

Organization and Planning Requirements: Lessons Drawn from Past Operations **2**

INTRODUCTION

It is an open question whether it is productive to draw conclusions from past operations for future thinking and planning. First, by the end of the cold war era there was an explosive development in the number of peacekeeping missions without a fundamental discussion about possible changes in force organization and methods for controlling the operation. Second, the nature of conflicts has changed drastically from an international character into a more interstate nature. Ethnic, religious, and national contrasts have created uncontrolled turbulence and violence. Third, UN finances exploded out of control and put extra pressure on the Secretariat to find other ways to organize and other means to save money.

Most of the peace operations from the past were established under the cold war era with their specific presuppositions. Trying not to be too hypothetical, I'll base my views on experiences with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) operation. UNIFIL was selected mainly for two reasons: first, this mission was established under the cold war era and second, it has slowly changed its modus operandi into a better defined concept of operation reflecting overall changes in the regional situation.

ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The conflict per se, the time factor, and available troops will together form the basis for the specific method of planning. With some few exceptions, the forces have been structured along functional lines and on the principle of minimal use of force. "Follow on Forces," operational, or strategic reserves have

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never been established by the UN—mainly because it was almost impossible to find troops.

If we go back and examine the way UNIFIL was established, the methodology employed was ad hoc.¹

The organizations are often structured with the following elements:

- Information/Intelligence
- Command and Control
- Operations
- Support

INFORMATION/INTELLIGENCE

The information element is often very vaguely defined and, consequently, vaguely executed.

The importance of exact and timely information-flow must again be underlined. In several instances, information collection and intelligence analysis were reduced to nearly useless activities. But these are critical requirements for a commander. Exact and timely information is essential to safeguarding your troops and knowing the actions taken by the belligerent.

This element of the organization has almost never been subject to studies and professional discussions. The sensitive nature of the information services is highly exaggerated—mostly for the lack of understanding.

In my mind, we can only succeed making “military information” real and effective through realistic planning and training. The training must cover tactical and strategic levels, and include political analysis.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

It is natural to move from the organization’s information-elements to command and control.

Like the main body of a UN-force, the command structure also reflects the multinational character of the mission. The complexity and sensitivity of peace-operations create unique situations at all command levels. International

media participation often increases the operation’s complexity, especially in the command and control arena. Time factors make the command structure sensitive to media-actions. A quick media action can affect the decision-making process. In other words, no commander wants his superiors learning of an adverse situation first through a media report. Consequently, the command and control structure must be equipped with the right high-speed communication technology.

Incidents occurring locally can assume a high profile in political terms. This fact underlines the importance of having headquarters personnel adept at accessing and analyzing information, supported by integrated data processing systems.

The staff procedures must be direct and quick. A disadvantage is that not all nations can participate in such a staff-environment.

OPERATIONS

In this examination, “peace enforcement” is excluded based on doctrine and two assumptions:

1. the “rules of engagement” and “use of force” are not adaptable to a peace-operation; and
2. to enforce peace is, in reality, to replace one conflict with another.

Intervention could often be used as a synonym for peace enforcement. Such operations are better left to groups of nations requested by the Security Council and based on a Security Council Resolution.

In this case, only peace operations are examined. A fundamental examination consists of three main elements:

1. the task,
2. analysis of the current situation and the desired situation, and
3. needed improvements and support.

Based on tasks given to present and past peacekeeping and peace-support missions, certain characteristic activities occur:

¹ For a systematic analysis of methods it would be useful to start with “An Agenda for Peace” and the description of “Wider Peacekeeping.”

- observing and reporting
- reacting
 - erect checkpoints
 - motorized patrols
 - foot patrols
 - blocking positions, on and off roads
 - intercept
 - tactical reinforcement (company/platoon)
- escorting
- defense
- covering actions
- tactical and general support
- training
- maintenance.

Further guidelines usually provided for the operations will be to keep the operation at the lowest possible cost with the lowest possible casualty rate. The guidelines are generally accomplished through the four following elements:

- observation and reporting,
- mobility,
- reaction and show of force, and
- protection.

A description of these elements will give a good picture of the current situation and consequently lead to our ideas about future requirements.

The detection capability today is limited. Equipment consists mainly of binoculars (day and night), surveillance radars and thermal vision equipment. Most of the observations are made from fixed positions.

It is easy to hide from UN observation posts, which means reduced UN control. UN checkpoints can easily be “outflanked,” due to the limited UN surveillance capacity. Today we compensate for the lack of modern equipment through manpower and, hopefully, being at the right place at the right time with a patrol. The cost-to-benefit ratio is very low. Analyses of reports given also show that the situations are often misunderstood or—worst case—there are no reactions at all.

Based on accurate reporting, the UN units and subunits are supposed to react adequately in the situation. The UN reaction should also reflect a balanced use of force and simultaneously avoid the possibilities of escalation. This requires skills and a very good understanding of the nature of peacekeeping and peacekeeping techniques.

Concerning protection, most efforts have been put into passive means. This is too expensive and contains too many tactical disadvantages. More mobile protective ideas create better tactical possibilities and protection for the local population.

ORGANIZATIONAL APPLICATIONS

To specify organizational requirements for future operations could lead to a colorful picture. However, let’s draw from the above some central ideas adaptable to modern organizations.

The normal modus operandi of a Security Council resolution develops into an operational concept, primarily described by its static nature—generally a network of positions able to observe, report, and react.

Changes are needed in the conceptual thinking that would allow a reduction in manpower (to make the operation less expensive), and also increase the operational capability of the force. These changes call for two main options:

1. Change to a more mobile concept. Where we have activities between parties, it is advisable to adjust from the traditional static model to a semi-mobile concept. This is important for two main reasons:
 - a. A mobile concept allows UN troops to patrol more with a greater presence in villages, farm-areas, along roads, in towns etc. This presence creates better contact between the local population and UN troops resulting in increased safety for the population and confidence in the UN operation.
 - b. Better controls with the belligerents. Knowing what is going on increases the possibilities of making the right decisions and reacting adequately to incidents. This again results in mutual confidence between the UN troops and the belligerents.

Two main factors must be introduced, namely: increased communication between the troops and the population, and impartial behavior.

2. Another method—maybe in combination with the previous—is to introduce modern military technology. One method of reducing manpower while also maintaining operational efficiency is to introduce a number of high technology aids. With proper training, these would more effectively allow the UN Force to observe and report activities in its area. At battalion level such equipment could include portable ground surveillance radars and ground sensors. For the Force as a whole consideration could be given to coastal radars, air surveillance radars, low light level television (LLTV), thermal vision equipment, ground sensors (seismic, acoustic, infrared, radio, laser technology, etc.) with all components combined into integrated systems. But, there are limitations on how far the technology can go.

The balance between moving troops on the ground and technology is delicate and must favor the presence of soldiers and the local population's confidence in the troops. How the organization will look on a piece of paper will vary with the national organizations and technical and educational composition of the Force.

So far we have been occupied with examining organizational requirements based on past and present models. However, future international crises and conflicts will probably change in nature and represent new challenges to the peace operations and their organizations.

To conclude this part a look into the future might unveil new elements and organizational thinking. Some analysts consider the old strategic elements; time, space and capacity to be too narrow a framework for modern thinking. Another limiting factor in present thinking is the concentration on the regional perspective. The problem—to find a balancing method between local conflict-solutions and regional ones—is a basic strategic and tactical challenge for the future. This change in conceptual thinking can be

examined in light of regional conflicts like the former Yugoslavia and the central Middle-East.

As we look into the future the basic strategic elements in any regional conflict would include:

- ground/sea,
- air,
- the ballistic missile sphere, and
- the environment.

There are also serious problems like genocide and other grave violations of international laws and conventions. An expression like “ethnic cleansing” should be abandoned because it is an ethnic impossibility.

The first two elements could be called “old” dimensions. The new elements reflect the need to deal with the ballistic missile sphere, and environmental problems.

The environmental question must not be underestimated, in particular the issues of water and pollution. These are elements that can pose a threat to one or more nations, and therefore have security implications. Therefore it is one of the elements that must be contained in any regional security mechanism (e.g., the need to protect and cultivate water resources will lead to either a high level of cooperation or confrontation among the region states).

Concerning the ballistic sphere, the last wars in the Middle East (Iran-Iraq, Kurdistan, Gulf War) have clearly shown that the traditional strategic concepts are almost obsolete. One important result is—as we approach the 21st century—that “strategic depth” has little meaning. Medium and long-range ballistic missiles have turned the rear areas into the front line. Based on these new realities, any overall security system must deal with such ballistic weapons. Arms control and arms reduction also become vital elements in the picture.

Security systems that might be put in place will serve both the local and the regional dimensions:

- a local mechanism, based on bilateral and even multilateral arrangements, and

- a regional mechanism, based on arrangements where each nation is put in a regional context.

The first local mechanism serves as a deterrent to possible aggression and surprise attacks. In this regard, a UN-force could fill a role as a monitoring force in the mechanism. In addition, the duties imposed by the regional mechanism will help enforce activities supporting the peace. This is because only regional arrangements will lead to a dismantling of negative or threatening power structures. And, further on, work toward disarmament and arms control programs. For example, a program can be carried out at the regional level to collect data on military activities and the environmental situation. This data can be reported to all parties involved, and thereby ensuring stability.

These kinds of arrangements will have to employ space satellites and operate in collaboration with the major powers.

Such mechanisms are probably the only way of ensuring a reasonable level of regional and national security in an era characterized by space technology and nuclear, chemical, and biological threats.

The UN appears to not have both the capability and capacity to operate such mechanisms. It is therefore another argument to work with the establishment of a General Staff at a central level with subordinated regional headquarters.

A vital issue in the force structure is the determination of which weapon systems will characterize the force. In the situation evaluation, the organizations and weapon systems that the belligerents possess and their ability to use the systems are essential to understand.

On the other hand, the structure of the UN force decides the belligerents' reaction to the UN's activities in the same way. The force's structure itself sends signals to the parties concerned.

The effectiveness of any peace operation necessarily depends on the degree to which the parties concerned are prepared to cooperate with the force, and the manner in which the commander

and his personnel are able—by tact and firmness—to carry out their mandate.

FORCE STRENGTH

When the decision about force structure has been made, the Secretary General decides the strength of the force. Logically, this decision is based on the mandate and the tasks of the proposed force.

The organization is not filled out without mentioning the medical component, helicopter capacity, logistic, and engineering components. There are additional support functions, such as humanitarian aid and the essential liaison to the parties concerned. A highly active liaison unit is vital in the confidence building activities; their credibility rests on their integrity.

From ideas concerning the organization, we now turn to the planning aspects.

PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

This examination will also point to the interaction between operational planning and force organization. During the operational planning, organizational requirements will fall out as part of the conclusions.

Before going into the planning procedure in more detail, we need to clarify the interactive mechanisms between peace operations and peacemaking activities. The interactions have three main dimensions: geographical, organizational, and operational. Any changes in one or more of these fields will cause political and/or diplomatic reactions—and vice versa.

Theoretically, we agree on the principle that no military action can be viewed as an end in itself. A pragmatic analysis of recent conflicts, and actions tells us this is not 100 percent true.

Military and civilian planners must therefore recognize and allow for the subordination of military operations to diplomatic and humanitarian activities and consider the likely effect of such subordination on military objectives. The political goal or goals constitute the principle criteria of the military plans.

REQUIREMENTS

The following applies to many important areas. It is expressed in general terms and is only meant as framework for the planning process.

Detailed guidance will always be developed for each aspect of the operation—both military and political. Detailed knowledge about the conflict concerned is vital.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The command and control structure derives from the actual situation. In addition to the military units' chain of command, an overall regional command should be identified (the force HQ)—all organized into a single chain of command. Military and civilian elements should be integrated.

A robust, high-performance communication system must be available before reconnaissance and deployment is undertaken. Most important is to create interoperability, common language definitions, common procedures, and common message text formats.

The communications (signal unit) between the Force Commander and the units should be provided by one nation.

Liaison should be established to the parties from the earliest possible stage in the establishing process. Liaison and coordination may require the force to deploy specialists to meet requirements for translating and interpretation. These elements are some of the cornerstones of confidence building measures.

Information and intelligence are also vital elements in peace operations. Liaison is one of the channels for military information. Consequently, the liaison activities have to be protected. Through intelligently organized liaison, the force will build its integrity and its confidence. Therefore it is important that the sponsoring nations and organizations do not interfere with information activities. These information activities should only involve the force and the single party of the conflict.

LOGISTICS

For smoothly running logistic services, one nation should have complete logistic responsibility. The common working language is critical, both internally for the force and to interface with the local populace. To the medical units this is vital, in order to build up the credibility of the medical services. Civilian hospitals can provide the higher echelon in the medical organization. In other fields, it is not recommended to use civilian contractors. The overall organization of the logistics must be tailored to each mission.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

An offensive—as opposed to a reactive—relationship with the media is needed (i.e., initiative, quick communication means, and adoption of media techniques to control information). However, reliable information is essential. A positive attitude toward the media will create a constructive atmosphere and lead to a more supportive role.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The establishment of standard operational procedures is extremely important. The rules of engagement, education, training, and exercises, and the use of force are the central chapters to emphasize in these procedures. These are unique for each force and are products of the mission, the force, and the parties involved in military actions.

THE LEGAL ASPECTS

The Force Commander should concentrate his work along three lines:

- internal, legal, and disciplinary aspects;
- international law, conventions, and regulations; and
- legal aspects of the relationship between the force and the host-nation.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Special consideration should be given to the funding issue, which must be resolved in the early stages of the planning process. The political authorities must establish a general policy on the source of funds for such operations. Operational commanders with budgetary responsibilities need to know the policy and, in addition, when funds will be made available. Due to the dynamic nature of peace operations, renewal of funds will probably be approved on a case-by-case basis. Funding requirements for assets used jointly by participating states and organizations need to be resolved as quickly as possible, preferably in advance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Tensions, rivalries and conflicts are germinating. Activities such as terrorism and mass migration will call for peace keeping, preventive deployment, or humanitarian relief operations.

One of the risks to peace operations is the reopening of hostilities in defiance of an agreed cease-fire by one or more of the parties involved. If peacekeeping forces are deployed in a buffer zone they face an imminent and direct risk.

Potential crisis areas comprise the full spectrum, from direct hostilities in certain developed regions to emerging political rivalries in more remote areas. In general, a mixture of political instability, economic failure or deadlock, and over-armament, could influence dormant border and ethnic disputes or form the basis for undemocratic expansionism.

Technological developments have affected peace operations and humanitarian activities considerably. Modern communications allow direct access to crisis areas. Developments within surveillance technologies allow continuous supervision of all kinds of terrain, troop movements, natural resources, etc. in given areas. All of this creates new challenges for mili-

tary planners. Forces put into action in peace operations should be tailored to each mission.

It can be dangerous to generalize from the lessons learned in earlier missions. It will therefore take extra efforts from the planners to extract the right elements from earlier missions when new organizations are made.

However, certain principles can be laid down as guidelines:

- a. deployment of peacekeeping forces is based on the consent of the parties directly involved;
- b. deployment does not imply specific attitudes toward the conflicting parties' rights, demands, or positions; and
- c. weapons are only used in self-defense.

To the extent that deployments deviate from one or more of these principles, the operation assumes a more enforcing role.²

In practical terms, the more the deviation from the above principles, the more there will be an overall increase in requirements for actual combat power and survivability. Survivability is determined by the unit size, equipment, operational concept, background training, and logistic support. However, the same elements will also characterize the force tailored for peace operations.

The elements of the organization create political signals. Military means and political activities are interactive mechanisms.

The readiness for peace operations are built on two pillars:

- a. the material standards within the deployed force; and
- b. the level of tailored training among officers and men for that particular peace operation.

“The professionals in violence” must put a lot of work into peacekeeping techniques. Their professionalism will be measured against the training standard established for this particular job.

Success will be built on credibility and confidence.

² Reference the United Nations Charters' Chapters VI and VII.