SWA 8: Peacekeeping

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Diehl, 1993

Diehl begins with the interesting assertion that peacekeeping has "evolved out of the failure of collective security and the inadequacy of peace observation." Peacekeeping missions are only deployed *after* a conflict has arrived at an armistice. By inserting themselves between combatants, they can function as a buffer and mediator, preventing a breakdown of a cease-fire and hopefully promoting a settlement. Peacekeeping troops are armed only to the point of credible self-defence in service of their state mission. Lastly, they are neutral, as in, their presence is not in itself assigning blame or offering support unilaterally to one side. They require the permission of the host country to operate, which may itself seem non-neutral, but on the level of analysis – the UN system – this serves to differentiate peacekeeping from international police actions. Thus, the presence of peackeepers introduces opportunity- and audience-costs for firing on blue helmets or ejecting them from a country. So, not only are peacekeepers effectively neutral, but their success also depends on them being *perceived as* neutral. The perception of neutrality is a running theme throughout all of Diehl's work.

After describing the general purpose and constraints of peacekeeping, Diehl describes their typical characteristics. Operations are almost always *reactive*, and they can only begin when a political or diplomatic opportunity opens up. The UN Security Council has taken on the supervisory role for peacekeeping operations, defining the extents of their mandate together with the host country. These mandates are subject to renewal every 6 months. The number of peacekeepers deployed ranges from two-thousand to twenty-thousand, but never enough to be a threatening force. Operational command is always under UN direction, with leaders on the ground being appointed from neutral countries.

What makes a peacekeeping mission successful? Before answering, it would first be prudent to define "success" beyond "kept peace." Diehl cautions against mistaken causality, that successful peacekeeping missions were "easy" cases and that failed missions were "hard" cases, doomed to failure by some third variable. He thus measures success as "non-resumption of armed conflict". Next, Diehl asks how a mission succeeds. Inserting a neutral force between adversaries adds moral weight to compliance with a cease-fire and reduces the chance for bad-luck to kick off a new round of fighting. Methodologically, he operationalises success as non-renewal of warfare, limited death and destruction short of war, and conflict resolutions successfully reached. This last criterion is wholly independent of the first two, but failure to reach a settlement wouldn't prevent us from calling a mission "partially successful" so long as war and bloodshed

ceases. Furthermore, peacekeepers can be withdrawn by the UN for financial or political reasons, leaving their job half-finished. Would these be failures? Diehl arrives at the very subjective answer that a peacekeeping mission has succeeded when there no longer exists a need for peacekeepers.

Diehl & Druckman, 2010

Chapter 4, *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping*

Diehl and Druckman are now writing in a very different world from 1993. They focus on five new missions of peacekeepers: election supervision, democratisation, humanitarian assistance, DDR, and human rights protection. These build on Diehl's previous work in defining "success" – the win-conditions for each kind of mission are easier to pin down. However, the information needed for peacekeepers to self-assess their progress continues to be elusive, especially since election supervision, democratisation, and human-rights protection are fundamentally *reactive* endeavours. DDR and humanitarian assistance, on the other hand, are more proactive.

Chapter 5, *Postconflict Peacebuilding*

Peacebuilding seeks to affect "attitudinal and relationship changes" between disputing parties. It builds on the absence of violence by making it less likely that violence will occur again. It has been practised as a doctrine since the end of the Cold War. The authors focus on a limited set of goals to define successfully built peace: local security, rule of law, local governance, restoration-reconciliation-and-transformation. They specifically avoid economic development as a measure of peace-building, not because it is irrelevant but because it is so relevant that it merits a whole other analysis of including different actors. Important to note is that the mission objectives of peacebuilding are theoretical extensions of the "new generation" peacekeeping discussed in chapter 4; however, peacebuilding does not always follow a peacekeeping mission (see the failed attempt at peacebuilding in Afghanistan under NATO occupation – specifically, on page 95).

The perception of neutrality can be helpful in peacebuilding, but I wonder if it is actually necessary. Indeed, the need to appear neutral might be a hindrance when prosecuting war criminals, for instance. And if that's so, is it ever reasonable to expect peacebuilding to work, long-term? I ask this especially because of how closely it resembles "nation-building" as a concept, except that it is carried out at the behest of an IGO like the UN.

Gizelis, 2009

Jentleson on Hammarskjöld