

Report on International Day of UN Peacekeepers - 23 May 2018

Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)

Politics, Partnerships, Protection

In accordance with RUSI rules, notes relate only to prepared statements, not questions and discussion.

CONFERENCE WELCOME

Ewan Lawson welcomed the participants on behalf of RUSI

Rt Hon Mark Lancaster TD MP, Minister of State for the Armed Forces

- Introduced three key themes of Pledges, Performance and Personnel
- UK's current troop commitment is 704, in operations including Cyprus, South Sudan, Mali and Somalia
- UK has provided training for 11,000 troops from 30 countries
- Scope of training has included working with engagement teams in Democratic Republic of Congo regarding abuse by peacekeepers
- Called for greater role of women in peacekeeping

Sarah Fountain Smith, Deputy High Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom

- Paid tribute to Lester B. Pearson, Canadian Foreign Minister and winner of the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize, who helped bring about the first armed peacekeeping mission
- Outlined the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations - launched at the 2017 Vancouver Ministerial on peacekeeping. Aims to gear Canadian foreign policy to promote the role of women in peace operations
- The proportion of women in peacekeeping is increasing but very slowly - the Elsie target of doubling the % of women peacekeepers by 2020 is not currently on track to be met until 2054
- Outlined Canada's increasing commitment to peacekeeping, including \$15m to growing the role of women. This is in the context of Canada seeking election to a rotating seat on the UN Security Council.
- At 2017 Vancouver ministerial Canada also launched with the assistance of the Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. This has been adopted by 16 countries. The principles include prevention tools, early warning signs of the use of children in war, and support to peacekeepers who have encountered child soldiers in the field
- Commitment of Canada to 'smart pledges' such as strategic air task-force, provision of Chinook and Griffin helicopters to MINUSMA UN mission in Mali

SESSION ONE: 'WHERE THERE IS NO PEACE TO KEEP'

Chaired by Dr. Karin von Hippel

Captain (RNLN) Niels Woudstra, former Commanding Officer of the Dutch Contingent in MINUSMA and current Deputy National Military Representative to NATO and EU in Brussels

- Outlined three essential types of peace operations: Observer Missions (UN Charter Chapter 6), Enforcement Missions (UN Charter Chapter 7) and broader peacemaking/peacebuilding operations
- Importance of 'escalation dominance,' i.e. the ability to respond robustly to the threat of force. This was lacking in situations such as Srebrenica, Bosnia, where peacekeepers were not able to act as an effective deterrent to violence. Some peacekeeping operations have escalation dominance, while others do not.

- Dutch contingent in Gao, Mali, is 550 strong - equipment deployed included helicopters and mortars
- All missions should be able to exercise their 'inherent right of self-defence' when attacked
- Cruz Report on peacekeeping found that the great majority of combat situations for peacekeepers in Mali were in their own self-defence - only a small number defending others or carrying out escort missions
- Peacekeepers in Mali face significant difficulties in terms of equipment, supplies and accommodation
- MINUSMA is a complex mission with around 40 contributing countries at a given time - lack of integration within the mission due to language barriers and constantly rotating contingents
- Lack of a guiding ideal or a sense of soldiers fighting for their own country damages morale
- Raises question of whether the UN is the appropriate mechanism for missions where there is no peace to keep, as opposed to missions carried out by individual countries, regional organisations or ad hoc coalitions
- Examples of traditional Chapter 6 Observer Missions which have functioned well are UNFICYP in Cyprus, UNIFIL in Lebanon

Lt Col KB Bishop RE, CO 32 Engr Regt (Contingent for Operation 'Trenton,' the UK deployment to UNMISS UN mission in South Sudan)

- Operation Trenton - Engineering and medical enabling and support mission based in Bentiu and Malakal, South Sudan. Trenton worked around Protection of Civilians sites guarded by Mongolian and Rwandan peacekeepers
- Trenton faced challenges of a civilian chain of command and civilian objectives against what might be required of the operation militarily
- Trenton worked well with Indian peacekeepers who also provided engineering support, although lack of resources and infrastructure posed challenges
- Encouraging peacekeepers to operate further from bases encouraged internally displaced persons to venture further from camps
- Sharing of best practice encouraged mission to take positive steps

Diane Corner, Former DSRSG of MINUSCA UN mission in Central African Republic (CAR)

- MINUSCA was the product of a 2014 Security Council Resolution. In September the existing African Union MISCA mission was 're-hatted' to create MINUSCA as a UN peacekeeping operation
- MINUSCA total strength of 14,000 personnel, 10,500 troops. It is the third UN peacekeeping operation in the country
- 1/4 of population in CAR displaced or refugees. 1/2 population in need of food aid. No standing national army and 14 armed groups operating across the country. MINUSCA is the only peacekeeping operation for which the Secretary General is currently requesting an additional battalion
- MINUSCA has seen numerous cases of robust responses to security threats, especially in late 2014 and early 2015 with assistance from EU forces
- MINUSCA carried out combat operations, including the use of air power, in and around the capital Bangui, particularly in securing the city's airport
- In 2017, north of Bambari, UN forces used attack helicopters against advancing armed convoy of militia, after giving two warnings. Mission was praised by UN Security Council. Threat of force has been effective deterrent, but mission must be willing to act upon any threats made for them to be effective
- MINUSCA has also failed to deploy force in other situations - problems of being overstretched and violence flaring suddenly. Performance and willingness of troops sometimes very high, but variable
- Cruz report highlights mounting casualties in peacekeeping. Many in CAR have been due to illness and accident as well as combat operations
- Use of force by mission cannot resolve the country's problems - only help make a political settlement possible
- Predecessor MISCA mission deployed quickly, mostly using troops from neighbouring countries. UN tried to rapidly carry out training but difficulties - team from New York sent to advise on sexual exploitation were confined to hotel due to security threats at the time

- Variable understanding among contingents of conduct expectations, but former AU units generally more willing to enter combat operations
- Bowali massacre 2014 - Democratic Republic of Congo troops carried out reprisal killings against civilians. Contingent sent home, although some of the local population protested this move. Cruz report recommends sending units home if not up to standard
- Small numbers of professional troops and staff officers can have a positive impact on mission - example of 140 strong Portuguese quick reaction force
- Peacekeeping “one of the most difficult tasks in the world”

SESSION TWO: FOLKE BERNADOTTE MEMORIAL LECTURE

Chaired by Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director UNA-UK

Ian Martin, Former Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Mission in East Timor and the United Nations Mission in Nepal, and former Executive Director of Security Council Report. Co-author of the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)

- Paid tribute to recent deaths of UN peacekeepers - 2017 saw highest peacekeeper casualties since 1994
- Successful missions have included Liberia and Ivory Coast, recently wound down - currently missions in Mali, Central African Republic and South Sudan are all facing significant difficulty
- Review of peace operations announced by Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon in 2014 came fourteen years after previous review, Brahimi Report. Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) published the following year
- HIPPO has been important in framing discussions on peacekeeping
- ‘Primary of politics’ is a key point of HIPPO - political considerations must drive the design of missions and help avoid military engagements
- HIPPO recommended a broad spectrum of missions with bespoke designs, something not previously reflected in the decision-making of the UN Security Council. Although there have been no new missions since HIPPO, the Security Council has accepted the criticism of over-ambitious mandates with unclear objectives
- 100,000 peacekeepers currently operate in a combined area of 10m square km
- Many troop-contributing countries still see peacekeepers in their traditional role as neutral observers
- HIPPO recommends that military counter-terrorism operations should not be in the remit of peacekeeping. Missions should be ‘robust but not aggressive’ - MINUSMA and Force Intervention Brigade in Democratic Republic of Congo are currently highly militarised
- HIPPO calls for a people-centred approach, including a greater role for women
- Measures outlined by Secretary General Antonio Guterres go beyond HIPPO recommendations in tackling sexual abuse
- Non-strategic budget changes pushed for by USA increase the risk of divergence between a mission’s mandate and its operational capacity
- Welcomes return of some developed Western countries to contributing peacekeepers, though troops from ‘Global South’ are still bearing the brunt of the risks
- ‘P5’ permanent members of Security Council have an important role in allowing the council to work effectively. Certain countries currently act as the ‘pen holders,’ dictating the UN’s approach in theatres of special interest. Recommends France should consider its historical dominance of Department of Peacekeeping Operations. UK should consider its role in fuelling the conflict in Yemen by supplying arms to Saudi-led coalition
- UK could play a valuable role by opening a strategic review of mission mandates, and supporting a strategic approach to mission funding
- Suggestion that spending on peace operations should come from national defence budgets, rather than international development budgets
- HIPPO calls for peacekeeping budgets to be kept in a single fund, rather than drawing on UN regular budget. Also called for P5 to contribute more troops
- UK currently contributes 0 police to UN missions, and 57 women peacekeepers of around 700 total
- Merit-based appointment of mission leaders is critical

- Return of 'Cold War' mentality makes a consensus on peacekeeping at the UN difficult. We should make all efforts to promote the capacity of the UN in finding peace

SESSION THREE: MARGARET ANSTEE MEMORIAL SEMINAR: 'FUTURE PEACEKEEPING' AND THE SEARCH FOR CAPACITY

Chaired by Emma Fanning, Oxfam

Chandrima Das, Director, Peacekeeping Policy, United Nations Foundation

- Seminar in memory of Dame Margaret Anstee, British diplomat and UN Undersecretary General who represented the UN in countries including Colombia, Bolivia, Ethiopia and Chile
- Ted Turner attempted to pay the shortfall of United States funding contributions to the UN. When this was not possible he created the United Nations Foundation to fund the UN by voluntary donations
- United States has on several occasions enforced a cap of 25% funding to UN regular budget from USA as opposed to its assessed rate of around 28%. By 2019 USA is forecast to be \$500m in arrears to UN
- United States has pushed for budget cuts to UN regular budget, including World Health Organisation, climate change programmes, UN Development Programme and UN Women
- Current US Ambassador to United Nations, Nikki Haley, works well with Secretary General Guterres but strongly pursued programme of cuts to peacekeeping. Proposed cuts in particular to missions in Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo
- Language used by United States on peacekeeping threatens the framework of protection of civilians by peacekeepers
- USA currently contributes 71 troops to peacekeeping
- Recent meeting between President Trump and Secretary General Guterres was positive. Peacekeeping offers a more cost-effective form of intervention than state-based military intervention
- Encourages UK to resist cuts to peacekeeping and remind US of advantages of working through UN system
- Quoted Eleanor Roosevelt: "Our own land and our own flag cannot be replaced by any other land or any other flag. But you can join with other nations, under a joint flag, to accomplish something good for the world that you cannot accomplish alone."

Sophia Willitts-King, Head of UN Peacekeeping Joint Unit and Deputy Head UN and Multilateral Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

- People-centred, sustainable peace is part of the wider UN Sustainable Development Goals
- UK is expanding its peacekeeping role beyond traditional 'comfort zone' in Cyprus, to express support for UN peace role and live up to UK's role as a P5 member
- UN provides good 'value for money.' UK pays 5.8% of UN budget
- UK reconsidered its potential in peacekeeping coming out of deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. A wider range of missions offered a greater range of opportunities to build operational experience and capacity
- UK is aware of the current imbalance of financial contributions and risk taking by more and less developed UN member states in relation to peacekeeping. The UK seeks to address this while shaping future missions in terms of partnerships and learning
- There is a need for the UK to re-engage with the military side of peacekeeping. The UK supports reform efforts and is engaged in Secretary General Guterres' programme 'Action for Peacekeeping' as well as seeking smaller but substantive improvements that can be made

Captain (N) David Mazur, Director Strategic Plans, Canadian Armed Forces Strategic Joint Staff

- Canada has a strong history of peacekeeping and is looking to re-engage
- Basic principles of the international system are democracy, territorial integrity and the rule of law
- 5 of 6 major operations are in Africa, so Canada's focus is there

- Canada's approach to peacekeeping informed by Cruz and HIPPO reports - identified greatest needs as logistics, mobility and intelligence
- Dynamics of troop contributions is complicated by countries vying for and protecting their Troop-Contributing Country (TCC) status. Some countries have battalions in waiting to be deployed to UN missions, and UN incentivises this by paying salaries of peacekeeping units
- UN's current quick response capacity is around 60 days. Canada offers to dramatically reduce this by offering strategic lift to African missions
- Priority is 'smart pledges' - helicopters are first priority. Deployments take time to negotiate and there is some lack of corporate knowledge due to period of less engagement in peacekeeping
- Envisages more robust Chapter 7, less Chapter 6 missions in future. Columbia may offer a rare opportunity for a 'traditional' mediating mission
- Future missions must be multidimensional with strategically crafted mandates, speed of response is critical. Missions should not be allowed to drag on where parties do not have political will to resolve their differences

David Curran, University of Coventry

- Peacekeeping budget is currently around \$7bn across 15 missions
- The UN's normative authority as a peacemaking institution gives it unique status in its approach to peace operations, but political expectations of how the P5 will work through the UN are not agreed upon
- In conflict resolution the key expectations are those of the 'peacekept' - those who are intended to benefit from peace operations
- The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has identified engagement with civil society as a priority
- The 'latest generation' stabilisation missions have a focus on supporting the government and counter-insurgency operations which can be hard to combine with community-led peacebuilding. Peacekeepers in some countries work alongside state forces accused of abuse
- While the UN in New York cannot fully appreciate the situation on the ground in a given country, currently DPKO reporting does not fully cover engagement with community stakeholders
- Although engagement with communities is improving, peace operations are still geared chiefly to the expectations of political elites. In order for peacekeeping to be more effective a framework for greater community engagement must be developed

CLOSING REMARKS

Tessy Antony, Princess of Luxembourg and Patron of UNA-UK, introduced by David Wardrop, Chair UNA Westminster

- Summarised the day's themes of politics, partnerships and protection
- Revisited issue of women in peacekeeping - currently 4% of peacekeepers female, improvement will require addressing the bureaucratic framework of the UN
- Noted representation of women in the speakers of the day's event
- UNA-UK is committed to helping to improve peacekeeping and remains the only UK charity dedicated to making the case for the UN
- UK's current commitments to peacekeeping last to 2020 - expressed hope for that to be sustained or improved upon