

Recent Thinking on Peacekeeping: Literature Review No. 1

Center on International Cooperation Project on Transformations in Multilateral Security Institutions Implications for the UN

This review forms part of a wider effort by the Center on International Cooperation, in collaboration with the Best Practices Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to bring to the attention of DPKO and its partners, in an accessible way, new research on peacekeeping and on factors that affect peacekeeping. For 2004-2005, three such reviews have been commissioned, designed to cover some of the more policy-relevant recent literature on peacekeeping.

**Consultant: Ian Johnstone
Associate Professor of International Law
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
December 16, 2004**

Introduction

This is the first in a series of periodic reviews of recent scholarly articles on peacekeeping and related issues.

This review focuses on a number of *empirical* studies. As one author points out, there is a vast literature on peacekeeping, but a dearth of rigorous empirical work on basic issues like where peacekeepers go, whether peacekeeping succeeds and what level of capacity is needed to meet current demands. These studies help to fill that gap.

For the most part, the findings will not surprise practitioners. But some do defy conventional wisdom, and moreover the findings and methodologies can be useful in sorting out what tends to work well and what does not.

In this review, I summarize four sets of studies, which relate to: 1) the incidence of armed conflict; 2) where peacekeepers go; 3) the effectiveness of peacekeeping; and 4) the global military capacity for peace operations. I begin in each case with a statement of the central finding of the study, then explain how it was arrived at and some of the implications.

I. The incidence of armed conflict

Mikael Eriksson and Peter Wallensteen, "Armed Conflict, 1989-2003", *Journal of Peace Research* Vol. 41(5), pp. 625-636.

Eriksson and Wallensteen's central finding is that the number of armed conflicts around the world has declined steadily since 1991 and continued to do so in the year 2003.

The Uppsala Conflict Date Project (UCDP) collects data on armed conflicts around the world. The findings are published on an annual basis in various sources, including the *Journal of Peace Research*. More complete information on the history of conflicts going back to 1946 is available at www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict. The UCDP's data set is one of the most accurate and well-used compilations of information on intra- and inter-state conflicts in the world.

The Project defines an armed conflict as the use of force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths (most datasets use a higher threshold and therefore are less comprehensive). The authors categorize conflicts by intensity and type. The first categorization designates conflicts as either "minor" (25-1000 battle-related deaths throughout the entire conflict), "intermediate" (over 1000 battle deaths in total, but fewer than 1000 in a given year) and "war" (more than 1000 battle deaths per year). The second designates conflicts as "intrastate", "internationalized intrastate" and "interstate".

Among the more interesting findings reported in the above article:

- The overall number of conflicts since 1989 peaked at 51 in 1991 and has been declining almost steadily ever since, to 29 in the year 2003. That is the lowest level of armed conflict since the early 1970s.
- The largest proportional decline has been in the number of wars, the highest intensity conflicts, which dropped from 17 in 1991 to 5 in 2003.
- The number of intrastate conflicts peaked at 49 in 1991 and dropped to 26 in 2003.
- The number of inter-state and internationalized intrastate conflicts has remained fairly steady, ranging between 3 and 7 for most years between 1989 and 2003.
- Six conflicts listed as active in 2002 were no longer active in 2003 (Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda and Somalia).

The authors point out that the slow but steady decline in armed conflicts defies conventional wisdom, which holds that tension and insecurity are increasing. They speculate that this is so because media reporting provides a snapshot of conflicts around the world, without reflecting variations over time. They add that the most serious conflicts are not always the ones that are most closely monitored by the media. In the period 1997-2002, for example, the most violent conflict by far was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Today, the Iraq war gets the most media attention. "If there is more gloom in the dominant media, it reflects security fears in certain parts of the world (notably the USA and western Asia), but not a rising trend in conflict." This is not to downplay the seriousness of today's conflicts, but rather to provide some historical perspective.

II. Where peacekeepers go

Michael Gilligan and Stephen Stedman, “Where do the peacekeepers go?” *International Studies Review* 5(4): 37-54 (2001).

The central finding of Gilligan and Stedman is that the more severe a civil conflict, measured by the death toll, the more likely the UN is to intervene. They also find that the UN is significantly less likely to intervene in civil wars in militarily strong states, measured by the size of the government army. And they identify a regional bias in favor of Europe over Africa and, surprisingly, Africa over Asia (in the sense that the UN tends to react more swiftly to crises in the former).

The Gilligan and Stedman piece is one of the few empirical studies on peacekeeping in the aftermath of civil wars. They ask a simple but normatively important question: what determines where and when the UN sends peacekeepers? They test some common assertions that may not be supported by the evidence, such as ‘peacekeepers go only to places where the P5 have an interest’, or ‘peacekeeping is imperialism and so occurs only where there are raw materials to exploit’.

The authors look at all civil wars after 1988 (60 in total), the number to which UN peacekeepers were sent (19 in total), and how much time passed after the start of each war before a mission was deployed. Using sophisticated social science methodology (with many tables, “dummy variables”, probits, tobits etc...), they come up with 10 findings, the most significant of which are noted above, namely that the UN is more likely to intervene when the death toll is higher and less likely to intervene in militarily strong states, and that there is a regional bias. They also find (with varying degrees of certainty) that the following factors do not seem to significantly affect the likelihood of intervention: the existence of a peace agreement, the lack of democracy, the war aims of rebels (secession *versus* control of government), the availability of primary commodity exports, and whether or not the country is a former colony of a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

One important research question that follows from their study concerns the regional bias. The bias in favor of Europe may be explained by the vital security interests of the US, UK and France (three permanent members of the SC), the “CNN effect”, and/or pressures generated by refugee flows and asylum seekers. The bias towards Africa over Asia is harder to explain: is it because Asian countries are less likely to consent to intervention, whereas African countries find it harder to resist? Do evolving norms about sovereignty in the two regions have any bearing on the bias? It is not hard to imagine possible explanations. The great virtue of the Gilligan and Stedman study is that it demonstrates how systematic empirical research can be used to confirm or refute impressionistic and speculative views.

Taken as whole, their results “suggest an image of the UN that attempts to balance between the dictates of power and concerns of principle”; it seems to respond to civil wars that involve the greatest humanitarian catastrophes, but is also guided by considerations of power, cost and risk.

III. The effectiveness of peacekeeping

Virginia Page Fortna, "Inside and Out: Peacekeeping and the Duration of Peace after Civil and Interstate Wars", *International Studies Review* (2003), Vol. 5(4), pp. 97-114

Virginia Page Fortna, "Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace", *International Organization* (Spring 2003), Vol. 57, pp. 337-372

Virginia Page Fortna, "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War", *International Studies Quarterly* (2004), Vol. 48, pp. 269-292.

Fortna's central finding is that peacekeeping works, both in inter-state and intrastate conflicts. More generally, she finds that some of the mechanisms normally associated with peacekeeping work well, whereas others do not seem to make much difference.

The three articles listed above are the product of a major research project, which also resulted in a book entitled *Peacetime: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (2004). Fortna looks at both inter-state and intra-state conflicts and seeks to measure the effectiveness of peacekeeping, as well as other mechanisms that may have an impact on the durability of peace (i.e. how long the peace lasts).

Her work on inter-state conflicts draws on cooperation theory to make the case that ceasefire agreements are not just "scraps of paper". Contrary to what scholars from a realist tradition may think, states and international organizations can institute measures to overcome the obstacles to peace. Practitioners know this already, but Fortna proves it empirically, and she shows which peace-maintaining mechanisms tend to work best.

Fortna examines 48 ceasefires in international wars ending between 1946 and 1997. She uses a "duration model" to measure the effect of peacekeeping (and other mechanisms) on durable peace, while controlling for other factors that might have a causal impact. As she points out at the end of the *International Organizations* article, her findings warrant optimism: peace mechanisms can help make ceasefires last longer; and the more mechanisms there are, the more likely is durable peace, although not all are equally effective. Specifically, she finds that peacekeepers, demilitarized zones, third party guarantees, joint commissions for dispute resolution, and specificity in the peace agreements are all effective tools. Confidence-building measures (like hot-lines), formalizing an agreement, and withdrawal of forces may help, but the evidence is uncertain. And there is solid evidence that arms control measures, on-going third party mediation, and attempts to control irregular forces do not help maintain peace after inter-state wars.

Of particular interest to the UN is her finding of "a large and statistically significant difference between cease-fires overseen by a fresh set of international peacekeepers and those without the benefit of peacekeeping". But she cautions that peacekeeping can easily become discredited: leaving a mission in place after it has failed (like UNMOGIP after 1965), does little to bolster the prospects for peace.

A similar empirical analysis of the impact of peacekeeping on intrastate conflicts is more difficult because of the need to control for more factors. How do you know the peacekeepers, as opposed to any one of a number of other factors, caused durable peace? How do you know peacekeepers are not simply deployed to the easy cases, where there is a genuine will to make peace, suggesting that the parties would not have gone back to war anyway? Or conversely, if peacekeepers are sent only to the hard cases and the peace often breaks down while they are there, does that prove that peacekeeping is ineffective? Or do the few times it succeeds against all odds mean it is effective?

Fortna, like Gilligan and Stedman, takes on this challenge by considering many factors that *might* affect the durability of peace: the military outcome of the war (ie whether there was a decisive victory by one side); whether a treaty was signed; whether it is an ethnic conflict; the death toll; the number of parties to the conflict; the duration of the war; the level of economic development; the availability of 'lootable' resources; the level of democracy; and the size of the government's army.

She examines 115 'spells of peace' between 1944 and 1999, relying primarily on data collected by Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis. Of those 115 cases, 41 had peacekeeping missions: 30 UN, 23 non-UN, and 12 both. Interestingly, her conclusions about where peacekeepers go are similar to those of Gilligan and Stedman (with some variations). Most importantly, she finds that consent-based peacekeepers tend to be sent to the hard cases rather than the easy ones. This is significant because it means peacekeeping is probably more effective than meets the eye; it can not be judged solely in terms of whether war resumes, without regard to the baseline prospects for peace. "Just as sicker patients are more likely to receive medical care, places in which the danger of another war is more likely are likely to receive peacekeeping".

Applying a duration model, she concludes that peacekeeping in civil wars works, and it has worked especially well in the post-Cold War era. Unarmed observer and traditional peacekeeping missions have been most successful, reducing the risk of renewed war by 81% and 86% respectively. Multidimensional missions reduce the risk of war by 53%. Peace enforcement reduces the risk by 43%. Those figures may even under-estimate the true value of peacekeeping, because they are derived from a model that does not give peacekeepers credit for peace that lasts after they leave. Factoring that in, peacekeepers reduced the risk of renewed war in the post-Cold War era by an impressive 84%!

As for other factors that may influence the durability of peace, Fortna's findings are:

- Wars that end in a decisive victory for one side lead to more durable peace (many other studies reach the same conclusion)
- Peace is easier to keep after long wars
- Peace is easier to keep in countries with higher levels of economic development
- Peace is harder to maintain after deadly wars
- Surprisingly, it is not clear that signing a formal peace treaty (as opposed to an informal truce) makes the subsequent peace any more durable
- Also surprisingly, the number of factions in the war does not seem to affect the peace

- During the Cold War, the availability of easily lootable commodities tended to fuel renewed conflict, but less in the post-Cold War era
- Peace is somewhat less stable after ethnic conflicts and in countries with large armies, but in both cases the effect is only marginally significant

Fortna's bottom line is that peacekeeping is not a silver bullet, but it does tend to make peace more likely to last, and to last longer. The empirical evidence is clear: as a conflict management tool, peacekeeping is well worth the effort.

IV. The global military capacity for peacekeeping

Michael O'Hanlon and P.W. Singer, "The Humanitarian Transformation: Expanding Global Intervention Capacity", *Survival* Vol. 46(1), Spring 2004, pp. 77-100

O'Hanlon and Singer's central finding is that there is a large gap between the demand for peacekeepers (military and police) and the available supply. They estimate that roughly 200,000 peacekeepers are needed to meet current demand, about double the number now in the field. They argue it is possible to fill that gap with some military restructuring and substantial but not exorbitant investment by developed and developing countries alike.

The authors' calculations, it should be stressed, are in the nature of well-educated guesses. Their goal is to show how "an improved global pool of fully deployable soldiers and police for humanitarian missions, above and beyond what is available today, might be created – and to estimate what equipment and training would be needed to make such a force effective and rapidly deployable". O'Hanlon and Singer are experienced and respected analysts, whose findings offer a sound starting point for discussion of how to increase global capacity for peacekeeping and intervention.

They arrive at the 200,000 figure by adding the number of UN peacekeepers in the field in mid-2003 (about 35,000) to NATO deployments in the Balkans (about 50,000), plus expanded missions in Afghanistan and the DRC (which they guess would require up to 100,000 troops). They offer 200,000 as a conservative estimate, as it does not take account of the need for possible future operations in a variety of places. Based on the ratio of police to troops in Bosnia, they set a benchmark figure of 10%, suggesting the need for 20,000 police alongside the military.

Is it possible to get from here to there? Considering that global military spending is \$800 billion per year and more than 20 million men and women are under arms, O'Hanlon and Singer think it is. They argue that the international community has the capability to deploy up to 200,000 troops at a time for humanitarian missions, drawn from a pool of 600,000 personnel. The methodology they use to estimate a country's projectable military capability focuses on three elements: strategic lift, logistics assets, and well-trained personnel. Assuming forces should be deployable within 2-3 months for at least one year, a pool of 600,000 is already available. Unfortunately, 2/3 of those come from the US (the authors provide a nice table showing the supply of projectable forces of NATO and non-NATO European countries). O'Hanlon and Singer do not call for the US to provide more

troops for humanitarian missions, because neither American nor international sentiment would accept it. Instead, they propose:

- The US commit to excellence in peacekeeping training and doctrine, add more military police and civil affairs to active duty forces, and develop a reserve of civilian police.
- Europe aim for a rapid deployment force of 150,000 (rather than the current 60,000 EU Headline Goal). Also, invest in strategic lift (mainly sealift) and logistics. By cutting the overall size of their armed forces by 10-25%, European countries could achieve this by investing about \$50 billion, which would require them to increase defense spending by an average of 6-7% for five years.
- Japan aim for 25,000 rapidly deployable troops and invest in strategic lift. The addition to Japan's defense budget would be about \$5 billion over 10 years.
- Developing regions: Africa aim for 50,000 fully equipped troops and another 50,000 not fully equipped. Middle East and South Asia adopt similar goals. South America aim for 50,000 deployable troops. Western countries would need to provide many of the resources required, costing about \$10-15 billion for the first 100,000 soldiers and half as much for the second group of 100,000.
- Canada, New Zealand and others make modest improvements in their capabilities.
- Turkey, South Korea, Russia, China and others might contribute more substantially to peace operations and humanitarian missions down the road
- Private military firms could fill gaps in logistics and transportation for poorer states and regional organizations. Mainly because of concerns about accountability etc, private firms should not be hired for combat functions.

O'Hanlon and Singer's bottom line is that filling the gap between the global demand and global capacity for peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention is a difficult challenge, but not so daunting or expensive as to excuse inaction. With minimal investments and some shifting of military resources and force structures, superior global capabilities for such missions are achievable. "The international community would finally have the means. All it would then need would be the will".