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CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



**Walking Point for Peace: An Irish view on the state  
of UN peacekeeping**

**Edward Burke and Jonathan Marley**

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

## CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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# Table of Contents

## Walking Point for Peace: An Irish view on the state of UN peacekeeping

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<b>Foreword</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Doctrine, Training and Stand-By Arrangements: Aspirations and Reality</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Mission Leadership, Command and Control</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4. Mission Intelligence and Strategic Analysis</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. Peacekeeping Finance and Logistics</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6. Conclusion</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>26</b>

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## Foreword

Could European countries make a greater contribution to United Nations peace operations? Since the disasters in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, few European generals and strategists have taken the UN seriously. When thinking of sending their troops abroad they have generally prioritized NATO and the European Union instead. New strategic dynamics are starting to change their calculations. The rapid spread of disorder across the Middle East and North Africa has forced EU members to rethink the crisis management options available to them. In Mali, the Netherlands and Nordic countries have made a large investment of personnel in the UN stabilization mission (MINUSMA) as part of a broader strategy to counter violent extremism in the Sahel. There has also been talk of a UN peacekeeping force in Libya. The United States has urged its European allies to take a greater role in current and future UN operations.

U.S. ambassador to the UN Samantha Power recently argued in Brussels that a fresh European investment in the UN could have a “momentum-shifting” impact:

Some critics claim that UN deployments detract from NATO’s core mandate or missions. Others claim that the United States does not respect these deployments, or views them as “soft.” Both claims are false. The United States values Europe’s military contributions to peacekeeping. NATO’s current Strategic Concept itself calls for working with UN and regional organizations to enhance international peace and security. Blue helmets carry the unique legitimacy of having 193 Member States behind them – from the global North and South alike. In addition, these missions allow burden sharing – European nations can provide high-value niche contributions and force-multipliers to UN missions, without having the burden of fielding the entire operation – a division of labor that both plays to European militaries’ strengths and spreads risks across a larger pool.

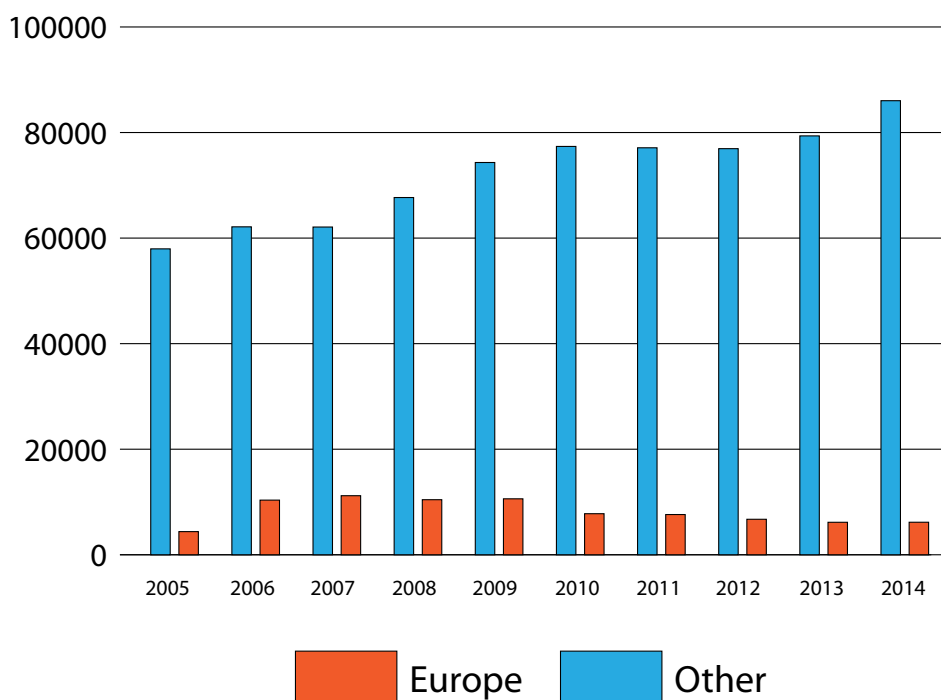
But while the strategic case for greater European participation in UN operations may be solidifying, there are many technical obstacles to this re-engagement. After years of experience in the Balkans and Afghanistan, European soldiers are more comfortable with NATO and EU doctrines and standards. Adapting to the UN’s way of doing business in cases such as Mali has been a bumpy process. European military officers typically view the UN’s systems for command and control, medical support and intelligence gathering as far inferior to the NATO/EU alternatives. Many of their criticisms are correct, and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which is relatively frank about these shortcomings, would not necessarily disagree. Yet in other cases, European complaints are either unjustified or based on out-of-date views of the UN’s abilities.

In this context, there is a need for European militaries to learn from the few that never completely gave up on the UN in the 1990s and 2000s. Ireland is one of the most prominent of these. Continuing on its Cold War tradition of peacekeeping, the Irish military has played a significant role in blue helmet missions ranging from Liberia to Lebanon over the last two decades. It has gained and maintained a much deeper and more current understanding of the UN’s strengths and weaknesses than most of their regional counterparts. Highlighting this unusual advantage, the United Kingdom recently requested Ireland to help train its troops on peacekeeping issues.

This paper by Edward Burke and Jonathan Marley offers an in-depth account of how Irish officers and officials think about UN peacekeeping. Their findings should be of interest to policy-makers not only in Dublin and New York but also among those European governments that want to increase their contributions to the UN in future.

The paper does not make completely comfortable reading for those who share this goal. Despite their continued commitment to the UN, many Irish officers still share the broader European preference for NATO/EU operations. They view many of the civilian officials that play a pivotal role in UN missions with skepticism. The suspicion is mutual. As one UN official interviewed for this study remarks, “The

## Military Personnel deployed by Europe and other regions: 2005 - 2014



Irish want to do everything their own way.” Such frictions are inevitable in all complex military operations, and Burke and Marley point out that representatives of non-Western troop contributors have raised similar concerns. A close reading of this paper should help policy-makers identify potential areas of tension in future operations.

In the concluding section of the paper, Burke and Marley identify particular areas for policy innovations, including (1) improving and standardizing training doctrines for UN contingents; (2) moving away from a “one size fits all” approach to the UN’s force generation process; (3) giving senior military officials on the ground greater leeway over how to use the forces and assets available to them; and, on a related them, (4) raising the quality of mission leadership. There are serious headaches over logistical issues and the use of intelligence. Yet the authors also give reasons for optimism: Experienced Irish officers believe that UN has made real progress instituting previous reforms, and are generally positive about the organization’s current efforts to modernize its approach to operations.

As Burke and Marley indicate, it is incumbent on both European militaries and the UN to innovate to work together better in future. There is little point in advanced militaries offering more personnel and assets to the UN if the organization cannot deploy and use them effectively. Equally, it is not much good for the UN to accommodate European concerns if EU members continue to offer limited military resources in return. Studies like this one may help both sides understand each other’s concerns better, and promote a unified approach to strengthening the UN.

Other factors may get in the way of this ambition: Europe’s overall security environment is deteriorating, and it has to use its resources wisely. For some EU and NATO members, bolstering the UN will remain a low priority. But as the crisis in Mali shows, European governments cannot simply treat the UN as an afterthought. For the first time since the 1990s, the blue helmets are making a direct contribution to European security. Europe needs to give them greater support. Ireland’s history of peacekeeping allows it to act as a pioneer in this task.

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## Walking Point for Peace: An Irish view on the state of UN peacekeeping

### 1. Introduction

On August 30 2014 Irish peacekeepers in Syria came under attack from al-Qaeda's affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra. The group had already kidnapped 45 Fijian soldiers and seized UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) bases, weapons and equipment. Now they surrounded, fired upon and demanded the surrender of two other UN positions manned by Filipino peacekeepers. Despite such attacks, Irish troops successfully relieved their encircled comrades, evacuating 93 personnel while maintaining their own security in a tense and highly volatile environment.

Irish troops had done well; but this was not the UN's finest hour – a war of words broke out between the UN Force Commander and the Government of the Philippines over whether its troops disobeyed an order to surrender to al-Nusra.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, the UN was forced to negotiate with an al-Qaeda group in order to gain the release of the Fijian troops, who were freed on 11 September. UNDOF has yet to regain its lost positions on the Syrian 'Bravo' line of the disengagement zone.

For the European countries - Austria and Croatia - who had recently withdrawn their contingents from UNDOF, this debacle on the Golan was entirely predictable. UN peacekeepers had been harassed and occasionally kidnapped for more than two years by rebel fighters who did not respect UNDOF's mandate (to keep a zone of separation between the Syrian and Israeli militaries).<sup>3</sup> In the end, it was only a single company of Irish soldiers that possessed any serious military capability to respond to an attack by al-Nusra. Ireland has always been willing to serve the UN in places where other European countries would not. However, a previously unwavering Irish commitment to UN service may become more conditional in future due to increased expectations over military capabilities, realistic mandates and duty of care on the part of the Irish government. Defence Minister Simon Coveney has argued for such a strict, conditions-based approach for future Irish contingents following the events of August 2014.<sup>4</sup>

Ireland's record on UN peacekeeping is impressive. At one point, in 1997, two-thirds of Irish soldiers had served on UN peacekeeping operations. Of these, 70 per cent had deployed on more than one mission. While that ratio dropped during commitments to NATO and EU-led missions in Kosovo, Bosnia and Tchad, in recent years UN service has once again become the norm for Irish military personnel. In April 2015 67 per cent of all Irish military personnel have served on UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>5</sup> Since 1955, 86 Irish soldiers have died on UN peacekeeping operations, more than any other European country with the exception of France and the UK. Ireland is one of the few European countries to consistently send contingents to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. At the end of 2014, 356 members of the Irish Defence Force were deployed on peacekeeping operations, including contingents in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the UNDOF in the Golan Heights.<sup>6</sup> Irish diplomats and defence officials in New York have consistently championed UN peacekeeping reform, being seen as a constructive, engaged – and occasionally critical – supporter of the UN agencies.<sup>7</sup>

Irish diplomats cite UN peacekeeping as a critical factor in explaining why there has been an almost 80 per cent decline in conflict since the end of the Cold War. But, there is also something more – Ireland's post-independence international identity was forged in the UN, a positive foreign policy contribution by a country that had asserted and then consolidated its sovereignty in the first half of the 20th century. Neutrality, support for decolonization, the campaign for nuclear disarmament and an enthusiastic participation in UN peacekeeping marked Ireland out as pursuing a substantially different international agenda than its nearest neighbour, the UK. Ireland could stay silent and opt out when larger Western countries acted against Socialist movements in the developing world, policies of which Irish governments often discreetly approved, but could also vocally support the principles of the UN charter and build ties with other new countries that had emerged from the British and other European empires.<sup>8</sup> The friendships won at the UN during the initial period of decolonization and peacekeeping have fostered a sentimental loyalty to the blue-helmet not widely shared

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among developed countries. As one envoy put it, “Ireland’s commitment to the UN organization is not merely based on pragmatic state security policy. There are very deep emotional ties between the UN and Ireland.”<sup>9</sup>

### *Irish defence policy*

Buffered by NATO on the western fringes of Europe, Ireland finds itself in a relatively benign strategic environment. Defence policy is rarely discussed; parliamentarians ask few questions about military capabilities and the €676 million annual defence budget. The Irish Permanent Defence Force with its 9,133 personnel accounts for only 0.55 per cent of GDP – the second lowest in the EU.<sup>10</sup> A parliamentary committee that is responsible for Justice and Equality also oversees Defence – only a few days are devoted annually to hearings on military matters. In 2014 the Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney, was also appointed as Minister for Defence – an onerous sharing of portfolios even for a Minister with a reputation for hard work and ability. The drafting of a new government White Paper on Irish defence policy in 2015 has provided a welcome, if overdue, opportunity for debate.<sup>11</sup>

Strategic interests are not usually considered when it comes to military deployments overseas. Irish diplomats view Ireland’s political and military commitment to the UN as uniquely strong among European countries, an enduring commitment of principle that they are very proud to consolidate in the future.<sup>12</sup> But UN service – for which Ireland is reimbursed – is also seen as a better ‘austerity option’ for a cash-strapped Irish government than EU deployments (which are not reimbursed).<sup>13</sup>

When it comes to overseas operations, non-NATO partners such as “the Nordics and Austria are the first port of call.” Diplomats cite Finland as Ireland’s best partner; the Finnish government and military have carefully synchronized operations and worked to enable smooth command changeovers, as is the case in the current Irish-Finnish battalion serving in UNIFIL. The same diplomats viewed the March 2013 deployment of an Irish Defence Forces/British Army integrated training team - a joint contribution to the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTMM) - as an anomaly; the Nordics and Austrians in this instance were unavailable.<sup>14</sup>

Irish officers<sup>15</sup> are also quick to praise their traditional non-NATO European partners. But many also believe that Ireland could benefit from building stronger NATO security partnerships – providing more opportunities for joint training exercises, intelligence sharing and a wider network of potential partners for future overseas deployments. Irish officers pointed to recent changes in the Swedish approach to relations with NATO (an exceptionally close relationship stopping short of full membership) as worth considering from an Irish perspective.<sup>16</sup> That logic appears to be increasingly persuasive to key ministers in Irish government. In 2015, a bilateral defence agreement was signed between Ireland and the UK; Irish and British troops will increasingly train together and will also likely deploy on missions together.<sup>17</sup>

A desire to further diversify Ireland’s security alliances away from traditional UN service is also representative of wide-ranging concerns among some officers in the Irish military about the state of UN peacekeeping. In 2011, a senior Irish officer wrote that:

...UN Peacekeeping, as a means of facilitating the maintenance of international peace and security and as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, is on ‘life support’. The ‘condition of the patient’ has not improved in its many recent deployments.<sup>18</sup>

The Irish government is concerned at the persistent unwillingness of many European countries to commit troops to UN operations. In 2013 only 0.5 per cent or 383 personnel in current UN peacekeeping operations in Africa came from Europe.<sup>19</sup> The trend has been noticed for some years with former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, writing in 2009 that the lack of European high-end military capabilities and political support was eroding the credibility of UN peacekeeping.<sup>20</sup> Some European countries say they are opting out because they do not believe UN structures can provide a sufficient level of force protection.

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## *A new European chapter in UN peacekeeping?*

The jarring experience of European UN peacekeeping contingents in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia during the mid-1990s reduced an already questionable appetite among some European countries for UN service. The Brahimi reforms were welcomed but came shortly before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which left even the largest European militaries over committed.<sup>21</sup> Some made excuses: since most UN peacekeeping missions were in Africa and Asia, countries from those regions should take full responsibility for peacekeeping. And it was cheaper to send African or Asian soldiers – European militaries' requirements regarding force protection and enabling assets often went well beyond what the UN system could provide or wished to reimburse. Denmark, Norway and Sweden were focused on NATO-led operations in Afghanistan: with the exception of UNIFIL, peacekeeping contributions from Europe were largely whittled down to Austria, Finland, Ireland and a handful of rotating Central European countries.

As the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan reaches its concluding phase, a number of European countries are beginning to ask whether and how they should re-engage with UN peacekeeping. During the last ten years traditional peacekeepers like Denmark and Norway increasingly prioritized war fighting and stabilization in Afghanistan over UN-led operations.<sup>22</sup> The UK is also beginning to look again at UN operations as a possible Troop Contributing Country post-2014.<sup>23</sup> EU countries continue to be among the largest donors to UN peacekeeping operations, providing close to 40 per cent of funds for the UN's 16 peacekeeping missions (to which 117,000 military and civilian personnel are deployed).<sup>24</sup>

Discussions surrounding UN peacekeeping reform are normally the preserve of civilians, particularly New York-based diplomats and analysts. Military views on peacekeeping are not sufficiently prioritized. Missions are still too often mandated according to political desirability rather than military reality based on available resources. Neat concepts quickly wilt under fire – listening to the operational experiences and frank opinions of soldiers,

and those civilians working alongside soldiers, should be given greater priority. By focusing on the operational, particularly military side, of UN peacekeeping, the authors have attempted to remedy that deficit. The paper does not provide an account of the latest strategic initiatives in New York. Instead it tries to capture the views of Irish soldiers who have served on UN operations from the shores of West Africa to the forests of Timor-Leste.

This report, based on a wide range of interviews with Irish military officers, diplomats and defence officials, seeks to answer a question frequently posed to Irish government officials by their European partners: How far has the UN come in improving its operational peacekeeping performance? The experiences of Irish soldiers in recent years offer a signal perspective for other European militaries. Despite relatively low defence spending, the authors believe that the Irish military has earned respect through rigorous preparation, perseverance and imagination in places like Liberia, Chad and Syria. Nevertheless, many of the interviewees did not hesitate to point out their own perceived shortcomings, as well as the UN, and were determined to find ways to avoid mistakes in the future. The aim of this report is to provide other European countries with an insight into how recent UN peacekeeping initiatives have translated into operational reality in order to allow for further comparison and dialogue.

The authors have taken the post-Brahimi<sup>25</sup> report era as their timeline. Since this landmark document, Ireland has sent dozens of contingents to serve in UN peacekeeping missions in Timor-Leste (UNTAET), Eritrea (UNMEE), Liberia (UNMIL), Chad (MINURCAT), Lebanon (UNIFIL) and Syria (UNDOF). From the outset it is clear that expectations on what constitutes effective peacekeeping differ between European countries and many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The European mantra is one of 'robust peacekeeping', which is aimed at force mobility, firepower and intelligence. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/Department of Field Support (DFS) 'Concept Note on Robust Peacekeeping' and the 'New Horizon' non-paper have examined at length the political and logistical requirements integral to robust



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peacekeeping including 'clear and achievable mandates', 'better logistics and support', 'enhanced training and readiness standards' and so on.

Some Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries fear that appeals for robustness are a potential threat to sovereignty; to be abused at will by Western UN Member States.<sup>26</sup> Developing countries, with limited technological capabilities and training, do not want to be left behind – not everybody can bring sophisticated unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or advanced signals intelligence to the table.<sup>27</sup> There are also real concerns about the possible implications of changes to the existing mechanisms for the reimbursement of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs).<sup>28</sup> Clashes in the UN General Assembly in recent years on these issues point to a lack of trust between UN Member States on peacekeeping reform. Ireland is firmly on the mainstream European side of that debate.

## 2. Doctrine, Training and Stand-By Arrangements: Aspirations and Reality

### *Doctrinal Context: diverging narratives of reform*

While the ten member high-level panel was putting the finishing touches to what we now know as the Brahimi report on UN peacekeeping reform, Ireland was simultaneously launching the most ambitious programme of defence reform in its history, producing its first ever White Paper on Defence.<sup>29</sup> Critically for Ireland's relationship with the UN, the White Paper was in many aspects a response to the European security demands of the time. Ireland, as 'an active and committed member of the EU' was prepared to play its part in European initiatives to address conflict in the western Balkans.<sup>30</sup>

Capability development for the Petersberg Tasks<sup>31</sup> became a Defence Forces mantra. The UNSAS arrangement that saw Ireland commit 850 personnel to the UN was mirrored by a similar offer to the EU under the newly established Headline Goal mechanism. Membership of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1999 provided exposure to NATO doctrine, training and standards that transformed the military culture and capabilities of the Defence Forces. The White Paper also specifically targeted a 'scaling down' of Ireland's commitment to UN missions in the Middle East and elsewhere in order to contribute more fully to the 'European domain'.<sup>32</sup> The intent signaled by the Irish government in 2000 was therefore clear: 'the UN was old school, Europe was the main effort'.<sup>33</sup>

### *Doctrine in a post – Brahimi era*

The failure of the UN in Bosnia and Rwanda during the 1990's, in particular the performance of UNPROFOR and UNAMIR, was critical to the thinking that informed the conclusions of the Brahimi report. High profile and shocking failures such as the UN failure to prevent Srebrenica and other massacres exposed the UN's weakness in doctrine, organisational culture, structure and function.<sup>34</sup>

Brahimi recognized the importance of the relationship between the politico-strategic and operational/mission levels of the UN – bridging the gap between 'mandates

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and the scope for operational activity' by targeting the interrelated elements of 'successful professional peacekeeping': capabilities, force protection, and effective rules of engagement. This did not necessarily mark a change of doctrinal approach *per se* but did provide for a reinvigoration and expansion of the existing doctrinal platform.

Though connections were drawn with the UN's robust interventions in the Congo during the 1960s, Brahimi's recommendations were not simply 'a back to the future' approach to contemporary peacekeeping. By prioritizing defence of the mandate, in addition to self-defence and defence of mission components, Brahimi opened the door for doctrinal expansion, including the introduction of concepts such as Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which became an integral part of UN mandates.

The goal of harmonizing UN peacekeeping practices between TCCs has prompted a succession of reform initiatives including publication of the '*Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*' in 2003 through to the '*New Horizons Initiative*' launched in 2009 and subsequent annual progress reports. The aim of the 2003 Handbook was 'to provide field personnel who are new to United Nations... with general background on the responsibilities of each component of our operations and how these fit together to form the whole'.<sup>35</sup> It is a practical document that captured the key characteristics of peacekeeping evolution, correctly identifying the necessity for effective cooperation and coordination at all levels – civilian and military – in 'multidimensional peacekeeping operations'. The Handbook drew attention to the transition of roles between military and civilian actors that would have been new to even the most experienced UN military officer.

The UN's 2008 publication of '*United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and guidelines*' provided a clearer doctrinal foundation for the emerging initiatives that the handbook identified. The more ambitious 'New Horizon Initiative' of 2009, aimed to 're-invigorate peacekeeping partnership by identifying a common vision of United Nations peacekeeping'.<sup>36</sup> It prioritized reform in four areas:

policy development, capability development, global field support strategy and planning and oversight.

Collectively these documents aimed to provide a doctrinal template for member-states preparing to contribute to peacekeeping missions; they directly challenged ad-hoc or complacent attitudes, both from within the Secretariat and among TCCs. The impact of the New Horizon Initiative among TCCs is open to question. An analysis of the Irish experience reveals that these UN initiatives gained little, and in most cases, no traction in Irish peacekeeping doctrine; alarmingly for the UN, most of the military personnel interviewed for this research were not even aware of their existence.<sup>37</sup>

### **Doctrinal impact: The Irish experience**

The evident lack of awareness regarding changes to the UN's peacekeeping doctrine in Ireland can be attributed to the Irish military prioritizing NATO and EU doctrine above that of the UN. A clear consensus among Irish officers was that a combination of EU concepts and NATO doctrine on peace support operations, as 'international best practice', was the best way to develop contributions to peacekeeping and peace enforcing missions; including UN-led missions.

Analyzing the doctrinal footprint at the operational level, it is clear that UN transformation initiatives intended for Member States are competing with, and in the Irish case losing to, other international organizations such as NATO or the EU. This orientation towards 'Europe' was replicated in the other EU non-NATO countries with the effect that the traditional core reserve of UN support in Europe, namely Ireland, Austria and the Nordic countries is losing its UN-centric focus.

With the exception of UNSCR 1325 – operationalizing the empowerment and protection of women - Ireland has typically not adopted UN policy relevant to peacekeeping operations, assuming that NATO/EU approaches to 'peacekeeping issues' could also cover Irish contributions to UN-led operations. In many cases this is unproblematic; Irish military units have effectively applied NATO and particularly EU approaches to issues such as gender

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and protection of civilians on UN missions. However, for other areas the assumption is clearly flawed. Ireland's consideration of the use of intelligence assets is wholly developed within the context of NATO and EU missions and stands apart from emerging UN ideas on the subject.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Irish military logistics personnel noted the incompatibility of field support strategies used by the NATO, the EU and UN.

Lately these assumptions are being challenged from another perspective, with senior military officers concerned that an attitude that Ireland 'could write the book on UN peacekeeping' is complacent and invalid. They have established a high-level defence board to review Defence Forces' peacekeeping doctrine to ensure that it is responsive to the operational needs and differences of various deployments; UN, NATO or EU.<sup>39</sup> Such recent attempts to bring Irish and UN peacekeeping doctrine closer together are praiseworthy. But it is clear that the stimulus for such an initiative has come from Dublin rather than New York.

Three elements of Ireland's experience stand out: First, the UN does not fully appreciate that it is in competition with the emerging EU and evolving NATO structures in terms of setting the agenda for peacekeeping reform. Second, this lack of inter-institutional awareness forms the genesis of misunderstandings between the EU and UN in particular and goes some way towards explaining some of the issues that arose during the handover from EUFOR Chad/RCA to MINURCAT in 2010; 'we viewed the UN as an equal partner, they saw us as a sub-contractor'.<sup>40</sup> Third, Irish military awareness of the content and purpose of 'New Horizon' was limited to just a handful of those officers interviewed. The military personnel who were aware of its content offered the view that insofar as it had progressed, it had yet to produce results 'beyond New York'.<sup>41</sup> Military personnel serving in UN missions were skeptical as to what was really being achieved on the military side beyond an exercise in 'paper compliance'.<sup>42</sup>

## **UN training reform**

The New Horizons Initiative identified the strengthening of training and education as a key enabler in improving effectiveness in multidimensional peacekeeping environments. There was an emphasis on building capacity in new, expansive areas of peacekeeping activity – including a rights based approaches for the protection of civilians, improved information and reporting frameworks, and a conscious attempt to standardize the training requirements for senior mission leaders and military units up to battalion level.

Although the UN has significantly expanded its education and training capacity, its focus is almost wholly on permanent UN staff with comparatively modest input to the training requirements of TCCs; including military, police and civilian staffs.<sup>43</sup> In the past the UN has largely limited itself to delivering training guidance or packages to Member States and their training institutes, trusting TCCs to deliver the required effect. The Irish experience reveals the limited impact of such an approach, even to a European TCC that has maintained a constant commitment to UN service for more than 50 years.

## **Irish training for peacekeeping operations**

Insofar as Brahimi and subsequent UN reviews made recommendations regarding training for UN missions there is almost no evidence that they have penetrated Ireland's systems of preparation for UN missions. In part this can be explained by the Irish Defence Forces' decision to prioritize NATO/EU standards over those of the UN, viewing them as 'best international practice'. This is not simply a matter of doctrinal preference. In the absence of an applied system of UN standards and certification, the Irish Defence Forces have adhered closely to NATO standardization agreements (STANAGs) alongside a self-evaluation process that mirrors the NATO evaluation and certification platform OCC (Operational Capability Concept).

The prioritization of NATO standards is greatly facilitated by a PfP framework that encourages continuous evaluation of training priorities and practical dialogue on training issues including comprehensive 'train the trainer' courses covering almost every aspect of operational engagement.

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This contrasts with UN training recommendations, which regardless of their merit lack the education and training support, oversight and evaluation infrastructure that NATO and the EU can offer.

Irish Mission Readiness Exercises (MREs) for UN operations are organized primarily in accordance with NATO/EU doctrine with limited UN specific input beyond the analysis of mission operations reports.

Interviews reveal a dichotomy at the centre of the Irish approach. Some of the criticism that Irish military and civilian personnel make of UN peacekeeping operations stems from an assumption of knowledge as to how the UN works rather than an actual awareness of the latest developments in UN peacekeeping. Some officers acknowledged that a NATO-heavy approach left some gaps in terms of the knowledge and understanding of the function of UN missions at all levels.

In some cases, training was adapted to accommodate cultural and rights-based elements of certain UN peacekeeping operations most notably in Liberia (UNMIL) and Chad (MINURCAT). Military officers interviewed suggested that this was perhaps more a response to lessons identified by the Irish military themselves in Eritrea rather than the conscious implementation of training guidance emanating from DPKO.

The lack of a direct UN input to training and preparation for peacekeeping missions contributes to 'time lost in mission' where personnel effectively have to learn on the job. This aspect is by no means unique to the Irish and is better understood as a NATO/EU issue, encapsulated best by a French military officer in UNIFIL who stated that it took him six months to understand how UN missions work and by then it was nearly time to go home.<sup>44</sup> In recognizing that the lack of penetration of UN training ideas can be explained by internal factors within Member States, it is equally clear that the UN must assume that it is failing to effectively deliver its training message. The handful of personnel in DPKO and DFS working to providing guidance on training for UN deployments understandably prioritize the least capable TCCs –putting

in place training packages for contingents already deployed on UN operations.<sup>45</sup> But the neglect of European TCCs has obvious negative consequences. A more hands-on approach to training contingents pre-deployment - as opposed to writing and distributing manuals – is required, together with a corresponding increase in resources for DPKO and DFS units involved in such programmes. The setting up of UN Regional Commands would facilitate such a direction provision of training to prospective TCC or PCC contingents.

### ***Stand-by arrangements***

The reform of UN stand-by arrangements has not matched the ambition articulated in successive reform documents published since Brahimi. Irish interviewees spoke of their considerable frustration with the UNSAS arrangement noting that member state pledges have little or no bearing on force generation/deployment readiness. UNSAS's 'lowest common denominator' modality was also criticized for not bringing together the type of forces and capabilities required for modern complex missions. One Irish officer concluded that due to a lack of political support UNSAS was 'wholly irrelevant to the point that it is actually an obstacle to effective operational deployment.'<sup>46</sup> While cooperation with regional organizations has developed significantly it has not achieved the intended level of sophistication to impact on force generation and delivery.

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### 3. Mission Leadership, Command and Control

#### *A glass half-full?*

All the interviewees consulted for this paper agreed that some reform had taken place since the Brahimi report in the area of mission leadership and command and control. Irish diplomats noted that DPKO and DFS had worked hard to make UN peacekeeping more flexible and responsive to operational needs on the ground, including the quicker release of funds for the start-up phase of missions – even if occasionally new mechanisms failed to function as anticipated. Much progress has been made but there are some outstanding areas for improvement: Improving mission leadership and planning, dealing with under-performing contingents and mitigating the effect of national caveats on mission performance.<sup>47</sup>

Many interviewees pointed to problems at headquarters level – an EU official pointed out that DFS did not view its role as being subservient to DPKO and that ‘huge inter-agency problems’ persisted at the heart of the UN.<sup>48</sup> Rivalry between career officials at the same level in these two different branches of the Secretariat pushed relatively soluble and unimportant problems up to a very high level for decision/sign-off – resulting in institutional deadlock. Infighting was highlighted as a major factor negatively affecting operational effectiveness by a senior UN official:

The incentives of the UN system are to work for part of the UN against all other parts of the UN to capture resources. A UN staffer does not work for the UN as a whole. He or she cannot see that far. The way that the UN is funded creates this distortion. There is not an incentive to work together. Instead, each agency is in competition for funds. A central planning process is needed to reduce this. This was what DFS was designed for – but some in DPKO feel threatened by the DFS role.<sup>49</sup>

#### *A lack of military expertise*

A 2012 UN peacekeeping evaluation concluded that C2 arrangements were ‘sound and fit for purpose, strategically, operationally and tactically.’ Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous was particularly pleased with the performance of the Integrated Operational Teams (IOTs) – made up of civilian and military experts – who, he reported, respond in a timely fashion to mission requirements at a headquarters level. He also claimed that DPKO has put in place a more flexible, devolved command structure which allows for decision making at the field or mission level. DPKO has also recently established the Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, which Ladsous hopes will improve oversight over mission performance.<sup>50</sup>

Senior Irish military personnel interviewed agreed that the UN had worked hard to come up with ideas for better operational performance. Many praised the work of Ladsous for his diligent work. But almost all of the Irish military personnel interviewed continue to hold grave doubts about the management of peacekeeping missions; their assessment is gloomier than that of the UN itself. A lack of military understanding was a constant criticism among the officers interviewed. As one Irish officer wrote:

Military leaders committed to the challenges of advancing UN peacekeeping in the 21st century are frustrated by the lack of informed debate on the minutiae of the military tactical and operational issues, which also impede progress.<sup>51</sup>

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned that the Military Division of DPKO is under-staffed, with a handful of military personnel responsible for unpicking the operational problems of more than 100,000 peacekeepers. The Secretary-General’s requests for additional resources have repeatedly been denied by member-states.<sup>52</sup> But it is not merely a lack of military numbers in UN HQ that frustrates Irish officers, but also their experience. A number of major TCCs strictly limit the deployment of officers on UN peacekeeping missions (normally to one mission in an officer’s career span). Whereas an Irish officer can expect to be deployed on multiple occasions to UN overseas operations, and will likely also have experience of NATO-

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led, EU and possibly OSCE missions, He may find himself trying to explain operational detail to a senior officer in New York who has never commanded large numbers of troops in a UN mission.<sup>53</sup>

Screening of candidates for senior UN positions based on past UN operational experience may have come some way on the civilian side. But senior military appointments are sometimes filled by candidates that have spent very little time outside their countries' borders. Inexperience or ignorance of UN structures and operations highlights the need for enhanced formal pre-deployment training requirement even for relatively senior officers.

### **Problems at UN Headquarters**

Some Irish officers claimed that the Secretariat and its agencies were occasionally selecting their own priorities rather than following the text of mandates. Irish military personnel in MINURCAT complained that the mission's mandate was not being fully implemented due to the desire of some in the Secretariat to resource the mission according to their own interpretation of the optimal level of operations as opposed to that specified by the Security Council. The botched handover in March/April 2010 from the EU Force Chad/RCA to MINURCAT was particularly frustrating. One Norwegian analyst wrote:

The handover was essentially sold by the EU as a successful example of EU-UN cooperation, and a 'continuing EU commitment' to the Darfur crisis. But the fact of the matter is that much of the assets that provided the EU force with a credible deterrent, including fighters and helicopters, were withdrawn, while the UN struggled to fulfil the 5,200 troop target for MINURCAT II.<sup>54</sup>

Worse, key enablers such as engineering expertise and equipment, communication and logistics never arrived for MINURCAT.<sup>55</sup> Mission capabilities were dramatically lower than anticipated but the ambitious mandate remained the same.

Irish diplomats and some senior military officers are concerned about 'a less than constructive' approach to robust peacekeeping on the part of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping (the C34). One diplomat reported that the 'C34 is a victim of a more confrontational approach in the rest of the UN' while another Irish official took the view that General Assembly fifth committee (Administrative and Budgetary) politics had greater impact on operational activity than anything the C34 produced.<sup>56</sup> Other interviewees believe it was 'beyond its sell-by date' with a military officer observing that "...any initiative which has (even minor) cost implications, no matter how useful it may be for peacekeeping policy, is strongly resisted."<sup>57</sup> A British diplomat concluded that the committee was fast becoming a talking shop: "To what extent the C34 or its reports really has an impact on peacekeeping on the ground any more is quite debatable."<sup>58</sup>

### **Mandates**

Irish officers, some of whom had served in UN peacekeeping missions over a period of 30 years, frequently drew attention to the mounting number of tasks the UN required of peacekeepers. Mandates have become more complex; UN peacekeeping missions today are more likely to be focused on state building, as opposed to merely separating belligerents.<sup>59</sup> Mandates have been fundamentally changed to include the protection of civilians (POC) – a primary task of 90 per cent of UN peacekeeping missions including MONUSCO, UNMISS, the African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the UN Operations in Cote d'Ivoire.<sup>60</sup>

According to a senior Irish officer the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali – MINUSMA "is a very good example of a UN mandate that is very broad, one that is complementing a national dialogue, that talks about elections, institutional building, assistance delivery, European CSDP [Common Security and Defence Policy] training."<sup>61</sup> But peacekeepers can find themselves feeling overwhelmed with the amount of tasks they are supposed to implement. By default they often focus on security tasks, even if they are not in a high-risk environment –

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leaving little time for core mandate activities. Prioritization is a constant problem.

### ***Getting lost in the desert – EUFOR Chad/RCA and MINURCAT***

Several Irish officers criticized the EU for setting an arbitrary deadline for the withdrawal of a CSDP peacekeeping mission in Chad during 2009 regardless of progress achieved and the situation on the ground: 'The EU CONOPS [Concept of Operations] did not have an end state but rather an end date.'<sup>62</sup> Irish military interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with preparations for MINURCAT by the UN Secretariat. They were unhappy with the pre-deployment briefings received by the Force Commander (FC) and Deputy Force Commander (DFC) for MINURCAT who arrived in country with a very limited appreciation of the challenges facing the mission.<sup>63</sup>

In Chad and the RCA, the UN essentially saw the EU as a contractor to do what the Secretariat wanted – EUFOR senior officers by contrast preferred to occasionally ignore the Secretariat and impose their own interpretation of the UN mandate: "The UN wanted the EU to provide specified escorts for their humanitarian convoys whereas the EU preference was for a 'security umbrella'... you could say that the EU interpretation of the Chad mandate was not the same as that of the UN." Not being under UN command liberated the Irish EUFOR contingent from onerous convoy protection of UN civilian personnel who did not trust the EUFOR security umbrella and wanted Irish soldiers to escort their movements around a vast area.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Getting it right in Kosovo***

Irish officers offer up Kosovo as a model of multi-actor cooperation during a peacekeeping operation. The NATO-led KFOR force had a 15 year CONOPS and foresaw a gradual transition to UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) control. "There was a logical sequence of transition from 'Combined Endeavour' through 'Focused Engagement' to 'Deterrent Presence' where KFOR then moved into an ATCP (Aid To the Civil Power) type role. The model used in Kosovo from 1999 is the best I have observed."<sup>65</sup> Some officers noted that Kosovo, unlike most

other peacekeeping missions, commanded a high level of political attention among European countries – enabling problems to be dealt with more quickly.<sup>66</sup>

### ***UNIFIL – NATO standards, UN Mission***

In recent years UNIFIL has won a lot of praise among Irish officers for operating 'like a NATO mission.'<sup>67</sup> But much of the changes to UNIFIL Command and Control (C2) arrangements have been a consequence of unilateral action by some NATO member-states rather than innovative reform by the UN. In 2006, France insisted on a French officer being appointed to the Chief of Staff position – and then remade that position into something much more powerful than ever envisaged previously.<sup>68</sup> France also insisted on the establishment of a Strategic Military Cell in DPKO (staffed mostly by Europeans) specifically for UNIFIL. NAM TCCs understandably wondered why European troops got such special treatment compared to their troops who had to rely upon normal DPKO structures.<sup>69</sup> Irish officers did not complain – UNIFIL's command structures and operational capabilities now worked more smoothly.

A similar experience occurred in Cote d'Ivoire in 2006 – France "ripped up the UN rule book and the J2/J3/J5 sides of the operation worked really well; these were controlled by the French. The other parts of the mission continued to be completely dysfunctional."<sup>70</sup> Irish military interviewees have noted that, where UN operations have worked best, one or two powerful Member States have taken a lead role. This has been the case for France and Italy in Lebanon in 2006, the UK in Sierra Leone in 1999, and Brazil in Haiti in 2006. Some have suggested that "the future effectiveness of UN operations will depend in substantial part on the participation of such states."<sup>71</sup> Unilateral actions by a lead TCC can lead to confusion over C2 and operational issues such as the gathering and sharing of intelligence – especially if other TCCs insist on adhering to long-established peacekeeping norms.

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## Overburdening an outdated C2 mechanism

Some Irish officers and diplomats have observed that in the immediate period after the Brahimi report the Security Council paid particular attention to matching mandate ambitions to resources. The same officers complain that Western governments are now increasingly using a 'box-ticking' approach to negotiating mandates. They insist on the development/human or gender rights aspirations that are beyond military competence without adding an adequate civilian dimension.<sup>72</sup> A more acrimonious relationship between Russia and the United States/Europe in the wake of the Libya intervention (strongly opposed by Moscow and now exacerbated by events in the Ukraine) has not helped. Russian and Chinese concern over liberal interventionism under the guise of implementing a UN mandate (as per Libya) has led to increased deadlock on agreeing new mandates. As one UK diplomat observed: "It is much harder to negotiate a simple mandate than a very detailed one that has everybody's priorities in it."<sup>73</sup> Short and readily comprehended mandates are very thin on the ground.

Most Irish military personnel interviewed concur that the lack of a UN Operational Headquarters negatively impacts upon the C2 of UN missions.<sup>74</sup> Operational headquarters and field headquarters should be separate, thereby:

...releasing the FC and DFC to deal exclusively with the military challenges at hand in the AOO [Area of Operations]. In the UN system there is no buffer between the strategic level at UNHQ and the mission or force. A mission headquarters does not fulfill the role of an OHQ. The result is a degradation of the time and space that the UN FC and DFC can devote to military issues when deployed.<sup>75</sup>

In the absence of a separation of commands, senior UN Commanders who should be focused on the daily momentum of military operations, instead become consumed by administrative and political issues. This runs contrary to the conventional view that UN flexibility is enabled rather than reduced by the lack of division between an OHQ and a FHQ.<sup>76</sup>

Some officers conclude that the lack of an OHQ results in poor strategic planning: "Strategic decisions do not match operational planning or capabilities. The first should not be made without interaction with the second. Yet, that is how the UN works."<sup>77</sup> An over-burdened FC finds it difficult to do two jobs at once – i) negotiating political and logistical details with headquarters and member-states; ii) planning and overseeing operations in the field.

Irish military interviewees also observed that the command relationship between a Special Representative to the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the FC could vary considerably – sometimes the FC reported through the SRSG (and then to New York) on a range of issues related to the peacekeeping mission's performance. This was the case for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2003/2004. In UNIFIL, the FC was also the Head of Mission (HoM) and had a much more direct relationship with headquarters in New York on all issues affecting the mission. Occasionally, SRSGs would choose to report on peacekeeping issues over the head of DPKO leading to communications problems that negatively impacted upon C2 for operations.<sup>78</sup>

The introduction of joint operations centres (JOCs) has had mixed results. JOCs often do not operate according to recognizable and consistent lines of authority. According to two DPKO officials, "the procedures and methodologies employed vary as significantly as the environments in which they [JOCs] are deployed."<sup>79</sup> It is difficult to discern a clear JOC template – each mission establishes its own interpretation of what a JOC should look like.

Senior Irish officers say that the UN battalion structure is now completely outdated. The size of a UN battalion has not changed since the UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo (ONUC) commenced operations in 1960. Irish officers argue that battalions need to be smaller but better equipped. And the ordnance and other assets that a force requires should be tailored to the peacekeeping operation being planned. But UN battalion requests remained almost universally the same (with very little reference to equipment): "The UN goes looking for the same battalion no matter what the mission." NAM TCCs continue to favour such a standardized and unwieldy battalion structure – fearful that they will not be able to meet more



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advanced standards. However, while pointing out current deficiencies, interviewees were also sympathetic to the UN Secretariat – without the participation of more European TCCs, the UN cannot be too selective in turning down contingents from elsewhere.<sup>80</sup>

### *Civilians doing a soldier's job*

Irish officers are frustrated by the current UN civil-military division of responsibilities in peacekeeping, particularly the lack of military control over key UN assets. An Irish officer cited the Prussian 19th century strategist Carl von Clausewitz's advice not to forget that: "The distance of hospitals and supply depots may easily figure as the sole reason for very important strategic decisions."<sup>81</sup> Lack of direct military control over these assets was highly problematic, hindering the ability of the commander to execute operations quickly.<sup>82</sup>

UN civilian structures and agencies do not operate according to military needs – they answer to their own bureaucratic hierarchies and often respond less urgently to pressing issues that will decide military success or not. According to senior Irish officers, civilian UN officials often fail to grasp critical (and complex) details affecting military performance. Instead of the situation being reversed in recent years, the civilianization of UN peacekeeping operations has accelerated.<sup>83</sup> The UN does not allow its civilian officials working on aviation issues to take a level of risk often integral to the success or failure of a robust peacekeeping or peace enforcement operation – adhering to the civilian norms of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). An Irish officer observed that:

No uniformed officer in the United Nations system, regardless of rank or appointment can independently launch a UN contracted aviation asset, be it fixed wing or rotary wing. The number one red herring is that the pre-launch procedures for a UN aviation asset whether it is crewed by civilians or military is exactly the same. And the same aircraft if it is crewed by a civilian rather than a military team is invariably billed at a much greater expense to the UN. But civilian contractors refuse to deploy their staff to areas that are not totally secured.<sup>84</sup>

Other TCCs have also noted such a 'civilianization' of peacekeeping. In a recent intervention the Rwandan Ambassador to the UN pointed out that UN peacekeeping missions were often forced to 'bid for assets' against UN civilian agencies, including for helicopters. In future, he argued, UN military operational needs must be prioritized – the Force Commander must have more operational clout when it comes to securing and using UN assets.<sup>85</sup> The civil-military operational division of labour is discussed further in the 'Logistics and Procurement' section of this report.

### *Duty of care and sending contingents home*

Duty of care or force protection is not only a problem that affects civilian personnel. According to senior military interviewees, it is also pushing a number of traditional TCCs out of UN peacekeeping. Duty of care/force protection is essentially "the idea that if you put a soldier in harms way, you have the mechanisms in place to recover him... one of the great reasons that other European countries, aside from Ireland, are deserting the UN is because they are unhappy with the concepts of duty of care."<sup>86</sup> Duty of care/force protection expectations have increased steadily since the first Irish UN contingents arrived in the Congo in 1960; Irish officers were deeply concerned to arrive in Tibnin in south Lebanon in 2011 to find that "camp protection was rubbish. HESCO was missing, and the protection fence was 'like chicken wire'".<sup>87</sup>

Irish officers acknowledge that some recent progress on under-performing contingents has been made by the UN Senior Advisory Group on peacekeeping; in 2013 they persuaded the 5th committee of the UN General Assembly to recommend the implementation of an incentive/penalty mechanism for TCCs to provide adequately equipped troops. But some Irish military personnel argue that it is still necessary to send some contingents home, particularly those who are poorly equipped to the point of being a hindrance to the mission:

...Only last year one contingent arrived in Mali effectively naked. They had no uniforms except for the one they were wearing, no rations, weapons or ammunition. Thus for a considerable period of time

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the mission was preoccupied trying to sort them out rather than focusing on mandate implementation<sup>88</sup>

Similarly those who refuse to carry out operational instructions from the FC that are critical to mandate implementation and are consequently a useless drain on resources: “The people in the decision making process in the UN system are kowtowing to Member States at the expense of operational efficiency.”<sup>89</sup> Better, on-going assessments of troop performance also need to be put in place – and these mechanisms need to have teeth if a contingent is found to be consistently failing to implement its operational instructions despite having the means to do so. Similar guidelines should be put in place for the removal of staff officers at Mission headquarters who are not following orders.

Despite the proliferation of POC and complex mandates involving the protection of exposed humanitarian supply routes, many UN contingents cannot carry out these duties due to an inability to project operational force. One officer spoke about his difficulty in implementing the MINURCAT mandate in Chad. Long-range patrols were needed to protect humanitarian supply routes that stretched for hundreds of miles. Most of the MINURCAT contingents could not meet this requirement “because their PLCE [Personal Load Carrying Equipment] couldn’t allow them to actually carry their kit and water for long enough. They didn’t have the kit. And they also didn’t have the training.”<sup>90</sup>

### ***The EU as a future UN peacekeeping partner***

Many interviewees observed that the EU does not yet integrate well with the UN institutions on peacekeeping – as seen in the case of EUFOR Chad and MINURCAT. One senior EU official acknowledges how difficult relations are: “Let’s be honest: There is huge competition between the EU and the UN. Both are competing for the same resources from the same Member States.”<sup>91</sup>

Ireland has worked hard to bridge the EU-UN gap, including during its 2013 Presidency of the EU – the Department of Defence, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has been both imaginative and

tireless in seeking ways to improve systematic cooperation between the two organisations. Irish diplomats in New York and Brussels have consistently argued for stronger EU consultation on UN bodies concerned with peacekeeping. But the EU-UN Plan of Action (PoA) on crisis management and peacekeeping will take time to deliver in practice. The PoA nominally allows for the ready deployment and integration of EU Common Security and Defence Policy assets with UN peacekeeping operations. If the PoA is to realize its potential, it will need high-level political attention - from both the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and EU Member State Foreign Ministers - to overcome administrative hurdles and institutional mistrust in its early years, something that has often been lacking to date in EU-UN cooperation.<sup>92</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The most pressing area for reform noted by Irish officers in the area of C2 is the putting in place of an OHQ for UN peacekeeping missions. Some interviewees recommended the option of introducing Regional Commands to oversee peacekeeping missions. Meanwhile, successive requests by the Secretary-General for more military resources at the headquarters level have been denied by UN Member States. Roles that would normally be filled by military personnel in an EU or NATO operation are instead taken up by civilians who operate according to different priorities and caveats outside of the military chain of command. Such a situation needs to be reversed. Robust peacekeeping mandates and/or expeditionary peacekeeping missions need to be constantly reviewed according to the equipment and capabilities of contingents. Better guidelines should be offered on the SRSG-FC/political and military relationship before and during each peacekeeping operation. Finally, EU-UN cooperation requires sufficient political priority to overcome institutional rivalries and blockages in communication.

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## 4. Mission Intelligence and Strategic Analysis

### *Embracing ‘the ugly word’ - Intelligence*

The Brahimi report identified intelligence, particularly field intelligence, and strategic analysis as key elements for delivering effective missions. In doing so, it challenged the generally held consensus that ‘the UN doesn’t do intelligence’ and provided much needed stimulus for strategic-level reform that had not progressed beyond the establishment of the DPKO and the SITCEN in the early 1990s. Unsurprisingly, and almost immediately, Brahimi’s findings encountered resistance; proposals for an Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat were rejected by the General Assembly. Later proposals for the establishment of the Military Information Management Service in 2008 were similarly denied.

Opposition to proposals concerning intelligence and strategic analysis predominantly came from NAM states concerned that ‘a militarily strong UN could threaten their sovereign power structure’,<sup>93</sup> large Western states that were reluctant to trust an organization of the size and structure of the UN with sensitive intelligence; and internally by UN personnel concerned that the creation of intelligence apparatus would damage the UN’s reputation and image as an impartial actor.

As complex and robust mandates emerged, TCCs, including those from NAM states, recognized that if their personnel were going to operate effectively and securely in modern peacekeeping missions then they needed an appropriate information/intelligence platform. Acceptable proposals that decoupled ‘traditional military intelligence’ from UN ‘information analysis’ were agreed upon - largely within the conceptual framework of the ‘Integrated Mission’ approach. This in turn allowed for the development of an intelligence type capability at operational levels; namely Joint Missions Analysis Cells (JMACs).

### *Stepping into the shadows: The Irish experience of ‘intelligence’ in UN operations*

Unlike NATO members, the Irish Defence Forces intelligence capability was almost wholly focused on internal ‘on island’ issues up to 1999.<sup>94</sup> From 1999 onwards, defence personnel encountered a variety of intelligence platforms in NATO, EU and UN missions and gradually moved to adapt its own intelligence capability. Participation in PfP and KFOR exposed them to NATO, standards that would gradually come to be adopted (though not officially) as service norms.<sup>95</sup>

The ‘static’ traditional approach to Chapter VI peacekeeping had relatively little need for intelligence frameworks. This situation was synopsisized by one officer who commented that:

There was no intelligence approach to speak of. The closest thing we had to it was the press officer who might pick up useful information from time to time but to say that it was anything more than *ad hoc* arrangement would be to exaggerate its significance.<sup>96</sup>

The move to Chapter VII mandates with their assorted mix of operational challenges placed intelligence questions to the fore in terms of operational activity. From the Irish experience of this context, three narratives emerge. First, demand for an ‘intelligence-led’ approach to peacekeeping operations is seen to gradually increase with the application of more robust mandates. Second, the increased importance attached to ‘force protection’ fostered a demand for ‘in theatre’ intelligence platforms. Finally, some officers sought to connect the effective delivery of R2P and Civil-Military Coordination (CIMCORD) doctrine with an appropriate intelligence capability.<sup>97</sup> The growing significance of these issues for the Irish, particularly those who make the force protection argument, suggest that there is an emerging consensus that a formal intelligence structure is now required on Chapter VII missions.

Views clearly differed on the UN’s delivery of ‘intelligence-led operations’. Irish officials in New York were enthusiastic about the impact of intelligence-led operations in MONUC

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and what they saw as the clear statement of intent to establish a strong intelligence framework for operations in Mali.<sup>98</sup> One interviewee observed:

There are a lot more positives than negatives. Ladsous is doing a fantastic job and he is going about things the right way in order to operationalize the UN and to allow people to do their jobs. For example the first time intelligence is mentioned is in the new Mali mission, he has got the UAVs sanctioned for Congo and will sanction them for other places. There is a lot going on...<sup>99</sup>

Those operating at lower levels in field missions were more cautious noting that military intelligence staff often struggled to find their role within information structures that were primarily civilian in nature, design and operation. One junior officer suggested:

The J2 [military intelligence] cell was really functioning as an information cell rather than what you would expect of military intelligence. In many ways they were in competition with the JMAC without the capacity to really make an impact. Often the product they were producing was not getting to the end user [Force Commander or J3] with the effect that intel-led operations were very limited...<sup>100</sup>

Such views are not necessarily representative of civil-military disconnects; Irish military personnel recognize that the UN 'needed a civ-mil approach' with the general caveat that it needed to be flexible enough to adapt to the requirements of a mission: 'it is not a one size fits all issue and cannot be civ over mil all the time.'

Although there were divergent views as to how 'information' or intelligence should be managed, Irish officers reported that military and civilian actors mostly worked quite well at the operational level, making positive references to the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), JMAC and security staff. Several military interviewees commented on instances of personality clashes between senior military and civilian staffs compounded by 'counter-

productive' competition between the civilian heads of sections:

Personalities matter. There were protracted periods during the mission when civilian heads of sections would simply not talk to or cooperate with each other with the result that important decisions were delayed for protracted periods of time...<sup>101</sup>

### **Impact of JMACs**

The decision to establish JMACs, as a means of dealing with the UN intelligence deficit was welcomed by most interviews as a step in the right direction – the UN was at least seeking to remedy the intelligence deficit. But the practical value of the JMAC remains questionable, at least for some UN peacekeeping missions. In the case of MINURCAT, the JMAC was seen to have made 'little or no contribution of substance to the mission'. This was not necessarily representative of flaws in the JMAC *per se* but rather that there was no 'intelligence hand-over from EUFOR Chad/RCA to MINURCAT'. EU intelligence personnel worked under strict classification procedures and were unable to share their information with deploying UN staff.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps more significantly senior officers also referred to 'alternative sources of intelligence' available through informal channels which proved to be invaluable in dealing with specific incidents.<sup>103</sup>

Those with experience of interacting with the JMAC in UNIFIL were generally complimentary about the cell's capability and effort with several commenting on the quality of civilian – military interaction within the cell. All respondents suggested that the cells' focus was often 'too high, too strategic and not where it needed to be to serve the operational level'. They also noted that JMAC often duplicated the work of DPCA [the Division of Political and Civil Affairs], which in turn created the potential for internal rivalry.<sup>104</sup>

The JMAC focus was more regional than on the AOR, this was a problem as the FC more often needed input on the situation within the AOR. What useful

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info he got came through DPA, civil affairs or *ad hoc* sources...<sup>105</sup>

Similar issues were identified in UNMIL though it was suggested that the UNMIL JMAC was more hindered by difficulties in finding suitably qualified staff, than by the focus of its efforts.

Taken together, the Irish experience would suggest that many JMAC staff are still unclear as to their position in a peacekeeping mission structure, leading to uncertainty regarding the level at which they should pitch their analysis. If the goal is the provision of material for 'information-led operations' then the JMAC concept has not been fully successful. A persistent disconnect exists between analysis and operational activity. The financial, technical and particularly staff resources available to JMACs is also problematic.

### ***Intelligence and competing agendas***

The issue of trust is in many ways central to the discussion of intelligence and information management at the UN and is an apparent feature on all sides. Military and civilian officials with experience of NATO-led missions suggested in general terms that NATO member-states are 'only prepared to trust the UN so far', voicing concern over the UN's capacity to manage sensitive information.<sup>106</sup>

Some military interviewees noted that this attitude was shared with NAM states though from a different perspective as they feared 'developments in certain areas lest they be left behind...'<sup>107</sup> One retired officer with experience of New York suggested that there was no financial incentive for NAMs to engage the question of information/intelligence reform:

Some NAM people do recognize the need to adapt information and intelligence capabilities but they are not prepared to trade on it as there is no money in it...

Bringing intelligence assets to the field does not gain additional reimbursement for TCCs – and some are

consequently reluctant to deploy valuable intelligence officers and equipment.

Others queried the commitment of individual contingents. A military interviewee spoke of an Observer Mission which almost came to a standstill because of the national staff mix in the JOC: "One officer arrived and made no attempt to follow SOPs; he was entirely preoccupied with his national agenda" which in this instance meant passing information to his capital on the potential of expanding his country's economic interests in the region.<sup>108</sup> The Irish experience suggests that the psychological commitment of TCCs to a UN mission can inform their position on the management application of classified information: "The Irish typically become mission committed in a way that other countries do not. There is no national agenda with the Irish."<sup>109</sup>

For TCCs that project a national agenda within or alongside a UN missions, the potential for a conflict of interest is obvious. When national and UN interests align such as with the French in Mali or CAR the outcome can be positive in that operational tasks can often be performed more efficiently; freed from the New York process and aided by 'information' provided from national resources. In such circumstances where national and UN interests digress the outcome is often disproportionately negative for the UN as missions are either sidelined or find themselves operating in information vacuums when officers refuse to share information. Irish military interviewees would cite their experience of peacekeeping in Chad as an example of both these issues: France's projection of national interests was occasionally prioritized ahead of a commitment to the mandate aims of EUFOR and MINURCAT.<sup>110</sup>

### ***National Intelligence Cells***

The competing demands of national and UN priorities have been highlighted during the recent deployment of National Intelligence Cells (NICs) by TCCs. Though not typically deployed by the Irish military, NICs have become an increasingly prevalent and often informal feature of UN missions. NICs operate in the same space but parallel to UN structures, more often than not acting independently and answering directly to their national authority. NICs can provide important information on force protection

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but concerns were also expressed about self-tasking: "... the danger is that some countries begin to run their own operations to gather tactical intelligence that goes beyond the UN mission needs. They may share this information with the JMAC selectively..."<sup>111</sup>

Another officer speaking of his experience in an African mission noted:

The jury is still out on their value. The relevance of NICs to a mission is questionable. There is an understandable disconnect but no formal relationship. And often when information is exchanged they will only release information to change an operation the way they want it to change – the big countries in particular do this...<sup>112</sup>

Most agreed that a fully established military intelligence cell embedded in the mission structure would be infinitely preferable to a series of *ad hoc* informal and uncoordinated arrangements including the proliferation of multiple NICs by TCCs that operated outside formal UN C2 arrangements.

## 5. Peacekeeping Finance and Logistics

The UN has substantially improved its procurement and logistics capability over the past 15 years, meeting many of the goals set by Brahimi. Procurement frameworks have been adapted to facilitate mission requirements and redesigned to address well-documented and proven concerns regarding corruption and inefficiency; though admittedly still a work in progress. The concept of having a strategic deployment reserve has gradually evolved from 'start-up kits' though the 'Strategic Deployment Stocks' concept of 2002 to the recent reinvigoration of the process with the 'Global Field Support Strategy' of 2010.

Criticism of UN logistics reform has focused on the technical and financial capacity rather than the suitability of the proposed concepts. Louise Fréchette noted that the development and application of 'mission startup kits' in tandem with the expanding role of the UN Logistics Base (UNLB) in Brindisi worked well for 'the smaller missions' but that its capacity was quickly over run. She noted that strategic deployment stocks were almost completely depleted in 2004 and UN agencies lacked the budgetary authority to quickly replenish such supplies as required.<sup>113</sup> In 2010, the launch of the Global Field Support Strategy sought to improve speed, quality and cost-effectiveness of deploying missions through development of pre-defined modules and service packages. The Regional Service hub in Entebbe, Uganda, was established to centralize support for four peacekeeping missions in the region. IT support for peacekeeping operations has also improved exponentially in the last five years. Logistics reform appears to be an area where the UN is making significant progress.<sup>114</sup>

Irish interviewees recognized that UN logistics has improved in recent years. But significant doubts remain, which can be summarized as follows:

- The lack of military control over logistics for peacekeeping missions and the related issue of the inflexibility of civilian structures for military operations.
- Failures to adequately resource and support key elements of peacekeeping missions.

- A frustration with inter agency ‘turf wars’ particularly between DPKO and DFS.
- A cumbersome approach to funding mission start-ups.
- Divergent standards and expectations on what logistic support the UN should be providing.

### ***The good, the bad and the exception.***

Significant contributions to UNMIL, MINURCAT and UNIFIL provide the background to Irish understanding of contemporary UN logistics and procurement procedures.

#### **Case Study 1: ‘the good’ - UNMIL**

Most of the military interviewees who participated in UNMIL reported favourably on UN supporting structures. For a start-up mission, with significant logistical challenges, deployment was relatively quick. Logistics support was described as ‘innovative’ and ‘effective’ with several positive comments on the success of the operational deployment of personnel by air and seaborne amphibious landings.. Officers praised the ‘key enabler’ role 2 medical support provided by the Netherland’s hospital ship.<sup>115</sup> Others who held senior staff positions in the mission spoke of their ability to plan and execute complex operations, including notably during the detention and trial of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, in neighboring Sierra Leone.<sup>116</sup> If good civil-military relations were the key contributing factor to these positive outcomes in Liberia the accounts from Chad exposed how systemic flaws can undermine civil-military relations.

#### **Case Study 2: ‘the bad’ – MINURCAT**

Criticism of the logistics and procurement structures for MINURCAT stemmed from the perception that the handover from the EU to the UN was undermined by a lack of trust on the part of the EU and a lack of interest on the part of the UN. Whether representative of inter-institutional rivalry, mistrust or incompetence serious errors were made during the transition from EUFOR CHAD/RCA to MINURCAT:

They appeared to take no account of the fact that the EU which had invested huge sums in developing and then controlling the APOD at Abeche effectively signed the airport over to the Chadian authorities without cognizance or awareness of the possible requirements of the follow-on MINURCAT mission; with the effect that the UN ended up having to lease the airport (from) the Chadian authorities at what was generally perceived as ‘unfavorable terms’, well above the going rate.<sup>117</sup>

At the operational level there were serious concerns as to the medical support, which centered on the location of the Role 2 facility and the in-theatre air assets required for CASEVAC. The availability of suitable air assets, which were supposed to be contracted by the UN, became a particular point of contention for the Irish government, almost bringing Dublin to the point of withdrawing Irish troops from the mission.<sup>118</sup> Tensions were heightened by criticism at home over a general lack of Irish military air-lift capability for overseas operations.<sup>119</sup>

Reflecting on the Chad experience one senior Irish officer expressed the view that many of the problems arose as a result of an organizational imbalance between the military and civilian approaches to logistics:

If you expect a military commander to plan military operations with a blue beret on him and you don’t have any control over the medical issues, the logistics issues, [...], how can a military commander plan and take responsibility for any serious military operation or incident without having control over the issues that determine whether the operation is going to be a success or not, the logistics.<sup>120</sup>

Drawing the distinction between the UN concept of ISS (Integrated Service Support) and the military concept of CSS (Combat Service Support) the same officer argued:

...the ISS is a beast of the DFS, so that is a civilian-led, civilian dominated system. Now there are certain military people embedded in it but they do not command it. Military commanders have no control

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or oversight of the issues that will decide whether a military operation will be successful or not...<sup>121</sup>

The argument was also made that this situation was not helped by the UN's tendency 'towards the civilianization of certain posts' which 'complicates accepted military command systems without really adding value...'<sup>122</sup>

Irish diplomats expressed similar concerns to those of the military:

...We were seriously disappointed by the UN. The transition to MINURCAT from EUFOR was botched – not merely a failure of institution to institution relations but a more systemic failing of the UN's functional day-to-day running of peacekeeping operations.<sup>123</sup>

The Irish government had signaled its intent to commit more troops to MINURCAT in 2010. A failure to renew the mandate precipitated a hurried withdrawal of the Irish contingent in March 2010. This situation was compounded by the then imminent rainy season, which would have curtailed all logistic movement into and out of the area of operations for a period of four months. This left Irish military planners in the unenviable position of extracting all personnel and equipment in a rapidly shrinking operational window. Within three months from the order to withdraw, the Defence Forces repatriated all personnel and equipment in an operation that was almost completely planned, coordinated and executed by Defence Forces personnel, with minimal UN input. The total cost of the operation came to €6.4 million which the Irish government sought to have reimbursed by the UN.

The UN (primarily DFS) refused to pay, arguing that the Irish extraction, which was primarily delivered through contracted air assets, could and should have been conducted using land and sea assets; significantly reducing the cost of withdrawal. Irish military personnel argued that it was impossible to extract Irish military assets by land and sea before the ending of the MINURCAT mandate. They also pointed to significant 'lessons learned' from the

land deployment to Chad; noting in particular the time, security and infrastructural challenges in getting from Douala port in Cameroon to N'Djamena in western Chad and then to Goz Beida in south eastern Chad; a distance by road of approximately 3,000km. Four years on the impasse continues with little sign of a solution.<sup>124</sup>

The nature of the impasse regarding the withdrawal from MINURCAT, and the operational experience that preceded it, raises a number of issues. Irish military personnel highlighted a lack of trust due to poor communication or a perceived lack of responsiveness with one arguing:

You can't rely on the UN for resupply. It is much better to do it yourself. We do it because we do not trust the UN to do it for us. If we trusted it we would use it but we don't; we do it ourselves and we bill it. In MINURCAT the Finns thought the UN would do it for them, it didn't work...<sup>125</sup>

Conversely a UN logistics officer, who had also worked with the Irish in UNIFIL, suggested of MINURCAT:

The Irish want to do everything their own way. Their attitude to UN logistics procedures is sometimes hard to take. They don't seem to recognize that we are applying rules intended for all TCCs and we can't just change the game because they [the Irish] want things to be like a NATO or EU mission.<sup>126</sup>

It is reasonable to argue that the Irish had legitimate concerns regarding the logistical support available to MINURCAT. In a succinct analysis, one Irish diplomat (well-disposed to cooperation with the UN) suggested that "whatever way you look at it that fact that we did not have sufficient fuel for our vehicles following the transition to MINURCAT was quite simply not acceptable..."<sup>127</sup> The reasons explaining why fuel was unavailable were perhaps more revealing:

There was too much bureaucracy involved at certain levels. In one instance they failed to provide fuel because the five people who had to sign the necessary forms were all on leave. We had to get a contractor out.<sup>128</sup>



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### **Case Study 3: 'the exception' - UNIFIL**

If MINURCAT was generally viewed in negative terms, assessments of the logistics platform in UNIFIL were broadly positive. While some problems were identified during the deployment to UNIFIL in 2011, in particular concerning camp force protection, the issues raised by the Irish were for the most part dealt with prior to the deployment of the main body to the mission. Those with experience of 'old UNIFIL' were struck by how things had changed for the better with one officer dryly noting that the "days of having to go to the local shop keeper to buy back UN supplies that were sold to them by members of another contingent were thankfully a thing of the past".<sup>129</sup> While some Irish logistics officers were critical of their UN counterparts in UNIFIL for their handling of the redeployment of Irish personnel to a different camp in 2012 others were content to describe relations as 'appropriately confrontational' noting that 'in the end both sides were pretty satisfied with their respective outcomes...'<sup>130</sup>

UNIFIL is not viewed as a typical UN mission. Unlike every other UN peacekeeping mission, UNIFIL receives large contingents from European countries. Those interviewed suggested that the lessons identified in UNMIL and MINURCAT are more representative of UN peacekeeping in general; highlighting both i) significant cleavages between western European countries and the UN regarding logistics and ii) an example where positive and effective cooperation was possible.

#### ***The Headquarters' Perspective: Rivalry, ownership and communications***

Irish staff with experience of UN Headquarters in New York understandably had a different perspective of UN logistics, which tended to be framed by tensions between reformers and those opposed to reform. Difficult relationships between DPKO and DFS and within the 5th Committee were described as a contributory factor to the 'tortuous' amount of bureaucracy associated with peacekeeping missions. One military officer recalled the frustrations of attempting to tap into a new UN strategic fund set up to expedite TCC deployment. He recalled

that the new funding mechanism was as frustrating as other UN 'laborious budgetary procedures'. Ireland ended up deploying UN Supervision Mission in Syria military personnel at its own expense because the budget to do so was not made available.<sup>131</sup>

Irish military logistics personnel recounted difficult negotiations whereby they tried to convince UN officials of the requirement to deploy 'key force protection assets such as APCs' [Armored Personnel Carriers], with UN officials questioning their necessity. While acknowledging the efforts of Under-Secretary-General Susana Malcorra, Irish officers were strongly of the view that the Contingent Owned Equipment Working Group (COEWG) 'badly needed reform as it is miles behind the curve/reality on the ground'. The shortcomings of the COEWG were viewed as more the responsibility of the many TCCs who need to 'escape their fixation with reimbursement' if reform is to be achieved.<sup>132</sup>

When considering the differences between the perceived success of UNMIL and failure of MINURCAT a number of those interviewed offered the view that the political weight necessary to drive Missions at Secretariat/General Assembly level was absent in the Chadian case:

There was no appetite for the mission in New York. The UN weren't keen on the idea to start with and seemed to expect that the EU would have continued, with the result that when it came to taking over the mission they [the UN] were never anything better than half-hearted.<sup>133</sup>

Irish officers drew parallels with the establishment of UNMIK which they felt was foisted on a UN that did not want to get involved. One Irish UN official present in UNMIK at the time suggested:

It was thrown at us after Rambouillet when we weren't prepared. That caused resentment in UN circles with the result that I felt the UN never really emotionally committed to the mission. It never really gained a foothold in the UNs institutional psyche...<sup>134</sup>

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Secretariat 'buy-in', despite clear authorization by the Security Council, should not be under-estimated as a determinant of a mission's success.

### ***A standards/expectations gap***

While the experience in Chad appears to dominate the prevailing Irish perspective of UN logistics and procurement it would be unreasonable to take it as representative of their whole experience over the past 15 years.

Though heavily critical of the UN effort in MINURCAT respondents were not unaware of the pressures experienced on the civilian side and the limits of military contributions:

You will never have a situation where military officers on short-term deployments to the UN will have control over logistics in its totality. I would separate two things: I would separate procurement and distribution. Let the civilians deal with procurement and let the supply of the logistics be a military governed task.<sup>135</sup>

The Irish view can be explained in large part through the White Paper on Defence and from their exposure to NATO. The Irish military 'moved away from direct provision by the UN because we got better at doing it ourselves.'<sup>136</sup> The Irish military has become more capable logistically and it has had the effect that Irish military personnel's expectation of 'good logistics for peacekeeping missions' has exceeded the progress they acknowledge the UN has achieved:

... overall I would say that staff systems and logistics are all much better. The global field support strategy has yielded some useful efficiency and savings but it is not where we would like it to be.<sup>137</sup>

Older officers have seen how far the UN has come. However, expectations are considerably higher among those younger officers who have gained experience of NATO-led or EU operations.

## **6. Conclusion**

Most military and civilian personnel interviewed for this paper agreed that the UN has come a considerable way in improving operational performance since Brahimi. There was much less agreement among interviewees as to whether these reforms were sufficient to meet Irish concerns and rising expectations. Some of the criticism, raised particularly by military participants, was unrealistic. Wishing for NATO-type standards of military organization is aiming far too high for an organization with fundamentally different aims, structures and members.

A number of instructive main themes emerged among interviewees. First, there is an almost complete absence of UN peacekeeping doctrine when it comes to the training of Irish military contingents. What guidance exists is inadequate and unread. TCCs bring their own highly disparate approaches to what they believe peacekeeping operations should entail and there is almost no common doctrine of training for respective missions. Both the UN and TCCs are failing to deliver a sufficient package of training that sets common standards and disseminates operational guidance prior to deployment. The development of that capacity would be beneficial to all parties. Member States like Ireland and UN agencies, including DPKO and DFS, must do much better in setting and operationalizing UN military doctrine in the future. 'Time lost' in mission learning UN concepts and operational structures remains a widespread problem for TCCs.

UNSAS is regarded as a 'lowest common denominator' – without any requirement for the diverse range of resources that would be make it more mobile and kinetic as required. The 'one size fits all' battalion of approximately 850 troops has not changed in decades; neither has UNSAS met its original expectations. It now requires urgent reform.

UN C2 arrangements continue to be hampered by inter-agency rivalry, particularly between DPKO and DFS. A lack of knowledge of military requirements at the operational and tactical levels meant that UN officials occasionally designed mechanisms that impeded rather than enabled UN Force Commanders. A lack of control over, and delay in the use of, critical assets such as air-lift capabilities, was

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cited as one example of the 'civilianization' of peacekeeping operations. Military chain of command authority (rigorous 'duty of care' for civilians impeded operations) and expertise were required. One concrete suggestion was to separate procurement and logistical supply – the former should be a civilian preserve while the military should take responsible for delivery in-theatre.

Selection of the right candidates for positions remains a problem. Senior military appointees to UN missions occasionally lacked sufficient experience of peacekeeping operations. More rigorous assessments, deliverable rewards, and penalties based on performance were needed. UN mandates were also not interpreted consistently. Irish military interviewees highlighted differences between UN Security Council views of an operation and the reality as implemented by the Secretariat or through regional bodies such as the EU (MINURCAT and EUFOR Chad/RCA were the examples most frequently cited).

Many military interviewees agreed that some separation of operational and field headquarters would be helpful. The FC and DFC needed more time to look inward at the day to day operational issues affecting a peacekeeping mission rather than constantly looking back to New York to gain political or logistical support. Putting in place of regional headquarters might help solve this problem. Meanwhile, the role of JOCs and JMACs should be regularly reviewed to ensure they meet some level of operational consistency and do not over-lap with other structures such as intelligence cells or the duties of political officers.

Irish military standards and expectations on UN operations are now aligned with those of European NATO member-states. Such ambitions may be too high for a politically and financially constrained UN. There is a risk of entrenchment – the UN refusing to bow to the demands of those who refuse to contribute troops to peacekeeping missions, and European countries in turn refusing to deploy before reforms are put in place.

Operational and logistical concerns about UN peacekeeping are not insurmountable if large, capable European countries work together and deploy together, including by unlocking inter-organisational funding constraints that

prevent EU Battlegroups from deploying on UN missions. The fact stands that the UN has achieved substantial progress in many areas since Brahimi published his findings<sup>138</sup> Instead of simply continuing to lecture agencies such as the DPKO and DFS in New York, Europe needs to get its house in order. Post-Afghanistan, senior military leaders such as the UK's Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Houghton have called for a much greater European commitment to UN operations.<sup>139</sup> In the 1960s European countries made vital contributions to peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East. In the 1990s, the second era of European peacekeeping, countries blamed the UN for a lack of technical proficiency but chose to overlook the political, operational and logistical problems caused by the absence of member-state political direction, coherence and financing. It is now time for a renewed European commitment to UN peacekeeping – carefully planned, resourced, and realistic in its aims. A good start would to overcome institutional blockages - including over financing - that have hindered the deployment of EU Battlegroups on UN missions. The appetite of countries such as Ireland and Austria to be the European exceptions in UN peacekeeping has been tested over the past decade but for now their commitment remains. 2015, and the UN review of peacekeeping chaired by H.E. Ramos Horta, should mark the beginning of a third era of European peacekeeping.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The authors are very grateful to all those who agreed to be interviewed during their research for this paper. They also wish to thank Richard Gowan, all at CIC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark for their support. However, the paper is the work of the authors alone, writing in a personal capacity, and does not in any way reflect the official views or policy of the Irish government, the Irish Defence Forces or any other institution/organization.

<sup>2</sup>Camille Dioula, 'UNDOF Commander: Filipinos defiance unprofessional', *Philippine Star*, 3 September 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Statement by Werner Faymann, Federal Chancellor of Austria, 'UNDOF Mission', Federal Chancellery of Austria, 6 June 2013.

<sup>4</sup>Statement by the Minister for Defence, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D., 'United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) Golan Heights', Department of Defence, 23 September 2014.

<sup>5</sup>Ireland retained up 381 personnel in UN missions during 2013 with the vast majority of that number completing six month tours of duty in UNIFIL and UNDOF; amounting to a sustainment of almost 11% of deployable army personnel. The Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Report 2013; Correspondence between the authors and Irish Defence Forces Headquarters, 24 April 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Speech by the Minister of State at the Department of An Taoiseach and the Department of Defence, Mr. Paul Kehoe, T.D., at the Air Corps Commissioning Ceremony, Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel, 14 February, 2014.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013.

<sup>8</sup>Irish antipathy towards more radical left-wing movements in newly independent countries became apparent during Ireland's first major peacekeeping contribution, when successive Irish contingents were sent to the secessionist Congolese province of Katanga as part of the Opération des Nations Unies au Congo, or ONUC (1960-1964). Dublin principally blamed the leftist President of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, and not the Belgian orchestrated secession of Katanga for the problems in the Congo, reflecting the US, French and British position (and not that of most newly-independent African countries who put the blame squarely on Belgium and its NATO allies). See M. Kennedy, *Ireland, the United Nations and the Congo: 1960-61* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014); E. Burke, *Ireland's contribution to the United Nations Mission in the Congo (ONUC): Keeping the peace in Katanga*, in M. Kennedy and D. MacMahon [eds.], *Obligations and Responsibilities: Ireland and the United Nations, 1955-2005*, (Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs, 2006), pp. 97-101.

<sup>9</sup>Bruce Jones, 'Peacekeeping in Crisis? Confronting the challenges Ahead', *RUSI Journal* 54 (5), pp. 78-83.

<sup>10</sup>The EU average is 1.50 per cent. Department of Defence, 'Submission as part of the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure', May 2014.

<sup>11</sup>The last Irish government White Paper on defence nominally expired in 2010.

<sup>12</sup>Interviews with Irish diplomats, July 2013.

<sup>13</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, 11th July 2013.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with an Irish diplomat, June 2013.

<sup>15</sup>The use of the term 'Irish officers' in this report refers to personnel in the Irish Defence Forces holding a Commission from the President of Ireland.

<sup>16</sup>Many Irish officers pointed to recent changes in the Swedish approach to relations with NATO (a close relationship stopping short of full membership) as something worth considering from an Irish perspective. Interviews with officers of the Irish Defence Forces, July and August 2013.

<sup>17</sup>Stephen Collins, 'Ireland and UK agree historic defence deal', *Irish Times*, January 12 2015. Eamon Gilmore TD, former Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), former leader of the current junior coalition partner, the Labour Party, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade from March 2011 until July 2014, was against significantly increasing defence ties with

NATO countries. However, the recent appointment of Charlie Flanagan T.D., who is from the more pro-NATO Fine Gael party, the larger of the two coalition parties, has arguably seen a shift in attitudes now that Fine Gael Ministers lead both the foreign affairs and defence portfolios. Interview with an Irish diplomat, June 2013.

<sup>18</sup>Brigadier Gerald Aherne, 'Peacekeeping: The Challenges Ahead. Lessons learned from the MINURCAT Force in Tchad and the Central African Republic', *Signal*, Summer 2011.

<sup>19</sup>Department of Defence, 'Minister Shatter seeks enhanced participation from the EU and EU Member States in United Nations Peacekeeping and Crisis Management operations', Dublin, February 1st 2013.

<sup>20</sup>Jean-Marie Guéhenno, 'Robust Peacekeeping: Building Political Consensus and Strengthening Command and Control', in *Robust Peacekeeping: The Politics of Force*, New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University, 2009, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup>Christopher Hope, 'Army came close to "seizing up"', General Sir Richard Dannatt says', *The Daily Telegraph*, 28th July 2010 and Interview with officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>22</sup>UN officials speak of a post-Afghanistan dividend pointing to recent contributions by Sweden and the Netherlands in Mali.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013; Adrian Johnston, 'Back in Blue: A British Return to United Nations Peacekeeping', *RUSI Journal*, March 2015, 160 (1), pp. 14-24.

<sup>24</sup>Statement of Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, 'Debate of the Fourth Committee on Peacekeeping', 28th October 2014.

<sup>25</sup>Former Foreign Minister of Algeria and UN Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi chaired a ten-member high level panel in 2000 to review UN peacekeeping and other peace support operations. Among other things, the report criticized overly-ambitious mandates, lack of resources and political support from UN member-states. See Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305 S/2000/809, 21 August 2000

<sup>26</sup>Thierry Tardy, 'A Critique of Robust Peacekeeping in Contemporary Peace Operations', *International Peacekeeping* (18) 2, pp. 152-167.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>White Paper on Defence', Department of Defence, 2000.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>Under the Treaty of Amsterdam, the Petersberg Tasks identified new roles for the EU in the areas of humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

<sup>32</sup>White Paper on Defence', Department of Defence, 2000.

<sup>33</sup>Interview with officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>34</sup>General Sir Michael Rose, 'Fighting for Peace: Lessons from Bosnia', London: Harvill, 1998.

<sup>35</sup>'Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations', UN DPKO, 2003.

<sup>36</sup>'A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for United Nations Peacekeeping', UN DPKO & DFS, 2009.

<sup>37</sup>While all interviewees were aware of the content of the Brahimi Report, knowledge of the other documents identified was limited and in the case of the UN Handbook none of the interviewees were familiar with its contents.

<sup>38</sup>Intelligence was not formally discussed by the UN until it was raised in the context of MONUC transition by USG Ladsous in 2011.

<sup>39</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>Policy, Evaluation and Training, Division, 'Best Practices and Training', Briefing to the C34 Committee, 7 January 2015.

<sup>44</sup>Interview with a French military officer, UNIFIL January 2013.

<sup>45</sup>Policy, Evaluation and Training, Division, 'Best Practices and Training', Briefing to the C34 Committee, 7 January 2015.

<sup>46</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, March 2013.

<sup>47</sup>Irish Permanent Representative to the UN, H.E. David Donoghue, intervention at a conference organized by the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN, 'UN Command and Control Arrangements: Progress, Challenges, Opportunities', New York, 3 July 2014.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with an EU official, July 2013.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with a senior UN official, November 2013.

<sup>50</sup>Intervention by UN Under-Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, Hervé Ladsous, at a conference organized by the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN, 'UN Command and Control Arrangements: Progress, Challenges, Opportunities', New York, 3rd July 2014.

<sup>51</sup>Brigadier Gerald Aherne, 'Peacekeeping: The Challenges Ahead. Lessons learned from the MINURCAT Force in Chad and the Central African Republic.' *Signal*, Summer 2011.

<sup>52</sup>Hylke Dijkstra, 'Efficiency Versus Sovereignty: Delegation to the UN Secretariat in Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping* 19 (5), pp. 581-596.

<sup>53</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>54</sup>Per Martin Norheim-Martinsen, 'Our Work Here is Done: European Union Peacekeeping in Africa', *African Security Review* 20 (2), pp. 17-28.

<sup>55</sup>Brigadier Gerald Aherne, 'Peacekeeping: The Challenges Ahead. Lessons learned from the MINURCAT Force in Tchad and the Central African Republic.' *Signal*, Summer 2011.

<sup>56</sup>Interview with an Irish diplomat, June 2013.

<sup>57</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2014.

<sup>58</sup>Interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013.

<sup>59</sup>Bruce Jones, 'Peacekeeping in Crisis? Confronting the challenges Ahead', *RUSI Journal* 54 (5), pp. 78-83.

<sup>60</sup>Ralph Mamiya and Haidi Willmot, 'Early Warning, the Protection of Civilians and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations', *African Security Review* 22 (2), pp. 68-77.

<sup>61</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2013.

<sup>62</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>66</sup>Interviews with officers of the Irish Defence Forces, July and December 2013.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Hylke Dijkstra, 'Efficiency Versus Sovereignty: Delegation to the UN Secretariat in Peacekeeping', *International Peacekeeping* 19 (5), pp. 581-596.

<sup>70</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, 3 July 2013.

<sup>71</sup>Bruce Jones, 'Peacekeeping in Crisis? Confronting the challenges Ahead', *RUSI Journal* 54 (5), pp. 78-83.

<sup>72</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>73</sup>Interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013.

<sup>74</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2013.

<sup>75</sup>Brigadier Gerald Aherne, 'Peacekeeping: The Challenges Ahead. Lessons learned from the MINURCAT Force in Chad and the Central African Republic.' *Signal*, Summer 2011.

<sup>76</sup>See for example the intervention by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Pakistan to the UN, H.E. Masood Khan: "Action on the ground is not hamstrung by a long C2 system", at a conference organized by the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN, 'UN Command and Control Arrangements: Progress, Challenges, Opportunities', New York, 3 July 2014.

<sup>77</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>78</sup>Interviews with officers of the Irish Defence Forces, July and August 2013.

<sup>79</sup>Ralph Mamiya and Haidi Willmot, 'Early Warning, the Protection of Civilians and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations', *African Security Review* 22 (2), pp. 68-77.

<sup>80</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>81</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, 'On War', *Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 129.

<sup>82</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>83</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>84</sup>Patrick Cammaert, 'A Peacekeeping Commander's Perspective from Headquarters and the Field', *RUSI Journal*, 153 (3), pp. 68-71.

<sup>85</sup>Intervention by H.E. Eugène-Richard Gasana, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the UN, at a conference organized by the Irish Permanent Mission to the UN, 'UN Command and Control Arrangements: Progress, Challenges, Opportunities', New York, 3 July 2014.

<sup>86</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>87</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013. This issue was addressed to their satisfaction prior to the Irish deployment.

<sup>88</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2014.

<sup>89</sup>Interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013.

<sup>90</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>91</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>92</sup>Interview with a EU official, July 2013.

<sup>93</sup>Should Read: Per Martin Norheim-Martinsen and Jacob Aasland Ravndal, 'Towards Intelligence-Driven Peace Operations? The Evolution of UN and EU Intelligence Structures', *International Peacekeeping* 18, (4), p.8

<sup>94</sup>Facing the threat posed by 'on island' terrorist organisations most notably the IRA and its associated splinter factions.

<sup>95</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>96</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces July 2013.

<sup>97</sup>A perspective which would undoubtedly be a cause for concern for civilian UN and humanitarian staff whom jealously guard their 'impartiality' in field missions.

<sup>98</sup>Sweden and the Netherlands deployment of Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) assets to Mali was viewed as a 'huge change in UN peacekeeping policy for the better'. Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces August 2014.

<sup>99</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2013.

<sup>100</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013. In a separate discussion with the same officer it was suggested that the fixation with the idea of 'intel-led operations' was "a lot of bluster... all military operations should be intelligence-led. If they are not then the commander is not doing his job. To try to suggest that this is something new is wholly misleading..."

<sup>101</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces September, 2013.

<sup>102</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>103</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December, 2013.

<sup>104</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>105</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, September 2013.

<sup>106</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013 and interview with a UK diplomat, August 2013.

<sup>107</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>108</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>109</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, September 2013.

<sup>110</sup>Interviews with officers of the Irish Defence Forces, August and December 2013.

<sup>111</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>112</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>113</sup>Louise Fréchette with the assistance of Amanda Kristensen, 'UN Peacekeeping 20 Years of Reform', CIGI Papers No. 2 – April 2012.

<sup>114</sup>Interview with a UN logistics officer, April, 2014.

<sup>115</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, November 2013.

<sup>116</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, April 2013.

<sup>117</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>118</sup>Officers of the Irish Defence Forces and diplomats alike reported that the issue was raised at the highest levels of the UN including with Secretary-General during a visit to Dublin in July 2009.

<sup>119</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces 2013.

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<sup>120</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>123</sup>Interview with an Irish diplomat, June 2013.

<sup>124</sup>Tom Brady, 'Row with UN over €6.4m cost of pull-out', *Irish Independent*, 9th July 2014.

<sup>125</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2014.

<sup>126</sup>Interview with UN civilian logistics officials, April 2013.

<sup>127</sup>Interview with an Irish diplomat, May 2013

<sup>128</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup>Interview with an Irish logistics officer, August, 2013.

<sup>131</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, August 2013.

<sup>132</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, March 2013.

<sup>133</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>134</sup>Interview with former civilian UN staff member of UNMIK, April 2014.

<sup>135</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, December 2013.

<sup>136</sup>Interview with an officer of the Irish Defence Forces, July 2013.

<sup>137</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup>Richard Gowan, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/15568/u-n-serves-as-perfect-alibi-for-big-power-inaction-in-unfixable-crises>

<sup>139</sup>Nick Houghton, Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture, RUSI, 18 December 2013.





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