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The UN at war: examining the consequences of peace-enforcement mandates for the UN peacekeeping operations in the CAR, the DRC and Mali

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The UN peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mali were in 2013 given peace enforcement mandates, ordering them to use all necessary measures to ‘neutralise’ and ‘disarm’ identified groups in the eastern DRC and to ‘stabilise’ CAR and northern Mali. It is not new that UN missions have mandates authorising the use of force, but these have normally not specified enemies and have been of short duration. This article investigates these missions to better understand the short- and long-term consequences, in terms of the willingness of traditional as well as Western troop contributors to provide troops, and of the perception of the missions by host states, neighbouring states, rebel groups, and humanitarian and human rights actors. The paper explores normative, security and legitimacy implications of the expanded will of the UN to use force in peacekeeping operations. It argues that the urge to equip UN peacekeeping operations with enforcement mandates that target particular groups has significant long-term implications for the UN and its role as an impartial arbitrator in post-conflict countries.

Keywords: peacekeeping; peace enforcement; stabilisation; CAR; DRC; Mali

What happens when the UN wages war? In March 2013 the UN Security Council mandated the inclusion of the Force Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), mandated to ‘take all necessary measures’ to ‘neutralize’ and ‘disarm’ groups that pose a threat to ‘state authority and civilian security’.¹ In April 2013 the Council authorised MINUSMA in Mali ‘in support of the transitional authorities of Mali, to stabilise the key population

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centres, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas'.²

This article seeks to draw out the practical, doctrinal and ethical consequences of UN war-fighting. When the UN, representing all the states of the world, uses peacekeeping operations to wage war, it violates the core principles of peacekeeping, well established with the Brahimi Report (see below) and the subsequent Capstone doctrine: UN peacekeeping operations are only supposed to be deployed where there is a peace to keep and should be impartial; should use a minimum of force (in self-defence or in defence of the mandate); and should have the consent of the main parties to a conflict.³ While there is general agreement after the failures of the UN in Rwanda and Bosnia that these principles have to be balanced by the need to protect civilians, the article argues that the authorisation and implementation of UN war-fighting in the Central African Republic (CAR), the DRC and Mali is moving UN peacekeeping into unknown and perhaps unwanted territory.

The article draws a line between the peace operations that operate under a UN flag, and those only wielding a mandate from the UN Security Council authorising peace enforcement, such as the ISAF operation in Afghanistan during the past decade and Operation Unified Protector in Libya in 2011. This is both for practical and more principled reasons. UN peacekeeping has changed significantly since the first observer missions in the Middle East in the early 1950s, but most observers agree that the use of force by the UN should be reserved for extreme cases. Over the past two decades a practice has gradually emerged where peace enforcement has mainly been delegated to regional organisations, and the UN has deployed peacekeeping operations. This has helped to maintain its impartial role on the ground and its ability to provide its so-called good offices – being a mediator between the parties.

UN peace operations have been in a period of flux for a long time, both in terms of political and operational developments. During the past decade the traditional principles of peacekeeping have been balanced by the need to protect civilians and by giving the UN a key role in the extension of state authority. However, this article argues that the mandates for the peacekeeping missions in the CAR (MINUSCA), DRC (MONUSCO) and Mali (MINUSMA) amount to a doctrinal change in UN peacekeeping towards stabilisation and peace-enforcement missions. While it is difficult to discern the strategic vision underlying these changes, they may have serious ramifications for UN peacekeeping operations and the way they are perceived, both in the field and internationally, as an instrument to support countries emerging from conflict.

It is not new for UN missions to have a robust posture, but this has normally been under the general authorisation of a Chapter VII mandate, where the threats have not been spelled out in such clarity as above, and for shorter durations. The inclusion of robust stabilisation mandates in UN peacekeeping will have consequences that may not yet be foreseen,⁴ and it will be essential to investigate and analyse these to get a better understanding of the likely success of such peacekeeping operations, as well as the consequences more broadly, in terms of the willingness of traditional as well as Western troop contributors to provide troops, and of the perception of the missions by host states, neighbouring states, rebel groups, and humanitarian and human rights actors.

The article is divided in three sections. I will first give a short background on the development of UN peace operations, with a particular focus on the use of force and development of stabilisation operations. I will then present the UN peace operations in the DRC and Mali, also noting the developments in the CAR. In the final section I will highlight the main findings of the article.

UN stabilisation operations – a short history

The term stabilisation was introduced to peace operations with the establishment of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. Since then the term has come to connote military efforts to stabilise a situation (or indeed a country) sufficiently to start efforts to build sustainable institutions. In a UN context the term was first used when establishing the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti in 2004.⁵ ‘Stabilisation’ in the UN context has been developed over the past decade and been given some shape and content; in the UN *Principles and Guidelines for Peacekeeping* (Capstone doctrine), the UN defines stabilisation as the period when a UN peacekeeping mission is deployed.⁶

What is interesting is that stabilisation is in many ways actually contrary to what UN peacekeeping operations are meant to do, at least in its more military (and NATO-influenced) form. Stabilisation is about using military means to stabilise a country, often with all necessary means to neutralise potential ‘spoilers’ to a conflict.⁷ However, one of the key principles of peacekeeping operations, as highlighted in the Brahimi Report, is that peacekeeping operations should only be deployed when there is a peace to keep.⁸ Clearly there are many examples of situations where UN peacekeeping missions have been deployed where there has been no peace in evidence – Chad, Darfur and DRC are all good examples. However, these missions were not equipped with peace-enforcement mandates (with the exception of the new mandate for MONUSCO), spelling out the enemy and tasking the mission to ‘neutralise’ it; rather they were given a wide mandate that gave them the opportunity to protect civilians, using all necessary means if so required. The use of force would be for limited durations and there are several good examples of such a limited and legitimate use of force, something I will return to later.

At the time of writing there are four UN stabilisation missions – MINUSCA in the CAR; MONUSCO in the DRC, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and MINUSMA in Mali.⁹ However, it should also be noted that there is no link between the degree to which a UN peacekeeping operation can use force and whether it is labelled a ‘stabilisation’ mission or not. For example, the UN mission in South Sudan has a Chapter VII mandate, enabling it to ‘use all necessary means...to carry out its protection mandate’,¹⁰ while many more UN peacekeeping operations have Chapter VII mandates allowing them to be ‘robust’.

In the aftermath of the failures of the UN to protect civilians in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia in the 1990s, doctrinal changes emerged allowing the UN to be ‘robust’ and to use force when necessary to protect civilians. However, there is a big difference between using force for short durations to protect civilians from harm, giving the UN peace-enforcement mandates – including a general authorisation to use all necessary means and authorising the UN to

‘neutralise and disarm’ particular groups, as was the case in the DRC – and effectively mandating the conduct of war-fighting against al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali.

What does robust peacekeeping mean?

In Haiti in 2005 MINUSTAH engaged criminal gangs in Cité Soleil in direct confrontation, with civilian casualties, in Operation Iron Fist. In a matter of hours on 15 August Peruvian and Brazilian peacekeepers fired more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition, grenades and mortars in a densely populated area, killing the gang leader Emmanuel ‘Dread’ Wilme and many of his followers.¹¹ Jean-Marie Guéhenno, UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations at the time, said:

it was necessary to stand up to armed groups that threaten to undermine peacekeeping missions. But he said UN commanders had to strike a balance between engaging in all-out warfare and resorting to the passive military posture that characterized UN operations in Srebrenica, where Dutch peacekeepers stood down as Bosnian Serb troops killed thousands of unarmed civilians.¹²

Another precedent was the robust action taken by MONUC against rebel groups in eastern DRC in 2006.¹³ MONUC’s support of the national Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) resulted in MONUC being considered a party to the conflict, even by some of its staff members.¹⁴ Both these instances have since been cited as examples of robust action to protect civilians.¹⁵

The UN had outlined the principle of ‘robust peacekeeping’ only one year previously, in a concept note presented to the UN General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34) for the February 2010 Substantive Session. Again, it is worth quoting an entire paragraph:

Robust peacekeeping is not peace enforcement. Robust peacekeeping is distinct from peace enforcement where use of force is at the strategic level and pursued often without the consent of the host nation/and or main parties to the conflict. The threat and use of force in robust peacekeeping is at the tactical level, limited in time and space, and aimed at countering or containing specific spoiler and residual or looming threat in a conflict or post-conflict environment. Large scale violence or one where the major parties are engaged in violent conflict is no longer a robust peacekeeping context. Robust missions are not configured or intended to address any systemic breakdown in a political process.¹⁶

This concept note was criticised for being too assertive when it was released.¹⁷ Morocco, representing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), said that peacekeeping was robust enough; South Africa said that robust peacekeeping should not be used as a peace enforcement tool.¹⁸

Modernising or undermining UN peacekeeping operations?

Today a new generation of peacekeeping operations is in the making. The new mandates for the UN peacekeeping missions in the CAR, the DRC and Mali are oriented towards stabilisation, with a high level of robust use of force. New

tools, technologies and capabilities are entering UN missions – aerial surveillance drones were deployed in eastern DRC in December 2013, and are planned for Mali in 2014. In Mali the UN will establish the most significant intelligence capability it has had on the ground so far, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), including tactical intelligence officers and analysts from the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway.

In the DRC MONUSCO has established local community networks and handed out mobile phones for information gathering; in Haiti and Libya the UN cooperated with voluntary technological communities to crowd-source information on human rights violations and humanitarian data. There is thus a trend of decentralising authority, feeding intelligence into operations on local levels, using a combination of human and signal intelligence sources such as drones, and including special forces to support more conventional forces. These changes mirror the lessons learned by Western member states and NATO from counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq;¹⁹ it seems as if these member states now are infusing their lessons into UN peacekeeping missions.

This is happening in at least two distinct ways – through the drafting of increasingly aggressive mandates in the UN Security Council, and through direct participation on the ground, either bilaterally (France), regionally (EU troops in CAR and Mali), or as part of UN missions (Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish troops in Mali). Let us now turn our focus to what is happening at the field level.

MONUSCO – winning the battle, but losing the war?

MONUSCO has for more than a decade been accused of failing its core mandate – to protect civilians. MONUC has repeatedly been accused of not being able to act or even being reluctant to do so. MONUC did nothing to protect civilians during the Kisangani massacre in May 2002,²⁰ and refused to act in Ituri in 2003, resulting in a scathing report by MONUC's first Force Commander:

[the contingent] refused to react by opening fire after proper challenge and in accordance with the mandate to protect the population and in accordance with quite unambiguous rules of engagement. Instead, they persisted in only firing in the air, declaring that they could only act under Chapter VII and engage in combat with prior authority of [their parliament].²¹

These are not the only examples. In May 2004 the Uruguayan battalion commander gave control of the airport in Bukavu to the rebel leader Laurent Nkunda and the UN failed to protect the city.²²

In 2010 the mission added stabilisation to its name, signalling the will of the UN to use force more proactively to protect civilians. But, since 2010, the mission has again been faced with accusations of inaction and failing in its main mandate – protecting civilians under imminent threat. In November 2012 the M23 took Goma with almost no resistance from MONUSCO.²³ In light of this regional states argued for an intervention brigade that could respond in kind to the M23 and on 24 November 2012 leaders from the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) member states gave M23 an ultimatum to leave Goma – which was ignored.²⁴ The M23 left Goma in early December

2012 but the problem remained – it seemed as if MONUSCO was not able to deal forcefully enough with groups such as the M23. In February 2013 11 regional countries agreed on a Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC, and the establishment of a brigade-strength Neutral Intervention Force (NIF) under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, funding this force was more difficult – it was estimated to cost US\$100 million – and SADC would also have to establish a support system for logistics, etc. Perhaps aware of these challenges, and wanting to save the last remnants of its reputation for not being able to stop the M23 with the largest and most expensive peacekeeping mission in the world, the UN made a counter-proposal to establish a Force Intervention Brigade, composed of troops from the SADC countries.²⁵

The Force Intervention Brigade was authorised by UN Security Council Resolution 2098 on 28 March 2013. The UN Security Council mandated MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade to ‘take all necessary measures’ to ‘neutralize’ and ‘disarm’ groups that were posing a threat to ‘state authority and civilian security’.²⁶ The brigade is composed of troops from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi, and its very active support was essential in fighting the M23. After the defeat of the M23, MONUSCO received an additional capability – South African Rooivalk gunship helicopters, which were used against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the first half of 2014.²⁷

However, there was considerable wariness about the new resolution among Security Council members and the resolution noted that the Force Intervention Brigade was established ‘on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice to the agreed principles of peacekeeping’.²⁸ Russia was the most vocal, emphasising that ‘what was once the exception now threatens to become unacknowledged standard practice’,²⁹ but China has also voiced its concern over the development. Two key worries have been voiced – giving peace-enforcement mandates to UN peacekeeping missions may compromise the impartiality of UN peacekeeping operations and may jeopardise the safety and security of peacekeepers. The new aggressive mandate of the mission, the inclusion of the Force Intervention Brigade and the ongoing war-fighting against armed groups such as the M23, the Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI) and the Congolese People’s Liberation Army (ALPCU) could increase the perception that the UN is taking sides and increase the risk of attacks against civilian and humanitarian components of the UN.³⁰

MINUSMA – UN moving towards counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations?

In Mali MINUSMA took over from the African Union mission AFISMA on 1 July 2013. In April 2013 the Council authorised MINUSMA in Mali ‘in support of the transitional authorities of Mali, to stabilise the key population centers, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas’.³¹ MINUSMA faces a very complicated situation on the ground, including the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL), which is fighting for autonomy for the North, the jihadists in AQIM, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in

West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar Eddine.³² In addition, various parts of the government are involved in drug smuggling, which may involve some of the armed groups.³³

The operation operates alongside the French Serval force, which includes special forces regularly targeting armed groups in northern Mali.³⁴ With asymmetric threats including liberation movements, jihadists and organised crime, and a mandate to support the extension of state authority and stabilise the country, including the volatile northern region, the ASIFU is the first attempt to incorporate a large-scale intelligence capability in UN peacekeeping.³⁵ The ASIFU is staffed by troops from the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway. The Netherlands has sent 380 troops to Mali, including 70 commandos tasked with collecting, processing and analysing intelligence, supported by four Dutch Apache attack helicopters. Sweden will send a 200-strong reconnaissance force;³⁶ Norway has deployed about 15 intelligence analysts.³⁷

Introducing new capabilities such as the ASIFU and conducting counterinsurgency operations in a UN context is likely to be controversial at best and clashes between military, development and humanitarian actors are likely to intensify. The UN Humanitarian Country Team stated its position on its relationship with armed actors early in 2013, when the preceding African Union mission, AFISMA, was deployed. The team expressed their strong disapproval of armed escorts and a relationship between humanitarian and military actors based on coexistence.³⁸ However, the position of the UN Humanitarian Country Team has not been heeded and there are reports of armed escorts being furnished as the only option, as MINUSMA is not able to deploy sufficient troops to provide area security.³⁹

With the large Dutch contingent and smaller contingents from Finland, France, Norway, Sweden and the UK, MINUSMA will have the largest participation of Western troops in UN peacekeeping. Combating terrorist groups and stemming migration to Europe have motivated their contribution of troops, and it is likely that the mission will be a laboratory for including some of the lessons learned from network-centric warfare and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, particularly taking into consideration the worsening situation in the north.⁴⁰ Introducing these concepts to the UN will not be easy, and perhaps not even a wanted development. It will be essential to support this process by providing the new arrivals with a better understanding of the similarities and differences between NATO and UN missions, and the need to take a less combative stance in Mali. One of the more possible scenarios for Mali is that the aggressive stance of the mission will be self-fulfilling, turning it from a peacekeeping to a counter-terrorism mission, leading to an escalating circle of violence with a high likelihood of civilians being targeted and killed.⁴¹ In this case it is doubtful if the inclusion of Western troops will be of added value. On 16 May 2014 violent clashes between Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) and the MNLA, in connection with a visit to Gao by Prime Minister Moussa Mara, resulted in a number of government officials being killed as well as members of both MDSF and MNLA. Nineteen UN police officers were wounded in the incident. The escalating violence and tension could put the UN in an awkward position, as it is torn between its mandate to be an impartial mediator and the charge to help 'extend and re-establish State administration throughout the country'.⁴²

MINUSMA also includes a Chadian contingent, which has shown a willingness to go into direct combat with armed groups. In one incident a convoy escorted by Chadian troops was hit by a roadside bomb, resulting in a number of Chadian casualties. The normal reaction would have been to wait for back-up and medical evacuation, but the Chadian troops followed the tracks of the bombers into the desert and ended up in an ambush where they fought for a prolonged period, losing several troops, but in the end persevering and winning the battle.⁴³ There have been widespread concerns that the Chadian troops are not well enough versed in international humanitarian law, and MINUSMA was given six months to ensure that the troops inherited from the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could perform to UN standards.⁴⁴

The Western troop contributions to MINUSMA add important capabilities but also pose new challenges for the mission. We have already mentioned the ASIFU – a joint intelligence contribution of the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway. The Dutch contingent is also expected to receive Chinook transport helicopters and Boeing Scaneagle drones.⁴⁵ The drones are lightweight and easy to operate, able to stay in the air for 15 hours. They can transfer live video streams and are also equipped with infrared and other intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.⁴⁶ Aside from this, on 12 May 2014 the UN also put out a tender for companies to submit letters of interest to supply drones to operate in northern Mali.⁴⁷

One of the main challenges with new equipment brought to Mali is the unwillingness to paint helicopters and planes white. The German C130 transport planes and the Apache and Chinook helicopters will continue to be in their combat colours,⁴⁸ with a UN logo painted on top. The image is unsettling for many, include those inside the UN: the UN is ‘going green’, ie turning into a combat operation.⁴⁹

The French Serval force operating alongside MINUSMA deployed two Reaper drones at the end of 2013 and, according to French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, the drones will aid the French force in its efforts to ‘eliminate all traces of al Qaeda’,⁵⁰ operating under a UN Security Council mandate.⁵¹ During the fighting in Mali in the spring of 2014 the USA programmed their drones based in Niger to collect intelligence over Mali and passed this on to French forces.

With all these capabilities the MINUSMA mission is becoming very robust, able to conduct counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations. But the robust posture may also have a self-fulfilling effect, drawing attention to the mission and increasing the chance of targeted attacks against the UN. Retaliatory attacks will most probably be targeted at the soft underbelly of the UN – the funds, programmes and agencies carrying out development and humanitarian work. I will return to this in the final part of the article.

MINUSCA – a multinational experiment

On 10 April 2014 the UN Security Council also mandated a UN peacekeeping operation in the CAR, called MINUSCA, replacing the existing special political mission known as the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA).⁵² In a country where the state has faced serious challenges

in extending its authority even to cover the capital Bangui, and where coups have been the order of the day for many years, the situation descended into internal conflict in 2013, pitting Muslims (Seleka) against Christian (anti-Balaka) populations. The international presence is multifaceted to say the least – the African Union, ECOWAS and the French all have troops in-country, the EU has sent the first troop of a 1000-strong EUFOR RCA contingent,⁵³ and the new UN mission was to take over the responsibility for military and police operations from the Africa Union mission, MISCA, on 15 September 2014. MINUSCA has a wide mandate to stabilise and support various peace- and state-building tasks in the CAR.

MISCA, consisting of troops from Gabon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and Cameroon, has declared the anti-Balaka as enemies after losing a total of 21 troops.⁵⁴ These challenges will be inherited by MINUSCA when it takes over responsibility for the police and military components of MISCA in September 2014, and it is likely that the CAR will continue to be engulfed in conflict for a long time to come. The eagerness of the UN Security Council to mandate a mission was founded in an opinion that ECOWAS and the African Union would not be able to stop the bloodshed. However, it is not clear that MINUSCA will fare any better, and it is likely that it will be experience the same difficulties as MINUSMA in getting the requisite troops and capabilities on the ground.

From robust peacekeeping to peace enforcement

The mandates for MONUSCO, MINUSMA and MINUSCA intensify the use of force in UN peacekeeping operations and could arguably be the beginning of an era of UN peace-enforcement missions.⁵⁵

We have seen that there were some contextual factors that led to the decision to furnish these operations with peace-enforcement mandates. In DRC, SADC with South Africa was pushing for the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade, while in Mali the African Union was one of the key supporters of a peace-enforcement mandate for the African Union mission, AFISMA.

In 1993 John Ruggie warned that the UN had entered ‘a vaguely defined no-man’s land lying somewhere between traditional peacekeeping and enforcement – for which it lacks any traditional guiding operational concept’.⁵⁶ His warnings were not heeded and the UN soon failed miserably in Srebrenica and Rwanda. The solution to the problem was to come to a new understanding that impartiality should be understood from the perspective of protecting civilians, and that the UN could not stand idly by while atrocities were committed. The *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (known as the Brahimi Report after the Panel chair, UN Under Secretary-General Lakhdar Brahimi) held that the traditional principles ‘should remain the bedrock principles of peacekeeping’, but that peace operations should be sufficiently mandated with robust rules of engagement for civilian protection and have the necessary resources to react where civilians were in danger.⁵⁷ Today the UN is finding itself in a similar predicament, taking on new tasks that border on peace enforcement. The question is whether the gap between principles and practice signify a need to update principles, or whether this is a function of practice leaving still valid principles behind.

Internally in the UN the shift towards peace enforcement is raising concerns among UN staff in the Secretariat and in the field. Edmond Mulet, the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for peacekeeping operations, argued in an internal memo in March 2013 that UN peacekeepers 'are neither trained nor equipped to implement such a mandate',⁵⁸ and others have argued strongly that this violates the core principles of UN peacekeeping and will have long-term negative effects that are hard to foresee.⁵⁹

The analysis of the consequences of UN peace enforcement operations can be divided into two levels. At the strategic level a division of labour has developed between the UN and regional organisations. The African Union is less than thrilled that the UN replaced its missions in Mali and the CAR before it got a chance to show that it could handle these situations. At the operational and tactical levels the UN does not have the tools or capabilities to execute combat operations and it is highly uncertain whether it is possible to enable it to be a combat organisation. Indeed, there is currently no consensus among member states that this is a desired development. In particular some of the traditional troop-contributing countries (TCCs), which provide the absolute majority of troops on the ground, are wary of a development towards peace enforcement as this increases the risks their troops are exposed to.⁶⁰

The key drivers for the slide towards peace enforcement can be grouped into three categories. Most important is the continuous struggle since the failures of the UN in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s to enable the organisation not to sit idly by when civilians are attacked, but to be equipped to take robust action when needed to protect civilians. Over the years NGOs, member states and others with a particular interest in this have pushed for conceptual and capability development to enable the UN to perform this task; since the mid-2000s the DRC has been one of the key laboratories for conceptual and operational refinement of the Protection of Civilians guidelines, feeding into all parts of the mission.

Second, the lessons from more than a decade of war-fighting in Afghanistan have over time permeated into the doctrinal thinking of Western forces and their approach to conflicts in international fora, including the UN Security Council. In the past, when UN missions have assumed a robust posture (such as in the DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and several other places) it has traditionally been under the general authorisation of a Chapter VII mandate, where the threats have been spelled out in less clarity than above, and for shorter durations. The mandates for the DRC, Mali and CAR reflect a trend towards feeding intelligence into operations at local levels, using a combination of human and signal intelligence sources such as drones, and including Special Forces to support more conventional forces. These changes mirror the lessons learned by member states and NATO from counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶¹

Third, the UK, USA and France are usually the 'pen holders' when new UN Security Council resolutions are drafted and they have, together with a number of seconded staff in the Office of the Military Advisor and Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the UN Secretariat, considerable influence on policy development processes internally. Chief among these is the current Under-Secretary-General for UN peacekeeping, Hervé Ladsous, a French career diplomat. France has had the privilege of staffing this post since Jean-Marie

Guéhenno was appointed in 2000. Ladsous is seen to be closer to the Quai d'Orsay (i.e. the foreign ministry) than his predecessors and has embarked on a vigorous agenda to move the 'UN into the 21st century', with the inclusion of surveillance drones in MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO as two examples.⁶² It is also important to note that, among many of the traditional TCCs, the move towards peace enforcement and inclusion of more offensive capabilities is perceived to be driven primarily by the 'penholders' of the Security Council and by other Western states, exposing their troops to increased risks.

In light of the above factors the decision to give a targeted peace enforcement mandate to MONUSCO could be seen as a kneejerk reaction to external pressures from NGOs, Western member states and, in particular, France. In the case of MONUSCO the regional dynamic also played a significant role and the inclusion of the Force Intervention Brigade could be seen as a move to avoid the involvement of SADC as a separate actor. This could be interpreted as a lack of strategic and long-term thinking when making the decisions to furnish MONUSCO with the Force Intervention Brigade and the peace enforcement mandate. A more dystopian view would be that this was an intended change with full knowledge but little regard for the longer term implications for the UN. The UN is being given tasks it has not been designed for and in the long term this will have grave consequences, undermining the general acceptance of UN peacekeeping operations as a tool to help states emerging from conflict, and in direct conflict with all the core principles of UN peacekeeping.

Summary and conclusions

This article has demonstrated a clear mismatch between doctrine and current practices in UN peacekeeping. UN peacekeeping is now at the deep end of the pool, without solid footing for its operations; member states and other stakeholders have good reasons to be worried about this development. The kneejerk response has been to ask for the development of new guidelines for UN peacekeeping to reflect the developments on the ground. This article argues for a much more cautious approach and suggests that reflections on the development of UN peace enforcement missions should proceed along two lines.

At the strategic level and in the academic community there is a need for careful consideration of what kind of instrument UN peacekeeping should be. Can the UN use peacekeeping operations to wage war? While it may be a tempting solution for members of the UN Security Council and for the UN Secretariat, wanting to show leadership and resolve and with limited interest in engaging bilaterally or through regional organisations, the urge to equip UN peacekeeping operations with enforcement mandates that target particular groups should be considered carefully. The use of force should be limited to critical instances when civilian populations are in grave and immediate danger, for limited durations and only to stabilise a situation. The urge to satisfy short-term objectives such as showing the UN Security Council and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to be 'doing something' should be resisted. UN Security Council mandates should not specify any potential enemies, should resist the inclusion of euphemisms such as 'neutralise', and force should be used only for short periods in order to protect civilians.

When inaugurating the first surveillance drones in December 2013, Hervé Ladsous said that UN peacekeeping had finally ‘entered the 21st century’.⁶³ The willingness to update UN peacekeeping with modern tools should be applauded, but the desire to use it as a combat tool is a less fortunate development and needs careful scrutiny. The re-engagement by Western member states with UN peacekeeping is long awaited and very much needed in order to legitimise UN peacekeeping operations and bring on board new capabilities, but these member states should carefully consider how their tools and troops are used, with due concern for the long-term consequences. At the tactical level there is an increasing risk of deadly attacks on UN troops, eg by jihadists in Mali or armed groups in the CAR – as an example, the Chadian UN troops in Mali have suffered significant losses.⁶⁴ However, it is unlikely that the UN will react until successful attacks on UN civilians are mounted, something which is increasingly likely, particularly in Mali. It is difficult to see how the UN will be able to sustain and support this new type of operation once their enemies start to target UN civilians and humanitarians at large.

The article also has implications for the policy level. The division of work between the UN and regional organisations should also be considered. The predicted decline of UN peacekeeping has been postponed as new situations have emerged and the Security Council has chosen the UN as its preferred tool for conflicts in Africa. However, in the long term, African regional and sub-regional organisations are increasing their competence and improving their track record and should continue to be responsible for the more robust end of the conflict spectrum, while the UN should focus on situations where there is a peace to keep.

The article has shown that there is a need for thorough discussion of the more consistently robust posture the UN is willing to take. Is this led by member states at the Security Council? What is the policy stance of DPKO and the Secretariat? In 2016 the UN will have a new Secretary-General from Europe. It is likely that this will also lead to a reshuffle of the USG posts and, as there is precedent for having a Under Secretary-General from Africa for UN peacekeeping (Kofi Annan), there is a increased likelihood of a change of this post to the South. This is likely to lead to new dynamics in the development of guidelines and doctrine for UN peacekeeping, taking more firmly into consideration the desire by African states to develop the African Standby Force under the African Union, and to more actively use African peace operations where possible.

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Notes

1. United Nations, S/RES/2098, 7–8.
2. United Nations, S/RES/2100, 7.
3. United Nations, *Report of the Panel*; and United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*.
4. Friis and Karlsrud, “FN går til krig.”
5. United Nations, S/RES/1542.
6. United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*.
7. For more on spoilers, see Stedman, “Spoiler Problems.”
8. United Nations, *Report of the Panel*, 11.
9. United Nations, S/RES/2074.
10. United Nations, S/RES/1996, 5.
11. Lynch, “UN Peacekeeping More Assertive.”
12. *Ibid.*
13. Terrie, “The Use of Force.”
14. Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians*, 168.
15. NYU CIC, *Robust Peacekeeping*, 52; and United Nations, “Draft DPKO/DFS Concept Note,” 2.
16. United Nations, “Draft DPKO/DFS Concept Note,” 3 (emphasis in the original).
17. WFM-IGP, “IGP Matrix of Issues.”
18. Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations, “Statement by Ambassador Baso Sangqu.”
19. Young, “Decade of War”; and Leed, “What Battlefield Lessons?”
20. Marks, “The Pitfalls of Action,” 71.
21. Holt and Taylor, *Protecting Civilians*, 251–252 (bracketed material in the original).
22. *Ibid.*, 257–259.
23. Hatcher and Perry, “Defining Peacekeeping Downward.”
24. Roux, *South Africa*.
25. *Ibid.*
26. United Nations, S/RES/2098, 7–8.
27. Defenceweb, “South African Attack Helicopters”; and African Defence Net, “After 23 Years.”
28. United Nations, S/RES/2098, 6.
29. UN Security Council, *In Hindsight*.
30. IRIN News, “After North Kivu.”
31. United Nations, S/RES/2100, 7.
32. Bøås and Torheim, “The Trouble in Mali.”
33. Interview with UN official.
34. Interview with UN official.
35. The Joint Mission Analysis Centres have existed for about a decade but are much more limited in size and scope.
36. Radio Sweden, “Swedish Troops.”
37. Government of the Netherlands, “The Netherlands to Contribute”; Radio Sweden, “Swedish Troops”; Verdens Gang, “Norge sender hysj-soldater”; and interview with UN official, April 10, 2014.
38. ‘Where cooperation between the humanitarian and military actors is not appropriate, opportune or possible, or if there are no common goals to pursue, then these actors merely operate side-by-side. Such a relationship may be best described as one of co-existence, in which case civil–military coordination should focus on minimizing competition and conflict in order to enable the different actors to work in the same geographical area with minimum disruption to each other’s activities.’ IASC, *Civil–Military Relationship*, 6. See also OCHA, *Humanitarian Country Team Position*; and OCHA, *Guidance on the Use*.
39. NUPI, “Post-election Mali.”
40. Remy, “Anarchy and Death.”
41. A concern also shared by UN officials on the ground. Interview with UN official April 4, 2014.
42. UN, S/RES/2100, 7.
43. Interview with UN official, April 4, 2014.
44. UN, S/RES/2100.
45. Interview with UN official, April 2, 2014.
46. Boeing, “Scaneagle.”
47. Nichols, “UN seeks Surveillance Drones.”
48. Photograph of an Apache helicopter in green with a small UN logo painted on top, on file with the author.

49. Interview with UN official, April 4, 2014.
50. "France to use Unarmed US-made Drones."
51. United Nations, S/RES/2085.
52. United Nations, S/RES/2149. BINUCA is a peacebuilding mission without police and military components.
53. Council of the European Union, *EU Military Operation*.
54. "AU brands Central African Republic Militia."
55. However, there is one notable predecessor – the UN operation in Congo (ONUC, 1960–64), had an executive mandate to restore order and assist the Congolese government and was engaged in direct confrontations. For more, see Bellamy et al., *Understanding Peacekeeping*.
56. Ruggie, "Wandering in the Void," 26.
57. United Nations, *Report of the Panel*, ix–x.
58. UN Security Council, *In Hindsight*.
59. Interviews with UN officials based in Bamako and New York, April 4 and 11, 2014.
60. Interview with UN official, April 11, 2014.
61. Young, "Decade of War"; and Leed, "What Battlefield Lessons?"
62. UN Office of the Spokesperson, "Highlights."
63. Ibid.
64. Interview with UN official, April 4, 2014.

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