PART 1:

PEACE PLANS IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Planning for Peace: Historical Perspectives

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More than 15 years after the end of the Cold War, it is clearer than ever that the 'New World Order' has failed to bring about eternal peace, and that we are nowhere near the 'end of history'. People are talking about third and even fourth generation peace operations (erroneously, in this author's opinion, by the way).[1] So a historical perspective to this topic may be justified.

Actually, relevant experience goes much further back in the past. International peace operations developed as an element of the international state system in the 19th century. The original aim, in the context of post-Napoleonic Europe, was to stabilize crisis zones, usually at the fringes of Europe, in the borderlands of the ailing Ottoman Empire.[2] Stabilisation, one might argue, is still the main purpose of most peace operations today, be it to prevent a war or – more usually – internal fighting from continuing, to prevent a crisis from spilling over into neighbouring territories, or to prevent a smaller conflict from escalating into a major one, for the sake of international peace and stability.

1. Commitment

This primary aim of (more often than not temporary) stabilisation rather than finding a permanent solution (which can only be found by the

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[1] In my opinion, the different types of peace operations (usually described as 'traditional', 'wider' and 'robust' operations) are not generations, but different types which developed in a parallel fashion. All three types are still with us, and will continue to do so. Recently, complex peace-building missions have occasionally been referred to as a fourth type.

[2] For a historical perspective on the evolution of peace operations, see my article, 'The Evolution of Peace Operations from the Nineteenth Century', in: Erwin A. Schmidl (ed.), *Peace Operations Between War and Peace* (Ilford, Essex: Frank Cass 2000), 4-20.

parties to the conflict themselves anyway) also marks one of the major difficulties of peace operations, especially when it comes to the long process of post-conflict peace-building: the potential lack of long-term commitment. And commitment is directly connected to the interests of all involved, including the troop contributing countries.

This also appears to be one of the major differences between modern international peace operations and other historical examples of post-conflict stabilisation or peace-building missions. Well before the development of international operations, territories were conquered or occupied after a war, or re-conquered after an uprising. Examples of these operations are numerous, of course, spanning at least four millennia, and perhaps much more. Many of the problems faced in modern missions – establishing a new administration, police and judicial system, feeding a starving population, caring for refugees, vetting former 'enemy' personnel, dealing with war criminals, building trust and constructing new loyalties, etc. – were a common theme of these endeavours. And more often than not, they were terribly mishandled, often leading to new bloodshed, or brutal repression. But – and this is the issue here – there was always one clear aim of these types of 'peace processes', no matter how well-meaning and respectful, or brutal and heavy-handed they were carried out: the political will of the occupying power, and thus its commitment, was clearly established. After all, the occupying power usually was one of the parties to the conflict, having become involved because of clear interests.

Even in the case of short-term post-conflict occupations, with no aim of permanently adding a territory to the victorious power's possessions, there usually was a clear will of carrying the task of pacification through. Examples of this include the post-1945 Allied occupations in Germany, Austria, or Japan. There was a clear commitment to establish a new order in these countries, ranging from the establishment of new governments and democratic structures to police and the 're-education' in schools. Out of their own clear interests, the governments in Washington, London and Moscow were determined to stay as long as necessary. Nobody talked about early 'exit dates' or leaving without

finishing the task.[3] It is exactly this combination of national interests of the countries involved, and clear commitment to the task, which appears to be a crucial element of most successful peace-building missions, in the context of international peace operations or elsewhere.

2. Planning for Peace

Planning for peace resembles military planning: operations rarely go according to plan.[4] Flexibility here is the key – this does not mean that a thorough planning process is not necessary (quite on the contrary!), but that it has to take place in a framework which remains flexible enough to allow modifications should they become necessary. Because of their long familiarisation with planning processes, it would seem that the military is – in general – better acquainted with the need for flexibility.

In the past years, considerable expertise has been gained to plan for peace-building operations, integrating different components (military, police, civilian etc.) as well as various international as well as non-governmental organisations. To take just one example, the Haiti operation of 1994-95 was a model of handover from the US-led Multinational Force to a UN Mission. Because of the preceding multinational intervention, the UN had several months to prepare for the new operation. According to the police commissioner, this was one of

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[3] Because of post-1945 financial constraints, a certain pressure to reduce forces and personnel as early as possible was always present, but it never went far enough to jeopardise the whole process. In this context, attention is drawn to a volume about historical examples of interim administrations and military government, presently prepared at the National Defence Academy's Institute for Strategy and Security Policy under the direction of Felix Schneider and Tamara Scheer.

[4] I have borrowed this phrase here from the after action report of Major Roderick Galloway, filed after his Nigerian unit had freed a team of Austrian peacekeepers from Bukavu prison, Eastern Congo, where they had been taken prisoner by rebellious Congolese forces. As he wrote in his report on the action, 'it did not go according to plan. Operations rarely do.' I am indebted to Major Galloway for having given me a copy of this report. See also: Erwin A. Schmidl, 'The 'Battle' of Bukavu, Congo 1960: Peacekeepers under Fire', in: *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 8/3 (Winter 1997), 25-40.

the best-prepared missions ever.[5] Yet, despite all this, the international community had to intervene in Haiti again, just a decade later. The commitment of the countries involved had not been strong enough to establish a lasting peace structure on the island.

The UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia in 1989-90 was generally considered one of the more successful missions, overseeing the transition of the former German colony to independence. Cedric Thornberry, who headed the civilian component, later recounted that he was often asked for a 'blueprint' of this mission, to be used for future operations. He had to decline: the plan had been changed many times along the way – and even a blueprint would be useless for other missions, because of the different circumstances.[6] There certainly exists a tendency to 'copy' apparently successful models for future operations. This is, of course, not wrong per se: we all learn from previous experience. Problems can arise, however, when models are copied for situations completely different from the original ones. Thus, the UN Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights in Syria has been one of the more successful traditional missions for over three decades (it was established in 1974), while the attempt to copy the model for Southern Lebanon in 1978 failed, because of the different conditions there. Sometimes, even less successful structures are copied for new missions for a variety of reasons, usually connected more to internal political issues in the contributing countries than for mission-related reasons. It might be doubted, for example, if it was a perfect solution to copy the Bosnia model (with parallel rather than integrated components) for Kosovo in 1999.[7]

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[5] I am grateful to Chief Superintendent (ret.) J.O.G. (Neil) Pouliot for his comments.

[6] Cedric Thornberry made this comment during a presentation at a symposium at the Irish Peacekeeping Training Centre (UN Training School Ireland) at Curragh Camp in June 1995.

[7] This point was already raised at the time, for example during a seminar held at Carlisle War College for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in mid-June 1999.

3. Structures

For a long time, military establishments had ambivalent perceptions of peace operations. Being 'operations other than war',[8] they were sometimes seen as a distraction from the armed forces' main tasks, binding resources and troops in long-term, usually static missions.[9] This has changed since 1990 – in the post-Cold War environment, participation in international peace operations has become the major task (and the major *raison d'être*!) for most militaries. Service abroad has become accepted as part of a soldier's career. For most officers, having been on one or several missions is by now almost a precondition for a rapid career.

The situation is different for police officers and civilian experts. Military participation in peace operations was from the beginning facilitated by the comparatively easy availability of military units in times of peace. The case is different for the police: no (Western) police chief can complain of a surplus of personnel, and the availability of experienced and well-trained police officers for international operations has always been limited.[10] Even worse appears the situation for much-needed civilian experts: serving a few months or years abroad, usually will hamper rather than advance the career of a civil servant or employee of a private company. It is little solace that there are thousands of motivated and eager young academics willing to contribute to world peace (and unable to find a job elsewhere) – what would actually be needed are mid-career experts. Not only would peace-building missions benefit from their experience, but they would in turn bring back valuable

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[8] This term was commonly used in the US in the early 1990s, even though 'OOTW' included missions such as the 'war against drugs' or post-disaster relief in addition to peace operations.

[9] Not only in the US, 'to fight and win this nation's wars' is seen as the main purpose of the armed forces. Peace operations, being for the most part non-combat operations, clearly carry less prestige than fighting missions, and are therefore often seen as 'easy' – which they are not.

[10] See this author's *Police in Peace Operations* (= Informationen zur Sicherheitspolitik 10, Wien: Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung/Militärwissenschaftliches Büro, September 1998).

experience gained abroad, in an international environment. So far, however, this remains wishful thinking.

In reality, many non-military tasks have to be carried out by the military, as there are no other resources available. This can be a problem, when young soldiers lack the experience (and serenity) of an experienced officer in carrying out police tasks, for example. To some degree, using reserve components (territorial, national guard, 'militia') provides an alternative, as they bring in more mature personnel, with a variety of civilian experience to draw on. Whether it's US police officers in a National Guard unit, or Finnish forestry experts serving in Bosnia to assist against illegal logging, they bring in expertise unavailable elsewhere.

This is not the ideal answer, of course. In the long run, it would be necessary to adopt spells of service abroad into civilian career plans, as they are already common in the military (and also in academia). Although not 'politically correct', it would be necessary to have something like the establishments preparing civil servants and others for "colonial service" of an age gone by, in order to provide the necessary training. Proper debriefing and 'lessons learned' structures would be needed as well, in order to make the best use of experience gained. For the moment, however, this appears to be far from realisation, despite some first steps in the right direction.[11]

In addition to reservists serving with the military, international organisations provide the bulk of civilian personnel in peace operations. These often lack proper expertise, however, and tend to copy one mission model for the next mission, even under different circumstances.[12] Fortunately, attempts are underway to achieve better understanding and interaction, such as the measures undertaken by the

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[11] Let us mention here, for example, the training course for civilian tasks in peace operations established at Schlaining in Austria already in 1993.

[12] I might add my personal experience here. While serving with the UN Observer Mission in South Africa in 1994, many colleagues had been in Cambodia before, and brought in their 'Cambodian' attitudes. This was not always helpful.

US Secretary of State's Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization to synchronize inter-agency efforts.[13]

Often, the parallel structures of various organisations working side by side rather than with each other are mentioned as a common feature – and often a common problem – of peace operations. In reality, whether organisations operate in an 'inter-locking' or an 'inter-blocking' manner often depends less on organisational aspects than on the personal – and leadership – qualities of the leading people in the field. Any generalisations here would be wrong, but the co-operation between different organisations often has been cause for misunderstandings in the past.

4. Success

What, then, defines 'success' in peace (-building) operations? It is difficult to measure, and can be established with certainty only after a lapse of several years, or even decades. The case of Haiti has already been mentioned, and recently East Timor provided another example of hopes unfulfilled. Sociology usually speaks of three generations necessary to adapt to new circumstances (or new identities), and this might well fit here as well, when it comes to the 'normalisation of society', often after severe and traumatic experiences.[14] This concurs with the necessity of seeing peace-building efforts as a long-term task, where time can be measured in generations rather than months or years.

For practical purposes, however, results and feedback are needed much earlier, and here the criteria for 'success' can only be drawn from expectations and mandates for the missions in question. There is no such thing as 'success' by itself, it has to be measured against the objectives set, by examining which objectives have been achieved within a given

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[13] Here, I am indebted to Henri Bigo, who participated in the Reichenau seminar, for his comments. Another institution to be mentioned here is the European Academy for International Training.

[14] In the discussions at Reichenau, Professor Zonac even mentioned four or five generations, especially in cases of long and severe collective traumas.

timeframe, and at what cost (including collateral damage in other fields).[15]

Despite all the problems and difficulties mentioned here, it would be wrong to conclude that there is no hope. Progress achieved in South-Eastern Europe over the past ten or more years is – setbacks notwithstanding – a promising sign that problems (or, rather: challenges!) can be faced and overcome. We are not living in an ideal world, and circumstances in a post-conflict setting are usually far from ideal, but this does not mean that success is impossible. After all, even the most stable countries in the world have earlier on been the place of bloody conflicts, traumatic experiences, and difficult post-conflict rehabilitation processes – sometimes not so long ago.

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[15] I am very much indebted to my good friend, BGen Dr. Heinz Vetschera, for his comments and suggestions during the discussions at Reichenau.