United Nation and Peace-Keeping in Africa in The Post-Cold War

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Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the Africa and United Nations relationship in security and peacekeeping. Its analysis the role the United Nations Organization in ensuring peace and stability in Africa in military aid and personnel's. In brief, it explains the concept of peacekeeping and its evolution in Africa starting from the development of African state after most had gain independence from 1958 and 1960 to their inability to effectively manage and resolve conflict by itself. Its also mentioned the challenges faced by United Nations in maintaining peace in Africa especially in areas of poor coordination complexity of operation and inadequate logistical support. This mission in Africa has led to a lot of success and ensured peaceful coexistence and respect for human life in different part of Africa. Moving forward, the paper suggested that UN should ensure an effective strategic oversight to overcome resource constraints, poor documentation and as well implement lesson learnt from previous operations, and that there should be an improvement in the Security Council's military expertise, risk analysis and transparency across the chain of command to ensure better living in Africa and the rest of the world.

Keywords: Peacekeeping, Security, development, post-cold war, United Nations

Introduction

Today, more than fifty thousand troops are deployed for UN operations in Africa and tens of thousands more deployed for regionally led missions in countries where civil wars and insurgencies have killed civilians and threatened to destabilize surrounding regions. Many experts agree that peacekeeping missions help to protect civilians and reduce some of the worst consequences of war but say they are often deeply flawed. Reports of sexual and

other abuses by UN peacekeepers have drawn condemnation in recent years and prompted some reforms. Still, heated debate persists about how to make these missions more effective, such as by looking to non-UN initiatives to bring peace to conflict-stricken parts of Africa.

In the contemporary epoch, the subject global peace, security, and development is an interesting one for social scientists and researchers in strategic studies. This is because there is near consensus among social scientists and development experts that peace and security are critical ingredients for development. Toure (2004) has described this new millennium as "a paradoxical epoch that is full of hope for peaceful coexistence between peoples" but is also dangerous with possibilities of explosive conflicts based on the mobilization of different identity and ideological divides. The mobilization of these ingredients of divides between people and amongst societies has led to the escalation of ethnic conflicts, civil wars, religious and other conflicts of various dimensions in political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres that are now threatening humanity. Having experienced the agonies and destructions of the two world wars, and other regional and international wars, fifty world leaders gathered in San Francesco U.S.A on 26th June 1945 and approved the charter for the United Nations Organization (UNO). This Charter was later ratified on 24th October 1945, marking the formal take-off of the U.N., as an international organization whose main aim is the maintenance of international peace and security. 246

Peacekeeping: A Conceptual Analysis

Peacekeeping generally is an intervention by a third party to separate and pacify participants in a conflict. The United Nations has performed peacekeeping operations since 1948, when it sent military observers to Kashmir, to oversee the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, and the Middle East, in the aftermath of the Arab Israeli conflict. Fifty years later the UN peacekeepers still had presence in these regions. The number of UN peacekeeping operations has increased rapidly since the end of the Cold War, with involvement in Somalia, Rwanda, the Balkans, and Kuwait, amongst others. Peacekeeping has tended to involve the introduction of military which has the job of observing the implementation of ceasefire agreements and providing a buffer between combatants. There has been debate as to the extent to which peacekeeping forces could or should be involved in the active enforcement of ceasefires, the possibility and practicality of neutral intervention, and the balance between upholding the status quo and acting to change the strategic situation to enhance the prospects of conflict resolution (McLean & McMillan, 2003).

Of the issues the United Nations confronts, none is as vexing as peace and security. During the Cold War, the structure of the Security Council (requiring unanimity among the five permanent members) prevented the United Nations from playing a major role in issues directly affecting those members. A new approach labelled peacekeeping evolved to limit the scope of conflict and prevent it from escalating into a Cold War confrontation. Peacekeeping operations fall into two types, or generations. In first-generation peacekeeping, multilateral institutions 247such as the UN seek to contain conflicts between two states through third-party military forces. Ad hoc military units, drawn from the armed forces of non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (often small, neutral members), have been used to prevent the escalation of conflicts and to keep the warring parties apart until the dispute can be settled. These troops operate under UN auspices, supervising armistices, trying to maintain ceasefires, and physically interposing themselves in a buffer zone between warring parties (Mingst, 2004).

In the post-Cold War era, UN peacekeeping has expanded to address different types of conflicts and take on new responsibilities. Whereas first-generation activities primarily address interstate conflict, second-generation peacekeeping activities respond to civil war and domestic unrest, much of it stemming from the rise of ethno-nationalism. To deal with these new conflicts, second-generation peacekeepers have taken on a range of both military and non-military functions. Militarily, they have aided in the verification of troop withdrawal such as the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and have separated warring factions until underlying issues could be settled as was the case with Bosnia. Sometimes, resolving underlying issues has meant organizing and running national elections, as were the cases in Cambodia and Namibia; sometimes it has involved implementing human rights agreements, such as in Central America. At other times UN peacekeepers have tried to maintain law and order in falling or disintegrating societies by aiding in civil administration, policing, and rehabilitating infrastructure, as in Somalia. Peacekeepers have equally provided humanitarian aid, supplying food, medicine, and a secure environment in part of an expanded version of human rights, as followed in several missions in Africa (Mingst, 2004). Peacekeeping was originally an operation that involves military personnel but that over the years, modern peacekeeping has now evolved to a point where economic, political, and social issues are involved. Accordingly, this new trend is popularly described as peace support operations (PSOs), an expression used to describe the total gamut of plans, policies and actions geared towards preventing, managing operations, and resolving conflict as well as restoring and maintaining peace in a conflict environment. PSOs began with military observation (or observer mission) and were later expanded to cover every facet of peacekeeping (Gbor, 2003).

UN peacekeeping has had successes and failures, as illustrated by the two African cases of Namibia and Rwanda. Namibia (formerly South-West Africa), a former German colony, was administered by South Africa following the end of World War 1. Over the years, pressure was exerted on South Africa to relinquish control of the territory and grant Namibia independence. Though the process of disengagement was tough because South Africa refused to consider change, citing security concerns, if Soviet-backed Cuban troops occupied neighbouring Angola, the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG) played a vital role in managing the move from war to ceasefire and then to independence. The operation in Namibia became the model for UN peacekeeping in Cambodia in the early 1990s and in East Timor in the late 1990s ((Mingst & Karns, 2000).

The Evolution of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Africa

The level of development of African states and their incapacity to effectively manage and resolve conflicts among themselves is largely responsible for their eliciting for external interventions in their crises. Following the excellent performance of Nigerian led ECOMOG Peacekeeping Forces in stabilizing and restoring peace, law and order in Liberia between 1990 and 1997 which led Liberians in gratitude to God to coin the cliché "thank God for ECOMOG, the involvement of African states in peacekeeping operations have known no bounds. In fact, this singular expression by Liberians tells volumes about the relevance and positive impact of peacekeeping missions globally (Basu, 2009). Prior to the emergence of the United Nations in 1945, there were no previous practices of peacekeeping. The world powers had other methods of trying to maintain international peace and security. These methods were however localized to regions and carried out by a collection of few powerful nations and their Kings mainly on ad hoc basis. For example, the concert of Europe as well as the League of Nations helped in no small measure to enforce peaceful co-existence amongst nations. These ad hoc measures did not however do much to maintain world peace and security and was proven by the outbreak of the First World War between1914-1918.

At the end of this war, the League of Nations was established as mankind's first attempt to internationalize the mechanism for maintaining world peace and security. The league had the principle of unanimity to guide and determine its actions against aggressors. This principle crippled the league as it could not control the aggressive tendencies of its ambitious members especially Germany. This inability of the league to tame aggressors in its rank paved way for the Second World War in 1939-1945 (Vogt & Ekoko 1993). It was after this war in 1945 that the victorious powers (USA, USSR, France and Britain) established the United Nations Organization to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to ensure by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods

that armed force shall not be used save in the common interest (UN Charter, 1945). With these solemn words, the UN took up as its primary objective and responsibility "to maintain international peace and security" (UN Charter, 1945). The strategy for pursuing and achieving this objective was collective security enforcement action as enshrined generally in chapter VI and VII of its charter and specifically in Articles 41 and 42. However, the powers of the UN in this direction begins in Article 39 which empowers the UN Security Council to assess threats to international peace and security while Article 40 enables the Security Council to commence the processes of intervention which may be preventive diplomacy as a first step. Article 41 specifically empowers the Security Council to impose sanctions against an aggressor. The collective security principle means that when a UN member fails in its treaty obligations to settle disputes with other members peacefully and opts instead for the use of force, the UN as a body will invoke its charter provisions and take military action against that member state.

But no sooner had the UN charter came into effect that the cold war began between the US and defunct USSR which were then the two super-powers in the world. This cold war frustrated the application of the principle of collective security in which the Security Council had to block any military action by the UN against themselves and their allies. The UN therefore decided to embark on peacekeeping method as an alternative strategy for maintaining international peace and security, using troops contributed by its members (Basu, 2009). The UN started with its first peace mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Palestine in 1948. This was followed by the deployment of its first armed peacekeeping force, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) to the Suez Canal to interpose between Egypt and Israel during the Suez Canal conflict which led to the occupation of the Canal by French and British military forces. It equally intervened in the Congo crisis in 1960 and since then the world body has not relented in its peacekeeping efforts with recent interventions in Democratic Republic of Congo and Western Sahara (Vogt & Ekoko, 1991).

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has also clearly spelt out the task of any peacekeeping mission as part of its mandate. However, in Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Ghana, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Senegal provide most of the uniformed personnel in the last seven UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. UN peacekeeping remain primarily one of the strategic instruments for preventing wars and alleviating the suffering of war-affected persons in Africa. Due to the complex nature of current wars, the UN is increasingly utilizing regional and sub-regional governmental groupings in Africa for the purpose of peacekeeping (Oguntomisin, 2004).

The Challenges facing UN peacekeeping mission in the Africa (DRC, South Sudan, and Central African Republic). There have been major challenges which have impeded the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in these countries, and regrettably, these challenges have hindered the ability of UN peacekeeping missions in restoring peace, stable governance, and the protection of civilians.

Increasing complexity of operation in dangerous areas

UN secretary for peacekeeping operation Jean-Pierre Lacroix, stated that armed groups are operating in very isolated and terrain which is characterized by difficult maneuverability, which is making it difficult for UN troopers to effectively penetrate these places. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) also state that these countries lack road infrastructure, and this makes the accessibility to high conflict zones rather impossible, hence the operations of armed groups in these areas further contribute to the prolonging of the conflict. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) state that for the UN to fully take the conflict to these groups, the use of unmanned vehicles, radars and other forms of technology will assist in the battle to ensure peace and is restored.

Inadequate logistical support

Doyle and Sambanis (2006) state that peacekeeping missions in the DRC and South Sudan often lacked the needed resources, and hence this means they struggle when faced with increasing rates conflict. The unavailability of weapons and logistical support are major examples of factors that hindering effective peacekeeping operations. Conflicts are arguably the single most important determinant of poverty in Africa. The report stated that UN peacekeeping missions are becoming stretched as conflicts increase globally, this means the resources available will further diminish, thus putting thousands at risks of hunger, death, and populations displacement.

The scope of peacekeeping operations

Adebajo (2012) argues that initially peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and the Central African Republic were mandated to undertake specific tasks, but changing dynamics and increased conflicts resulted in the change of those mandates, as they have had to allocate resources to 250deal with other issues that were arising during the conflict and this further increases the inability of the mission to better deal with the conflict, therefore, ever-changing mandates become a bottleneck to effective peacekeeping.

Sexual allegation and abuse of power by peacekeepers

Neudorfer (2014) argues states that out of the many challenges of UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, constant allegations levelled against peacekeepers of sexual misconduct

have affected the trust of peacekeeping operations and further contributing to feelings of skepticism and disdain among some countries, especially in the DRC. Neudorfer (2014) argues that the UN fails to ensure ethical behaviour of peacekeepers, and this motivates them to commit crimes as there is a vacuum in terms of responsibility and accountability.

Poor coordination and collaboration amongst host governments

UN peacekeeping operations are jointly hosted by UN and host countries, however, the United Nations (2000) states that the mandates of peacekeeping operations may not align with the objectives of the host country which may lead to poor cooperation, hence giving way to fiction. For example, countries such as Eritrea and Western Sahara have previously expelled UN peacekeepers mainly because of the misalignment of their mandates and this impacts peacekeeping operation and the aim to restore peace.

National Security and Peace Keeping in Africa

UN peacekeeping missions in Africa (DRC, South Sudan and the Central African Republic) have surely contributed significantly to reducing the violence in these countries, however peacekeeping operations have also been cast into doubt owing to their inability to protect civilians and ever-increasing allegations of sexual miss-conduct against peacekeepers (Muggah, 2018). Neudorfer (2014) alludes that allegation against peacekeepers cooperating with armed groups have also tarnished the image and overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. From robust mandates, lack of needed resources, dangerous terrain, to the increasing inter-regional trafficking of weapons, these are some of the major factors which are currently impeding the successful undertaking of peace operations in these countries successfully. De Coning, Chiyuki Aoi, and Karlsrud (2017) also allude that the remoteness of villages in these countries further makes it cumbersome for peacekeeping operations to respond in a timely manner. Furthermore, mandates need to be clear and focused and their quick adaptation time to change to keep with the changing conflict dynamics. Former UN undersecretary, Ban Kimoon noted that peacekeeping missions today are facing numerous challenges, especially in terms of receiving sufficient logistical supports. However, Mangala (2010) notes that if not for the UN intervention, the conflict in these countries would be utterly disastrous and these countries would have descended into flown blown conflict; therefore, the UN must be given credit regardless of their failures or shortcomings. Bronkhorst and Urmilla (2014) concludes that Africa is a continent characterized by increasing rate of sectarian conflict which is devastating socio-economic aspects of these countries, however UN intervention has served as a lifeline for these countries, thus better cooperation and coordination is needed to better cooperation to ensure the eradication of the conflict and the cooperation in the joint of peace and stability

Achievement of the UN

The UNs ability to maintain world peace since its formation is a fact, for since its formation it has been able to stop world war despite the fact there are global threats that if not for the UN would have degenerated into a world war. Such global conflicts include the Israeli – Palestinian crisis in the Middle East, US invasion of Iraq amongst others.

Secondly, the matured way the organization handled the ideological war between the two superpowers the USA and the defunct USSR without taking sides is commendable.

Thirdly, in maintaining peace, the organization can be argued to have performed very well even though it may not be directly involved in peace enforcement, it has been engaged in peace keeping operations in different war-ravaged countries such as DR. Congo, Bosnia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Darfur, amongst others. According to UN Peace Keeping Operation (2004) the UN had 57,334 peacekeepers at a cost of about 3 billion dollars in Africa alone.

In addition, the UN has also assisted the global community in managing crisis that emanates both from natural disasters and conflict situations. In recent years, the UN has assisted victims of the Haiti earthquake, the 2004 Tsunami victims, wildfires and internally displaced persons in conflict zones have all received assistance from the UN. According to Anyaele (2005) the UN through its specialized agencies has enhanced human rights defense, through (UNHCR) human standard of living (UNICEF and WHO) control of dangerous diseases (WHO) education (UNESCO) economic development (World Bank, IMF and WHO) aids to developing countries (WHO, World bank, UNDP). In addition, to maintain peace among member nations the UN through the ICJ has adjudicated on cases between member-nations and the parties have accepted the courts decisions no matter how painful they may be, for instance the ceding of oil rich Bekasi peninsula to Cameroun by Nigeria. The dismantling of Apartheid in South Africa has a lot to do with its condemnation by the UN; the decolonization of Africa was also boosted by the UN support to most of the colonized countries. Finally, the UN serves as a forum where global leaders come together to discuss global issues, share ideas, and provide factual global standards for addressing critical human problems.

UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa: The Way Forward

1. The UN should ensure an effective strategic oversight to overcome resource constraints, poor documentation and as well implement lesson learnt from previous operations
2. There should be an improvement in the Security Council's military expertise, risk analysis and transparency across the chain of command.

3. That the UN should come up with a clear and actionable mandate with benchmarks for all peacekeeping operations in Africa
4. Adequate information flow between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop contributing countries should be given priority.
5. The UN should improve on the quality of preparation, planning, monitoring and evaluation of operations

Conclusion

UN Peacekeeping helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. These unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy troops and police from around the world, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council and General Assembly

Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect, and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law. Finally, despite the challenges, it is glaring that with the internal mechanism (self-check) to identify and address its problems on ground, the UN has the capacity and ability to right the wrong and keep up with the pace of peacekeeping operations. As reforms is being carried out particularly to ensure actionable and measurable peacekeeping mission mandates, there is hope that these challenges will be overcome particularly if this is matched with enough material and logistical resources.

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