

Peace Support Operation in Transition: Fourth generation

UN peacekeeping

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Synopsis

Bangladesh has been contributing to Peacekeeping missions for almost a quarter-century. The ongoing global political turmoil and regional crises have immensely kept on challenging the collective efforts of the modern-day peace operation. The objective of this commentary is to provide a simple yet comprehensive outline of recent trends in peacekeeping operations and discuss the contribution and challenges for Bangladesh in fourth generation peacekeeping.

The concept of Peace-Keeping and peacebuilding

Peace-keeping

The concept of “*Peace-keeping*” evolved with the establishment of the United Nations (UN). UN peacekeepers are providing security, political assistance as well as peacebuilding activities to aid a conflict-ridden country to have peace. Today, peacekeeping operations are multidimensional and are not only compelled for security purposes but also for political progress like defending human rights, maintaining law and order, providing protection to civilians, organize and support free and fair elections and most importantly restoring rule of law.

Peacebuilding

The notion of “*Peacebuilding*” emerged with an understanding to promote sustainable peace by addressing the origin of a violent conflict in order to ensure capacity for maintaining peace and resolving conflicts. The 2000 report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (also known as the Brahimi Report) defined Peacebuilding as “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.”

Historical development of UN peacekeeping

UN peacekeeping operations have been on constant evolution and till now gone through four different generations. The first-generation operation outlined in the chapter VI of UN charter operations had been conducted after taking approval from host nations so there is no violation of state sovereignty; and non-use of force by United nations as UN is not a party of conflict rather a party for conflict resolution. Unlike first generation peacekeeping operation, second generation was not only for freezing conflicts rather also assisting the transition toward peace. The failure of second generation peacekeeping during 1990s as seen in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia made third generation peacekeeping as ‘peace enforcement’ illustrated in Chapter VII of UN charter. The limitations of these missions paved the way to the understanding that only humanitarian aid with no use of force won’t be solution with the change in dimension of conflicts as seen in Yugoslavia and Somalia in the 1990s. Upon reviewing and assessing the success and failure of previous peacekeeping operations, the UN proceeded to the formation of fourth generation operation.

Fourth-generation Peace Operations

The fourth-generation peacekeeping operation has certain characteristics that were included to peacekeeping operations to make them more effective and sustainable. Firstly, the fourth generation of UN peacekeeping is often known as ‘robust peacekeeping’ where there is permission to use force to enhance civilian tasks. As the dimension of the peace operations have drastically changed as seen in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina where there were mass violation of human rights, hence International human rights law and norms recognize the necessity and virtue of a robust approach as a protection mechanism for peacekeepers. The permission to use of force at peacekeeping missions are provided by Chapter VII of UN charter is often criticized as it does not serve the Security Council’s goals to maintain international peace.

Secondly, one of the important motive and tool of fourth generation peacekeeping operations are ‘peacebuilding’. The motive of peacebuilding missions is achieving their end that is through a two-tier process of political institutionalization and economic liberalization. These require direct involvement in shaping government institutions which had turned into part of

peacebuilding activity often known as ‘State building’. These excessive forms of nation building activities have also somehow shifted the goals of international intervention. Fourth generation operations are designed to resolve the root cause of the conflict and authoritatively try to create a condition for peace.

Thirdly, as dimension of peacekeeping operations keep changing so does the mandates. Peacekeeping organizations are obliged to follow the UN Security Council’s (UNSC) resolutions on women, peace and security in all peacekeeping operations. The department of peacekeeping operations promotes gender equality by ensuring deployment of qualified female uniformed military personal or civil staff for administrative, management or secretariat positions. The female peacekeeper’s often turns out to be as role models who inspires local women or girls in societies which are often male dominated to earn their own rights and take part in the peacebuilding process.

Fourthly, it is a vital factor for fourth generation peacekeepers to know an official UN language which maximum of the time are same as the crisis hit countries local language (English, French, Arabic, etc.) depending on the geographical location. Without having a common language as a means of communication might give rise to misunderstanding and mistrust among crisis hit local populations. Not only that there are different battalion’s, brigades and sector headquarters operating together who are interdependent to each other where compliance is must. Hence, such language learning activities have turned-out to be an important aspect of pre-deployment trainings.

Fifthly, as technological evolution in the world is proceeding UN must keep up with the pace to provide tech enabled peacekeeping. Hence, Fourth-generation peacekeeping is also known as ‘smart peacekeeping’. This initiative had helped technology initiative countries to help troops or police contributing countries who are usually from developing countries with low tech. These collective contributions had made UN peace keeps providing security and reach local people in new ways using GPS, smartphones, internet-based facilities, use drones or satellite images and ensure safety from mines and explosive remnants of war.

Sixthly, in the era of fourth generation peacekeeping different countries train their peacekeepers in pre-deployment training to prepare them for ‘robust peacekeeping’ or

‘peacebuilding’ activities. In 2017, DPKO-DFS had provided countries taking part with pre-deployment training materials to align all peacekeepers with basic principles and guidelines of UN peacekeeping. These pre-deployment training materials are based on multiple themes as peacekeeper’s discipline, child protection, human rights, sexual exploitation and abuses, environmental protection and etc. Still the quality of pre-deployment training varies as DPKO-DFS has failed to provide a global training architecture with only providing pre-deployment training materials.

Finally, United Nations difficulty of coping up with the multidimensional demands of peacekeeping operations led to an increase focus towards regional organization. These include the Regional organizations like NATO or Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) and etc. Operations are mixed of military, police and civilian led activities under mixed command mechanism where UN and other regional or international organizations are deploying troops and civil personal for the same mission under different command chain known as ‘hybrid missions/operations’. In this regard, hybrid missions are very different from ‘co-deployment’ or ‘joint (multinational) operations’. These hybrid operations are naturally different from the Chapter VII UN charter missions where there is no high use of force or robust peacekeeping. The United Nations – African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Sudan can be seen as a proper example of hybrid mechanism. To address such issues the UN DPKO made a document known as “New Horizon” which had called for collective efforts and greater cooperation from contributing countries.

Bangladesh in fourth generation UN peacekeeping

As a peace-loving nation Bangladesh takes part in UN peace operations as a constitutional duty and international obligations. Currently as of December 2017, UN is operating 16 Peacekeeping operations among where Bangladesh is taking part in 10 with 7,246 Bangladeshi troops and police personnel. The Bangladeshi contingents are providing security in some of the hotspots of the world like Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Darfur region of Sudan.

Bangladesh is also committed towards women participation in peacekeeping, as currently 157 women peacekeepers are serving among 1400 deployed around the world. Previously, Bangladesh had deployed a full female armed police unit in Haiti and two female combat pilots

in Democratic Republic of the Congo. Bangladesh is believed to have a well repeated leading pre-deployment peacekeepers training institute known as Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT). This internationally reputed institute includes multidimensional courses like women, peace and security, sexual violence, language course on English, French and Multinational Peace Operation Exercise known as (Shanti Doot).

There are certain complexities and challenges that are beginning to seem like a factor to worry about regarding the future of Bangladeshi participation in UN peacekeeping missions due to the change in dimension of UN peacekeeping operations and world politics.

Firstly, as the diminution of the conflicts are no longer among states rather inter-states like in Mali, South Sudan where Bangladeshi peacekeepers are currently in operation, different groups are supported by other state or non-state actors which makes it extremely confusing and impossible to solve.

Secondly, as missions today are aimed toward armed groups' robustness have had turned out to be a growing factor as part of the mandate, these ambitious mandates for future are drafted by developed countries who are not ready to take such risk nor ready to support with technology and finance.

Thirdly, after the populist led American government had announced the reduction of contribution toward UN peacekeeping and US ambassador to UN had asked for a reform the ongoing missions, Bangladesh should worry as a major contributor to peacekeeping missions.

Fourthly, as most of the ongoing interstate conflicts are in Africa, the number of Bangladeshi peacekeepers might drop due to preference to regional troops.

Lastly, Bangladeshi peacekeepers are lacking behind regarding use of modern technology in UN peacekeeping operations compared to competing peacekeepers contributing nations.

Conclusion

Proven over the last six decades, peacekeeping operations had been one of the major tools as international community conflict resolution. With the change in dynamics of international politics mandates peacekeeping operations also kept changing over time. This commentary had discussed the features and details regarding fourth generation UN peacekeeping, which was later used to compare the contribution of Bangladesh in fourth generation Peacekeeping. Lastly this commentary had tried to discuss the shortcoming of Bangladesh in fourth generation UN peacekeeping with suggested reforms.