

Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension

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Mark Malan

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Preface

Mark Malan and Christopher Lord

The United Nations has been quite unambiguous in articulating what it can and cannot do in terms of peace support. Basically, it cannot do much beyond Chapter VI peacekeeping in the realm of military intervention. African coalitions, on the other hand, have proven themselves capable of conducting fairly sustained multinational operations that have involved some heavy combat engagements. Since 1990, African multilateral interventions have developed a momentum of their own, and have increasingly leaned towards some type of peace enforcement, rather than regional peacekeeping operations in a benign security environment.

The principles guiding such interventions have yet to find expression in a realistic intervention doctrine, informed by practice, that goes beyond the 'right of humanitarian intervention' and paying lip-service to **An Agenda for Peace**. From an institutional and legal point of view, the issue of developing multilateral intervention doctrine is a global one. In practice, however, the problem is more pressing in some regions than in others. Africa and the Balkans, for example, have emerged as the most dangerous and challenging environments for the conduct of contemporary peace operations.

The member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) have articulated some serious lessons from their experiences in the Balkans, and are at an advanced stage of developing doctrine for more 'robust' interventions. On the other hand, the mainstream debate on multilateral intervention in Africa, which is shaped to a large degree by Western powers, continues to focus on the need for more 'UN-type' peacekeeping training for African soldiers. There have thus been few meaningful advances in conceptual thinking on the principles and limits of regional or coalition peace operations in Africa.

At the global level, there is also substantial divergence with respect to what should or should not be done under the banner of peace support operations — a divergence rooted particularly in the Cold War division of the world into two opposing military-ideological blocs. The confrontation between the erstwhile USSR and the West effectively divided the world into two large doctrinal blocs, with less developed countries adopting either Western-style doctrines, often modeled on British or French ideas, or Soviet-style doctrines, with active Russian involvement at all levels of their military development. The Cold War doctrinal legacy therefore remains prominent in many developing countries.

A central problem is thus posed by the remaining discrepancy between the Soviet conception of doctrine and the Western conception. When Russians discuss their 'military doctrine', they naturally include political principles — such as doctrinal statements about the right to intervene in the so-called 'near abroad'. This means that numerous international discussions on principles and doctrine for multilateral military interventions in support of peace have never really taken off.

The African debate on peace support operations suffers from all these maladies. The colonial

heritage saw a rough divide between those African militaries that espoused French doctrine and those that espoused British military doctrine. The situation was exacerbated during the Cold War, when the armed forces of many countries were trained according to Russian/Chinese-style military doctrine. Indeed, there are some cases (for instance in warlord armies) where it is not clear that there is any military doctrine at all. On the positive side, it may be said that Africans collectively have some direct experience with the military doctrine of four of the permanent five Security Council members — and that they may be uniquely placed to unify or synthesise such thinking into a viable doctrine for multinational peace operations.

It is against this background that an international workshop with the theme **Towards a global consensus on peace support operations: The African dimension**, was convened in Pretoria from 21-23 October 1999. This monograph is the product of the workshop, which was organised by the ISS under the auspices of the Norwegian-funded Training for Peace Project, in collaboration with the Czech Institute for International Relations (IIR). The Pretoria workshop followed two related events that took place during 1999, with a similar theme. From 28-31 May 1999, an international workshop on **Integrated military doctrine: Towards a global consensus on peace support operations** was presented in Prague by the IIR and the ISS. This was followed, from 24-26 August, by a Southern African regional workshop on **Integrated principles for peace support operations**, held at the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe.

As the theme suggests, the events in this series have been motivated by a need for greater conceptual clarity on principles and doctrine for the conduct of increasingly complex peace support operations. While the Prague event focused on the policy end of the debate, the Harare workshop, attended by military experts, concentrated more on the implementation side of peace support. The results of these two workshops served as an introduction to the Pretoria event, which brought together both academics and practitioners in an effort to advance understanding through a synthesis of both levels of experience and analysis. It would be extremely difficult to capture the essence of three days of intense and informative debate, and to do justice to the contributions of all the dedicated participants who engaged in this debate. This monograph is therefore a compilation of edited texts of most of the formal presentations that were made — interesting reading for anyone who is concerned with the challenges of conflict termination through the medium of third-party military intervention.

The nine articles in this publication are of uneven length and differ in the depth and scope of analysis conducted on the respective topics. Some are the product of academic research and reflection, while others are more descriptive and anecdotal — especially the contributions by former peacekeeping commanders and practitioners. Some of the latter articles also contain a degree of overlap in terms of subject matter, but they have not been excluded as each practitioner interpreted events from a somewhat different angle. The result is a remarkably detailed exposition of the status of international peacekeeping in all its guises — from UN peacekeeping to the NATO and Russian variants, with special focus on the African variety of regional intervention.

Annika Hansen makes an attempt to define or delineate some universally applicable principles on when, where and how third-party intervention should take place. The title, *Lines in the sand: The limits and boundaries of peace support operations*, is very apt, for it appears that there are more exceptions than rules, and that the limits and boundaries shift with each new act of multinational intervention. Nevertheless, this is a brave attempt at circumscribing what should or should not be done under the rubric of 'peace support operations'.

Espen Barth Eide's contribution, entitled *Peace support in the Balkans: Lessons for Africa?* consists of an appraisal of the decade-long crisis in the Balkans, which has confronted Europe with a seemingly ever-lasting series of challenges in the field of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and post-conflict peace support. He highlights a series of lessons to be drawn from Europe's many attempts to make peace in the Balkans, that should be of interest to peacekeeping practitioners, as well as scholars specialising on specific regions — including Africa. This in no way suggests that Europe has anything like an established model of peacekeeping and peace support operations that simply can be transferred to other parts of the world. But Europe's experiences matter, not the least because the reference to the events in the Balkans is such a central part of contemporary doctrine development in the field of peace support operations — including the trend towards the *regionalisation* of peacekeeping efforts.

Another potential source of insight for the development of peacekeeping in Africa is the experience that has been gained by the Russian Federation in both UN international peacekeeping and the regional variety of operations in the territory of the former USSR. Michael Yermolaev's article on *Russia's international peacekeeping and conflict management in the post-Soviet environment* reveals that Africa is not unique as a region that seemingly confounds effective intervention by the UN in order to restore or maintain peace and security. Obviously a no-go area for the type of new NATO peacekeeping covered by Eide, instability and conflict in the 'Near Abroad' have compelled Russia and some partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to become leading exponents of the art of 'backyard' peacekeeping. The lessons that emerge are rather similar to those of Nigeria and its partners in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from interventions in the West African region.

Before elaborating on the regional peacekeeping theme, there are two contributions by former UN force commanders on lessons from UN missions in Africa. Henry Anyidoho addresses the topic of *Political control and guidance of peace support operations in Africa* from the perspective of a UN commander. He highlights the necessity for firm and enlightened political control and guidance of the military in peace support, and advances some practical suggestions on how to improve this aspect of UN missions. Similarly, Philip Sibanda's paper on *United Nations operations in Southern Africa: Mandate, means and doctrine in UNAVEM III* points to some of the deficiencies of UN peacekeeping in Africa, without suggesting that the concept should be reinvented.

The following two contributions are by Nigerian Army officers, focusing on regional peacekeeping efforts under the auspices of ECOWAS. Maxwell Khobe provides an excellent and comprehensive overview of *The evolution and conduct of ECOMOG operations in West Africa*, while E T Dowyaro highlights the concept of ECOMOG operations in his contribution, entitled *ECOMOG operations in West Africa: Principles and praxis*. Collectively, the contributions by these regional force commanders provide a good deal of thought-provoking insight into one of the most ambitious attempts to foster regional peace and security through the interventions of a regional coalition in ruinous armed conflicts that place entire civilian populations at risk. While there is admittedly a degree of repetition in these contributions, editing has been kept to the minimum in order to preserve the unique perspectives of both practitioners as they relate the tale of ECOMOG.¹ Of particular interest are a number of 'doctrinal statements' that should inform the debate on the concept and conduct of future regional peace operations in Africa.

Many commentators have looked to South Africa to form the nucleus of a Southern African capability for regional third-party intervention to stabilise situations of ongoing or potential armed conflict, in much the same way as Nigeria has been the lead nation for West African efforts.

Pretoria has failed to deliver on these expectations, articulating a clear preference for the world of mediation and peacemaking diplomacy — with the exception of a brief military foray into Lesotho. From this limited experience, Theo Neethling extracts a fairly comprehensive list of lessons in *Conditions for successful entry and exit: An analysis with specific reference to SADC allied operations in Lesotho*.

The final contribution by Mark Malan, is appropriately titled *Peace support operations in Africa: The unresolved issues*. The list of issues that need to be resolved in order to arrive at a viable concept for conducting peace support operations in Africa is potentially a mile long. It can feed off the seemingly endless lists of lessons observed from past peacekeeping endeavours, such as those articulated in this monograph, or it can rather focus on a number of big issues which, if resolved, may change the nature of peacekeeping as it is known in Africa. The author has chosen the latter approach, addressing three core questions:

- When and where to intervene?
- Who should intervene?
- How to intervene?

While he does not come much closer than Annika Hansen in reaching clear answers, Malan asserts that the development of an unambiguous policy on how to intervene in African conflicts will go a long way towards clarifying the first two issues.

Notes

1. Another excellent contribution on this theme was presented at the workshop by Victor Malu. This will be published as *Peace support operations in Africa: An ECOMOG commander's perspective in a forthcoming ISS monograph entitled **Building stability in Africa: The challenge for the next millennium***. Major-General S V L Malu, CFR, DSO, DSS, psc, mni, fwc, is Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Nigerian Army. He served two tours of duty in the ECOMOG High Command in Liberia: firstly, as the chief of staff and director of operations from 1992-93, and later as force commander from 1996-1998

Lines in the sand: The limits and boundaries of peace support operations **Annika S Hansen**

INTRODUCTION

No peacekeeping operation has ever been perfect and none is likely to be so. None has ever achieved all its aims, but some have achieved at least some of their aims. At a time when peacekeeping, in general, and the United Nations (UN), in particular, are suffering from the backlash of exaggerated expectations and some significantly less than perfect operations, the question of the limits and boundaries of peace support operations becomes ever more pressing.

Stedman has observed that a "*common thread throughout [the UN's] efforts has been the lack of a rule on which cases to tackle, and a coherent strategy for intervention in civil war.*"¹ Deducing guidelines on how to circumscribe peace support operations is therefore extremely difficult, and the argumentation tends to become circular. This article represents an attempt to structure some of the suggestions put forward in this area. If this does not succeed in bringing some order to the discussion, it might at least live up to Harry Truman's norm that, "*if you can't convince them, confuse them.*"

Some of the ground that is covered, is likely to be familiar, as it is necessary to begin with a brief overview of the fundamental principles and challenges of peace support operations. This is presented in the light of indications of the potential limits or boundaries of peace support operations. This basis is used to suggest a series of principles that might guide assessments of when and — perhaps more importantly — when not to intervene. All principles have their rationales, as well as shortfalls, both of which are discussed before some final conclusions are drawn on this challenging topic.

FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS IN PEACEKEEPING

Before reviewing some of the limits and challenges of peace support operations, it is important to call to mind the traditional, fundamental principles of peacekeeping and to note how they have evolved in recent operations. Peace support operations have undergone fundamental changes in the post-Cold War period. They have increased in depth and in breadth, and are charged with a greater number of and more complex tasks, and involve more and a greater variety of actors. This is due to the unlocking of the UN Security Council as a decision-making forum, which gave rise to high expectations of the role that the organisation would be able to play in future conflict management. Similarly, the notion of peacekeeping was extended from a purely humanitarian task to attempts at finding political solutions to the conflicts in question.²

At first glance, it appears that the development has come full circle, as little faith is once again being displayed in the UN as a tool for conflict management, following some less than successful operations. However, it is argued, firstly, that the UN still has a major role to play and, secondly, that the evolution of the concept of peacekeeping continues. This is confirmed by the fact that other organisations have taken over in cases where the UN has been unable or unwilling to act. Thus, the traditional guidelines for peacekeeping are applied in a very different context than the one envisioned in the heyday of peacekeeping and in the literature of the early 1990s.

Moreover, rather than distinguishing between different kinds of peace support operations by categorising them as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, peacemaking, or peace enforcement,³ factors should be identified that characterise different operations and have different implications for the assessment of whether or not they should be attempted. Although they provide useful understanding of various aspects of peacekeeping operations, Boutros-Ghali's categories are often falsely regarded as part of a continuum. Instead, most peace support operations simultaneously display features of several categories and change over time. Three major criteria for assessing the nature of a peacekeeping operation are therefore suggested as being more fruitful for purposes of analysis:

- legitimacy;
- the level of force used; and
- the type and stage of the conflict that is to be managed.

These factors can all be linked to a model of the constellation of actors to be found in any given mission. In addition, the factors are interrelated.

The model of actors involved in missions consists of three major elements that are, in themselves made up of component parts:

- the international presence;
- the local population; and

- the conflict.

It is the conflict itself that is to be managed by the international presence, but in the course of their conflict management efforts, international actors have to relate to local counterparts.⁴ Typically, the international presence is composed of a military peacekeeping or observer mission ('military force'), and various combinations of civilian police, human rights and election monitors, and the relief and development community ('civilian actors'). Actors range from representatives of international organisations, to government representatives or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Similar to the international presence, the local counterparts are diverse groups, consisting of a political leadership, the population at large, and regular and irregular armed elements.

Legitimacy

The first factor is the legitimacy of an operation, which, in turn, is a function of consent/sovereignty, impartiality, credibility and effectiveness. Legitimacy refers to the acceptance of the peace force by the international community and by the parties to the conflict, its mandate and the way it relates to the conflict. The degree of legitimacy also affects security and stability in the conflict area.⁵ Many equate peacekeeping with *"an operation that enjoys the consent of the parties"*, whereas peace enforcement is one that does not. Just as Boutros-Ghali's categories are flawed, so too is the notion that one either has consent or one does not.⁶ Not only does consent usually change over time, it also varies among the different levels of actors that are party to the conflict.

Moreover, referring to the multiplicity of actors who need to work together during the course of an operation, Diehl points out that *"while co-operation from the disputants is a necessary condition for success, it is not a sufficient one."*⁷ Still, it is highly unlikely that the international community will engage in a peacekeeping operation that lacks the consent of all the parties from the outset. A minimum of consent can thus be assumed in all operations, from at least one of the major parties and its supporting population, and at least at the time when the mission is initiated.

Consent and sovereignty are two sides of the same coin. Sovereignty is far from the fixed concept tied to non-intervention that it used to be. Similarly, different tasks undertaken by the peacekeepers as part of the peace support effort affect a party's sovereignty and, concomitantly, its consent to varying degrees. Kofi Annan also distinguishes between state sovereignty and individual sovereignty. He supports the view that the former has become a more diverse concept in the face of globalisation and international co-operation, and underlines the relevance of the latter in the context of humanitarian intervention.⁸ Neither lack of consent, nor proclaimed violations of sovereignty necessarily need to preclude international involvement, but peacekeepers have to be aware of the degree to which they are compromising a state's sovereignty, as this will have direct implications for their legitimacy.

Although impartiality is perhaps considered the most fundamental of the traditional concepts of peacekeeping, it is extremely difficult to maintain in practice. In recent years, the sometimes crippling notion of strict impartiality has been replaced by even-handedness that is tied to compliance with the force's mandate. As Annan puts it, *"[i]mpartiality does not — and must not — mean neutrality in the face of evil."*⁹ The implementation of the Dayton Agreement is an example of the Implementation Force (IFOR) led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Bosnia, and the later Stabilisation Force (SFOR) presupposing a minimum degree of consent, given in the signing of the agreement by all the parties. All enforcement action taken

during the course of the peace process was then related to the Agreement to the greatest degree possible, in order to maintain the impartiality of the intervening force. Thus, pressure may indeed be placed unevenly, such as on the Bosnian Serbs, if one of the local parties is more recalcitrant than another.

Credibility and effectiveness are functions of the force's ability and willingness to exercise its mandate. They form a mutually destructive or a mutually reinforcing cycle with legitimacy, in that an increase in the peacekeepers' credibility will render them more effective and will strengthen their legitimacy. In contrast, should the peacekeepers prove to be ineffective, their credibility will be seriously undermined and their legitimacy damaged.

The authorising body is often a critical aspect of the legitimacy of a peace support operation. Without going into detail on the authority of peacekeeping missions, the main distinction has been between operations that have been authorised by the UN and those that have not. As of yet, the UN also *"remains the only global authority for sanctioning a coalition willing to act against an aggressor."*¹⁰ Although regional organisations are being strengthened world-wide, none has established the same legitimacy as the UN. Thus, the legitimacy of a force and its mission are affected by whether or not it has been commissioned by the global authority of the UN, or whether it has been mandated by a coalition of states or a regional organisation. This is intricately linked to the legal basis on which an operation rests. In the following discussion, it is assumed that most peace support operations will have the blessing of the UN, even if they are not UN-led operations.

Level of force

The second critical factor in peace operations is the *level of force* that is used. This factor affects legitimacy and all its constituent elements, such as the corresponding question of consent. Most peacekeeping operations have experienced a lack of consent or opposition at some level, regardless of the overall consent and compliance of a given government or other local actor. Gow and Dandeker speak of a *"broadly consensual environment"* in which enforcement actions might become practically necessary, both reflecting and reinforcing a *"semi-consensual environment."*¹¹

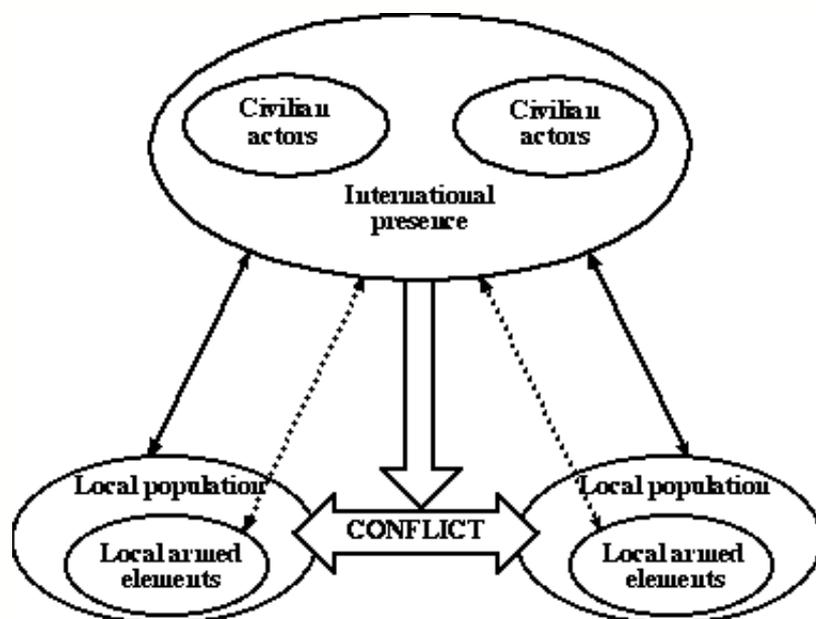
Whether or not force is actually used, it should not be excluded as a potential arrow in the quiver of the peacekeeping force. The mere availability of the forceful option, coupled with a demonstrated willingness to use it, can be enough to render its application unnecessary. When threats are made that force will be used, it is critical that the participating countries are prepared to use it, as well as willing to do so. If they are not, their credibility will be questioned and the effectiveness of the operation will be impaired. At the same time, the extensive use of force is likely to affect a peacekeeper's perceived impartiality in the eyes of the party against whom force is used the most.

Through the years, the concept of the use of force only in self-defence has been steadily extended. When first formulated by Hammarskjöld, it was a minimalist interpretation of the right of self-defence based on the simple fact that peacekeepers could not be denied this right. In the course of several missions, especially after the end of the Cold War, the concept has been extended to include the defence of UN equipment and the defence of the mission. This reflects the evolved notion of impartiality, where loyalty to the mission and its goals has precedence over all other parties and concerns. In the context of the above figure, coupling the level of force with the question of impartiality means distinguishing between force used against local elements, armed or unarmed, and force used in support of conflict management.

Although the use of force is perceived by some as an attractive tool, particularly following the supposed success in Kosovo, that very same case underscored the fact that force without a political counterpart — diplomacy — can only have a limited effect.¹² Still, there are a number of challenges in linking force and diplomacy, not least of which is the discrepancy in pace and the public gratification that each option provides. Furthermore, the two may have such diverging approaches that they may almost be counterproductive along the way, despite the fact that they pursue the same overall goal.

The forceful option has also become more tempting with the growing superiority of Western military power. Whereas the balance of the Cold War prevented the use of force in all but the defence of cardinal issues,¹³ the tipping of the scale in favour of the West has unleashed a certain trigger-happiness. Yet, there remains a relatively high threshold for the use of military force and the option requires powerful motivations in order to be considered a legitimate tool — particularly by the domestic constituencies of the potential contributors. In contrast, when the use of force fails, it triggers a serious crisis of legitimacy for the contributing states.

Figure 1: Constellation of Actors in PSOs



Type and stage of conflict

Finally, the type of conflict in which the peace support force is to intervene is a pivotal factor in the context of deployment. Still, most conflicts evade classification into civil wars, internal, interstate or international conflicts, and Smith has suggested that the existing terminology is simply inadequate.¹⁴ In order to avoid the pitfalls of those classifications, Sabin prefers to describe the general features of future conflicts as follows:

- There will be significant diversity in the types of war.
- Future conflicts will be complex or multidimensional. They move increasingly away from "a clear 'front line', to one in which antagonists have a growing range of coercive options, almost independent of distance, and in which multiple actors with multiple interests interact in ways very different from the classic bipolar duel."¹⁵
- Conflicts will be marked by asymmetry with regard to differences in military skill and

technological capability, but also to respective levels of commitment and ruthlessness.

- Increasingly, conflicts are politicised, involving a struggle for hearts and minds, particularly in the case of civil war or external intervention. They also become a contest of image due to the role of the media.16

All of Sabin's characteristics point to the fact that peace support operations will be launched in increasingly difficult conditions. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for the interventionists to understand the dynamics of the conflict, in order to operate effectively and to be perceived as legitimate. The nature of future conflicts also suggests that a wide range of tools will have to be used in order for an operation to be successful. In practice, the force has to relate to the conflict before it relates to the parties, such as the evolved notions of impartiality and consent imply.

In addition to the type of conflict, the mission will face very different circumstances due to the *stage in which the conflict is* at the time of intervention. The most important distinction will be whether or not the conflict is ongoing. Quite often, this is difficult to determine, and formal markers are used, such as a declaration of war or a peace settlement, an international presence, the casualty rate, or the number of violent incidents. Thus, pre-conflict deployment is virtually impossible and highly unlikely without the explicit consent of a given local authority or authorities. Whereas peacekeeping in a post-settlement context is the most straightforward, intervention in an ongoing conflict is excessively difficult. Thus, different issues will be at the forefront, depending on whether the force is being deployed preventively, in an ongoing conflict or in an operation in the wake of a cease-fire or a peace agreement. Ironically, as Woodward points out, intervention is usually late, when a significant level of violence has become undeniable, but also when the situation has become far more complex and more difficult to manage for outside actors.17

LIMITS AND CHALLENGES

Given the evolution of peace support principles and practice, there is obviously a whole series of limits and challenges to interventions in future conflict environments. Among the many challenges, three aspects have once again been selected that are critical to the success of a peacekeeping operation:

- the political willingness of the conflicting parties to comply;
- the strength of the intervening coalition; and
- the organisational constraints on the operation.

Political willingness of the parties

Closely related to the issue of consent is the question of the political willingness of parties to comply to a given mandate. It always has to be realised that the solution to a conflict is never practical or technical in nature, but is a matter of addressing underlying political issues. Therefore, despite the fact that a peacekeeping force will expect to face opposition from different sources and levels during a peace support operation, it should take political opposition to its presence seriously. In the same vein, there is a need for flexibility and an open ear for legitimate security concerns, even though these may at times be difficult to distinguish from hostile propaganda.

As the figure indicates, the international presence faces a diverse local counterpart. Particularly in the wake of an agreement of sorts, there is often a group of people who profit from a sustained level of tension, whether in terms of economic gain or power, and who disrupt the

peace process. This group of 'spoilers'¹⁸ frequently targets the relationship between the local population and the international presence. This clearly needs to be managed if peace is to be consolidated. It is important to realise that, regardless of the peacekeeping force's specific actions and relationships with different components of the local counterpart, it is *"bound to influence, in one way or another the military and political balance."*¹⁹ The more the peacekeepers affect the local power constellations, the more consent will be inconstant and tactical.

Having said this, it is also true that *"[p]eacebuilding agencies are not conquering powers: their influence is limited because they generally lack the capability to impose peace, and must therefore rely on the continuing co-operation, or at least acquiescence, of local parties."*²⁰ In fact, it has been argued that the lack of consent and local opposition to the presence of the peacekeeping force are among the most damaging factors for the success of an operation. Kofi Annan, stressing the importance of post-settlement support, maintains *"... that peace is not true or lasting if bought at any cost; that only peace with justice can honor the victims of war and violence; that without democracy, tolerance and human rights for all, no peace is truly safe."*²¹

Strength of the coalition

The strength of the intervening coalition²² and the political willingness of the international community to engage in a peacekeeping operation are closely linked to the degree of co-operation demonstrated by the parties to the conflict. The more resistance the mission meets on the ground, the more will the strength of the coalition be tested. In part, this reflects an unwillingness to put the lives of a contributor's personnel at risk, such as happened in Angola. The coalition is likely to be weaker, the higher the level of violence in theatre. Chayes elaborates on this, in the context of the Gulf War:

*"As a practical matter, in the fall of 1990, it was no longer possible for the United States to use force in the Persian Gulf without the concurrence of those engaged with it. Because these coalition states joined in the UN effort, they too became exposed to the military, political, and economic consequences of any military action the United States took. Indeed, the first consequence of such action would have been to shatter the international consensus that gave legitimacy and strength to the enterprise."*²³

It is a well-known fact that the fragility of the coalition is one of the international community's most vulnerable points. Thus, the unity of the coalition can be targeted directly by local armed elements that would profit from the withdrawal of the international presence.

Any coalition of states that initiates a peace support operation has to realise that a mission will not face the same conditions in the course of its operational life as it did at the time that the mandate was determined. Instead, the situation on the ground is dynamic: it varies over time, with different mission tasks and in different areas. In addition to a change in conditions, the mandate might also be adjusted, such as in Somalia where the mandate was expanded even before the first authorised contingents had managed to reach the theatre.²⁴ There have been frequent calls, particularly from the military components of a mission, for a clear mandate. However, it is seldom recognised that *"the importance of a clear mandate is probably overestimated as it is merely a surrogate for the political consensus underlying it."*²⁵

In this sense, a vague mandate might be an indication of a fragile political consensus that could not agree on a common vision for the operation. Similarly, it has been suggested that *"[f]inancial support of a peacekeeping operation is, to some degree, a barometer of the political support for*

Organisational constraints

Peace support operations generally suffer from three types of major organisational constraints: *decision-making*, *co-ordination*, and *funding*. The pitfalls of decision-making and the large bureaucracy in the UN have been discussed extensively elsewhere, but it is worth touching on a few aspects in the context of this discussion.

Ironically, it may be argued that difficulties in decision-making are indicators of an organisation's relevance and weight. The authorisation of peace support operations is not taken lightly by any of the members of the Security Council, as they are well aware of the significance of legitimisation by the UN. Another aspect is the simple fact that these constraints are far from unique to the UN. Any international organisation struggles to establish consensus among its members. It is the price that is paid for co-operative action among democratic states. When it comes to the size and unwieldiness of the UN system, the issue of collecting, processing and responding to information that has been gathered, is central. Improvements are sorely needed with regard to the analysis of past experiences, as well as the monitoring of current situations, in order to optimise the information available to peace missions.

Co-ordination between different agencies within the UN system has clearly improved, but given the number of agencies and the scope of their activity this will be a continuous challenge.27 In recent years, the spotlight has increasingly been directed towards the challenge of civil-military co-operation. Arguably, it is one of the areas in which most progress has been made. Although co-operation remains sketchy and uneven, there is clearly a better understanding between military and civilian actors in terms of their respective philosophies or doctrines, organisational structures and needs. In part, this has been reinforced by the fact that local counterparts also increasingly regard the military and civilian actors as two sides of the same story.

Thus, challenges that previously isolated the military component of the international presence are no longer distinctly military, and the security of civilian actors has become threatened to a greater extent. Naturally, this also has to do with the fact that most contemporary peace support operations take part in the context of 'civil wars' and civilian targets are more frequently chosen which, in turn, exacerbates the civilian aspects of the humanitarian emergency and calls for greater involvement of civilian relief agencies/providers. However, military and civilian actors do remain at odds about calls for a clear mandate: while civilians prize flexibility, the military prize clarity.28 The situation in the theatre has been additionally complicated by the presence of private security companies whose activities significantly impact the environment in which the peacekeepers operate, but that usually do not form a direct part of the international presence.29

Financial constraints are among the most crippling challenges faced by peace support operations.30 Lack of financing, more specifically, can have two effects. Firstly, it can place limitations on the activities of the force, forcing it to select certain tasks or concentrate on different regions rather than pursuing a comprehensive approach. This triggers a vicious circle, as the peace process becomes delayed, which means that it will need more funds than anticipated. Secondly, a shortage of money can lead to the complete abandonment of an operation when sources of funding run out.31

In practice, the lack of funding is far less dramatic for UN peacekeeping operations which have traditionally run on, regardless of budget deficits. In contrast, the work of some of the UN specialised agencies, such as United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), has been severely impaired when appeals have not been met by contributions. Similarly, regional and subregional organisations, such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have not been able to initiate effective peacekeeping operations due to a lack of funds. Obviously, the more comprehensive and the more forceful the peace support operation, the more cost-intensive it will be.

Among all the restraining and conditioning factors for peace support operations, cash flow remains a key issue. Given finite funds and resources and too many conflicts to manage, selection will have to take place. What are possible guiding principles for when and where to intervene?³²

WHERE SHOULD THE LINE BE DRAWN?

It is important to keep in mind that the guiding principles of peacekeeping discussed above are not mutually exclusive. In fact, there will be many cases in which several principles apply. In addition, the following principles focus on the question of *where* and *when* to engage in peace support operations, rather than how or with whom. The concluding remarks will include suggestions for the practical application of these principles, and what this implies for the *how* to intervene.

International law should be followed in deciding where and when to act

International law is a seductive determinant for a decision to intervene, due to its supposed neutrality and legitimacy. A legal approach strengthens the legitimacy of an operation in that it ensures that at least a minimum of consent is given at the outset.³³ International law can have two functions. On the one hand, it can serve as a legal framework for peace support operations. On the other hand, it can be a substitute for peace support operations by trying to solve problems in the legal arena rather than through the deployment of military forces. The following focuses on the former role of international law.

There are two preconditions for action. Firstly, there must be a generally accepted system of law and norms, such as laid down in the UN Charter and similar documents.³⁴ These determine not only when action is 'allowed' or called for, but also what type of action may be taken in the course of a mission. The most central issue here is of course the degree to which and under what circumstances force may be used. According to international law, only the UN Security Council has the right to authorise the use of force.³⁵

Secondly, the norms are only useful when there is a system for putting them into practice. When being asked to decide on instruments to implement international norms in Kosovo or Rwanda, the system failed. A major problem in the UN system is the fact that judicial and executive power lie in the same hands, namely those of the Security Council. As a result, there is no division of power, and the act of deciding on action and legalising it, is one and the same.³⁶

As international law always reflects the *status quo*, it may be unsuitable or inadequate for the novel situations that may have to be faced in upcoming peace support operations.³⁷ In an attempt to remedy the static nature of international law, its jurisdiction has been expanded to include the 'security of individuals' as a trigger for intervention, in addition to threats to international peace and security.³⁸ This reflects Annan's distinction between state sovereignty and individual sovereignty, where the individual is given equal standing in international law by being a party to treaties and conventions. In practice, the extension creates another stumbling

block for the application of the legal principle, as it implies a value dimension which undermines the neutrality of international law.

In theory, there is a great advantage to the use of international law, due to the continuity and neutrality it provides. However, the lack of legal consistency is a serious impediment to its unchallenged position as the guiding principle. Thus, it hinges on the political will and the consensus among member states whether action is authorised or not. The legal instrument is thereby deprived of its neutrality and credibility.³⁹ Even the UN Secretary-General recognises the limitations of his organisation in this respect, and argues that there is a moral imperative to seek alternative options when the UN system is paralysed. This leads to the second potential guiding principle.

There is a moral obligation to act

The notion that there is a responsibility to assist others in times of crisis, especially innocent civilians, is one of the founding principles of the UN. This is also reflected in early statements by Hammarskjöld, who exclaimed that the "*[p]rohibition against intervention in internal conflicts cannot be considered to apply to senseless slaughter of civilians or fighting arising from tribal hostilities.*"⁴⁰

In the post-Cold War era, the international community has managed to go full circle in a very short period of time. The initial enthusiasm illustrated by the concept of a New World Order was thwarted by the over-ambitious and less successful peacekeeping activities of the mid-1990s. Today, the concept of humanitarian intervention displays a renewed concern for and willingness to defend values and individual rights rather than territorial interests. As a result, speaking almost forty years after Hammarskjöld, Annan essentially represents the same point of view, when he states "*the need for timely intervention by the international community when death and suffering are being inflicted on large numbers of people, and when the state nominally in charge is unable or unwilling to stop it.*"⁴¹ This development is also reflected in the fact that humanitarian issues are increasingly pushed as 'high politics' by countries such as Canada.⁴²

Thus, a moral obligation is instinctively right. Still, there are a number of drawbacks when applying the moral duty as a guiding principle for when to engage in conflict management through peace support operations. For example, Woodward argues that humanitarianism seldom provides the answers to the causes of conflict, such as issues of political control or territory.⁴³ This shortcoming is exacerbated by the fact that there is a tendency among international actors and organisations, which are frequently dominated by Western thinking, that if only democracy and liberal market economy have been established, peace will be a given. Roland Paris has warned that both concepts — democracy and market economies — bring with them substantial instability, and both thrive on conflict.⁴⁴ Instead, a more flexible approach is essential that should take the specifics of each conflict into account and should not shy away from reasserting and strengthening the state so that it can effectively exercise its sovereignty, and provide security and stability for its citizens.⁴⁵

Perhaps the most important factor that detracts from the moral duty as a guiding principle is the role of the media in channeling attention and international concern. As Stedman has noted with respect to the trigger for international involvement, "*[b]y default the present criterion is whether there are pictures of the war and its suffering on television.*"⁴⁶ Thus, rather than a noble instinct, a sense of moral duty is all too often a product of 'manipulative' news coverage, that is the degree to which the media focuses its attention on a given conflict and for which it is lobbying for action.⁴⁷

To an increasing degree, public opinion is thus an important determinant of a state's decision whether or not to act and what action to take, if any. If the media only triggered action, there would be reason to be thankful. Unfortunately, the feeling of moral responsibility called forth by media images is a fickle thing, which can wear out too quickly, leaving the conflict area in worse shape than it might have been, had the international community not intervened at all.

Regional organisations should handle their own regional problems

Ever since the publication in 1992 of Boutros-Ghali's **An Agenda for Peace**, calls for regional organisations to bear a greater share of the responsibility for regional security have been growing louder. In part, the demands spring from a fear among Western governments of getting caught in 'mission creep' on a global scale. The official argument for regional action points to the proximity of regional neighbours to a given conflict, which implies a more immediate interest in its solution, as well as to the fact that such states are an immediate subject of a conflict's regional implications, such as refugee and arms flows.

Moreover, one might suppose that, in theory, a regional peacekeeping mission or a regional coalition of states would be based on a common perception of the problem and thus diverge less with regard to the goals that are to be achieved. However, practice, such as the military engagement in the Democratic Republic of Congo, indicates the enduring prevalence of national, as opposed to regional interests. The same is true of Europe's efforts in the Balkans.

Despite the lack of impartiality that is sometimes attributed to neighbouring states, demonstrated for example in Liberia and East Timor, these will quite often be the only ones willing to take action and incur the costs of action. An argument in favour of regional intervention is that the success of a peace support operation hinges on it not being opposed by neighbouring countries. Although positive influence is not as easy to pinpoint, it is clear that, when the regional context is hostile to the process, peace efforts are doomed.⁴⁸ Therefore, the direct involvement of regional countries in peacekeeping efforts, casting them in an active supportive role, might be desirable.

The main obstacle for regional action is the fact that — with the possible exception of NATO and the European Union (EU) — many of the financial problems that peacekeeping operations face, are compounded at the regional level. Aside from Europe, there is no other region in the world with the organisational and (more importantly) the financial capacity to sustain large-scale peace support operations. The prospect of funding difficulties creates serious shortfalls in credibility and effectiveness and, as argued above, results in problems of legitimacy. The argument that regional organisations should bear the responsibility and the burden of regional peacekeeping is too often launched in European capitals, against the financially strong backdrop of NATO and the EU.

Strangely enough, the transatlantic community's difficulties in handling the Balkans has not produced a greater understanding of the challenges faced by far poorer and far more unstable regions, such as Africa. Yet, it is only realistic to recognise that this is the pattern that has been established in recent years and that it is unlikely to change in the near future. Cases in point are the ongoing operation in East Timor, the UN withdrawal from Angola, and the merely nominal presence of Western contributions to UN operations outside Europe.

A decision to intervene should only be taken in the knowledge that the job can be done

UN peacekeeping is experiencing a triple crisis: a crisis of mandate, a crisis of methods, and a

crisis of means. Therefore, it has to realise its organisational limitations, and it has been suggested that the UN should *"go back to basics."*⁴⁹ Stedman, for example, draws the line at engagement in ongoing conflicts and argues that military intervention in a civil war is far too ambitious a task and is to be avoided at all times. Instead, the UN should intervene *"where there is the best chance to save the most lives."*⁵⁰ This is best done in two ways: by acting only with a sufficient degree of consent, such as in a cease-fire, or with peace agreement in place, or by improving the capacity to bring about a negotiated settlement. It is important to stress that, while this points in the direction of so-called traditional peacekeeping, Tharoor argues that revitalising the principle of consent, as the key to an operation, need not preclude 'multidimensional' peacekeeping. Both Stedman and Tharoor underline the critical importance of co-ordinating the actions and goals of the international community.⁵¹

The above argument appears very reasonable at first glance. But how can there be certainty that the operation is indeed as feasible as envisioned? When the argument for engaging in a peace support operation is the conviction that the job can be done, this implies that there is a clear idea of the tasks and a common understanding of the strategic goal of the mission. But, as Anderson emphasises, the one certainty in a military mission is the *"inevitability of unpleasant surprises."*⁵² When unforeseen obstacles arise and it becomes more difficult to achieve the predefined 'endstate', the strength of the coalition becomes a crucial factor and the will of the international community is put to the test. Too often, when the tasks are believed to be manageable, the international community falls into another trap by setting an 'end date' for the operation. Ironically, the surest way to undermine political will is to set unattainable goals, with the result that the peacekeepers gradually lose credibility.

The need for sustained international engagement is the single most important determinant for a successful peace process.⁵³ Indeed, *"[i]f the international community is unwilling to commit the assets to mounting an operation and seeing it through to a conclusion, it might be better not to attempt such intervention at all."*⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the kind of involvement that peace support requires — regardless of whether one believes that the mission is practicable - *"probably means making longer, more expensive and more frustrating commitments than most publics are willing to tolerate."*⁵⁵ This is true with respect to both the human and the financial cost of an operation.

As a result, in ongoing operations that comprise a wide variety of components, such as military officers or observers, civilian police monitors, deminers, humanitarian agencies and other development staff, donor fatigue is a serious problem. Despite the general realisation that a long-term approach is imperative to the success of an operation, donor patience is often insufficient. Frequently, this is due to a lack of progress or the increasing awareness of the complexity of the situation to be handled. International efforts towards implementing the Lusaka Protocol in Angola are a case in point. Although the first two years elicited enthusiasm among donors, willingness to contribute funds to the international efforts waned as tensions gradually grew and the lack of co-operation by local counterparts became more apparent.

CONCLUSION

Following every concluded peace support operation, attempts are made to assess what can and what cannot be done in future, and to establish a limit for peace support operations. Every time a new crisis arises, the lines thus drawn, prove to have been drawn in the sand. A recent article by the UN Secretary-General in **The Economist** is a case in point. Annan writes that he believes *"... it is essential that the international community reach consensus — not only on the principle that massive and systematic violations of human rights must be checked, wherever they take place, but also on ways of deciding what action is necessary, and when, and by*

But the international community simply does not have the capacity to address all 'massive and systematic violations of human rights'. As much as it may be desired, it is unlikely that the international community will move away from an *ad hoc* approach in determining the limits of its peacekeeping activities. As it unfolds, each crisis is assessed individually, in a unique context of national interests and public pressure. A peace support operation will be initiated only if there is a group of states that have a particular interest in managing the conflict and that are willing to pay the price. The tasks that are undertaken, will be consistent, not with the needs of a given situation, but with the level of commitment of the international actors.

Naturally, an operation that reflects the political concern of a chosen few, brings questions of neutrality to the fore. The discussion is similar to that on the special interests of regional organisations. Suffice it to say that vested interests are not necessarily a bad thing and "[n]eutrality in peacekeeping is determined more by behaviour and situation than by force composition."⁵⁷ Still, multilateralism is always desirable as a way in which to mitigate partiality by any one actor. In this respect, the role of superpower participation is another aspect that merits further analysis.

However, as the type of force that is authorised and deployed and the mandate that is devised, is so contingent upon the particular situation, it is critical to reduce the unpredictability to a minimum.⁵⁸ Therefore, planning, preparedness and intelligence are essential. Intelligence co-operation, in particular, has long been a taboo topic, but if peacekeeping is indeed to become more efficient and effective, it requires a thorough understanding of the conflict based on information-sharing and predeployment fact-finding. For example, it is astounding how unprepared the international community was for the refugee flow in Kosovo, and for the violence that ensued after the referendum in East Timor.

Another crucial aspect is the need for strategic thinking.⁵⁹ Once a mission has been decided upon, even if in an *ad hoc* manner, its execution should follow explicit and predetermined objectives. This involves co-ordination among all the international actors, both at a strategic and a tactical level. Although milestones, timetables, and subordinate goals should be flexible enough to take account of developments in the course of a mission, the overall aims should not waver, and should be commonly understood and accepted by all contributors.

Furthermore, regardless of the level of force used or the type of conflict, any form of peacekeeping will only be successful if it addresses the underlying causes of conflicts or provides a stable framework in which they may be addressed by the parties involved. One of the main realisations of past efforts to bring about peace is that the political willingness of the parties is a key to success and that peace can never be forced on them. One clear limit for peace support operations is thus that the international community should never relieve the parties of their responsibility to bring about peace.

Finally, there is a clear responsibility to act. Naturally, most peacekeeping operations could be better organised, run more efficiently, be more co-ordinated and more focused, but that does not mean that peacekeepers should not do their best even under difficult circumstances to assist in bringing about or consolidating peace, or preventing the outbreak of hostilities. As Edmund Burke pointed out, "*for evil to flourish, it is only necessary for good men to do nothing.*"

Notes

1. S J Stedman, *UN intervention in civil wars: Imperatives of choice and strategy*, in D C F Daniel & B C Hayes (eds), **Beyond traditional peacekeeping**, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1995, p 40.
2. D Smith, *Interventionist dilemmas and justice*, in A McDermott (ed), **Humanitarian force**, PRIO-Report 4/1997, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oslo, 1997, p 13; A Suhrke, *Human security and the interests of states*, **Security Dialogue**, 30(3), 1997, p 268.
3. These the categories were introduced by Boutros Boutros-Ghali. B Boutros-Ghali, **An Agenda for Peace**, United Nations, New York, 1992, pp 7-8. For simplicity's sake, the terms 'peacekeeping' and 'peace support operations' are used interchangeably.
4. Naturally, the conflict does not need to be limited to only two local parties. The figure merely illustrates the basic constellation in theatre.
5. A S Hansen, *Political legitimacy, confidence-building, and the Dayton Peace Agreement*, **International Peacekeeping**, 4(2), 1997, p. 74ff.
6. One of the first to approach variations in consent systematically by distinguishing between tactical and operational consent was Charles Dobbie. See C Dobbie, *A concept for post-Cold War peacekeeping*, **Survival**, 36(3), 1994, pp. 121-48.
7. P F Diehl, *The conditions for success in peacekeeping operations*, p 167.
8. K A Annan, *Two concepts of sovereignty*, **The Economist**, 18 September 1999.
9. K A Annan, *Walking the international tightrope*, **The New York Times**, 19 January 1999, Section A, p 19.
10. Daniel & Hayes, op cit, p 306. In addition, by declaring acts of aggression or breaches of peace and security, the UN is the body to declare who the 'good' guys and the 'bad' guys are.
11. J Gow & C Dandeker, *Peace-support operations: The problems of legitimation*, **World Today**, 51(8-9), 1995, p 171; M Goulding, *The use of force by the United Nations*, **International Peacekeeping**, 3(1), 1996, p 9.
12. See for example C Bildt, *The relationship between force and diplomacy*, paper read at the **IISS 41st Annual Conference**, San Diego, 8-11 September 1999.
13. Smith op cit, p 13ff.
14. Ibid.
15. P A G Sabin, *Change and continuity in the character of conflict*, paper read at the **FOA Symposium on The Character of Future (Armed) Conflicts**, Stockholm, 28 October 1998, p 30.
16. Ibid. pp 29-31.
17. S L Woodward, *Should we think before we leap? A rejoinder*, **Security Dialogue**, 30(3),

1999, p 279.

18. See, for example, S J Stedman, *Spoiler problems in peace processes*, **International Security**, 22(2), 1998, pp 5-53.
19. O Schachter, *Authorized use of force by the United Nations and regional organizations*, in Damrosch & Scheffer (eds), **Law and force in the new international order**, Westview Press, Boulder, 1991, p 83.
20. R Paris, *Peacebuilding and the limits of liberal internationalism*, **International Security**, 22(2), 1997, p 88.
21. Annan, **The Economist**, 1999, op cit, p 19; See also Annan, **The New York Times**, 1999, op cit.
22. In this context, the term coalition does not imply that the force has been authorised by an organisation other than the UN. It is merely a collective description for the group of contributing states.
23. A Chayes, *The use of force in the Persian Gulf*, in Damrosch & Scheffer, op cit, p 7.
24. T Mockaitis, *Civil conflict intervention: Peacekeeping or enforcement?*, in A Morrison *et al* (eds), **Peacekeeping with muscle: The use of force in international conflict resolution**, The Canadian Peacekeeping Press, Clementsport, Nova Scotia, 1997, p 38.
25. Diehl, op cit, p 164.
26. Ibid, p 162.
27. A McDermott, *The UN and NGOs: Humanitarian intervention in future conflicts*, in McDermott, op cit, p 72ff.
28. J H Anderson, *End state pitfalls: A strategic perspective*, **Military Review**, September/October 1997, p 93.
29. See, for example, D Shearer, *Outsourcing war*, **Foreign Policy**, 1998, pp 68-80; D Shearer, **Private armies and military intervention**, Adelphi Paper, 316, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998; K A O'Brien, *Military-advisory groups and African security: Privatized peacekeeping?*, **International Peacekeeping**, 5(3), 1998, pp 78-105.
30. Financial constraints include funding for programmes that form part of the peace support effort, but also logistic shortcomings and lack of staff.
31. Diehl, op cit, p 161.
32. Stedman, 1995, op cit, p 51.
33. Traditionally, the legal framework of an operation includes a status of forces agreement (SOFA) with the authorities of a host country. See T Findlay, *The use of force in self-defence: Theory and practice*, in Morrison *et al*, op cit, p 52.

34. The main legal instruments for peace support operations are the UN Charter, the International Human Rights Conventions of 1948 and subsequent documents, and the Law of War laid out in the Geneva Conventions.
35. The relevant articles of the UN Charter are Article 51 on the right to collective self-defence, Article 39, and Article 42.
36. M Zürn & B Zangl, *Weltpolizei oder Weltinterventionsgericht*, **Internationale Politik**, 54(8), 1999, p 18ff.
37. Point raised by Ole Waever at a seminar, Oslo, 14 October 1999.
38. Suhrke, op cit, p 266.
39. Zürn & Zangl, op cit, p 20.
40. Dag Hammarskjöld, quoted in Findlay, op cit, p 64.
41. Annan, **The Economist**, 1999, op cit.
42. Suhrke, op cit, p 266.
43. Woodward, op cit, p 279.
44. See Paris, op cit.
45. E B Eide, A S Hansen & B Lia, *Security sector reform as a development issue*, Room Document 7, presented to the DAC Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation, OECD, Paris, 3 June 1999.
46. Stedman, 1995, op cit, p 51.
47. S Tharoor, *UN-Friedensbewahrung. Aussichten für die Bewältigung Internationaler Konflikte*, **Internationale Politik**, 51(12), 1996, p 31.
48. Diehl, op cit, p 167ff.
49. Tharoor, op cit, p 31ff; McDermott, op cit, p 72ff.
50. Stedman makes this argument; see Stedman, 1995, op cit, p 51.
51. Tharoor echoes Stedman's arguments. See Tharoor, op cit, p 30.
52. Anderson, op cit, p 94.
53. This is one of Barbara Walters' main findings. See B Walters, *Critical barriers to civil war settlement*, **International Organisations**, 51(3), 1998, pp 335-64.
54. Mockaitis, op cit, p 48; D A Lake & D Rothchild, *Containing fear. The origins and management of ethnic conflict*, **International Security**, 21(2), 1996, p 42.

55. Daniel & Hayes, op cit, p 306.
56. Annan, **The Economist**, 1999, op cit.
57. Diehl, op cit, p 166.
58. Findlay, op cit, p 70.
59. Stedman, 1995, op cit, p 61.

Peace support in the Balkans: Lessons for Africa?

Espen Barth Eide

The decade-long crisis in the Balkans has confronted Europe with a seemingly everlasting series of challenges in the field of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and post-conflict peace support. The process is still under way, and nobody knows the final outcome of the crisis that has been referred to as the Yugoslav War(s) of Dissolution.¹ At the time of writing, it is clear that some of the peace settlements will in effect only last as long as there is a substantial international peacekeeping presence in the region, whereas new developments — particularly in the southern Balkans — may still lead to new confrontations, bloodshed, and the need for new peacemaking efforts and subsequent peacekeeping attempts.

In an African context, there may be a series of lessons to be drawn from Europe's many attempts to make peace in the Balkans. While every crisis is unique, and every region has its own characteristics, crosscontinent exchanges of experience may be constructive in a global quest for a better understanding of these issues. They should also be of mutual interest to peacekeeping practitioners, as well as scholars specialising on individual regions.

This is in no way intended to suggest that Europe has anything like an established model of peacekeeping and peace support operations that simply can be transferred to other parts of the world so that they can 'learn' how to deal with their own conflicts. Nothing could be further from the truth. To be honest, Europe does not really know how to handle contemporary conflicts either. A realistic look at the achievements suggests some occasional, limited success among cases of complete failure, rather than a streamlined regional conflict-handling capacity. It appears that Europe has at least as much to learn from African experiences in conflict prevention as Africa has to learn from Europe.

But Europe's experiences matter, not least because the reference to the events in the Balkans is such a central part of contemporary doctrine development in the field of peace support operations. Whether this means that any lessons have actually been *learned*, is another question. A distinction may indeed be made between lessons *observed* and lessons *learned*, as the latter implies that these have been taken into the recognised, collective wisdom of the people, states or organisations for whom this insight is relevant, in order to affect future behaviour. The handling of the 1998-1999 crisis in Kosovo repeated several of the mistakes committed during previous attempts to prevent the escalation of conflicts in the Balkans. Other actions were based on false (and overly optimistic) conclusions about what had worked before. As a consequence, a serious question mark should be added when reference is made to lessons learned and not merely observed.

Still, some trends and developments may indeed be identified in the way Europe attempts to deal with its own crises, and these *deserve* a closer look by anyone dedicated to the enhancement of African capacities in this very crucial area.

One of the rather obvious developments in Europe is the trend towards the *regionalisation* of peacekeeping efforts. Throughout the 1990s, there was a clear move from the global responsibility of the UN towards more regional efforts and engagements. This process reached at least a preliminary climax when the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) decided to attack Yugoslavia in order to influence its policy on Kosovo, without an express mandate from the UN. Strictly speaking, this was a violation of the fundamental principles of the UN Charter — despite the fact that NATO referred to UN Security Council Resolutions 1160 and 1199 (demanding an end to the fighting in Kosovo, but without expressly authorising military intervention).

The UN was clearly marginalised by this act and by the subsequent handling of the war over Kosovo. In the aftermath of the operation, however, the UN re-entered in the form of a UN-led civilian administration in Kosovo, and a UN Security Council mandate for the NATO-led peacekeeping force, KFOR. It may therefore be too early to conclude that the UN has become irrelevant to European crisis management.

Another trend is the recognition that peacekeeping in civil war-like situations is substantially different from overseeing interstate cease-fires or peace agreements. This was bitterly experienced by the UN-led, but predominantly European Protection Force (UNPROFOR) operation between 1992 and 1995. Later engagements by the UN, NATO and the OSCE have led to another important recognition: that peace takes time in coming, and that commitments that are too short may undermine fragile peace settlements. Europe is beginning to learn that intervening in other people's wars is a very difficult business.

Maybe the key lesson to be learned, is that the level of ambition has been too high. For those unprepared to draw that lesson, there is really only one viable alternative: to engage in serious and structured exchanges of views, experiences and insights in an attempt to make the tools better understood in order to be able to design better responses to future crises in the Balkans, as well as in other regions of the world.

EUROPE AFTER THE COLD WAR: BACK TO ITS OWN DYNAMICS?

With the end of the Cold War, the superpower 'overlay' on European security was largely removed, and the tense but stable environment that had characterised the continent from the late 1940s to the late 1980s went with it.² Europe went from relative peace in the shadow of the threat of World War III to a post-Cold War situation where new challenges and risks emerged in the wake of the tug-of-war between the superpowers. It quickly became clear that the threats to Europe's prosperity and security no longer came from the danger of a full-scale war between East and West, but from the potential for secessionist conflict, troubled or disrupted democratisation processes, ethno-nationalist conflicts, and so forth. The forecasts for the near future ranged from super-optimism to extreme pessimism, from those heralding 'the end of history' to those issuing warnings that the Cold War would soon be missed.³

The concern over European security thus went from being subordinated to the superpower confrontation to the handling of small and medium-sized crises as they occurred (particularly in Central and Eastern Europe) in the short run, and attempting to contribute to crisis prevention in the long run. All the existing security-related organisations of Europe lost their old rationales. It

quickly became clear that they would have to adapt to the changing circumstances or become obsolete and perish. While the Warsaw Treaty Organisation was dismantled by its own members, the key Western European organisations embarked on the long road of adapting and restructuring for new realities. Among those that chose to adapt to a new role, NATO is of particular interest in the context of this article. NATO set out in the early 1990s on a path that has largely transformed it from predominantly being a collective defence alliance to a broad-ranging security organisation that can be used for collective security operations out of area. Secondly, it is attempting to 'project' security and stability eastwards through the process of expanding its membership to former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

The development of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) into the *Organisation* for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is also relevant in this context, as it is sometimes seen as the archetype of a 'regional organisation', with reference to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In 1990, the CSCE solemnly presented its Charter of Paris for a New Europe, and declared that it was now to become a Europe-wide organisation rather than a semi-permanent diplomatic conference between East and West. It was not, however, before 1994 that the name change actually took place.

With the tragic developments that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia and parts of the Soviet Union, war returned to Europe as a contemporary reality, and with it came the question how to deal with such crises arising in Europe itself. In fact, this meant that Europe had 'caught up' with a general global trend towards protracted and savage internal wars with international repercussions. Thus, just as in the case of Africa, the question now was who were to be responsible for dealing with these situations. Should there be a preference for regional solutions, through the use of the OSCE, the European Union (EU), NATO and the Western European Union (WEU), or should Europe, too, rely on the UN and the global level to take a lead role? After all, with the exception of Cyprus, peacekeeping was traditionally something that Europe contributed to in other parts of the world, not something the UN came to Europe to undertake.

Almost a decade later, this question is as relevant as when the Cold War ended. The relationships between regional European organisations, the UN and the leading states in Europe are in the midst of a long period of transition.

EUROPE: TAKING THE LEAD IN UN CHAPTER VIII REGIONALISATION?

Late twentieth century Europe is the world's most institution-rich region. In principle, this provides an excellent testing-ground for the question how the relationship between the UN and regional organisations could work. The European experience might be a learning process for other parts of the world in this respect. However, in the field of peacekeeping, a regional European role is actually quite new, and still under development. Despite claims to the opposite, with closer scrutiny, the experience may turn out to be less of a 'success story' than what the regional organisations themselves may care to admit.

Given its institutional strength, combined with better financial resources than most other parts of the world, Europe might be a logical place to start relieving the UN of the burden of peacekeeping activities, allowing the UN to concentrate on other regions, particularly those where resources are more limited and/or where regional institutional arrangements are more scarce.

In principle, the role of regional organisations in the maintenance of peace and security falls into one of two categories or 'modes'. A regional organisation or arrangement can either develop into

a partner and subcontractor of the UN, or it can attempt to substitute on behalf of the UN and thereby undermine the primacy of the global organisation in European security. While the specific handling of a crisis need not be very different between the two scenarios, the distinction is a fundamental one, and the path that is eventually chosen, may end up leading to very different outcomes for European security.

THE BALKANS: EUROPE'S PRIMARY SECURITY 'LABORATORY'

The outbreak of war in Yugoslavia

The events relating to the collapse of Yugoslavia largely halted the almost euphoric celebration of the era of peace that was to follow the end of superpower conflict. A full-scale war took place before the eyes of a horrified European and world community that proved largely incapable of preventing it from starting or bringing it to an early end. The attempts at political, economic and humanitarian intervention made by all the security-related institutions on the continent ended up proving merely that Europe had not yet achieved a 'security architecture' able to prevent and curb major conflicts. Andreatta, for instance, argues that European institutions in 1991 were too weak and, had they been stronger at the time, might have led to a more comprehensive management of the crisis.⁴ A more pessimistic conclusion could be that, when things get rough, national interests will again dominate, despite previous commitments to international principles and organisations. This may be particularly true when formal institutions have not reached the level of cohesion necessary to remain united even in times of crisis.

The first attempts by the European Community (EC) and CSCE at brokering a peace treaty took place in Slovenia, and were in fact relatively successful. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991. On 27 June, Slovenia sent its new armed forces to take over border and customs controls on its international border. Fighting in Slovenia began two days later, as the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) moved to take back control. Both the EC troika and, on Austria's request, the newly established 'Conflict Prevention Centre' of the CSCE were mobilised. Jointly, the EC and the CSCE negotiated a cease-fire, the Brioni agreement, between Yugoslav and Slovene authorities effective from 7 July. The cease-fire, however, did not imply that the EC recognised the formal sovereignty of Slovenia. That decision was to be taken later.

The Brioni agreement was seen as a success for both the EC and the CSCE. For the first time, they could test their ability to mediate a 'real' international conflict successfully. Jacques Poos, Foreign minister of Luxembourg and head of the EC troika at the time, triumphantly announced, "*This is the hour of Europe.*"⁵

The Slovene 'war of independence' had little in common with what was to come in the wars in Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war in Slovenia lasted for ten short days and might not even have begun if not for the intention of the Slovene forces to restrain the retreat of the JNA. The fighting killed 39 Yugoslav soldiers, eight members of the Slovene forces, two Austrian journalists, two Slovene civilians and eight foreign truck drivers.⁶ The JNA was neither enthusiastic about, nor well prepared for fighting its own population, and most of the actual fighting took place because of a few instances of bad communication of orders to hold fire.⁷ With hindsight, however, the June-July 1991 events in Slovenia opened the door to further military conflict. Woodward argues that, as the internationally brokered settlement defined the JNA as the aggressor and recognised the Republic's borders as legitimate, the actors in the Yugoslav struggle were set.⁸ While celebrating their apparent success, the EC and CSCE delegations seemed to pay little attention to the further implications of these decisions for the other republics of Yugoslavia. From then on, the internal constitutional struggle was transformed

to one of defending sovereign borders.9

Although the Croat and Slovene issues were 'settled' by the 15 January 1992 recognition, EC attempts to negotiate a political solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued during February and March 1992. This time, the United States entered the scene, supporting a policy of early recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The US had not yet recognised Croatia and Slovenia. Now, it wanted to restore unity with its European allies on this issue, but at the same time stick to its basic position that if recognition of post-Yugoslav states were to take place, such recognition should be issued to anyone who wanted it.10

Since 1991, France had pushed for the introduction of a European peace force to stop the fighting, but this had not been accepted by its allies. This was partly due to British resistance, as well as US opposition to the development of an independent European military role. The US government was opposed to the introduction of an 'out of area' capacity for NATO at the time.

Despite all the efforts to find a 'European' solution to the war of Yugoslav dissolution, the initiative reverted to the UN. The cease-fire brokered by Cyrus Vance in Croatia in January 1992 was to be monitored by a UN-led peacekeeping force. The 14 000-strong UNPROFOR was deployed to Croatia in February 1992. According to the plan, the JNA was to withdraw; the Serbs in Krajina, Eastern and Western Slavonia were to be safe in UN protected areas, and a programme of refugee return was launched. Fighting had ended for now, but thirty per cent of Croatia was left outside the control of the Croatian government. Political settlement was deliberately postponed.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina flared up in March 1992. On 17 March, an EC plan for a new constitution for Bosnia — based on a cantonment model — was presented, but it was rejected by the parties. On 6 April, the EC recognised the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The day after, the US recognised Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war in Bosnia, soon to be the bloodiest in Europe since World War II, was not to be brought to an end for three and a half long years.

NATO in action: The 'Bosnia laboratory'

With the advent of UNPROFOR, the EU had abdicated the lead role in the search for a settlement to the Balkan crisis. The time had come to bring in another regional organisation. NATO had been brought into the Balkan theatre as a subcontractor to the UN in 1992. It provided maritime forces to monitor compliance with the weapons embargo on the former Yugoslav region, and air power to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnian airspace.11 From July 1992, NATO maritime forces were engaged in the supervision of the arms embargo imposed by the UN and economic sanctions in the Adriatic. The operations were initially named Maritime Monitor and Maritime Guard. Maritime Monitor was NATO's first 'out of area' operation. With the introduction of Maritime Guard, the use of force to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 787 was authorised.

At the outset, NATO's maritime operations were conducted parallel to those of the WEU, but in 1993, they were combined in Operation Sharp Guard after a step-up of the UN boycott. The conducting of these maritime operations, however, did not bring NATO particularly close to the UN at an operative level. Although NATO operated with a UN mandate, beyond the necessary top-level political contacts, the maritime operations were executed autonomously and interfered little with what happened on the ground in Croatia and Bosnia.12

With the introduction of NATO-led air operations into the theatre, the level of co-operation

increased. Operation Sky Monitor was initially set up to monitor the no-fly zone established over Bosnia by Resolution 781. In March 1993, the mandate was expanded to authorise active enforcement of the no-fly zone. Later the same year, through Resolution 836, the use of air power was mandated in support of UNPROFOR's ground forces and in defence of the six safe areas that were designated in April and May 1993. The UN attempted to use NATO air power assets for deterrence, but the strategy eventually failed.¹³

NATO's air assets were instrumental in denying the Bosnian Serbs the possibility of using Bosnian airspace for military purposes. The system passed its first real test when four of six Galeb fighter aircraft, violating the no-fly zone, were intercepted and shot down by two US F-16Cs on 28 February 1994.¹⁴ This was NATO's first combat action ever.¹⁵ The no-fly zone was, in fact, quite effective in restricting the Bosnian Serbs' use of fixed-wing aircraft for military purposes, whereas technical and political considerations restricted the use of force against helicopter traffic.¹⁶

NATO's close air support for UN troops was based on requests in situations where UN commanders were to decide on the targeting and execution of such support. This reactive system already existed when the proactive air strikes system was developed in February 1994. The threat of NATO air power was utilised to coerce the belligerents to comply with the twenty kilometre heavy weapon exclusion zone around Sarajevo. However, neither reactive close air support nor proactive air strikes could deter the belligerents in the longer term. Coercion was not possible owing to the incremental use of force demonstrated by the UN and NATO, hardly capable of influencing the cost-benefit calculus of the main aggressors, the Bosnian Serbs. The UN-NATO double key arrangement for authorising air strikes was strongly in focus at the time, and has since repeatedly been referred to as the main obstacle to the use of credible force. If NATO were given authorisation to use air power at will, NATO aircraft would still have to ensure that they did not cause collateral damage to the Bosnian civilian population or UN ground troops. In addition, NATO would have to avoid the various representatives of the numerous international humanitarian organisations and the UN civil police monitors. UN delays in authorising the use of air power were due to checking and double-checking that no collateral damage would be inflicted on any of the representatives of the international community. NATO could hardly have circumvented this issue.

However, the largest obstacle to the use of force with NATO air power was the tight integration of the political, military and humanitarian components. The Bosnian Serbs left the negotiating table when they were attacked, and impeded the distribution of humanitarian relief aid. The vulnerability of the fragile ground operation was exploited through the taking of hostages after an attack. These problems had to be solved before NATO could orchestrate a prolonged air campaign.

NATO was formally less involved in UNPROFOR's ground operations than in the air and sea operations. However, a clear NATO-UN connection can be found here, too. Many of the main contributors to UNPROFOR were NATO member states (in particular, France and the United Kingdom, which were the main troop-contributing countries). Their military establishments developed substantial Bosnia experience throughout the conflict. NATO's planning capacity was utilised almost during the entire conflict to prepare for a series of different operational scenarios. From 1993, planners at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe were charged with planning for possible NATO contributions to implement an eventual peace agreement. For instance, the 1993 Vance-Owen plan included a substantial NATO presence on the ground. Massive air strikes were on the planning table from August 1993. Other plans were made for extraction purposes, that is, if the situation in Bosnia were to deteriorate even further and the UN

decided to give up its military presence there. Operation Deliberate Effort was the name of NATO's plan for the active withdrawal of personnel deployed in UNPROFOR and the staff of other international agencies in such a situation. Although it was never put into practice, it provided a good foundation for the planning of Operation Joint Endeavour, which eventually implemented the military aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Throughout the process, the flow of information to NATO was substantial (not least to maintain readiness for a major military involvement). The first IFOR commander, Admiral Leighton Smith, had been kept updated on the developments in the former Yugoslavia on a daily basis in his NATO Southern Command (AFSOUTH) headquarters in Italy for years before he was actually installed in Sarajevo.

The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), which was to become the ground element of IFOR, had also been planning for Bosnia for a long time before they were charged with providing the enabling forces and then the command of the land elements of IFOR in late 1995.¹⁷ Throughout 1994 and 1995, UNPROFOR staff officers maintained close links to the ARRC in case of a possible NATO involvement.

The end of the Bosnian war

Towards the end of the war, NATO air power (which had been available throughout the conflict to support the UN) was used in a coercive diplomacy campaign that led to the cease-fire of 12 October 1995 and the Dayton negotiations in November. The key player in this process was the US special envoy, Richard Holbrooke. In the Holbrookian reading of what happened, air power was *the* decisive element.¹⁸ However, the role of the air strikes in August and September should not be overestimated. They worked because they came in a setting where:

- the Croatian army, together with the new Bosnian-Croat coalition in Bosnia, were forcing the Serbs out of the areas they controlled, first in Croatia and then in Bosnia; and
- where Holbrooke, coming in as a new US negotiator, made the US change its mind on the question of unity *versus* partial division of Bosnia.

The US accepted, for the first time during the war, the Bosnian Serb claim on a Serb republic (Republika Srpska). The US' encouragement of the Bosniac (Bosnian Muslims) position between 1993 and 1995, that only a unified Bosnia would be acceptable, is often cited as one of the key obstacles in arriving at an earlier peace settlement. This new US policy was in fact more accommodating towards the Bosnian Serbs than before. Thus, the Bosnian Serbs were bombed into accepting what they had been fighting for all along, albeit within the limits set by the international community.

In other words, the frequent references to the 1995 air strikes as *the* decisive development in terminating the war may be an overestimation of their relative importance. A false 'lesson learned' was drawn, and this proved dangerous years later when NATO was planning for the Kosovo operation, as it created the impression that air power had achieved the status of a magic tool for terminating conflicts.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the use of coercive force *did* indeed contribute to the eventual termination of the Bosnian war, to the cease-fire of 12 October and to get the parties to Dayton for negotiations.

NATO as peacekeepers: IFOR and SFOR

The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) that was sent to Bosnia in December 1995 was the first example of a NATO land military engagement anywhere in the world. This experience has since contributed greatly to the redefinition of NATO's role and the shaping of the alliance's

identity.

Although IFOR was decided upon at Dayton, without the UN being invited by the US hosts, it was given a Security Council mandate (Resolution 1031 of 15 December 1995). Thus, legally speaking, it was clearly in line with the basic principle of Chapter VIII. Even though it obtained a Chapter VII mandate and the most robust force structure of any peace operation in history, it was still a *peacekeeping* force in that it was implementing an agreement signed by the parties and was based on the consent of the former warring factions.

Furthermore, IFOR was very much the continuation of UNPROFOR under a new name and with a new and much more operational mandate. For most European troop contributors, 20 December 1995 simply meant switching hats or helmets 'from blue to green' and painting the white vehicles camouflage green. The only large country that was coming to the theatre for the first time was the US. However, as it suddenly became the main player in the Balkans operations, the US was eager to underline that IFOR had little to do with the preceding UN operation. For instance, an offer to include people from the experienced and highly skilled UN Civilian Affairs Division, already in place, was turned down, and many people were flown into main headquarters in a country about which they knew little or nothing.²⁰ Other nations were eager to make sure that the transition went as smoothly as possible, while portraying a step change in posture.²¹ Ultimately, substantial knowledge gained during the UNPROFOR operation was transferred to IFOR through this smooth transition.

Other elements also turned out to be beneficial to NATO. Firstly, there were logistical benefits — as the UN had been in place for years, installations and equipment could simply be taken over by NATO rather than brought into a volatile conflict area in the midst of a Balkan winter. Secondly, the operation was to take place in a theatre very close to NATO itself (particularly Italy) and with the friendly support of Hungary, at the time a NATO candidate country that allowed its territory to serve as a staging area and rear base for IFOR. NATO also achieved a very good Status of Forces Agreement with Croatia, through which most transit had to take place, either over land from Hungary or by sea from Western Europe via the Croatian harbour of Split. All this provided an ability to become operational quickly, thus avoiding a period of uncertainty. Thirdly, a very effective 'psychological operations' campaign was conducted, sending the message to the parties that they had better not mess with IFOR because it could and would strike back. 'Robust' behaviour from the very first days was part of this approach.

Furthermore, NATO had no hesitation in using intelligence resources, which is an integral part of NATO's force structure. The pre-existing resources in the area (which, of course, officially did not exist when the UN was in charge) could now co-operate better, thus enhancing the possibility of a unified analysis and assessment of the situation. It was not that no intelligence efforts had taken place before, but troop contributors could now be more open with each other on this issue and reap the benefits of joint action, which had been made more difficult by the UN's formal insistence on openness in all areas and the non-use of intelligence resources.

These were exceptionally good conditions for a NATO force. The former head of the Bosnia Task Force, Greg Schulte, rightly pointed out that, if NATO could not do its job in Bosnia, he would wonder where the organisation would be able to work at all.²²

In the design of IFOR, NATO was able to integrate a large number of non-NATO states, including Russia, several former Warsaw Treaty Organisation members and most of Europe's neutral countries. Thus, NATO had taken a big step forward in becoming a forum for *de facto* military integration in Europe. IFOR also became the first full-scale test of NATO's Partnership

for Peace agreement.

Beyond strengthening relations with Russia and Central and Eastern European countries, the arrival of IFOR and particularly the US contribution to it led to a noticeable improvement in intra-alliance relations after years of transatlantic quarrelling over what should be done in Bosnia. Now, *all* the leading countries in the Contact Group had committed forces on the ground, thus paving the way for further integration of policies and action.

One year later, however, it had become clear that the task of securing peace in Bosnia would take more time, and IFOR was replaced by SFOR (Stabilisation Force). Its mandate was given for one and a half years, after which a renewal was given, this time without fixing an end date.

Inter-institutional relations in the Dayton package

SFOR is only one of many agencies involved in the Dayton peace process. The Dayton Agreement stipulates a series of very detailed military tasks for the peacekeeping force. In addition, it is called upon to "*provide a secure environment for the civilian implementation process.*"²³

A study of the implementation process suggests that, in the initial stage, it suffered from a noticeable lack of co-ordination. A position of high representation, with a corresponding Office of the High Representative (OHR), was established on Europe's request, but the US disliked it from the outset. In reality, the high representative received only weak executive powers, and although he was supposed to have primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation process, his only prerogative was that he could call the involved agencies together for a meeting.²⁴ Furthermore, relations between the OHR and IFOR were quite poor during the initial months, and much time was lost.²⁵ In many respects, the civil-military relationship that existed as part of the international community's endeavours in Bosnia deteriorated initially because of the fragmentation of the various efforts following Dayton. Whereas the UN had provided an integrated framework for the military, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the civilian affairs unit and, to a large extent, the main non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved, all these efforts were now put on separate tracks.²⁶

The situation improved, however, during the second half of 1996, particularly after the introduction of the so-called principals' meetings, in which the six key organisations began meeting frequently. This was the in-theatre adaptation of the non-existing framework for co-ordination that the international community received at Dayton.

When NATO first started operations, it was frequently pointed out that it had to do its best to avoid so-called *mission creep* — that is, the tendency for a force to take on tasks other than those for which it was set up. However, this proved very difficult and led to much bad press for NATO. For example, there was the early 1996 burning of Serbian Sarajevo suburbs by radical Serbs who wanted to prevent their fellow nationals from staying on in a Muslim-controlled town, as well as the frequent quarrels with several civilian agencies about access to heavy resources in areas like transportation and engineering. Soon, the NATO-led force was compelled to accept mission creep anyway, as several of the most important challenges were to be found in the interface with the civilian process. In some ways, this ran contrary to what the NATO planners had expected, but was in fact also a consequence of IFOR's initial military success: The successful implementation of the more precisely defined military aims led to a change of focus now that the war itself had been brought to an end. Relations between the military and civilian dimensions of the Dayton peace process improved further when IFOR became SFOR; SFOR

put an increased emphasis on the civilian interface. One example is the augmenting of civil-military co-operation, CIMIC in military slang, in areas such as road construction and gas and water supply.

The initial separation of the civilian and military tasks that came with Dayton was in fact just part of a larger tendency to give every conceivable organisation in Europe a role in the peace implementation process. In some cases, this happened to their outright surprise. The following are a few examples.

The OSCE was given the task of organising elections, something it had never done before. It was not a task the OSCE Secretariat or presidency had asked for, but one allocated to it by Holbrooke and the US delegation at Dayton. The US was eager to promote the role of the main regional civilian organisation, while simultaneously reducing the role of the UN, which in many quarters was seen as partially responsible for the inability to stop the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

Similarly, it came as a surprise to the UN that it was *not* called upon to organise elections — after all, this was a job the UN had often done before and one for which it is seen as relatively well suited. Instead, the UN was given the task of reconstructing and monitoring the police forces of Bosnia through the International Police Task Force (IPTF). The UNHCR was given the important task of refugee repatriation, but lost much of the role of overall humanitarian co-ordination that it had had during the war. The EU was brought in to help with civilian reconstruction and economic revitalisation, and it was the EU's Carl Bildt who was appointed as high representative.

Despite its shortcomings, the Dayton process has been a very important learning exercise for Europe, and it remains a model in which co-operation between the UN and a number of regional organisations and agencies remains a key issue. Thus, all in all, this first major experiment in subcontracting does indeed confirm the basic principle of delegating the Security Council's authority.

TOWARDS A NEW 'MODE': THE UN, THE OSCE, NATO AND KOSOVO

Kosovo escalates

If Dayton-Bosnia is an example of a co-operative mode of regionalisation, then the recent developments over the issue of Kosovo may herald a more purely European approach to crisis management in which there is less of a role for the global level and the UN. What was originally presented as an exception — NATO threats, and subsequent use of force without UN Security Council authorisation — may soon turn out to be the beginning of a new pattern in the UN-NATO relationship.

Kosovo is in many ways the place where the current crisis in the Balkans began, and many analysts agree that the crisis will not end before some kind of final settlement has been found in Kosovo.

During the winter of 1997/1998, a guerrilla organisation known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) took up arms and began fighting the Serb police forces in the region. The war escalated after a Serb attempt to crack down on the military structure of the KLA. Fighting during the summer of 1998 led to a humanitarian crisis that threatened to turn into a catastrophe the following winter, with thousands of internally displaced persons living in the highlands of Kosovo and facing very harsh winter conditions. The violence had a shocking effect on Europe, as many

people thought that the crisis in the Balkans was effectively over and that what remained to be done, was long-term peacebuilding assistance, not renewed crisis management.

The UN Security Council was alerted to the Kosovo situation, and sanctions, political pressure and clear demands were issued throughout 1998.²⁷ Several Western powers, Russia and European organisations such as the EU and the OSCE all made a number of diplomatic attempts to achieve the jointly stated aim of the international community: constitutional autonomy for Kosovo within the boundaries of the Republic of Serbia itself, or at least within those of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

However, the agreement in the Security Council stopped short of authorising enforcement action, despite British and US proposals. A dispute developed between the Western members of the Security Council on the one side, and Russia and China on the other. Throughout the year, the US, the UK and NATO had issued a long series of 'final warnings' to President Milosevic. NATO was facing a credibility problem over this issue: how far can an alliance like NATO go in threatening to use force when it never materialises?

In the autumn of 1998, preparations were made within NATO to take enforcement action without a UN mandate. Just as they did in the Security Council, the US and the UK took the lead in insisting on the need for a formal NATO decision to authorise air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to put extra weight behind the negotiations in Pristina and Belgrade, which were now led by the chief negotiator from the Dayton talks, Richard Holbrooke. The purpose of NATO's threat and potential action was to change the calculations of Milosevic towards accepting the demands put forward in UN Security Council Resolution 1199. While most alliance members agreed on the need to put extra pressure on Milosevic, the attitudes towards threatening, and possibly using, NATO military power against Yugoslavia provoked very mixed reactions among the allies. A number of countries, including Germany, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Greece and Luxembourg, expressed grave concerns about authorising NATO action without a UN mandate.²⁸

However, the US used exceptionally strong pressure to get the reluctant NATO members in line. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote personal letters to the foreign ministers of NATO countries, arguing that "*[t]his is not a time to back down' and that 'NATO's credibility is now on the line.*" According to contemporary press comments, she was trying to invoke the traditional fear in NATO of a withdrawal of US interest in European security.²⁹

During the night between 12 and 13 October, the North Atlantic Council of NATO authorised an activation order, after long deliberations and after hearing fresh reports from the Belgrade negotiations through Holbrooke. In principle, NATO was now ready to attack the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, force planning was primarily conducted on the air power side, as few, if any, NATO countries were prepared to deploy forces on the ground in a war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.³⁰

Obviously, NATO's aim was to force a pacific settlement of the Kosovo situation through creating a *credible* threat of force. After the decision on the activation order, and with substantial physical preparations under way for a possible attack, the threat was indeed made more credible. On the other hand, NATO now found itself in a situation where it could no longer step down: it would either have to strike or declare a diplomatic breakthrough, and the alliance did not have much time to lose.

A temporary agreement was reached, however, between Holbrooke and Milosevic on 13

October 1998. It stipulated a partial withdrawal of Serbian special police and military troops from Kosovo, renewed negotiations over partial autonomy for the province, the establishment of a new Kosovar Albanian-dominated police force within the province and the deployment of up to 2 000 OSCE verification officers in the Kosovo Verification Mission. Before this, it had been very difficult to get any OSCE mission established in Kosovo. Yugoslav authorities had blocked the missions of, among others, OSCE/EU negotiator Felipe Gonzales on the grounds that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia itself had been suspended from the organisation and thus was not prepared to co-operate. The agreement of 13 October was initially hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough — predictably so, as this was NATO's only alternative to launching the planned military campaign. Right after issuing the Activation Order, the North Atlantic Council decided first to postpone the air strikes for ten days and then, on 27 October, to call them off.³¹

The OSCE's Kosovo Verification Mission

After the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement, the task of verifying compliance with the deal was handed over to the OSCE by the US government, and on 16 October, an agreement was signed between the chairman-in-office, Polish Foreign Minister, Bronislaw Geremek and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Zivadin Jovanovic. A 2 000-strong Kosovo Verification Mission was now to be developed, partly on top of the existing Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission — which was sent to Kosovo in late spring 1998 — and the European Community Monitoring Mission, the EU analysis and monitoring operation that has been working in several parts of former Yugoslavia since 1991. However, from the outset, it became clear that the observers were facing a difficult and dangerous job. After all, the deal is highly unpopular among the local majority (the Albanian population), as well as the local minority (the remaining Serb population, estimated to number less than ten per cent of the population). While the Kosovar Albanians found that the agreement fell far short with respect to their demand for full autonomy, many Serbs were angry at Milosevic for 'selling out' their 'homeland'.³² According to Fehmi Agani, a key representative of the Kosovar Albanians' self-styled president, Ibrahim Rugova, the Holbrooke delegation had informed them about the deal with 'extreme arrogance', arguing that there was no alternative but to accept it.³³ The KLA stated that its aim was independence and that it would remove everything that stood in the way.³⁴ Thus, an unarmed observer force was sent into an ongoing conflict in a setting characterised by extreme polarisation between two groups, the Rugova moderates and some KLA militants, as well as an open internal divide within the majority.

These circumstances have prompted questions about the observers' security. Holbrooke did not succeed in getting Milosevic's support for the provision of a lightly armed force in Kosovo to protect the observers. They were to be protected by the very same Serbian police they were to monitor. In practice, protection in such a situation requires a sound working relationship with both the police and the KLA, the two entities among which power is divided in the province. In addition, a NATO extraction force was set up in neighbouring Macedonia, led by French forces. The US refused to send troops to yet another operation in the Balkans at the time.³⁵

NATO was given a role in Kosovo, however, in that it was allowed to conduct air surveillance operations over the area with unarmed aircraft. For this purpose, a separate agreement was signed by the supreme allied commander in Europe, General Wesley Clark, and the Yugoslav army chief of staff, General Momcilo Perisic, on 15 October 1998.³⁶

The Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was the first major operation in the Balkans in which the OSCE was involved since the beginning. This is a very different starting point from that of Bosnia and Croatia, and a substantially more demanding one. In Bosnia, the OSCE was brought in after four years of UN involvement. In the Danube region of Croatia (formerly Eastern

Slavonia), the OSCE took over the task of monitoring the local police force from the UN, which had been in the region for a number of years. When the transition was made on 15-16 October in the Danube region, it was little more than a change of uniforms, as many OSCE observers were already involved in the UN police monitoring operation there. In addition, most of the practical planning for the new operation had been done by the UN staff rather than by the OSCE itself, as the UN had far more experience in such matters.³⁷ The Kosovo operation was very different: not only was it the largest OSCE operation to date, but there was no predecessor to learn from, and the OSCE was no longer one of several operators, but the main co-ordinating body.

Several critics argued over the winter of 1998-1999 that the apparent reduction in violence in Kosovo was a temporary affair, partly because wars tend to limit themselves in harsh Balkan winter climates, and partly due to temporary self-moderation when checking out the limits of the KVM operation. The developments from January to March 1999 proved the critics right. It became increasingly clear that the OSCE's civilian monitoring presence would not be a sufficient deterrent to the renewal of fighting. Both sides violated the peace agreement. The Serbian forces continued sporadic attacks on KLA strongholds, whereas the KLA triumphantly marched into positions abandoned by the Yugoslav National Army when they had to remove one-third of their forces and return the rest to barracks. Technically speaking, only the Serbs could violate the agreement, as the Albanians had not signed the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement, but there had been some kind of implicit understanding that the KLA was also to show moderation in light of the agreement and the presence of the OSCE. However, nothing of the sort happened, and the situation was already deteriorating when 45 men and young boys were found massacred in the little village of Rajac at the end of January 1999. Everything seemed to indicate that the atrocity had been committed by Serbian forces in revenge of the killing of two policemen in the same village. However, the possibly premature statement by the head of the OSCE verification mission, William Walker, who accused the Serbs of the event straightforward, led to a serious deterioration of OSCE/KVM/Serbian relations. With hindsight, this was the beginning of the end for the OSCE-KVM in Kosovo and the beginning of the second countdown to NATO attacks on Yugoslavia (the first 'countdown' had been suspended by the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement).

Rambouillet

In order to give diplomacy yet another try, the Contact Group for the Former Yugoslavia, comprising Russia, the US and key Western European states, took the initiative to convene a series of negotiations about an end to the conflict and about the future status of Kosovo at the Rambouillet palace outside Paris in France. Both parties to the conflict were at first extremely reluctant to take part in the negotiations, as they appeared to be more eager to win than to enter into any kind of compromise. Real negotiations hardly took place, as the delegations never physically met, but were given US-initiated proposals which were then carried back and forth by the negotiators. Towards the end of the process, the US negotiators, led by Madeleine Albright, launched a strategy of trying to secure at least one signature — that of the Kosovar Albanians — and then to use this in a direct threat against the Yugoslav authorities: sign here, or you will be bombed. The strategy was even openly confirmed by Madeleine Albright:

*"... it is now to a great extent up to the Kosovar Albanians to create this black-or-white situation, the extent to which they now follow up on the political part and continue to make clear that a Nato implementation force is what they want ... the Kosovars have a responsibility in fulfilling their part to make their answer a clear and unequivocal 'yes'."*³⁸

In the end, a half-hearted Kosovar signature was indeed attained. The process developed into a

showdown between NATO and Yugoslavia, where none seemed prepared to flicker first. Yet another round of very specific warnings to Yugoslavia's President Milosevic — several of them issued with a clear deadline — created a situation where both Yugoslavia and NATO painted themselves into a corner and where there was no other way out than either a Yugoslav signature to the Rambouillet proposal that the Kosovars already had accepted, or a NATO attack on the country.

A further deterioration in the security situation on the ground, and the definite collapse of the Rambouillet process, forced the chairperson of the OSCE, Norway's Foreign Minister, Knut Vollebæk, to order the full evacuation of the KVM from the province. The verification officers had their permits cancelled on leaving Yugoslav territory for Macedonia, and although the KVM was formally upheld in case of a possible re-entry into Kosovo, this was the effective termination of the OSCE's first experience with a type of peacekeeping operation of its own. The KVM never reached its agreed strength of 2 000 (at maximum strength, they still lacked several hundred verifiers) and important time had been lost due to their belated entry into the theatre, logistic problems, and to internal discussions of leadership structure and the role of the various contributing countries.

NATO's first war begins

NATO's air strikes began on 24 March 1999. Contrary to what the most optimistic proponents of air strikes had thought, the government of Yugoslavia did not back down at the time, but escalated its operations in Kosovo instead. In many ways, what was experienced in the March-June period of 1999 was not one, but two wars. The first was NATO's war against Yugoslavia, to which the Yugoslavs offered surprisingly little resistance, even to the point of very sparse use of its air defence systems. The other war was Yugoslavia's full-scale war against the KLA and against Kosovar Albanian civilians in large parts of Kosovo, to which neither the KLA nor NATO were initially able to put up much effective resistance.

NATO's air war against Yugoslavia proved to be poorly planned and poorly linked to the political purposes of the alliance. It was criticised for overlooking a number of golden rules of military theory. In the opinion of many analysts, it represented an exaggerated reliance on air power alone, it lacked effective back-up plans in case the original strategy failed, which for instance led to the issue of ground troops being postponed very long into the campaign. NATO also seemed to be caught by surprise by the refugee crisis, despite early intelligence warnings of this as a very real scenario if air strikes were launched.

On the other side, Yugoslavia concentrated on the final onslaught against the armed KLA and civilian Kosovars alike. A massive campaign of systematic and violent expulsion of the civilian population was launched. *This* war appeared to have been well planned and prepared, and conducted according to a clear, albeit extremely malign, political purpose.

NATO's plan was to conduct its initial operations during what was described as Phase I (predominantly attacking air defence systems in Yugoslavia) and Phase II (attacks on the Serbian police, military and paramilitary forces active in Kosovo). However, both phases proved rather unsuccessful. The systematic expulsion of Kosovars continued unabated, and when assessing the overall battle damage after the war, it became obvious that the ability to conduct tactical operations only from the air had been substantially over-estimated.³⁹ What was successful in technical terms was NATO's Phase III: the strategic bombing of infrastructure (like bridges, railways, roads and power plants), communications centres and industry throughout Yugoslavia. Together with Russian diplomatic pressure on Milosevic, and several European

efforts to find a compromise solution to the war, a cease-fire was agreed upon at the beginning of June, and the war was terminated on the following conditions:

- a complete withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo;
- Yugoslav acceptance of the stationing of a NATO-led peacekeeping force under UN auspices;
- an international guarantee for the formal integrity of Yugoslavia's borders; and
- a guarantee of the continued commitment to defend a multicultural Kosovo.

Post-war Kosovo: A fragile peace

After the withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops, and the successful and undramatic entry of the new peacekeeping force (KFOR) and the civilian UN administration (UNMIK), it quickly became clear that several major issues remained to be solved. These unresolved issues threatened to give European actors headaches over Kosovo for several years to come. Indeed, the future setting in which the UNMIK and KFOR operations are to take place, may end up proving the most difficult and potentially dangerous peace support environment in the Balkans to date.

The fundamental problem in Kosovo after the NATO air war and the withdrawal of the Yugoslav security forces was that nobody had really won the war. Yugoslavia all but lost Kosovo. At the least, it had to hand the province over for an undetermined time to an international administration run by the UN and underpinned by a *de facto* NATO occupation.⁴⁰ While Yugoslavia — through the G8 agreement in June 1999 — received formal international recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it remains unclear whether the country will ever again exercise any actual control over the disputed province. But, neither did its main opponent, the KLA, win *its* war. It did not achieve the full independence of Kosovo that it had hoped for, nor did it achieve a situation where it was authorised by the international community to set up a new state administration. Quite the contrary, it now has to endure a long-term international administration of Kosovo based on an agreement where the KLA is supposed to cease to exist in its core function as an army, and to transform itself to a 'regular' political movement instead. This runs at odds with what seems to be the bottomline strategy of the KLA: first to liberate the country, and then to install itself as its natural masters in opposition to other (and more liberal) forces. Its final goal is clearly a fully independent state.⁴¹ The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) used to act as a party-state in the informal home-grown *Republic of Kosovo*, taking care of many basic state functions from 1989 to 1998, despite Serb insistence that the province was run from Belgrade. Many Kosovars used to see it as the natural dominating force of a future independent Kosovo. The KLA has openly challenged this assumption since the armed struggle began.

With this as a starting point, it was completely predictable that, after having forced the Serbian security forces out, the UN, KFOR and the rest of the international community's main argument would be with the KLA. Seen from the standpoint of the KLA, the only thing that now stands between them and full independence is the international military and civilian presence.

The relationship between the KLA and UN/KFOR is complex. On the one hand, NATO is seen as a liberator, an ally in the struggle for independence to which gratitude should be expressed and with which, ideally, the best of relations would have to be maintained. Simultaneously, it is the main embodiment of the reality that Kosovo has not been handed over to Kosovar rule after

all. Predictably, the tensions between KFOR and KLA will deteriorate, but only slowly, as the second concern eventually takes over from the first. To use a Western European metaphor: the KLA would like to see itself in the position of 1945 France. On behalf of France, General-cum-President Charles de Gaulle could give his allies, the US and Great Britain, their well-deserved warm thanks and then wish them a safe journey home. Instead, the Kosovar leadership is finding itself more in the position of post-1945 Germany or Japan. In Germany and Japan, the new political forces that emerged after the war were subordinated to a long-term *benign occupation* which was there to ensure the prosperous development of democratic rule and which would only withdraw when this transition was completed to the satisfaction of the occupying forces.⁴² However, this can hardly be described as the ideal position for the KLA. A gradual normalisation based on UN/KFOR terms may open a broader political spectrum among Kosovars than what the KLA would really like to see *before* political power is formalised through elections, for example. The KLA's relative advantage of being the liberating force will then be starkly reduced.

It quickly became clear that the problems in Kosovo were not yet over when a series of what has been described as 'revenge attacks' were committed by returning Kosovars against Serbs, gypsies and other non-Kosovar groups. As the Kosovars were moving back into the region from the south, caravans of Serbs were leaving towards the north, and autumn 1999 estimates suggest that as many as 250 000 people were driven away after the war began. As the international peacekeeping presence was unable to prevent this new exodus, parallels were drawn with the burning of the Serb suburbs of Sarajevo in January 1996. This time, however, KFOR at least attempted to curb the flow somewhat. If correct, the reported number of non-Albanians that has left Kosovo since the end of the war are actually the same as the number of Kosovars who were internally displaced by the war and by the actions of Yugoslav forces during the autumn of 1998. It was, to a large extent, this situation that triggered NATO's decision to prepare for using force against Yugoslavia to prevent ethnic cleansing.

A careful and gradual process may prove to be the only way to ensure that one dictatorial regime is not substituted by another, or that the ethnic cleansing of Albanians is substituted by the ethnic cleansing of Serbs and gypsies instead. But in this very recognition lies the fundamental structural difference between the position of the UN/KFOR and the KLA.

NATO's understanding of this kind of peacekeeping environment has obviously improved substantially since the first NATO peacekeeping operation was launched with IFOR. In this operation, 'no mission creep' was the answer to all the questions raised by the civilian pillar of the implementation process. With KFOR, the understanding that it is in place to help and underpin all the civilian reconstruction efforts, was initially introduced by the first commander, General Michael Jackson, and continued to be in place with the second KFOR commander, General Klaus Reinhardt.⁴³ Indeed, the whole KFOR operation is in several respects more 'European' than IFOR, as the American 'quick fix' approach is much less visible in Kosovo than it was in Bosnia. Significantly, the first two commanders have been European, the force composition of KFOR is overwhelmingly European, and the operational concepts are much more European than American. This is a better starting point — but it remains to be seen whether this will keep violent conflict out of Kosovo and the countries surrounding it.

Challenges ahead

At the beginning of the new millennium, the western Balkans remains a highly unstable region. With the exception of Slovenia, few final settlements have been found. The end of the Franjo Tudjman period opens new issues of internal stability in Croatia. A fragile peace is in place in

Bosnia, but only due to SFOR's presence. The final solution to the Kosovo issue remains open — shall it stay an integral part of Serbia, become a republic in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, achieve independence, or even join Albania? NATO and the UN are presiding over the formal continuity of Kosovo within Serbia against the will of most Kosovars, while Serbian sovereignty is temporarily suspended. The issue of Kosovo's future is again in a large part related to the internal developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where Montenegro's move towards *de facto* independence threatens further disintegration. Inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia are rapidly deteriorating, and are linked to the situation in Kosovo. The EU and OSCE-initiated Stability Pact and other urgently required regional initiatives suffer from the impasse in Belgrade, as a regional approach without the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which geographically links the other parts together, seems to prove rather complicated. Thus, the risk of further conflict is definitely open. Yugoslavia's dissolution has led to four wars so far, and it is far too early to conclude that that the last one has been seen. If further conflict, suffering and disintegration are to be avoided, genuine regionbuilding policies must be introduced, supported and defended.

SOME GENERAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

At this point, it is possible to point to some general lessons that might form part of a potential future set of lessons actually *learned* in the Balkans, lessons that are also applicable to Africa and other regions of the world.

Do not send a peacekeeping force if there is no peace to keep. UNPROFOR, the original UN peacekeeping force in Croatia and Bosnia, learned this the hard way. UNPROFOR was supposed to protect the delivery of humanitarian aid (which it actually did with substantial success) in the midst of a raging war, but it initially organised itself more like a classical peacekeeping operation and applied operational concepts developed for first generation peacekeeping à la the Middle East. UNPROFOR also suffered from a persistent public relations problem in that it was perceived as being responsible for bringing the war to an end. Consequently, it was judged on its ability to perform a mandate that it never had, rather than on its own premises.

Complex emergencies require multifaceted responses. Modern peacekeeping operations normally entail three pillars: a military pillar, a 'law and order' pillar, and a civilian pillar. Organisations active in different pillars may have very different tasks, but more often than not, are dependent upon one another for success. Those engaged in repairing the infrastructure or in social reconciliation efforts are dependent upon the international military presence, if not for their personal protection, then in order to provide the 'secure environment' that is a prerequisite for effective peacebuilding. On the other hand, military organisations involved in peacekeeping are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of an international humanitarian and reconstruction effort. Not only does this enhance the image of the foreign presence, which provides a level of force protection for the troops, but it is also the best path towards a situation where developments make it possible to leave the theatre again: civilian success is the only viable exit strategy for peacekeepers.

Be prepared for long-term commitments. Once a peace agreement is in effect, it is important to know that peacebuilding implies substantial time and effort and that there may very easily be setbacks during the process.

Robust mandates (Chapter VII) are better than limited (Chapter VI) ones. Such

mandates give the force commander more flexibility and allows for an element of deterrence to be built into the operation. A robust peacekeeping force may be necessary to deter war — whereas an underresourced presence with limited mandates may be less of a deterrent and the situation may more easily deteriorate (this is the peace support version in the old dictum that, if you want peace, prepare for war).

Create an ‘holistic’ and unified vision among the international players. Political commitment on behalf of the key contributors is crucial to success. Infighting among the key international sponsors of a peace process threatens its overall success. This was a major problem during the first years of the Bosnia operation, as key international players, both among the Western European states and between them and the US, disagreed openly about the Bosnian policy and over what should be the final outcome. A similar row may easily develop over Kosovo, where the final settlement of the conflict remains open. Differences of opinion will always exist, but if possible, attempts should be made to sort them out internally and then to stick to the joint policy.

Avoid sending mixed signals. A recurrent feature of the handling of the crises in the Balkans by the West is that some actors signal support for the position of one side in the conflict, whereas others signal support for its counterpart. Alternatively, composite actors (like NATO) may indeed send several different messages at the same time, when different positions are attempted internally, or simply as a result of the lack of a clear policy. This may indeed aggravate the conflicts, as the potential parties interpret these mixed signals in policy as support for their side of the conflict.

Avoid overcommitment. The UN experience from the tragic events in Srebrenica illustrates a recurrent theme in handling crises like this. It is not necessarily non-action, but rather half-hearted action (like declaring a city a safe area without committing sufficient troops and developing a credible policy to defend it), that leads to the worst failures. If the Security Council had not declared Srebrenica a safe zone, the people there would have been left to their own calculations. For many individuals, this would have meant that they could leave in time, and they might have lost their homes, but not their lives. Setting realistic goals and concentrating on achieving them may be a much better strategy than to compete internationally to attain the moral high ground, and then to pass the buck when the responsibility for enforcing decisions has to be accepted.

Avoid presiding over unsettled issues. When wars fail to produce a stable outcome, they frequently reignite at a later stage. At best, peace prevails, but only in the form of a permanent cease-fire (like the several decades’ long stalemate in Cyprus). A degree of commonly understood ‘settlement’ is paramount in order to conduct long-term planning on the military as well as the civilian side. The settlement does not have to be attainable at the moment. It may well be a vision about a future situation and/or about the conditions that have to apply for it to happen, as well as about the transition necessary to arrive at the agreed future situation. The absence of any such joint vision, however, is very dangerous for a peace process.

The unwillingness to support a specific settlement in Kosovo is a good illustration of this phenomenon. Achieving some kind of settlement is important for all aspects of post-war reconstruction, as both economic reconstruction and developments on the human rights and institution-building side are dependent upon some kind of clarity about the future political framework of the province/country. Roughly put, an investor would like to know in which country he is investing, and who the political power-holders are whom he should

relate to, not only today, but in some years' time. He would normally also like to know something about the eventual risk for future conflict that will undermine his investments. Similarly, a normal political spectrum and a vibrant civil society are best fostered in a climate free from fear and intimidation, which again is dependent upon some minimal consensus on the future path to take. In both Bosnia and Croatia, where systematic post-conflict conflict prevention are in progress, the fundamental issue of who is to be in power in the long run is largely settled. In Croatia's Eastern Slavonia (or the Danube Region), it is the Croatian government, albeit with a certain international presence that tries to ensure that Croatia lives up to its commitment to make the region also habitable for Serbs. In the (rightly so) much-criticised Dayton Agreement for Bosnia, it is immensely more complex, but there still *is* a degree of settlement on the sovereignty issue in the relationship between the two entities, as well as between the entities and the Bosnian state. Thus, the future parameters for action are more or less clear. In Bosnia, the main purpose, currently, of the SFOR presence is to keep this negotiated path open and the other paths closed. No such final settlement has been arrived at in Kosovo. Quite on the contrary, the future status of Kosovo is almost as open as it was when the conflict began. The only option that is no longer on the table is continued direct rule from Belgrade, but all the others — a province of Serbia with extensive autonomy, a third republic of Yugoslavia, an independent state of Kosovo, or a north-eastern part of greater Albania — are still principally open. Experience from similar situations suggests that, as long as the fundamental political sovereignty issue remains unsettled, the conflict is not yet over.

Criminals always gain from war. Just like in many recent African cases, the experiences from the Balkans strongly suggest that internal war, chaos and the breakdown of social order are ideal breeding grounds for organised crime, the smuggling of arms and other commodities, as well as the illegal trafficking in human beings. The criminal networks that are formed in wartime will hardly disappear when the war is over, but rather attempt to achieve as much influence in the new system as possible. The warlords of yesterday frequently become the magnates of tomorrow, and they tend to gain substantial control over the political and economic developments after the conflict has been brought to an end. An international peacekeeping presence that wants to contribute to a peaceful and constructive transition from war to peace should not avoid addressing this very important issue. However, the experience in the Balkans suggests that the international community only came to understand the full extent of this issue belatedly.

Think twice on the issue of policing. Modern peacekeeping operations are very much geared towards performing some kind of 'policing' job in the aftermath of a conflict. This should be distinguished from the task of assisting, training and monitoring a local police force to enable it to take over this key function. The latter has typically been the task of an international civilian police (CIVPOL) component. However, in the post-war conditions in Kosovo, the UN has taken on a completely new role in providing active law enforcement services based on a CIVPOL component. In effect, this takes the main occupation away from the 50 000-strong NATO-led KFOR mission and gives it to a few thousand police officers, haphazardly gathered from countries with very different policing styles (for instance, with respect to the use of firearms). An initial evaluation suggests that this model may not be very effective. A possible consequence may be that military forces simply have to accept that, in future engagements, rudimentary policing functions have to be provided, at least temporarily, by the military.

CONCLUSION

This article has had a dual purpose. Firstly, it aimed to illustrate the gradual *regionalisation* of intervention, crisis management and peacekeeping that is under way in Europe. Indeed, such a trend can be found in the present case of UN/NATO/OSCE/EU relations in the Balkans. It is too early to conclude, however, whether this will happen within the co-operative model provided by the UN Charter, or as a further development of Western organisations, like NATO, assuming greater regional or even global responsibilities outside the UN framework.

Secondly, it aimed at presenting some of the specific experiences of the European actors in trying to bring peace to the Balkans, arguing that this might prove relevant to operations in Africa and elsewhere. As stated initially, Europe does not have the answers to these issues any more than other regions. However, the paths taken in the future development of peace support activities in Europe will also be of the utmost importance to the rest of the world. After all, Europe does provide an important testing ground for a cluster of issues of global relevance.

Notes

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1. See, for instance, J Gow, **Triumph of the lack of will: International diplomacy and the Yugoslav war**, Hurst & Company, London, 1997.
2. On the notion of a superpower 'overlay' over a regional security complex, see B Buzan, **People, states and fear: An agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era**, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991. An early reflection of the nature of the post-Cold War security situation in Europe can be found in B Buzan *et al*, **The European security order recast: Scenarios for the post-Cold War era**, Pinter, London, 1990.
3. Two frequently cited examples of these two extreme interpretations of the future, seen from the vantage point of 1989, are F Fukuyama, *The end of history?*, **The National Interest**, 16, Summer 1989, pp 3-18; J Mearsheimer, *Back to the future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War*, **International Security**, 15(1), 1990, pp 5-56.
4. See, for instance, F Andreatta, *The Bosnian war and the new world order*, **WEU Institute of Security Studies Occasional Papers**, 1, 1997, p 2.
5. C Bennet, **Yugoslavia's bloody collapse**, Hurst & Company, London, 1995, p 159.
6. *Ibid*.
7. S Woodward, **Balkan tragedy: Chaos and dissolution after the Cold War**, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, 1995, p 167.
8. S Woodward, *Redrawing borders in a period of systemic transition*, in M J Esman & S Telhami (eds), **International organisations and ethnic conflict**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1995, p 211.
9. *Ibid*, p 213.

10. Ibid.
11. For a thorough account and analysis of NATO's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, see G L Schulte, *Former Yugoslavia and the new NATO*, **Survival**, 39(1), Spring 1997, pp 19-42.
12. However, Sharp Guard was effective in minimising the flow of arms into the region. Of the 74 000 ships challenged by NATO's vessels, six were caught attempting to break the embargo. The operation obviously had a deterrent effect on smugglers attempting to use the sea route (however, as is now known, most arms came into the the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia via other channels).
13. See more on this in P E Solli, **UN and NATO air power in the former Yugoslavia**, Report 209, NUPI, Oslo, October 1996.
14. Ibid, pp 24-25.
15. See Schulte, op cit, note 12, p 21.
16. A restrictive practice was introduced relating to the use of force against helicopters, for three reasons. Firstly, helicopters can fly close to the ground and land quickly if intercepted. Secondly, they are often used for medical evacuations and other non-offensive purposes. Thirdly, the UN extensively used helicopters for their operations, and there was fear of misidentifying and engaging UN helicopters, as had happened in Iraq, where US fighter jets accidentally shot down two US helicopters believing that they were Iraqi.
17. M Walker, *ARRC into action*, **NATO's Sixteen Nations**, 41(2), 1996.
18. For a personal account by the key player himself, see R Holbrooke, **To end a war**, Random House, New York, 1998.
19. For a thorough study of the possibilities and limitations of air power in peace operations, see C Rønnfeldt & P E Solli, **Use of air power in peace operations**, NUPI, Oslo, 1996.
20. For a discussion of the transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR, see E B Eide & P E Solli, **From blue to green: The transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR**, Working Paper 539, NUPI, Oslo, 1995.
21. For instance, this was the case for France, the UK and the Nordic countries, to name but a few.
22. Schulte, op cit, note 12.
23. Dayton Agreement, Annex 1A.
24. It has never been explicitly clear what the high representative represented. The EU? The international community (whoever that is)? The London Peace Implementation Council? In this author's view, the lack of clarity contributed to the unfortunate weakening of his powers.

25. B de Lapresle (France), Personal communication, Sarajevo, Spring 1996.
26. For an informative account of the differences between the international community's representatives at the negotiations in Dayton in November 1995, see P Neville-Jones, *Dayton, IFOR and alliance relations in Bosnia*, **Survival**, 38(4), 1996-97.
27. See, in particular, UN Security Council Resolutions 1199 and 1203, 1998.
28. See, *Allies grim, Milosevic defiant*, Washington Post, 8 October 1998.
29. See, *This is not a time to back down*, **The Guardian**, 9 October 1998.
30. Plans were made for a phased attack, which would gradually be stepped up if Milosevic did not cede. NATO's supreme commander in Europe, General Wesley Clark, made it clear that, "[i]f necessary, NATO air power will systematically take apart Milosevic's air defence structure and expose his military and police machinery of repression in Kosovo to destruction." Quoted in *NATO nears final order to approve Kosovo strike*, **New York Times**, 11 October 1998.
31. The Activation Order still remains valid, though only so that a leaner decisionmaking procedure will be required to call for strikes again should Milosevic not comply. At the time of writing, this did not seem very likely, given the extensive OSCE involvement in Kosovo.
32. See, *A war too far for Milosevic*, **The Economist**, 14 November 1998.
33. Reported by R Flottau in **Tempus**, 19-25 November 1998.
34. OSCE observers, Personal communication in the theatre.
35. *Surveillance vital to Kosovo deal*, **Jane's Defence Weekly**, 21 October 1998.
36. Ibid.
37. See the report on **Lessons learned from UNTAES**, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York, 1998.
38. Press conference following meetings on Kosovo in Rambouillet, France, 23 February 1999. Office of the spokesman.
39. Specifically on the lessons of the Kosovo war, see I H Daalder & M E O'Hanlon, *Unlearning the lessons of Kosovo*, **Foreign Policy**, Fall 1999; A Roberts, *NATO's 'humanitarian war' over Kosovo*, **Survival**, 41(2), Autumn 1999; M Mandelbaum, *A perfect failure: NATO's war against Yugoslavia*, **Foreign Affairs**, September/October 1999.
40. Occupation is here used to illustrate a situation where a foreign military force takes complete control over a territory with the intention to stay for a substantial period of time, and where an international administration is introduced instead of a local government. The UN/NATO role in Kosovo should be understood, however, as a (at least intentionally) benign occupation. See below on the parallel to Germany or Japan. This argument runs contrary to, for instance, early statements by UN chief administrator Bernard Kouchner

who insisted that "*we are not an occupational force.*"

41. While this is the final goal of some of the factions of the KLA, others seem to see independence as an intermediate goal on the way to unification with Albania.
42. This is a benign occupation because it is well-intended towards the local subjects, but simultaneously wary of their own ability to run the country at the present point in time. In Germany and Japan, occupation took a co-operative and supportive attitude towards the new local leaders, without being ready to hand over authority before this process was over.
43. General Reinhardt confirmed his vision of a broad and encompassing operation, focused on supporting the civilian side, in an interview with the author in Lubljana on 7 October 1999, the day before he took over as commander of KFOR.

Russia's international peacekeeping and conflict management in the post-Soviet environment

Michael Yermolaev

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union, the subsequent withdrawal of its 500 000-strong armed forces from Europe, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact¹ opened the way for deep systematic changes in the geopolitical balance of power on regional and global levels. The new post-Soviet environment exerted a substantial influence on the nature of Russia's foreign and defence policy, as well as on the functions, goals and tactics of its armed forces.

The new character of risks and challenges to national security in the post-Soviet environment predetermined a principally new function of the Russian military — to keep and restore peace unilaterally or under international agreements within the framework of peace support operations, or *mirotvorcheckie operatsii*.

The new 'peacekeeping' function of the armed forces, which was subsequently incorporated into national military doctrine, evolved as the result of the convergence of a number of factors. Firstly, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there was a radical change in the nature of the main threats and risks to Russia's national security. The conflicts and contradictions between different nations and nationalities, and ethnic and religious communities challenged the integrity of many states and nations in the post-Soviet environment — including Russia itself. For the first time in modern history, Russia had to admit in its new *National Security Concept* that the current and potential conflicts in its territory and in the 'near abroad' are the main sources of threats to its stability and security. As a result, Russia had to start building a new crisis reaction and conflict management potential, including special peacekeeping forces.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the world was also faced by a number of armed conflicts in other regions that led to humanitarian crises. This forced the world community to undertake appropriate actions in an attempt to stop these conflicts and to initiate the difficult processes of national reconciliation. Russia, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, bears the primary responsibility, along with other permanent members of the Council, for keeping and restoring international peace and stability. For this reason, Russia has allocated huge material and human resources over the last decade for conflict management under the UN flag. In this

regard, it is noteworthy that Russia's National Security Concept for the first time determines that the country's long-term interests require its wider participation in peacekeeping operations, and that *"the implementation of such operations should become an important instrument for the prevention or liquidation of crises as they arise and develop."*

The experience gained by Russia during the course of peace support operations in the post-Soviet environment has vividly demonstrated that conflict management at the national and international levels is an extremely complex process. Positive results can only be achieved when such operations are based on internationally recognised principles and when they have clear international support.

Starting from the early 1990s, Russia therefore began to contribute military and police personnel for participation in most of the new peace support operations conducted under the auspices of the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Organisation for Security Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In fact, Russia has a 25-year history of participation in international peacekeeping. From 1973 to 1998, Russia participated in eleven out of 48 UN peacekeeping operations. More than 770 Russian UN military observers, and some 18 000 soldiers and officers have served under the UN flag.

The end of the bipolar system of international security, which was based on the balance of interests of two superpowers (the US and the Soviet Union) marked the beginning of a new phase in the theory and practice of modern peacekeeping. Particularly, questionable techniques used by some regional organisations² initiated strong debates in Russia on the legitimacy and principles of regional peacekeeping. In addition, the extensive use of military power by the world's leading nations³ highlighted the problematic nature of the new international peacekeeping and peace support operations (PSOs). Politicians, military experts and scholars are now trying to find proper answers to challenging questions such as:

What are the legitimate principles, democratic norms and mechanisms that the world community is supposed to use for keeping and restoring peace in the 21st century?

What are the norms and mechanisms that will provide international peace and security in new geopolitical realities?

The necessity to find answers to these and other questions became especially apparent in the Spring of 1999, when US-led NATO forces conducted an unprecedented (since World War II) war against Yugoslavia to protect the human rights of one of the dominant ethnic communities in Kosovo. Many experts in Russia and abroad immediately claimed that the techniques of enforcement management which were used by NATO in the Balkans could most likely be applied in other regions world-wide, where the interests of the US or other key NATO members were at stake. One of the main outcomes of NATO's enforcement action against Yugoslavia — clearly seen especially from Russia's point of view — is that a number of challenging precedents were established during NATO's so-called 'humanitarian bombardment', that will have a direct bearing on the character of future conflict management techniques in Africa, the post-Soviet environment and elsewhere.

It is particularly pertinent that the US/NATO war against Yugoslavia, as well as Russia's subsequent wide-scale anti-terrorist combat operations in and around Dagestan (in August-September 1999) raised strong debates in Russia on the issue of the role of military force in international peacekeeping and conflict management in the post-Soviet environment.

It is against this background that this article will address three main issues. Firstly, the main phases of Russia's peacekeeping evolution and the development during the last decade will be summarised. Secondly, the existing legal base for the use of the Russian armed forces in conflict prevention and management is considered. Finally, some of the key lessons are highlighted that were learned by Russia from its involvement in international peacekeeping in the post-Soviet environment and in the Balkans.

THE EVOLUTION OF RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING

The modern history of Russian peacekeeping began in Cairo on 26 November 1973, when the first 36 Soviet military officers received UN blue berets and became military observers in the UN Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East (UNTSO). This was a direct outcome of the Vladivostok Agreement reached between the USSR and the US, where the two superpowers decided to use a new instrument for monitoring their decision to stop the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war.⁴

Despite the deployment of its military observers under UN command and control in the Middle East — where the Soviets and the Americans tried to advance their national interests by different means — the Soviets resolutely refused to accept the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping operations in other regions. The USSR did not participate in their conduct, nor did it provide material or financial support. For this reason, the history of Russia's contemporary peacekeeping really belongs in three more recent and crucial phases of evolution and development — 1989-1992; 1992-1995; and 1996 until present.

The first phase — 1989-1992

The first phase saw the re-evaluation by Russia (at the time still the USSR) of its position and attitude to international peacekeeping. It happened under the strong influence of the policy of *perestroika*, promoted by the then president of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev. At this stage, the Soviets officially recognised the legitimacy of 'classical' UN peacekeeping and began to participate in a number of newly established UN operations. For example, from April 1991, Russia's UN military observers participated in the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) and in the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). From October 1991 until March 1993, forty Russian military observers participated in the UN mission in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The second phase — 1992-1995

In 1992, the USSR ceased to exist and Russia became a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Among the positive distinguishing outcomes, achieved as a result of the dissolution of the USSR, is Russia's expanded contribution to international peacekeeping. Russia's military and police personnel began to participate actively in most of the newly established international peacekeeping missions in the territory of the former Soviet Union and further abroad. For example:

in the Balkans from March 1992 (Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia);
in Georgia from August 1993 (UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)); and
in Angola from February 1995 (UN Angola Verification Mission III (UNAVEM III)).

In addition, Russia's military also participated in two other UN missions — in the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) from December 1992 until December 1994, and in the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) from October 1993 until March 1996. Moreover,

since Autumn 1995, Russia's military have been taking part in the NATO-led peace support operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While the effectiveness of Russia's peacekeepers in peace support operations under UN command and control did not raise much concern, their activities in the near abroad drew sharp criticism in both national and international mass media. Moreover, the disparity in the ways and methods of conflict resolution between Russian and Western military experts, became increasingly apparent.

A number of leading Western politicians and experts, analysing the character of Russia's peace support operations in the territory of the CIS, claimed that Russia was violating some of the fundamental norms and values of international peacekeeping. For example, Mikle Orr, the Director of the Conflict Studies Research Centre at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, United Kingdom, claimed that none of Russia's peacekeeping operations fulfilled the requirements for intervention which were set by various CIS agreements. Moreover, he argued that Russia used the name of the CIS to give a cloak of international respectability to its pursuit of what the government perceives as Russia's national interests around its borders.

Analyses of the results of Russia's peacekeeping in the post-Soviet environment from 1992 to 1995 show that despite the fact that Russia's military managed to bring armed conflicts in the CIS near abroad to a halt, it became patently clear that pure military force cannot address the deeper roots and causes of modern conflicts and thus provide sustainable security, development and overall political settlement of modern conflicts.

The third phase — 1996 until present

Despite the substantial decrease in the number of UN peacekeepers deployed world-wide, Russia had to increase its contribution to conflict management in the international arena. Russia allocated material and human resources for all categories of peace operations that are being conducted in Europe, Africa, Asia and in the post-Soviet environment. This happened mainly because of the following two factors.

From January 1996, Russia's military began to take part in joint Russia-NATO peace support operations in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as part of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Close co-operation between Russia and NATO's military in Bosnia led to a new qualitative status in Russia/US/NATO relations. In addition, it opened a new page in the history of Russia's international peacekeeping and gave a new dimension to its theory and practice.

The participation of Russian troops in conflict management in the Balkans under the UN and later NATO flags, clearly demonstrated that Russia and the US/NATO military can conduct joint peace support operations on a high professional level in different regions of the world. Russia's military role in the peacebuilding process in the Balkans was commended by General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Commander of the allied forces in Europe. According to Clark, *"the multinational forces would not have been able to accomplish their peacekeeping mission in Bosnia successfully without the Russian brigade."* He also pointed to the fact that *"... the peacekeeping co-operation among our armies is building a foundation for the future partnership for peace ..."*

The second factor behind the expansion of Russian peacekeeping was the signing of the *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*, and the subsequent development of all-round military-to-military contacts, including

the joint training of peacekeepers. This exerted a substantial influence not only on the character of Russian-West relations, but also on the further evolution of Russia's position toward unilateral and joint peacekeeping and conflict management in the new geopolitical environment.

Particularly during the period 1996 to 1999, Russia became involved in joint training for future peace support operations with the world's leading nations, including the US, the UK and Germany. This was carried out both within the new format of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme, and within the framework of Russian/US/UK bilateral/trilateral exercises. Alongside these troop training initiatives, Russia and NATO began examining the possibilities of engaging Russia's military assets for joint peace support operations, including the use of Russia's strategic air lift capacities.

During joint military exercises conducted in Turkey from 13 to 15 October 1998, Russian and NATO specialists trained an element for possible future joint peacekeeping co-operation — specifically with regard to the transportation of US/NATO resources by Russian aircraft. In particular, exercise participants loaded and transported a huge US anti-aircraft defence radar station (the AN/TPQ-64, which weighs 30 tons) in a Russian IL-76 aircraft. There are also plans to train pilots and crews in the transportation of the US Patriot anti-aircraft complex by Russian AN-124 aircraft — including refuelling of the latter in the air by US/NATO planes.

From 1996 onwards, in addition to its traditional involvement in UN peacekeeping, Russia thus began to be actively involved in joint Russian-NATO peace support operations in the Balkans, where it deployed more than 5 000 soldiers and officers from its élite airborne forces. In Africa, the Russian military has continued to be involved in conflict management exclusively under the auspices of the UN, primarily in observer-type missions in countries such as Egypt, Congo, Sierra Leone and Western Sahara.

LEGAL BASIS AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING

When considering Russia's international peacekeeping in the post-Soviet environment, it is useful to analyse the legal basis for the use of military force, on the one hand. On the other hand, it is also fruitful to examine the main techniques used by Russia's peacekeepers in the field in all types of peace support operations, but especially those which were conducted in the territory of the former Soviet Union and in the Balkans.

Contemporary Russian peacekeeping is based on several key documents, which have been developed over the past seven years or so. The legal basis of Russian peacekeeping has evolved against a background that included the absence of a clear vision of Russia's new national identity, of military doctrine, and of clear ways to achieve sustainable political and economic development. Before considering the main lessons learned from Russia's practical peacekeeping experience, it is thus useful to review the legislative foundations of Russian involvement in peacekeeping, which are laid down in national laws and presidential decrees.

An analysis of the above documents reveals some of the crucial distinguishing features of the basis that established the legal and political framework for Russia's military activities in the interest of international peacekeeping and conflict management.

Russia has determined a clear set of conditions under which it will take decisions whether or not to allocate its human and material resources for international peacekeeping. The following three may be regarded as crucial preconditions:

A UN authorised mandate for any type of peace support operation, or a proper decision on

the mandate and terms of peacekeeping by a regional organisation, has to be in place.

The level of Russia's participation in international peacekeeping must correspond with national strategic interests.

The strategic planning of any joint peace support operation must take place on a multinational level.

In addition to these three factors, the main conditions to be met before committing Russian forces to peacekeeping are listed in Table 2.

Table 1: Legislative foundations of Russian involvement in peacekeeping

Document	Year
The Constitution of the Russian Federation	1993
Federal law: About the Defence	1997
Federal law: On the procedure of allocation of military and civilian personnel for participation in the peacekeeping and peacemaking	1995
Presidential Decree No 1300: The Concept of National Security of Russia	1996
Presidential Decree: On the Establishment of a special military Contingent in the Armed Forces for participation in peacekeeping and peacemaking activity	1996

Table 2: The main conditions of Russia's support for and participation in peacekeeping operations

1	"Conformity of the peacekeeping operation with the advancement of Russia's national interests, fulfilling the goals of foreign and defence policy"
2	"Existence of an international dispute that requires settlement through peaceful means, or a threat to international peace and security"
3	Presence of a clear political aim and clear mandate for the peacekeeping operation
4	"The consent of the government (in cases of internal conflicts) and appropriate parties for the establishment of a peacekeeping operation, except in those cases of an extreme nature (violation of peace or act of aggression) and/or those that exert a direct threat to the national security of Russia and its borders"
5	Close ties between the establishment of a peacekeeping operation with tasks of assistance to the political process of the peaceful settlement of the dispute
6	"The availability of resources adequate to the mandate of a peacekeeping operation, and readiness of the proper states to allocate contingents and to provide financing"
7	"Relatively clearly determined period of the peacekeeping operation in the mandate, and conditions for the termination of the operation as 'entrance' into and 'exit' from a peacekeeping operation are not less important than its establishment"

Table 3: National contributions to KFOR

Country	Number of troops
United Kingdom	13 000
Germany	8 500
United States	7 000
France	7 000
Italy	5 000
Russia	3 600
The Netherlands	2 050
The Ukraine	1 300
Turkey	1 000

Moreover, the strategic command and control over Russia's military forces during overseas duties, including in international peace support operations in the Balkans or in the post-Soviet environment, will be retained by the president and general headquarters. According to the federal law, About the Defence of 15 May 1996, the president of Russia has the prerogative to utilise troops for peacekeeping or peace enforcement functions. However, the Council of the Federation has an exclusive right to take the final decision whether or not Russia's troops would be deployed beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation. The presidential power to deploy military personnel for overseas duties is thus balanced by the Council of the Federation's prerogative power to mandate the use of Russia's troops in overseas duties in accordance with the international agreements of the Russian Federation.

Finally, according to presidential decree no 1300, the Concept of National Security of Russia, the basic principles for the use of force by Russia's military in peace support operations are determined. Among these principles, which are more widely known in Western countries as rules of engagement (ROE), the following are pertinent:

the use of force will be considered on a legitimate basis, only when all non-military possibilities to settle the crisis situation have been exhausted or have been proven to be ineffective; and

the use of military power against civilians or for the achievement of political goals is prohibited.

Considering the nature of ROE, it is also appropriate to outline the main principles guiding the use of force, which were agreed upon between Russia and the US military and which are being used in training during their joint military exercises. According to the **Russian-United States guide for tactics, techniques, and procedures of peacekeeping forces during the conduct of exercises** (1994), military force may be used in the following cases:

for self-defence, including against forceful attempts to disarm the peacekeeping force;

for defending peacekeepers' posts, positions and vehicles;

for defending peacekeeping units against attack; and

to protect controlled area/buffer zone facilities that, if destroyed or damaged, may cause catastrophes (these facilities include, for example, dams, power stations, chemical plants, and so on).

Alongside the legal framework for peacekeeping, Russia has also established its own peacekeeping force. In accordance with the presidential decree, On the Establishment of a Special Military Contingent in the Armed Forces for Participation in Peacekeeping and Peacemaking Activity, a special contingent was established within the structure of the Russian armed forces with the specific purpose to conduct peace support operations. The maximum total strength of this peacekeeping force is some 22 000. This includes seventeen motor rifle and four airborne infantry battalions, as well as support and service units. While the units of the designated peacekeeping force do participate in international peacekeeping, their duties have often been handed over to Russia's élite airborne troops.

REGIONAL PEACEKEEPING IN THE POST-SOVIET ENVIRONMENT

A regional peacekeeping potential that may be used when requested, has been established under the auspices of the CIS. The bulk of this CIS peacekeeping and crisis reaction potential is supported by Russia. Russia has made energetic efforts to strengthen the CIS peacekeeping mechanism, which could be more actively used not only in the post-Soviet environment, but also in other regions. However, no substantial progress has been made in transforming a number of documents and memoranda into a working and reliable mechanism for conflict prevention and management. Part of the reason for this is that Russia and some leading CIS states (including the Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaidjan) have sometimes held clearly opposing views not only on the methods and means of conflict management, but on the very essence of collective peacekeeping and international security.

Before considering the main lessons learned from Russian peacekeeping in the territory of the CIS, it is thus useful to examine how the political-military leadership of the CIS organisation understands the essence of international peacekeeping. According to the CIS manual, **On training and conduct of peacekeeping operations in the CIS**, a peacekeeping operation is:

"... a complex of co-ordinated and interlocking objectives, tasks, locations and timings of the activity of specially trained military, police and civilian personnel in the support of efforts towards stabilisation of the situation in regions of potential or current conflicts, conducted in accordance with the Mandate, approved by the CIS Heads of State (UN Security Council, OSCE), aimed at stoppage of armed conflict and the creation of conditions facilitating its political settlement."

However, this manual was only approved by CIS members in 1996, while Russia has been allocating its human and material resources for conflict management in the CIS territory since 1992. In July 1992, in compliance with the bilateral Russia-Georgia Dagomistskoe agreement, a Russian airborne regiment was sent to South Ossetia to assist in the settlement of military conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia. This regiment was later relieved by an infantry battalion.

Practically at the same time, in accordance with another bilateral Russia-Moldova agreement (Principles of peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Trans-Dniester region of the Moldova Republic), six Russian battalions were positioned between warring factions in the buffer zone, which was determined by the control commission on conflict settlement. After the cease-fire agreement was implemented and the warring factions ended their combat actions, the situation in the region stabilised and Russia was able to decrease its military presence by autumn 1994, to a 650-strong contingent.

In the autumn of 1993, in accordance with a mandate issued by the CIS Council of the Heads of States, Russia's 201st reinforced infantry division (6 000 personnel) formed the bulk of the collective *mirotvorcheckie* forces in Tadjikistan. Once again, in June 1994, Russia engaged in another peacekeeping mission in the region of Georgia-Abhazia, and deployed five battalions to the mission area within the framework of the CIS collective forces. In summary, from 1992 until 1997, more than 50 000 Russian military personnel participated in peacekeeping and crisis management operations conducted under the auspices of the UN and the CIS.

When analysing Russia's peacekeeping activities and outcomes, it is necessary to briefly revisit the nature and roots of these activities. For example, what are the main factors that predetermined the character and methods of Russia's peacekeeping in the CIS territory? Basically, the following factors determined the techniques and character of Russian-led peace support operations in the post-Soviet environment.

Firstly, Russia had to initiate and conduct its peace support operations in a situation that demonstrated the clear inability of federal and republican political authorities to handle ethnic rivalry and communal conflicts by peaceful means through negotiation and mediation. In a wider context, the dissolution of the USSR actually created a security dilemma for most of the nations in the former Soviet Union:

How should ethnic, religious and other types of conflicts, both at the community and republican levels, be prevented, stopped and settled?

How were the new political entities to provide national security and human rights in the new geopolitical environment?

Secondly, due to the unpredictable dissolution of the USSR, there were no mechanisms in place to provide collective security in the post-Soviet environment. There was no legislation or training manuals on how to use military force in peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Moreover, in the absence of international support and desire to be involved in conflict settlement in the post-Soviet environment, Russia had to invent techniques and principles for the use of the army under the CIS banner. Furthermore, Russia had to bear the brunt of the financial and material burden for these conflict settlements itself.

Subsequently, Russia began to create the legal framework and conceptual basis for its contemporary peacekeeping practice from scratch. It is not surprising, therefore, that there were initially a great number of misunderstandings and mistakes, if Russian peacekeeping activities are assessed from the viewpoint of strict classical UN peacekeeping theory. For example, most of the peacekeeping missions in the CIS were not deployed under multilateral mandates, but rather on the basis of bilateral (sometimes oral) agreements between the Russian president and the leaders of warring factions.

Thirdly, the Russian military had never been trained for such 'special' and extremely sensitive types of activity. There was no military doctrine, no peacekeeping concept, nor even manuals for peacekeeping training. Moreover, when Russia's military started their peacekeeping activities in the CIS territory, no such 'peacekeeping' functions had ever been envisaged for the army. Even on the command level, Russia's peacekeeping forces had no clear vision of the essence of international peacekeeping and conflict management.

Due to these factors, and the deep interconnected political, economic and social ties between the former Soviet Union republics, peace support operations in the CIS territory exhibited the following main distinguishing features (in contrast to 'classical' UN peacekeeping):

In most cases, Russia unilaterally had to deploy its military contingents in the mission area, in accordance with bilateral agreements, with the mandate approved only later by the CIS Council of Heads of States.

Peacekeeping forces were deployed where there were no peace to keep — in the midst of armed conflicts, where cease-fire agreements between warring factions were not reached or were clearly being violated.

When engaging in collective peacekeeping operations, Russia and the CIS had to include the use of military and police personnel from bordering countries, a practice that had hitherto been avoided in UN peacekeeping.

For the first time in international peacekeeping, joint patrols were conducted that included military representatives from both warring factions. The rationale was that, through this instrument, mechanisms of trust and objective verification between warring factions would be created, thus contributing to mutual confidence-building. Despite initial criticism of this technique, the innovation subsequently proved its worth. For example, this mixed composition of verification missions facilitated the early end to bloody conflicts in Trans-dniester and in South Ossetia.

Due to the absence of CIS joint peacekeeping policy at the initial stage, there was a misunderstanding in the minds of politicians and military commanders of the essence of peacekeeping and its difference from enforcement operations or even local wars. This meant that Russia's peacekeeping terminology, or *mirotvorchestvo*, was very often applied to a range of very different military activities. For example, the primary mission of Russia's 201st division in Tadjikistan was referred to as *mirotvorcheckie*, despite the fact that this formation was clearly fulfilling border guard functions, as well as anti-drug and anti-terrorism missions.

At present, there are four peacekeeping operations being conducted under the auspices of the CIS. Since March 1998, there were a total of 11 908 regional peacekeepers deployed in the CIS territory (6 673 in Tadjikistan, 1 690 in Abhazia, 2 309 in the Trans-dniester region, and 1 236 in South Ossetia). Financial planning for the training and deployment of peacekeepers has been practically nil. In the federal law of the Russian Federation, The Federal Budget for 1998, for example, there was no expenditure allocated for peacekeeping, despite the fact that the military costs of sustaining the four CIS operations amounted to some 512,4 million roubles (US \$80 million).

An analysis of the main features of Russia's peacekeeping in the CIS territory reveals a number of other barriers to the further development of the international peacekeeping potential of the CIS as a regional multilateral organisation. Prime among these is the lack of political will among some CIS member countries to participate in peacekeeping under the auspices of the organisation. For example, despite the fact that a decision was made in March 1997 to establish the CIS committee on conflict situations, no political consensus has been reached on the functions of the committee to date. Some countries want it to evolve into a viable and permanent conflict management instrument, which would be authorised to take decisions and to exercise command and control functions over peacekeeping operations. Others want to limit its functions to that of a representative and consultative discussion forum.

Secondly, there is still an absence of effective civil-military relations, and of acceptance of civilian control over the military. On the strategic level, the CIS mechanism sometimes seems to work, and to result in positive decision-making. For example, the Council of Heads of State issues mandates and determines the duration of CIS missions. However, there is no political oversight, direction or control at the operational level. As a result, the civil and political functions within the mission area are carried out by the force commander. As a rule, the force commander can take any decision by himself, including those on intervention in conflict situations. On the other hand, he is supposed to consult with the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs/Council of Ministers of Defence. However, even when such consultation does occur, there is very limited authority at the ministerial level.

A third problem is that most countries do not, or cannot provide contingents for CIS peacekeeping forces, and Russia has to carry the major burden by itself. For example, despite the fact that the CIS approved the establishment of collective peacekeeping operations for

Tadjikistan, Abhazia and Georgia, these operations have been carried out almost exclusively by Russian soldiers (90 per cent in Tadjikistan and 100 per cent in Abhazia).

Furthermore, there is no commonly approved vision on the joint employment of CIS peacekeeping forces. The position of the Ukraine, Kazakstan and Uzbekistan is that CIS peacekeeping forces should have the status of UN standby forces, which participate only in operations under the auspices of the UN and, in some cases, under the leadership of the OSCE. In this regard, it is worth noting that regional peacekeeping forces have been deployed in seven countries of the CIS, including Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kirgizia, Uzbekistan and the Ukraine.

Finally, these and other factors, including the 'Chechnya syndrome', have created a strong negative attitude among politicians and ordinary people to Russia's peacekeeping in the near abroad. Furthermore, negative attitudes to modern peacekeeping in Russia have arisen as a result of the extensive coverage in the mass media of NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia.

In sum, Russian attitudes towards peace support operations, especially on the techniques and ways of conflict management in the new geopolitical environment, have generally begun to coincide with the views and approaches of the leading countries, including the US and UK. On the other hand, the lack of international support, as well as the absence of institutionalised mechanisms for conflict prevention and management among CIS member states have led to some negative tendencies not only in the field, but between Russia and its former allies, including the Ukraine and Georgia. These differences may prevent the further meaningful development of an effective collective mechanism for conflict prevention and management in the territory of the CIS.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN KOSOVO (THE BALKANS) AND RUSSIA

Kosovo's potential to create a humanitarian disaster and destabilise European security has been widely understood since the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia fell apart in 1991. The roots of the Kosovo conflict have been cultivated by a number of factors emerging through many centuries. Due to the fact that Yugoslavia did not comply with the NATO ultimatum to observe human rights and provide for the return of refugees from the Yugoslav province of Kosovo on 24 March 1999, NATO started its first full-scale combat offensive against Yugoslavia. NATO conducted an intensive bombardment of the whole territory of Yugoslavia that lasted 78 days. After a peace agreement was reached, the NATO-led KFOR forces were deployed in Kosovo and divided the Yugoslav province into five sectors.

The deployment of the advance element of Russia's peacekeeping force in Kosovo started on 12 June 1999, when the first 200 paratroopers secured the Slatina aerodrome in Pristina. Deployment was completed by 6 August 1999. The deployment of Russia's peacekeeping force in Kosovo was authorised by the Russian Council of Federation and was conducted in accordance with the general headquarters plan, which was co-ordinated with NATO command. About 3 500 Russian soldiers were eventually deployed in Kosovo, in addition to some 1 000 items of combat material, including eleven helicopters and a field hospital. Military transportation aviation made forty flights, while seventeen railroad convoys were used for transportation. Sea transportation was carried out by large amphibious ships of the Black Sea fleet.

Russia's peacekeepers were subsequently deployed in four out of five sectors in Kosovo: north (French sector), south (German), east (US) and central (UK). Russia's military presence in most of the KFOR sectors contributed significantly to the smooth deployment of NATO troops into

Kosovo. According to the military command, Russian paratroopers in all sectors are trained and ready for any possible challenges. They are equipped with powerful weapons: each airborne battalion in Kosovo has artillery and mortar support units, and combat helicopters are ready to assist in an emergency.

The deployment of Russian peacekeepers in Kosovo on 12 June 1999 and the securing of the Slatina aerodrome in Pristina exerted a major positive influence on the Serb population and gave them hope that their interests would also be preserved. By late June, Russian peacekeepers were stationed in the historic area of Kosovo Pole, where there was a battle in 1389 between invading Turkish and Serb forces. The Serbs lost the battle and their independence for more than 500 years. Later, near the place of the 14th century battle of Grachanica, the main Serb Temple of the Blessed Virgin was built. The establishment of Russian positions in the area of Kosovo Pole contributed to the stabilisation of the situation and led to a decrease in the distrust of Serbs toward British troops, in particular, and KFOR, in general. In this regard, it is worth noting a British peacekeeper's assessment from the field, *"if the Serbs had left Kosovo Pole, then they would have left Kosovo also, because that village is an indicator of the whole situation in the region."*⁵

According to the Helsinki US-Russia agreement, Russia was asked to deploy two battalions in the German south sector: one in Malishevo and one in Orahovac. The area of responsibility designated in the south sector comprised 25 square kilometres, and included a population of some 18 000, of whom 3 000 were Serbs. The meeting of German and Russian troops in July 1999 in the vicinity of the city of Rudnik in the south sector elicited increased media attention and coverage — as this was the first time in the 20th century that Russian and German military forces had worked together — appropriately in a joint peace support operation in the Balkans.

Within a two month period, 30 000 KFOR troops had been deployed in Kosovo, the bulk of KFOR's total final authorised strength of 50 000. The current national contributions to this force are presented in Table 3. Several other countries — Greece, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Romania, and Finland — collectively provided several hundred more peacekeepers.

In addition to paratroopers, Russia sent a police contingent to Kosovo, which is part of the 3 000 strong UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL) component. The CIVPOL component was established in accordance with the UN mandate and is expected gradually to take over some of the stability and law enforcement functions from KFOR. In August 1999, Russia deployed 210 police officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Kosovo. Together with the police officers from another 63 countries, they are carrying out their assigned duties in hazardous conditions with the aim of restoring law and order in the post-conflict environment.

Russia's *milicionery* (police officers) are divided into two groups: 110 are included in the UN special police forces and the other 100 are members of the UN CIVPOL. It is worth noting that the inclusion in the mission of a UN special police force is a first for the world body. Hitherto, UN CIVPOL were only involved in monitoring the work of the local police, and in teaching or mentoring them in policing according to international standards. In Kosovo, the functions of UN CIVPOL are radically changed and expanded. They are guarding key points in Kosovo and will also be expected to participate in law enforcement operations.

Russia's active participation in conflict management in and around Kosovo became a clear indicator of its contemporary pragmatic position aimed at active participation in the efforts of the international community to support peace processes in all regions of the world. However, the techniques used in the management of the Kosovo conflict by the US-led NATO bloc raised

strong objections and concerns in Russia, and placed a big question mark over future Russian-NATO relations.

However, Kosovo also opened a new phase in the history of modern international peacekeeping. The techniques and technologies used in the management of the Kosovo conflict will exert a decisive influence, not only on the Russian disposition towards peacekeeping in the post-Soviet environment, but also on the forms and methods of conflict management to be utilised by the leading nations and regional organisations world-wide.

CONCLUSION

With more than 25 years of experience in participating in international peacekeeping, there has been a substantial evolution of Russian views on the nature and techniques of keeping peace and managing conflict under the auspices of the UN and other international organisations. Despite its initiation into UN peacekeeping in the Middle East in 1973, Russia's active involvement in international peacekeeping only really began at the end of the 1980s, when historical political and economic reforms were initiated in the Soviet Union and consequently continued in Russia.

From 1992 onwards, Russia started to conduct and participate in peacekeeping operations in the near abroad — in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Despite the subsequent development of legal and political frameworks for joint peacekeeping under the auspices of the CIS, the majority of member countries have not supported a wider joint peacekeeping posture. This may be explained primarily in terms of perceived fears among some of the smaller CIS countries that joint peacekeeping under the auspices of the organisation could potentially strengthen Russia's domination of the post-Soviet environment. On the other hand, many experts argue that there is an urgent need to establish applicable collective CIS peacekeeping structures and mechanisms. Such a crisis reaction potential would allow the organisation to:

maintain stability in the post-Soviet environment through a collective peacekeeping force; defend its regional interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia; and meet new challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and in the Middle East.

Furthermore, Russia believes that the final goal of CIS peacekeeping must be to provide for the maintenance of law and order in the CIS-Eurasia environment through a variety of instruments, including CIS collective peacekeeping.

Over the past decade, Russia has managed to establish a relatively developed legal and political framework for its international peacekeeping and for the use of its armed forces in different regions under the auspices of the UN or other international organisations. There are clear indications that, despite economic difficulties, Russia will continue to be involved in international peacekeeping. However, the scale of such involvement would be based on a selective approach and strategic interests. Most probably, from a long-term perspective, Russia will try to strengthen its crisis reaction mechanism and capacities to be able to meet new challenges and to play an active and prominent role in most international peace support operations initiated and conducted under the auspices of the UN — or any other international organisation that produces a legal mandate and has effective command structures.

Notes

1. The former military strategic Alliance of the Eurasian Communist states.

2. Including NATO's open anti-Serb community activities in a post-Yugoslavia environment within the framework of the UNPROFOR humanitarian mission (1992-1995).
3. Particularly by the US/UK against Iraq (in 1998-1999); by the US-led NATO force against Yugoslavia in the course of the 78-days war (March-June 1999); and Russia's first ever large-scale anti-terrorist operation in and around Dagestan (August-September 1999).
4. UNTSO was the first classical UN peacekeeping operation, established in 1948.
5. *Chto zhdet nashix*, **Komsomolskaya Pravda**, 3 July 1999, p 8.

Political control and guidance of peace support operations in Africa: A UN commander's view

Henry Anyidoho

INTRODUCTION

The term peace support operations has certainly gained recognition in the dictionary of conflict management, and so has the study of its many facets. A solution to any problem must obviously first of all be based on factors and deductions drawn from these factors. These deductions will suggest many courses of action and the adopted course of action will produce a plan. The plan will spell out the mission.

In the execution of the plan, there must necessarily be some mechanisms in place that will ensure that every step taken, is geared towards the achievement of the mission. Some of these mechanisms can be described as control measures and guidance. Peace support operations are fundamentally political problem-solving exercises, and must therefore necessarily have some control measures and guidance in place.

As simple as the words 'control' and 'guidance' may appear, it may be worthwhile to consider their definitions. Control may be defined as 'the power or authority to direct, order or manage'. Guidance, on the other hand, is explained as 'help or advice given to somebody by someone in authority'. By arranging and combining the definitions of these two terms, they simply amount to 'an authority that directs or orders or gives advice to somebody to act in a particular way'.

The topic at hand therefore has to do with the nature of contemporary peace support operations and the issue of some form of political authority giving direction, advice and help to peace support operations in Africa. The problem that is considered is whether or not it is right, appropriate and necessary for such political direction and, if so, what the advantages and disadvantages are of the present system of control and guidance to peace support operations.

Finally, a few suggestions are made, from a UN force commander's perspective, on measures that could be applied to make such control and guidance more effective.

THE NATURE OF PEACE SUPPORT IN AFRICA

The term 'peace support operations' takes its root from what the UN originally simply referred to as peacekeeping operations. Over time, however, it became clear that there are many stages of

managing conflict, hence the introduction of the term peace support operation. Historically, Africa first experienced UN operations in the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in the early 1960s. This was the first time that a UN force was deployed in Africa. The UN Congo Operation was the largest third-party peacekeeping effort ever to be authorised by any international organisation in the early history of the UN. During its four years of operation, from 1960 to 1964, a total of over 93 000 soldiers from 35 countries served in the Congo. Since this event, there have been many UN engagements in every region of the African continent, beginning with operations in Namibia and Angola in 1989 and extending during the 1990s to Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Liberia. UN operations in the Central African Republic are ongoing and there are embryonic missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In most of these cases, operations have been established amidst political turmoil. The civil administration had broken down and state authority had often collapsed following bitter intrastate conflict. Indeed, some of the states became ungovernable for many years. In all cases, law and order were affected in one way or the other. Under such conditions, there was a need to re-establish the necessary authority to enable a return to good governance and stability.

Good governance implies the existence of a due political process and the rule of law, which are essential elements in building an effective relationship between people and their governments and to create the necessary environment for sustainable development. How will a due political authority be established in a failed state for example, after the UN has authorised a peace support operation? There should be certain procedures that will ensure a systematic return to the desired situation. These procedures are inextricably linked to the issue of control and guidance.

COMMAND AND CONTROL MECHANISMS

With the evolution of peacekeeping into more complex peace support operations, the UN has endeavoured to find a satisfactory way to direct the affairs of such missions. A number of experiments have been conducted during past missions. For example, in the Congo in the 1960s, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) was the head of the mission, with the chief of UN Civilian Operations and the commander of the UN force as his immediate subordinates. In the case of Cyprus, the force commander and the SRSG held equal status at the initial stages of the mission. Currently, all UN missions have an SRSG as head and these changes have been as a result of experiences gained in earlier missions.

This does not mean that the SRSG commands the force commander, instead he gives political direction to him. It is up to the force commander to analyse these political directives from time to time as he focuses his attention on the command of his troops. The force commander exercises operational control over all military contingents and every contingent has its own commander, appointed by its home government. However, this simple division of authority does not necessarily mean that there is a harmonious relationship between the SRSG and the force commander.

The problems that have been plaguing UN missions as far as the relationship between the positions of the SRSG and the force commander are concerned, stem from the fact that wrong steps are often initially taken when appointing individuals to fill these very sensitive offices. Basically, the Security Council exercises political control and guidance through the Secretary-General or his designated agent, the head of the mission. The authority that appoints the SRSG also appoints the force commander. If good judgement and care are exercised in the selection

process, there should be harmony in the field. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

For example, in the establishment of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), General Romeo Dallaire, the first force commander, was also the leader of the technical survey team to Rwanda prior to the establishment of the mission. When he was subsequently appointed as commander, he arrived in Rwanda more than three months before the SRSG was appointed. This obviously created fertile ground for disharmony. After successfully 'running the show' for a considerable time, the force commander had to hand over the reins and descend to a second position.

Another issue that causes a strained relationship is the personalities that hold both of these key appointments on a particular mission. If the incumbents hold divergent views, or for any reason become tilted to one side in the conflict, then the game is about to be lost. If, on the other hand, a mission is lucky to have agreeable characters with a common purpose (to achieve the set goals), then the mission will be on course. Of course, a lot of other parameters affect the success of a mission, but nothing can be more devilish, discouraging and destructive than having an SRSG and a force commander who do not agree. This type of situation can create a worse conflict than the original one between the warring factions.

The relationship between the SRSG and the force commander also extends to the issue of impartiality in dealing with the parties to the conflict. The SRSG and the force commander should avoid any act that can be misinterpreted to mean inclination towards one faction or the other under all circumstances. For example, acceptance of an invitation to dinner may not appear to be a serious issue, but in a strife-torn situation, the individuals you talk to and socialise with can take on a much deeper meaning. Balanced thinking, a correct attitude, and awareness of an ever-changing situation are the qualities that commanders must have. A neutral stance helps the SRSG and the commander to exercise effective control.

THE NECESSITY FOR POLITICAL CONTROL AND GUIDANCE

In any well-established peace support operation, *mandates* will have to be given. Indeed, mandates bring peace missions into being. Budgets accompany mandates and spell out objectives to be achieved during such operations. The question is why further political control and guidance of peace support operations are necessary.

It has already been indicated that something must have certainly gone very wrong with a country before the establishment of a peace support operation. This is very evident in the appalling conflict situations that were witnessed and continue to be witnessed on the African continent. In all cases, there is a good deal of shuttle diplomacy before, during and after the conflict. As conflicts escalate, diplomacy picks up or assumes an even greater importance. General Erskine notes, for example, in his book **Mission with UNIFIL**, that the "*UN Emergency Force II effectively established in Sinai and reduced tension between Egypt and Israel, making it possible for the peacemaking process to gain momentum.*" He gave the credit for the mission's success to Dr Henry Kissinger's strenuous and pioneering shuttle diplomacy.

In Africa, the Arusha Accord that preceded the establishment of UNAMIR is well-known. So too is the Lusaka Accord of November 1994 that gave birth to UNAVEM II. Again, the most recent diplomatic efforts in the DRC, the signing in August 1999 of the Lusaka cease-fire agreement, and the many diplomatic efforts culminating in the Lomé Accord that seems to bring a ray of hope to Sierra Leone, are all fresh in people's memories. Who are those who conduct these meetings and conferences, which eventually result in the signing of agreements that, in turn,

pave the way for the establishment of missions, or lead to the amicable solution of such conflicts? By and large, they have been and will continue to be politicians and diplomats.

Both the 52nd session of the General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General's report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa list the factors driving conflicts as historical legacies, internal factors, external factors, economic motives and particular situations. Soldiers do not normally discuss these issues; they are matters best dealt with by scholars, historians, politicians, diplomats and eminent personalities.

Politics are inextricably linked to the very root causes of conflicts. For example, the conflict in the Congo in the early 1960s started with the emergence of nationalist movements striving towards independence. They were political movements. The Rwandese Patriotic Front is a political movement that gave birth to the Rwandese Patriotic Army. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia led by Charles Taylor was a political organisation that fought the civil war with other political organisations and the Liberian Army for over seven years. More recently, in Sierra Leone, it is clear that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) is a political organisation.

In nine cases out of ten, there is a struggle for power to rule a group of people or a nation. The orientation is ultimately towards political power. Unfortunately, the drive towards political power often escalates into violence and the violence results in the breakdown of law and order, which in certain cases leads to a complete failure of governments.

What have been witnessed in recent years is that, in the struggle for power, atrocities are committed, women and children are killed or maimed, and the survivors become homeless and subsequently internally displaced. The established authority breaks down and most often has to be rebuilt from scratch. Who will be the main players in returning such conflict-devastated states to normalcy if the situation has to return to good governance? Do rebels know how to run the state machinery? Is the primary job for the military directed at the running of the state machinery? Is their basic job politics? The answer is an unambiguous *no*.

The only logical step under such conditions of anarchy will be to put in charge those who have received adequate training in the field of politics and diplomacy. This is obviously the reason why deliberate efforts are made to nominate seasoned diplomats and personalities with a reputable background in mediation and negotiations to lead peace support operations.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF POLITICAL CONTROL AND GUIDANCE OF PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The force commander's primary aim is simply to achieve his operational objectives. The military objectives are carved out of the mandate of the mission. All being well, there should be no disagreements between those charged with the responsibility of running a peace support operation, since every operation aims at achieving the overall aim of the peace mission. However, misunderstandings often arise from the fact that, when the commander analyses the mandate of the mission and identifies certain tasks that he must undertake to achieve his objectives, he may not be allowed to do so.

For example, there have been occasions in the past when force commanders were not granted the authority to carry out operations that they considered crucial to the attainment of some of their objectives — such as conducting a cordon and search operation in order to make a particular zone safe. The approval for operations like these has not been granted by the UN on many occasions, particularly because of their failure in places such as Somalia, but also

because some UN troops (such as some of those in UNAMIR) were ill-equipped for these tasks. On the other hand, there have also been instances where authority was given and the results became disastrous for the peace support troops themselves.

There have been yet other instances where commanders on the ground have carried out operations without necessarily receiving a clear-cut approval from New York, and where such operations have succeeded to the credit of the UN. An example from Rwanda was the cordon and search operation in the Kibeho and Ndagogo camps for internally displaced persons. Killings by the militia were reported in these camps and the Rwandese Patriotic Army became very agitated. The Rwandese government wanted something to be done about the situation and the UNAMIR commander decided to carry out an operation to rid the camps of all warlike materials and to arrest suspected criminals.

The plan was communicated to New York while preparations were under way. After answering many enquiries from UN Headquarters, some sort of vague approval was received just about at the time when the operation, code-named 'Hope' was about to be launched. Cordon and search operations were subsequently executed without any casualties to UNAMIR forces. In the process, a large quantity of assorted warlike materials was seized, to the admiration of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Rwandese authorities and the international media. This turned out to be an operation that restored confidence in the entire UNAMIR force. Where authorisation is unclear, it is often a question of weighing the advantages of success against the possible disadvantages of operational failure.

Quite frankly, indecision during tense moments creates a lot of friction between those that give political directives and force commanders. The examples from UN missions are numerous. Nevertheless, the advantages of some form of political control and guidance clearly outweigh the disadvantages. It is essentially the struggle for political power that leads to the breakdown of law and order. The world will accept the situation as normal only if a due political process is restored.

Who will ensure that this occurs? How can good governance be established without appropriate political direction? Indeed, who are the parties involved in establishing a mission in the first place? They are the diplomats and politicians. Whether it is at the level of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) or the UN, it is a group of diplomats and politicians that will take the decision. Without a mandate, there will be no peace support operation.

Politicians and diplomats also know whom to talk to in order to get the *financial support* for the conduct of a peace support operation. Indeed, donor communities deal with diplomats and politicians. They do not normally communicate with military men or force commanders.

Apart from the simple issue of funding, it has generally been accepted that the presence of troops in any peace support operation is just one aspect of solving the problem. There are many other actors in the field: NGOs, UN agencies, church leaders, eminent citizens, and the media also have prominent roles to play. All these various actors need to be co-ordinated and their efforts harmonised towards a solution to the problem.

Admittedly, the force commander is a major player in the process, but he and his forces in the theatre only play their part in stabilising the security situation. They are not the custodians of good governance, and good governance means a return to due political process. Ultimately, democratisation, the observance of human rights and economic development continue to constitute the most valid insurance policies against the social chaos and instability that

precipitate armed conflicts.

However, there is a downside to political control and guidance. The negative consequences of political indecision — of foot dragging when very important decisions must be taken — have already been mentioned. Those that the SRSG consults in New York often do not have adequate or in-depth knowledge of the situation on the ground. This is especially so when fresh violence erupts and the situation keeps changing by the hour. Any loss of time is immediately translated into the potential loss of many lives.

Sometimes, there is also tension between political control and guidance, and military command at the theatre level as well. For example, in Rwanda at one stage, the SRSG was relocated to Nairobi in Kenya, while the civil war in Rwanda continued. How could the SRSG give an accurate description of the situation, let alone issue any meaningful directives? When guns are firing, shells are exploding and fear is rife, it will be the person trained to withstand such emergencies that will normally stand up to the test.

Another area of concern relates to the position and status of the chief administrative officer. While the SRSG is the head of the mission, and the force commander commands the many officers and individuals in the contingents, there is this all-powerful position of the chief administrative officer. Neither the SRSG, nor the force commander has control over the finances of any UN mission. It is the chief administrative officer who controls the 'purse'. This state of affairs renders the two men at the top powerless. Instant decisions concerning minor expenditures that could go a long way to boost the morale of troops or enhance their operational efficiency cannot be effected because of lengthy bureaucratic procedures in the UN system.

For example, when the civil war broke out in Rwanda, the force commander needed to get food and water to the troops as a matter of urgency. These are the basic necessities of life, but his staff could not make any procurement from the nearest point of availability. The chief administrative officer had been relocated to Nairobi, and simply did not share the same sense of urgency with the force commander.

Another large gap, which is often felt in the control of UN missions, is the lack of adequate and accurate *intelligence*. In a purely military sense, commanders require intelligence upon which to base operational plans. The UN resists using the phrase 'intelligence gathering', since this implies 'spying' on its member states. Whichever terminology is used, there is a pressing need to have information upon which plans can be formulated and executed. The absence of an intelligence or information gathering system within UN missions has created a gap that was filled in certain cases by unreliable and unco-ordinated news from NGOs and the news media. There is no way control can be effectively exercised without appropriate information or intelligence.

Finally, the much vaunted issue of political will cannot be separated from the issue of political control and guidance. A serious disadvantage in the control of peace support operations in Africa is the absence of *political will*. There may be some form of political control over a peace support operation, but what about the political will to see that such a mission succeeds? African governments tend to show no continued interest in peace support operations after they have been launched. Often there is no direct communication link between the mission and OAU headquarters, and the organisation cannot bring the requisite pressure to bear on member states to support the peace process. For example, when an embargo is placed on the supply of arms to a conflict-torn country, the neighbouring states simply do not feel obliged to enforce such an instrument.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to give some meaning to the concept of political control and guidance in peace support operations, and to emphasise the fact that political control is indeed necessary. The reasons for the latter have been clearly outlined. It is essentially the struggle for political power that gives birth to most conflicts that, in turn, necessitate the establishment of peace support operations. It is therefore only appropriate that those who know the game of politics and diplomacy are called upon to direct the affairs of such missions when they are established.

Care must be exercised, however, in selecting the individuals in whose hands these important assignments are entrusted. There is the need to have a common objective, and there must be a harmonious relationship between the SRSG and his force commander. The need for political will to support the political control and guidance cannot be overemphasised. Under all circumstances, financial authority and well-established systems of communication and intelligence must be given to those at the helm of affairs of any peace support operation.

In conclusion, the issues may be summarised in the following suggestions towards improved political control and guidance of peace missions in Africa:

The appointment of the SRSG, or the head of the mission, and the force commander should be done at the same time, and both persons should begin to co-ordinate their plans at the very outset.

Throughout the life of any peace support operation, the head of the mission and the force commander should remain in constant consultation with each other and, in turn, remain in close contact with the authorities that establish the mission, whether this is the UN or OAU Headquarters. In the case of African conflicts, the OAU must show enough interest not only by appointing one individual to the city in which the mission headquarters is established, but must also properly co-ordinate and co-operate with the UN mission on the ground.

The present system where the chief administrative officer controls all the finances of a UN mission, thereby delaying execution of many plans, should be reviewed. The SRSG is the head and the force commander commands forces that may number in the thousands, so they should ideally have some financial authority.

The question of intelligence is so crucial to the success of any mission that both the SRSG and the force commander must be supported by strong intelligence and reliable communication networks if the peace support operation is to succeed.

Political will is essential on the part of heads of state in a particular conflict region. In particular, arms flows to a conflict area must be stopped by the political authorities of neighbouring states. Moreover, those that control the decision-making process at UN headquarters should show enough resolve to make a peace support operation a success once it has been mandated

Note

Brigadier General Henry Anyidoho is a former force commander of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda. He is currently the Commander of 2 Infantry Brigade Group, Ghana Armed Forces.

United Nations operations in Southern Africa: Mandate, means and doctrine in UNAVEM III

Philip Sibanda

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this article, all countries situated completely or partially wholly south of the equator have been categorised as Southern Africa. Since the early 1960s, the United Nations (UN) has conducted the following military and police operations in six countries in this region:

the UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo (ONUC) from June 1960 to June 1964;
the UN Angola Verification Missions (UNAVEM I — III) from January 1989 to June 1997;
the UN Transitional Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG) from April 1989 to March 1990;
the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) from December 1992 to December 1994;
the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) from October 1993 to March 1996;
the UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) from June 1997 to date; and
most recently, the UN Operation in the Congo (MONUC).

As is the procedure in the UN, the establishment of each of these missions was preceded by a Security Council resolution that spelled out the name of the mission, its mandate and duration.

The mandate of a given mission determines the nature of the mission — whether it is purely an observer mission, comprising civilian police or military observers with some civilian input or a combination of these, or whether it is a peacekeeping or peace enforcement mission. The mandate also always states other tasks of a humanitarian nature that have to be undertaken during the life of a mission.

The aim of this contribution is to provide a brief overview of UN operations in Southern Africa, with specific reference to their mandates, before focusing, in particular, on the mandate, means and doctrine that were applicable in UNAVEM III.

MANDATES FROM PAST AND PRESENT UN MISSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Congo Kinshasa

In 1960, the UN Security Council, through Resolution 143, established ONUC. The main aspects of this mission's mandate were to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces, to assist the government to maintain law and order and to provide technical assistance. The mandate was further modified to include the maintenance of the political integrity and political independence of the Congo, and the prevention of civil war, and to secure the removal of all foreign military and paramilitary personnel not under UN command from the Congo.

UNAMIR

In October 1993, the UN established UNAMIR for an initial period of six months through Security Council Resolution 872. UNAMIR was a successor to the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG). It was a peacekeeping mission, and its mandate was mainly to ensure the security of the capital Kigali, to monitor the cease-fire signed on 4 August

1992, to monitor the situation during the period of the transitional government's rule, leading up to the elections, and to assist with mineclearing and the co-ordination of humanitarian relief operations. After the resumption of hostilities, the mission's mandate was expanded to include the protection of refugees through the establishment of secure humanitarian areas.

UNAVEM series of missions

From December 1988 to June 1997, the UN established and sustained a series of three missions in Angola. UNAVEM I was established through Security Council Resolution 626 of December 1988. UNAVEM II was established through Security Council Resolution 696 of 1991. The UNAVEM I mandate was, in effect, extended to UNAVEM II in 1991. UNAVEM I was to have a duration of 31 months, while UNAVEM II was to have a duration of 17 months. UNAVEM III was created by Security Council Resolution 976 of February 1995, for a period of 24 months. More specifically, the mandates of these missions were as follows:

UNAVEM I was to verify the redeployment of Cuban troops northwards of the Namibian border and their total withdrawal from Angola in accordance with the timetable agreed to between Angola and Cuba. This task was successfully accomplished by the end of May 1991.

UNAVEM II took over where UNAVEM I left off, and its broad objectives were the verification of the arrangements agreed to between the Angolan government and UNITA, before and during the UNAVEM I period, pertaining to the cease-fire and the neutrality of the Angolan police. It was also to verify the elections in the country scheduled for September 1992. UNAVEM II was an observer mission with a combination of civilian police and military observers, as well as a civilian staff complement comprising international civilian staff and election observers.

After the failure of UNAVEM II in 1992, and the subsequent return of the country to full-scale war, UNAVEM III took over from UNAVEM II in February 1995. This was two years after the resumption of the war, and the mission's broad objective was to pick up the pieces of the peace process from where UNAVEM II had left and to complete it. The mission's mandate was therefore very much linked to the UNAVEM II mandate. In addition, the mission was to provide good offices and mediation to the parties; monitor and verify the extension of state administration throughout the country; verify the disengagement of forces; monitor troop movements; verify information received from both the government and UNITA regarding their forces; assist with the establishment of quartering areas; verify the quartering of UNITA troops and the withdrawal of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) to barracks; supervise the collection and storage of weapons belonging to UNITA; verify the completion of the formation of the FAA; verify the free circulation of people and goods; verify the neutrality of the Angolan police; and verify the disarming of the civilian population and the quartering of the Rapid Reaction Police.

UNTAG

The UN Transitional Assistance Group in Namibia was created by Security Council Resolutions 431 and 435 of 1998, as supported by Resolution 682 of 1989. This mission was established to assist the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to ensure the early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision of the UN. The mission was also to help the SRSG in ensuring that all hostile acts ended, troops were confined to barracks and that the South African Defence Force was eventually withdrawn from Namibia.

Furthermore, all discriminatory laws were to be repealed, political prisoners released and refugees allowed to return.

ONUMOZ

The UN Operation in Mozambique was established by Security Council Resolution 797 of December 1992. Its broad objectives were to facilitate the impartial implementation of the agreement signed in Rome on 4 October 1992 between the president of Mozambique and the leader of RENAMO, to monitor and verify the cease-fire, and to verify the separation, regrouping and collection, storage and ultimate destruction of weapons and the demobilisation of fighters. They were to further verify the withdrawal of foreign forces from Mozambique and the disbanding of all irregular groups before certifying the country ready for the holding of elections and thereafter monitoring the preparations for and the actual elections.

MONUA

The UN Observer Mission in Angola was a successor to UNAVEM III and, although it took over the UNAVEM III mandate and assets lock, stock and barrel, it was intended to gradually turn the mission into an observer mission as the parties to the conflict accomplished the remaining tasks of the peace process. At the same time, the mission was to allow for the repatriation of a number of peacekeepers. Unfortunately, this was not to be. The remaining tasks were not accomplished and the country slid back into war. In addition to the provisions of the UNAVEM III mandate, MONUA was to assist the Angolan parties in consolidating peace and national reconciliation, and foster an environment conducive to long-term stability and the rehabilitation of the country.

MONUC

The UN Observer Mission in the Congo was established by Security Council Resolution 1258 of August 1999. It is an observer mission and is intended to be a precursor to a peacekeeping mission. Its mandate is as follows:

to establish contact and maintain liaison with the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and all parties to the (Lusaka) cease-fire agreement;

to assist the JMC and the parties in developing modalities for the implementation of the agreement;

to provide technical assistance as requested by the JMC;

to provide information to the Secretary-General regarding the situation on the ground and to assist in refining a concept of operations for a possible further role for the UN in the implementation of the agreement once it is signed by all parties; and

to secure guarantees of co-operation and assurances of security from the parties for the possible deployment of Military Observers.

MANDATE VERSUS MEANS IN UNAVEM III

As already alluded to, the resources made available to a mission are determined by the mandate. However, the quantity, quality and mix of the resources that are provided, are not always commensurate with the tasks outlined in the mandate. When talking about means or

resources, the adequacy of the mandate itself should therefore be examined.

A clear and concise mandate creates an enabling environment for the conduct of all activities pertaining to a particular mission. An ambiguous mandate creates confusion and leads to arguments between UN personnel and the belligerents. Many times during the UNAVEM mission, UN personnel have been told by one or both of the belligerents that they are overstepping their mandate. This usually occurs when the belligerents find weaknesses in the mandate, although at times, this also happens where there is a belief that not all UN personnel fully understand their mandate and can therefore be 'threatened' to desist from undertaking some of their mandated tasks, which a belligerent party may consider to be interfering with its activities.

While the UNAVEM III mandate was clear and concise, the belligerents chose to argue with UN personnel over the question of overstepping their mandate. As an example, the government prevented UN personnel from entering the harbour area in Luanda on a number of occasions, while UNITA checkpoints either denied or delayed UN patrols along certain roads, or prevented UN personnel from verifying certain items delivered by plane, claiming that they were non-lethal and were therefore not subject to verification.

With regard to personnel and equipment, these certainly did not match the mandated tasks. For example, the peacekeeping personnel requirement submitted to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) before the commencement of the mission was for some 15 000 soldiers, but the Security Council authorised only 7 000. Motor vehicles for police and military observers and other supporting staff were also generally inadequate and, except for a few that were purchased during the life of the mission, were old and had been shipped to Angola from other UN missions that had closed down in places such as Somalia and Cambodia.

According to the mission standing operating procedures, each observer team site was supposed to operate with three vehicles, and each patrol was to consist of two vehicles, while one remained to execute administrative duties at the team site. There were very few occasions when this was achieved. This inadequacy meant that observers were at times unable to accomplish their tasks, or did so in violation of the standing operating procedures.

Air transport was another area where there were glaring inadequacies. The mission had seven M18 helicopters, five Casa 212 light transport aircraft (which were later replaced by Cessna Caravans), two Beach Craft B200 light aircraft, and two Hercules C130 medium transporters (which were from time to time augmented by one Boeing 727 or an Ilyushin 76). While the fixed-wing aircraft complement was almost adequate, the helicopter fleet was most inadequate. The requirement was for at least fourteen, but only seven were provided. These could not adequately cater for the needs of the mission in a vast country like Angola, where the road network had been severely damaged by years of war and a lack of maintenance.

In general terms, resources made available to UNAVEM III were therefore inadequate and this was attributed to inadequate funding. From a force commander's perspective, it seemed as if the Security Council 'wished' to achieve maximum results from low inputs.

DOCTRINE

The UN doctrine for Chapter VI operations is standard. It is based on the principles of confidence-building between the belligerents, and between the belligerents and the UN personnel; on impartiality on the part of UN personnel when dealing with belligerents; and on restricted use of force, only for self-defence and the protection of UN property and lives. Another

principle which is part of this doctrine is support for humanitarian activities.

Confidence-building between the belligerents took the form of daily or weekly meetings between the liaison officers of the belligerents chaired by the UN at team sites, at battalion or company headquarters (where these were not co-located with team sites), at regional headquarters, and at the Armed Conflict Prevention Group and the Joint Commission (both located in Luanda). The aim was to ensure that the belligerents did not misinterpret activities related to the peace process which each of the parties was undertaking. For example, the movement of large groups of UNITA elements to given locations in preparation for quartering could be misconstrued as preparations to attack government troop positions. On the other hand, movements by government forces from forward positions were not to be misconstrued by UNITA as regrouping in preparation to attack its positions.

Confidence between the parties and the UN personnel was built through the latter's impartiality when dealing with complaints raised by the parties, and by the provision of communication radios to some key personnel from the parties who were in isolated locations in the early part of the mission. Credibility was another important factor related to impartiality which helped to create confidence between the parties and the UN personnel.

Although UNAVEM III lost some lives due to mines and bandit activities, only on one occasion did UN personnel use weapons to repel a group of armed bandits who had attacked a convoy that they were escorting in the Villa Nova area of Huambo Province. While the peacekeepers had a deterrent capability when deployed as a unit-sized group in one general area, the question that always nagged the mission command was the diminished fire power of these troops once deployed in companies, some as far away as 200 kilometres from other troop locations. The force commander's concerns were further compounded by the non-existence of an air mobile reserve which could be used either to reinforce or to extract these troops in case of need. There is therefore a need for planners at DPKO to balance the Chapter VI principle of restricted use of force with a credible deterrent, coupled with a deployment concept that does not lead to the penny pocketing of troops.

Finally, the principle of support for humanitarian activities — besides bringing the locals and the UN personnel together — brings much needed relief to people who would be in serious need of food and other basics of life in most cases. This principle should not be divorced from any UN peacekeeping or peace enforcement doctrine.

CONCLUSION

Peacekeeping missions are complex undertakings that require clearcut mandates and that should have a set time limit. The mandate will determine whether a mission is purely an observer mission, an assistance mission, a peacekeeping mission or a peace enforcement mission.

The means to support the missions are determined by the mandate, and although the means should be adequately allocated in order to achieve the intended objectives, this is not always the case. Therefore, missions sometimes fail as a result of this under-providing of resources. This, to an extent, was the case with UNAVEM III.

Note

Major-General P V Sibanda serves in the Zimbabwe National Army. He is a former force commander of the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

ECOMOG operations in West Africa: Principles and praxis

E T Dowyaro

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a non-standing military force consisting of land, sea and air components, that was set up by member states of the ECOWAS to deal with the security problem that followed the collapse of the formal state structure in the Republic of Liberia in 1990. The force successfully restored an atmosphere that permitted the reinstatement of a functional state structure in Liberia. It is currently engaged in the process of re-establishing the authority of the democratic order and ending a nine-year savage civil war in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

The success of the force — despite numerous shortcomings and some failures — has attracted international attention. But in order to understand the operations of ECOMOG, it is necessary to provide a bird's eye view of the nature of the political states that created the force, the type of security threat that faces them collectively and individually, and the external interests at play in the West African subregion.

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of the evolution and conduct of ECOMOG operations in West Africa. In particular, a background to the development of the ECOWAS conflict resolution mechanism provides the basis for an understanding of the authority and political dynamics that have influenced ECOMOG in the field. The focus then falls on the concept and conduct of operations, before concluding with some observations on the problems and prospects facing ECOMOG as a subregional peace support force.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE WEST AFRICAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISM

ECOWAS and the idea of allied armed forces

As mentioned above, ECOMOG is a military force formed by member states of ECOWAS from units of their national armed forces. ECOWAS itself consists of sixteen member states with a total population estimated at some 216.2 million people. The official languages of member states are English, French, Portuguese and Arabic. The economy of member states is predominantly agricultural and their major exports are petroleum, gold, diamond, bauxite, iron, coffee, timber, cotton and groundnut. The main external economic investors in the subregion are France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Arabs of Lebanese and Syrian origin. Internal official trade between member states is low due to poor interstate infrastructures (particularly road, railway and telecommunications); different colonial histories and heritages; and deep-seated distrust between the ruling élite. However, informal crossborder trade and population movement are quite widespread.

The population of the subregion is dominated by young people, most of whom lack education, technical skills and the general prerequisites to function effectively in a modern economy. There

is a wide disparity in distribution of wealth and income among the population and between the urban centres and rural areas. Consequently, there is constant pressure on the governments of member states to increase the tempo of development in both urban centres and rural areas. However, these governments lack the resources to provide what the youthful population needs, and this creates a process of permanent agitation for change that is not clearly defined beyond the demands for an immediate improvement in living conditions.

West Africa, therefore, is a hotbed of political, economic and social agitation that has resulted in the growth of insurgent and revolutionary movements supported largely by economically marginalised youths and estranged members of the élite. The governments that have emerged from this environment tend towards autocracy and repression, while the political system favours the exclusion of the opposition and opposing views. This is achieved either through one-party structures or outright military rule. The security structure of states is devoted to the preservation of the regime and the undermining of those who oppose it. The latter often includes the rulers of neighbouring states.

Healthy competition for development among states is what every seriously minded person desires, but deep-rooted suspicion and rivalry between the ruling classes of the various member states have created a fertile ground for outside interest to undermine the élite of these countries. These outside interests are sometimes pure private economic interests with designs on monopolising the export trade of particular states, especially their mineral resources and produce, or they can include those who seek to control the state political structure for criminal purposes. In addition, there are those who have found the drug trade very lucrative, and who want to manipulate state structures to ensure that they have maximum gain from hard drugs.

The security problem among the various member states is compounded by the multi-ethnic nature of these states. Without exception, all states in West Africa are a forced amalgamation of different nationalities, some with opposing cultural value systems. These states were put together at the turn of the century by France, the UK, Portugal and Germany for their own administrative and economic convenience.

Consequently, internal struggle for political power and economic privileges between the élite of the various national groups is a constant factor in the politics of the subregion. In many instances, the nationalities which make up these states find themselves dispersed over more than one state, and the élite of these divided nationalities assist one another to gain power in their respective states of residence. Once such goals are achieved, the successful rebels try to export such ideas across their borders into countries that are otherwise stable.

By the late 1970s, West African leaders had recognised that they needed to pool their resources to address the various internal security problems in their respective countries — problems that often overflowed to their neighbours. They realised early enough that the success of an insurgent or revolutionary movement in one country is bound to spread to others. Consequently, they signed a non-aggression pact in Lagos, Nigeria in 1978. However, this Non-Aggression Treaty only addressed the issue of the open support that the various ruling classes might give to the opponents of incumbent rulers. It failed to address the issue of the various insurgent movements that were threatening most of the regimes internally.

It was in recognition of the fact that the Non-Aggression Treaty did not provide mutual security against the very real threats of internal insurrection that the member states, prodded by Nigeria and Ghana, negotiated and signed the Protocol on Mutual Defence Assistance in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 29 May 1989. The Protocol provided for a non-standing military force to be

used to render mutual military aid and assistance to a member state that falls victim to external aggression. However, the actual purpose of the Protocol is evident in Article 4(b). This provides for a collective response where a member state is a victim of internal armed conflict that is engineered and supported actively from outside, and which is likely to endanger the peace and security of other member states.

Under Article 18(2) of the Protocol, member states are not entitled to intervene militarily if the internal armed conflict poses no danger outside the borders of the afflicted state, and if it is not supported from outside. In order to secure the military assistance of the Community, the head of state of the country desiring assistance is required to ask for it in writing through the chairperson of ECOWAS. Once received, such a letter serves as a signal for the military force of the Community to be placed on an emergency footing.

The nature and composition of the military force envisaged under the Protocol is defined in Chapter V, Articles 13 and 14. It was to be known as the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC). Each member state was required to earmark units from its national armed forces that, in an emergency, would be placed at the service of the Community. The AAFC was to be under the command of a force commander who would be appointed by the head of state who chaired the Community on recommendation of the Defence Council of the Community, which consists of the ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of member states. The force commander is to act in concert with the chief of defence staff of the particular member state that receives military assistance from the Community.

According to the Protocol, the AAFC would be used as follows:

Where two member states are in conflict, the Community will interpose the AAFC between them as a peacekeeping force.

Where a member state is the victim of internal armed conflict supported from outside and its head of state has requested military assistance from the Community in writing, the AAFC will be sent to it as an intervention force.

Although the Protocol was invoked with respect to the Liberian crisis of 1989/90, the AAFC never materialised. Rather, a smaller group of ECOWAS member states put together the intervention force known as ECOMOG.

From AAFC to ECOMOG

Since ECOMOG operations started with Liberia, it is necessary to discuss some of the events in the country that led to the creation of the regional force. On 12 April 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe took advantage of the absence of the senior officers who had planned the *coup* to terminate the oligarchic government of President William Tolbert. When these officers saw that the marines had actually assassinated President Tolbert at the executive mansion in Monrovia, they took to their heels. Master Sergeant Doe, realising that he was now the most senior among the soldiers at the executive mansion, declared himself head of state. Among his subordinates was Charles McArthur Ghankay Taylor, a member of the General Services Agency (GSA) at the time.

In an attempt to legitimise his rule, Doe organised an election in 1985 and declared that he had won. Meanwhile, Charles Taylor had embezzled government funds and escaped to the United States. On 24 December 1989, Taylor spearheaded an insurgent movement, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to overthrow the government of President Samuel Doe. Taylor

was supported by the late President of Côte d'Ivoire, Felix Houphet-Boigny, who was an in-law and had been a close friend of President William Tolbert.

The NPFL made rapid military gains and, by the middle of June 1990, were fighting in the vicinity of the Liberian capital, Monrovia. The fighting was of a most savage nature. The combatants respected neither life nor property and killed Liberian nationals and foreigners indiscriminately. Civilians were particularly targeted in the conflict. They were murdered in their thousands and in the most brutal manner. The result was a massive refugee problem as thousands of civilians fled to neighbouring countries.

The internal security situation further deteriorated when the commander of the advance unit of the NPFL that was operating in the vicinity of Monrovia, Prince Yormie Johnson, revolted against Charles Taylor and formed his own armed movement. Liberia gradually started sliding into anarchy as the government of President Doe was clearly losing the capacity to protect life and property, enforce law and order, or even to carry out the normal routine of administration. Thousands of foreign nationals were trapped in the fighting. Many of them fled for safety to their embassies, churches or with international relief agencies, but they were chased from these supposed places of refuge and massacred by Liberian combatants. Many countries that attempted to evacuate their nationals could not do so because of the state of anarchy.

It was under these terrible conditions that President Doe called on the Community to assist him to restore normality in his country. His request was a test case for the Protocol on Mutual Defence Assistance. The government of President Doe was clearly unpopular at home and was on the verge of military defeat by the insurgents. In addition, Doe himself was not on good terms with his neighbours — particularly Côte d'Ivoire, an influential country among Francophone members of the Community. On the other hand, President Doe was a friend of General Ibrahim Babaginda, the president of Nigeria and the most powerful country in the Community.

The request by Liberia for assistance therefore split the Community. The Anglophone countries, led by Nigeria, were prepared to assist, while the Francophone countries were opposed to military intervention. They preferred dialogue and negotiations, which suited Côte d'Ivoire, because their protégé, Charles Taylor, was on the verge of a military victory despite his problems with the breakaway faction of Prince Yormie Johnson.

On 7 August 1990, with all semblance of government having disappeared in Liberia, the Anglophone countries under the auspices of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (which they dominated), met in Banjul, the capital of The Gambia and took a decision to send a military force to intervene in the conflict in Liberia. The Francophone members of the Community, with the exception of Guinea (the only Francophone member of the Standing Mediation Committee), were opposed to the military intervention.

The intervention force was designated ECOMOG and troops were contributed by Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The force was placed under the command of a Ghanaian general, while the bulk of the land and naval forces and the entire air force was contributed by Nigeria. The force was given the mandate to restore law and order in Liberia, to create an environment that will allow humanitarian operations, and to secure a peaceful atmosphere that will facilitate cease-fire negotiations. There is considerable evidence that the US supported the initiative of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee. It is also important to note at this stage that the initial troop-contributing countries were all members of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee. At a later stage, Senegal, as a result of Nigeria's persuasion, contributed troops. However, the Senegalese withdrew their contingent after it had

suffered five casualties and constant harassment, including being taken hostage by NPFL combatants.

ECOMOG troops under General Quinoo landed in Liberia on 24 August 1990. They quickly secured the Freeport in Monrovia with the co-operation of Prince Yormie Johnson and President Samuel Doe and his Armed Forces of Liberia. Charles Taylor and his NPFL opposed the force, accusing it from its inception of a lack of neutrality. Perhaps the political atmosphere under which ECOMOG entered Liberia and began its march to history is best illustrated by the nature of the factions which supported its arrival. Prince Yormie Johnson and President Doe were sworn enemies of both Charles Taylor and each other. Each welcomed ECOMOG with a view to use it to advance his own political objectives. Doe wanted the force to restore his political authority, which would involve military action against Charles Taylor and Prince Yormie Johnson. Prince Yormie Johnson, on his part, wanted the force to relieve the military pressure on him from Taylor's forces, giving him the opportunity to reorganise and consolidate while waiting for an opportune moment to eliminate both President Doe and Charles Taylor.

AUTHORITY AND POLITICS OF ECOMOG OPERATIONS

ECOMOG is deployed and operates under the directives of the authority of the heads of state of ECOWAS. This authority is usually exercised, on behalf of all heads of state, by the head of state who has been elected by his colleagues as the current chairperson of the Community. Day-to-day issues and political directives are handled by the ECOWAS Secretariat, which is headed by an executive secretary. Military operations are entrusted to the force commander. There are also two other supervisory political structures — the Defence Council and the Defence Commission.

The Defence Council consists of the ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of member states and is headed by the current chairperson of the Community. It is this Council that examines the situation on the ground, decides the strategy to be adopted and the means of intervention to be used. The Defence Commission consists of chiefs of defence staff of the armed forces of member states. It is a purely technical committee that advises on military operations.

Until the recent meeting held in Lagos, Nigeria in April 1999, the governments of troop-contributing countries exercised considerable political control over their contingents — a factor with grave operational implications. The force commander did not have absolute operational command and control of the contingents under him and could not always deploy them according to his own operational appreciation. Usually, the home governments of the contingents dictate where and how troops from their countries will be deployed. Each contingent commander answers to both the force commander and his own chief of defence staff, and the views of the latter inevitably carry more weight than the former.

The effectiveness of ECOMOG depends directly on the level of political consensus existing within the community on how the mission it is engaged in should be handled. Achieving this consensus has been one of the biggest problems to plague ECOMOG operations. In Liberia, there was a clear division between the five members of the Standing Mediation Committee and the other eleven members of ECOWAS. In Sierra Leone, there was deep disagreement on when force should be employed and to what extent. This has led to situations where some member states actually offer their territories and give extensive support to the insurgent movements against which ECOMOG is conducting military operations.

ECOMOG should ideally be constituted and deployed at the sole discretion of member states.

This again has not been the case, because of the enormous influence and interest of the external economic investors in the politics of the subregion. Consequently, all ECOMOG operations are considerably influenced by extraregional interests. Sometimes, conflicts of interest between countries outside the subregion directly hamper the deployment, reinforcement and logistic support of troops engaged in ECOMOG missions. In Sierra Leone, for example, the limited interest of the US and the uncertain attitude of France have been major factors in the slow military progress of the troops on ground, despite considerable commitment by Nigeria.

ECOWAS member states lack the economic resources to sustain the kind of large-scale military operations that are dictated by situations the ground. Where the necessary political will is lacking among the Western powers, the level of logistics needed by commanders on the ground to get the job done, becomes equally absent. Consequently, ECOMOG military operations usually start off on a sound footing and then get bogged down by insufficient logistics. This creates the opportunity for Western powers to force negotiations and settlements that represent such a compromise that, in most cases, they satisfy no one.

The rivalry and deep suspicion between the ruling classes of West African states further complicate the political environment. Member states sometimes refuse to participate actively in, or even oppose ECOMOG operations because a rival member state played a prominent role in the decision to send troops or is seen to be taking credit for the initial start-up of the operation. In other cases, a statement giving prominence to the role of a particular country can trigger resistance and refusal to send troops from others.

There is also the fear of smaller countries of the dominant role of Nigeria in ECOMOG. Some fear that ECOMOG is a kind of imperial excuse used by Nigeria to interfere in the internal politics of smaller states. Although the evidence on the ground contradicts this fear, some non-regional countries have exploited it to discourage these countries from active participation in ECOMOG. Ironically, when some of these states are overwhelmed by their internal armed opposition, they start pleading for intervention by ECOMOG under Nigerian leadership or active participation. This scenario played itself out in Guinea-Bissau, where the regime of President Veira was very lukewarm to ECOMOG until he was overwhelmed by his own political enemies. His desperate effort to secure Nigerian participation in the ECOMOG force that was sent to his assistance failed. As it were, the entire operation failed and he was overthrown by his opponents.

The different colonial experience of member states is another political issue that affects ECOMOG operations. Francophone member states see the security goal of the subregion differently from Anglophone member states. They regard ECOWAS more in terms of economic co-operation and trade. They are not comfortable with the level of political integration which ECOMOG of necessity entails. Consequently, they see ECOMOG more as a military force designed to solve the security problem of Anglophone member states, using the collective economic resources of the entire Community. This attitude, coupled with their very close political, economic and security relationship with the former imperial metropolitan state see them adopting a lukewarm attitude to all ECOMOG operations. Indeed, many of the insurgent leaders enjoy very close relations with leaders of Francophone member states and have considerable economic investments in these countries.

THE CONCEPT OF ECOMOG OPERATIONS

The military missions that ECOMOG has carried out since it came into existence in 1990 may be categorised as follows:

intervention;
peace enforcement; and
peacekeeping.

The concept and nature of operations in each category are briefly discussed below, along with the key aspects of community relations, peacebuilding, and command and control.

Intervention missions

In its intervention operations, ECOMOG has usually been deployed at the request of a legal government to stop a situation from degenerating further into anarchy. Except for Guinea-Bissau, the *de jure* government was no longer able to carry out the function of governance. In Liberia, the government virtually existed only in the Presidential Palace while its opponents had little control over the actions and activities of combatants fighting for them. Consequently, civilians became principal targets of the conflict. The security and economy of neighbouring states were strained by the influx of refugees and criminal armed groups. In Sierra Leone, the government was removed in a military mutiny and the succeeding illegal regime could not control the activities of the enlisted ranks who carried out the mutiny. Thus, the state actually protected criminals who went plundering other people's property, raping women and murdering opponents. The *de jure* government was assisted by ECOMOG to return to power and reinstate law and order.

ECOMOG intervention missions have involved combat action against insurgents or factions which resist the authority of the *de jure* government. Such intervention missions are aimed at securing a cease-fire, creating a conducive atmosphere for negotiations and the protection of non-combatants through establishment of safe havens where civilians can escape from the savagery of the conflict and live a normal life under direct ECOMOG protection. Even though the principle of intervention is that the consent of the conflicting parties is needed before the intervention force can enter, situations prior to the intervention, in most cases, have not warranted securing the agreement of all the parties in the conflict.

This inability to secure the co-operation of all armed groupings before deployment has been a sore point with critics of ECOMOG. However, such critics should remember that, in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, these armed groupings had become indifferent to the suffering of the civilian population. In Sierra Leone, the illegal regime initially rebuffed efforts at a negotiated solution. When it was compelled to sign an agreement, it quickly reneged on it, thus leaving intervention as the only option left for ECOWAS leaders. In Liberia, the NPFL was opposed to any form of agreement that would halt its military action, because it believed it was on the verge of military victory. Meanwhile, the situation was actually slipping out of control. The country had descended into anarchy. The options were intervention or to allow the population of Monrovia either to be massacred by drug addicted combatants who were out of control, or to die as a result of starvation and disease.

Peace enforcement

All ECOMOG intervention operations have so far been successful. They have forced armed groups to accept negotiations that, in most cases, led to a cease-fire. ECOMOG is normally asked to monitor and enforce the provisions of the cease-fire. Because the factions that signed these cease-fire agreements do not do so in good faith, violations are rampant. This compels ECOMOG to use force to get the recalcitrant parties to adhere to what was agreed. Sometimes, this will involve outright and large-scale military operations against the most belligerent insurgent

group or groups. ECOMOG missions, at this stage, change from intervention to peace enforcement. At all stages, the ECOWAS Secretariat is kept informed.

Peace enforcement operations of ECOMOG have always led to a widening of the initial safe havens established for non-combatants. This compels armed groups to realise that they cannot achieve their political objectives by military action. It takes appreciable time for armed groups to reach this conclusion. In the period that ECOMOG is engaged in military action to force them to such a position, extensive logistic support and troop reinforcement are required. This is because the groups which it is fighting against are not conventional armies, and their strategy is to bring intolerable hardship on the civilian population in order to make ECOMOG and the legal authority it supports unpopular. They usually do this by carrying out extensive ambush operations on commercial vehicles in order to render the roads unsafe. They also carry out extermination operations against undefended communities in order to terrorise others into submission and collaboration.

In order to checkmate this strategy of terror, ECOMOG has had to deploy over wide areas, but in most cases, it has not had adequate troops and logistics to do so. It is usually at this critical stage that ECOMOG suffers operational reverses that Western powers exploit in order to step in and force all the parties to negotiate. These negotiations are normally under the auspices of ECOWAS, and in all cases a general settlement is reached. A consistent aspect of these general settlements includes disarmament, the formation of an interim or transitional government, the return of refugees, military reform, and the staging of general elections. ECOMOG is usually tasked to carry out the disarmament, ensure the security of UN personnel and the interim or transitional government, as well as to assist in the process of military reform and the conduct of general elections. At this stage, ECOMOG missions change from peace enforcement to peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping

ECOMOG peacekeeping missions normally start off on a very difficult footing. It takes considerable effort, time and diplomacy to persuade the parties that fought ECOMOG that the force is now neutral. However, ECOMOG has successfully overcome these difficulties and can rapidly transform itself from a fighting force to a peacekeeping force that enjoys the confidence and respect of the very insurgents it was fighting. The key to this success is because ECOMOG has always enjoyed the trust and confidence of the civil population. In many instances, it has intervened when general anarchy has set in, and has saved the civilian population from the savagery of gunmen. ECOMOG is thus perceived as a liberator by the larger society.

ECOMOG soldiers have also shown remarkable humanity in their treatment of captured or surrendered combatants. The initial fears which insurgents have had about ECOMOG disappear when, in contact with ECOMOG troops, they are given food, cigarettes, medicine and made to feel at home as fellow soldiers. In most cases, the combatants find that they receive better treatment from ECOMOG troops than from their own commanders. ECOMOG High Command also makes a deliberate effort to reach the leadership of the insurgent movements and to establish sound interpersonal relations. The success of this strategy has been manifested in the ready acceptance, or sometimes even request by the insurgent leaders for ECOMOG to assume responsibility for their personal security.

Community relations and peacebuilding

In all phases of its operations from intervention to peacekeeping, ECOMOG pays considerable

attention to community relations. It assists the host communities to restore destroyed infrastructure, such as power houses, water supply, communication and broadcast facilities. In many instances, the allowances of ECOMOG troops (which are paid in US dollars) provide the basis for the resumption of commercial activities. ECOMOG soldiers are known to be liberal spenders, and the local merchants find the security they provide and their dollar expenditure sufficient encouragement to resume their business. As economic activities pick up, reconstruction work quickly follows suit. These in themselves provide alternative employment opportunities for some of the combatants.

ECOMOG has successfully undertaken the disarmament of combatants and a return to a state of law and order in Liberia. But it did not succeed in carrying out military reform because of the determination of the NPFL — which won the general elections — to exclude other armed groups from the military. This tragic decision still has serious security consequences for the government of President Taylor. The excluded groups simply bided their time and have now restarted a new insurgent war in Liberia. In Sierra Leone, the task of reforming the armed forces was entrusted to the author as commander of the ECOMOG Taskforce Sierra Leone. ECOMOG has also been tasked to carry out the disarmament programme jointly with the UN.

Command and control

Like most multinational peace support forces, ECOMOG has experienced difficulties in trying to operate a unified command. Because of the high level of distrust among member states and the influence of non-regional powers, troop contingents usually arrive in the mission area with different and sometimes conflicting instructions. From the perspective of a former force commander, it appears that the kind of key instructions on rules of engagement, given to various national contingents in a typical ECOMOG operation by their home governments, could vary from contingent to contingent as follows:

to take active part in all military operations, including combat in all parts of the mission area;

to take active part in combat, but only in a particular part of the mission area;

to take active part in combat only on the approval of the home government, after assessing the situation;

to avoid taking part in any form of offensive operations, but to defend if the contingent is attacked; or?

not to participate in any fighting whatsoever and to refuse deployment in areas where contingent personnel might be exposed to the dangers of combat action.

The command structure of ECOMOG is very simple. At the top is the force commander with below him the deputy force commanders who are also the contingent commanders of their countries' troops. The force commander operates a small planning staff headed by a chief of staff, who deals with common problems and co-ordinates the activities of the various contingents in close co-operation with his deputies.

The central planning staff, under the directive of the force commander, usually designates various sectors of the mission area to the respective contingent commanders — taking into consideration their strength, instructions from their home governments, their affinity to the host

country and the level of their equipment, arms and ammunition.

ECOMOG does not operate a common or central logistic administration system. Each country provides its own contingent with arms, ammunition, food, transport and communication equipment. Nigeria has provided the entire force with petrol, oil and lubricants. The US, through a private company called Pacific Architect Engineers (PAE), has assisted ECOMOG operations with transport helicopter services, communication facilities, vehicles and general repairs and maintenance. The services provided by PAE are used commonly by all the contingents.

In operations, the force commander's mission is given to the contingent commanders, who then task the various units of their contingents. Because of the high level of control by home governments, the contingent commanders enjoy considerable autonomy from the control of the force commander. There have been instances where contingent units were pulled out of their areas of deployment without the approval or even the knowledge of the force commander, thus endangering the deployment of flanking contingents. Some contingents have also at times refused to come to the aid of other contingents without clearance from their home governments.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Operational challenges

Despite problems of command and control, among others, ECOMOG has achieved more success than expected by its founders and the international community. It has provided clear proof of what is possible if African states pool their resources to address a problem. Though the force has been successful, it would be foolhardy to ignore the considerable problems that have been identified in the course of its operations. The most salient of these may be summarised as follows:

- excessive control by home governments;

- language differences;

- lack of standardisation of equipment, arms and ammunition;

- different training standards, doctrine and staff procedures;

- poor sea and air lift capabilities;

- absence of vital air-to-ground support assets, particularly ground attack helicopters;

- lack of logistic support for some contingents;

- inadequate resources to deal with humanitarian problems;

- poor co-ordination and liaison with international relief agencies; and

- the misrepresentation of force activities by mercenary organisations and the international mass media.

Many of these problems and their implications have been discussed above, and others are common to virtually all multinational peace missions. For example, the problem of language

differences is ubiquitous, and is overcome at high command level either by the use of interpreters and/or the appointment of bilingual (French and English) officers as contingent commanders or staff officers.

Since member states of ECOWAS have limited capacity to manufacture military ordinance and equipment, it will remain difficult to standardise equipment, arms and ammunition. A possible solution is for member states to earmark specific units of their armed forces for ECOMOG service. Such units could be equipped with similar equipment, arms and ammunition. The training standards, doctrine and staff procedure of these ECOMOG earmarked units could be harmonised by an ECOMOG standing command staff whose headquarters would have to be designated and manned permanently. However, these innovations would require more political will than what is currently in existence among member states.

The economy of most member states is poor, hence they rely on non-regional states to sponsor their contingents for ECOMOG operations. The level of political will in such sponsor states determines the extent of logistic support that will be provided to the units they are sponsoring. Sometimes, these sponsor states change their policy or experience budget problems which have a direct impact on the continued stay of contingents they are sponsoring in the mission area and/or their operational effectiveness.

Nigeria remains the only member state of ECOWAS that has the capacity for heavy military air and sea lift. The country is thus in a position to support its troops effectively, but other member states often lack such capability. This is sometimes responsible for their reluctance to contribute troops for ECOMOG operations. There have been suggestions in some quarters for the creation of an ECOMOG support command that would have ships and aircraft capable of lifting heavy materials. In addition, the command would maintain logistic depots all over the ECOWAS subregion, which ECOMOG troops could draw on during emergencies. This suggestion is expensive, and can only be realised with the assistance of the UN and the wealthier nations.

The geographic terrain of most parts of West Africa favours insurgency warfare and guerrilla operations. Experience in Liberia and Sierra Leone has proved that helicopters are crucial to operations in these areas. Unfortunately, West African armed forces have very few helicopters for combat and support operations. The Nigerian Air Force, which displayed exemplary gallantry in ECOMOG operations, seems to have learned this lesson and is addressing the problem. Other member states need to do the same so that there will be improved air support in future operations.

In the course of their operations, ECOMOG troops have repeatedly encountered the problem of civilian refugees fleeing towards their positions. In most cases, the forward units with whom they come in contact do not have the necessary food and medicine to take care of the large number of refugees. They are consequently forced to share their operational rations and medicines with civilians. Efforts to get relief agencies to take over the management of these refugees have always proven difficult. Relief agencies do not want to go to the frontline and ECOMOG usually lacks the transport facilities to move such large numbers of civilians to sites that are acceptable to relief agencies. In addition, relief agencies are reluctant to hand over their food and medicines to ECOMOG to administer to the refugees. This problem has been persistent and a solution has not yet been found by ECOMOG high command.

ECOMOG has so far operated in countries with valuable mineral deposits which are of interest to many parties. Among these parties are mercenary outfits who seek to associate their operations with ECOMOG successes and hence boost their marketing potential among

prospective clients. Mercenary outfits have successfully manipulated the international mass media and created several false impressions about their role in ECOMOG activities. In some instances, they even claim direct responsibility for successful operations carried out, without their involvement, by ECOMOG. The operation in Sierra Leone is a classic case in point.

Sandline International and Executive Outcomes have made several false claims about their roles in the restoration of the democratic government of Sierra Leone. As the commander on the ground, the author is in a position to state that, contrary to what the international mass media have reported, Sandline and Executive Outcomes played no significant role in the operations to reclaim Sierra Leone from the illegal regime that ousted the democratic government. The operation was planned and executed by ECOMOG, and the forces employed by the force commander were mostly those of the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Air Force with the Nigerian Navy later joining the operation. The service of the non-Nigerian helicopter that supplemented the efforts of the Nigerian Air Force was fully paid for in cash by the government of Sierra Leone.

The future of ECOMOG

The restoration of constitutional governments in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the conclusion of the impending disarmament exercise in Sierra Leone will mark the end of the active deployment of ECOMOG. In accordance with the political framework under which the force operates, it will be dissolved and the contingents will return to their respective countries. However, many observers are of the view that, while the contingents return home, ECOMOG headquarters should remain in a designated member state. They believe that this is necessary to consolidate the nine years' experience gained during the force's operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

There have also been several suggestions that certain aspects of the force should be transformed to a permanent status, in order to quicken the reaction time in future emergencies. Elements suggested for transformation to permanent status include a logistic support organisation, a joint training body for officers and senior non-commissioned officers, and a joint Intelligence agency. It has been suggested, for example, that all member states should train their military cadets, staff officers and senior officers in one military academy, staff college and war college. This would solve many problems of language, different training standards, doctrine and staff procedures.

There has also been a further recommendation that member states should harmonise their procurement of certain categories of military equipment, so that their various contingents can operate and co-operate with less difficulty in future operations. Some have gone so far as to propose that there should be a deliberate effort by member states to tailor their military procurements in such a way that these incorporate likely requirements for ECOMOG service. Thus, member states should improve their sea and air lift capabilities if they can afford to, so that they can sustain their future ECOMOG contingents. In addition, they should improve their combat and transport helicopter assets.

CONCLUSION

Although the above are as yet merely suggestions, proposals or recommendations, they are positive signs that ECOMOG has created an awareness among West African leaders, intellectuals and military experts that the force is a positive security development that requires some finetuning. Given the growing number of conflicts on the African continent, ECOMOG is a

reminder of the fact that the right tool for conflict resolution can be found from within the continent, if African countries are prepared to pool their resources. ECOMOG is therefore a lesson which should not be forgotten, because it also points to the fact that there is no need to wait for outsiders to help if Africa itself can address its problems effectively.

Note

Brigadier General Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe, is presently Chief of Defence Staff, Republic of Sierra Leone. As a Nigerian army officer, he was a previous force commander of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone.

INTRODUCTION

When the founding fathers of the Economic Community West African States (ECOWAS) reached the historic accord to establish the subregional body in 1973, the focus was on the integration of the region to accelerate economic progress.

Neither the founding fathers nor indeed subsequent West African leaders particularly considered the effect of conflicts and regional instability on the economic objectives which they set forth to accomplish for the subregion. The first arrangements made to guarantee subregional security merely consisted of a Protocol on Mutual Assistance in defence matters, signed in Sierra Leone on 29 May 1981.

However, it was obvious that conflicts and the likelihood of instability could not be wished away, since West Africa was characterised by economic backwardness, ethno-religious divergence and political rancour. The spontaneous formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990 was therefore a direct response to the realities of the earlier omission of security concerns from the organisation's agenda. Within the relatively short period of its existence, ECOMOG has gone full circle from peacekeeping and peace enforcement in Liberia, to restorative intervention in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

Except in the case of the Dominican Republic, where the Organization of American States (OAS) intervened in 1965 to save the country from anarchy, the use of substantial armed forces in support of peace operations was consigned mainly to the purview of the United Nations.¹ Throughout the Cold War, relations between nations were marked by an overriding desire to protect national sovereignty. Indeed, the charters of the UN, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and ECOWAS, drafted during this period, all emphasise non-interference in the internal affairs of member nations and mutual inviolability of sovereignty among member states. This was an era of paradox, of unrelated brothers with a professed mutual desire for an embrace — but with both hands behind their backs. This paradox defined the general concept and principles of peacekeeping world-wide, until the end of the 1980s.

Kitson has defined the Cold War concept of peacekeeping as "*preventing by non-warlike methods one group from fighting another group of people.*"² It precludes a formal attack by an army on one or both parties to a dispute in order to halt it. Logically then, the orthodox principles of peace operations were distilled from such normative doctrine. These principles posit the following:

acceptance of the peacekeeping force by the warring parties;

establishment of relative peace which subsumes a bilateral or multilateral cease-fire by parties in conflict; and

neutrality of the peacekeeping force.

The end of the Cold War heralded some fundamental global policy shifts. As the Cold War thawed, so did the balance of power, and its ripples threatened stability in various regions. The UN's incapacity to deal with the new threats to international peace and security, particularly in Africa, was palpable. Ironically, humanitarian concerns, desire for global economic progress and the survival of democracy took centre stage at the UN during this period. At the same time, the realities of conflicts that stood between stability and economic progress became pervasive. The unfolding era called for greater initiatives in the management of conflicts and regional stability. In crisis-ridden Africa, the surge of pragmatism gave rise to a renewed rigour for regional collective security. In West Africa, it was the Liberian crisis that provided the test case with regard to the following dichotomies:

sovereignty *versus* human suffering;

sovereignty *versus* regional instability and its concomitant socio-economic degradations;
and

the desire to make a change *versus* the political will to do so.

ECOMOG operations, which were originally conceived on the orthodox principles of peacekeeping, brought into focus the usual dilemma of the peacekeeper — the tricky nexus between established principles, and their application in a situation where peace had assumed priority, but the principles themselves begged for reform. The priority of peace as the antithesis of regional communal welfare underscores the necessity for examining the dynamics at play in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace restoration.

The aim of this contribution is therefore to review the ECOMOG operations in West Africa, from the perspective of both principles and praxis. Consideration is given mainly to the operational dimension, without dwelling too much on tactical and logistic issues. Considering that ECOMOG operations in West Africa have generally been very similar in concept and execution, this article is limited to the operations in Liberia, beginning with an overview of the causes of the crisis and the initial involvement of ECOMOG. This is followed by an overview of the principles guiding ECOMOG operations, including the mandate from ECOWAS, before the focus shifts to the operational challenges of peacekeeping and peace enforcement — including the ever-problematic aspect of disarmament. Finally, brief mention is made of ECOMOG's role in elections and during the post-election phase.

THE LIBERIAN CRISIS

A primary operational requirement for the contemporary peacekeeper is an understanding of the background to a crisis. Usually, this consists of historical factors in which may be embedded the socio-economic reasons for conflict. This understanding is important, in order to form the basis of conformity with the general principle of an informed neutral stand. Nevertheless, suspicions of peacekeepers and their motives are almost certain to arise, with or without foundation, as was the case with the UN (British) operations in Cyprus in 1963-64. In Liberia, operations were made difficult by the refusal of the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) to accept ECOMOG and, in particular, Nigerian involvement in the attempts at conflict resolution.

The remote causes of the Liberian crisis are traceable to the political and economic domination

by the Americo-Liberians, dating back to 1822, to the total exclusion of the indigenous majority of the population. Socially, the domination of the indigenous inhabitants by the few settlers created a master-servant relationship which continues to reverberate through the political life of Liberia until today. From independence in 1848 to date, Liberia has been ruled by 21 presidents. From Joseph Jenkins Roberts (1848-1856) to William Tolbert (1971-1980) up to President Charles Taylor (August 1997 to date), and the rest in between, only one president has come from the indigenous communities that constitute over 90 per cent of the population. Master Sergeant Samuel Doe came to power in April 1980 through the barrel of the gun. It was a popular *coup* that was staged largely by his tribespeople and was widely accepted as the emergence of the oppressed local majority.

Over the years, however, President Doe was also regrettably found to be dictatorial, ruthless and repressive in dealing with political opposition. The arrest and kidnapping of politicians became rampant. People were arbitrarily arrested, tortured and detained for varying periods by Doe and his henchmen. In addition to these methods, Doe resorted to arson as a political weapon to eliminate any opposition. With a record marked by bloodletting and injustice, the stage was set for the return of the Americo-Liberians to power. In December 1989, Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, led his Libyan-trained fighters across the Liberian-Ivorian border and secured a foothold in Nimba county. This incursion into Liberia by the fighters of the NPFL was the immediate cause of the Liberian civil war.

Though the NPFL continued to grow in strength under Charles Taylor, its initial motive of removing tyranny and installing democracy became compromised as Taylor's ambition to fight his way into the Executive Mansion became evident. This ambition gave rise to the factionalisation of the NPFL, with Prince Yormie Johnson forming the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). As it turned out, both factions were bent on fighting their way to the seat of government in Monrovia. All efforts at reconciliation by mediation committees and respected leaders failed as Charles Taylor remained intransigent. This was because his faction was better equipped, trained and funded than the others, and victory (entry into the executive mansion) was perceived as achievable.³

Clearly, the situation had become chaotic and the country was fast becoming ungovernable. Already, many members of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) had left the barracks and joined the factions of their choice based on tribal affiliation. Faced with imminent collapse, the government of President Doe turned to ECOWAS for assistance.

INVOLVEMENT OF ECOMOG

The crisis in Liberia soon became a threat not only to neighbouring countries, but also to the entire subregion of West Africa. Consequently, during the summit of heads of state and government in Banjul, The Gambia, in May 1990, ECOWAS formed a mediation committee which later formulated and adopted the following outline of a peace plan for Liberia:

observance of an immediate cease-fire by all factions;

the formation of an ECOWAS monitoring group (ECOMOG);

the convening of a Liberian national conference to set up an interim government acceptable to all parties; and

the conduct of legislative and presidential elections in June 1991.

By July 1990, Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea had each pledged a battalion towards the formation of ECOMOG to monitor the cease-fire, while The Gambia and Sierra Leone pledged a battalion minus.4 On 24 August 1990, ECOMOG, with a total strength of about 3 000 in its ranks, started to land at the Liberian port of Monrovia. Right from this first beachhead, ECOMOG was met with belligerence from the NPFL. The troops under the command of Lieutenant-General Quainoo had to fight their way into the streets of Monrovia. Although the peacekeepers were in Liberia to monitor a cease-fire, they were compelled to fight first for their own survival. The initial fighting was an act of self-defence, rather than a deliberate attempt at peace enforcement (which came as a later development in the operations), but it heralded the nature of operations in the Liberian situation.

OVERVIEW OF PRINCIPLES

The general principles of peacekeeping have already been mentioned, as well as the fact that the emergent perspective of the ECOMOG operation in Liberia was one of contradiction in terms of principles and their application. Firstly, the force was hurriedly set up with a mandate which did not reflect the realities on the ground. Secondly, the force moved in before clear terms of reference could be established. Thirdly, it was only once the force checkmated the game plans of contending parties that the looming protraction and complexities of the conflict, and the increasing burden on the peacekeepers, became evident. Much of the rules of the ECOMOG 'game' therefore had to evolve in response to the peculiarities of the situation.

Peacekeeping is essentially different from other military operations such as countersubversion and counter-insurgency. Consequently, the methods of operation are necessarily different. As is well-known in military circles, the offensive spirit which every soldier must have to ensure success in combat operations is strongly de-emphasised in peacekeeping. Indeed, a peacekeeping soldier requires some retraining and reorientation to prepare him for subsequent engagement in warlike activities. Therefore, a commander facing both peacekeeping and combat situations at once is indeed in serious difficulty.

Traditionally, insurgents primarily employ persuasion backed with force as a mode of operation. However, the situation in Liberia was not that of popular rebellion, but one in which insurgent factions employed armed force as a primary means of operation. Had the situation been otherwise, ECOMOG's role in Liberia would simply have reverted to that of internal security operations — a military role primarily concerned with the maintenance and restoration of essential services in the face of civil disturbances and disobedience, using minimum necessary force to accomplish these tasks. Although not universally applicable, the principles of internal security operations did help to address the doctrinal lacunae that confronted the ECOMOG contingents.

It is thus useful to recall these basic principles:

Civil authority: The military will always be in support of the civil authority except in extreme cases of urban anti-terrorist operations. This underscores the primacy of having a civil authority in place.

Co-operation: There must be co-operation at all levels, in every sphere and at every step with the civil authority. The police and military must work as a team.

Justification: There must be legal justification for each separate act of force, and such acts should not be continued longer than is necessary to achieve the immediate aim.

Prevention: The only object of the use of force is to suppress actual disturbances. Force must never be applied as a reprisal or with punitive intent.

Minimum force: Only that force which is absolutely necessary to achieve the immediate military aim should be applied.

Maintenance of public confidence: To depress the morale of the dissidents, every effort must be made to foster and gain public confidence and support.

Legal obligation: Members of the armed forces must comply with the law and act calmly and impartially.

Evidence: The commander on the spot must record accurate evidence of any incident related to a civil disturbance.

Safeguarding local citizens: Care must be taken not to endanger harmless civilians.

It needs to be pointed out that, once the ECOMOG task metamorphosed into a hybrid operation of peacekeeping, counterinsurgency and peace enforcement, these principles were applied according to their relevance to respective phases or a combination of phases of operations. In the Liberian case, the principles of maintenance of public confidence and that of safeguarding loyal citizens were given prominence throughout.

There is a traditional analogy that compares the insurgent to a fish, and the populace to the water in which it thrives. According to counterinsurgency doctrine, the perceived solution to insurgency is therefore to drain the water in order to suffocate the fish. To some extent, the Liberian situation confirmed the voracity of this thinking. Here, the fish also constituted a threat to the water in which it lived, given the extreme level of mutual ethnic annihilation which had ensued. There was therefore a need to drain the water, not only to suffocate the fish, but also to save the water from involuntary evaporation by massacre.

In Liberia, the 'water' was drained through evacuations, by creating and expanding safe havens for those who desired to escape to relative safety. Survival instinct induced the populace to flow to relative safety as refugees outside Liberia, or as displaced people in the safe havens created within the country by ECOMOG. In this way, collateral damage to the innocent was eliminated or minimised while dealing with insurgents — although military concerns obviously shifted to the humanitarian concerns of looking after the basic needs of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Of course, no amount of theorising can bring results in a practical scenario, and the Liberian intervention was not a pure counterinsurgency campaign. Therefore, apart from the necessary political support required for such an intervention, the command must be sound and effective. As a practical guide for the high command and, indeed, at all levels, there is no substitute to those time-tested principles of actions based on necessity, impartiality and good faith. A clear and practicable mandate is also a desirable, but elusive source of direction to all commanders.

ECOMOG MANDATE

At the inception of ECOMOG, the mandate was for peacekeeping. It included the creation of safe corridors for victims of the crisis to escape to safety in neighbouring countries. It also

included the evacuation of foreign nationals and the restoration of law and order. Specifically, in accordance with the decisions of the ECOWAS Standing Committee signed in Banjul on 7 August 1990, ECOMOG was to do the following:

- maintain, enforce and monitor the cease-fire;
- protect life and property;
- maintain essential services;
- provide security to the interim administration in Liberia;
- observe elections; and
- conduct normal policing duties.

It should be noted that the ECOMOG mandate suffered the basic handicap inherent in principles that are distilled from mere idealistic and parochial platforms, as already discussed. Thus, ECOMOG was mandated to maintain a cease-fire in an environment where none was in existence, and in which the force quickly recorded casualties as a result of hostile actions. In view of the belligerent reception, the mandate was reviewed by ECOWAS heads of state and was changed to include peace enforcement. Accordingly, the force commander gave his directives for enforcement actions to commence on 1 October 1990. From then on, ECOMOG operations in Liberia were an admixture of peacekeeping and peace enforcement activities. It became a case of developing principles to rationalise the meeting of objectives. A parallel may be found in the Korean campaign which, though fought under the auspices of the UN, was clearly not peacekeeping, but rather a venture in collective security.⁵

Concerning operational objectives, ECOMOG was not only expected to stop the warring factions from fighting each other, but was also expected to prevent any further resumption of hostilities by them. Its area of operation was not to be utilised for hostile activities of any kind. Despite its manpower deficiency, ECOMOG was to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to the local population and the international community within the area of operation. As a peacekeeping force, it was to operate on the basis of consent and co-operation. This required the force to combine firmness in carrying out its mandate, with sensitivity towards the local community. The aim was to solve problems in a practical, just and fair manner and to avoid confrontations whenever possible. ECOMOG was to limit any restriction it imposed on the population to the minimum necessary to enable it to undertake the task successfully. It was not authorised to assume responsibilities which normally belonged to the Liberian civil authorities.

PEACEKEEPING IN LIBERIA (OPERATION LIBERTY)

The opposed landing of ECOMOG in Monrovia on 24 August 1990 marked the beginning of Operation Liberty in Liberia. The hostile reception notwithstanding, the troops managed to fight their way to a safer and defensible area north of St Paul's River. It must be understood right from the outset that it was the NPFL that presented the greatest threat to ECOMOG, and that resented the participation of Nigeria in the monitoring group. After consolidating its position, ECOMOG continued to receive supplies and reinforcements. Negotiations and discussions were started between the ECOMOG leadership and the leadership of the warring factions. This was the beginning of the process of peacekeeping.

On 10 September 1990, President Doe was kidnapped and brutally murdered by Prince Yormie Johnson of the INPFL. The situation was blamed on the Ghanaian force commander who was immediately withdrawn and replaced by a Nigerian.⁶ With the death of Doe, the doors of the executive mansion were now widely opened, and the presidential seat was up for grabs. However, some of Doe's supporters escaped to Sierra Leone where they were to organise

themselves as yet another belligerent faction.

With the escalation of the crisis by all factions, humanitarian relief services became impossible. Thousands of civilians were trapped, and hundreds were dying daily. To redress the situation, ECOMOG received a clear mandate from ECOWAS to clear Monrovia of rebels and to make it a safe haven out of the reach of Taylor's guns. Clearly, such a mission did not call for handshakes, but for bullet-trading — by peacekeepers. The principle of minimum force was no longer appropriate or applicable. By the end of December 1990, the entire Monrovia was cleared of fighters, except for the occasional infiltration by the NPFL.

Having been forced out of Monrovia, the faction leaders agreed to go to the negotiating table. The Lomé Agreement of 13 February 1991 and the Yamoussoukro Accords I-IV (June-October 1991) were brokered by ECOWAS to put an end to the crisis, but they were doomed to failure. However, an interim government of national unity under Dr Amos Sawyer was inducted into office as a result of these initiatives.⁷ Importantly, the Yamoussoukro IV Accord, signed on 30 October 1991, outlined steps to implement a peace plan that included the encampment and disarmament of warring factions under the supervision of ECOMOG. It also included the establishment of transitional institutions to carry out free and fair elections.

PEACE ENFORCEMENT

Over time, it was made increasingly clear to the warring factions that ECOMOG was there to stay, and that none of them could win by force of arms. Consequently, they became more receptive to peace overtures. A decision in the Yamoussoukro Accords which was of major significance was the disarmament of the warring factions. To conduct this, ECOMOG was to deploy troops in strategic places for the collection of belligerents' weapons. The plan for this disarmament was accepted and signed by all the warring factions. Two major lessons, learned the hard way during this phase, were the requirement for firmness of purpose and decisive action as a means of ensuring compliance.

For example, in the first week of September 1992, ECOMOG deployed its troops in all areas held by the factions for purposes of monitoring their disarmament. To everybody's surprise, on 8 September 1992, the NPFL held all the ECOMOG troops deployed in its area as hostages. This development infuriated the high command, as these troops were tortured and humiliated.

After intense negotiations, the NPFL reluctantly released the hostages, having achieved the aim of nullifying the disarmament plan. However, as if that was not enough, on 15 October 1992, Charles Taylor decided to unleash an offensive action against ECOMOG positions. This action, which Taylor dubbed Operation Octopus, was launched with the following aims:

- to overrun the entire Monrovia and capture ECOMOG headquarters in the process;
- to neutralise the INPFL in the Caldwell area and capture its leader, Prince Yormie Johnson, alive; and
- to take the executive mansion for Charles Taylor to declare himself president.

Operation Octopus almost succeeded, as the rebels captured most of Caldwell just behind ECOMOG headquarters. However, the headquarters (under the able command of the chief of staff of ECOMOG at the time, Brigadier-General S V L Malu) were quickly reinforced with troops from the Nigerian contingent and the attack was successfully repelled. Prince Yormie Johnson was also extricated from NPFL encirclement by the Nigerian troops.

However, the Sierra Leone-based supporters of late President Doe, who had formed another group in June 1991 called the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO), now became apprehensive of NPFL moves. ULIMO's aim was to challenge the intransigence of Charles Taylor and to stop any of the factions from taking power by force of arms. This faction, led by General Roosevelt Johnson and Alhaji Kromah crossed into Liberia and drove the NPFL out of Bomi, Lofa and Cape Mount counties. However, as a result of internal rivalry, ULIMO also split into two factions: ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K.

At the peak of factionalisation, ECOMOG had to contend with a total of about ten factions. It is also noteworthy that, at this point in the crisis, the polarisation of factions was no longer solely based on disagreement over ideological principles or political log jams, but purely on disagreement over economic and financial matters. In effect, the Liberian territory had been scrambled into enclaves with the warlords in control and reaping the benefits that accrued from the resources within each enclave. Thus, the financial muscle to prosecute their notorious agenda was guaranteed by their external trading collaborators, a factor which contributed immensely to the intransigence of the various factions. Indeed, there was much interfactional movement and shifting of allegiance among the armed fighters, depending on which faction's enclave was more lucrative.

By the end of October 1992, the city of Monrovia was cleared of belligerents and once more restored as a safe haven. The operation to repel NPFL attacks was carried out by the combined efforts of four Nigerian battalions, one Guinean battalion, one Ghanaian battalion and a battalion minus from Sierra Leone. Though ECOMOG troops suffered casualties, their morale remained high. Some of the pertinent lessons learned during this phase include:

- never to underrate the fighting spirit of the factions;

- the necessity for contingency plans in preparation for peace enforcement tasks;

- the need to grasp the complex nexus between peacekeeping and peace enforcement; and

- the need to include the control of displaced civilians and refugees as a mandatory part of the initial plan for any operation.

As the Liberian conflict dragged on, the relationship between ECOMOG troops and the fighters of ULIMO-J began to deteriorate. Cases of exchange of fire at Tubmanburg were reported. On the eve of Christmas 1995, the fighters of ULIMO-J attacked the ECOMOG location in Tubmanburg. As a result of the attack, the rebels seized two 122mm guns and destroyed another. They also seized some mortar tubes and a large consignment of arms and ammunition. Besides the humiliation, ECOMOG suffered some casualties. This action was planned and directed by Roosevelt Johnson himself.

Having taken over the control of the city from ECOMOG, the fighters of ULIMO-J rushed into the town, looting and shooting anybody who resisted their demands. Some people who were considered to be collaborating with ECOMOG were immediately arrested and taken to unknown destinations. There was a total breakdown of law and order in Tubmanburg.

From all indications, it was clear that the ECOMOG troops in Tubmanburg had become complacent. To redress the situation, two more ECOMOG battalions were quickly dispatched to the sector. After two days of fierce fighting, Tubmanburg was liberated and peace was once

again restored through the use of force. The captured guns were later recovered by the chief of staff ECOMOG on 19 August 1996, through diplomacy and negotiations.

DISARMAMENT

One of the most important tasks carried out by the peacekeepers was the disarming of the warring factions. The issue of disarmament was originally raised in the Yamoussoukro Accord of October 1991. After the debacle of September 1992, disarmament was given more prominence in the supplement to the Abuja Accord of August 1996. At the level of ECOMOG, preparation for this disarmament effort included the following:

- selection of disarmament centres;

- visits to the various camps to sensitise the fighters and prepare them for disarmament;

- provision of incentives for the combatants to disarm;

- joint training for officials of UNOMIL,⁸ the government of Liberia and ECOMOG on the conduct of disarmament;

- provision of logistic requirements for officials, as well as for former combatants; and

- provision of transportation for the arms and ammunition that were to be collected.

According to UN and ECOWAS arrangements, the disarmament was to be conducted by ECOMOG from 22 November 1996 to 31 January 1997, with UNOMIL officers as observers. It was estimated that there were 33 000 fighters to be disarmed. To ensure success, various meetings and conferences were held, usually with the leaders of the warring factions in attendance. To provide for closer understanding and remove any suspicions, ECOMOG embarked on confidence-building visits to all rebel locations. Though there were anxious moments when some ECOMOG officers were again taken hostage, the situation generally improved gradually and cordiality was re-established.

On 22 November 1996, against enormous external hurdles and a cloud of uncertainty, the force commander, Major-General Malu, declared the commencement of disarmament in Liberia.⁹ This courageous decision earned ECOMOG the respect and admiration from Liberians and the international community. By 7 February 1997, a total of 28 819 fighters out of the estimated 33 000 were disarmed. The following arms and ammunition were recovered:

- 13 167 small arms (serviceable and unserviceable);

- 1 628 584 rounds of ammunition (mixed);

- 6 field guns; and

- 4 145 bombs/explosive ordnance.

Though the collective strength of the factions is put at 33 000, it is clear that not all fighters were in possession of rifles. From ECOMOG experience, the ratio was approximately one rifle to four persons. There were also about 15 000 child soldiers within the six major factions — most of them carried arms at some stage.

Having disarmed the combatants, there was a feeling of relief and hope among Liberian society. Within the first three months after the disarmament which ended in February 1997, thousands of Liberian refugees and displaced persons returned. They composed a song entitled *Thank God*

for *ECOMOG*, which was sung in the churches, mosques and markets. Having conducted a successful disarmament process, the only major item on *ECOMOG*'s mandate that still had to be attended to, was the presidential and general elections planned for March 1997, but later moved to July 1997.

ELECTIONS AND THE AFTERMATH

After disarmament, the people of Liberia started to enjoy relative peace and security. However, *ECOMOG* continued its peacekeeping duties by intensifying patrols, improving on the checkpoints, and conducting cordon and search operations. In doing these, the willing participation of the local population was most encouraging. About five per cent of the recovered arms and ammunition were as a result of information given by individuals. Indeed, the six field guns recovered from the NPFL were found on the basis of paid information.

While routine activities were going on, *ECOMOG* was fully involved in the preparations for the presidential and general elections. It must be understood that, at this stage, the international community was showing considerable interest in the Liberian crisis. Besides the active participation of the US, the European Union was also beginning to contribute to the peace process. The activities of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also became more intense and wider in coverage. More West African countries also decided to contribute troops to *ECOMOG*. *ECOMOG*'s duties in the elections were stipulated as follows:

- control of political rallies and campaigns;
- provision of security during political rallies;
- protection of all party chairpersons;
- participation in all meetings organised by the Independent Election Commission (IECOM);
- provision of communications between the IECOM and all county headquarters;
- provision of transport, including air transport in support of the election;
- assistance in the compilation of voters' registration lists;
- provision of custody and security for all election material, including ballot boxes;
- provision of security at all polling booths;
- organising voters to cast their votes in an orderly manner;
- supervising the counting of votes in conjunction with IECOM officials;
- ensuring that no vote-rigging took place throughout the elections; and
- provision of security to all IECOM officials.

The presidential elections took place on 19 July 1997, and Charles Taylor was duly elected as president of Liberia. With his inauguration on 2 August 1997, the peacekeepers had fulfilled one of the major duties in their mandate. With an elected government in place, *ECOMOG*'s role had to be reviewed. Its security duties, for example, could only be executed with the co-operation of the government of Liberia.

The Liberian National Police, the Armed Forces of Liberia and the ministers of Defence and Justice were all involved in security matters. Meanwhile, President Taylor had made it publicly clear that *ECOMOG* should leave Liberia six months after his inauguration. Consequently, by February 1998, all national contingents had left Liberia, except for Nigeria and Ghana. These two countries remained in Liberia because of the fragile nature of the peace in the country. From all indications, Taylor saw *ECOMOG* as a parallel government and, as such, a challenge to his authority and a threat to Liberian sovereignty. There were musings about the president's ingratitude in many quarters.

To cover up the accusations of ingratitude, and perhaps more for security reasons, Taylor requested the countries of ECOWAS to assist him with a force for capacity-building in the security sector of the Liberian state. Taylor expected the proposed capacity-building force to resort under the authority of the Liberian Ministry of National Defence, with himself as the commander-in-chief. Clearly, no country would be willing to contribute troops in such a manner, even if the host country is willing to assume some responsibilities. Therefore, the continued stay of Ghanaian and Nigerian troops was primarily on the wider request of the Liberian people, in the interests of their personal security rather than regime security. The services of the troops, however, were rendered at no cost to the government of Liberia.

CONCLUSION

The ECOMOG experiment in Liberia has been widely acclaimed as one of the most successful and unprecedented in the history of peacekeeping. It is indeed gratifying to hear some countries urging the UN, as well as other subregional organisations to attempt the resolution of African conflicts by emulating the example set by ECOWAS and ECOMOG. For those who may indeed be willing to learn from the ECOMOG experience, the critical success factors may be summarised as follows:

the legitimate and strong rotating leadership of ECOWAS at the critical time;

the dominance of Nigerian troops in ECOMOG, which enhanced decision-making and unity of purpose;

the high level of training, discipline and loyalty of the Nigerian and Ghanaian officers and soldiers;

the extraordinary gallantry and sense of adventure of the Nigerian soldier;

the willing support of Liberian civil society to ECOMOG and the peace process;

the excellent logistic support provided by the US and Dutch governments during the disarmament;

the dynamic leadership of Major-General S V L Malu, who was in Liberia twice at critical times;

the co-operation of the international community, particularly the US, the EU and Japan;

the fighting spirit of the Nigerian Air Force and its heroic efforts to maintain the logistic line throughout the crisis;

the availability of naval ships with troop-carrying capacity and limited fire power;

the inherent weaknesses of the warring factions;

the provision of logistic support and funds by the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and

the maturity of the force commanders and the co-operation of all contingents.

Despite the historic contribution to international peacekeeping, it is on record that several powers were strongly critical of ECOMOG operations in Liberia. However, these same powers eventually supported and assisted the ECOMOG peacekeepers.

In the final instance, everyone learned that peace can only be kept when there is peace to keep in the first place. Consequently, the nexus between peacekeeping and peace enforcement must be the subject of constant study. For peace to be durable, it seems that the peacekeeper should be ready for both peace enforcement and yet more peacekeeping.

Notes

1. F Kitson, **Low intensity operations**, Faber & Faber, London, 1971, p 146.
2. Ibid, p 4.
3. Taylor was thus completely against the intervention by ECOMOG in the Liberian crisis.
4. A battalion is the generic unit of most conventional armies, consisting of both combat and support subunits (companies) and other specialist elements that enable it to function virtually independently during operations. The term 'battalion minus' refers to an understrength army unit that may be lacking one or more subunits or specialised elements, and would thus be dependent upon other units for the missing capabilities.
5. Kitson, op cit, p 146.
6. Remnants of the AFL and the Krahn's of President Doe's ethnic group saw his capture from the ECOMOG headquarters in 1990 as an ECOMOG conspiracy hatched by the Ghanaian contingent (in charge of security at the headquarters). Only the swift replacement of Lieutenant-General Quainoo, the Ghanaian ECOMOG force commander, helped to defuse the fever-pitch tension that followed Doe's subsequent murder by his captors. He was replaced by Major-General Joshua Dogonyaro of Nigeria, and this move restored confidence in the neutrality of the force, which was critical at that tottering stage.
7. Of considerable importance to the peace process were the chairpersons of the interim governments — beginning with Dr Amos Sawyer in November 1990, and ending with Prof Sanka Woloo and Mrs Ruth Sando Perre in August 1996. These leaders performed well under very difficult circumstances. Clearly, their contributions to the peace process were enormous. The following ECOWAS accords played vital roles in resolving the Liberian crisis:

ECOWAS Peace Plan (Banjul Communiqué) - August 1990

Bamako Cease-fire Agreement - 28 November 1990

Banjul Joint Statement - 21 December 1990

Lomé Agreement - 13 February 1991

Yamoussoukro I Accord - 30 June 1991

Yamoussoukro II Accord - 29 July 1991

Yamoussoukro III Accord - 17 September 1991

Yamoussoukro IV Accord - 30 October 1991

Geneva Cease-fire Agreement - 17 July 1993

Cotonou Accord - 25 July 1993

Akosombo Agreement - 12 September 1994

Accra Clarification - 21 December 1994
Abuja Accord - 19 August 1995
Abuja Accord Supplement - 17 August 1996

8. United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia.
9. As part of its duties for the conduct of the disarmament, ECOMOG performed the following:
 - conducted confidence-building visits to the locations of the warring factions;
 - selected disarmament centres in all locations;
 - created liaison mechanisms with the interim government, UNOMIL, NGOs and the representatives of each faction;
 - distributed gifts and medical supplies as incentives to warring factions visited;
 - created buffer zones between factions to allay their fears of surprise attacks;
 - provided all logistic support to both government and UNOMIL officials whenever requested; and
 - transported former combatants to and from disarmament centres.

Conditions for successful entry and exit: An analysis with specific reference to SADC allied operations in Lesotho

Theo Neethling

INTRODUCTION

On 22 September 1998, the early morning silence of Lesotho was shattered by the sounds of Operation Boleas when 600 South African soldiers moved into Lesotho. Thus began the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) almost seven month-long operation in an effort to deal with the deteriorating security situation in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. Although it was said to be a combined task force, consisting of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), it was not before nightfall on 22 September that approximately 200 Botswana troops arrived in Maseru.

The *mission* of the combined task force was "... to intervene militarily in Lesotho to prevent any further anarchy and to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order."¹ The *battle concept* was described as "[t]he deployment of forces in order to locate and identify destabilisers and destabiliser resources, to disarm and contain them and to strike where applicable with the necessary force to eliminate the threat."² The *desired result* was to create a stable environment in Lesotho, and to restore law and order to enable negotiations to take place between the political parties in Lesotho.³

The South African government insisted that the military intervention did not constitute an

invasion,⁴ while the SANDF maintained that there was not only a proper SADC mandate, but also a virtual moral obligation on South Africa and Botswana to intervene in Lesotho.⁵ The decision was based on and justified by the fact that SADC was directly approached by the prime minister of Lesotho, Pakalitha Mosisili, who requested the intervention;⁶ that the intervention was based on agreements reached in SADC; that all attempts at peacefully resolving the dispute had failed; and that South Africa had intervened to protect certain South African interests such as the Katse Dam water scheme. It was furthermore stated that the Lesotho government was democratically elected (despite certain irregularities during the election process) and that it was increasingly required of South Africa to play a role in regional peacekeeping efforts.⁷ In addition, it was stated that the decision to intervene had signalled to ambitious elements in the military forces in the region that the political aspirations of any military faction would not be tolerated in any member state, and that South Africa's commitment to this policy was also a commitment to development in the region.⁸

For collective security to be effective and to ensure successful multiparty entry and exit in conflict situations, certain conditions are required both at the military and political levels. In this context, this contribution is an attempt to discuss Operation Boleas with special focus on the South African forces that participated in the operation. The broad political context in which the operation took place, is briefly discussed, before turning to an assessment of the operational activities during 1998 up to the point where Operation Boleas began displaying many of the classic hallmarks of a peace mission.

BROAD INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Success in any multinational operation depends upon a broad political process. Such missions never only comprise military exercises. In fact, military operations play a distinctly supportive role, and may even produce few obvious results with regard to the outcome. Of significant importance is the broad political apparatus or institutional framework created to manage co-operative security and to co-ordinate the military effort.

In addition, military operations in the realm of peace and security critically depend on the extent to which international authority underpins such operations and on the political will of participating member states. This kind of authority is necessary to assist in reducing political pressure on the countries involved, to prevent the international isolation of the participating countries if an operation aborts, and to prevent over-extending the capabilities of a country's armed forces.⁹ Such a political apparatus and institutional framework are also important for the legitimacy of an operation. Legitimacy is frequently a decisive element in intervention operations, as such operations are only likely to be supported by other external roleplayers if they are perceived as legitimate.¹⁰

Framework for military intervention

One of the greatest difficulties experienced during Operation Boleas was clearly its political justification from a regional perspective. Much confusion surrounded the modalities for security co-operation under the auspices of SADC. In August 1998, SADC became the focus of international attention when Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia decided to intervene in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The decision was based on requests from President Laurent Kabila for military assistance (the DRC became a member of SADC in 1997) against advancing rebel forces.¹¹ Still, the undertaking was *ad hoc* and was not organised under SADC auspices, although it did receive retroactive endorsement from SADC.¹²

South Africa specifically emphasised the need for a peaceful solution and declined to send troops. It was also reported that South Africa would only consider sending troops should a peacekeeping force (presumably in accordance with a UN mandate) be deployed in the DRC.¹³ The South African decision eventually proved to be a wise one, since Rwanda and Uganda decided to engage in the conflict in support of the rebel movement, while Chad and Sudan were subsequently drawn in to fight on the side of Kabila.¹⁴ Another important point relates to the fact that Zimbabwe and Angola were harshly criticised in the South African media, as reporters claimed that Zimbabwe's main motive was an effort to promote Zimbabwean business interests in the Congo. Similarly, it was reported that Angola's interest was to prevent the Angolan rebel force, Unita, from using the DRC as a rear-base.¹⁵

On 31 August 1998, the UN Security Council issued a statement calling for a cease-fire in the DRC, the withdrawal of all foreign forces and the opening of political dialogue towards national reconciliation. The statement also repeated an earlier call for an international conference on peace, security and development in the region to be held under the auspices of the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).¹⁶ However, at the Eighteenth SADC Summit held in Mauritius on 13 and 14 September 1998, the SADC heads of state and government "... welcomed initiatives by SADC and its Member States intended to assist in the restoration of peace, security and stability in DRC ..." ¹⁷

In September 1998, shortly after Kabila's request for assistance, South Africa and Botswana intervened in Lesotho in an attempt to assist the Lesotho government in restoring law and order following the election-related unrest. The undertaking was labelled as a 'SADC force' in name after a series of phone calls between the relevant heads of state.¹⁸ The intervention was immediately questioned, as some observers claimed that the operation went beyond existence in international law as only the point that South Africa had intervened to protect certain South African interests, such as the Katse Dam water scheme, would seem to have clear existence in international law.¹⁹ Specifically, this implies that a case of propping up a shaky regime, unable to represent Lesotho as its government, could not be regarded as a proper response in terms of international law.²⁰ It was furthermore pointed out that there were no clear guidelines on the part of SADC regarding military responses to internal conflicts in SADC member countries.²¹

Co-ordinating military intervention

It can be rightly argued that any justification for a military intervention on the grounds that it is in the interest of peace must proceed from the assumption that such justification cannot be contradictory to the purpose and principles of the UN, as embodied in the Charter of the world body.²² To this end, Article 24 of the Charter confers upon the UN Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 52 deals with 'regional arrangements' and states that nothing in the Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. Yet, intervention operations should not be contemplated without UN authorisation, as Article 53 of the UN Charter clearly states that "... *no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangement or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council ...*" ²³

Until recently, intervention operations were conducted under the auspices of the UN and under the guise of peacekeeping — especially peace enforcement. The UN operation in Somalia is a typical example as it was basically a peacemaking operation based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter.²⁴ However, recent developments in Africa, with special reference to intervention in Sierra Leone, the DRC and Lesotho, have pointed towards intervention operations without UN

endorsement.

What seems to be important is to address potential conflicts or *coups* before they take place or escalate beyond control. Indeed, Boleas commander, Colonel Robbie Hartsliel, suggested that *"... this kind of intervention [in Lesotho should] be accepted as a new kind of peace operation in Africa, because such operations may prevent a massive loss of lives and enormous economic damage."* According to Hartsliel, everything possible must be done to prevent civil war, and this can be achieved only if intervention takes place before armed conflict occurs. *"The problem is that people romanticise peace operations. It would seem to me that firstly they want to have an outbreak of civil war, then a cease-fire, then an agreement which is acknowledged by the UN, and only then should the peace force move in."*²⁵

However, it should be borne in mind that peacekeeping is essentially a UN responsibility, that it should be endorsed by the world body, and conducted in accordance with the international ethos of the UN Charter. This would imply that any justification for military intervention on the grounds that it is in the interest of peace must proceed from the assumption that it is not contradictory to the UN Charter. At the same time, some analysts suggest that intervention operations should be led by regional organisations or military alliances, or even a single nation, under the political authorisation of the UN.²⁶ However, this would mean that the formulation of UN mandates should not inhibit swift intervention in internal crises, and that regional or subregional organisations should clearly provide for guidelines with regard to military responses to internal conflicts within the framework of sound objectives.

What is also significant is the fact that the UN now seems prepared to form partnerships with willing regional organisations and alliances in Africa as far as operations for maintaining peace and security are concerned. This relates to the idea of a shared responsibility between the UN and continental stakeholders for the effective management of conflict in Africa. As such, Africa is the first continent where extensive efforts have been made between the UN and a regional body (the OAU) with the specific objective of enhancing the management of conflicts in the region. However, many issues remain unclear, specifically in terms of an ideal arrangement between the UN, the OAU and other roleplayers. If these and the above issues are not resolved, the justification and motives of interventionists in regional conflicts are likely to be called into question and, consequently, the military aspects of such operations are also likely to be subjected to a greater degree of criticism and scrutiny.

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF BOLEAS

The nature of intervention operations is multidimensional (political/diplomatic, military/security, humanitarian/economic/social) and this requires planned co-ordination with the view to ensure a coherent multinational effort.²⁷ To assess Operation Boleas as a military operation, certain essential elements or requirements in any peace intervention operation or enforcement action have to be taken into account.²⁸ From a theoretical and practical viewpoint, the successful conduct of such operations requires a high degree of co-ordination between various contributing nations and bodies, as well as clear objectives and demands.

Mission and mandate

Multinational military forces of all kinds are often presented with serious challenges and resistant operational environments. In such volatile situations, mandates must provide for sporadic changes in the nature of operations and in the military action to be taken. Moreover, as multinational operations in the name of peace and security reside in the interface between

political and military affairs, the need for clear mandates and rules of engagement is paramount. Against this background, the experience of military forces in many theatres highlights a critical issue concerning the contemporary challenge of operations in internal conflicts, namely the problem of formulating mandates of which the humanitarian and political objectives are effectively understood and reinforced by the forces on the ground.29

As far as Operation Boleas is concerned, the SANDF claimed that the forces were mandated to conduct a military intervention operation to establish control over the border between South Africa and Lesotho, to protect South African assets and to stabilise Maseru in order to create a safe environment in which Lesotho's problems could be negotiated.30 The task of the SANDF was therefore to prevent any further anarchy, to negate the threat of a military *coup*, and to create a stable environment within which a political settlement could evolve.31 From a political perspective, it was also stated that the operation did not intend to 'prop up' either the Lesotho government, or the opposition. Intervention was intended to quash a military *coup* which would have prevented the people of Lesotho from democratically resolving any conflict dividing the majority and its opposition.32

In a *post mortem* of its foray into Lesotho, however, the SANDF did claim that the government lacked a clear national security policy and that it had not been made clear to the SANDF that Operation Boleas was an intervention operation as opposed to a peace support operation.33 Still, in the light of the above, it would be fair to conclude that the military forces were not hampered by political uncertainty or confusion over the political and strategic objectives of Operation Boleas. Unlike many other multinational operations — especially peace enforcement operations — previously conducted on African soil, the operational situation did not fluctuate and require sporadic changes in the nature of the operation and in the action to be taken on the part of the military forces. In fact, the operation was conducted in a tiny country with a 909 kilometre long border. The forces simply had to deal with a deteriorating security situation, to secure South African interests in respect of the gigantic Highlands water project, and to prevent a military *coup* by mutinous members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

The SANDF publicly stated that the rules of engagement, the status of forces agreement and the mandate had been made clear before the operation began, and that legal briefings had been given to all concerned prior to the deployment of forces. The only problem was that a wider mandate should have been provided to cover incidents such as the looting which took place in central Maseru. Specifically, the maintenance of law and order was inhibited because the SADC forces had no powers of arrest.34

Mandate versus means

Sub-Saharan Africa is in need of financial assistance to conduct regional operations in order to maintain peace and security.35 Many African defence forces experience logistical and organisational problems, and are generally plagued by obsolete and worn-out military equipment, while training difficulties are also experienced.36 This lack of resources hinders the participation of many countries in multinational operations, as most experience difficulties in respect of the ground, air or sea transportation required for timely long distance deployment.37

In the case of Operation Boleas, the South African Army deployed a mechanised battalion, with an airborne company in reserve, on 22 September 1998. The South African Air Force deployed six Oryx transport helicopters, two Alouette III helicopter gunships, two Alouette III helicopters (in a command role) and a Cessna Caravan. In addition, a Botswana mechanised infantry company joined after a twelve-hour delay.38 According to the chief of the SANDF, General Sipiwe

Nyanda, the operation cost the SANDF more than R24 million over the period 22 September to 2 November 1998. These costs included more than R6,2 million for personnel allowances, R13-million for civilian transportation and R2,7 million for air support services.³⁹ In February 1999, it was revealed that the total expenses of the operation amounted to R36 million⁴⁰ and that the Lesotho government would have to carry the costs.⁴¹

Although the SANDF claimed that the costs of its involvement in Lesotho had depleted its already strained budget⁴² and that the SANDF's war reserves were also at depleted levels,⁴³ there is no conclusive indication that the operation was hampered by financial constraints in terms of its day-to-day operational activities. In fact, the strength and capability of the South African forces in the African context are indisputable, while Botswana has become an 'upper middle income' country in terms of the World Bank definition, with one of the world's highest economic growth rates.⁴⁴ It can therefore be argued that a lack of resources and inadequate logistic support cannot be seriously considered as impeding factors in conducting the intervention operation in Lesotho.

Neither were the forces troubled by difficulties of long distance deployment. Certain problems, such as ineffective telecommunications during the operation, were more the result of inexperience and a lack of functionally trained and skilled personnel. Yet, the SANDF's public acknowledgement that there were only limited reserves of ration packs, batteries, vehicle tyres, and vehicle spares for infantry combat vehicles (ICVs) and armoured personnel carriers (APCs), should not be taken lightly and are indicative of the fact that budget cuts have had a deleterious effect on the force's main and other equipment.⁴⁵

At the same time, some analysts argue that the deployment of a force that was too weak to carry out its mission quickly in the face of serious opposition influenced the outcome of Operation Boleas. It would seem that this situation was aggravated by the late arrival of the BDF contingent, leaving the intervention force under strength during the crucial early hours and with no troops to handle the unexpected rioting and looting in Maseru.⁴⁶ Media reports suggested that, if the SANDF had entered Lesotho with a much stronger troop contingent, the city could have been flooded with patrols, obviating the need to lift a finger against civilians who ran riot, thus possibly saving Maseru from partial destruction.⁴⁷

The SANDF, however, maintained that the forces had been correctly composed in the light of intelligence reports and of the operational appreciation of the level of resistance expected, and pointed to the fact that the forces had been committed to the doctrine of minimum force.⁴⁸ Yet, the SANDF eventually took the step of increasing its troop numbers in Lesotho to 3 500 in the course of events during October 1998, and later admitted that there was a perception on the part of the SADC forces that the dissident elements in Lesotho would be disoriented and that they would be easily overcome.⁴⁹

In the final analysis, information on the run-up, planning and execution of Operation Boleas reveals that the preliminary decision made at the operational level was based on Operation Kitso, a contingency plan that was designed only for the evacuation of South Africa's High Commission personnel and South African citizens in Lesotho, and not for military intervention in the event of a possible *coup d'état*. Clearly, a more comprehensive operational plan should have been formulated.⁵⁰

Co-ordination and unity of effort

States participating in multinational operations to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts retain

their autonomy and sovereignty. Such contending national priorities have the potential to translate themselves into problems with command and control, rules of engagement, disciplinary measures and personnel procedures. Differences of opinion in a volatile situation may result in political differences and disagreements between the participating states.⁵¹ Furthermore, challenges concerning a lack of co-ordination between and within mission elements can pose a great number of military problems, particularly given different training standards, operating procedures and suspicions about intelligence-sharing.⁵²

With regard to Operation Boleas, the SADC forces initially consisted exclusively of SANDF personnel, rather than a mix of SANDF and BDF soldiers. South Africa, owing to its proximity to Lesotho and its size, contributed far greater force numbers to the operation than did Botswana. In addition, the South African forces were also 'first on the scene' and, as such, had to deal with what was perhaps the most difficult and challenging part of the operation. As already pointed out, the BDF troops arrived in Lesotho only after the SANDF had been engaged in a day-long solo effort, in combat operations against LDF elements — particularly in and around Maseru. The BDF had also been committed to the less volatile area of southern Lesotho, where its vehicles were more suited to the terrain than the heavier South African vehicles.⁵³

It should also be noted that a combined joint headquarters had been established by the combined task force to conduct simultaneous planning and execution and to conduct replanning during execution.⁵⁴ It would therefore seem that challenges associated with a lack of co-ordination and command and control arrangements between and within national contingents cannot be cited as factors that impinged on Operation Boleas in any significant terms.

Intelligence collection capabilities

Contemporary peace initiatives have shown that politically fluid and militarily complex situations may require more advanced resources and procedures for collecting, assessing and distributing intelligence. Intelligence on the military power and disposition of forces, the location of minefields, the level of violence and other features in a deployment area are essential for planning and conducting military operations.⁵⁵ In order to be effective in mandate execution, a military commander needs to be able to detect the movement of the belligerent forces, determine the location of arms caches, and anticipate the plans and tactics of those who intend to violate agreements and jeopardise the execution of the mission mandate.

The issue of intelligence certainly was one of the most controversial aspects of Operation Boleas. Media reports generally described the intelligence used to guide the South African troops into battle as "*poor and inaccurate*", and associated this with the much higher than expected rate of casualties.⁵⁶ Even specialised military journals reported, for example, that the underlying cause of problems encountered during the operation seems to have been the failure of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs and the intelligence services to provide an accurate picture of the situation. Consequently, the SANDF had made an over-optimistic assessment of the situation, resulting in the deployment of a force too weak to handle the situation.⁵⁷

In response to media reports and speculation, SANDF spokesperson, Colonel John Rolt stated that "*if there had been a problem internally with gathering intelligence, as was being speculated, then it was best that the problem was sorted out internally.*"⁵⁸ At the same time, Colonel Hartslief, the force commander, maintained that the South African forces were in a position to make use of proper intelligence reports. He disclosed that the South African special forces were dispatched to the mission area prior to the operation with the aim of providing the SADC forces

with relevant information and that the SANDF did not enter Lesotho blindly. According to Hartsliet, it was, rather, the 'fog of war' that played a role in operational difficulties encountered during the deployment phase.⁵⁹

However, the SANDF eventually admitted that the degree of armed resistance that was encountered, was greater than had been expected⁶⁰ and that the initial commitment of 600 SANDF troops was based on intelligence reports anticipating limited resistance.⁶¹ It was also admitted that, as a result of the withdrawal from Lesotho of the South African military attaché in April 1998, the SANDF had suffered a significant loss of intelligence collection capabilities in that country. By the same token, observation teams could not confirm certain critical tactical information on time, and adequate aerial photographs were unavailable. It was publicly stated that the SANDF intelligence contingent was not sufficiently manned and skilled, while outdated equipment had to be used. In addition, specialised counterintelligence was not immediately available. Intelligence liaison with the BDF was also limited.⁶² In the final analysis, one can only readily agree with the observation that improvements in the SANDF's intelligence-gathering capabilities and/or in the process of its analysis, and in transmission of intelligence to all relevant roleplayers are required, and that these capabilities are imperative in operations of this kind.⁶³

Media relations

Military forces engaged in third-party interventions must be perceived as efficient and effective. Accordingly, it is important that representatives from the media are in a position to have a clear understanding of the operation and of the operational issues within the mission area. Media coverage can enhance perceptions — positive or negative — among both the members of the task force themselves, and the people in whose area they are deployed, as well as among the public at large. An ability to deal with the media may be crucial in determining how peace initiatives are perceived.⁶⁴

Operation Boleas was conducted in the full glare of the media, and reporters played a pivotal role in interpreting news and events surrounding the operation. In fact, the South African government blamed the media for their assessment of the Lesotho intervention and alleged that the media were guilty of manipulating the truth. Moreover, a number of opinions had been voiced on the appropriateness of SADC's intervention in Lesotho, which made it difficult to judge whether the mission could be regarded as successful or not. Judgement was further clouded, since the media created an impression that the intervention was unrelated to any rationale and a clear political mandate.⁶⁵ To this end, the SANDF publicly stated that the 'psychological and media war' had been lost 'at all levels'.⁶⁶ In terms of media liaison, the SANDF also admitted that:

there was a lack of clear strategic guidelines;
there was no cohesive corporate communication strategy; and
external communication tended to be reactive rather than proactive.⁶⁷

However, it should be noted that the external communication that took place during the operation, was enhanced by the direct involvement of commanders in this role, high levels of truth and transparency, and visits to the area of operations arranged for journalists.⁶⁸ Much was done in a personal capacity by the force commander to ensure that the media could view and cover the operation in Lesotho. In fact, Hartsliet was commended for his openness towards journalists. In his dealings with the media, Hartsliet also admitted that there was a problem on the part of the South African government (or military) to relate the intervention to a rationale. He

argued that better communication could have tempered some of the criticism and negative reflections by reporters.⁶⁹

Thus it, would seem that the South African government found it difficult to propagate a wider understanding of Operation Boleas in media circles. It should be emphasised that peace missions of all kinds reside in the interface between political and military affairs. In view of this, media reports claimed that the South African government and SADC lacked a clear policy framework in their dealings with Lesotho. Another point of criticism in respect of the political handling of the issue related to questions about payment for the operation. The official South African response that "*Lesotho will have to pay*"⁷⁰ was always treated with a measure of scepticism.

There was also a negative response towards the fact that Sydney Mufamadi, the minister of Safety and Security at the time, instead of the minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo, was given the task to deal with the turmoil in Lesotho. Similarly, the fact that Acting President Mangosuthu Buthelezi (in the absence of President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki) took the decision to intervene was likewise questioned and widely criticised.⁷¹ This was aggravated by the fact that a number of informal allegations had been made by prominent government representatives that they were either not informed or only scantily informed of the plans for the Lesotho intervention. Some parliamentarians and the chairpersons of key parliamentary committees were angered by their exclusion from the decision-making process.⁷² Certain reporters also maintained that a military solution was opted for, while efforts by the South African government to find a negotiated political settlement in Lesotho had not been fully exhausted.⁷³ Such claims were especially roused by the opposition parties in Lesotho, who assertively whipped up suspicion about the motives for the intervention.⁷⁴

The above critical claims and viewpoints about the political handling of the operation seem to have had a negative influence on the media's general attitude towards the operational aspects of the operation. Yet, it would also appear that the initial negative reports in the media on Operation Boleas changed somewhat over time, as could be detected in later media reports after Lesotho had returned to normal.

Civil-military interaction

The deployment of multinational forces in situations of conflict demands a delicate and critical relationship with the parties to the conflict, as well as with the local population. Therefore, any type of third-party intervention requires a sensitive approach.⁷⁵ The fact that members of peace forces are often or frequently in contact with the local population especially calls for a great deal of caution and prudence on their part in order to avoid misunderstandings, tension or even collusion. They can be called upon to use diplomatic skills, and to seek compromises by means of negotiation. Such attributes require an additional dimension to a soldier's professional life.⁷⁶

In this context, the task force of Operation Boleas was clearly committed to the doctrine of minimum force. The SANDF maintained that a non-violent approach was followed for as long as this was possible, even at the expense of military effectiveness.⁷⁷ For instance, blank ammunition was initially used by the Ratel 90s⁷⁸ and, on all occasions, the South African troops were fired on first.⁷⁹ Thus, it can be concluded that the SANDF were clearly aware of the fact that the deployment of troops in Lesotho involved a delicate and critical relationship with the respective roleplayers, including the local population.

It should also be noted to the credit of the officers commanding Operation Boleas that a civil-

military operations centre was established in Maseru early in the mission's existence. According to Colonel Hartslief, this helped to shape a more positive image of the operation from the viewpoint of civil-military relations.⁸⁰ The establishment of such a centre was done to co-ordinate civilian and military affairs between the SADC forces and the other roleplayers in Lesotho. Specifically, the function of the centre was to oversee the security-related issues in Lesotho and to liaise with government departments, the business community, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other roleplayers on security matters and humanitarian relief.⁸¹

Linguistic and cultural diversity

The effective command and control of any military operation depend heavily on its communication capacity and ability. It is necessary to furnish authorities at all levels with timely information on the direction and co-ordination of all activities at ground level.⁸² In sub-Saharan Africa, the military of the various states have all inherited the languages of the former colonial powers, as well as their various military cultures. Previous command and control problems experienced during multinational operations to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa were often related to linguistic diversity.⁸³

Since both the South African and Botswana forces used English as a medium of command communication, problems pertaining to command and control cannot be related to linguistic diversity. In addition, it has already been pointed out that the South African forces arrived first on the scene and had to deal with what was perhaps the most difficult and challenging part of the operation single-handedly. Furthermore, the BDF was deployed in southern Lesotho, where its vehicles were more suited to the terrain than the heavier South African vehicles.

It could also be argued that the combined task force had a decided advantage over any other potential task force as far as their cultural background, language and knowledge of Lesotho were concerned. It would be fair to state that the culture, customs and traditions were not incomprehensible to them. It can therefore be concluded that they had a fairly easy task as far as compatibility with the operational requirements and the local environment are concerned.

Standard of forces

Since the undertaking of multinational operations for the maintenance of peace and security is a daunting challenge in any terms, proper standards of training, and the quality and professionalism of soldiers can hardly be overemphasised. It is imperative that professional armed forces, commanded by professional officers, properly trained and well-disciplined for their primary mission, are the only forces to be deployed for such operations.

In a frank *post mortem* of its foray into Lesotho, the SANDF stated that the situation in Lesotho developed quickly and that time was too short for proper planning and for deployment drills and rehearsals by the soldiers involved⁸⁴ — despite the fact that the president's office instructed the SANDF to conduct contingency planning on 16 September 1998.⁸⁵ Participating units were not fully combat-ready, and stock-level planning for operational reserves was not done, resulting in a strain on supplies.⁸⁶ Accordingly, the subsequent media reports that the SANDF went in "*too quickly and ill-prepared*" cannot be slated as totally unjustified and unfounded.

To some analysts, the decision to send troops to Lesotho marked a sea change by the government that, until the intervention took place, had unsuccessfully pursued the path of peaceful negotiations. Then, after failing to persuade the quarrelling political parties in Lesotho to sit down and hold talks, "*it wielded the big stick*"⁸⁷ — but without a contingency plan on the part of the SANDF.⁸⁸

Another problem encountered in Operation Boleas relates to reports of poor discipline among SANDF soldiers. A number of allegations of misconduct — especially absence without leave — were reported. However, the SANDF took a firm stand in this regard⁸⁹ and it is doubtful whether this really inhibited the ability of the SANDF to perform its task. In fact, the SANDF claimed that its troops distinguished themselves by demonstrating very good battle discipline.⁹⁰

Furthermore, the selection of key appointments with proper managerial skills and experience is a vital issue in the context of resource requirements. In previous multinational operations in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the failure of military planners to select officers with adequate training and expertise for vital aspects of operations influenced the ability of forces to arrest the conflict successfully.⁹¹ By the same token, collective operations in the name of peace and security are seldom ‘tidy’, and ‘the fog of war’ demands strong and competent leadership.⁹²

A lack of sound leadership would not seem to have imperilled the execution of Operation Boleas at any stage. For example, it can be pointed out that Colonel Hartsliet, officer commanding during the first part of Operation Boleas, was highly commended by the South African media for his leadership role in the operation. Hartsliet, an officer who has undergone training in peace operations in Canada, Germany and Bosnia, was also the officer commanding of 43 Mechanised Brigade, a SANDF rapid deployment formation. As such, he was undoubtedly an experienced officer.⁹³ The rest of the South African command structure in Operation Boleas also seem to have proven themselves in the fields of managerial skills and good leadership during the operation,⁹⁴ despite a few tactical errors in the early stages of the operation.⁹⁵

Lessons to be learned

One cannot disagree with the chief of the SANDF, General Siphwe Nyanda, that the military objectives defined in the mandate were accomplished,⁹⁶ despite the fact that certain tactical errors were made and the degree of armed resistance that was encountered, was greater than had been anticipated. It would be fair to state from a purely military viewpoint that Operation Boleas had been successfully conducted, as it did succeed in stabilising the security situation in Lesotho, which allowed the political parties to resume negotiations around the issue of governance. In addition, it safeguarded South Africa’s interests in Lesotho and succeeded in securing strategic installations from being taken over or destroyed by the mutinous forces. However, the operation did not succeed in preventing and controlling the destruction and looting of property in central Maseru. From a political perspective, it has yet to be seen whether the operation has paved the way for fresh elections in pursuit of a medium and long-term political goal and settlement.

Most importantly, the combined task force managed to withdraw ahead of schedule in May 1999 under relatively stable conditions, and avoided becoming involved in an interminable and intractable conflict.⁹⁷ It is especially laudable that a training element with a strength of 300 soldiers from South Africa and Botswana remained in Lesotho to assist in the training and restructuring of the LDF in accordance with the principles of defence in a democracy.⁹⁸

In the context of the above, a number of lessons from Operation Boleas can improve the performance of the SANDF and other Southern African forces in future operations of this kind. These lessons include the following:

The parameters of possible future intervention operations (enforcement action) need to be clarified in terms of South Africa’s foreign policy (or national security policy).

The degree of resistance of armed soldiers, in particular those who are not commanded by a formal structure, should never be underestimated.

Intervention operations should be conducted with an outlook or approach of expecting the worst under hostile conditions, and should move on a continuum from enforcement action towards a peacekeeping role.

Planning for future intervention operations needs to address all foreseeable contingencies.

Successful intervention is possible only when an appropriate contingency plan exists, covering all possible aspects of the anticipated action and response.

In the event where no contingency plan exists, enough time must be allowed for the full spectrum of deployment drills.

Military staff who understand intervention operations (or rapid deployment) under hostile circumstances need to be in control.

The challenges of interoperability and the deployment of the SANDF in a combined or regional force need to receive continuous attention at all relevant levels.

Efficient intelligence for intervention operations should be available at all relevant levels.

Military intelligence resources should be deployed prior to intervention to provide real time and timely intelligence during execution.

Intelligence personnel should be trained and skilled to execute their functions under hostile conditions.

Contingency planning for rapid deployment needs to include the stockpiling of war reserves.

Communication with the media and other relevant roleplayers is a critical factor if intervention operations are to be successfully conducted.

Communication with the local population is important for the image of the intervening forces and for communicating the reasons behind the intervention.

Mandates for intervention operations should provide for all possible collateral incidents, such as looting and arson, and the necessary powers (for example, powers of arrest) to deal with such incidents should be provided.

The ability to draft a status of forces agreement and rules of engagement on short notice must be available.

A proper understanding of and commitment to legal principles (such as the law of armed conflict) on the part of all relevant functionaries are imperative in cases of enforcement action.

Finally, it can be pointed out that entrance into an area of conflict should be preceded by a

sound assessment of the situation. All relevant decision makers must be provided with a thorough evaluation of:

- the nature of the conflict;
- the prospects for a political solution to the conflict,
- the extent to which military intervention will facilitate conflict resolution; and
- the political objectives of the intervention.

Clear exit criteria must be considered in terms of the achievement of a desirable political endstate within an acceptable period of time, rather than in terms of the technicalities of a military withdrawal plan. Decision makers must therefore be reasonably convinced that intervention will not result in a diplomatic or political failure.

CONCLUSION

Unlike many other previous multinational operations on African soil, the SANDF was not hampered by political uncertainty over the political and strategic objectives of Operation Boleas. Intervention was intended to stabilise Lesotho in order to create a safe environment in which Lesotho's problems could be negotiated and to protect South African assets in the country. Accordingly, the military planners of Operation Boleas were able to define a clear *mission*, a *battle concept* and a *desired result* for the operation. At the same time, the swift decision to send troops to Lesotho left the SANDF without a proper contingency plan, especially in the light of vagueness and uncertainty concerning the ambit of South Africa's foreign policy framework for enforcement action. SANDF units were not fully combat-ready as time was too short for proper planning, deployment drills and for rehearsals by the units involved.

Yet, Operation Boleas did experience certain shortcomings and problems. It is especially clear that, as a result of intelligence reports on the situation in Lesotho, the SANDF's assessment was over-optimistic and resulted in a force too weak to handle the operational requirements and especially the level of resistance from LDF elements. However, this should not simply be made the scapegoat for the higher than expected rate of casualties, since enforcement action is seldom 'tidy'. In fact, the SANDF has admitted that the deployment phase was marked by a few tactical errors.

It can be argued from a narrow military perspective that Operation Boleas was a success, in the sense that the military objectives of the mandate were accomplished. The operation succeeded in stabilising the security situation in Lesotho. Furthermore, the operation safeguarded South Africa's interests in the country and succeeded in securing strategic installations from being taken over or destroyed, although it did not succeed in preventing and controlling the destruction and looting of property in central Maseru. This allowed the political parties to resume negotiations around the issue of governance. In this regard, the overall success of the decision to intervene in Lesotho should be measured in political terms with regard to the extent to which the military action facilitated conflict resolution in the framework of a desired political endstate.

Finally, what has been highlighted by Operation Boleas is the need for an overarching political framework in which SADC countries — and South Africa, in particular — can exercise judgement and undertake enforcement action within a circumscribed framework. The challenge is to establish an acceptable basis for involvement or intervention in intrastate conflicts or threats to regional peace that respects the dignity and independence of states without sanctioning the misuse of sovereign rights to violate the security of people residing within a state's borders. Suffice it to say that regional enforcement action is extremely difficult, risky and expensive.

Multinational operations in the name of peace and security reside in the interface between political and military affairs and success in any operation of this kind depends upon a broad political process. Operation Boleas clearly bears testimony to this.

Notes

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3. SANDF, <www.mil.za/SANDF/Current%20Ops/Boleas/Boleas-2.htm>, op. cit.
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5. SANDF Directorate Corporate Communication, *The SADC intervention in Lesotho ... a military perspective*, **Salut**, July 1999, p 23.
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22. M Malan, *Regional power politics under cover of SADC — Running amok with a mythical organ*, **ISS Papers**, 35, October 1998, p 8.
23. United Nations, **Charter of the United Nations**, San Francisco, 1945.
24. Bir, op cit, p 23.
25. A Stofberg, *SA moet mag nou steun*, **Beeld**, 3 October 1998, p 9.
26. Bir, op cit, p 25.
27. Ibid, p 22.
28. It should be clear that Operation Boleas was a SADC intervention operation in Lesotho that was conducted in the light of fears that a military *coup* was planned in the country. Hence, it is technically wrong to typify it as a multinational peace support operation, since peace support operations are normally associated with action occurring along a conflict continuum between preventive diplomacy and post-conflict reconstruction and development. In this regard, peace support operations in the military sense generally entail post-conflict activities designed to strengthen and rebuild a country; peacekeeping activities that involve the containment, moderation and termination of hostilities within states; or the application of military force in accordance with UN Security Council authorisation in support of efforts to reach a political settlement. At the same time, the elements required for effective military action during peace support operations are likewise of relevance in the case of intervention operations.
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51. Williams, op cit, pp 91-92.
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53. Sutton-Pryce *et al*, op cit, p 28.
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INTRODUCTION

It is clear that the challenge of peace support in Africa is an immense one, a challenge that will not be met by rhetoric and catchy clichés such as *African solutions to African problems*. It is also clear that the present and future peace support environments in the Balkans and in Africa are and will be anything but benign. Why then does the mainstream debate on ‘peacekeeping’ in Africa focus on the need for more ‘blue helmet’ type training for African soldiers — while the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) focus on developing doctrine for more ‘robust’ interventions?

Part of the answer to this question lies in the inherent difficulties of building consensus among the 53 member states of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) around an integrated military doctrine for peace support that goes beyond ‘classic’ consensual operations. A number of recent international and regional conferences and workshops bear witness to the sensitivities surrounding this issue — not only among politicians and scholars, but also among military practitioners themselves.

But the key problem lies in defining appropriate limits and boundaries for what can conceivably be executed under the rubric of ‘peace support operations’. With blue helmet operations all but defunct, the failure to circumscribe and expand the concept of peacekeeping has seen a diverse array of African military interventions, ostensibly in support of ‘peace’. These have been manifested in such unlikely peacekeeping interventions as mercenary operations in Angola and Sierra Leone, the bombardment of Freetown by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the invasion of Lesotho by Southern African Development Community (SADC) ‘forces’, and the combat operations of ‘SADC forces’ in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In the Balkans, the rationale for intervention has not been as overtly political as in Africa, but the results have been no less destructive — as witnessed in the ‘humanitarian’ air blitz on Kosovo and Belgrade. The multifaceted United Nations-based interventionism of the 1990s and the more recent and focused military coalition interventions — ostensibly motivated by humanitarianism — have added a new twist to the intervention debate. Some analysts now see the ‘right of humanitarian intervention’ as forming part of the new international order.¹

However, there is still very little consensus on when, where and how to intervene — and with whose authority. As the UN Secretary-General has put it: *"In Kosovo a group of states intervened without seeking authority from the United Nations Security Council. In [East] Timor the council has now authorised intervention, but only after obtaining an invitation from Indonesia ... As in Rwanda five years ago, the international community stands accused of doing too little, too late ... Neither of these precedents is satisfactory as a model for the new millennium."*²

The aim of this contribution is to highlight a number of key unresolved issues regarding the present and future conduct of peace support operations on the African continent. These issues are grouped into three main areas of enquiry: when and where to intervene, who should intervene, and how to intervene.

WHEN AND WHERE TO INTERVENE

The question of when and where to intervene legitimately can be answered, rather simplistically, with a brief reference to the UN Charter. Chapter VII deals with *Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. It empowers the Security Council

to decide on measures to be taken to restore peace (implicitly, once a dispute has degenerated into armed conflict and has been identified by the Security Council as a *threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression*). Through Chapter VII, the UN Security Council is empowered to investigate alleged violations of the peace and then determine measures to be taken against the states concerned.

However, the UN Charter was clearly drafted with the view to regulate relationships among its members, in other words, independent states. It granted all members equal status, and assumed that states would continue to be the primary and sovereign actors in international relations. It does not contain provisions whereby the Security Council or General Assembly may relate to non-state agencies such as rebel movements, communal minorities, or political parties. Indeed, Article 2(7) states that:

"Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII."

This means that, theoretically at least, no invitation or consent is needed for UN intervention when the internal situation in any state is designated by the Security Council as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. The utility of this framework for intervening in order to end civil wars is, however, far more problematic than 'simple' intervention aimed at reversing acts of international aggression.

There has been little rigorous study on the relationship between external intervention and the outcome of intrastate conflicts. Greater knowledge about the internal dynamics of civil wars would undoubtedly help in assessing the utility of intervention, and the relationship between such intervention and durable peace. But it is a simple fact that most civil wars have ended with the outright military victory of one side over the other, and that the most stable peace settlements have resulted from military victory rather than external mediation and negotiations. On the other hand, such military victories in civil wars are often characterised by the widespread abuse of human rights, massive displacement of peoples, environmental degradation and even genocide — all of which militate against national reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction.³ This, in essence, poses the dilemma of 'humanitarian intervention', not only as a right, but also as a duty.

'Humanitarian intervention' may be defined as military intervention in a state without the approval of its authorities, for the purpose of preventing widespread suffering or death among its inhabitants. Increasingly, the term has confusingly been used to refer to the provision of major humanitarian assistance to people in an emergency situation, not necessarily involving the use of armed force, and not necessarily against the will of the government of those people.⁴

Even the military, with its well-known penchant for definitional clarity, seems confused by the notion of humanitarian intervention. For example, extant NATO peace support operations doctrine does not refer to 'humanitarian intervention', but it does specify 'humanitarian operations' as a subset of peace support operations. By way of definition, it explains simply that:

"Humanitarian operations are conducted to alleviate human suffering. Humanitarian operations may precede or accompany humanitarian activities provided by specialised civilian organisations."⁵

Briefly mentioned under the rubric of humanitarian operations are 'humanitarian assistance',

'disaster relief', and 'protection of human rights'. Under the latter, the doctrine states that "*[t]he protection of human rights is a fundamental element of all military operations. However, the prevention and redress of wide spread abuses to human rights will require a [peace enforcement] force ...*"⁶

Importantly, the doctrine goes on to emphasise that "*[i]n the conduct of [peace enforcement] the link between political and military objectives must be extremely close*", while recognising that such interventions are "... *increasingly into situations of widespread human rights abuses including genocide and ethnic cleansing associated with collapsed or collapsing states.*"⁷

The fact that military organisations are embracing humanitarian and human rights objectives has led to a perceived politicisation of humanitarian assistance under certain circumstances and to the 'humanisation' of military force under others. Humanitarian intervention thus remains an ambiguous concept that provides little practical guidance on when and where to intervene in armed conflict. Its basis, formulation, and implementation are widely discussed, yet there seems to be no international consensus on the principles which guide it and its boundaries.

There is also no universal measure of how much human suffering, on what scale, is so intolerable that states will invoke the right of humanitarian intervention to alleviate this suffering. The threshold of suffering that would invoke intervention varies according to factors such as mass media exposure, ethnic affinity and perceived national interests, rather than any kind of objective criteria. The net result is that a great deal more human suffering will be tolerable and tolerated in Africa than in Europe or the Americas. As Annan has noted,

*"... the commitment of the world to peacekeeping, to humanitarian assistance, to rehabilitation and reconstruction varies greatly from region to region, and crisis to crisis. If the new commitment to humanitarian action is to retain the support of the world's peoples, it must be and must be seen to be-universal, irrespective of region or nation. Humanity, after all, is indivisible."*⁸

These undeniably noble sentiments are unlikely to be converted into action. As the Secretary-General himself admits: "*...The world has changed in profound ways since the end of the Cold War, but I fear our conceptions of national interest have failed to follow suit.*"⁹ Indeed, most capable interventionists embrace the same type of policy restraints as those imposed by the United States' PDD-25, a kind of 'no more Somalias' doctrine.¹⁰ This unwillingness to embrace a universal humanitarianism and the notion that intervention must be strongly predicated on national interests are also apparent among African states.

Indeed, the increasing trend towards humanitarian action appears to reflect a mainly Western preoccupation. In this respect, Minear and Weis have noted that:

*"The concept of humanitarianism is most fully developed in the cultures and jurisprudence of Judeo-Christian nations. Reflecting those roots, the origin and constituencies of many of the better-known humanitarian organisations are Western ... The dominant ideologies and styles of such agencies sometimes alienate non-Western countries and populations..."*¹¹

This is not to say that indigenous African culture is devoid of humanity.¹² However, current African approaches to conflict resolution appear to differ from Western notions for broadening the concept of peace support to include forceful humanitarian interventions — or they may merely reflect the reality that all interventions are steeped in political motives. For example, African subregional organisations such as ECOMOG and SADC have pursued overtly political

objectives (regional stability) as rationale for intervention. Neither organisation has laid claim to the right of intervention on humanitarian grounds, and this motive has been remarkably absent from the security debate on a continent where humanitarian needs are so poignant.

Moreover, the forceful operations of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone and the 'SADC coalitions' in Lesotho and the DRC have borne little resemblance to contemporary UN or NATO peace support operations. The March 1999 NATO air blitz on Yugoslavia, under the mantle of 'humanitarianism', indicates that the West indeed accepts the need for forceful humanitarian intervention, but it is unlikely that it will use its 'smart' weapons to prevent genocide in Africa. As the Lesotho intervention proves, the West will also be reluctant to condemn more primitive forms of peace enforcement on the African continent.

The when and where to intervene is therefore a function of political will — and will be decided on a case-by-case basis by a variety of actors: individual countries, *ad hoc* coalitions, multilateral organisations and military alliances, and/or the UN Security Council. As Maninger has noted:

*"Interventions are a product of a number of coinciding factors. The preconditions [for intervention] are seldom applied fairly and instead base themselves predominantly on a geopolitical priority list. Africa's place on that priority list will vary from case to case ..."*¹³

Nevertheless, the decision to intervene and the underlying motives will be a key determinant of the appropriate intervening agent for the job, and this, in turn, will shape the nature and scope of the intervention itself.

WHO SHOULD INTERVENE?

During the Cold War, there was a fair understanding of a simple division of labour whereby the UN mounted military peace operations and observer missions while regional organisations concentrated on preventive political and diplomatic measures. This changed in the 1990s. A proliferation of devastating internal conflicts saw several actors (governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental) becoming involved in attempts to resolve or ameliorate the same conflicts.¹⁴ This soon led to the idea of layered responses to African crises, whereby the initial response would come from local and national organisations, followed by responses at the subregional and regional (OAU) levels, and finally by those of the UN and the broader international community. It was thought that this would overcome inertia at the level of the UN, and enable more rapid and appropriate responses at much lower levels of the international security framework.

According to Margaret Vogt: *"One of the most important innovations in the management of international security in the post-Cold War era is the concept of shared responsibility between the United Nations and some regional organisations for the effective management of conflicts within the regions of the world. Africa is the first region where extensive efforts have been made recently to formalise the relationship between the UN and the regional organisation, in this case the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), with the specific objective of enhancing the management of conflicts in the region."*¹⁵

Under the auspices of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the OAU is indeed mandated to co-ordinate its activities closely with the UN and with African regional and subregional organisations, and to co-operate, where appropriate, with neighbouring countries. There is thus a strong perception among Africans that the future of conflict resolution and peacekeeping rests on a pyramidal security framework, described by Nhara as follows:

*"In graphic terms, and for the purposes of conflict management, the partnership between the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, together with its corresponding sub-regional organisations, should be akin to a pyramid. At the top of that pyramid should be the United Nations as a world body, and as the supreme organ for ensuring peace and security, worldwide. At the bottom of that pyramid should be the sub-regional organisations. And, between the apex and the base, the OAU should provide the critical linkage."*¹⁶

The great advantage of this type of approach to conflict management in Africa is that neighbours are more familiar with each other's problems than outsiders. Neighbours usually have a fairly common culture, a common social identity, a common history and similar experiences. The disadvantage, however, is that close proximity often generates tension and reduces the spirit of impartiality between neighbours — to the extent that they sometimes become part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.¹⁷

An overriding interest in their neighbourhood's stability, and their actual or potential leverage with disputants, means that subregional organisations such as ECOWAS, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and SADC may be uniquely qualified to launch preventive diplomacy efforts — and perhaps to effect negotiated settlements in cases of civil war. However, the role of regional organisations in conflict resolution has become extremely convoluted. 'Peacekeeping' has become more robust than ever before, and new operations are increasingly launched with a strong Chapter VII mandate. Drawing extensively on the ECOMOG experience, and perhaps confused by NATO's unique resources as a military alliance without peer, these peace missions have been delegated to regional organisations and arrangements because, as Annan has admitted:

*"The United Nations does not have ... the institutional capacity to conduct military enforcement measures under Chapter VII. Under present conditions, ad hoc Member States coalitions of the willing offer the most effective deterrent to aggression or to the escalation or spread of an ongoing conflict ..."*¹⁸

There has indeed been significant evidence of this. Substantial and forceful multinational operations have been conducted since 1990 by ECOWAS in West Africa, and since July 1992 by Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tadjikistan. While this robust 'peacekeeping' has been undertaken by regional organisations and alliances, much smaller UN missions have been deployed to observe the 'peacekeepers', as well as the belligerents (for example UNOMIL in Liberia, UNOMIG in Georgia, and UNMOT in Tadjikistan).

Beyond the inherent limitations of the UN system itself, sensitivity to violence and low tolerance for casualties effectively eliminate Western involvement in any type of peace enforcement operation that goes beyond the 'distant retaliation doctrine' underpinning Operation Desert Storm and the more recent NATO aerial operations in Kosovo. The reluctance to deploy ground forces in combat situations where the distinction between friend and foe, or soldier and civilian is unclear, is far greater when the region in question is of little strategic significance — as is the case with most conflict zones in Africa.

These trends have been accepted rather uncritically by African analysts and policy makers, while those from the West have not had the courage to challenge the proponents of 'backyard peacekeeping' in the Russian 'near abroad' and in Africa — so long as such operations do not demand sacrifices of Western soldiers.

It is now commonly accepted that the security dilemma of marginal African states can be addressed by constructing larger units of security. However, the prospects for sub-regional collective security or even defence regimes developing successfully in Africa cannot be considered good, exactly because states remain the basic building blocks and decisional loci of multinational security regimes. The process of state formation and statebuilding in Africa, on the whole, has not produced very strong foundation stones for larger security constructs. Since the demise of the Cold War, African states have become ever more vulnerable to armed insurgencies. In many countries, insurgent movements now not only rival the juridical state as a unit of coercion, they have also emerged as competing centres of security.¹⁹

The devolution of peacekeeping responsibilities to African countries is thus predicated largely on attempts to build hollow multilateral structures for conflict resolution — both at the level of the OAU and that of subregional organisations. Attempts to refine the relations between the two levels of organisation — that are similarly composed of weak member states and are lacking significant resources — are thus also bound to be fruitless. Unless, of course, the need to place statebuilding and good governance at the centre of such efforts is accepted, and the debate on the utility of such organisations for conflict resolution is stripped of much of its customary politeness and hypocrisy. As Vogt so candidly puts it:

*"The OAU and the African sub-regional organisations need to be clearer on the moral and political principles which should inform the relationships between and within states in the region. These organisations should uphold minimum standards, the violation of which should be sanctioned equally across the board, and not only when the culprit is a relatively less powerful member of the organisation."*²⁰

In terms of military intervention, it has been recommended by African military chiefs that the OAU approaches the UN to endorse and authorise a peace operation where this is a necessary response to an emergency on the continent. Only if the UN is unresponsive, should the OAU be prepared to take preliminary action while continuing its efforts to elicit a positive response from the world body.²¹

The emerging concept for the conduct of OAU peace operations envisages the use of subregional organisations as a possible first line of reaction where the OAU is unable to act. The African chiefs of defence staff have recommended a brigade-sized contribution from each of the five African subregions, as a starting point for this type of capacity.²² However, it is necessary to move beyond the mere idea of earmarking troops. As Maninger has noted:

*"In the final analysis, it might be prudent for African States to accept that they are unlikely to receive massive foreign assistance in expanding regional capabilities and that they cannot expect direct foreign intervention to be more than a rare exception. Solutions to the continent's plagued conflict areas, will ultimately require a fundamental paradigm shift in this regard."*²³

The 'paradigm' has already shifted towards a greater reliance on regional security arrangements. What is needed is a focus on modest measures for the prevention and containment of conflicts, rather than attempts to replicate the UN system at the regional level. The emphasis should be on simple but reliable structures for security co-operation, ones that can stabilise relations and prevent the spillover of conflicts.²⁴ If this co-operation is to include joint military enforcement operations in support of peace processes, then this should be determined upfront, and the necessary legitimacy for such a course sought through the establishment of appropriate structures and principles for the conduct of such operations.

HOW TO INTERVENE?

Pacific measures

It is widely accepted that short-term measures to prevent the outbreak of fighting, or to stop fighting which has already started, must be bolstered by long-term measures to address the root causes of the conflict. As most African countries lack the capacity to export significant amounts of development aid and assistance, there is a continuing and unambiguous need to engage the broader international community in support of regional development efforts.

Beyond the development imperative, however, the process of 'peacebuilding' involves the inculcation of respect for human rights and political pluralism; the accommodation of diversity; building the capacity of state and civil institutions; and promoting economic growth and equity. These measures are the most effective means of preventing crises, and are therefore as much pre-crisis as post-crisis priorities. In all cases, peacebuilding should aim at the empowerment of peoples and should be based on local traditions and experiences, rather than the imposition of foreign modes of conflict management and governance.

African leaders have the potential to shape thinking in this regard, even if the resources for financial assistance and project implementation must be sought from the broader international community. But the latter is a subtle process, from which few diplomatic kudos can be gained. It also requires a good measure of introspection and example-setting in the realm of good and transparent governance. Most leaders are therefore more interested in direct diplomatic action in the realm of conflict prevention and resolution. 'Peacemaking' has thus become the favoured response to emerging African conflicts.

However, the vast majority of Africa's actual and potential conflicts are internal within the state.²⁵ This makes peacemaking an extremely complicated undertaking, and one of dubious utility, beyond the narcissistic effects on the members of the growing club of African peacemakers. The apparent ease with which the members of this club have lately been embarking on aircraft bound for the DRC and some of its bellicose neighbours belies the fact that this is no game for amateurs.

There is great political sensitivity around the causes of intrastate conflict, for they have to do with issues such as the quality of governance; the way law and order are maintained; the equity of economic and social systems; and ethnic discrimination. Beleaguered governments understandably tend to resist the attempts of outsiders to address these issues. There is also not much joy to be had from the other side of the bargaining table, which is normally occupied by an insurgent movement or movements. Rebels are likely to be amply supplied with arms, obsessively secretive, inexperienced in negotiation, without transparent lines of authority, undisciplined, violent and unfamiliar with the norms of international behaviour. They are obviously not easy people for even seasoned diplomats to deal with.²⁶

Moreover, governments themselves (or at least some key government officials), as well as various warlords, are likely to be benefiting from a war-based economy. This involves the exploitation of natural/national resources, under cover of the conflict situation, for self-enrichment. The intractability of internal conflicts also relates to the high levels of violence and the viciousness with which civil wars are prosecuted. In some cases, 'ethnic cleansing' or even genocide is included in the military objectives of belligerents. Large-scale violence within states thus tends to be more protracted than wars between states.²⁷ The scope for suggestions on compromise and conciliation may therefore be very limited.

It is not surprising that, despite the contemporary preoccupation with promoting the settlement of intrastate wars at the bargaining table, the record shows that negotiated peace has been a relatively rare outcome.²⁸ Of course, there have been more negotiated cease-fires than there have been comprehensive political settlements, but this is not necessarily a good thing. In Angola, for example, a number of cease-fires and peace accords have been brokered by outsiders over the past two decades, only to be broken by the signatories themselves — despite significant international supervision and assistance.

There is also a need for better timing and co-ordination of peacemaking endeavours — as illustrated by the Ethiopia-Eritrean border war, which began in May 1998. The day after this crisis erupted, Asmara called for international mediation.²⁹ A flurry of diplomatic ‘peacemaking’ activity ensued, conducted by such diverse actors as: Susan Rice, Paul Kagame, Salim Ahmed Salim, Hassan Aptidon and Moamar Gadhafi. Ethiopia and Eritrea both used the interlude provided by these and subsequent diplomatic initiatives to arm their forces to the hilt. No peacekeeping force was mustered, and the conflict remains unresolved to this day. Too much unco-ordinated peacemaking, implemented too soon, can obviously be counterproductive.

Annan’s report on conflict in Africa clearly states that peacemaking efforts need to be well co-ordinated and well prepared. The Secretary-General warns that *“the failure of the major external actors to maintain a common political approach to an erupting or ongoing crisis is one of the principal impediments to progress towards a solution,”* and that *“... it is critically important that international actors avoid the temptation to undertake rival or competing efforts.”*³⁰

The current fascination with brokering cease-fires and applying ‘conventional’ steps towards a peaceful settlement may also prolong conflicts rather than resolve them. Cease-fires allow warring parties to rest, regroup, re-arm and retrain. Once a cease-fire has been signed, no side is faced with imminent defeat or the prospect of intolerable losses. This allows them to direct their energies towards the next round of fighting, and the very incentive for a lasting settlement is removed.³¹ The case of Angola also highlights the possible long-term negative effects of third-party peacemaking — of pushing belligerents towards an agreement that they do not really want. It also confirms the fact that war-based economies will not disappear with the signing of formal peace agreements and the deployment of international observers and aid agencies.

The obvious lesson from Angola is that some conflicts just have to run their course until war fatigue makes mediation and compliance with the terms of peace agreements a more rational option than the continued prosecution of political aims by violent means. As Maninger has observed:

*“It is very important for people in conflict zones to become tired of war, before they develop a consensus-capability which is conducive to resolving the conflict and implementing a lasting peaceful solution.”*³²

This wisdom was not applied to settling the August 1998 rebellion of the *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie* (RCD) against the government of President Laurent-Desire Kabila. Military hostilities had hardly commenced before the first of a number of increasingly complicated ‘layers’ of responses to the conflict were made. These ranged from military intervention on the side of Kabila by three SADC states, to Pretoria’s plaintive cries for a ‘negotiated settlement’. Although SADC appointed Zambian President Frederick Chiluba as the ‘official mediator’, a peacemaking process of shuttle diplomacy involving dozens of regional heads of state and Foreign and Defence ministers eventually gave birth to a cease-fire agreement which was signed by the leaders of the six states party to the conflict in Lusaka on

10 July 1999 — but not by the Congolese rebel groups.³³

Yet, the peacemakers persisted in their efforts until, on 31 August 1999, the RCD eventually signed the cease-fire agreement in Lusaka. The compromise agreement that was brokered provided for all fifty founding members of the RCD to sign the document. The problem with this inventive diplomacy is that the Lusaka agreement allowed for each signatory — then envisaged to be the states involved plus the RCD and the *Mouvement de liberation congolais* (MLC)³⁴ — to nominate two members each to the Joint Military Commission. Within hours of the RCD signatures, disagreements arose between the Goma and Kisangani factions, with both insisting on representation on the JMC.³⁵ The compromise agreement therefore merely deferred the problem of the RCD split to consideration of the JMC's make-up.

However, the tenuous Lusaka agreement has held amidst frequent accusations of significant cease-fire violations. Although the implementation timetable outlined in the Lusaka accord has already slipped badly, the UN is going through the motions of planning to deploy military observers as a prelude to some kind of multifunctional peace mission.

Multifunctional peace missions

In less than a decade, peace support operations have evolved rapidly and in an *ad hoc* fashion, from classical peacekeeping (involving military interposition to monitor inter-state cease-fire agreements) to complex multidimensional interventions where the military component is but one of many participants within any particular peace process. The concepts of preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, humanitarian assistance, peacemaking and peacebuilding have all been incorporated in an holistic vision of comprehensive and ambitious peace missions. This has given rise to what the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre has dubbed the *new peacekeeping partnership* — a partnership that includes the military, civilian police, government and non-governmental agencies, diplomats, the media, and organisations sponsoring development and democratisation programmes.

However, it is unclear how this partnership is to be constructed within the rubric of 'indigenising' peace missions in Africa. While military units and formations are tangible, easily identifiable entities, the so-called 'civilian component' of modern peace missions is highly amorphous. The exact number and mix of civilian roleplayers will depend on the particular demands of the peace process, and will differ from mission to mission.

This has created unprecedented challenges in the realm of co-operation, co-ordination and the higher management of peace missions. The latter is compounded by the fact that UN civilian personnel are appointed as individuals who are not responsible to their national governments, while many other civilians working in the field are employed by a wide variety of private or non-government organisations (NGOs) which are not part of the UN system. The co-ordination, integration, and fostering of unity of effort among the various mission components have become dominant topics of debates in polite peacekeeping circles, and these challenges are indeed being addressed in the doctrinal development of Western military organisations.

However, such concerns are largely peripheral to the debate on the future of African peacekeeping. The dominant peacekeeping partnership that is emerging for Africans has nothing to do with the 'civilian component'. It is framed by Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and sees the countries of the North helping African countries to resolve their own armed conflicts — implicitly through multinational military intervention. Pertinently, all the major African peacekeeping capacity-building initiatives have focused exclusively on military training for

peacekeepers.

The military focus of foreign training initiatives is not surprising, as the key players in respect of humanitarian assistance, human rights action, and economic and social action are not national or regional actors from Africa or the South. They are international intergovernmental organisations, international aid agencies, and NGOs from the northern hemisphere. It is therefore extremely unlikely that any African nation (or regional grouping of nations) would contribute significantly towards the range of actors that make up the new peacekeeping partnership.

In the absence of a well-funded, vibrant and internationally focused civil society in Africa, the bulk of the 'civilian component' of multinational peace missions will continue to be provided by the North (with the exception of local employees with little decision-making power). Peacekeeping that is increasingly conducted under regional auspices (or by *ad hoc* coalitions of the willing) in Africa will therefore continue to be dominated by the blunt military instrument. The concept of multifunctional peace missions and the idea of a 'new peacekeeping partnership' thus has more relevance for the developed countries of the North than for those in Africa. This may be explained in terms of a surplus of individuals with relevant occupational skills in the North, longer experience within the UN system, greater financial resources, and more.

However, if much greater responsibility for keeping the peace is indeed to be devolved to Africans themselves, then there are two basic options. The first is to accept that African peace missions must necessarily be conducted according to standards and principles that are necessarily more 'brutal' and unsophisticated, and which leave little space for 'new peacekeeping partnerships'. The second option would be to insist on a more balanced approach to African capacity-building initiatives — one that focuses with equal aplomb on engaging and integrating the (albeit elusive) 'civilian component' into the theory and praxis of African intervention.

The second option is unlikely to materialise in the near future, and this creates the need for some hard-headed thinking on African doctrine for peace operations. 'Mainstream' peace support operation doctrine focuses increasingly on elusive entry criteria and utopian endstates. However, the means available to interventionists will always fall horribly short of desirable endstates, and it is unlikely that contemporary conflict scenarios will produce rational entry criteria — especially where Africa is concerned. But Africans must take careful note of this mainstream doctrine. It not only addresses issues of 'how to intervene', but also provides vital clues on 'who should intervene', where the articulated criteria for intervention are simply not present.

Even if some or most of the entry and exit criteria can be met, as long as no Western power feels threatened by African conflicts, the prospects for outside intervention remain weak. This is morally indefensible and potentially subversive of the idea of enforcing general human standards under multilateral authorisation, and it clearly contravenes the legal obligation of governments to deal with acts of genocide. However, it serves no purpose to bemoan the situation and wait for the dawning of a new international rectitude. The focus should rather fall on what can (and cannot) be done by Africans under these circumstances.

Linking African doctrine to African experiences and capabilities

In Western states, doctrinal thinkers have been preoccupied with questions of consent: hence the quarrels over Chapter VI or Chapter VII (traditional peacekeeping *versus* peace support

operations). Progress in the development of doctrine for peace support operations in the African context needs to take account of theories developed elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the United States and in the former Soviet world. It was agreed at the Harare workshop that:

*"Doctrine for on-going and future [peace support operations] in the African context must be informed by certain African realities that are inevitably different from the environment that has shaped European and American doctrinal development."*³⁶

In this context, it should be remembered that the whole issue of building African capacity for the conduct of peace support operations is inextricably linked to the Rwandese genocide of 1994. During the holocaust that lasted from April to July 1994, Hutu extremists *"systematically hacked down, shot and blew up tens of thousands of Tutsis and Hutu moderates."*³⁷ By August 1994 as many as 500 000 Rwandese had been killed, three million had been internally displaced, and more than two million had fled to neighbouring countries — out of a total pre-war population of approximately seven million. Women and children suffered most from the aftermath of the genocide, with an estimated 47 000 children orphaned, 250 000 to 500 000 women raped, and 2 000 to 5 000 children outcast because they were conceived as a result of rape.³⁸

Following the death of ten Belgian soldiers serving in UNAMIR in April 1994, the force was reduced to a mere 270, in the midst of the genocide. Former UNAMIR force commander, Romeo Dallaire, stated that if he *"... had gotten [sic] 2,500 to 4,000 effective troops in the first month, hundreds of thousands of people would have survived."*³⁹ As the UN Secretary-General observed, the international community's reaction to the genocide in Rwanda demonstrated graphically its extreme inadequacy to respond with prompt and decisive action to humanitarian crises entwined with armed conflict. It has also been said of the Rwandese tragedy that:

*"... if the UN had at its disposal even a small, rapidly-deployable constabulary force of lightly-armed troops, it might have been able to prevent this new chapter in man's cruelty to man. Indeed, the speed with which such a force could be deployed may be more important than its tactical proficiency, which may need to be only marginally better than rag-tag local forces to have a profound effect."*⁴⁰

This observation has wider implications for the debate on peacekeeping in Africa. Rebel forces in Africa typically rely on lightly armed foot soldiers and their ability to mobilise local populations to join their cause through persuasion or coercion. They often have no access to more sophisticated weaponry than assault rifles, light machine guns and mortars. For example, the destruction of the Liberian state began in 1989 when Charles Taylor invaded the country from the Côte d'Ivoire with a lightly armed, Libyan-trained force numbering about 100 men. If even a modest intervention force with tactical aviation assets had been in place, this incursion may easily have been halted.

If this is the kind of contingency that Africans should prepare for, then the OAU chiefs of staff recommendation of a standby brigade in each of the five African subregions may be closer to the mark than is realised. But this must be linked to a realistic concept of operations and modalities for extremely rapid deployment. However, the current debate on multifunctional peace missions, 'new peacekeeping partnerships', entry and exit criteria, and endstates, among others, has shifted the focus from the real problem at hand. ECOMOG experiences in West Africa (from which the bulk of African 'lessons learned' can be drawn) indicate the need for a concept of operations that will result in the quick termination of potentially ruinous and protracted conflicts.

The primary aim of such operations should be to stabilise the ailing state in order to stop the killing and maiming of civilians in the shortest possible time. This demands recognition that a multilateral military intervention should aim to alter the internal balance of power, thereby allowing a sufficiently decisive military victory to get all parties to the negotiating table. It implies the rejection of the traditional notions of impartiality and consent as a basis for intervention.

Such interventions, involving the preordained and calculated use of force, should contribute to political (and not parochial economic) outcomes. They must be aimed at changing, rather than sustaining the *status quo*, for it is the legitimacy of the *status quo* that is at issue in communal conflicts. As Herbst has observed:

*"In a number of [African] countries, the state is slowly being merged into a web of informal business associations instituted by rulers who have little interest in carrying out the traditional functions of the state and who do not recognise or respect boundaries, while enriching themselves through trade."*⁴¹

When a multinational coalition force intervenes on the side of a legal (though corrupt) regime, such intervention should therefore be predicated on a pre-agreed and viable programme for establishing political accountability, with milestones that can be monitored by the local and international community (for example, the freeing of political prisoners and unbanning political parties). There was clearly no such conditionality attached to the 'SADC allies' intervention on behalf of Kabila last August.

An unambiguous intervention policy has both military and political advantages over a peacekeeping operation. At the political level, taking sides from the outset enables the intervening actor to side-step the difficult task of protecting the neutral image of the intervention force, and it facilitates the co-ordination of field activity and diplomatic bargaining. Outcomes depend more on the leverage of the interventionist than on attempts to create proposals based on broad appeals intended to generate voluntary compliance by diverse conflicting groups. Direct, partial intervention also allows the military to concentrate on military and security objectives with a clarity of purpose that is absent in impartial peacekeeping.⁴²

At the grand strategic level, the decision to intervene in order to terminate an internal armed conflict requires that a Faustian bargain should be struck. It involves accepting a need to choose between the lesser of two evils, in terms of both the parties to the conflict and the degree of force that would predictably be necessary for restoring a measure of stability while minimising the number of civilian casualties. It may mean the provision of assistance to a beleaguered government in forcing the opposition into submission, but this assistance must be predicated, in turn, on that government's willingness to submit to the terms and conditions set by the multilateral organisation that authorises the intervention.

At the operational level, the idea would be to construct a minimum winning coalition consisting of the favoured army and the multinational conflict termination force. The ultimate aim is to regain a monopoly of military force, in order to bring armed violence under central control and to induce all belligerents to the bargaining table. This basic precondition for starting a viable peace process has consistently been ignored in African conflicts, from Angola to Sierra Leone. As Mackinlay has noted:

*"Unless a monopoly of violence can be achieved, any attempt to disarm will expose the vulnerable, law abiding element of the community to local gangs, who are certain not to disarm."*⁴³

Recentralising the power within a broken state is thus the key challenge, and this necessarily involves the application and systematic monopolisation of military force.

As with all types of forceful intervention, this type of operation would need to be legitimised. Multilateralism in itself implies a commitment to the principles governing the conduct of relations among states, as stipulated in the UN Charter. In as much as it reflects a commitment to international principles, multilateralism tends to confer legitimacy on the military actions of nations. But African multilateral organisations such as SADC need to clarify their legal status with respect to the maintenance of regional security — and the use of force in conflict termination clearly demands Security Council authorisation.

Whitman has argued in this context for a formal procedure to preserve the independence of UN bodies without paralysing action:

*"What is required is not a legal or quasi-legal empowerment of states to assert that their interventions are undertaken on behalf of the international community, but a range of measures (including intervention when appropriate) which are collectively determined, sanctioned and controlled. In other words, not expediency and pragmatism, but law enforcement."*⁴⁴

Given the Security Council's willingness to condone and authorise the forceful ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone (albeit *ex post facto*), it is not inconceivable that a far more robust concept for African peace support operations could be blessed with such legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

The issue of where and when to intervene in 'complex emergencies' will not be resolved with any clarity. Pleas for a more even-handed approach by the international community (via the UN Security Council) are appropriate, but they are unlikely to change the way business has been conducted in the foreseeable future. In conflict situations where the international system remains constipated, it must therefore be accepted that other actors will have to step into the breach (as ECOMOG did in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as NATO did in Kosovo, and as Australia did in East Timor).

Decisions on where and when to intervene, rightly or wrongly, have already been devolved to individual states or groupings of states. They have been taken on the basis of the perceived individual and collective interests of the states concerned, rather than any elevated notions of a right and duty towards humanitarian intervention. A great measure of '*ad hoc*racy' has been tolerated in the process. But these actors, no less than the Security Council, must now also grapple with a perennial problem of law enforcement and justice — equity. More equitable decisions, in turn, can only emerge from more formalised, transparent and effective organisational structures at the regional level.

The key issue at stake is the need to achieve greater consistency with regard to military intervention. Greater consistency is required not only in terms of the principles and doctrine that guide operations, but also in terms of the predictability of such interventions. Only then will the collective will of international and/or regional states have a deterrent effect on those who would pursue their sectional interests by forceful means.

The UN has been quite unambiguous in articulating what it can and cannot do in terms of peace support. Basically, it cannot do much beyond Chapter VI peacekeeping in the realm of military intervention. African coalitions, on the other hand, have proven themselves capable of

conducting fairly sustained multinational operations that have involved quite heavy combat engagements. What is missing, is the linkage between such African forces and the UN 'superstructure', or the so-called 'civilian component'. The precedent has been set for linking coalition forces with the UN superstructure, and for doing so with extreme rapidity in the case of Kosovo. How this can or should be replicated in the African environment remains an important issue for further debate.

However, the singular challenge for the international community, in general, and Africans, in particular, is to close the gap between rhetoric and reality. African multilateral interventions have developed a momentum of their own, and they have leaned towards the type of 'conflict termination operations' described above. This needs to find expression in a realistic intervention doctrine, informed by practice, that goes beyond the 'right of humanitarian intervention' and the paying of lip service to **An Agenda for Peace**.

Notes

1. A Roberts, *Humanitarian action in war: Aid, protection and impartiality in a policy vacuum*, **Adelphi Paper**, 305, IISS, 1996, p 19.
2. K A Annan, *Two concepts of sovereignty*, **The Economist**, 18 September 1999.
3. C King, *Ending civil wars*, **Adelphi Paper**, 308, IISS, 1997, p 12.
4. Roberts, op cit.
5. NATO, *AJP-3.4.1 Peace support operations*, 2nd study draft, 1999, p 3-11.
6. Ibid, pp 3-12.
7. Ibid, pp 3-5 — 3-6.
8. Annan, 18 September 1999, op cit..
9. Ibid.
10. In May 1994, the Clinton administration's Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25) decreed that the US would not intervene in future crises unless American national interests were clearly at stake, and the mission had clear and limited objectives, including a well-defined exit strategy.
11. L Minear & T Weiss, **Mercy under fire: War and the global humanitarian community**, Westview, Boulder Colorado, 1995, pp 21-22.
12. For example, *ubuntu* is an indigenous African philosophy of humanism and co-existence. The concept defies simplistic definition, but it does represent a way of life based upon self-respect and respect for others as human beings, the latter becoming the source for finding one's own humanity. However, *ubuntu* cannot really survive the secular processes of urbanisation, commercialisation, corruption and armed conflict — where these lead to the destruction of the family as the basic unit of society.
13. S Maninger, *Heart of darkness: Western policy of non-interventionism in Africa*, **African**

Security Review, 8(6), 1999.

14. See M Vogt, *Co-operation between the UN and the OAU in the management of African conflicts*, in M Malan (ed), **Wither peacekeeping in Africa?**, ISS Monograph, 36, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, April 1999.
15. Ibid.
16. W Nhara, *Conflict management and peace operations: The role of the Organisation of African Unity and subregional organisations*, in M Malan (ed), **Resolute partners: Building peacekeeping capacity in Southern Africa**, ISS Monograph, 21, February 1998, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, p 39.
17. Witness, for example, the involvement of DRC neighbours, Angola and Rwanda, on opposite sides of the conflict in Congo — and differing opinions among key SADC member states, South Africa and Zimbabwe, on military support to President Kabila.
18. *UN report on reform*, 16 July 1997, <www.un.org/reform/track2/part2.htm>.
19. Ibid.
20. Vogt, op cit, p 60.
21. Second Meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Harare, Zimbabwe, 24-25 October 1997.
22. Ibid.
23. Maninger, op cit.
24. Nhara, op cit, p 38.
25. Recent civil wars Africa have been characterised by the significant involvement of external actors, including the pursuit of war aims by the armed forces of neighbouring states. Some analysts therefore question the utility of distinguishing between intrastate and interstate conflict. However, the difficulties of mediating in intrastate conflicts apply equally (if not to a greater extent) in the case of 'hybrid' conflicts.
26. M Goulding, *The case for an integrated approach to peace and security*, in Malan, February 1998, op cit.
27. King, op cit, pp 23-24.
28. Ibid.
29. This technique had been used before by Eritrea in its aggressive assertion of border claims with Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti. In all three cases, Asmara had used or threatened military action, and followed closely with calls for international mediation in order to gain unilateral advantage from the situation.

30. United Nations, A/52/871-S/1998/318, **Report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa**, paragraph 20.
31. Maninger, op cit..
32. Ibid.
33. The mainstream RCD-Goma had refused to acknowledge the signature of its ousted president Wamba dia Wamba. On the other hand, MLC head Jean-Pierre Bemba said he would not sign unless Wamba did.
34. *Mouvement de liberation congolais*, led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, the first of the Congolese rebel leaders to sign the Lusaka cease-fire accord on 1 August 1999.
35. *Democratic Republic of Congo: UN welcomes rebel signing of peace accord*, **IRIN-CEA Update No. 748 for Central and Eastern Africa**, 2 September 1999.
36. M Malan, *Integrated principles for peace support operations*, ad hoc ISS Report, September 1999.
37. **All Africa Press Service**, 24 April 1996.
38. According to extracts from a report by a UN special investigator published in **International Peacekeeping News**, 2(1), March-April 1996, p 7.
39. Quoted in **International Peacekeeping News**, 12(4), September-October 1995.
40. **Peacekeeping: Perils and prospects. "The big ten" lessons learned from recent operations in Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and Bosnia. Observations from two BENS-sponsored symposia on peacekeeping**, January 1996.
41. J Herbst, *Responding to state failure in Africa*, **International Security**, 21(3), Winter 1996/97, p 124.
42. J Rudolph, *Intervention in communal conflicts*, **Orbis**, Spring 1995, p 271.
43. J Mackinlay, *International responses to complex emergencies*, **International Peacekeeping News**, (2)5, 1996, p 37.
44. J Whitman, *A cautionary note on humanitarian intervention*, **Journal of Humanitarian Assistance**, 15 September 1995.