

A talk on Emerging Trend in Peace keeping by Dr Bruce Jones from the Centre for International Cooperation(CIC) was organized at CLAWS on the 28 Feb 2012. The Talk was chaired by Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd).

Welcome Remarks: Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd)

The Director welcomed and introduced Dr Bruce Jones, Dr. WPS Sidhu and Gen Nambiar. He stated that the nature of peace keeping missions have changed considerably along with new trends in emerging conflicts.

Dr Bruce Jones:

There is blurring in the boundaries of peace keeping/ peace enforcement/ counter terrorism operations. Substantial evolution has taken place since the 1990's.

India has an enormous and crucial role in UN Peace Keeping operations over a considerable period of time. India is one of the largest contributors of UN Peace keeping troops. It is not just the quantity of troops that matters; India sends quality well trained troops. India also provides other assets like helicopters, intelligence and logistic support etc. which are necessary for operations. High order capabilities are important for complex operations. India has a pivotal role in peace keeping operations as they contribute high-level assets which are not matched by any other country. The EU countries and other developed countries do contribute high order technology assets to UN operations but do so very infrequently. India is the only country which has the capability of not only sending in a large number of troops but also high end technology. Other countries either commit man-power or high end equipment. Hence it can be said that India is the backbone of UN operations in the past decade and it would have been very difficult for peace keeping to have been a success without India's contribution.

Since the end of the cold war the levels of civil wars have steadily declined and peace keeping is one of the central reasons behind this decline. This becomes apparent when we see the history of civil wars since the 1960's till mid 90's. By about the year 1993, when Peace Keeping expanded, the number of civil wars decline. Since the end of the cold war there has been a 40 per cent reduction in civil wars and an 80 per cent reduction in large scale civil wars. A lot of hard work goes into ending civil wars and India and UN should both be very proud of these figures.

If we look at the civil wars since the 1990's (not including Afghanistan), the contribution of UN operations has been very significant in ending hostilities, with the exception of Bosnia. Most peace keeping operations have taken place in very low-income countries in Africa, and in the fringes of Latin America. Most such civil wars have ended, but there are still some places where civil wars are continuing to take place like in South Sudan which high levels of violence prevails.

On the other hand we see an increase in the activity which blurs the line between traditional Peace Keeping and Peace Enforcement and might go further into being called Counter Terrorism. In the contemporary period we can date the evolution of peace keeping to 1999 and the operations in Sierra Leone where the government and the rebels had a peace agreement and the implementation of the peace agreement was with the UN peace keepers. In 1999 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) wanted to break away from the peace agreement and launched an attack on the Sierra Leone government. The policy response of the UN was not to remain impartial to the events but to side with the government to defeat the guerillas, which required the support of the Royal Marines. This demonstrated a change in the way UN operated as the UN took a pro-active stance in defence of the peace agreement. UN did not stay neutral as it did pre 1999.

The trend continues in the Congo (2006-07) where the rebels in the East had a peace agreement with the government and then broke the peace agreement with the government. The UN again did a repeat of the Sierra Leone action and sided with the government, helping its forces to defeat the rebels. This operation raised some conceptual questions on the UN's role as there were serious allegations of human rights abuses by the government and its lack of will in doing anything progressive. From the UN's perspective, its decision to support the government with a shady human rights record posed some questions for the Security Council. But for the evolution of UN peace keeping this was a significant episode.

The most significant step in the evolution came in 2006, post the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in Southern Lebanon. UN had a large multi-national force in South Lebanon. The mandate of UNIFIL was to extend the authority of the state through the area of operations and to dismantle any illegal armed groups (Hezbollah). The situation did not unfold as the drafting committee had intended it to but it marked a departure for the UN, in that it gave UNIFIL an explicit mandate to extend the authority of the state which involved dealing with the Hezbollah, a designated terrorist organisation. The new complexity is how to designate a terrorist organisation internationally. In South Sudan the leading source of opposition is the Janjaweed. The Janjaweed is a political/military organization which has no strategic goals with the government. The Janjaweed are not defined as terrorists. Part of the mandate in Southern Sudan is to protect civilians and to attack the Janjaweed. The basic idea is the same as Southern Lebanon, to act against non-state actors and to protect civilians.

In Somalia there is a multi dimensional operation which is not a blue helmet (UN) operation. There are multiple components in Somalia ranging from US Special Forces in Northern and Southern Somalia fighting AL-Shabaab, UN/AU controlling the port and parts of Mogadishu, a multi national maritime operation combating piracy and a mandated Ethiopian and Kenyan force combating Al-Shabaab. All of these are a part of

a unified strategy to combat Al-Shabaab. The line between peacekeeping/ counter terrorism has been crossed here to combat terrorism.

More peace keeping operations like Somalia and Southern Lebanon can be expected in future as against the more traditional peace keeping operations conducted earlier. Meanwhile we see a lot of instability in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the Arab world. The question is, to what extent will we see further revolutions and what will be the UN response to the new challenges?

The UN is experimenting with alternate models of peace keeping, which are special political missions. These are basically light political civilian operations with little or no military component. Nepal was an example of this. In Nepal the UN had political and human rights observers and a small group of military observers. There are various other tools that are available to the UN and they should be used in different contexts. In Libya UN tried to follow the same model but the situation in Libya is deteriorating.

We are now in a period where the boundaries between traditional Peace Keeping/Peace Enforcement/Counter Terrorism are blurry and the “Bluriness” will continue. This problem requires some conceptual thinking and political thinking.

Remarks by Chairperson

The UN forces lack the commitment of the members of the Security Council. There is a lack of participation of the developed world in peace keeping operations. The developed nations have the man power and the resources to support peace keeping operations. The types of operations in the future could be:

- Enforcement actions under chapter 7 (like the gulfwar I)
- Stabilisation
- Traditional Peace Keeping
- Robust Peace Keeping

Discussion

The category of stabilization and the category of robust Peace Keeping have merged. The category of Blue Helmets and that of multi-national force has also merged. This is a good thing. In Lebanon there is a substantial European participation. It is not a UN force like others. Most of the contingents use their own resources. This is a productive thing as this way the UN force can deploy on time and not be a second tier force.

Nationbuilding/Peace building: There are 20 countries where Peace building is taking place. UN goes in with Peace Keepers but more in the traditional peace keeping mode and then talks to the transitional government which is successful. Then you go for socio-economic development. For this, the UN turns to UN aid and the World Bank which has

repeatedly been unsuccessful. The only exception to this is Cambodia. There is a fundamental mismatch and events tend to re-occur.

In Libya the Security Council voted in favour to apply force to protect civilians. India also voted in favour of the resolution. The council did not authorize regime change. But the Americans went ahead and said that situation would not change without a regime change.

China does not contribute combat troops to Peace Keeping missions; they deploy police, engineers and logistics but not combat troops. The Europeans can not deploy troops or assets to UN operations because of their commitment to Afghanistan. When they withdraw from Afghanistan they will not be able to send troops for Peace Keeping operations because of the Euro Zone crisis. Middle powers like Mexico, South Korea and Indonesia can contribute more troops. However, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan will continue to be major contributors.

In Afghanistan a multi-national force under UN authority of regional countries like Pakistan, Iran, India, China and Russia can come in to take over from ISAF or a regional force of other countries.

After the draw down from Afghanistan there will be US SF personnel in Afghanistan. Afghanistan can be a very good example of a merger of UN forces with a force from another multi-national coalition. Afghanistan would want a large number of troops from the UN. The Indian way of fighting Peace Keeping operations will have to change if India wants to commit its forces in Afghanistan (under a UN mandate). UN forces would want ISAF support.