO draft training strategy: "Today's skills will not be enough for tomorrow's tasks – and no teams/units or individuals come complete with all the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to be successful in a UN environment. There are always gaps or areas that need reinforcement."³⁴ Perhaps the UN expects too much of its political affairs officers, or perhaps it is unable to attract and retain the required quantity and quality of officers to execute the numerous and complex tasks enumerated above. Whatever the reason, it is apparent that the UN cannot depend upon the political affairs components of its missions in Africa to monitor embargoes and provide economic intelligence, and therefore has to rely on the appointment of *ad hoc* “panels of experts” for these tasks.

For example, on 17 May of this year, the UN Secretary-General named another five-member panel of experts to monitor the extended arms embargo against the DRC.³⁵ Similarly, on 1 April 2005, in response to a Security Council request, Kofi Annan appointed a three-member panel of experts to monitor the arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire.³⁶ Their duties include examining and analyzing information gathered by the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and French Licorne forces, information from other Governments on any flows of arms and related materiel and any provision of military aid, advice or training, as well as any networks operating in violation of the embargo.

³² Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, December 2003.

³³ Correspondence with UN Senior Political Advisor, 18 April 2005.

³⁴ UN DPKO, Draft Training Strategy, February 2005, Introduction.

³⁵ The members of the panel are: Ibra Deguène Ka, from Senegal (chairman); Kathi Lynn Austin from the USA (arms trafficking expert); Abdoulaye Cissoko from Mali (aviation expert); and Jean Luc Gallet from France (customs and border control expert).

³⁶ The Council imposed the embargo in November 2005. The members are Gilbert Charles Barthe of Switzerland, Atabou Bodian of Senegal (chairman), and Alex Vines of the United Kingdom.

In Liberia, a five-member UN panel of experts was appointed to monitor the four-year-old ban on diamond exports by Liberia. The panel reported to the Security Council in March 2005 that the National Transitional Government of Liberia had signed a secret agreement with the West African Mining Corporation (WAMCO), a deal that gives a *de facto* monopoly to WAMCO to buy up Liberian diamonds and other minerals produced in the west of the country. The panel expressed concern that the deal was struck in an atmosphere of secrecy with a company of "unknown provenance" and cited its existence as evidence that the ban on diamond exports should be maintained.³⁷

The tasks handed to these panels of experts are arguably the provenance of the Political Affairs sections of MONUC, ONUCI, UNMIL and the like. However, it appears that *ad hoc* panels of experts – many of them researchers working with international “think tanks” – are more adept at “data mining”, and that they have the expertise needed to analyse and assess this information and to produce reports on which decisions can be made at the highest level. The UN Secretary-General sees the establishment of joint mission analysis cells in missions such as ONUCI as essential for arms embargo monitoring processes, but this will only be so if the cells are fully established and fully functional (see below).³⁸

At mission HQ level, coordinating and analysing available information from all role players has long been a challenge. UN missions direct a complex mixture of political, military and humanitarian elements – each with their own sources of information, analytical process and operational objectives, and their related intelligence requirements and planning cycles. Failure to establish an integrated mechanism to handle this information has resulted in different components each having their own view of a given situation, and in advice provided to senior mission management that is often contradictory or confused.³⁹

While military intelligence (G2) practices offer tried and trusted methods of information management, it was felt by the UN DPKO that the most appropriate solution in the multi-disciplinary peace operations environment would be to create a joint or integrated structure staffed with military and civilian analysts. For this reason, DPKO has elaborated a concept for the centralised direction, collection, processing and dissemination of information, and has begun to establish Joint Mission Analysis Cells (JMAC) in a few of its ongoing missions.

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY

³⁷ The ban was originally imposed in 2001, along with an arms embargo, to prevent the government of former President Charles Taylor from using the foreign exchange earned from diamonds mined in Liberia and smuggled in from neighbouring Sierra Leone to buy weapons. The UN Security Council extended its ban on exports of rough diamonds by Liberia in December 2004 for a further six months, with an undertaking to review the situation in March 2005. After receiving the report of the panel, it agreed on 30 March 2005 to keep the ban in force until June when it will come up for review again. See IRIN, UN reveals suspect diamond deal, 30 March 2005.

³⁸ United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on inter-mission cooperation and possible cross-border operations between the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire*, S/2005/135, 2 March 2005, par. 11.

³⁹ Patrick Cammaert, *op cit*.

The JMAC concept

The role and intent of the JMAC is *to provide the expertise to handle information, conduct and present analysis, build databases, and provide advice at a level that will ensure that decisions are made with awareness of all available and relevant factors.* The cell should be capable of providing in-depth current and longer term analysis of issues affecting the mission. The JMAC will draw on information which is available from open sources, but it will also assess the information that is gathered by all elements of the mission. For example, humanitarian representatives will be one of the key players in this respect. Others, such as security, civilian police, military and political officers, will also contribute. The JMAC will thus be the focal point for the fusion of information from all sources. The strategic intent of the JMAC is to harness information from multiple sources and services in order to provide operational focus the ability to deter and defeat threats posed by armed groups and other spoilers within the area of operations.

The JMAC is thus conceived as a multidisciplinary cell that undertakes analysis of information from all sources, analyses it and provides medium and long term intelligence advice to the senior mission management to assist the decision making process. Embedded in the organization would be a Central Information Management Cell (IMC), jointly military and civilian, to provide a focus for reports and ensure the free passage of information around the Mission and Force HQs.

Information often arrives in mission headquarters via a number of means: e-mail direct, fax, code cable or through the Operations Room. E-mails may be limited distribution or, more commonly, be scattered randomly to every possible recipient, many of whom find the traffic irksome. In the JMAC concept, a Standard Operating Procedure would specify the process of directing all reports, from both military and civilian sources, to the IMC. A small number of Information Managers in the IMC would be responsible for initial screening, prioritization, first-line analysis and reporting. It would be their responsibility to disseminate the information as necessary, tasking the appropriate analyst with the further exploitation of the material. IMC officers may also be called to conduct focused research. The analysis component of the JMAC will provide the more comprehensive analysis encompassing all the dimensions of a mission, ranging from the political to risk management, humanitarian concerns, and the military. This analysis will provide the medium to longer term strategic perspective that will enable the mission to anticipate developments.

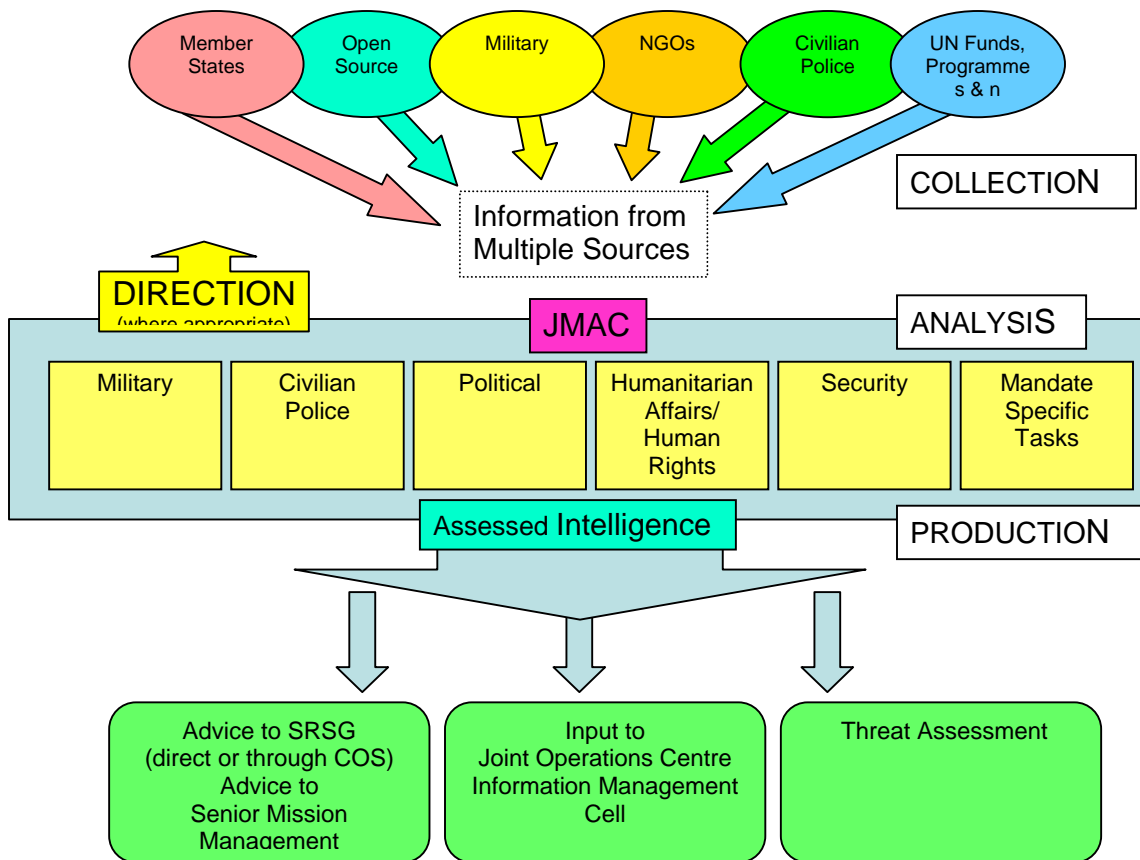
Most missions to date have not had a comprehensive information database. While the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) has a database, it is located in Military Information and it is non-relational; which means that researchers have to scroll through endless reports to gather information. Much time is wasted in looking for archived information by hunting through past e-mails. There can be no adequate grasp of information, personalities, events or activities, without a database with all headquarters divisions joined to it, where people can pool knowledge and commonly share what is hidden on individual computers. The collation of information into a dependable, common, relational database is therefore considered a vital tool for the JMAC, where all information will be entered and over time an extensive wealth of knowledge assembled. The database will include information on personalities, events, incidents, groups and other information required by the mission. Information entered into the database would obviously require careful vetting for accuracy and reliability.

To ensure security of information, the JMAC will work within a discrete Local Area Network (LAN), with the ability to join the UN Wide Area Network (WAN) for dissemination of its product. The information contained on the database as well as assessments in progress will be sensitive and therefore the control of the dissemination of product will be the responsibility of the Chief of JMAC. Measures will be necessary to ensure the operational security and preserve the sensitivity of the JMAC.

The JMAC should be headed by a Senior Information Analyst (D-1 level, depending on the size of the mission) who coordinates and directs the production of short and longer-term analytical papers, written and verbal briefings, estimates, threat and risk assessments and other research projects directed by the SRSG and the Senior Management Team. The JMAC Head and Deputy will have experience at the strategic and operational level in intelligence staff work and a strong analytical background. Similarly, military and civilian analysts, including a risk management analyst must have skills and experience in producing or contributing to the range of intelligence products. The size of JMAC will be linked directly to the size and scale of the mission.

A range of traditional intelligence tools will be used to direct the efforts of the JMAC. The overarching document is the Collection Plan, which will define the collection efforts of UN sources and agencies. Gaps in information will be identified and a potential source will be assigned to meet a particular requirement. The JMAC will have the authority to actively seek information and tasks will be levied on all components of the mission to provide information. In return, the analysis will be shared with the components, agencies and programmes and in particular threat and risk assessments will be provided. Collection Plans will also be developed at levels below Mission Headquarters so that information can be gathered for example from regional offices where often more detailed and in-depth knowledge is available. More specifically, Priority Information Requirement (PIRs) will set the priorities for information or subjects of interest to the JMAC. PIRs will be distributed at all levels so that subordinate headquarters are directed to seek the information required by the JMAC. To supplement this process, more urgent Requests for Information (RFI) can be brought to the IMC at any time.

The JMAC should be manned 24 hours a day, which would considerably increase the capability to absorb and analyze information. The centrality of the JMAC to the mission structure is illustrated schematically below:



In summary, the tasks the JMAC will perform are to:

- Provide relevant and timely analysis and advice to the SRSG, Senior Management team and heads of office, components and agencies within a mission to allow informed decision making;
- Monitor and provide early warning of developments of threats;
- Establish a focal point for all information;
- Collect information and create a database to ensure continuity;
- Provide short term and longer term assessments of events and developments in response to tasking and requests from the SRSG and other mission components;
- Provide input into threat and risk analysis and advice on the mitigation of risk in close coordination with the security components;
- Produce integrated written and verbal evaluations and distribute these as appropriate;
- Liaise with neighbouring missions to ensure the coordination and sharing of relevant information;
- Co-ordinate meetings and working groups to encourage the input of information of all mission components, offices, agencies and programmes to ensure as comprehensive a security assessment as possible; and

- Integrate with security components on the production of threat estimates and analysis.

The fact that JMAC will cover the main functional areas of a mission does not mean that all components have to be represented in the JMAC. But it does mean that for each functional component there should be an expert who is the point of contact for that component. Although the JMAC's primary focus is on the medium to longer term, those coordinating current operations will be able to draw on its resources.⁴⁰

A further innovation by DPKO has been the development of a concept for creating Security Information and Operations Cells (SIOC) in UN missions. The SIOC will be both a contributor to the JMAC (from security personnel at all levels) and a user of the information from the JMAC databases or finished product to assist in the SIOC threat assessments. This will avoid duplication of material collected and achieve efficiency by ensuring that all relevant information is available to JMAC analysts responsible for a broader security assessment.

The SIOC concept is still in its infancy and has not yet been established in extant missions. It is envisaged that the SIOC's responsibilities will relate to security issues only, whereas the JMAC's are much wider. There will inevitably be an overlap of interests, but the aim is to avoid competition or duplication of functions – something the missions cannot afford. Ultimately, the JMAC should be the custodian of the information and intelligence database covering the whole range of mission interests, while the SIOC should work closely with the JMAC and be able to draw on its database to inform its own decision making process. However, the SIOC should not be conducting a separate analysis process in anything other than very specific security-focused issues.⁴¹ Close coordination will need to take place between SIOC and JMAC as a consistent security picture for civilian and military personnel is essential.

DPKO has emphasized to Member States that JMAC is not a military intelligence cell. While it will provide intelligence input to current operations, it does not have responsibility for coordinating those operations; this is the job of the Joint Operations Cell (JOC). The JMAC should also not be in competition with other functional areas with an interest in information management; it is intended simply as the single integrated focus for producing a comprehensive product.⁴²

For example, risk analysis graphics will be provided by the JMAC to reflect a current assessment of risk to personnel operating in all mission areas. The information will be displayed graphically to facilitate briefing and decision making on such matters as the deployment of staff into isolated areas in the field. Incidents of criminal, military or armed

⁴⁰ UN DPKO (Military Division and Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit), *The Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC)*, briefing to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping (C34), 2 February 2005.

⁴¹ Correspondence with Nicholas Seymour, 31 March 2005. Colonel Seymour is Chief of Military Planning Service at UN DPKO.

⁴² UNDPKO, *The Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC)*, Briefing to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping, 2 February 2005.

group activity, or situations of concern to, for example, Human Rights or Child Protection staff will also be recorded and collated. The integrated nature of the JMAC will encourage the contribution of all components of the mission to improve situation awareness and make recommendations on measures to mitigate risk or threat to potentially exposed UN staff, offices, agencies and components.

The key to the success of the JMAC concept is the availability of professional intelligence analysts with strategic and operational experience to lead the JMAC. While a civilian chief will provide continuity, military personnel in JMAC must also have an intelligence background. The analytic process and quality of intelligence product is also dependant on the information available at the tactical level, where some contingents are strong in technological intelligence gathering capability, and others in low-tech, on the ground HUMINT ability. Here, too, capabilities may be improved through a sharper focus by contributing countries on selection and training requirements.

Implementation of JMAC: UNMIL experience⁴³

The JMAC concept is very sound in theory, but it is nowhere near being fully implemented in practice. One of the key problems with implementation in Liberia is that the mission is not structured, nor does it have the procedures or the mindset to fully support it. Some aspects are starting to work, such as the incorporation of civilian analysts into the JMAC. However, it has proved difficult to get the requisite 'buy in' from the various mission components.

There is not insubstantial resistance to the JMAC concept on the ground at middle and senior management level. The reasons for this vary from a lack of understanding of the concept, to an inbuilt resistance to what is commonly seen as a 'military' organisation, and basic turf issues as various organisations protect their spheres of responsibility. In Liberia, JMAC premises are located some 15 kilometers from Mission HQ, but only 10 meters from the Force Commander's office. The symbolism of the JMAC's location is pervasive. Inevitably, this co-location will reinforce the perception that the JMAC is a military organization. It is therefore important that the location of the JMAC is carefully considered, when it becomes an integrated component of current and future peace operations.

Erratic distribution of information and 'guarding' of information is still a common occurrence. Under such circumstances, a JMAC cannot in fact work as it should. Overcoming this obstacle will require:

- An endorsed policy outlining the JMAC's mission, status and *modus operandi*. This should include clear direction on chains of command, control and communication; and detail on how the other organisations fit into the Cell. This is essential to ensure common understanding.

⁴³ Correspondence with Colonel Louise Felton, UNMIL Chief JMAC, 30 May 2005. For UNMIL, it was recommended that an experienced military officer (Colonel) should head the JMAC for a year, but, for the sake of continuity, a civilian (P5), could head the cell in subsequent phases.

- Once policy is in place, personnel attached to the JMAC, such as Civil Affairs analysts, need to have their terms of reference, contractual obligations and funding lines clearly defined. This is required, not only to avoid the 'resentment' of organisations who have to give up members of staff to work in the JMAC, but also so that staff do not find themselves in the ambiguous position of 'belonging' contractually to one organisation but working for another and possibly being seen as traitors in the camp.⁴⁴

Without the whole concept of JMAC being officially endorsed, and proper terms of reference agreed for those attached to the Cell, there will remain considerable difficulty in trying to get the system to work, and those attached to the JMAC will remain in a delicate and difficult professional situation. The expansion of the cell to include staff from the main areas of the mission is clearly key to the JMAC concept, but this is also where the most resistance has been encountered.

Another major challenge facing the JMAC is the lack of appropriately trained personnel. With one or two exceptions, JMAC personnel are not intelligence trained. Nor in many cases do they have any experience in collecting, collating and analyzing information and producing reports. These skills are not so difficult to acquire over time, provided that personnel have a good command of English, and are intelligent with the right mindset. However, in Liberia there is a high turnover of personnel, which means that the JMAC is continually operating at a lower level of expertise than would be desirable, and is always busy with a fair amount of on-the-job training. This is manageable most of the time, but when the operational tempo increases, it can put considerable pressure on the few experienced personnel in the organisation. The provision of appropriately trained personnel, both civilian and military, is essential if the JMAC concept is to work effectively.

It is not only a matter of personnel provision, but also personnel retention. It is difficult for any system as complex as JMAC to operate effectively without some degree of long-term or corporate memory. The UNMIL JMAC has suffered from a lack of continuity. The production of good analysis and informed comment relies considerably on personnel with historic background and knowledge of the issues in the mission area. A good database is a considerable help, but this in turn relies on having enough suitably knowledgeable, skilled and trained people to keep the database up to date.

The UNMIL JMAC has suffered from gaps in the staffing of key posts, such as Information Managers⁴⁵ and this leads to gaps in data because people do not physically have the time to regularly update the information. In order to ensure the comprehensive and accurate storage and cataloguing of information, a dedicated database manager is an essential requirement in the JMAC. Moreover, formalizing the appointment of civilian analysts as part of the JMAC team will help in improving corporate memory and experience, as civilians tend to remain in

⁴⁴ For example, a civil affairs officer posted in the JMAC was unable to obtain information from his Civil Affairs counterparts because he was regarded as a representative of the military arm of the mission. Interview with UNMIL Civil Affairs officer, Accra, 11 June 2005.

⁴⁵ According to the staffing table, the UNMIL JMAC should have three Information Managers, but it started up and ran for months with only one in post.

the mission for a considerably longer period than their military counterparts. Civilian analysts also add substantial value to the information product, because of their different and often broader range of experiences, knowledge and contacts.

CONCLUSION

There has always been a tradition within the UN system that intelligence gathering is contrary to the open nature of the UN system and is therefore absolutely forbidden. Intelligence was not considered necessary for traditional peacekeeping operations, where the consent of all parties involved was a leading principle. However, lessons learnt studies show an increasing concern among military and civilian personnel that the direction, processing, and dissemination of information relating to the mission are inadequate. Uncoordinated and contradictory information stemming from a multitude of unrelated sources has often flowed haphazardly into military and civilian sections of the mission, with unverified information being pushed upward, applied in policy planning and publicized. Apart from the waste of time and resources deployed in pursuit of wrong policy objectives, this may compromise the credibility of the mission as a whole. Organizational ‘turf wars’ and parochial views of the mission mandate soon become obvious to the parties to a conflict. Rebels, the host government and civil society all tend to exploit such weaknesses.

Moreover, developments in current peace operations – not least in MONUC operations in the eastern DRC – have significant ramifications for the concept (doctrine) and conduct of UN peace operations. Joint UN-Congolese army operations, launched to drive Rwandan rebels back across the border, for example, are more akin to rural counterinsurgency operations than peacekeeping. Such new concepts of operations add a new dimension to the civilian protection challenge – one that can never be met without adequate intelligence assets and appropriate force capabilities.

It has become increasingly clear that the capacity to collect, analyze and disseminate vital information in a timely manner is essential to successful mandate implementation. ‘Hardcore’ intelligence material is proving increasingly critical, not only to the policy planning process, but also to the security and safety of mission civilian and military staff as well as local communities. While the concept of ‘intelligence’ remains a highly sensitive matter politically and should be addressed accordingly, it could be beneficial to ‘name the beast’ – it may well do more harm than good not to use correct concepts to describe the functions and structures that are essential to mission success.

Fortunately, it appears that the taboo has been broken (at least within DPKO, if not among all member states and personnel in the field) that the UN cannot speak about intelligence, and some member states have finally come to the conclusion that the nature of conflict has changed. The challenge now is to develop the appropriate structures, strategies and specialist personnel. Although the JMAC concept has been presented to the General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping (C-34) for consideration (where it was well received), it has not yet been approved as such.

Nevertheless, JMACs have been established (albeit on an *ad hoc* basis) in several ongoing UN missions. For example, in Sudan there is a Unified Mission Analysis Cell (UMAC), and the missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone both have cells known as JMAC. None of these cells in

fact work as they should and although JMAC personnel in the field welcome the fact that the word 'intelligence' is now being used freely, they are also concerned about the expectations that this creates in a situation where JMACs are not yet in a position (appropriately structured, trained, and equipped) to produce true *intelligence*. The JMACs clearly need much more institutional authority and support to deliver what a “joint mission analysis cell” should be capable of. To this end, the DPKO has established a working group⁴⁶ to deal with the challenges of implementation – a first priority being the development of an appropriate official JMAC policy.

At the field level, it is realised that the sharing of highly sensitive information may add a new dimension to the challenges of co-operation among the various components of integrated missions. The JMAC brief, to collect intelligence from all sources, civilian as well as military, may further fuel turf wars and tendencies towards parochialism in the missions. A dedicated information/education campaign will therefore be necessary to deal with lack of knowledge of the concept and the benefits of more coordinated information gathering and processing. The need for a clear identification of the JMAC mandate, articulation of a policy, and subsequent mission-wide training is obvious.

On the other hand, no matter what new structures are created, their efficacy will be dependent to no small measure on the knowledge and skills of key individuals operating within the system. On the military side, much of the extant organic intelligence capability in the missions is designed only to satisfy the tactical “force protection” requirement of the contingents, and seldom provides the scope and quality of intelligence required by decision makers in a dynamic and integrated mission environment. At the lowest military tactical levels, there is little doubt that appropriate training and the provision of basic equipment such as digital cameras may enhance capability. Troop contributing countries also might be encouraged to provide dedicated intelligence assets to their contingent HQs, including professional intelligence officers, linguists and analysts who have a satisfactory understanding of the conflict area. On the civilian side, the solution probably lies less in the realm of training than in enhanced recruitment and selection of balanced teams of political affairs and human rights officers, especially those who apply for service in a JMAC.

Finally, it should be noted that all these challenges are equally pertinent to the African Union and the various African regional security mechanisms that are in the process of developing an African Standby Force. While the military force components of these standby capabilities are at quite an advanced stage of design and planning, the civilian components of the envisaged mission structures are not fully developed, nor are they integrated with the role and tasks of the force component. There is an urgent need for a much greater African understanding of the importance of the integration of military and civilian tasks in contemporary missions, and of the need to plan for a joint mission analysis capability in future African missions.

⁴⁶ The group consists, among others, of members of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, Military Planning Service, and the Civilian Police Division, as well UN Security and the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



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