Committee: Special Commission

Topic: The Question of Re-evaluating UN Peacekeeping Missions in Post-Conflict Regions

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**Summary**

UN peacekeeping has evolved significantly over the past 75 years, adapting to the changing nature of global conflicts and emerging challenges. Initially focused on managing post-conflict stabilization, peacekeeping has become increasingly complex, addressing issues such as the weaponization of technology, climate change, and the rise of non-state armed groups. Despite its success in maintaining peace in many regions, the growing number of intractable conflicts poses significant challenges to peacekeeping. Over the years, reforms have been aimed at ensuring peacekeeping operations remain effective in this evolving environment. Initiatives like **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)** and **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)** have emerged as frameworks to strengthen the foundations of peacekeeping and refocus efforts towards more realistic goals, enhanced political support, and better-equipped forces. In addition, the **New Agenda for Peace**, launched in 2023, focuses on comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of conflict, providing an important step in redefining peacekeeping for the future.

The transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding is a critical phase for countries hosting United Nations missions. While peacekeeping can help set a country on the right path, long-term success relies on local ownership of recovery efforts. UN peacekeeping missions, such as those in Sudan and Liberia, have demonstrated the importance of tailored transitions that engage local stakeholders throughout the process. Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized that peacekeeping operations are not permanent and must adapt to evolving conditions. Former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf highlighted the success of Liberia’s transition, noting that peace must be adopted as a way of life by the host country. Sustainable transitions are nationally owned and require coherent, integrated efforts from both regional and international partners.

**Definition of Key Terms**

* **Peacekeeping Mandates**: Tasks assigned to peacekeepers, which may include monitoring ceasefires, providing security to civilians, and supporting political processes. These mandates are developed by the UN Security Council based on the specific needs of each mission.
* **Protection of Civilians (PoC)**: A mandate given to peacekeeping forces to proactively protect vulnerable populations from violence, particularly in conflicts involving non-state armed groups.
* **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)**: An initiative launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2018 to refocus peacekeeping efforts, emphasizing stronger, safer missions and mobilizing political support for peacekeeping operations.
* **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)**: An extension of A4P launched in 2021, which focuses on implementing the priorities of A4P, emphasizing political solutions, better-equipped peacekeeping forces, and enhanced coordination with regional organizations.
* **New Agenda for Peace**: A 2023 initiative that focuses on identifying and addressing the underlying drivers of conflict, enhancing collective security responses, and incorporating emerging risks into peacekeeping strategies.
* **Host State Consent** is the principle that a UN peacekeeping mission requires approval from the government of the country in which it operates. This consent ensures legitimacy and cooperation, but can be revoked, complicating peacekeeping efforts, as seen in cases like Mali.

**Background Information**

Over the past seven decades, UN peacekeeping has become a cornerstone of international crisis management, focusing on stabilizing post-conflict zones and supporting political transitions. The nature of peacekeeping has shifted dramatically since the UN’s first mission in 1948, reflecting changes in the types of conflicts and the broader geopolitical landscape. While early missions primarily focused on traditional interstate conflicts, today’s operations are increasingly deployed in complex, intra-state conflicts, where peacekeepers must navigate hostile environments and manage political dynamics often involving non-state actors, and fragile host governments.

Due to this, peacekeeping missions have been increasingly tasked with more proactive roles, particularly in protecting civilians. The shift from passive observation to active intervention has been particularly evident in missions since 1999, when the UN began authorizing peacekeepers to use force to protect civilians under imminent threat. Despite these advances, peacekeeping operations often struggle with limited mandates, insufficient resources, and growing hostility from non-state actors and, in some cases, the host states themselves.

A significant challenge in the 21st century has been the growing number of threats facing peacekeepers. The weaponization of technology, the impacts of climate change, mass displacement, and the fragmentation of armed groups have all contributed to making peacekeeping increasingly perilous. Peacekeepers are frequently targeted by armed groups, and the missions themselves often lack the personnel and equipment needed to address these threats. These challenges have underscored the need for comprehensive reforms within the UN peacekeeping system.

**Recent Developments**

In recent years, the evolving nature of conflict has prompted the UN to adopt several initiatives aimed at reforming and strengthening peacekeeping efforts:

* **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)**: Launched in 2018 by the UN Secretary-General, A4P aims to renew political commitment to peacekeeping and create a set of mutually agreed principles for more effective operations. The initiative emphasizes realistic peacekeeping mandates, stronger operations, and mobilization of political support for peace processes. A4P has shifted focus towards more strategic, well-structured, and well-trained peacekeeping forces.
* **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)**: Launched in 2021, A4P+ is an extension of A4P, providing an implementation strategy that focuses on seven thematic areas. These include enhancing political solutions, ensuring better coordination with regional partners, and strengthening the safety and security of peacekeepers.
* **UN Peace and Security Reforms (2017)**: Aimed at enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of the UN’s peace and security pillars, these reforms integrated the peace and security pillar with the human rights and development pillars, aligning them more closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment aims to ensure that peacekeeping missions contribute to long-term peace and stability by addressing the underlying drivers of conflict.
* **High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)**: Established in 2015 and culminating in the 2016 HIPPO report, the Panel conducted a comprehensive assessment of UN peace operations. The report emphasized the importance of political solutions, stronger partnerships, and a more flexible and adaptable peacekeeping framework.
* **Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS)**: A key outcome of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial process, which began in 2014, the PCRS aims to improve the rapid deployment of peacekeepers by creating a system for pledging and maintaining specialized capabilities, enhancing the ability of peacekeepers to respond swiftly and effectively to crises.
* **The New Agenda for Peace (2023)**: Launched in early 2023, this new initiative aims to better understand and address the drivers of conflict. It calls for a renewed collective effort to enhance security responses and manage emerging risks, marking a significant shift towards a more holistic approach to peacekeeping.

**Timeline of Events**

* **1948**: **First UN Peacekeeping Mission**  
  The UN deploys its first peacekeeping mission, the **United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)**, to monitor the Kashmir ceasefire.
* **1956**: **Suez Crisis (UNEF I)**  
  The UN launches its first large-scale peacekeeping mission in response to the Suez Crisis to supervise the ceasefire between Egypt and Israel.
* **1960s-1980s**: **Expansion of Peacekeeping**  
  Peacekeeping missions expand globally, with notable operations in the Congo, Cyprus, and the Middle East, focusing on ceasefire monitoring and stability.
* **1990s**: **Shift to Complex Operations**  
  Post-Cold War, peacekeeping becomes more complex, especially in places like Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, where the UN faces severe challenges in managing ethnic conflicts and genocides.
* **1999**: **Sierra Leone and Protection of Civilians**  
  **UNAMSIL** becomes the first mission tasked with protecting civilians under threat, marking a shift towards more proactive peacekeeping roles.
* **2000**: **Peacekeeping Reform - Brahimi Report**  
  The **Brahimi Report** calls for reforms to improve UN peacekeeping, highlighting issues in planning, leadership, and resources.
* **2004**: **Peacekeeping Expansion and New Concepts**  
  The UN adopts **robust mandates**, allowing peacekeepers to use force proactively for civilian protection, seen in missions like **MONUC** and **MINUSCA**.
* **2008**: **Capstone Doctrine**  
  The UN publishes the **Capstone Doctrine**, outlining peacekeeping principles and concepts, laying the foundation for future peacekeeping operations.
* **2010**: **New Horizons Initiative**  
  The **New Horizons** initiative aims to improve peacekeeping through better mission planning, faster deployment, and stronger global partnerships.
* **2014**: **Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS)**  
  The **PCRS** is established to ensure rapid deployment of peacekeepers, with Member States pledging specialized capabilities.
* **2015**: **HIPPO Report**  
  The **HIPPO Report** emphasizes integrating political solutions, improving partnerships, and ensuring the necessary resources for peacekeeping operations.
* **2017**: **UN Peace and Security Reforms**  
  **Peace and Security Reforms** integrate the peace, human rights, and development pillars to improve coherence and align with the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.
* **2018**: **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)**  
  The **A4P** initiative is launched to renew political commitment to peacekeeping, refocus missions, and ensure peacekeepers are well-trained, equipped, and supported.
* **2021**: **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)**  
  The **A4P+** initiative is launched to implement A4P priorities, focusing on political solutions, safety for peacekeepers, and coordination with regional organizations.
* **2023**: **New Agenda for Peace**  
  The **New Agenda for Peace** aims to address the root causes of conflict and enhance collective security, focusing on emerging risks like climate change and cyber threats.

**Additional Notable Milestones**

* **2005**: **World Summit**  
  The **World Summit** establishes the **Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)** to assist countries transitioning from conflict and strengthens the UN Human Rights Council (HRC).
* **2014**: **UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Process**  
  The **Peacekeeping Ministerial process** begins, providing a platform for Member States to pledge support and resources for peacekeeping operations.
* **2019**: **UN Peacekeeping Capability Gaps**  
  The UN addresses gaps in peacekeeping capabilities, such as logistics and medical support, to improve mission effectiveness.

**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

* **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)**: Focuses on the integration of gender perspectives into peacekeeping operations, emphasizing the importance of women’s involvement in peacebuilding.
* **The Brahimi Report (2000)**: A key report assessing the UN’s peacekeeping failures and providing specific recommendations for reforms, particularly in terms of institutional changes, funding, and political commitment.
* **The New Agenda for Peace (2023)**: Builds on the work of previous peacekeeping initiatives to address emerging risks and improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

**Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue**

Previous attempts to reform UN peacekeeping have been met with varying degrees of success. The **Brahimi Report** in 2000, for example, identified key shortcomings in peacekeeping missions, including poor planning, inadequate resources, and weak political support from Member States. The **New Horizons** initiative in 2010 sought to address these issues by emphasizing better mission planning, faster deployment, and improved political direction. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the limited willingness of Member States to commit the necessary resources for peacekeeping operations.

**Possible Solutions**

* **Improved Political Support**: Member States should prioritize political solutions to conflict, ensuring that peacekeeping is always part of a broader strategy for peacebuilding.
* **Increased Funding and Resources**: Ensuring that peacekeeping missions are adequately funded and equipped to meet the complex challenges of modern conflict is crucial for their success.
* **Enhanced Partnerships with Regional Actors**: Strengthening collaboration between the UN and regional organizations will allow for more localized, context-specific responses to conflict.
* **Flexible, Adaptive Mandates**: Peacekeeping mandates should be adaptable to the evolving nature of conflict, ensuring that peacekeepers can respond quickly to emerging threats.

**Recommendations for MUN Delegates**

* **Adapt to New Peace Operations**
  + Support the shift to Special Political Missions (SPMs) and UN-backed counter-terrorism forces.
  + Push for new guidelines to manage UN support for military operations.
  + Balance peace enforcement with traditional peacekeeping principles.
* **Promote Flexible Mandates**
  + Call for clear, adaptable mandates that respond to evolving threats.
  + Ensure missions can adjust without full renegotiation.
  + Equip operations with modern tech and rapid deployment forces.
* **Ensure Sustainable Transitions**
  + Support gradual, conditions-based mission exits.
  + Advocate for local, regional, and economic involvement post-exit.
  + Link transitions to economic development to reduce instability.
* **Strengthen Peacebuilding**
  + Encourage partnerships with development banks and UNDP.
  + Promote local projects addressing economic drivers of conflict.
  + Align peacekeeping with SDGs for long-term resilience.
* **Focus on Political Solutions**
  + Push for peacekeeping as part of broader political strategies.
  + Emphasize conflict prevention and local engagement.
  + Support national dialogue and inclusive peace processes.
* **Boost Regional Cooperation**
  + Strengthen ties with regional bodies (AU, ECOWAS, ASEAN).
  + Empower regional peace operations with UN support.
  + Promote hybrid missions combining UN and regional expertise.
* **Advance the New Agenda for Peace**
  + Back the 2023 New Agenda for Peace to address modern threats.
  + Reinforce multilateralism and peacekeeping norms.
  + Expand UN focus to emerging threats like cybersecurity and misinformation

**Conclusion**

UN peacekeeping remains a vital tool for maintaining international peace and security, but its future lies in adaptability and deeper integration with political, economic, and development efforts. As missions evolve to meet complex challenges, it is essential to prioritize comprehensive, sustainable solutions that address the root causes of conflict.

In post-conflict countries, peacekeeping plays a crucial role in stabilizing fragile environments, but long-term peace depends on local leadership, national ownership, and economic recovery. Successful transitions, such as in Liberia and Sudan, highlight the importance of coordinated efforts between the UN, regional organizations, and local stakeholders. Ensuring that peacekeeping transitions align with economic development and peacebuilding initiatives can reduce the risk of relapse into conflict.

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