



THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF PEACE OPERATIONS: A DIALOGUE WITH EMERGING POWERS

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The world is experiencing what many argue is a fundamental rebalancing of the global political and economic order and entering a multipolar world. While the character of international relations that will emerge from this shift remains uncertain, the key determining issues have begun to emerge. Among these is the role of the international community in managing conflict, and in particular the use of force in this context.

In the past 20 years there has been a far-reaching shift both in the nature of conflict and in the character of international interventions to prevent, manage and terminate conflicts. Established understandings of the distinctions between war, civil war, armed violence and even peace have been transformed.

During the same period, the traditional notion of peacekeeping has been challenged by ever more robust mandates, the emergence of expanding concepts of peace operations to include peacebuilding and state building, as well as various discussions about legitimate (and illegitimate) intervention, alongside unprecedented mission numbers and sizes. The transformation of the global order and the rise of actors from the Global South into leading regional and international roles raise many questions about the sustainability of the current approach to peace operations. At the same time, the established powers have begun to advance new approaches for intervening in conflicts that challenge long-established and widely supported principles of the international system, notably sovereignty.

Indeed, a key issue is how to situate peace operations, with its increasingly broad boundaries, within the spectrum of international behaviour involving the use of force. The international responses to conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, and to the ongoing crisis in Syria, have underscored the centrality of these issues for the international community in a new context characterized by the emergence of an increasingly influential set of new actors in the area of peace operations and the continued activism of established actors in an increasingly multipolar context.

All of this suggests that the international community faces a new situation in which the definition and forms of peacekeeping, who contributes and par-

* This report attempts to summarize the contents of each workshop session, including both presentations and discussion. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of SIPRI or of the majority of the participants.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

● In the past 20 years there has been a far-reaching shift in the nature of international conflict management. Within this context, the traditional notion of peace operations has been broadened by ever more robust missions, the expansion of mandates towards peacebuilding, and by an unprecedented growth in both the number and the size of operations.

Today, many are questioning the sustainability of the paradigm of peace operations that has emerged since the cold war. It is becoming evident that shifts in international power relations as a result of rapid economic growth in parts of the Global South are calling into question the existing structures of international conflict management, including peace operations.

SIPRI has launched the 'New Geopolitics of Peace Operations: A Dialogue with Emerging Powers' initiative with support from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). The initiative aims to identify potential future challenges for peace operations and new initiatives that will strengthen the legitimacy of peace operations and create greater capacity, enabling peace operations to meet these future challenges. SIPRI will be conducting a series of dialogue meetings around the world to support these aims.

**Workshop participants**

1. Lina Alexandra, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta
2. Prof. Richard Caplan, Oxford University
3. Dr Cedric de Coning, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs/ACCORD
4. Claire Fanchini, SIPRI
5. Annika Hilding-Norberg, Folke Bernadotte Academy
6. Rebecca Jovin, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
7. Christian Kellerman, FES Nordic
8. Stefan Köppe, Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze
9. Volker Lehmann, FES New York
10. Dr David Lewis, Bradford University
11. General Ashok K. Mehta, defence analyst
12. Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI
13. Kari Möttölä, Unit for Policy Planning and Research, Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
14. Prof. Alexander Nikitin, Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences
15. Prof. Antônio Jorge Ramalho, Universidad de Brasília
16. Dr Thierry Tardy, Geneva Centre for Security Policy
17. Dr Anthoni van Nieuwkerk, Centre for Defence and Security Management, University of Witwatersrand
18. Sharon Wiharta, SIPRI
19. Dr Xue Lei, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies

ticipates, when and where missions are undertaken, and the role of regional organizations are being shaped by a new variety of actors often operating in different ways and advocating new approaches.

This raises many questions. In this context of flux, will emerging actors reinforce the existing paradigm or will they participate in shaping a new paradigm with new forms of interventions and a new set of norms to guide them? Or will we instead see the increasing fragmentation of international conflict management through the use of force by regional and global powers in ad hoc coalitions of the willing and in unilateral interventions? What impact will these developments have on the future forms and locations of conflict, and how will these changes shape broader international relations? In what ways and in which forms can the new constellation of actors concerned with international conflict management come together to forge a new consensus on effective and legitimate forms of peacekeeping and interventions to address future conflicts? How will evolving domestic debates, international interests, enhanced capacities and new ambitions to play more prominent regional and international roles affect the nature and patterns of peace operations? What policy perspectives are driving emerging powers' participation in peace operations? What dynamics emerge from the various regional settings? And what potential exists for regional cooperation on conflict management issues?

The kick-off meeting of the project 'The New Geopolitics of Peace Operations: A Dialogue with Emerging Powers' took place on 13 January 2012 at SIPRI, in Stockholm, Sweden.

The meeting gathered a small group of experts and practitioners for a one-day brainstorming session on the key issues impacting the future of peace operations. Regional dialogue meetings are to be held in Africa, East Asia, Europe and South America and South Asia.



The project is generously supported by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and is conducted in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

SESSION 1. A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: WHAT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS?

There has been much speculation that peace operations are facing crisis, not least because they have traditionally been initiatives of a global order that is now changing. Peace operations are in fact not facing a moment of crisis but rather one of opportunity. Certainly, as peace operations represent an integral part of the international management of security, most of the emerging powers are currently trying to reflect their new global and regional status through their role in them. This has resulted in significant shifts in the global pool of contributors to peace operations. The newly prominent players are bringing with them, along with resources, different views on the modalities and underlying concepts of peace operations.

Redefining peace operations?

As emerging powers bring new conceptions of peace operations to the table, the definition of a peace operation is being challenged and the concept of intervention is often referred to. This distinction between peace operations and interventions reflects the difference in how peace operations are conceptualized between the Global South and the established powers of the Global North.

The distinction throws up the question of what should be considered a peace operation and what should be called, instead, an intervention. Should UN-mandated operations be considered peace operations and non-UN mandated operations considered interventions, based solely on their legal basis? Also, for political reasons, some countries would prefer to say they are intervening to pave the way for a future peace operation.

Defining an operation as a peace operation or a military intervention relates to discussions on the use of force, on the legitimacy the action is being attributed with and its level of intrusion into a given country; and in some respects, on how the conflict is being defined. The concept and, arguably, the practice of peace operations have expanded and blurred the boundaries between what is commonly accepted as a peace operation and what is a military intervention. The examples of Afghanistan and Iraq throw up pertinent questions as to how far these concepts should or can expand. The recent invocation of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) for the NATO mission in Libya further complicates matters.

Different views on the modalities of peace operations

Questions are currently being raised about the appropriateness, desirability and effectiveness of the so-called liberal peace agenda. Many emerging powers are not persuaded by the merits of the liberal peace model and, indeed, the model is not delivering as promised and adjustments seem to be required.



Agenda

Opening remarks

Speakers: Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI, and Christian Kellerman, FES Nordic

Overview of project scope and process

Sharon Wiharta of SIPRI introduced the New Geopolitics of Peace Operations project.

Session 1. A changing world order: what implications for the future of peace operations?

Discussant: Dr Richard Caplan, Oxford University

Session 2. Norms and concepts—a fragile consensus?

This session explored the concepts, norms and paradigms framing conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In particular it asked whether emerging powers subscribe to existing global norms and concepts, whether domestic policy debates on multilateral intervention impact emerging powers' perspectives and priorities, and whether the growing role of emerging powers in peace operations will result in the introduction of new norms.

Discussants: Dr Thierry Tardy, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and Lina Alexandra, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta

Session 3. Evolving approaches

From India's focus on capacity building to Brazil's emphasis on social and economic development: this session explored how the increasing role of the emerging peace operation actors might affect future interventions in post-conflict states.

Discussants: Gen. Ashok K. Mehta, defence analyst, and Prof. Antônio Jorge Ramalho, Universidad de Brasília

Session 4. Beyond a 'New Horizon' for the UN?

This session focused on the question of whether current developments will see more countries contributing to UN peace operations or whether regional organizations will increasingly lead interventions.

Discussants: Rebecca Jovin, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and Dr Xue Lei, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies

Session 5. New forms of cooperation

This session examined the potential modalities of cooperation between the emerging and established actors in peace operations.

Discussant: Dr Cedric de Coning, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs/ACCORD

Challenges to the scale of peace operations

After a decade of continuous expansion, historic levels of demand, and increasing complexity, peace operations as they currently exist and at their current scale are at risk. Among the prevailing geo-economic and geopolitical trends today are the financial crisis that started in 2008 and the resulting fiscal austerity. These have led to a perception that the present costs of peace operations are unsustainable; pressure to scale down the overall size of these operations is increasing.

There is a clear trend among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) to seek to reduce the cost of peace operations by looking more seriously at upstream conflict prevention and at enhancing the tools at the disposal of the UN Secretariat—notably political missions, especially with mediation capability. A focus on mediation has led to around 50 new posts being created in the Policy and Mediation Support Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and early DPA action in hotspots such as Libya and Yemen.



In the case of the UK, there has been a renewed focus on what it calls building stability overseas (BSO), both through better integration of foreign and development policies and through upstream prevention.

Regardless of the new challenges and divergences, there is continued reliance on peace operations as instruments to bring stability to conflict-ridden regions. There will in fact be increased demand to do more with less and for regional organizations to play more of a role in the future. There has already been a significant strengthening and expansion of regional security organizations in Africa and Europe. This raises the issue of how and how far regional organizations should be accountable to the Security Council.

SESSION 2. NORMS AND CONCEPTS: A FRAGILE CONSENSUS?

A fragile consensus

With emerging powers taking a larger part in peace operations, existing global norms and concepts are likely to be challenged while new ones may be introduced. This does not, however, mean that emerging powers will reject each and every norm or concept previously established. One clear area of consensus, though fragile, exists: the protection of human rights. Although the emerging and the established powers agree in principle on the importance of human rights in this context, they diverge as to how different categories of rights should be prioritized in the planning and execution of peace operations. Notably, Western powers emphasize the pursuit of political rights while emerging powers put more emphasis on economic rights. Brazil is particularly vocal about its preference for economic rights, arguing that there is a causal link between economic equality, on the one hand, and peace and security on the other.

Emerging and established powers also sometimes diverge as to the means to pursue peace operations' objectives. Emerging powers tend to express strong commitment to and respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-interference. This has resulted discord with established powers as to how peace operations should seek to, for example, restore and guarantee the protection of civilians in the host country. In particular, emerging powers frequently balk at the prospect of coercive measures, especially the use of force, and especially when the coercion is to be used against the host state. The Libya case is an emblematic example of this discordance: although emerging powers initially approved the idea of a militarized response to protect civilians, they soon rejected NATO's maximalist interpretation of the mandate. However, in many cases, particularly those where the host state is in favour of the peace operation's deployment, emerging and established powers can generally agree on mandates and methods.

Divergences and new approaches

A number of other divergences between emerging and established powers, along with new approaches, are also likely to appear. For example, there is a current debate over the 'liberal peace' agenda Western powers are said to have for long supported as the norm for peace operations. Brazil, which seeks a rebalancing of the global order, may want to impose, or at least strongly



recommend, economic equality as the, or at least a, new agenda for peace operations.

Emerging powers' commitment to the respect of sovereignty and non-interference may result in their pushing for increased ownership by the host states of certain aspects of a peace operation.

Moreover, as emerging powers gain space in the peace operation field, it is likely that intensifying domestic policy debates on multilateral intervention will have an impact on their perspectives and priorities, which may in turn lead to further divergences and to the introduction of new approaches and new 'entry points' for peace operations.

No imminent clash

Despite the discordances, there is little immediate prospect of a clash between emerging and established powers in the field of peace operations. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, although peace operations are undoubtedly crucial for international security, they may simply not be worth the fight for either category of power. Secondly, the emerging powers rarely act as a coherent bloc. There are significant differences between emerging powers on peace operation norms and concepts; what opposition to existing norms there is among emerging powers is neither systematic nor global. For example, South Africa largely agrees with the prevailing norms; while emerging powers call for reform of the Security Council, China generally puts its weight behind the status quo. Thirdly, the sustainability of emerging powers' achievements in changing the peace operation field is uncertain.

Although a major clash between established and emerging powers over peace operations is unlikely in the coming years, the underlying disagreements need to be carefully considered in the future.

SESSION 3. EVOLVING APPROACHES

SESSION 4. BEYOND A 'NEW HORIZON' FOR THE UN

The emergence of new actors in peace operations may result in an increasing regionalization of interventions—that is, an increasing number of operations being led by regional organizations. In fact, emerging powers may want to use and even further strengthen their leadership in their respective regions through regional operations.

Operations led by regional organizations have the advantages, of immediacy and efficiency. Regional organizations are better able to deploy operations quickly when a crisis arises in their own region. Furthermore, the shared values and affinities and the relatively easy understanding that exists between the members of a regional organization make conducting the operation easier. Finally, regional organizations can play a valuable role in preventing crises in their region. This raises the question of whether a council of regional organizations should be created to gather and discuss their participation in peace operations.

The increasing regionalization of operations may in turn lead to a decrease in the number of UN-led operations. However, regional organizations do not have the capacity for peacebuilding or UN-style stabilization. Besides,



the UN has a unique level of knowledge about the challenges along with experience in handling them.

SESSION 5. NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION

As a result of the emergence of new actors, it might be appropriate to consider potential division of labour, that is to say division of the tasks an operation encompasses according to what a given contributing country excels at. Some countries, due to their histories and experiences, may be better than others at certain things and these competitive advantages may be something to explore and exploit.

Furthermore, as countries from the global South may have more experience when it comes to emerging from conflict, they may want to consider the creation of South–South norms or concepts. The civilian capacity issue is another area of potential South–South cooperation, but also of North–South cooperation.

Finally, regional financial institutions like the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, along with forums like the G20 should be increasingly be considered as potential cooperation partners.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There was a rich discussion in the workshop on the future landscape of peace operations and on the different perspectives on prevailing norms and concepts. The workshop raised many pertinent questions regarding what constitutes peace operations and on the nexus between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. These will be explored further in the regional dialogues to be held in 2012 and 2013. There was also evident interest in having further intra-regional discussions on the new geopolitics of peace operations.

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