

## UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: NEW TRENDS (Concept Note)

On 11 June 2014, the Russian Federation as President of the UN Security Council will be holding an open debate: "UN Peacekeeping Operations: New Trends". The event, bringing together Security Council members, a broad range of Member States, including troop- and police-contributing countries, and the UN Secretariat, is expected to produce a vivid exchange of views on one of the most pressing and relevant areas of the UN activities. The UN Secretary-General is expected to brief the Council.

The evolution of approaches to UN peacekeeping is due primarily to the changing nature of conflicts that the Organization has to deal with. Today, unlike in the era of "classical" peacekeeping, the vast majority of crises that necessitate the deployment or extension of mandates of UN peacekeeping operations are armed conflicts of non-international character also often referred to as internal or intra-State (usually in the context of confrontation between government forces and non-state armed actors). These conflicts break out for a wide variety of reasons and complicating factors, but usually have one thing in common - the key to their settlement lies in national reconciliation. One exception is the presence of terrorist organizations and transnational armed groups which may be benefiting from a vacuum of state authority but which may have little or no grievances or interests within that country where they are operating.

While peacekeeping operations have deployed often to address these intra-State conflicts, what is new is that they now often have no choice but to operate where there is little or no peace to keep, where "blue helmets" may be confronted by unconventional threats and higher security risks. As a rule, there is a prevailing view that under such circumstances broader international engagement could provide at least a push towards stabilization. At the same time, there is an increased need to take into consideration the readiness of troop-contributing countries to face such elevated risks. In addition, UN "blue helmets" are often deployed in parallel with foreign military forces already operating on the ground (both from national and regional organizations) and regional or international envoys or specialized missions. This creates additional challenges as well as opportunities for closer partnerships.

1. One of the milestones for UN peacekeeping along this path was the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2098 in March 2013, which extended the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC and established an Intervention Brigade in its structure empowered to use preemptive force and conduct targeted offensive operations. A short time later, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2100 establishing the peacekeeping operation in Mali. The UN Security Council, taking into consideration specific threats in that country, authorized MINUSMA to use all necessary means to fulfill its mandate, including to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to key population centers. One should also bear in mind earlier and quite common mandates, which envisage the use of "all necessary means/actions". In some cases peacekeepers used force at a larger scale - UNOCI's posture under UNSC Resolution 1933 is a relevant example.

These new developments in UN peacekeeping may seem to be in greater tension with and, in some cases, may seem even to run counter to the basic principles of peacekeeping.

That is why this issue should be reflected in UN documents on peacekeeping agreed by Member States. So far, we are dealing with a fragmented approach towards an increasing trend.

The UN, represented by its Secretariat and Member States, particularly troop-contributing countries, will inevitably face the task of elaborating a clear and all-encompassing position on a wide range of issues related to "robust" operations, as well as assessing their effectiveness and impact on the image of the Organization. This, in particular, relates to a clear substantiation and a strong understanding of missions' goals and posture (e.g. "what side to take?", "how to ensure rigorous efforts to advance national reconciliation?", etc.). When one of the parties to an intra-State conflict is the government, the tensions between the principle of consent and the principle of impartiality become very difficult to manage as seen in some missions today. The definition of precise and timely developed strategies of stabilization and military concepts, scope of use of force, effective leadership and command and control, generation of necessary forces and assets, including training of "blue helmets" and their logistics are critical. It is necessary to understand new challenges that will inevitably arise for the UN personnel, including humanitarian staff, working on the ground in parallel with PKOs.

Under new conditions, the issue of peacekeepers' security becomes more acute, especially in situations when threats to them come from non-governmental armed groups. There is a serious concern about possible increase in the toll of troops as a result of their direct participation in hostilities (though so far according to statistics the death toll remains largely attributable to self-defense scenarios). Member States and the UN Secretariat will need to have a serious conversation to clarify issues related to the loss of special protected status of peacekeepers under international humanitarian law and legal aspects of their responsibility for its violation.

Besides that peacekeepers must be able to have proper equipment, perimeter security, vehicles, etc. that permit them to operate safely, and this may have resource implications for consideration by appropriate bodies.

2. To a certain extent the issue of new "ambitious" mandates includes such aspects as operational and technical strengthening of UN peacekeeping operations, including through the use of high-tech equipment. Especially with regard to evolving understanding that advanced technologies (including unmanned unarmed aerial vehicles (UUAVs), latest medical and engineering equipment) can contribute to a better implementation of mandates and the enhancement of the safety and security of personnel as well as situational awareness. Such positive elements were highlighted during a recent briefing by DPKO to the Security Council.

However, along with the overall positive attitude to the idea of "modernizing" PKOs, debates inside the UN on some specific new technologies, in particular UUAVs, exposed a number of issues in the political, legal and financial areas. There are questions regarding control and ensuring the confidentiality of information collected. The deployment of UUAVs in the DRC has also brought to light problems related to the timing, operational and cost effectiveness, as well as relevant human resources matters. The Security Council in its letter to the Secretary-General (S/2013/44) noted that the trial use in MONUSCO of "external equipment imaging/electronic equipment and associated analysis capabilities, notably surveillance capability, such as that provided by unmanned aerial systems, to enhance situational awareness, if available, will be on a case-by-case basis, and without

prejudice to the ongoing consideration by relevant UN bodies of legal, financial and technical implications of the use of unmanned aerial systems".

As of today, such a discussion in the relevant UN intergovernmental bodies is very fragmentary, and it is time to develop a balanced UN approach, including in the form of their regulatory documents.

There is no doubt that all UN peacekeeping operations must have necessary resources, including human and technical, to implement their mandates. One of the most actively developing models is the temporary transfer of personnel and equipment between missions in case of gaps, for example due to a deterioration of the situation. In some instances, this mechanism has proved its effectiveness. However, inter-mission cooperation should not affect the implementation of each of mandates, the security of "blue helmets" and the level of budgetary discipline. This is a question on the willingness of contributing countries to provide their capabilities to perform tasks in more complex or varying situations.

3. Contemporary multidimensional missions' mandates become more and more complex and include, along with tasks to restore security in host countries, abundant peacebuilding activities - up to comprehensive restoration of statehood in the broadest sense of the word. Some recent experience poses a question whether the UN is capable to take on the whole range of tasks simultaneously - both from political and resources points of view, especially in cases when the conflict develops cyclically with periods of rapid deterioration in the security area. That is why in some cases there is a need to set priorities in mandates - through the sequencing of tasks implementation - in order not to let such overloads on missions undermine their ability to maintain security, promote political process and national reconciliation.

Abovementioned aspects do not constitute, of course, a complete list of new trends in the UN peacekeeping, but perhaps they are the most relevant and affect its qualitative transformation. The fragmented nature of intergovernmental political and legal framework on these issues dictates the need for Member States to continue active discussions on the development of appropriate doctrines, elaboration and adoption in the foreseeable future of regulatory documents based on an analysis of lessons learned.

There is no doubt that the central role in the formulation by Member States of such decisions, as well as guidance to the Secretariat on the general issues of peacekeeping, belongs to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly. Logistical, budgetary and personnel matters should be addressed in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Fruitful discussions in those bodies are necessary for the Security Council to make informed decisions when elaborating individual mandates for peacekeeping missions, while taking into particular consideration the views of troop-contributing countries and the situation on the ground.

An inclusive interaction within the UN General Assembly and the Security Council will provide the Secretariat with necessary guidance, as well as strengthen the strategic partnership in the UN peacekeeping, whose main advantage is its universal character and unique legitimacy.

The advisability of an outcome document, if any, will be determined based on the results of the upcoming open debate.