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PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

This study presents a critical overview and analysis of principal events that characterize peace keeping operations in Africa: challenges encountered and prospects towards enhancing their effectiveness. The study observed that between 1947 and 2013, Africa experienced 90 peace keeping operations. Majority of the armed conflicts in Africa attracted peace operations more regularly than the global average with United Nations (UN) consistently being the predominant peacekeeper in the continent of Africa where 33 UN-led operations had been deployed. African contributions to peace operations increased dramatically during the twenty-first century with the continent's Regional Economic Communities (REC5), with prominently ECOWAS playing major role. The European Union has become a more important peacekeeping actor as part of its Common Defense and Security Policy, thus making strategic partnership in peacekeeping becoming the norm in Africa. It was equally noted that many peace operations in Africa continues to suffer from a "capability-expectations" gap. The study recommended among others, that efforts should be made to sustain the partnerships between the African Union and the UN and EU regarding peace keeping operations in Africa and that stakeholders should endeavour to find a solution to the funding problems for African institutions.

Keywords:

Africa, Peace Operations, United Nations, Armed conflict

Introduction

Principally, peace keeping operation in Africa geared towards the improvement of peace and harmony through the use of different mechanisms, the work highlights the peace keeping operations that is strategic in nature and weapons used in achieving the said goals and the work traces the way and manner problems are been tackled. Finally, it approves the possible solutions to the menace of unrest in the continent.

The paper proceeds in three parts. The first section summarizes the major patterns of peace operations in Africa, focusing primarily on developments since 2000. It summarizes the number, locations, size and principal mandates of peace operations on the continent and offers six propositions about the main contemporary patterns evident across them. The second section examines seine generic problems that these operations have faced at both the strategic and operational levels. At the strategic level, they have encountered problems related to designing political strategies for conflict resolution and ensuring coordination between multiple international actors; a gap between expectations and capabilities; and the related problem of ensuring adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding. At the operational level, peace operations have often lacked requisite capabilities such as force enablers and multipliers as well as civilian capacity; they have struggled to implement mandates related tocivilian protection and public securitytherule of law; there have frequently been problems related to theuse of military force as well as promoting security sector reform; and there have been problems of ensuring rapid deployment.

The final section assesses the prospects for improving the effectiveness of peace operations in Africa by calling for enhanced efforts in five main areas. 'These are the need for more effective partnerships between the international actors involved in peace operations; resolution ofthe various problems related to financing these missions; ensuring smoother transitions across different types ofmissions; enhancing the ability of peacekeepers to protect civilians; and ensuring peace operations linked to effective strategies for conflict resolution in their respectiveareas ofoperation.

Pattern

What patterns are evident across peace operations in Africa? Between 1947 and 2013, Africa experienced 90 peace operations. Of these, 77 were deployed since 1990, while 47 started since 2000.

Proposition 1: Major armed conflicts in Africa attracted peace operations more regularly than the globalaverage

Between 1947 and 2013,47 wars took place in Africa. When compared to other regions of the world, major armed conflicts in Africa regularly attracted the deployment of a peace operation (consistently remaining above 50%). The majority ofpeace operations were in response to wars that broke out in the 1990s and 2000s (approximately 46% of all wars on the continent, and 35% of the total number of peace operations). Since 1990; there has been at least a 70% chance that international society would deploy a peace operation as part of its response to a major armed conflict in Africa. Indeed, between 2000 and 2013, there was an 83% chance that a new African war would attract a peace operation within five years. Since 2000, only twomajor armed conflicts in Africa did not attract a peace operation: the communal violence in different parts of Nigeria (2004) and the civil war in Libya (2011); the later attracted a humanitarian military intervention.

Proposition 2: The UN has consistently been the predominant peacekeeper in Africa

This is in line with the UN's predominant peacekeeping status worldwide but it also holds true for operations in Africa, where 33 UN-led operations have deployed. After a Western-led retreat from peacekeeping in Africa after the "Black Hawk down" episode in Mogadishu during October 1993, the UN returned to die continent in unprecedented levels after 1999. Since then, many of the UN's operations have involved large numbers of uniformed personnel (over 10,000). At the time of writing (October2014), the UN has authorized an all-time high of over 108,000 uniformed peacekeepers in Africa.

The next most common type of mission was UN-recognized, that is, operations that are not explicitly authorized by the UN Security Council but are nevertheless supported by it in resolutions or presidential statements. This reflected a trend whereby after the Cold War several African regional arrangements, most notably ECOWAS, saw the UN as an unreliable partner in conflict management on the continent and hence they had to take the lead in peacekeeping. More recently, after the creation of the African Union (AU), the number of UN-recognized missions reduced, replaced primarily by AU and sub-regional missions that deployed with authorization from the UN Security Council.

Proposition 3: African contributions to peace operations increased dramatically during the twenty-first century

During the 1990s, African peace operations were usually conducted by the continent's Regional Economic Communities (REC5), most prominently ECOWAS. However, with the creation of the new African Union, since 2004 most African contributions outside of UN-led missions have come via AU not REC operations. Specifically, the AU has now conducted ten operations, the largest being AMIS (Darfur, Sudan, 2004-07), AMISOM (Somalia, 2007-), AFISMA (Mali, 2013), and MISCA (CAR, 2013-14); where the Union authorized the deployment of over 40,000 troops, nearly 4,000 police, and over 400 civilian experts.

There are, however, two important caveats to this trend. First, external assistance was important to deploy and/or sustain African peacekeepers in the respective theaters of operation. This was achieved through various ad hoc bilateral and multilateral assistance packages linked to specific missions, as well as longer-standing "train and equip" programmes aimed at enhancing Africa's peacekeeping capabilities. Second, African states provided very uneven numbers of personnel, with a majority of African peacekeepers originating from less than a dozen countries. This inequity is partly a product of the hugely uneven distribution ofmilitary and police capabilities across the continent, and partly a product of uneven levels of political commitment to peace operations evident among African governments.

Proposition 4: The European Union has become a more important peacekeeping actor as part of its Common Defense and Security Policy

During the 2000s, the European Union (EU) significantly increased its peacekeeping presence in Africa under the framework of its new ComnonDefence and Security policy. EU missions drew significant French and German support in particular and focused on DRC and Chad/CAR. In addition, through its African Peace Facility the EU proved significantly more willing to fund various African peace and security initiatives.

Proposition 5: During the twenty-first century, peacekeepers in Africa have been concentrated in a relatively small group of countries

The new operations deployed into Africa since 2000 could be found in fifteen countries. Today, peace operations remain in ten of them. However, between 2006 and 2013 the majority of peacekeepers were deployedinDRC, Somalia and the Sudans. Indeed, at one stage, the four UN-led operations in DRC and (the) Sudan(s) accounted for roughly one-third of all UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide, and one-third ofthe entire UN peacekeeping budget, while theAUs Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was its only operation from mid- 2008 until early 2013. The new missions in Mali and CAR during 2013 have diluted this concentration to some extent.

Proposition 6: Partnership peacekeeping has become the norm in Africa

A central lesson derived from the experiences of conflict management in the twenty first century Africa is that no institution or actor can deal with the challenges alone. Partnership peacekeeping—where operations involve collaboration among two or more international institutions—has thus become the norm. The emerging division of labor has seen African states provide the majority of the personnel (including for some UN missions) with other actors providing significant forms of assistance in terms of funding, training, equipment, logistics, and planning. The key partnerships in contemporary Africa are the UN-AU, EU-AU, AUREC, and some key bilateral relationships between the African peace and security institutions and the US, France, Germany, the UK and several Scandinavianstates.

Problems

What are the major challenges facing peace operations in Africa? This section analyzes the main generic problems at both the strategic and operational levels. Important strategic challenges involve designing political strategies and coordinating international actors; gaps between expectations and capabilities; and the related problem of ensuring adequate, sustainable, and predictable finding.At the operational level, peace operations have often lacked force enablers and multipliers as well as civilian capacity; they have struggled to implement complex, multidimensional and often politically naïve mandates; there have frequently been problems related to the use of military force; and rapid deployment has proved an almost constant headache.

Strategy and Coordination

Arguably the most fundamental problem facing peace operations in Africa is designing and implementing a workable strategy to address the causes of the crisis in question. Peace operations are an instrument that can mitigate some of the worst consequences of armed conflict but they are not in and of themselves a political strategy for conflict resolution. Deploying a peace operation to a crisis zone will not ensure its resolution. While peacekeepers can and do engage in localized and operational forms of mediation and conflict resolution, they are not responsible for forcing the belligerents to reach a political settlement. Rather, peace operations should work in parallel with a peacemaking process aimed at achieving a political settlement to the crisis in question. As China's UN representative recently put it, "The deployment of peacekeeping operations itself is not the goal. Only through political dialogue, comprehensive consultation so as to settle differences and the attainment of national reconciliation can we effectively curb violent conflicts, stabilize the situation and restore security." Without a strategy to achieve a political settlement, peace operations are liable

to tread water for considerable periods of time, as they have done for decades in Kashmir, Cyprus, the Middle East, and Western Sahara. The same problem is now occurring in CAR, DRC, Mali, Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan where peace operations are not tied to a viable peace process, either because that process has collapsed (as in DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, and Sudan) or did not exist in the first place (as in CAR, Somalia and South Sudan).

In the quest to develop a workable strategy for conflict resolution, peace operations also suffer from the related challenge of ensuring coordination among the various actors involved in deploying a peace operation. In the broadest sense the relevant actors are those that mandate/authorize the mission, those that deploy personnel and assets in it, and those that provide the finance. Although calls for coordination are a staple refrain of states and international organizations, it is only rarely that such actors actually allow themselves to be coordinated if this means changing their goals, priorities and or approaches in Africa, debates about strategic coordination involve the many moving parts but the central nexus comprises relationships between the AU, Africa's relevant Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the UN, the EU, and key bilateral players such as the United States, France and the United Kingdom.

Part of the problem here is that coordination is never a purely technical exercise but is really about ensuring the convergence of political visions and priorities. Consequently, it often highlights the different philosophies and doctrines on peace operations among these different actors. For example, while the UN is wedded to a notion of "peacekeeping" based on the principles of consent, impartiality and minimal use of force, usually after a ceasefire or peace agreement has been established, the AU is committed to a much broader notion of "peace support operations" which might involve conducting enforcement activity to impose peace by defeating spoilers. Another dimension of the problem is that there are sometimes a large number of actors involved. For example, between 1997 and 2014, CAR was the site of fourteen different peace operations carried out by the UN, ECCAS, AU, EU, and France. In other cases, it is the number of actors involved to deploy a single operation. The most complex example here is the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM which receives uniformed personnel from the AU (although for several years had to work alongside parallel Ethiopian forces), its logistics support from the UN, its personnel allowances from the Eli and other financial support via a UN Trust Fund ofvoluntary contributions, and on-the-ground training and mentorship from the EU, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti and aprivate US firm, Bancroft Global Development.

Expectations and Capabilities

Many peace operations in Africa also continue to suffer from a "capability-expectations" gap. This can manifest in various ways including:

- a gap between the authorized numbers of personnel and those actually deployed— with many missions taking many months or even years to reach their authorized strength;
- a gap between the force requirements specified for the mission and those actually deployed— with many missions suffering debilitating gaps related to transportation, engineering, logistics, medical, information-gathering, and aviation (military and utility) units;
- a significant lag time between authorizing a mission and its actual deployment; and
- the issuing of vague and unrealistic mandates which raise local and international expectations well beyond what the peacekeepers have the capacity to deliver.

The need to ensure the rather basic point that mandates should match resources has been a constant maxim of peacekeeping analysts for many years. It was probably put most succinctly by the Brahimi

Report's (2000) emphasis on "The pivotal importance of clear, credible and adequately resourced Security Council mandates."

With this in mind, two types of mandated tasks have often raised (local and international) expectations well beyond what peacekeepers can reasonably deliver: those associated with civilian protection and security sector reform (SSR). Many peace operations have failed to engineer effective SSR either because they were asked to undertake it before the war in question was over, most notably in South Sudan, or because there remains a system of political patronage and nepotism that makes it almost impossible to build a professional set of armed forces loyal to the state as opposed to a particular regime or identity group, most notably in DRC and Somalia. With regard to civilian protection, this is a laudable and important objective but it has the unfortunate consequence of opening peace operations up to considerable criticism when they inevitably fail to meet the (understandably high) local expectations.

Using Military Force

When and how to use military force represents another set of challenges. In recent years, peacekeepers in Africa have been called on to use military force for various purposes including civilian protection, VIP protection, self-defense, as well as to target specific non-state armed groups. Part of the explanation for this lies in the mandates given to some missions, notably those in Somalia, Mali; DRC, and CAR; which have blurred the lines between peacekeeping and atrocity prevention, and between peacekeeping and counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations. But it is also related to the increasing tendency of some armed non-state actors to view peacekeepers as enemy combatants rather than impartial arbiters of a peace process. The result has been a rise in asymmetric attacks on peacekeepers in several theatres, particularly via the use of IEDs in both Somalia and Mali.

This raises challenges for peacekeepers in the realms of both pre-deployment training and operational effectiveness in the field. Withregard to pre-deployment training, UN and other peacekeepers only recently started to receive instruction on the military tasks involved in civilian protection scenarios, and it remains unclear what, if any, training they receive related to counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism. The AU has similar challenges. Even battle-hardened troops from Uganda and Burundi, for instance, required extensive additional field training in how to counter IEDs and conduct urban warfare operations in Somalia. The emerging lesson from both AMISOM's war against al-Shabaab and the Force Intervention Brigade's campaign against the M-23 rebels in DRC is that the potential for peace operations to effectively wield military power depends in large part on the willingness of the relevant TCCs to participate in proactive and risky operations.

Rapid Deployment

Rapid deployment capability is the final challenge discussed here. Assuming that some unforeseen crises will erupt in Africa, the actors and institutions that might want to respond require some form of rapid deployment capability. With a couple of exceptions, UN peacekeeping operations have taken many months to reach their authorized deployment levels. The exceptions were the mission between Eritrea and Ethiopia (LINMEE) which was relatively small and drew forces from the Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHTRBRIG), and the mission in Abyei (UNISFA) which was also relatively small and composed almost entirely of Ethiopian troops who deployed quickly to their neighboring state ofSudan.

For African-Led operations, the problems of rapid deployment have been even more acute. Since the early 2000s, most debate focused on constructing regional standby brigades as the building blocks of

the African Standby Force (ASF). Included in the ASF concept was a call to develop a "rapid deployment capability" (RDC) that would allow the AU and/or RECs to field boots on the ground within 14 days ofthe decision to deploy. However, neither the ASF nor the RDC reached full operational capacity as planned and the timetable for completion was pushed back from 2OlO to 2015. In light of this delay and the failure of African states to rapidly deploy troops to stem Mali's crisis during 2012, in early 2013 the AU unveiled the "African Immediate Crisis Response Capacity" (ACJRC). Drawing from a reservoir of 5,000 troops, the ACIRC is supposed to comprise tactical battle groups of 1,500 military personnel deployed by a lead nation or a group of AU member states and that would be sustainable for 30 days. Its purpose is to conduct stabilization and enforcement missions, neutralize terrorist groups, and provide emergency assistance to AU member states. Unlike the ASF regional standby forces, theACIRC is apurely military capability without police or civilian elements. The ACIRC stimulated debate over whether the AU should retain its emphasis on the RDC or focus on the newACIRC. The subsequent compromise fashioned by the AU was that the ACIRC should be conceived as atemporary and interim phase in the development of the ASF. Either way, rapid deployment will only be possible if three conditions are met: I) timely political consensus on where, when and how to act; 2) adequate numbers of prepared troops and materiel; and 3) logistics systems in place to ensure their rapid deployment into the area of operations. With this in mind, in August 2014 the United States announced a new initiative to help the militaries of six African states—Senegal, Ghana, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda—to maintain "forces and equipment ready to rapidly deploy and state their intent to deploy as part of UN orAU missions to respond to emerging crises." Starting in FY2015, its budget is $110 million per year for 3-5 years.

Conclusion

How might the effectiveness of peace operations in Africa be improved? We suggest reforms and greater efforts are required in five main areas;

First, continue to enhance the partnerships between the African Union and the UN and EU. Elsewhere we have suggested a detailed set of reform proposals for the UN-AU partnership. However, with the EU's growing roles in this area, greater effort should be made to make this a genuinely triangular relationship between the three institutions. While the EU pledged a round of funds under its African Peace Facility (APE) for 2014-2016 (up to a maximum of €900m), debate continues over whether stronger ties can be made between the AU and EU related to planning and command and control mechanisms, as well as whether the EU should lift its prohibition on providing military equipmentto theAU undertheAPF.

Second, a solution to the funding problem for African institutions needs to be found. This is really a political question inasmuch as African governments clearly possess enough wealth to find their peace operations but they choose not to invest it in the African peace and security architecture. Until they do, critics will continue to conclude that this may simply be a way to attract external resources and there will be no genuinelyAfrican "ownership" ofthese operations.

Third, work towards smoother transitions across different types ofmissions, especially AU-to-UN operations. This could be facilitated by conducting shared technical assessments of the situation on the ground (which would ensure a degree of convergence in the force requirements); adopting mutually agreeable timetables to facilitate smooth rotations, logistics support, and contract renewals; and ensuring that AU forces meet UN mission standards for contingent- owned equipment and relevant skills.

Fourth, although significant strides have been made with regard to doctrinal development and training, peacekeepers still need to improve their ability to protect civilians. In one sense it is inevitable that making civilian protection part of peacekeepers' mandates will lead to failure. But not attempting this task would be worse for both the legitimacy and effectiveness of peace operations. Greater efforts are therefore required toensure that peacekeepers are appropriately equipped and well-trained before they deploy.

Finally, in many ways the most fundamental issue confronting peace operations concerns their entry strategies, specifically, under what circumstances should a peace operation deploy and how can they be linked to effective strategies to resolve the crisis in question? This is a political question about the philosophy and doctrine underpinning these missions. It requires a renewed look at the types of problems peace operations are able to fix, as well as recognizing the limits ofthose operations and admitting that they cannot solve all the problems ofthe world's war-tom states.

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