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United Nations Peacekeeping Offensive Operations: Theory and Doctrine

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Introduction

The strategic decision of the United Nations (UN) to pursue offensive operations in order to achieve mandate objectives in peacekeeping missions, was met with a mixed response by the international community.^[1] Many observers regard the decision of deploying the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) MONUSCO, and the mandating of unilateral offensive operations in peacekeeping to be contradictory to the principles of impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The fact that the UN, in response to certain threats has opted for the use of combat operations, necessitates a new way of thinking about peacekeeping operations.

The point of departure of this paper is that the UN has not defined offensive operations, and specified what this means in practice. There is a need for the UN to define offensive operations, across the levels of peacekeeping, to be clear as to what it entails – Are offensive operations limited to tactical level mobile ground operations with limited indirect fire and attack helicopter/gunship support (robust peacekeeping)? How does strategic mandates regarding offensive operations influence peacekeeping doctrine? Should there be an organisational doctrine that guides the military strategic concept of operations (CONOPS)? Does offensive operations only span conventional operations or does it include counterinsurgency operations? Once there is a clear understanding of what offensive operations entail, doctrinal guidance for the strategic, operational and tactical levels of peacekeeping should be created. This is currently a gap which may result in less than optimal efficiency in operations.^[2]

The aim of this paper is to propose a UN military strategic and operational framework for the conduct of efficient offensive operations in peacekeeping. The military strategic and operational framework suggested in this study is motivated by MONUSCO Security Council (SC) Resolutions, 2098 (2013) through to 2348 (2017), which urges that MONUSCO improve its operational effectiveness through lessons learned (UN, 2017:15). Two main proposals regarding offensive operations spring from the aim of this paper and include suggestions on:

- Amendments to doctrine regarding offensive operations across the level of peacekeeping,
- Theoretical constructs regarding offensive operation (manoeuvre theory).

This paper acknowledges the evolution of modern peacekeeping, from its traditional model into

multidimensional complex peacekeeping. Since 2013, the unilateral use of force to neutralise Armed Groups in the DRC has been included in the lexicon of UN peacekeeping mandates (FIB) which added a new dimension to the already multifaceted phenomenon of complex peacekeeping. Although the use of force on the tactical level was not entirely new, the strategically mandated independent use of force added a new layer of complexity to the SC's strategic intent in relation to the conflict in the DRC. [3]

From a strategic military perspective, the Principles and Guidelines of UN Peacekeeping Operations (Capstone Doctrine) make no provision for the strategic and operational guidance for offensive operations. The use of force in the Capstone Doctrine is directed to influence military spoilers and 'not seek their defeat' (UN DPKO/DFS, 2008: 35). Where it must be recognised that the UN has published an official guideline on the use of force, "Use of Force by Military Components in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations", this publication marks a departure from the Capstone doctrinal guidance on the use of force in terms of the neutralisation of Armed Groups. Furthermore, where the abovementioned guideline indicates that the objective of offensive operations is to neutralise Armed Groups, it only refers to the Mandate and Rules of Engagement, as guiding documents for the execution of operations – no reference is made to the mission concept and CONOPS (UN, 2017: 24). Furthermore, there remains significant gaps in UN doctrine for independent offensive operations.

The decision to mandate offensive combat operations under the banner of the DPKO should not be taken lightly. Such operations pose inherent difficulties on the tactical level with multi-cultural and polyglot forces and may set a challenging precedent on the political level, whether formally or tacitly.

The UN's decision to use offensive operations should be based on a firm theoretical construct. The conduct of operations should be grounded in military tradition, however UN forces, recruited from across a range of military systems have varying competing and occasionally complimentary doctrinal customs. In order to limit the confusion of diverging doctrinal backgrounds, this paper suggests the use of manoeuvre theory as a basic construct in which to frame UN offensive operations and the creation of UN joint doctrine for offensive operations. This should complement the planning process involving, SC Resolutions, Integrated Strategic Frameworks, Military Capability Studies, Mission Concepts, CONOPS and Operational Orders.

The understanding of combat operations is of great importance and the paper responds to the recommendation by the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) report that the UN secretariat become more field focussed (HIPPO, 2015: viii), in that offensive operations be studied and understood by the UN headquarters.[4]

UN Strategic Mandate for Neutralising Armed Groups: Towards a doctrine for Offensive Operations

By framing operations within a theory of war, the construct will assist commanders in the way that they think about operations, state their intent and will further promote confidence in the military decision-making cycle. Doctrine reflects institutionalised knowledge and provides direction on 'how' to carry out operations, where theory provides a broad view and understanding of offensive operations (Angstrom, Widen, 2015: 5).

This section proposes that a UN doctrine be created which defines offensive operations. In terms of offensive operations, doctrine is required that addresses how a force fights across the various levels of peacekeeping. The main impact of doctrine is that while it defines institutional methods about what works in combat; it also indicates, institutional values and the way that people talk and think about military missions (Hoiback, 2013:116-120). The book 'UN Peacekeeping Doctrine in a New Era: Stabilization, Protection and New Threats', is a seminal work on contemporary UN doctrine. The work examines the

gap between UN peace operations as a whole and the lack of available doctrinal guidance. Focusing on political, strategic and national doctrines the book proposes new typologies for UN peacekeeping doctrine (De Coning, Aoi, Karlsrud, 2017). Offensive operations in the DRC marks a departure from traditional peace enforcement doctrine which is defined as military force used at the strategic or operational level, without the consent of the main parties, or where a political process is absent or difficult to attain and where there is harm to civilians (UN DPKO/DFS, 2008: 42). The UN has claimed that its operations in the DRC does not constitute peace enforcement (De Coning, 2017: 154). This paper builds on the idea that the UN requires an amendment in doctrine and focusses on the doctrinal adjustments as relevant to the application of offensive operations. The change in operational need and doctrine is necessitated by evolving international security threats.

The change in the character of conflict has necessitated changes in the UN's approach to peacekeeping. This has included a renewed focus on offensive operations such as the creation of the FIB in the DRC and more robust offensive inclined operations in Mali (against violent extremists utilising improvised explosive devices) and the Central African Republic (CAR). The UN decision to make use of offensive forces was a result of the strategic moment in which it found itself. M.A. Clarke defines a strategic moment as a "confluence of different trends that are at once full of possibilities, but also difficult to interpret and liable to rapidly evolve, a time when major choices with long-term consequences cannot be avoided." (UK Army, 2012: iv). The strategic moment of the UN is the result of the progression of violent trends over the last few years and the UN's concomitant response.

During the early 1990s, the UN was hopeful to reaffirm the envisioned peace of the historic UN Charter. The post-Cold War security environment, was viewed enthusiastically with aspirations of establishing a broad peace through traditional, Chapter VI, buffer force peacekeeping operations. The failures in Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Somalia, provided a heavy and sobering blow to traditional peacekeeping models indicating their profound limitations. Multidimensional peacekeeping developed from traditional peacekeeping in response to the growing complexity of conflicts where often there was no peace to keep. The role of civilian peacekeepers became more prominent as the need to address human rights violations, monitoring of elections, setting up transitional administrations and provision of humanitarian assistance amongst other broad requirements, reached beyond the scope of the military.[5] Multidimensional peacekeeping should be guided by the supremacy of the political process in conflict affected countries, and draws its strength from the political will of states supporting the UN, as highlighted in the *Brahimi* and High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) Reports.

Within the sphere of politico-strategic intent, the UN mandated the use of offensive operations in neutralising Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SC, 2017: 11),[6] which from a strategic viewpoint, indicates the resolve and intent of the SC. The strategic-operational-tactical question which results from the decision is - how to define the use of force in offensive operations? If the UN considers offensive operations, limited to conventional mobile attacks, then the question is posed as to whether such offensives are sufficient to defeat politically motivated Armed Groups?

The HIPPO report advises caution in the use of offensive operations in peacekeeping missions (HIPPO, 2015: x). Many modern commentators hold similar opinions on the unguided use of force in peace missions (Blyth and Cammaert, 2016). The use of force in peace missions versus the political will and interests of TCCs remain a hot topic for political debate, while on a practical level UN headquarters and field personnel require a guiding framework for the execution of offensive operations. The application of offensive operations should, support the nature, principles and objectives of the UN. The SC Resolution 2348 (based on SC Resolution 2098 (2013) and subsequent resolutions) called for highly mobile robust operations to neutralise Armed Groups in the DRC (SC, 2017:11).

The FIB was created in 2012, as a result of MONUSCO's ineffective tactical response to the M23 rebel group in 2012. It was formed by regional actors who had the political will to act decisively to put down the M23 rebellion. The African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC)[7] however lacked the security infrastructure and economic means to facilitate an independent mission in the DRC and as a result the FIB was deployed under the banner of the UN.

In studying the strategic and tactical relationship which resulted from MONUSCO's inability to respond to the M23 rebellion prior to the establishment of the FIB, a fundamental disconnect is noted. The Chapter VII mandate was sufficient to authorise the use of force for the protection of the mandate and to defend Goma against the M23. Furthermore, robust peacekeeping has been used on various previous occasions in the DRC.[8] However the combination of the risk appetite of the respective Force and contingent commanders as well as the political will of the TCCs were factors in MONUSCO's inability to defend Goma against M23 rebels. The result was a strategic blunder, in that the mandate was not fulfilled through the lack of ability or will on the tactical level. As a result, the decision was taken at the strategic level to reinforce the objectives of security through explicitly developing the mandate of offensive operations to neutralise Armed Groups.

The decision of the UN to consider offensive military operations as a strategic means requires a framework for execution. The paper recognises the UN's planning and execution methods which include but are not limited to, Integrated Strategic Frameworks, Mission Concepts, Military Capability Studies, CONOPS and Operational Orders. The strategic framework for execution is by its nature multifaceted and challenging, given the confluence of diverging actors and threats. It stands to reason that offensive operations are proportionally more challenging with the increased complexity of Armed Groups, context and terrain. To cite examples from current missions where the security situation involves asymmetric, guerrilla warfare threats from non-state actors, such as Mali and CAR; the UN should carefully consider its strategic options in terms of the use of robust peacekeeping and offensive operations. The creation of a guiding joint doctrine for offensive operations across the levels of peacekeeping, will address the strategic-operational-tactical relationship between the UN, regional partners and TCCs and will make operations more efficient and interoperable. Furthermore, such doctrine will guide the supply of forces, the execution of operations and the processing of intelligence. This is particularly important in the case of Mali, even though the mission does not have a strategic mandate for offensive operations, the host of actors in the area of operations complicates operational efficiency, where the G5 Sahel, Barkane and UN forces operate with divergent doctrines. In the process of creating a doctrine the UN will be required to define the limits of offensive operations and neutralisation of Armed Groups in peacekeeping.

Offensive operations are defined by the US Field Manual 3-0 Operations, as the "operations (that) aim to destroy or defeat an enemy...and achieve decisive victory (US Army, 2001)". Does the neutralisation of Armed Groups in the DRC refer to the decisive defeat of such groups? By defining offensive operations the UN will promote understanding and clarity. The formation of clear doctrine throughout all levels of peacekeeping including definitions, force and organisational command relationships will further promote efficiency and interoperability.

The execution of military operations remains subjective to interpretation and the tactics of each state are dependent on their national doctrine. The use of a common military strategic framework, on the operational and strategic levels, will assist with interoperability between polyglot TCCs with often diverging military traditions, while respecting the TTPs of the individual states. This paper suggests that the UN should frame its combat operations within a particular theory of war which should be clearly stated in the Capstone Doctrine and the various military manuals, including but not limited to the Infantry Battalion Manual, Military Engineer Manual and Special Forces Manual which set out[9] the traditional

roles of Infantry, Engineers, Special Forces, Air Support amongst other force elements. For example, the UN Infantry Battalion Manual, states that the UN peacekeeping battalion does not manoeuvre in offensive and defensive operations (UN DPKO/DFS, 2012: 86). An addition therefore needs to be made to address more offensive roles envisioned and mandated by the UN. The Mission Concept, CONOPS and Operational Orders must be similar for all parts of a given mission and in the case of MONUSCO the framework forces and FIB must have the same objectives and guiding instructions to ensure efficiency and interoperability.

By declaring the military theory and conceptual direction of offensive operations, the UN will promote clarity among civilian and military peacekeepers and between the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This in turn should be reflected in doctrinal guidance across the levels of peacekeeping. The Capstone Doctrine, or relevant doctrinal document or addendum outlining offensive operations, will assist in informing the strategic and operational concepts of campaigns and combat operations. This should be tied to a clear intelligence picture on the various levels of peacekeeping.^[10] The focus should be rapid high impact and highly mobile operations which secures strategic results. The victory of the FIB over M23 has indicated the ability of tactical operations to succeed against rebel groups in UN peacekeeping operations.^[11] The use of small well-trained fighting forces with a background in manoeuvre warfare doctrine have also succeeded, outside of the ambit of UN peacekeeping operations in conducting efficient operations with strategic success in Africa. An example being the operations of Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone (Barlow 2015).

The implementation of a UN military strategic framework and manoeuvre theory through an offensive peacekeeping doctrine does not discount attrition theory, nor does it guarantee victory and the attainment of political solutions. It does however provide the best systematic method for the achievement of political objectives through the use of military means. The military strategic framework^[12] for offensive operations can be developed from the UN's existing tools including, the Integrated Strategic Framework, Mission Concept, and CONOPS, which are designed to implement strategic mandate objectives through operationalisation of plans and tactical execution.^[13] The tactical level execution of offensive operations is central to achieving strategic goals and neither sphere can exist in isolation.

In order for a military victory to be translated into political capital, an opposing force must be defeated and ground must be captured and defended. Where UN manpower is insufficient in holding terrain, national and allied forces should be used. When a military victory is not followed up by the placement of conventional forces in the conquered area, a power vacuum will most likely be created which will result in the replacement of the old rebel forces with new ones.^[14] The limited success of the DRC military (FARDC) in consolidating FIB gains must be questioned (Cammaert, 2013: 1). The strategies of the UN and the host state must thus share a similar vision. UN doctrinal guidance should refer to 'how' to execute offensive operations and how to gain operational and politico-strategic objectives from tactical execution.

The FIB's tactical defeat of the M23 gave hope to UN offensive operations however the political dealings and accomplishments following the victory remain debatable. The UN FIB subsequently achieved limited success against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The FDLR have political objectives and their members have become immersed in the local community within eastern DRC. In this case conventional operations may not be sufficient but rather a counterinsurgency strategy may be required in the event that an offensive approach be further pursued (Garcia, 2017:9).^[15] In 2005, Major General Patrick Cammaert utilised a strategy against the FDLR which bore similarities to counterinsurgency operations (Baker and Jordaan, 2010: 157). In the event of intervening in insurgency or in contexts where local population are hostile towards the UN, a counterinsurgency strategy could be considered to complement combat operations. This is of course subject to the mandate, political climate

and international interest amongst the SC.

These military and political considerations go beyond the scope of this paper, and the complexity in the study of strategy is subject to the context of the mission in question. The national political considerations of TCCs, which are averse to risk may make counterinsurgency operations unlikely. While this paper does not have an opinion about the use or implementation of counterinsurgency operations and strategies in peacekeeping missions, they may be a natural consideration as a result of the progression of combat operations. The defeat of guerrilla, unconventional or insurgent forces has been studied in depth by military and political scientists and theorists, and the overwhelming conclusion is that it is a fundamentally herculean and problematic project to undertake for national or coalition militaries. Jim Terrie states that it is doubtful whether UN peacekeeping forces would be able to apply a counterinsurgency strategy due to capability restrictions and low troop levels (Baker and Jordaan, 2010: 152).

The consequences of the neutralising of Armed Groups, has non-military consequences which may require civilian peacekeeping and UN police involvement. Following the defeat of Armed Groups, the civilian peacekeeping component has an important role to play in political advocacy, community liaison and monitoring and evaluation following the termination of hostilities. Furthermore, in the event of the defeat of Armed Groups in the DRC, an appropriate MONUSCO UN and DRC police plan of action is required so as to mitigate the potential effect of rebels/insurgents in local villages. Offensive operations doctrine should be holistic and should ensure that community liaison assistants, police and other UN tools are effectively used and integrated.

UN doctrine for offensive operations should thus address the limits and definitions of offensive operations when strategically mandated. The doctrine should, build on the UN guideline on the use of force (2017), and extend across the strategic, operational and tactical levels of peacekeeping so as to ensure an effective and holistic understanding of the topic. Furthermore, such a doctrine should highlight interoperability with other regional partners such as NATO and the AU.[16] Where manoeuvre theory provides a construct for the conduct of operations, doctrine should guide the execution of operations without being overly prescriptive (US, 2014: 70). Doctrine provides the 'how to' in operations where concepts look to the future of peacekeeping.

Manoeuvre Theory: A Proposed Framework for UN Offensive Operations on the Strategic and Operational Levels of Peacekeeping

The study of war is broad and multifaceted and military staff and defence colleges dedicate extended periods to the study of this phenomenon. Whereas warfighting and peacekeeping are not synonymous, there are certainly some elements of warfighting that overlap into peacekeeping – robust peacekeeping, peace enforcement and offensive operations. In the study of war there are two main theories, manoeuvre and attrition. The two theories are broad overarching frameworks which influence the commander's thinking about war and the ways in which operations are executed. These theories are not mutually exclusive and operations and wars often combine the two constructs on different occasions and on the different levels of war (Springman 2006:1).

The UN, by choosing offensive operations, may have to publish a doctrine on its combat operations which should generally be framed in a theory of war. Manoeuvre warfare theory, although based largely on Cold War conventional warfare theory, is a construct that can be applied to limited forces in small operations as well as large forces in high intensity operations. In terms of modern history there are a number of prominent examples which support manoeuvre theory: following the First Gulf War, NATO adopted manoeuvre warfare as its tactical doctrine; the attrition focused Vietnam War, led the United States of

America (USA) to re-analyse its approach to warfare resulting in a focus on manoeuvre theory; Africa has had its own unique experience in warfare where manoeuvre theory with limited forces has demonstrated great value.^[17] In regards to tactical doctrine - tactics, techniques and procedures are left to the authority of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) (UN DPKO, 2008: 9). The United Nations has the authority and responsibility to frame the tactical means within a theoretical construct of offensive operations applied within the broader operational and strategic levels of peacekeeping.

Manoeuvre warfare attempts to gain victory through focussing on the operational level of war, and where possible avoiding unnecessary pitched battles. Within the framework of manoeuvre theory, the role of the commander is to defeat the enemy and not necessarily destroy the enemy (Leonhard 1994: 24-29). The alternative theory to manoeuvre is attrition theory and where manoeuvre warfare emphasises the human element of war attrition theory has a distinct focus on the technological aspect of war and the destruction of the enemy's mass (Leonhard 1994: 19). At most times in the conduct of operations, there will be a relationship and continuum between attrition and manoeuvre warfare theory. Where manoeuvre theory in its purest form may not always be attainable – that is a rapid victory with minimal loss of life, it provides an ideal to be strived for and a better option than attrition.

There are three main methods of achieving victory through manoeuvre warfare theory, pre-emption, disruption and dislocation. **Pre-emption is the use of manoeuvre in a prophylactic way to prevent** the outbreak of combat (Simpkin 1986: 140). There are historical examples of successful pre-emptive tactical offensive operations in the DRC, executed under Chapter VII mandates (Blyth and Cammaert, 2016). Adding to the discussion on pre-emption, the Under Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, stated that operations would include, “adapting our capabilities and our field support to allow Missions to act in an agile, mobile, robust and pre-emptive manner” (Ladsous, 2015). This method may be achievable with a rapidly deployable UN force, or where a force is in theatre, and are rapidly transferred to another area where a flare-up of violence may occur. As a guide for the time-spans for the redeployment of UN Infantry Battalions, the manual indicates an Infantry Battalion Quick Reaction Force (company group) should be deployable anywhere in the Battalion area of operations within two hours, anywhere within Mission area of operations in six hours and inter-mission within twenty four hours (UN DPKO/DFS, 2012: 72). Dislocation and disruption are the other means of achieving victory through manoeuvre warfare which occur after the conflict has commenced. These means of achieving victory can be adopted and incorporated into the relevant UN doctrinal documents so as to shape the thinking about offensive military operations.

Pre-emption, is preventative and makes use of speed, (British Army 2010: 5-16; Leonhard 1994: 63-64), dislocation and disruption occurs after the outbreak of violence, and involve attacking the centre of gravity and the physical and psychological spheres of the enemy, epitomising surprise while avoiding the enemy strengths and attacking weak points (South African Army College 1996: 7/5-6; British Army 2010: 5-16). Carl von Clausewitz coined the term, ‘centre of gravity’ referring to the hub of all power, on which victory depends (Von Clausewitz 2006: 119). Manoeuvre theory modified the concept of centre of gravity and redefined it as the critical vulnerability, which when attacked would lead to the defeat of the enemy through paralysis (Leonhard 1994: 44).

The military strategic framework verifies the importance of manoeuvre warfare (Gooch 1996; Baylis 1987; Van Creveld 1991; Handel 1992; Olsen and Gray 2011; Gray 2007) and links political interests, the use of the military and the different levels of war/peacekeeping. The levels of war/peacekeeping provide the framework to understand the process of planning and applying Chapter VI, Chapter VII and unilateral offensive operations in order to achieve strategic objectives.

Between the strategic level of war/peacekeeping and the tactical level of war/peacekeeping there is the

operational level of war/peacekeeping. The operational level traditionally refers to the conduct of campaigns whereas the tactical level refers to battles (Leonhard 1994: 9). In peacekeeping the tactical level may also include the efforts of civilian peacekeepers. Where the TCCs can determine the use of TTPs, the UN can provide the theoretical framework at the strategic and operational levels for the conduct of the campaign. Campaigns are fought at the operational level of war which links the strategic objectives to military actions at the tactical level. When analysing the levels of war versus the levels of peacekeeping one has to deliberate on the limitations and considerations specific to the UN.

The levels of war include the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The respective level of war dictates the type of military planning and action that is required. This process must be mimicked for UN offensive operations. The strategic level, concerns itself with objectives and mandates as set out by the SC. The contribution of military forces by TCCs are also of strategic concern and their national political interests influence the quantity and type of forces deployed. The operational level pertains to mission headquarters and campaigns and is organised around force and mission leadership; and the tactical level refers to battles and engagements usually with divisions, brigades and battalions. The tactical level also provides the setting where civilian peacekeepers carry out critical tasks for the mission. The commitment of UN forces in peace operations may be smaller than the military forces deployed in conventional wars, however the planning process and the conceptual model for campaigns and battles remain similar. The execution of military and civilian actions on the tactical must theoretically translate to the achievement of strategic objectives.[18] Figure 1 shows the levels of peacekeeping and the UN guiding documentation.

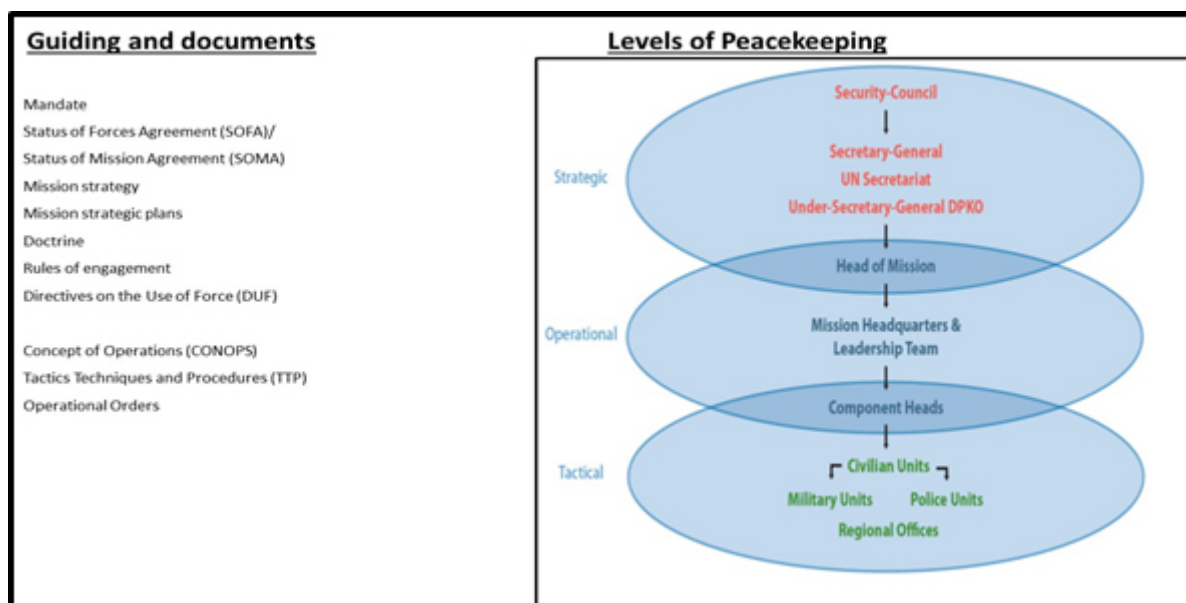


Figure 1: Levels of Peacekeeping. Amended from the Infantry Battalion Manual (UN DPKO/DFS, 2012: 55)

Each level of war has its respective centre of gravity and thus its critical vulnerability. Therefore it is suggested that prior to undertaking offensive operations the UN determine the centre of gravity of the opposing force (Mission Concept/CONOPS) and then execute the required operations using a combat doctrine and military theory. The operational level is where the political and strategic objectives are realised and it is where manoeuvre warfare is executed. The operational level of war/peacekeeping is controlled by the UN where the tactical level is subject to the TTPs of the respective TCCs. Should the UN not wish to be in command on the strategic and operational levels, or if the reality of tactical operations result in TCC's respective home governments making distance operational decisions in the

mission area – then it could be that offensive operations should be avoided as a means to achieve SC strategic objectives in peacekeeping.

The efficiency of missions relies on the command structure which in terms of traditional military headquarters and structure is non-existent on the strategic level of the UN. Where the strategic level has its inherent difficulties, tactical efficiency, it is of vital importance and can be assisted through the appointment of the correct military commanders for the required combat centred missions. This should be done as soon as possible and where feasible during the initiation or planning phase (CONOPS). In practical terms the CONOPS should clearly identify centres of gravity in conjunction with TCCs. The focus should not only be on the quantities of uniformed personnel required but the CONOPS should be guided by an overarching doctrine and military theory so as to define offensive operations, neutralising of Armed Groups and the ways and means required.

The concept of achieving victory with minimal loss is central to manoeuvre theory. The SC Resolution 2348 states that Armed Groups in the DRC should be neutralised by offensive operations which should be conducted “in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner” (UN, 2017:11). The main reason for the compatibility of manoeuvre warfare with the UN offensive operation mandates is the general aversion of TCCs to high risk, attrition and losses. The use of pre-emption makes use of mobility, speed and surprise rather than firepower to achieve its objective. In making use of minimal direct fire engagements it reduces the risk of casualties. (Leonhard 1994: 64). The use of minimal force appeals to the UN. The low intensity firepower/highly mobile operations will most likely have to be combined with air support and engineering capabilities.

Offensive operations may be limited in cases where Armed Groups have some amount of strategic depth, as afforded by support bases across national borders, for example Chad-Darfur Sudan, DRC-Uganda amongst others, or when opposing forces have local population support as in the case of insurgent hubs (the resurfacing of M23 rebels may be a case in point). These limitations should be thoroughly considered while developing military options. These options may include utilising regional actors so as to achieve maximum effect through offensive operations. In the event of encountering guerrilla/insurgent forces, in considering efficiency on UN offensive operations, it may be necessary to combine manoeuvre warfare with counterinsurgency strategies.[19] Counterinsurgency can be defined as the “blend of comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously contain insurgency and address its root causes (US Government, 2009: 2).” This of course is subject to the mission mandate and is only suggested if the UN decides in pursuing an aggressive military strategy. Should the UN not be willing to decode and decipher the complexity of military doctrine and theory, then offensive operations may not be the correct policy tool for executing UN mandates.

Conclusion

The SC’s mandate of unilateral offensive operations is in many ways a throwback to the thinking in the conception of the UN Charter which was aimed at countering aggression in the maintenance of international peace (White, 2013: 572). Despite the mandate, the UN has until present not effectively defined offensive operations within peacekeeping doctrine. As a result it is difficult to understand the character and limits of such operations. The decision of the UN to make use of offensive operations necessitates the DPKO/DFS to develop military strategic and operational frameworks to define and efficiently execute offensive operations.

The paper contributes to the study of UN offensive operations and proposed a UN military strategic and operational framework, theoretical constructs regarding offensive operations (manoeuvre theory) and suggestions as to amendments to doctrine regarding offensive operations across the level of peacekeeping.

The paper suggests that the UN make use of manoeuvre warfare theory as a broad approach to the conduct of offensive operations on the strategic and operational levels of peacekeeping. Furthermore, the paper suggests that the UN' theoretical approach to war and offensive operations be highlighted in the respective doctrinal publications and manuals. Manoeuvre warfare theory recognises the importance of technology as well as intelligence, counterintelligence and technology.[20] Despite the importance of technology, the most important factor remains leadership and the human element (Vego, 2007: XII-28).

The paper suggests that the military underpinnings of combat operations should be clearly stated in the DPKO Capstone Doctrine and should filter down through to the manuals for Infantry, Engineers, Special Forces, Air Support and other military elements. The understanding of offensive operations through a common doctrinal lens will promote interoperability. There is a need for 'joint' doctrine which should clearly outline command relationships, subordinations and organisation.[21]

The path of offensive combat operations is a tricky and complicated one. The UN should carefully consider this, due to the inherent difficulty of fighting under the banner of DPKO, and because of the challenging precedent that sets on the political level, whether formally or tacitly.

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End Notes

[1] See, P. Cammaert, “The UN Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, *International Peace Institute*, 2013; E. P. Rhoads, “Perils of Peacekeeping without Politics”, *Rift Valley Institute*, 2013; S. Sheeran and S. Case, “The Intervention Brigade: Legal Issues for the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, *International Peace Institute*, 2014; M. Berdal and D.H. Ucko, ‘The Use of Force in UN Peacekeeping Operations’, *The Rusi Journal Article*, 160, 1, 2015; J. Stearns, “Can Force be Useful in the Absence of a Political Strategy? Lessons from the UN missions to the DR Congo”, *Global Peace Operations Review*, 2015; E.H. Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); C. De Coning, “Peace Enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal Distinctions between the African Union and United Nations”, *Contemporary*, 38, 1, 2017.

[2] For research which goes beyond UN offensive operations see, C. De Coning, C. Aoi and J. Karlsrud, *Peacekeeping in a New Era: Adapting to Stabilization Protection and New Threats*. New York: Routledge. This work indicates gaps in the political and strategic UN peacekeeping doctrine and provides an in depth study on the topic

[3] See Security Council Resolutions, 2293 (2016), 2277 (2016), 2211 (2015), 2198 (2015), 2147 (2014), 2136 (2014), and 2098 (2013).

[4] The paper acknowledges that the HIPPO report suggests caution in the conduct of UN offensive operations (HIPPO, 2015: x).

[5] See, UN DPKO, *Handbook on United Nations Multi-Dimensional Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: UN, 2003); M.W. Doyle and N. Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); DPKO/DFS, *Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines (Capstone Doctrine)*, 2008.

[6] See Security Council Resolutions, 2293 (2016), 2277 (2016), 2211 (2015), 2198 (2015), 2147 (2014), 2136 (2014), and 2098 (2013).

[7] The HIPPO report acknowledges the importance of global-regional partners in promoting international peace and security and the importance of the UN in facilitating the strategic vision of such partnerships (HIPPO, 2015: XI, XII).

[8] See P. Cammaert, “The UN Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, *International Peace Institute*, 2013.

[9] See, UN, ‘UN Infantry Battalion Manual’, DPKO/DFS, 2012; UN, ‘UN Peace Missions Military Engineer Unit Manual’, DPKO/DFS, 2015; UN, ‘UN Peace Missions Military Reconnaissance Unit Manual’, DPKO/DFS, 2015; UN DPKO//DFS, ‘Aviation Manual’, 2005. In terms of intelligence doctrine see, O. Abilova and A. Novosseloff, “Demystifying Intelligence in UN Peace Operations: Toward an Organizational Doctrine”, *International Peace Institute*, 2016; UN DPKO/DFS, ‘Policy: Peacekeeping Intelligence’, 2017.

[10] See, UN DPKO/DFS, ‘Policy: Peacekeeping Intelligence’, 2017.

[11] The victory over M23 was also successful because of regional political pressures exerted on Rwanda, which as a supporter of rebels in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was widely regarded as a spoiler. See, J. Stearns, “Can Force be Useful in the Absence of a Political Strategy? Lessons from the UN missions to the DR Congo”, *Congo Research Group*, 2015.

[12] See, J.R. Cerami and J.F. Holcomb, *US Army War College: Guide to Strategy* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001).

[13] See UN Integrated Strategic Framework; Mission Concept; Multi-year strategies for UN Agencies; UN, *Planning Toolkit*, 2012; The Concept of Operations (CONOPS) is developed with TCCs at the start of a mission and in accordance with the modification of mandate objectives.

[14] In a case where rapid offensive forces are used to secure objectives, upon the defeat of the opposing force, an additional conventional force must be placed on the ground to secure and dominate the area. This could be forces of the state being assisted or conventional Chapter VI peacekeeping forces. It should be noted that Chapter VI forces will most likely be regarded as

party to the conflict because of their association with the offensive force.

[15] See, D. Baker and E. Jordaan (eds), *Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2010); US Army, *Field Manual 3-24.2 Tactics in Counterinsurgency* (Washington, US Army, 2009).

[16] See C. De Coning, “Peace Enforcement in Africa: Doctrinal Distinctions between the African Union and United Nations”, *Contemporary*, 38, 1, 2017.

[17] See, H. Frantzen, *NATO and Peace Support Operations 1991-1999: Policies and Doctrines* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); US Field Manual (FM) 100-5; US Marine Field Manual, FMFM 1-5; E. Barlow, Barlow, *Composite Warfare: The Conduct of Successful Ground Forces Operations in Africa* (Solihull: Helion, 2015); M. Kainerugaba, *Battles of the Ugandan Resistance A Tradition of Maneuver* (Kampala: Fountain, 2010); S. Fitzsimmons, *Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); R. De Vries, *Mobiele oorlogvoering: 'n perspektief vir Suider-Afrika* (Pretoria: Harman, 1987); R. De Vries, *Eye of the Firestorm: Strength Lies in Mobility* (Johannesburg: Naledi, 2013); E. Jordaan, ‘An Airborne Capability from South Africa from a Special Operations Forces Perspective’, *Scientia Militaria*, 40, 1, 2012. F. Vrey, A. Esterhuysen, and T. Mandrup, *On Military Culture: Theory, Practice and African Armed Forces* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2014); ; A. Garcia, ‘A Manoeuvre Warfare Analysis of South Africa’s 1914-1915 German South West African Campaign’ *Scientia Militaria*. 45, 1, 2017.

[18] In this regard certain strategic objectives cannot be operationalised.

[19] Baker, D and Jordaan, E (eds). 2010. *Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects*. (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press); UN Global Counterinsurgency Strategy, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>; K. Friis, ‘Peacekeeping and Counter-insurgency – Two of a Kind?’, *International Peacekeeping*, 17, 1, 2010.

[20] See, UN DPKO/DFS, ‘Policy: Peacekeeping Intelligence’, 2017; O. Abilova and A. Novosseloff, “Demystifying Intelligence in UN Peace Operations: Toward an Organizational Doctrine”, *International Peace Institute*, 2016; Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping, ‘Final Report: Performance Peacekeeping’, United Nations, 2014; A. Walter Dorn, ‘Smart Peacekeeping: Toward Tech-Enabled UN Operations’, International Peace Institute, 2016.

[21] This can be similar to a military organisation. See, M.N. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Newport: Naval War College, 2007), XII-28.

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