

# UNPROFOR and UNTAC: Lessons Learned as to Requirements for Planning, Training, and Equipment

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**his paper will attempt to extract the major lessons learned from UN experiences related to UNPROFOR (UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia, i.e., Croatia, Bosnia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and UNTAC (UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia). The focus will be on:

- the broad area of planning, with particular attention to the formulation of achievable mandates or United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs), and the command and control arrangements in the field;
- training, as a means to operationalize and practice the relevant military doctrine associated with a particular peace operation; and
- specific equipment items appropriate for peace operations.

## ■ UNPROFOR

Analysis will focus largely on UNPROFOR as a continuing peace operation laboratory, using UNTAC to supplement this analysis with other unique lessons learned.

The formulation of clear and achievable mandates, usually expressed in a UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), is a critical first step in any UN-directed peace operation. The mandate determines the appropriate military doctrine, whether it is traditional peacekeeping or “multidimensional peace operations,” and doctrine, in turn, determines the training and equipment of the force.

by

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Clear and achievable mandates depend, in turn, on:

- sufficient predeployment reconnaissance or “technical surveys”;
- professional force and logistic planning;
- professional analysis of resource requirements; and
- constant dialogue between military planners and policy makers, both in national capitals and UN Headquarters in New York.

There is a constant requirement for continuous dialogue between military planners and policy makers to avoid unintended “mission creep” where requirements quickly outstrip capabilities and resources. UNPROFOR’s mission change in Bosnia, from facilitating humanitarian assistance to protecting designated safe areas and enforcing heavy weapons exclusion zones, had profound doctrinal and resource implications.

Although in theory it may be possible to employ traditional peacekeeping with elements of peace enforcement in the same tactical context, in practice it is militarily difficult and politically sensitive. Peace enforcement is, by and large, incompatible with impartial, consensual peacekeeping.

In that units are organized and equipped differently for traditional peacekeeping and enforcement actions, units are not interchangeable, nor can they transition back to traditional peacekeeping once they cross the “Mogadishu line” into peace enforcement and are consequently perceived as a co-belligerent.

In multidimensional peace operations, such as those involving humanitarian and refugee assistance, electoral monitoring, developmental assistance, et al., planning must incorporate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, and ICRC into the earliest stages of planning and ensure their representation in field headquarters.

In all peace operations, well-trained, competent staffs are key to supporting the force commander. LTG Morillon was fortunate in deploying to Bosnia with the NATO NORTHAG Mobile Headquarters, a well-trained headquarters versed in NATO staff procedures. Unfortu-

nately, this is an exception to most UN field deployments, where ad hoc staffs are quickly thrown together and operations are further constrained by incompatibilities in force equipment and training status.

Adequate command and control arrangements are essential to prosecuting effective, multinational peace operations. Because UN peace operations will never achieve true “unity of command,” every nation will insist that its own national sovereignty “unity of purpose” can be achieved by full agreement on the mission (the UNSCR mandate) and the relevant doctrine (concept of operation). This understanding must be supplemented by adequate communications equipment and liaison parties.

Field headquarters need to be fully integrated civil/military headquarters with full NGO representation, to include integration of all United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs). UNMOs in Bosnia need to be integrated at the Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H) Command level, not at UNPROFOR Headquarters, Zagreb.

In that a large part of UNPROFOR’s logistic and other support is contracted, there is a requirement to better integrate Civil Affairs Officer support at the user command level (B-H Command rather than Zagreb or New York at the Field Operations Division).

Just as traditional peacekeeping and peace enforcement are usually incompatible in the same tactical context, use of NATO air (peace enforcement) coupled with UN forces on the ground (peacekeepers), incapable of defending themselves, is a recipe for discrediting the entire UN and NATO effort.

UN custody of Serb heavy weapons at UN collection points in both Croatia and Bosnia has proven to be a failure in that UN custody has lacked enforcement and has been more appearance than substance.

## ■ UNTAC

Most of the UNPROFOR planning lessons learned apply equally to UNTAC, although the “all means necessary” provision of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter used in Bosnia was not invoked by the United Nations in its UN-

directed peace operation in Cambodia. The following are Cambodia-unique planning lessons:

Although UNTAC was the broadest, most complex and expensive peace operation prior to UNPROFOR, planning suffered at the outset from a lack of coherent, synthesized intelligence data for predeployment planning. Three separate technical survey teams were dispatched with minimal coordination and useful output.

“Unity of purpose” and coherence of the force were greatly facilitated in the field by requiring all contributing nations to coordinate all messages to home capitals with UNTAC.

Planning for one of the multidimensional peace operation tasks election monitoring was inadequate, resulting in using UNMOs to fill the shortfall, hardly a preferred solution and one that required ad hoc, catchup training.

Predeployment planning did not identify the requirement for adequate headquarters and staff support, resulting in weaknesses in logistic and operational planning, as well as basic language problems.

UNTAC’s experience in Cambodia illustrated another key lesson for predeployment planning, that of anticipating and relieving the economic impact of a UN presence in a Third-World country. Black market activities and economic distortion of local economies with hyperinflation were unanticipated legacies.

In spite of detailed planning related to disarming militia and demobilizing combatants, the regroupment and cantonment regime based on voluntary participation did not work, particularly when basic ethnic/factional attitudes remained unchanged, and one or more sides saw the balance of forces being altered to their disadvantage.

## TRAINING

### ■ UNPROFOR

As previously mentioned, training must be keyed to the military doctrine relevant to the mandate and peace operation at hand. Specific lessons learned follow:

Predeployment training is essential on the role of force and accompanying Rules of Engagement (ROE), particularly in ambiguous situations of partial or sporadic consent. Although the line is inherently fuzzy, specific scenario-driven training must focus on those Chapter VII coercive uses of military force that do not erode UN impartiality or result in crossing the “Mogadishu line.” As mentioned earlier, such use of coercive force is both politically sensitive and militarily difficult. This author remains convinced that Chapter VII actions are incompatible with UN-directed, as opposed to UN-authorized, peace operations.

Training related to indigenous culture, history and religion, and expected UN conduct and discipline must be accomplished before deployment to enhance the impartiality of the force and ensure the highest standards of performance. Such common training would have reduced difficulties UNPROFOR experienced with Russian, Nigerian, and Ukrainian units.

Other mission-unique training, not routinely covered in general purpose forces’ annual training schedules, includes:

- arbitration/negotiation skills,
- manning check points/road blocks,
- planning/coordinating UNHCR convoys, and
- international legal/human rights guidelines.

### ■ UNTAC

In an extremely complex operation involving 32 national contingents, UNTAC clearly felt the need for professional, well-trained staff officers conversant in common military language and procedures. Language training in such a diverse environment was essential.

A common predeployment training program based on UN/NATO/national guidance is badly needed, particularly since UN force contributions are solicited more on regional balance than military efficiency or effectiveness. UNTAC saw wide disparities in training skills with training shortfalls most apparent in units from Bulgaria, Ghana, Tunisia, and Indonesia.

Demining and mine clearance were specific skills identified and required by UNTAC, given the wide proliferation of mines throughout Cambodia. Such skills were fully incorporated into a “Mine Clearance Training Unit” designed for indigenous personnel.

## EQUIPMENT

### ■ UNPROFOR

Identified equipment requirements are as follows:

Intelligence capabilities are key to any military operation, and although the UN has historically viewed intelligence as incompatible with the impartiality required in traditional peacekeeping, it has lately found greater support. In this regard, airborne platforms are key (e.g., AWACs, JSTARs or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)) to be confident that corralling or cantonment of heavy weapons is being accomplished, that separation criteria are being observed, or that forces are complying with no-fly zones.

Precision, rather than area, weapons are required to ensure the selective engagement of targets (the “smoking gun”) and to reduce collateral damage. A higher allocation of snipers per ground unit is preferred to enhance this selective engagement.

C<sup>4</sup>I equipment is always at a premium. In the current case of NATO air being used in support of UNPROFOR forces on the ground under “dual-key arrangements,” ground-to-air communications and target designation equipment are requirements not commonly found in most UN peace operations.

In that the “smoking gun” is frequently a mortar or artillery piece, artillery or mortar direction-finding radars are essential for selective target identification and engagement.

When first deployed to Croatia in 1992, lack of vehicle stocks and spare parts inhibited UNPROFOR’s achievement of full mission effectiveness. Common equipment stocks and other nonperishable items have been consistently

articulated as requirements for all UN peace operations, most recently covered in Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s *An Agenda for Peace*.

Concerning other organizational/equipment requirements, the following capabilities are enumerated to provide the required force flexibility:

- engineer units/equipment for nation-building and confidence restoration;
- intelligence capabilities (C<sup>4</sup>I);
- logistic units; and
- multimedia public affairs (PA) and psychological operations (PSYOPS) units to communicate UN intentions and objectives, both to the local nationals and to the warring factions themselves.

### ■ UNTAC

Three UNTAC-unique equipment requirements follow:

- As indicated earlier in the planning discussion, mine detection and mine clearance equipment were high-priority items, given the specific environmental situation in Cambodia.
- In that UNTAC was excluded from Khmer Rouge areas, insufficient C<sup>4</sup>I capabilities hindered knowledge of Khmer Rouge heavy weapons’ locations. In addition, there was little capability to assess Cambodian cheating on cantonment of such weapons.
- It took one year to establish Radio UNTAC. An initial PSYOPS capability would have greatly facilitated this important communications function.

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