

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AND BANGLADESH: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The United Nations peacekeeping evolved following multifaceted nature of conflicts in the world. Both nature and dimension of peacekeeping diversified and varied across different timeframes. In order to reduce multidimensional threats of conflicts, UN so far developed four generations of peacekeeping. UN also changed its mandates and purposes of activities of peacekeeping missions for fulfilling emerging demands of diverse generations. Bangladesh is one of the top troop-contributing countries to the UN. The country has been playing significant contribution in peacekeeping operations since its participation in peacekeeping operations in 1988. Simultaneously, the country also faces some challenges in peacekeeping missions. In fact, the possible transition from the third to the fourth generation of peacekeeping has brought about new challenges for Bangladesh. As the fourth generation of UN peacekeeping would be highly multidimensional in nature, it could be a major issue of concern for Bangladesh.

Introduction

The primary purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end to take, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.¹

----- Article I of the Charter of the United Nations

The arrangement of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) was established in order to ascertain international peace and security throughout the world. The traditional role of UN peacekeeping operations was mostly narrow in terms of both scope and range of activities.² Over the years, UN peacekeeping evolved with the changing dimensions of international conflicts and global political landscape.³ The dimensions of UN peacekeeping were expanded specially after the end of the Cold War.⁴

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¹ Mark Malan, "Peacekeeping in the New Millennium: Towards 'Fourth Generation' Peace Operations?" *African Security Review*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1998.

² <<http://pom.peacebuild.ca/bestpracticesevol.shtml>> (accessed October 07, 2013).

³ See, "60 Years of United Nations Peacekeeping," at <<http://www.un.org/events/peacekeeping60/60years.shtml>> (accessed January 25, 2013).

⁴ Supra note 1.

The vision of modern peacekeeping is no longer limited to peacemaking and peacebuilding, rather to the assurance of human security in both pre and post-conflict arenas and to the settlement of peace agreements.⁵ The end of intra-state conflicts and the emergence of modern nature of warfare have generated multidimensional responsibilities of peacekeeping beyond its traditional activities. In this era of the fourth generations of UN peacekeeping, strengthening states' capacity and removing states' fragility could be one of the major outlines for UN peacekeeping operations. Thus, the current generation of peacekeeping may bring about dramatic changes in operational capacities of UN peacekeepers. It could also add adequate capabilities and clarify the appropriate operational guidelines for future peacekeeping missions.

The article describes different forms of UN peacekeeping operations following the changing nature of international conflicts along with a particular focus on the fourth generation of UNPKO. The study also attempts to analyze Bangladesh's contribution in UN peacekeeping operations, which critically explores the role of Bangladesh in UN peacekeeping missions. The paper focuses on Bangladesh's preparedness for the fourth generation of UN peacekeeping as well.

Conceptual Analysis

Peacekeeping

The concept of 'peacekeeping' evolved in order to prevent dispute, persuade opposition parties for dialogue rather than violence as well as bring about peaceful solution to dispute and build sustainable peace process around the world.⁶ Surprisingly, there is no proper definition of peacekeeping.⁷ However, the concept developed since 1945 with certain agreed principles.⁸

According to the United Nations, peacekeeping means,

*The deployment of international military and civilian personnel to a conflict area with the consent of the parties to the conflict in order to stop or contain hostilities or supervise the carrying out of a peace agreement assist with humanitarian relief, human rights compliance and nation building.*⁹

⁵ Julian Ouellet, "Peacekeeping", September 2003, at < <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/peacekeeping>> (accessed February 22, 2013).

⁶ <<http://www.unac.org/peacekeeping/en/un-peacekeeping/fact-sheets/from-peacekeeping-to-peacebuilding>> (accessed March 22, 2013).

⁷ L. Juma, "Peacekeeping in Africa: Problems and Prospects," *University of Botswana Law Journal*, vol. 9, June 2009, pp. 7-8.

⁸ Jon Fink, "From Peacekeeping to Peace enforcement," Washington D.C., June 1994, at <<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a283935.pdf>> (accessed March 22, 2013).

⁹ <<http://www.unac.org/peacekeeping/en/un-peacekeeping/fact-sheets/from-peacekeeping-to-peacebuilding>> (accessed March 25, 2013).

The definition of peacekeeping also includes “[T]he way to help countries torn by conflict creating conditions for sustainable peace. UN peacekeepers – soldiers and military officers, police and civilian personnel from many countries monitor and observe peace processes that emerge in post-conflict situations and assist conflicting parties to implement the peace agreement they have signed. Such assistance comes in many forms, including promoting human security, confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development”.¹⁰

Regarding force deployment, UN defines, “an operation involving military personnel, but without enforcement powers, established by the United Nations to help maintain or restore international peace and security in areas of conflict”.¹¹

The concept initially developed to minimize complexities of the Cold War era but later expanded with varying nature of conflict and multifarious international system. Now, UN peacekeeping includes separation of forces, humanitarian protection, impartiality in action, non-use of force except in self-defence, and comprehensive peace settlement.¹² Following Chapters VI and VII of UN,¹³ the notion of peacekeeping evolved.¹⁴ In general, peacekeeping can be summarized into three principles, e.g. non-interference in domestic jurisdiction of any state, impartiality, and use of force only in self-defence.¹⁵

¹⁰ Özlem Pınar Oran, “How have United Nations Peace operations evolved since the end of the Cold War and with what consequences?” at <http://academia.edu/1085376/How_have_United_Nations_peace_operations_evolved_since_the_end_of_the_Cold_War_and_with_what_consequences> (accessed July 11, 2013).

¹¹ Emel Osmançavuşoğlu, “Challenges to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. IV, no. 4, December 1999-February 2000.

¹² <<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peacekeeping.shtml>> (accessed July 07, 2013).

¹³ Chapter VI of UN mentions peaceful settlement of disputes whereas UN’ Chapter VII allows the Security Council to determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and to make recommendations or to resort to non-military and military action to maintain or restore international peace and security.

¹⁴ Harun ur Rashid, “Peacekeeping and Bangladesh,” *The Daily Star*, May 29, 2013.

¹⁵ Nurullah Yamali, “The Use of Force for Collective Security and Peacekeeping at the End of the Twentieth Century,” at <<http://www.justice.gov.tr/e-journal/pdf/LW7042.pdf>> (accessed June 28, 2013)