



THEMATIC LINE 2: MUTUAL TRUST ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT

SUB-THEME 2C: COMBINED FORCES IN PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

SPEAKER: CANADA

BACKGROUND PAPER

SUMMARY

1. Since the 1990s, complex and volatile peace support operations have increased significantly and, as a result, the UN and the international community face new challenges. Regional training and regional mechanisms in the western hemisphere need to be enhanced and/or created, in order to facilitate more effective combined peace operations. The international community responded to the conspicuous peace operation failures of the 90s by demanding a more rapid and effective capability from the UN. The UN created strategic deployment stocks, the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS), and recommended the creation of several brigade-size forces to enhance the UN's ability to create missions more rapidly. Currently, the only such operational brigade is the Multinational Stand-by High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG). Countries within the Western hemisphere can help build cohesiveness for combined operations through joining SHIRBRIG or by working to create a separate brigade of the Americas. Forces in combined peace operations today must also recognize that peacekeepers and peace-builders have become inseparable partners. As a result, effective cooperation and planning not only with other military actors, but also with civilian peace-builders should be considered.

BACKGROUND

2. The UN is the pre-eminent international organization with the charter authority to maintain international peace and security as mandated in Chapter VI and VII of the United Nations Charter. It is in accordance with these chapters that peace operations are carried out as practical applications of UN responsibility to assure international peace and security. As the UN does not have its own armed force, it must rely on contributions from member states resulting in multinational and combined operations. The UN can also sanction peace operations to be carried out by regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) or coalition efforts such as the American-led coalition in the Balkans.



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3. Countries within the Western hemisphere have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to international peace and security through participation in a variety of peace operations. For the month of August 2002, 13 countries in the hemisphere contributed almost 3600 troops, military observers and police to 14 UN peace support operations at various locations in the world. Latin American countries contributed over 2600 personnel, and Uruguay was the eighth largest contributor in the world, contributing almost 1600 personnel.

4. The nature of UN peace operations has changed dramatically over the last decade, from traditional operations with soldiers monitoring ceasefires and force separations after inter-State wars, to more complex, multi-dimensional operations with a variety of military and civilian actors in the same theatre working to build peace after intra-state conflict. Since the end of the cold war, peace support operations have become increasingly complex and volatile. The UN and the international community have faced new challenges due to the changing nature and scope of peace operations.

5. In the spring of 2000, the UN Secretary-General announced the creation of a panel to review the full range of UN activities in support of international peace and security and to offer concrete recommendations for making that support more effective. *The Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (Brahimi Report) is a comprehensive document that has become the pillar for discussions about peace operations including conflict prevention and peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building.

6. Three key elements that have emerged from the report will be explored in this discussion. First, peace operations generally require multiple national commitments to cover the scope of the mission and to address political sensitivities. The ability of the UN or other organizations to identify the adequate number and appropriate representation of troops is contingent on the creation of a significant pool of forces with the appropriate training and equipment and the political will to deploy such forces. The need for quick and effective response in peace support operations will also be discussed. Forces that train and plan together as a cohesive unit can best meet this requirement. Finally, as a result of the comprehensive nature of today's missions, the military not only must learn to work with armed forces from other countries but also must cooperate with civilian elements within missions and mission areas.



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DISCUSSION

ISSUE 1 – DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES

7. The effectiveness of the international community to address international peace and security ultimately rests on political will. The Brahimi Report recognizes that the impact of the changes recommended in the report will be fleeting unless “Member States of the Organization (UN) take seriously their responsibility to train and equip their own forces and to mandate and enable their collective instrument, so that together they may succeed in meeting the threat to peace.” Countries within the western hemisphere can play an important role towards the realization of this goal through not only training and equipping their own forces but also through supporting regional political mechanisms like the Organization of American States (OAS) to help bolster a regional response to crisis.

8. As outlined above, a number of countries within the hemisphere already have a strong record in peace operations. However, regional cooperation and training can help heighten the effectiveness of current participation while also encouraging increased participation from other countries.

9. Over the past decade, a variety of creative, flexible, nontraditional forms of regional cooperation on security issues have been created, such as the Conference of the Defence Ministers of the Americas;¹⁷ the three service conferences – Commanders Conference of American Armies (CAA), the Conference of the Chiefs of the American Air Forces (CONJEFAMER);¹⁷ and the Inter-American Navy Conference (IANC);¹⁷ the Regional Security System of the Eastern Caribbean countries; the Framework Treaty of Democratic Security in Central America; the Declaration of Mercosur, Bolivia and Chile; and the efforts to form a Southern Cone Centre for Conflict Resolution.

10. Discourse at these forums has become increasingly cooperative, has provided a channel to share strategic information, and has increased confidence among the region’s militaries. Such cooperation and confidence is the building block for combined peace operations.

11. Shared courses, training and exercises can help further the ability of forces to participate and to cooperate in peace operations. Through such mechanisms, information and knowledge on doctrine and methodologies is shared, and professional linkages are developed therefore increasing interoperability and enhancing force effectiveness in a combined operation.



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12. Combined training initiatives already exist, such as bilateral and multi-lateral combined exercises, personnel exchanges of both students and instructors, and observation of routine operations. For example, many nations from the hemisphere participate in annual naval exercises such as UNITAS and personnel from various countries in the hemisphere have benefited from courses [run by the United States](#) on professionalizing and modernizing armed forces.

13. Recognizing that the best peacekeeper is a well-trained and equipped professional soldier, all combined training efforts help build capacity for combined peace operations. However, such training should also be supplemented by peace support specific training.

14. Some specialized peacekeeping activities have occurred among several American countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Canada works with a number of countries in the hemisphere, through such means as sending personnel on courses to the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre ~~or~~ [and participating in officer exchange](#) ~~using officers and assisting peace training centers.~~ [Argentina and Chile also have peacekeeping training centres.](#)

15. Regional organizations have neither the resources nor the mandate to substitute for the UN, but regional organizations also have a role to play in peace operations. The Organization of American States (OAS) has complemented UN peace support operations in a variety of ways such as through assistance for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Nicaragua, and through the provision of political support, human resources and expertise in UN missions. Aside from its own deployments, the OAS could also play a larger role in combined peace operations through coordinating and developing regional capacities. However, to achieve this latter goal, the capacity of the OAS should also be enhanced. The Hemispheric Security Review will hopefully lead to mechanisms for greater hemispheric integration and cooperation in peace operations.

16. **Opinion:** While individual countries within the hemisphere should work to enhance their capacity to participate in combined peace operations, a more coordinated approach for regional training for peace operations should also be developed.



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ISSUE 2 - DEVELOPING RAPID REACTION CAPABILITIES

17. Since the 1990s, the international community witnessed an array of peace operation disasters such as Rwanda in 1994 and Srebrenica in 1995 that led to a desire to enhance the UN's ability to respond quickly and effectively in times of crisis. Towards this end, the UN established strategic deployment stocks (SDS) at the UN Logistics Base (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy to provide a minimum support capability whereby, within 30 or 90 days, a peacekeeping force can perform its basic core tasks in the principal theatre of a mission area for a limited period of time. The UN also created a UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS) based upon conditional commitments by members states to contribute specified resources within agreed times for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The resources agreed upon remain in their home country, where necessary preparation, including training, is conducted to fulfill specified tasks or functions in accordance with United Nations guidelines. When necessary, the resources are requested by the Secretary-General, and, if approved by the Member States, are rapidly deployed.

18. However, history has shown that in complex missions, cohesiveness is one of the most important aspects for the success of a mission. A number of coalition efforts have been able to capitalize on this requirement for cohesiveness by bringing together troops that have already planned and trained together. To help create cohesiveness in a UN setting, the Brahimi Report recommended the creation of several brigade-size forces, within the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS), composed of contributions from several nations that are well-trained and equipped according to a common standard.

19. The Multinational Stand-by High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG) is currently the only operationally ready brigade-size force able to provide the UN with a rapid reaction capability as envisioned in the Brahimi Report.¹ Through SHIRBRIG, contributions from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden² are combined to form a brigade able to provide a rapid deployment capability to the UN for deployments of up to six months in peacekeeping operations mandated by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. As with the UNSAS, each participating country decides on a case-by-case basis whether or not to take part in any given SHIRBRIG mission and therefore national decision-making procedures and sovereignty is in no way affected by participation in SHIRBRIG.

¹ SHIRBRIG was first declared ready for deployment in January 2000, elements of SHIRBRIG deployed to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in November 2000, and on January 1, 2002, SHIRBRIG informed the UN that it was again ready for deployment.

² Argentina had been a full member, but recently suspended its membership. Other countries that have expressed an interest in SHIRBRIG but that have not committed to full membership include, Lithuania, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Chile, Czech Republic, Hungary, Jordan, Ireland, Senegal.



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20. In theory, when deployed, SHIRBRIG would be comprised of four to five thousand troops and contain a headquarters, communications facilities with three or more infantry battalions, and one or more reconnaissance units. A planning element, permanently located in Copenhagen Denmark acts as the nucleus for the SHIRBRIG headquarters upon deployment. Additionally, the planning element helps build cohesiveness by developing standard operating procedures, conducting operational and logistic training and exercises, and collecting and evaluating lessons learned.

21. Through SHIRBRIG small and medium size nations pool their resources to provide a cohesive brigade-size force to the UN that such countries would otherwise not be able to supply. Because of this resource pooling, member states are also able to exploit specialized capabilities. Through the planning element, SHIRBRIG can also be used as a base for combined training experiences and for gaining exposure to a variety of professional military practices.

22. As participation in any given mission remains a national decision, SHIRBRIG must strive to gain redundancy within its pool of units to enable brigade deployment. As a result, SHIRBRIG is always looking for new members. SHIRBRIG would also like greater geographic representation in the brigade so new members from Latin or South American countries would be particularly welcome.

23. Countries within the Americas can help build cohesiveness for combined operations through exploring membership to SHIRBRIG as has already been done by Argentina and Chile. The Brahimi Report calls for a number of rapid reaction brigades and SHIRBRIG is also interested in sharing its knowledge and experiences with other countries wanting to form their own brigade. As a result, as an alternative and/or in addition to SHIRBRIG membership, countries within the Americas may strive to create a brigade of the Americas for UN operations based on the SHIRBRIG model.

24. **Opinion:** More countries in the Americas should consider SHIRBRIG membership and/or the formation of a separate regional brigade to enhance the rapid reaction capability of the UN.



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ISSUE 3 – CIVIL AND MILITARY COOPERATION IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

25. In today's complex peace operations, the military can be involved in the spectrum of peace support roles including conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. Throughout these roles, the military will interact with a variety of civilian actors such as police services, administrators, election monitors, humanitarian aid workers and medical staff. As a result, in addition to gaining inter-operability with other militaries, increasingly, soldiers in peace operations must also enhance their ability to work with a diverse array of civilian actors.

26. The military-civilian link is particularly important for peace-building. As outlined in the Brahimi report, peacekeepers and peace-builders are inseparable partners in complex operations: while the peace-builders' ability to function in volatile and dangerous regions depends on the peacekeepers' support, the peacekeepers' exit strategy depends upon the peace-builders' work. As a result, the increasing role of non-military actors in peace operations is a benefit to and should be encouraged by military units. Additionally, sustainable peace-building efforts should be focused on establishing and building the capacities of national institutions so that the peace missions themselves do not become substitutes for national governance structures. To attain sustainable peace, military and non-military actors in an operation need to closely coordinate their efforts.

27. A number of different practices can be implemented in order to support military-civilian cooperation in multi-national peace operations. For example, a number of militaries have Civil and Military Cooperation (CIMIC) officers who focus on providing a link between the security force and the local population or international civilian agencies working in theatre. For example in the peace operation in Kosovo (KFOR), CIMIC officers contributed through construction projects³, distributing humanitarian aid and sending assets throughout the theatre of operations to support KFOR. These projects had a positive impact on the quality of life of the local population and are noteworthy examples of the extensive integration and cooperation that can occur between numerous actors in a mission. For example, one particular project in Kosovo involved a chief engineer from a local company designing a project to meet the needs of the returning community, the Canadian International Development Agency providing money to Canadian CIMIC officers to buy water pipes and Bosnian soldiers digging canals to lay the pipes. In addition to the physical success of a new water carrier system, the co-operation between foreign and domestic, and civil and military elements provided the additional benefit of creating a climate of trust and therefore more favourable environment for the individuals returning home after the conflict.

³ Projects ranged from the delivery of alternative accommodations for winter, to the reconstruction of external medical clinics and elementary schools as well as water-supply projects.



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28. Canada recently initiated a civil-military pilot project with even greater civil-military integration. During the Canadian deployment to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), a civilian contractor deployed with the military to provide early support for post-conflict peace-building, humanitarian and development advice to the Canadian Contingent Commander. This individual also helped gather information and identify areas for what the Brahimi Report called “quick impact projects”, or projects implemented early in the life of the mission that make a demonstrable difference in the lives of the people in the mission area and therefore help build the credibility of the mission. As well, this civilian contractor was part of a non-military national resource, with a separate budget, and as such brought in much needed developmental resources to the mission. The civilian contractor stayed in the region to continue the peace-building efforts under UN contract after the military contingent left.

29. The examples above illustrate the many advantages of military and civilian cooperation in peace support operations as follows: civilian agencies can contribute much needed project funds; the military can benefit from civilian humanitarian and/or regional expertise; the military can benefit from the creation of a positive image of military personnel, locally, nationally and internationally; and civilian peace-building strategies can contribute to and facilitate a military exit from the mission.

30. **Opinion:** The use of CIMIC officers and/or the deployment of civilian peace-builders with regular contingents should become a regular practice among militaries in the Americas to support combined efforts in peace operations.

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