

Technology and Peacekeeping: Too Good to Be True? | 10

Perhaps the best way for me to use the group's time is to offer the purely personal perspective of a National Security Council (NSC) staffer on some of the issues before us. Nothing I say should be construed as reflecting the Administration's position on peacekeeping, or its foreign policy in general.

This focus on my experience with United States intervention decisions is, I think, appropriate. Since from the point of view of the conference organizers our focus should be on the way U.S. forces should be trained and equipped to wage peacekeeping (or whatever precise term best describes the particular contingency under discussion), it is also appropriate because much of what is going to happen with respect to UN peacekeeping will be driven by U.S. policy, or rather the way U.S. policy is implemented.

I will begin by making a couple of brief observations about technology and peacekeeping, then describe where I think the United States is as a government on peacekeeping. Finally, I will explain why I think that it's probably too early to celebrate the widespread application of new, or even old technologies, to peacekeeping and close by taking questions. What I will try not to do is veer off into discussion of specific operations or dissect the UN's management of operations. My only objective is to set the stage for talking about technologies and peacekeeping.

For the purpose of the rapporteur's report, let me say at the outset that I think the U.S. military should procure whatever technologies it needs and can afford to fulfill the missions assigned by national command authorities. These missions do relate to peace operations. This is the answer of main concern of the conference organizers, at least from my parochial standpoint.

by

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The United States in the future will certainly be involved in small wars. These wars will involve combat in urban terrain and against enemies interspersed among civilians. It is under these conditions that the United States is self-deterred from using its firepower willy-nilly. The on-scene commander, especially the junior leader, needs as much information about his/her adversary as possible, to get inside his decision cycle and disrupt his operations.

With respect to the broader issue of technology intended for use in military interventions in peacekeeping or peace enforcement, the picture is a bit more complicated.

I should note here that I am not an expert about peacekeeping technologies. This is not just modesty. There is a point here. After Tony invited me to the conference, I attempted to read up on the subject of technologies and peacekeeping. The White House library had nothing on the shelf. In the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in the planning shop, I was referred to an officer who had contributed to the Army's new doctrine for operations-other-than-war, but who disclaimed any special knowledge of new technologies and peacekeeping. I called up RAND and spoke to a physicist who had tried to do a study of the subject, but could not get it published. Attempts to contact Jan Morris, a visionary in this area, failed. The most illuminating material I found was from the pen of Dick Garwin. My point is this: When a member of the NSC staff went to seek advice on new technologies and peacekeeping, the experts within the government who I am confident exist were entombed so deeply in the bureaucracy that their advice could not be solicited.

From the material I could locate, I concluded that technology for peacekeeping falls into two broad categories: monitoring, surveillance, and verification on the one hand, and tactical equipment on the other. Obviously there is some overlap between these two categories.

The use of advanced surveillance technology is valuable in the planning process before a peacekeeping operation is undertaken, especially where the theater of operations is not familiar.

How good is the infrastructure? What is port capacity? What about road capacity and throughput? Communications? What is the terrain like? Where are the principal cities and towns? Where are masses of refugees concentrated? Do the local combatants have strongholds, cantonments, weapons storage areas, or important communications nodes?

At least some of these questions can be answered with imagery, acquired by a variety of platforms. The information obtained thereby can help determine how large an intervention force is needed, what its lift and sustainment requirements will be, and in consequence, how much the intervention is likely to cost.

These sorts of capabilities also have obvious uses in confidence building and by this I mean instilling confidence in one party regarding the actions and intentions of the other and instilling confidence in each party regarding its respective capabilities to cope with attack. Such capabilities can also help determine the sources of violations in highly confusing situations; mortar and artillery fire-finding radars can under some conditions enable observers to know who shot John, especially where there are suspicions that John himself has shot John to implicate a rival party. Fire-finding radars are also good for force protection. Similar technologies are also indispensable in monitoring and verifying compliance with disengagement or truce arrangements, as we have heard regarding the Sinai and Golan disengagement, which are monitored by U-2 aircraft. Virginia Gamba has already given us an exhaustive list of the various confidence building measures and verification schemes. This list is well known from Helsinki and the work of the CSCE in Vienna that benefited from these technologies, so further elaboration is unnecessary.

As Admiral Howe points out in his paper, intelligence collection is equally necessary for protection of UN troops in the field. This kind of tactical intelligence is indispensable for preventing the smuggling of weapons into vulnerable areas and preventing ambushes. There are in many types of sensors, descendants of the Vietnam-era sensors grabbed off the shelf by E-Sys-

tems for the Sinai Field Mission that would meet this requirement quite well. Some of these are now in development, due in part to the interest of the special operations and low intensity conflict specialists in the U.S. Department of Defense.

Nor is there much dispute about the potential utility of less-than-lethal weapons, otherwise known as pre-lethal weapons, since many were conceived of as techniques to transfix prey before the kill. Although at the last conference I attended where this was an issue, one participant advised the conferees that “anything worth doing, was worth doing lethally.” I think we all agree that there are times when this is not a useful ethos.

For example, Admiral Howe would probably agree that if the Pakistani troops had had an alternative, non-lethal, means of coping with the Aidid-inspired crowds in Mogadishu, events might have played out differently for UNOSOM II.

Having said this, I will turn to my real theme: Constraints on the development and deployment of these new and not so new technologies. I see three related issues: money, feasibility, and the scope of the actual requirement. Of these three, funding is most important.

MONEY

Some new technologies are relatively cheap, while others, especially in the area of surveillance and monitoring, are less so. However someone must still buy them, maintain them, and be in a position to lend them to those who need them but cannot acquire them. Few countries have the money to do this; even the United States can play this role only in a limited way.

The mood in Congress toward anything related to peacekeeping, or the UN in general, is extremely negative. More broadly, the mood in Congress does not favor spending on the entire array of international programs at levels even close to those we have seen over the past decade. The relevant numbers are based on the one appropriations bill and one authorization bill that

have thus far been reported out of their respective subcommittees in the House.

United States spending on foreign programs will be cut by at least \$2 billion in FY 96, from a \$2.1 billion level of effort, which also happens to correspond to the Administration’s FY 96 request for these programs. The effect of a cut this size is heavier than it would appear. One fourth of the budget goes to Egypt and Israel, which neither the Administration nor Congress would wish to cut. One fourth goes to State Department salaries and infrastructure, which cannot, as a practical matter, be cut. The other fourth goes to programs that are unassailable for political or other programmatic reasons, such as disaster relief or antiterrorism assistance. This means that the \$2 billion is necessarily going to come out of an exceedingly small base. Competition among agencies responsible for implementing U.S. foreign policy will be sharp.

These deep cuts will pit those who want to fund multilateral programs, such as international financial institutions, against those who want to fund bilateral aid programs. Peacekeeping advocates within the Administration are likely to get caught in the crossfire.

By peacekeeping, I mean both assessed UN peacekeeping and voluntary peacekeeping. These are two separate accounts, the latter serving as a very flexible source of funds for use in contingencies. Unfortunately, this is likely to be cut back to a sum just large enough to pay for a handful of operations, including MFO (Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai) and UNFICYP (UN Force in Cyprus).

That this was going to happen was already apparent in the preparation of the President’s FY 96 budget request, which did not fully fund anticipated costs of the assessed debt and current operations. (This debt will grow by another \$1 billion if an UNPROFOR [UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia] withdrawal operation is conducted on an assessed basis.) There was simply not enough room under the top line permitted by the Administration’s budget overseers. We now see that this restrictive top line was

unrealistically generous toward international programs.

At the same time, the likely Republican nominee for the 1996 presidential race has cast peacekeeping as something fundamentally at odds with America's national interest. His colleague, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has expressed himself even more plainly. Both have sponsored legislation that would severely limit the Administration's flexibility in carrying out UN peacekeeping operations, both voluntary and assessed.

To make matters worse, negative public perceptions of UN involvement in the former Yugoslavia are increasing the political cost to the Administration of pushing hard for peacekeeping related programs as part of its legislative agenda. Indeed, presidential rivals have seized on the situation in Bosnia to demonstrate the unreliability of the UN and the infeasibility of its mandates. This attitude has colored congressional views of intervention in general, regardless of the institutional framework in which it is carried out. An especially revealing example of this trend is the opposition to staging a U.S. peacekeeping force on the Golan Heights, like the MFO. One would have thought that Congressional commitment to Israeli security would have guaranteed direct U.S. troop support for a peacekeeping arrangement that secured a Syrian-Israeli peace treaty. Yet prominent members of the foreign policy elite argue that the risks and costs to the United States are too high to justify the deployment of U.S. military personnel to the Golan.

I should add to this the fate of the Administration's request for supplemental Fiscal Year 95 appropriations to cover its expenses related to Haiti, the Cuban migrant problem, and Rwanda. The State Department and AID got nothing, although they had spent about \$200 million. The Defense Department received about \$2 billion, but had to take it on an offset basis, which required reprogramming the funds from other accounts. There was no new money. Since these donor accounts were dedicated to force readiness, the reprogrammings were transformed into a scandal by opponents of the Administration's

policies, thereby creating a vicious circle. Peacekeeping is creating a hollow army, and a hollow army cannot defend America's real interests.

These facts serve as an important cautionary tale. In the first instance, they mean that the UN could be in danger of bankruptcy in the foreseeable future, which would prevent questions about the availability and usefulness of new technologies. Second, they mean that agencies will be extremely reluctant to pick up the cost of developing, acquiring, and distribution to the UN or other countries these technologies for peacekeeping purposes. Third, they mean that Congress is likely to see such technologies, especially the less-than-lethal ones, as being attractive to the Administration. Mainly, because it appears to make intervention easier by removing the most significant moral and political barrier to combat, casualties. I think if we look at the situation honestly, we would ourselves conclude that this is perhaps the most troubling aspect of less-than-lethal weapons.

FEASIBILITY

By raising feasibility as an issue, I am asking just who is going to use this fancy stuff? Virginia Gamba has distributed questionnaires in which she polled peacekeeping countries on whether they used any sort of advanced technology in their participation in peacekeeping operations. They seem to show that only the industrialized countries made use of such technologies. Nor should this come as a surprise.

The fact is that armies cannot make effective use of advanced technologies unless they already have relatively advanced skills and the basic ability to cope with stressful and ambiguous situations. These are the kinds of situations that these technologies are designed for. Employment strategies also presuppose good command and control.

These skills are acquired through training and indoctrination; there can be no doubt that the differences between peacekeeping and combat imply the need for different kinds of training. For example, there are new tasks:

- Crowd control; administering humanitarian relief; validating compliance with accords; negotiating with parties who may be only as pure as the driven slush (as Dorothy Parker used to say); preventing refugee flows; and establishing or administering a code of justice. Tasks that warrant greater emphasis:
- Interaction with civilians; using loudspeakers; applying rules of engagement safely and sensibly; guarding things; liaison with foreign forces; counter-mine operations; applying laws of war; and providing convoy security.

Then there are the things that need to be re-learned:

- Use of force, how to seize and control buildings, set up static defenses, use of marksmanship, interaction with NGOs, and disarming of belligerents and civilians.

Some of this training is happening outside the Nordic countries at long last. Austria, Italy, and the United Kingdom are now doing it; Ireland, Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain are getting a good start. Poland and the Czech Republic are seeking to do this in the context of the Partnership for Peace. By and large, however, forces in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East, are not doing specialized training. (The exceptions in Latin America and the Pacific are Argentina, Australia, and Fiji.) In Africa and the Middle East, most armies simply do not train. They either operate or maintain static positions (i.e., are assembled in barracks). There is neither the tradition, nor cadre, nor money to conduct realistic training, which is fuel intensive and requires the expenditure of consumable items that often cannot be replaced.

The irony is that these countries represent the largest untapped resource of peacekeeping personnel; they also include some of the most heavily relied upon countries for peacekeeping operations. Yet is it reasonable to think that they are going to be able to absorb new technologies or approaches to military/peacekeeping activity when they do not train intensively for conven-

tional missions, let alone specialized missions that border on police work?

And if they are to be trained, who is going to do the training? Early in the deliberation process leading to the Administration's policy on peacekeeping operations, members of the Administration floated the idea of using a deactivated military base in the United States as a site for relatively large scale unit training for peacekeeping operations. The idea did not catch on because it was clear to the Defense Department that it would wind up paying for the continuing operation of a military facility that it had already chosen to close down to save money. After all, there was certainly going to be no money in the State Department budget for this activity.

If the United States is not going to conduct training necessary to exploit the utility of advanced technologies for peacekeeping, who will, especially given the cost not just of training but of sustaining the foreign forces being trained?

SCOPE OF THE REQUIREMENT

It is my impression that most peacekeeping operations work just fine without specialized equipment, although demining is probably an exception to this rule. As long as troops are disciplined, well trained and well led, they will handle themselves effectively. In Cambodia, for example, Bangladeshis fought company sized battles with Khmer Rouge and held their own, while Indian troops managed to quell election riots effectively.

Setting aside surveillance equipment for troop protection and truce monitoring, there is room to doubt that introducing new tools, given shortfalls in training, etc., will repay the cost and effort. In some ways, it even might be counterproductive. Susan Woodward alluded wisely to the possibility that the use of new technologies by peacekeepers might spur countermeasures that could raise the level of violence and undermine the operation in which the technology was introduced. New tools that peacekeeping troops would use are subject to imitation or defeat.

Under some conditions, the use of less-than-lethal weapons could signal a lack of resolve that could embolden an adversary and invite an increase in violence. The broader point here is that the use of these devices does not somehow make the issue, regarding the use of force by UN troops, disappear. The decision whether or not the UN is prepared to dominate the proverbial ladder of escalation will still have to be faced.

Another point to remember is that soldiers who are not extremely well trained, but who have become reliant on these tools, could find themselves in an exceedingly awkward situation when their gizmos do not work. Moreover, they may not want to do their jobs unless they have such tools. For example, Salvadoran troops trained by U.S. special forces personnel reportedly refused to patrol at night without night vision goggles

once they got used to wearing them. The inconvenient part of this arrangement was the frequency with which these devices failed to work.

On balance, the promise of technology for peacekeeping is high. We know this is especially true in the areas of verification, monitoring, intelligence collection, and crowd control. The latter activity needs special attention because, in many instances, peacekeeping operations devolve to police work. My conclusion, however, is that financial support for research, development and acquisition is lacking; troops drawn from outside a small group of industrialized countries would have a hard time making effective use of new technologies; and the need for most such technologies in most peacekeeping operations is probably limited.