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Peacekeeping Partnerships: Cooperation or Conflict

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Summary

This paper seeks to understand the nature of cooperation between the UN and other IGOs in ongoing conflicts. It will examine the security framework in which these multilateral arrangements were created, the gaps they were trying to cover, and the problems and areas of opportunities. It will use the AU-UN partnership in Africa as a framework with which to address these issues. While some complementarity has been established in terms of division of work, there has also been overlap of responsibilities resulting in chaos or downright bitterness. Yet, despite the slow progress, international institutions and peacekeeping partnerships seem to be the roadmap for the foreseeable future.

In the post-Cold War era, the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) have brought about substantive changes to their peacekeeping efforts in tune with the evolving security dynamics. With catastrophic interventions like in Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia in the 1990's, the UN increasingly had to bear the brunt of managing international crises. The UN Security Council (UNSC), although charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and global order, was unable to deliver for a myriad of reasons including but not limited to non-robust mandates, deficiency of resources such as a rapid reaction military force directly under UN command, divided opinions on peace enforcement operations among member nations, and lack of political will.

It was in this context that the Security Council began to outsource or commission appropriate security coalitions of states to enforce the world's will. In 1992, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali petitioned for greater cooperation between the UN and regional organizations.[1] In 1994 and in 1999, the UN General Assembly called for collaboration between the UN and other regional institutions.[2] The UNSC began to incorporate the tasks of these regional organizations into its own peacekeeping mandates. While the Council set the overall directives, these organizations began to take the lead on the ground. Post 9/11, multilateral groupings such as the African Union (AU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and others have emerged as actors in their own right. Perceived common threats and shared security interests allowed states to band together under shared defence umbrellas.

With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other large-scale conflict outbreaks in places like Sudan, international security institutions even began to share the same operational theatre. This was partly by designation and partly by design. Everyone wanted a "frontline role" in global missions without actually being embroiled in the complications that come with such operations. As a result, peacekeeping or peace enforcement partnerships seemed like the perfect "burden sharing" solution. As missions became increasingly complex and multidimensional, states also realized the need for interdependence. Nations began to

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[1]   Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992), An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping, A/47/277 - S/24111, http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html

[2]   United Nations (1994), Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security, A/RES/49/57, http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r057.htm; UN DPKO (1999), Cooperation between the UN and Regional Organizations/Arrangements in a Peacekeeping Environment, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/UNRO%20Cooperation%20between%20the%20UN%20and%20Regional%20Organizations.pdf

espouse the formation of "coalitions of the willing" among states with shared international norms.

These partnerships in the theatres of war have faced a myriad of problems in terms of cohesion and mission success, and the dominant view so far has been that they have not worked. This paper seeks to understand the nature of cooperation between the UN and other IGOs in ongoing conflicts. It will examine the security framework in which these multilateral arrangements were created, the gaps they were trying to cover, and the problems and areas of opportunities. It will use the AU-UN partnership in Africa as a framework with which to address these issues. While some complementarity has been established in terms of division of work, there has also been overlap of responsibilities resulting in chaos or downright bitterness. Yet, despite the slow progress, international institutions and peacekeeping partnerships seem to be the roadmap for the foreseeable future.

Changing Security Environment

Between 1987 and 1994, the number of UN peace operations in the world increased more than three-fold.[3] Just prior to the 9/11 attacks and in the post 9/11 era, regional organizations began to participate in peace operations. The dynamics of the evolving international security environment are highlighted in Table 1. Missions became increasingly complex with challenges being posed every step of the way to nations' understanding of the meaning of security.

Table 1: Peacekeeping and International Security Environment[4]

Period	International Security Setting	Peace Operations
Cold War	Bipolar opposition	Traditional peacekeeping
	Inter-state conflicts	Chapter VI mandates
	Identifiable battle spaces	13 missions between 1948 and 1988
	End of biopolarity	Peace keeping and Peace enforcement, Chapter VII mandates

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[3]   Ibid.

[4]   Kristine St-Pierre, Understanding the Spectrum of Complex Peace Operations, Pearson Peace keeping Centre, 2008, pp. 5-6.

Post Cold War I	Intra-state conflicts	Multidimensional peacekeeping
	Ill-defined battle spaces	20 missions between 1988 and 1993
	Non-state actors	
	Failures such as Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda	Chapter VIII mandates
Post Cold War II	Rise of regional organisations	Western contributions reduce
	NATO, EU, AU, ECOWAS	Developing world contributions increase
	NATO's Kosovo Campaign	Integrated missions
Post Cold War III	Partnerships between UN and regional organisations	Mission complexity increases
	Ill-defined battle spaces	Protection of civilians is part of directives
	Failed States and War on Terror	Dramatic increase in number of peacekeepers
Post 9/11	Peace enforcement partnerships strengthened	Hybrid operations and integrated missions
	Ill-defined battle spaces	R2P

Traditionally, scholars have used such chronological methods to distinguish between different types of peace operations, as if to suggest that as time passes, earlier models or challenges no longer exist or are valid. This is only partially correct. The current threats to mission success such as lack of integration of forces, creation of weak mandates, etc. are not new. Simultaneously there is a recognition that peace keeping cannot be carried out in isolation; rather, the underlying basis for conflicts need to be addressed in conjunction with a military effort to achieve durable peace. Complexity has arisen out of carrying out state building activities in regions where there is no peace to keep.

One way that the UN has addressed these dilemmas is by tying up with regional organizations. It has recognized the value and need for on-the-ground partners with the expertise and/or the political will to intervene in areas where it cannot step in single-handedly. Today, troops are deployed mainly as part of UN/AU forces in Africa, NATO/UN forces in the greater Middle East region, and NATO/UN/EU soldiers in Europe. 40

per cent of global deployments are in Africa alone with the UN being the single largest contributor of boots, accounting for almost 90 per cent of all deployments there (ten times the number provided by other organizations). Most of the peacekeepers come either from Africa or from South Asia.[5]

Although the unprecedented growth in peace operations fuelled such institutional partnerships, these collaborative efforts remain largely unplanned in nature. While some effort has been made to ensure that these partnerships are based on division of labor or complementarity of skills, "turf wars" amongst the various organizations have thinned out resources with each developing a range of capabilities of varying proficiency. What is more, peacekeeping has begun serving as a substitute for political solutions to conflicts – a process that has made such efforts largely expensive, complicated and unsuccessful. Joint operations have essentially been so caught up with the organizational structure through which peacekeeping should be carried out that the quality of competence offered has deteriorated. While use of force is an important part of any military operation, the mission cannot rely on this as a starting point, which is what peace operations have become today.

The contemporary security environment is such that peacekeeping partnerships are being forged under three scenarios: 1) To protect civilians, 2) As an antecedent to peace building, and 3) To engage in the war on terrorism.[6] Protection of civilians refers to the increasingly accepted norm in international relations of the "responsibility to protect". The right to intervene in the internal affairs of a state in case of threats to human security has become an accepted basis for peacekeeping missions.[7] Peace building would refer to activities such as policing, election monitoring, DDR and SSR programmes, assistance in holding referendums, economic development, etc., all of which are now carried out as part of peacekeeping campaigns. Finally, peacekeeping's role under the "war on terrorism" rubric would entail the ongoing US-led fight against the spread of radicalism, in particular Islamic extremism. The relationship between these strategic perspectives remains convoluted. Hybrid operations like the ones in vogue today have a difficult time maintaining coherence and consistency between these various agendas.

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[5]   Centre on International Cooperation, Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009 Briefing Paper, 2009, p. 7.

[6]   Richard Gowan and Ian Johnstone, "New Challenges for Peacekeeping: Protection, Peacebuilding and the 'War on Terror',", International Peace Academy, Working Paper Series, March 2007.

[7]   Ibid, p. 5. Since 1999, eight UN missions have been authorized to protect civilians. The AU mission in Darfur also has this responsibility as part of its mission mandate. Other mandates contain this clause implicitly.

Hybrid Operations

Yet, the complexity and vast requirements means that such hybrid operations are also indispensable. In contemporary times, in an effort to address this complexity, three kinds of joint approaches have emerged – UN integrated missions, Hybrid Operations and Provincial Reconstruction Teams.[8] Hybrid operations or inter-organizational partnerships have been in vogue for almost two decades whether it is joint peacekeeping operations by UN-ECOWAS in West Africa or UN-NATO in Afghanistan. Each such partnership has been unique in its own way, and does not necessarily take on any specific structure. Yet, if one were to organize such operations, one could roughly classify them as sequential, parallel or integrated in nature. Key distinguishing features of each of these operations are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Hybrid operations[9]

Hybrid Frameworks	Features	Examples
Integrated	UN and other IGOs operate under a single chain of command	Darfur (UN and AU)
Parallel	UN deploys in conjunction with other organisations, but no formal connection	Afghanistan (UN, NATO, EU), Democratic Republic of Congo (UN, EU), Iraq (UN, NATO)
Sequential	UN forces come before or after other forces	Liberia (ECOWAS-UNMIL), Somalia, Kosovo, Burundi, Bosnia (NATO-EU)

Sequential operations have worked best for peacekeeping, particularly in circumstances when the UN lacked the political will or simply did not have the capacity to deal with all aspects of a complex mission. On the other hand, parallel operations have enabled

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[8]   Kristine St-Pierre, Understanding the Spectrum of Complex Peace Operations, Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, 2008, p. 12. Integrated Missions and Provincial Reconstruction Teams do not fall within the scope of this paper. Briefly however, according to an independent study done for the UN ECHA Group on integrated missions, they are simply "instruments with which the UN seeks to help countries in the transition from war to lasting peace, or to address a similarly complex situation that requires a system-wide UN response, through subsuming actors and approaches within an overall political-strategic crisis management framework." PRTs are civilian-military constructs organized to promote good governance, assist in reconstruction and improve security conditions.

[9]   Sarjoh Bah and Bruce Jones, Peace Operations Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements, Centre on International Cooperation, 2008, pp. 2-3.

institutions to build complementarities based on each other's comparative capabilities and strengths. Such partnerships have enabled regional peacekeeping arrangements gain credibility and authority at the international level. As complexity has increased in the mission space, these institutions have realized the need to commit such joint ventures to international norms such as R2P and state building while establishing military deterrence capabilities on the ground.

Yet, the problems associated with these operations have also been numerous. In sequential and integrated operations, the UN has traditionally had problems yielding control or entrusting mission responsibilities to other institutional setups. Given the ad hoc nature of these partnerships, handing over responsibility has never come about comfortably, smoothly or in an organized manner. Also, troops have simply been "re-hatted"[10] into other roles, which has led to problems of coordination and logistical confusion. Furthermore, role transfer has not necessarily always meant a transfer of legitimacy or dominion. "Peacekeeping Overstretch" is a worrisome dilemma whereby states have recognized the tightening pool of available manpower or other resources.[11]

UN-AU Case Study

Africa is home to the largest number of peace missions in the world, hosting more than 70,000 peacekeepers and counting. It is also the birthplace for inter-institutional peacekeeping alliances. The African Union has, in the African space, conducted several such operations too – from Burundi in 2003-2004 to Somalia and Darfur from 2004 onwards. When the UN decided to team up with the AU in its Darfur operation, it was the first hybrid mission of its nature. Although such collaborative efforts have been summoned for more than a decade, the hurdles posed to such integration have not been easy to overcome.

It was only in 2000 that the AU materialized as an important player for peace and security on the African continent. The AU was fundamentally modelled on the UN – its Peace and Security Council, for example, is very similar in structure and function to the UN's own Security Council. Its first mission amounted to a peace operation in Burundi in 2003, when it sent almost 3,000 peacekeepers to monitor a ceasefire arrangement between warring parties.[12] The UN later took charge with the UN Mission in Burundi for a couple of years

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10   Ibid, p. 4.

11   Centre on International Cooperation, Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2009 Briefing Paper, 2009, p. 1.

12   African Union, Communiqué of the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at Heads of State and Government Level, Central Organ/MEC/AHG/Comm.(VII), 3 February 2003, http://www.africa-union.org/News_Events/Communiqu%E9s/Communique_E9_20_Eng_3feb03.pdf

before handing back the reins to the AU in 2007.[13] Subsequent AU missions have included Darfur (AMIS) and Somalia (AMISOM).

In a report by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended more robust agreements between the UN and various regional organizations such as the AU. It suggested that member states donate equipment to the AU for peacekeeping operations, and advised regional organizations to seek official authorization for missions from the UN Security Council, thus legitimizing such operations globally.[14] In a separate report, Kofi Annan laid out a decade long plan to enhance the AU's capabilities, while encouraging information sharing between such regional organizations and the UN. Annan also recommended that portions of the UN peacekeeping budget be given under extraordinary conditions for use by regional organizations to carry out peacekeeping activities.[15]

Several problems pose challenges to the UN-AU partnership. The AU does not wield the same capacity as the UN does. It does not have the same level of financial resources, troop contributions, logistical supplies, experience level or military might to match up to the UN. Thus there is often a mismatch of expectations on both sides. Furthermore, the AU does not have enough managerial manpower either. In the early stages of the AU's mission to Darfur, it had only two dozen staff members in its headquarters. Its Peace Support Operations Division, responsible for organizing, monitoring and deploying field personnel to its missions, is also critically understaffed.[16] Different levels of troop training and weak mandates threaten AU missions. Funding also remains a critical problem, with the AU relying mostly on foreign donations from the US, UK, EU, Japan and Canada.[17]

Yet, there have been several advantages that the African Union has brought to notice. At a time when UN troops were forbidden by the Sudanese government to enter Darfur, an all-African contingent via the AU served as a very good alternative. Now that there is an integrated effort on the part of the UN and AU in Darfur, there are lessons to be learned from coordinated mission planning. AMIS serves as a good knowledge base not only to strengthen these partnerships, but also highlights areas for future improvement such as

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[13]   African Union, Communiqué of the 65th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, PSC/PR/ Comm(LXV), 9 November 2006, http://www.iss.org.za/uploads/COMM65.PDF

[14]   United Nations, A more secure World: Our shared responsibility, Report of the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (New York United Nations, 2004), pp. 36, 86.

[15]   Kofi Annan, In Larger Freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all, 21 March 2005, para 213-215, http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/UNreform/UBUNTU-1.pdf

[16]   Katherine Andrews and Victoria Holt, United Nations-African Union Coordination on Peace and Security in Africa, Stimson Centre, August 2007, p. 3.

[17]   Ibid, p. 4.

improved means of funding, etc.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that peacekeeping partnerships are yet to mature, the general consensus is that the world is headed towards greater integration between the UN and regional arrangements such as NATO or the AU. Such institutions play an important role, especially in a world with power imbalances, distrust and unrest. Cooperation among states towards peacekeeping mechanisms gives birth to opportunities for burden sharing, balancing power, pursuing self-interest and generally preventing the collapse of world order as it stands.

In light of the changing security dynamics, peace operations have become both all the more complex and important. Bringing together regional arrangements allows flexibility for political manoeuvring and unity vis-à-vis mission mandate and implementation. Still in its infancy, peacekeeping alliances should be viewed as a means to an end rather than an end unto itself. It is impossible to obtain a foolproof hybrid operation. But with each step forward, finding common ground for joint preparation mechanisms becomes all the more easier.