

Peacekeeping Under Strain: Coping with Evolving Contradictions?

Tim Guldemann

Introduction: the nature of peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is a lifesaving undertaking. It has contributed to reducing the number of ongoing wars in the last 15 years and is an essential instrument for fostering global peace and stability. However, peacekeeping is an activity full of contradictions. Many of these cannot be avoided, but can be acknowledged in order to improve understanding and learning.

Worldwide, almost 200,000 soldiers, police officers and civilians are serving as peacekeepers. They are sent by international organisations and governments into different conflict areas, with the aim of making the world safer. Since the end of the Cold War, such peace interventions have grown massively into a complex global undertaking. The drivers of this increase in peacekeeping have been both a new international consensus and high expectations addressed to the United Nations (UN), as the leading international body for securing global peace.

The engagement of the international community through peacekeeping activities, however, has often been decided quickly and with unclear mandates, especially in the early 1990s. This resulted in compromises on how and where to engage, which inevitably led to discrepancies between the objectives and the impact of certain operations. Because of this, the concept of peace interventions has undergone a difficult learning process over the last two decades. This process is analysed in this article in the following three phases.

- **The Expansion after the Cold War:** During its massive expansion after 1989, traditional peacekeeping was overstrained by new tasks, for which it had not been designed. Its failure provoked a re-assessment, leading to a change of approach.
- **The new approach of Peacebuilding:** The new, more ambitious approach combines traditional peacekeeping with instruments of political intervention intended to stabilise the political and social environment that had caused or allowed conflict. However, in this new political role, peace interventions have abandoned their former neutrality and created a series of new contradictions.
- **The impact of the global economic crisis:** As well as affecting the overall conditions for peace interventions, financial and political restrictions will curtail the future engagement of Western governments. At the same time, peace intervention generally may be increasingly questionable, as a largely 'Western' project. For peacekeeping to be more widely accepted and supported – and therefore more effective – wider international cooperation is necessary.

The UN and other international actors undertake a wide range of activities to foster peace and security in different conflict areas around the world. Among these activities, collective peace interventions account for by far the largest part of total personnel and costs.^[1] Apart from 'conflict prevention', intended to keep 'tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflicts', the UN defines four other types of peace activities, as follows.

- **Peacemaking** includes 'diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement'. It 'may also be undertaken by unofficial and non-governmental groups or by a prominent personality working independently'.
- **Peace enforcement** aims to re-establish peace and security by legal force in a conflict, provoked by aggression. Offensive military force has been legalised only twice – in Korea (1953) and against Iraq

(1991). In defending a ceasefire agreement, UN missions in various situations have applied military force, extending beyond self-defence.

- **Peacekeeping** is ‘designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements’.
- **Peacebuilding** ‘involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development’.

These definitions are not generally accepted, and they do not make clear distinctions between the different types of peace activities. Sometimes, as also in this article, ‘peacekeeping’ is used as the overall term for the latter three types of peace operation. In reality, field missions operate based on mandates, which combine elements of different activities. Missions are also generally not clearly focused, [2] sometimes leaving a grey area between peace enforcement and peacekeeping.

Table 1: Foreign personnel deployed in peace operations, May 2009[3]

	Military	Police	Civilian	Total
UN missions	82,000	10,000	9,000	101,000
NATO missions	73,000	25	0	73,025
EU missions	3,700	2,100	880	6,680
African regional organisations	4,250	140	0	4,390
OSCE missions	30	0	515	545
Others	7,000	370	350	7,720
TOTAL	169,980	12,635	10,745	193,360

The figures in Table 1 reflect the structure of international peace missions. More than half of total peacekeeping personnel are under direct UN command; NATO accounts for more than one third; the EU, the African Union and the OSCE together contributed only 6% of the total peacekeeping personnel. Peace operations are mostly military: of the total personnel in Table1, 88% are troops, only about 5% are civilian mission members, and the rest are police officers. The Multinational Force in Iraq, and local employees (which account for about 13,000 staff members of all UN missions alone)[4] are not included in this overview.

Since the end of the Cold War, peace operations have greatly increased in size and number, as exemplified by UN activities.[5]

- During the Cold War, the UN’s traditional peacekeeping operations remained stable at a relatively constant level of around 10,000 UN peacekeepers. They were even fewer between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s.
- Between 1992 and 1995, there was an eight-fold increase in UN personnel to over 80,000. In the first decade after 1989, the UN started more than twice as many peace operations as it had in the previous four decades combined.
- Radical contraction followed, in the second part of the 1990s, with UN peacekeepers falling below 20,000, reflecting the serious setback in these operations.
- Since the turn of the century, a new expansion has been taking place, to today’s total of over 100,000 UN peacekeeping personnel.

This quantitative development reflects how international peacekeeping has reacted to increased demand, and to major problems in a difficult learning process.

Overstrained traditional peacekeeping after the Cold War

Until 1989, UN peacekeeping operations were required to maintain a neutral role regarding the conflict parties. Mostly, the task of the missions was, and in some cases still is, to keep conflict parties apart, to monitor the respect of a ceasefire at a demarcation line, and to report on adherence to the ceasefire. Traditional peacekeeping was guided by four principles:

- the consensus of the conflict parties on the operation's mandate,
- the operation's strict neutrality between the conflict parties,
- restriction of the use of force to self-defence,
- the mission's operation under direct UN command.

The concept was successful under Cold-War conditions in making the best of the UN's limited space for manoeuvring. In 1988, the UN even received the Nobel Peace Prize for these operations.

However, this kind of peacekeeping also contributed to the freeze of conflicts, sometimes for decades, instead of resolving them – as in Cyprus, where the UN has been stationed for over four decades. Peacekeeping missions can also stabilise illegally created new borders by monitoring respect of these borders – as with the EU observation mission in Georgia. Whenever a conflict erupts anew, the mere presence of peacekeepers cannot prevent open violence. In late 2008, the biggest UN Mission was MONUC, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a staff of 20,000, that is a fifth of all UN peacekeepers worldwide. It could not hinder the rebels in Eastern Congo from advancing into the city of Goma, committing massacres among the civilian population and compelling a quarter of a million people to flee the area. In such situations, the UN faces a choice either of taking sides – in this case with the government – or of becoming an irrelevant and ignored observer.

Traditional peacekeeping was challenged fundamentally after the end of the Cold War. The end of communism did not bring peace to the world. On the contrary, the number of open conflicts immediately rose and reached a peak of 55 wars in 1992,^[6] and demand increased for peacekeeping operations. There was strong international consensus, not since equalled in this form, in favour of launching large-scale peacekeeping operations. For the first time, the Security Council entrusted the UN with its original role of guarantor of world peace, but increased demand and political support also raised expectations addressed to the UN. At the same time, modern conflicts have been growing increasingly difficult to manage through external interventions. Non-state actors, not accountable to any government, play an increasing role. Violence is used more readily and humanitarian rules are respected less and less. Moreover, failing states and escalating conflicts are mutually reinforcing.

The UN reacted with new ambitions for its leading role in international security. In the period between 1990 and 1994, UN peacekeeping operations expanded massively. The euphoria was reflected in UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace*, adopted in June 1992, which went as far as proposing a permanent UN army available to the Security Council.^[7] The *Agenda* considers a UN response by such forces to outright aggression 'not likely to be available for some time to come'. However, for restoring a ceasefire, it recommends 'that the [Security] Council consider the utilisation of peace enforcement units [...which] would have to be more heavily armed than peacekeeping forces' and 'be under the command of the Secretary General'.^[8] However, this type of intervention would be a provisional measure (according to Article 40 of the UN Charter) and as such it 'shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of the parties concerned'. In fact the *Agenda* tries to overcome the dilemma of traditional peacekeeping by proposing peace enforcement, assuming that this would be possible by consensus of the parties involved.

However, 'peace enforcement by consensus' is a contradiction in terms. The instrument of peacekeeping, traditionally designed for a consensus environment after a conflict, was overstrained in the early 1990s. Peacekeeping mandates could not be extended to include the new role necessary for coping with newly

erupted or ongoing conflicts. Instead of fulfilling the new role as guarantor of global peace under the new conditions, the UN failed. This led to a crisis of UN peacekeeping, particularly caused by its failure in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda from 1993 to 1995. This failure also weakened the overall reputation of the UN.

In Somalia, after Spring 1992, the UN succeeded in assuring the humanitarian food supply, but could not bring the civil war under control. After the violation of the ceasefire, the Security Council empowered foreign forces under the UN mandate to proceed against General Adid, one of the conflict's party leaders. By doing so, the UN departed from its impartiality in the conflict. UN Pakistani troops provoked an escalating conflict with Adid's militia. Early in October 1993, the US intervened against General Adid's position. The operation ended in a disaster, leaving over 800 dead (500 civilians, 300 Somali militants and 18 US soldiers). [9] This resulted in strong reluctance in Washington towards further engagements in UN missions.

In Bosnia, UN peacekeeping lost its credibility when 'UN Protection Zones' could not be protected. On 16 April 1995, the UN Security Council had guaranteed the security of the people in Srebrenica and soon afterwards extended this guarantee to five other cities, without receiving the necessary military capacity from member states for fulfilling these obligations. Consequently, UN peacekeepers from the Netherlands became powerless observers of Serbian militias deporting 7000 to 8000 Bosniaks and killing them afterwards. This failure to act led to the downfall of the Dutch government.

In Rwanda, the UN mission had 2300 peacekeepers and military observers when the genocide against members of the Tutsi tribe began. The mission was informed about Hutu violent intentions, urged for more troops and wanted to seize arms caches. However, UN headquarters^[10] forbade the mission to use force except for self-defence. After ten Belgian UN soldiers were killed, the UN withdrew the largest part of its mission, leaving the Tutsis without protection. Within 100 days in 1994, Hutu militias killed between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsis.

The failure of these missions caused general disillusion with UN peacekeeping, including in the inter-national public opinion. Member states became very reluctant to contribute troops and civilian personnel to such missions. This setback contributed to the abrupt end of Boutros-Ghali's first mandate, and he was replaced by Kofi Annan in February 1996. Annan substantially reduced UN field missions in the following years: By 1998, the UN peacekeeping budget was reduced to almost a quarter of what it had been five years before.

A commission, mandated by Kofi Annan and led by the former Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi, outlined the strategy for future UN peacekeeping. The *Brahimi Report* was critical of UN-operations that 'did not deploy into post-conflict situations, but tried to create them'.^[11] The commission reaffirmed three of the traditional principles of UN peacekeeping: the consensus of the conflict parties, the mission's impartiality and apparently the use of force for only self-defence. However, on the crucial point of impartiality, it went beyond the traditional approach:

Impartiality for United Nations operations must therefore mean adherence to the principles of the Charter: Where one party to a peace agreement clearly and incontrovertibly is violating its terms, continued equal treatment of all parties by the United Nations can in the best case result in ineffectiveness and in the worst may amount to complicity with evil. No failure did more to damage the standing and credibility of United Nations peacekeeping in the 1990s than its reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor.^[12]

In this way, Brahimi's commission recommended going beyond traditional peacekeeping and stressed the 'need for robust doctrine and realistic mandates [...] It means that mandates should specify an operation's authority to use force'. In other words, the commission implies the need to go beyond mere self-defence. Otherwise, it would not be necessary to specify:

bigger forces, better equipped and more costly but able to be a credible deterrent. In particular, United

Nations forces for complex operations should be afforded the field intelligence and other capabilities needed to mount an effective defence against violent challengers.^[13]

Like Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda*, the Brahimi report argues for a shift in peacekeeping in the spectrum ^[14] from basic peacekeeping to the very challenging tasks of enforcement operations or humanitarian interventions. Between these two poles, an intermediate area can be defined as 'stabilisation operations'.

- **Basic peacekeeping**, as in its traditional form, can count on the full consent of the conflict parties and consists mainly of monitoring a ceasefire, establishing a buffer zone between the belligerents, supervising troop withdrawals, conducting inspections and providing security for the monitors.
- **Stabilisation operations** have to deal with some resistance and extend the operation into the field of securing a stable environment by providing protection of borders, government buildings, politicians, election activities and humanitarian services. Such operations assist also in mine clearance and disarmament activities; they have to deter the outbreak of violence and to support local police in the event of riots.
- **Enforcement operations** need a robust mandate to deal with eventually widespread resistance. In addition to basic peacekeeping and stabilisation, enforcement also includes complex stability tasks such as to: guarantee security to populations at risk and provide them with humanitarian aid under difficult conditions, forcibly disarm belligerents and disruptive elements, conduct sanctions and embargo operations, arrest war criminals, control air space and waters, and maintain its own, robust quick-reaction forces.

Member states were very reluctant to concede to the UN robust mandates and refused to send their soldiers for operations under UN command. The alternative to enhanced UN peacekeeping for coping with the demand for robust action was a new division of labour, which actually took place. Instead of working to extended UN mandates, the UN kept the classical tasks of peacekeeping by lightly armed peacekeepers and concentrated on the civilian and police fields. For more complex or challenging military tasks, the Security Council mandated individual states or NATO. This shift in international peacekeeping doctrine – also called 'peacekeeping by proxy' – went in parallel with a shift in the military doctrine of major states, above all the US. In October 2008, a new regulation for the US army ('Stability Operations FM 3-07') put operations for stabilising a crisis area at the same level as traditional combat operations.

The advantage of the division of labour is the direct engagement of participating states or NATO in military peacekeeping, for which they assume the political responsibility. However, a successful division of labour, if political and military operations are deployed in parallel (as in Kosovo in the case of UNMIK and KFOR), depends on functioning cooperation between the two missions, each of them reporting to different headquarters. Moreover, outsourcing more robust tasks to individual states or NATO deprives the UN of its direct control over the operation. Instead, it allows individual states, such as the US, enhanced influence in the political development on the ground.

The second consequence of the peacekeeping crisis in the early 1990s, in addition to the new division of labour, was a strategic shift towards peacebuilding strategies to resolve conflict and foster political stability. This change was also reflected in the Brahimi Report, which recommends a 'doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police, other rule of law elements and human rights experts in complex peace operations to reflect an increased focus on strengthening rule of law institutions and improving respect for human rights in post-conflict environments'. ^[15]

Contradictions of peacebuilding interventions

The step from traditional peacekeeping to a broader approach including peacebuilding was a substantial change of paradigm. Whereas peacekeeping during the Cold War was committed 'to abstain from any political activity in the hosting country', ^[16] peace operations now lead to the opposite, and they interfere in the country's political and social life. Modern peacekeeping therefore abandons its previous neutrality,

which before could still be upheld for the supervision of a ceasefire. The new approach pursues a political project, with two important implications.

First, peacebuilding defines the political contents of the project. All peacebuilding interventions of the last decade share the twin goals of democracy and market economy. This is in itself a Western project. It can be shown that democracies are generally less involved in interstate and intrastate conflicts. However, in some countries democratisation, promoted above all by externally supported efforts to push for elections in a series of countries, has had destabilising effects. This was the case in Cambodia, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda and Bosnia. [17]

Second, the driving forces for peace operations are Western governments. They carry the biggest part of the financial burden, commit the biggest number of troops and implement the policy. They have a majority among the veto powers in the UN Security Council and a leading role in the peace operations themselves. NATO operations are by definition an exclusively Western domain.

The new form of peace operations, combining peacekeeping with active peacebuilding efforts, has been realised above all in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Kosovo, following Western military intervention. NATO assures security; the UN, the OSCE, the EU and other actors build up state institutions, strengthen democracy, promote the return of refugees, and support minorities as well as the respect of human rights.

Such peacebuilding, however, implies direct political intervention, from outside, into the political and social life of another state. Hence, peacebuilding is based on political influence, because it could not otherwise be realised through the consensus relationship of traditional peacekeeping. There are different expressions of power, directly or indirectly used by Western governments to influence local partners so that they deliver what the international side expects from them.

- **Power relationship:** In many cases the mere relationship of power between the two sides assures the expected behaviour on the local side. The peace agreement at the end of the war in Yugoslavia was signed at US air force base Dayton, Ohio, an impressive setting that had an impact on the signing partners.
- **Access to international cooperation and assistance:** Granting or refusing access to international organisations, such as the Council of Europe or the EU, or to their assistance programmes, or to assistance from the IMF and the World Bank, is used to influence local actors. In the Balkans, the EU has applied this ‘sticks and carrots’ approach extensively. Only after Croatia had handed over the indicted war criminal, Ante Gotovina in December 2005, were EU membership negotiations initiated. In Indonesia, pressure from the IMF obtained the necessary concessions from Jakarta in 1999 for resolving the East-Timor conflict.
- **Political positioning:** There are conflicts in which the West has had direct influence and has worked towards establishing a new government, ready to cooperate in the international peace project. In Afghanistan, president Karzai was put in power by the Bonn Conference in December 2001; only afterwards he was democratically endorsed.
- **Sovereign rights:** There are models for peace settlements in which the West keeps sovereign rights to intervene in local politics. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina has special rights for implementing the civilian part of the Dayton peace agreement. He can overrule political decisions and even dismiss local politicians. In Kosovo, following the declaration of independence in February 2008, the International Civilian Representative, according to Annex IX of the ‘Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement’, [18] shall ‘take corrective measures to remedy... any actions taken by Kosovo authorities that’ he ‘deems to be in breach of this Settlement... or spirit of this Settlement... this may include... annulment of laws or decisions adopted by Kosovo authorities’; he also ‘shall have the authority to sanction or remove from office any public official’.
- **Protectorate:** A more explicit form of external domination is the establishment of a protectorate. This was the case in Kosovo where, based on Security Council Resolution 1244, the actual sovereignty was handed over to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), as

the head of an interim administration. The stabilisation model consisted of the gradual establishment of local provisional institutions, to which more and more administrative responsibilities were transferred until a political settlement could be achieved.

Peacebuilding efforts have been massively expanded during the last decade, and peace operations are increasingly confronted with new problems and contradictions, which did not exist in traditional peacekeeping. The new difficulties are mostly consequences of the political interference from outside. The following list summarises six key problems, but is not exhaustive.

1. Exit strategy

If a mission is deployed with a clearly defined goal and end-date, agreed upon by the conflict parties, the political commitment is foreseeable and the conditions for the cooperation with local partners are clear. In January 1996, the UN assumed the transitional administration of Eastern Slavonia until the region was integrated into independent Croatia on 15 January 1998, as had been previously decided. However, if an end-date for the international commitment depends on the success of its stabilising and rebuilding activities – such as in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan – the political risk is far greater. Here, the international actors themselves assume responsibility for the success of an open-ended project, and can hardly afford the high political costs of failure.

The project can succeed only if the fragile equilibrium of successful peacekeeping and successful peacebuilding can be maintained. This, however, requires a strong military and peacebuilding engagement from the outset, otherwise the process can fall victim to a vicious circle. In Afghanistan, the military engagement at the beginning was weak. Worsening security conditions have seriously jeopardised the development of civilian capacity. At the same time, setbacks in peacebuilding efforts, especially in the judiciary and police, hampered social development, affected internal stability and increased conflict potential. This vicious circle has now provoked fundamental doubts about the Western approach in Afghanistan. The problem cannot be resolved by a mere increase of foreign troops, now provided by the US but refused by most European states. In Bosnia, although security is stabilised, the international presence finds itself in a deadlock; the Dayton accord 14 years ago did not foresee the exit strategy.

2. Institution-building prejudices state-building

If the political solution to a conflict is not defined at the start of international involvement, it remains the task of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding implies the build-up – also through elections – of public power structures, which can hardly be defined without prejudging the political solution. Leaving the political solution unclear can provoke new conflicts, as with the riots in Kosovo in March 2004, five years after the international intervention. The riots forced the international side to accelerate institution-building in view of the envisaged political solution of a supervised independence, as defined by the Ahtisaari Plan. [19] In March 2007, the plan failed to find international consensus. Institution-building by international actors (UN, OSCE [20]) had contributed to local expectations for independence. Western governments had actively promoted independence to the point that they in the end could pretend that there no other solution for securing stability than independence, declared in February 2008.

3. Stability versus rule of law

Peacekeeping enhancing internal security is confronted with the following dilemma: to stabilise the situation, it has to make deals with partners who, during the conflict or afterwards, have committed serious crimes or are suspected to have done so. In Afghanistan, the West felt obliged to work closely with brutal warlords in order to foster security. In Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj became a strong partner of the international actors, although he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and then acquitted due to lacking testimonies. Stability

considerations can hinder subsequent approaches respecting the rule of law on drugs (as in Afghanistan) or organised crime (as in Kosovo), undermining the credibility of the international intervention.

4. Foreign standards versus empowerment

Political stability can become sustainable only if local ownership is assured, that is if local structures are developed to empower local partners to take responsibility for the process. However, international missions set standards and benchmarks and make empowerment dependent on their fulfilment. By doing so, they often delay the process: above all, big missions are inclined to keep control; and bureaucratic structures tend to perpetuate themselves.

The Council of Europe mission monitoring the Kosovo elections in 2007 acknowledged their quality but criticised the OSCE for having failed in the empowerment beforehand, and for having done too much in running the elections. If laws are written by foreign experts, as in Kosovo, they not surprisingly comply with international standards but their implementation is hampered by social reality and traditions.[21] If peace operations promote rule of law and democracy in traditional societies – for instance with quotas for female candidates in elections – they accelerate modernisation, but provoke conflicts with traditional elites. In Afghanistan, the Taliban and others oppose efforts for granting equal rights for women, denouncing this interference as ‘Western cultural imperialism’.

5. Lack of democratic legitimacy of foreign interventions

Local people may welcome foreign presence initially, for assuring peace and security. However, the foreign presence is increasingly questioned, the longer it lasts. Foreigners who promote democracy also execute power, for which they have no democratic mandate from the population concerned. This situation becomes critical in elections, promoted or organised by foreigners, when the ‘wrong’ candidates are elected. If the internationals have the authority, they can simply dismiss such politicians, as in the case of the hardliner Poplasen, elected in 1998 in Bosnia.

6. Cultural gap and bureaucracy

Peace operations mostly take the form of larger missions, with hundreds or thousands of personnel. People from different countries are imported to work within a cultural environment different from their own, and in many cases unknown to them. Institutions engaged in peacebuilding are large, and so have intrinsic bureaucratic problems. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon addressed such problems at a meeting of UN managers in August 2008:

When you are trying to do something, which is tough, when you are trying to change the status quo, people will resist... They are thinking of their own position or benefit, not the larger interest of the UN... Here in the UN, unfortunately, I see people too often putting their own interest first... I see too many turf fights, too much intramural wrangling, too much protectiveness of the status quo... We waste incredible amounts of time on largely meaningless matters... People forget. We are here to act. We are here to deliver results... Department heads squabble among themselves over posts and budgets... as though as they somehow owned them... When you work for the UN... please leave your ego at the door.[22]

To present these problems is not an argument against peacebuilding operations, which are necessary and lifesaving and have achieved a lot. It is an argument for an open learning process for improving international peace interventions, which operate under difficult and contradictory conditions. It is an argument for supporting debate, which also has to acknowledge that peace interventions cannot be successful without external pressure and a good deal of paternalism in dealing with former conflict parties. Although institutional obstacles might hinder this learning process, the whole undertaking of international

peace operations could continue relatively smoothly in the years to come – if we were not in a global economic crisis, changing the framework conditions of international politics.

International peacekeeping after the global economic crisis

It seems reasonable to assume that the world economic crisis will enhance instability, tensions and conflicts. Demand for peace operations is likely to increase. The question is: will international peacekeeping satisfy this demand? This in turn depends on whether adequate financial and human resources can be mobilised, and whether there will be sufficient political will and consensus. Peacekeeping now and in the near future will have to cope with three serious obstacles: limitations in staffing, financial restrictions and declining Western influence.

- **Limited availability of personnel:** As outlined near the beginning of this article, peace operations depend mostly on military personnel. In recent years, it has been possible to increase the number of states contributing troops. ‘When one looks to the future... it seems likely that the demand for easy and moderately challenging operations will generally be met’; however, NATO, the EU and states, ‘that take on the most hazardous and potentially violent missions... are already overstretched, and they should remain so for many years to come’.[23] While the US during 2009 have already doubled their troops to 68’000 and a further increase to 100,000 troops has been announced, European countries are very reluctant to strengthen their engagement, especially in problematic areas of the country, making burden-sharing among NATO states very difficult. Military presence in Afghanistan has become a major political issue in Germany in particular, where total withdrawal is increasingly debated. Half of Germany’s 6600 military personnel abroad are deployed in Afghanistan. Although this is less than 3% of its total staff, the German army is considered to be operating abroad at its limits of capacity, also due to shaky public support.
- **Eventual Financial restrictions:** The economic crisis has not yet hampered current peacekeeping operations. In May 2009 the yearly budgets for ongoing UN-Peacekeeping operations have been prolonged. In December 2009 the budget for the UN-Mission in Afghanistan has even been substantially increased. However, it can be assumed that participating states might become more reluctant to engage when new missions will come on the agenda. Therefore, in case of a new major crisis, international consensus on a larger new peace operation with strong military and financial commitments from different Western governments is rather unlikely.
- **Weakening Western power and influence:** Western predominance in the world is diminishing, and the economic crisis has accelerated this trend. This also undermines the acceptance of peacebuilding projects, which promote democracy and market economy and depend on direct Western influence on local actors. In the past eight years, US international credibility has suffered serious setbacks, affecting Western credibility generally in the rest of the world. Obama’s administration can hardly reverse this trend. The West is less and less successful in imposing its concepts on local actors by mobilising global support for its projects, as exemplified in Kosovo, in the Iranian nuclear issue or in the Near East. The world has become multi-polar, making international consensus on peace interventions more difficult. However, to date, there is no alternative to the Western concept of peace intervention, to Western peacekeeping capacities and to Western political will to engage.

Overall, two scenarios are discernible for the future of peacekeeping. First, it is possible that the weakening of the West as the traditional main power in world politics may not allow for coping properly with local conflicts, and will have wider destabilising effects. Second, it is possible instead that international peacekeeping efforts may be established on a broader basis. This would include the active involvement of Russia and of new powers such as China, India, Brazil and others. The West would have to accept these actors as equal partners, and the new actors would have to prove their readiness to assume global responsibility and to overcome narrow national interest as the sole driver of their foreign policy. This second scenario has clear implications for how the West understands its own role in the world. As Paddy Ashdown, former High Representative for Bosnia, has put it: ‘If we want a more ordered world at a time of

great instability, we are going to have to provide a space at the top tables for nations that do not share our culture, our history, our world view or even our values'. [24]

Footnotes

[1] The definitions and notions used in this paragraph follow those applied by the UN, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department for Field Support (2008) 'United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, principles and guidelines', New York, pp.17–20.

[2] In 1996/97 the author was the Head of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya. The short mandate of this small mission of about eight internationals had elements of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Its peacemaking role, not explicitly foreseen by the mandate, consisted of mediating the ceasefire in May 1996 and arranging the meeting for the Khasavyurt Agreement on 31 August 1996. Its main peacebuilding contribution consisted of essential support for the elections in January 1997.

[3] Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Berlin): International and German Personnel in EU, UN, OSCE, NATO and Other Field Missions, updated in May 2009.

[4] <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm> , figure for February 2009.

[5] Birger Heldt (2008) 'Trends from 1948 to 2005: how to view the relation between the United Nations and Non-UN entities', p. 16f, in Donald C.F. Daniel, Patricia Taft and Sharon Wiharta (eds), *Peace Operations*, Washington.

[6] http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/lpw/Akuf/kriege_archiv.htm

[7] *Agenda for Peace*, point 43.

[8] *Agenda for Peace*, point 44.

[9] Information provided by a high military officer of a UN member state involved in the Somalia operation.

[10] At UN headquarters, DPKO was in charge, headed by the then Under Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

[11] UN document A/55/305–S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, p. viii
(http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/a_55_305.pdf).

[12] *Ibid.*, p. ix.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. X.

[14] See: Donald C.F. Daniel (2008) 'Why so few troops from among so many?' in D.C.F. Daniel, P. Taft and S. Wiharta, *Peace Operations*, Washington, p. 48 onwards.

[15] Brahimi Report, point 47, p.8.

[16] Mandate of the UNEF in the Sinai 1956, quoted in Roland Paris (2007) 'Wenn die Waffen schweigen', Hamburg, p. 34.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 267 onwards.

[18] This so-called Ahtisaari Plan was submitted by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on 26 March 2007. Although it was not endorsed by the Council, it became the basis for the independence process promoted by the main Western powers. By May 2009, 60 states had recognised Kosovo's independence; for the majority of states, Kosovo is part of Serbia.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Elections held while the political solution is still debated can be used or abused by conflict parties to mobilise the electorate in favour of their position. The OSCE mission in charge of the elections in Kosovo in November 2007

was seriously criticised for defending its neutral position with respect to Kosovo's status. In Chechnya, the author as head of the OSCE mission was declared *persona non grata* by the outgoing local president for stating after the elections in January 1997 that they did not affect Chechnya's status as part of the Russian Federation.

[21] The OSCE mission in Kosovo, in its Background Report 'Human rights, ethnic relations and democracy in Kosovo, summer 2007 – summer 2008' of 2 September 2008, states 'While the laws meet international standards, their implementation is often hampered', and the 'judiciary remains the weakest of the public institutions. There are widespread violations of fair trial standards'.

[22] Ban Ki-Moon's remarks at the Chief Officers of UN Funds and Programme Meeting, Turin, Italy, Friday 29 August 2008. (The first two sentences quoted here, in the original text follow the rest of the quoted text).

[23] Donald C.F. Daniel (2008) 'Why so few troops from among so many?' in D.C.F. Daniel, P. Taft and S. Wiharta, *Peace Operations*, Washington p. 231.

[24] Paddy Ashdown in *Guardian.co.uk*, 25 May 2009.

About the Author

Tim Guldemann is a Swiss diplomat currently on leave and Professor in Political Sciences. He works at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva. In May 2010, he returns to the Swiss diplomatic service to become Ambassador to Berlin. He was head of the OSCE Missions in Chechnya 1996/97, Croatia 1997–99 and in Kosovo 2007/08. In this last function he was Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kosovo. The ideas in this article were developed during a visiting professorship in October–December 2008 at the Goethe University of Frankfurt in its Cluster of Excellence, 'Formation of normative orders'.

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