

Eastern Africa Standby Brigade, What Capacities Does it Require?

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*“Turning fragile and failed States into strong and stable ones is perhaps the most difficult security challenge of our time”*¹³-Malcolm Chambers, 2005

Embedded in this quote is the question of whether or not a peace keeping concept and an infrastructure to operationalize it can be developed and sustained in a pre and post conflict situation in an Africa to turn fragile and failed states into strong and stable ones. My presentation seeks to discuss the capacities necessary for Eastern Africa Standby Brigade to undertake peace support operations and achieve the desired expectations.

EASBRIG a component of the African Standby Force (ASF) was finally established on the 11th April 2005 when the Summit of Eastern Africa Heads of State and Government signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing it. The countries, which constitute EASBRIG, include the Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda.

¹³ Malcolm Chambers in Rescuing the State, Europe next Challenge, The Foreign Policy Centre and British Council Brussels, 2005

Initially, countries Tanzania, Mauritius and Burundi were part of the Eastern Africa Region but they have opted to join other region on matters of the Standby Brigade citing problems such as language, historical background, culture, prior security arrangements, and distance in relationship to the center of gravity in the concept of their security perspectives.

The MOU, the Policy Framework and the budget adopted by the Summit constitute a package of policy documents, which sets out how the policy organ of a decision making process of EASBRIG, the issue of mandate including the mission scenarios¹⁴, level of peace support operations, and relation with the Africa Union.

EASBRIG importance will be measured not in terms of numbers but quality of its capacity to undertake peace support operations in pre conflict and post conflict multifaceted and complex scenarios.

Today in Africa, a conflict free region in the Continent is an exception to the rule. In the Horn of Africa alone the tension between Eritrea and Ethiopia is heading to a peak point. Nearly 150,000 troops face each other in a pensive situation around Badme the disputed border strip of land claimed by both countries and all it requires is an incident to trigger another war. Besides Ethiopia continues to be dogged by conflicts by a half dozen

¹⁴ The Policy Framework of EASBRIG outlines the six mission scenarios

armed groups fighting to breakaway or fighting to seize power.

Somalia continues to be a collapsed state with over 25-armed groups with combined militia strength of 50,000. Sudan, although a Comprehensive Peace Agreement has been signed between North and South, the Darfur problem remains unresolved. There is tension in the North Eastern part of Sudan where hostilities could break out anytime. In Uganda the LRA problem the most serious of them all has not been resolved and indications are it is a dispute, which could expand to the more peaceful South of the Country.

Besides, there are 50,000 peace-keeping troops in Africa now. Soon the number will increase drastically when the UN Peace Keeping in Sudan moves to full capacity. Additional 10,000 troops will be injected to Africa. In the Darfur region Africa Union hopes to double the number of troops there to nearly 6,000. Already there are 10,000 humanitarian “troops”¹⁵

The ASF and its regional Components is part of the Continental Security architecture and provides a framework for all Africa to work together. The concept includes rapid reaction and provides the necessary infrastructure for use by the African Union Peace and Security in peacekeeping peace enforcement and deterrence and pre-emptive deployment in the phase of

¹⁵ Quoting Jan England the UN Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs in TV interview on CNN on the 2nd May 2005

gross violation of human rights and genocide and other peace problems.

The threats to which a peacekeeping infrastructure such as EASBRIG must deal with also tend to change. Kofi Anan writing a forward note to the Report of the Secretary General High Level Panel on Threats, challenges and Change speaks of the need for a comprehensive system of collective security, one that tackles both new and old threats and addresses the security of concern of all states – rich and poor weak and strong. He goes on to say that of particular importance is the assertion that today's threats to our security are all inter-connected. He identifies the security threats to include terrorism, civil wars, extreme poverty, and what he calls Biological threat -Aids¹⁶

A peace Keeper today is not simply a soldier or an Officer with a rifle strapped on his shoulder or pistol around the loins wearing a blue helmet or beret but demand for one who has skills, knowledge beyond the call of duty of a normal soldier. Peace-keepers should be equipped with such skills as training in humanitarian law, mine detection and clearance, first line reconciliation, mediation, dialogue and in DDR process and many other relevant skills in modern peace making.

Among the challenges of the capacity of EASBRIG is the management capacity of ASF itself and leadership from the Africa Union as an Institution overseeing not just the

¹⁶ Kofi Anan in the Report of the Secretary General High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations 2005

ASF but also the Brigades in the five geographical areas of the continent, Financing, doctrine development and other capacities. Underpinning these challenges is the indisputable fact that conflict in Africa far from abetting is increasing and the existing ones increasingly evading mediation and reconciliation efforts. For example the Darfur Conflict has continued to difficult to resolve and it may not be so soon.

The Concept

The establishment of the Africa Standby Force is a goal achieved through a metamorphic process. Immediately after a number of African Countries became independent, it became necessary to create a continental wide unity and hence the birth of Organization of African Unity (AOU). A major objective of the OAU was to establish an African High Command but it was too ambitious and being at the height of the cold war few people wanted to see such a Force.

But the end of the Cold and international rivalry was a blessing in many ways. In Africa it motivated thinking of new realities. First among these realities is captured in the Cairo Declaration of 1993, which agreed to make the restoration and building of peace in war-ravaged countries a priorities¹⁷. The second reality was the need to have a capability to forestall similar incidents as the Rwanda Genocide and in anticipation to deal with gross violations of human rights such as the Darfu problem. In

¹⁷ Assembly of OAU Heads of State and Government Declaration

short these and many other demands motivated the thinking of a new Continental Security architecture based on realities and an African concept recognizing first and far most the interests of the African people themselves.

Peace and Security Architecture in Africa

The EASBRIG should be viewed in light of the coming into being of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the establishment of the ASF. Article 13¹⁸ of the Protocol establishing Peace and Security as an organ of Africa Union, set out the mandate of the Force as: Intervention in member states in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a member state in order to restore peace and security, Preventive deployment in order to prevent a dispute or conflict from escalation and ongoing violent from spreading to neighboring areas or states and the resurgence of violence after parties to a conflict have reached an agreement, peace building including post conflict disarmament and demobilization, observation and monitoring missions, humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilian population in a conflict area and support efforts to address major natural disasters and other types of peace support missions.

These and any other additional roles define more or less the boundaries and level of capacities that would be required for the Force and the Brigades EASBRIG of

¹⁸ Article 13 is a chapter in the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and provides for the regional mechanism for management of the Standby Brigades.

course being one of the five brigades, which are largely complimentary in nature. Capacities that are required for the EASBRIGA can thus be categorized into the following:

- **Funding**
- **Training in modern peacekeeping practices, in the development of the doctrines, SOPs, and logistic issues.**
- **Linkages and with UN and AU**

Funding

In EASBRIG Member States realized that funding the activities of the Brigade may require charity beginning at home support especially for the Administrative expenses. In a meeting of Ministers of Defense in Kigali in September 2004 a decision was taken to fund the cost of maintaining the PLANELEM and the Brigade HQs. A budget of \$2.5 million was agreed and that has now been acceded to by the Summit of EASBRIG held in Addis Ababa in April this year.

The Mission expenses however will still have to come from donors and especially from Peace Facility of the AU. As Malcolm Chambers argues “donors including the EU are now prepared to support African Peacekeeping forces recognizing the important contribution they can make to the containment and resolution to regional

conflicts”.¹⁹ It is with realization that EU has helped to set up the Peace Facility within the Africa Union to which presently only EU has set aside funds from the Contonou Agreement.

Funding for EASBRIG operations will be a major challenge. But arising from the Maputo Meeting of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in July 2003 a Peace Facility at the AU was created and funds from the European Union under the Contonou Agreement were pledged to the fund.

The G8 have also pledged support for programs in Peace and Security. What has been holding Regions from tapping into the fund has been lack of a legal framework for cooperation between AU and RECs. That has now been resolved and there is an MOU outlining cooperation between the two organizations. It has now also been resolved to refine the system of accessibility of Regions into the Peace Facility. These should be able to fund short time and less ambitious programs. Peace Keeping is an expensive activity and the funds in the peace Facility are limited presupposing that additional funds should be sourced.

Africa has not only been expecting funds from donors, it has been doing something for itself. Several Africa Countries have donated funds to the AU Peace Fund. Algeria has donated \$410,000, Ethiopia \$100,000, South Africa 2.7 million and Senegal \$1,132. It may not be

¹⁹ Malcolm Chambers in the Rescuing the State Europe's next challenge, Foreign Policy Centre British Council Brussels 2005

much but it does none the less demonstrate commitment to the cause.

A good example of the inadequacy of the funds available in the Peace Facility is the cost of deploying an IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia. Deploying Eight Battalions in Chapter 8 peacekeeping role for nine months at current cost using what we have come to call ad hoc rates, which roughly work out to be 50% of the UN reimbursing rates will be US \$ 500 millions. If necessity arises to keep the mission beyond the nine months the cost will be much higher.

Funding for the ASF and the Brigades now remain one the most serious challenges to the maturing of the concept of peace keeping in Africa. Questions being asked are if it is indeed wise for Africa to rely on single source funding the EU for its peace support operations. There may have to be a need for Africa to create a trust fund and ask well-wishers without attribution to donate to the fund from which peacekeeping expenses can be met.

Training

ASF is mandated to operate under the UN Charter 8 in peacekeeping roles up to scenario VI equated to Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Brigades will be able to develop capacity for peace support operations up to scenario IV by the year 2010. This sets therefore the training level and goal by which any forces doctrine must attempt to meet.

The concept of the Standby Force was developed with the assistance of the UN, as AU did not have to re-invent the wheel. The SHIRBRIG model remains the best example for our regions to learn from. The UN on the other hand remains the main reference point for both the Brigades and the ASF. In the case of EASBRIG at the time of establishing the Brigade SHIRBRIG was involved in the experts meeting in Jinja Uganda and provided valuable contribution, which shaped the concept. Knowing that the concept of standby was derived from them a need arises for the SHIRBRIG to be a partner in the development of the EASBRIG.

In IGAD we have planned to request SHIRBRIG to arrange a study tour in January 2005 for a number of officials from the IGAD, the PLANELM and the Brigade HQs to be acquainted with the concept of standby as soon as the later two are operational.

The region has a number of Centers of Excellency, which are useful in parting skills, and here in Eastern Africa Kenya Peace Keeping Training Center (KPTC) is one such institution. It has been offering peacekeeping courses to a number of students coming from all over the world. Expanding it to serve the region should not be a big problem. Additional courses can also be added to cater for special courses for the EASBRIG.

A number of Centers of Excellency were identified in Ethiopia, Kenya Rwanda and Uganda, which would be contracted by EASBRIG to develop curriculum for peace

support operations and provide slots of training for EASBRIG personnel for all ranks.

Training remains one of the most important areas of capacity building to which we in IGAD will pay special attention. Peace keeping has become a very valuable military science and the region therefore intends to equip its officers and men of this important skill in order for the brigade to do its work much more effectively.

We intend to contact a number of our partners in training for peace support operations. The Policy Framework establishing EASBRIG clearly sees the need for operational, tactical and strategic training capacities required in the Centers of Excellencies and urges that capacity to be established. The region will have to look to our partners in this area and here again SHIRBRIG may be approached for support.

Humanitarian Law

Modern peace keeping practice is incomplete without inclusion of lessons in Humanitarian law and related areas. Here IGAD is lucky because ICRC has already committed itself to provide not only expertise but also financial support to have this done.

Collaboration with other Institutions

Collaboration with other Peace Support institutions remains the key to the success of the EASBRIG to build

up sufficient skills and knowledge in peace support operations. Several institutions and Organizations have offered assistance and we think now after the approval of the EASBRIG at the Summit level the stage is set for a number of bilateral engagements to be undertaken. ACOTA, BPST, RECAP and SHIRBRIG will engage our region in more concrete ways in order to help give capacity for the Brigade and IGAD looks forward to the engagement with this institutions.

The British are the first to have come in with some support and have assisted the PLANELM in Nairobi with a number of things. They have donated a building and equipment, a good gesture for a start. The GTZ in the year 2006 may dedicate \$ 250,000 to support EASBRIG in a number of capacities such as funding IGAD Secretariat continued coordination role, Impact Study and Papers Preparations of the Expert Studies and research.

Recommendations

EASBRIG requires a number of capacities to be able to be an effective peace keeping infrastructure in the Eastern Africa Region.

First and foremost, it requires the capacity to help and assist the reconstruction of a whole new security sector in a fragile or collapsed state. In Somalia the Security system collapsed and any peace keeping effort there must have the responsibility to assist and help to establish and train a new Police and Armed Forces entities using modern and current best practices. To be able to do so the

capacity of the EASBRIG itself must be enhanced. That is where the collaboration with other institutions would have been useful in the acquisition of modern skills in this area for application in this new role. In this regard there is urgency in strengthening regional capacities in existing centers of Excellencies for operational, tactical and strategic training.

Second, funding remains one of the most important are of capacitating the EASBRIG, as there is an obvious limit to which EU specifically can assist the ASF and the Regional Brigades. Whereas the Peace Facility availability has been instrumental in the deployment of the AU peace keeping Force in Darfur, it is by all means only facilitation and more sources ought to be identified and explored to provide multilateral funding capacities. Here the UN with its ability to mobilize resources can be a partner and we hope that AU specifically pursues this option in which UN takes some responsibility in raising funds to assist in the sustenance of peace support operations in the Africa.