

The typology of peace operations presented in this report focuses on operational aspects. It should help decisionmakers to understand the limitations of peace operations, to select the optimal type of operation for a given situation, and to evaluate the success of an operation.

Legal Basis of Peace Operations^[1]

The Charter of the United Nations describes a system of collective security having two modalities: pacific settlement (Chapter VI) and action with respect to threats to the peace (Chapter VII). Chapter VI lists the traditional techniques of diplomacy, including negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, and other peaceful means. Chapter VII concerns forceful ways of dealing with threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression. Article 42 of Chapter VII empowers the Security Council to take action by air, land, and sea forces to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Over the past five decades, the Security Council has developed peace operations, an ad hoc response to conflict not addressed in the Charter. In practice, the Security Council has invoked both Chapter VI and Chapter VII. Invoking Chapter VI has implied that lethal force was authorized in self-defense while accomplishing the mandate. Invoking Chapter VII has implied that lethal force was authorized to accomplish the mandate, coercing parties if necessary.

Criteria That Bound Peace Operations

Consent and impartiality are the criteria that bound peace operations.

Consent of the Parties

Consent means that parties to a conflict are willing to help accomplish the mandate. *Parties* are entities that the Security Council believes are responsible for conflict, implying that they control significantly large forces, but not that they have any particular legal status. Parties have included clan leaders (Somalia), self-declared governments (Bosnian Serb authority in Pale), and, of course, member states in the United Nations. To date, no peace operation has been initiated without at least initial consent from the parties.

Impartiality

Impartiality means that the Security Council has decided not to take sides, based on its judgment that all parties share responsibility for a conflict; it identifies neither aggressor nor victim. Not taking sides implies that the Council will not try to attain the political-military aims of any one party to the exclusion of other parties' aims. Parties often insist that all actions of the peace force be neutral in their effect, i.e., affect all parties equally. But even the least intrusive peace operation is highly unlikely to affect all parties equally.

If the Security Council judges that the parties do not share responsibility but, rather, that there is an aggressor who bears all the responsibility, it may authorize a range of actions directed against the aggressor, as in Korea and Kuwait, but peace operations are precluded by definition.

An Operational Typology of Peace Operations

Peace operations are highly political, but they should also make operational sense; otherwise, military forces should not be employed. An operational typology looks at peace operations very much as a Force Commander must. With as much precision as the subject allows, this typology defines peace operations in ways that he would find helpful.

Over the past five decades, the Security Council has authorized five types of peace operations: observation, interposition, transition, security for humanitarian aid, and peace enforcement. Observation and interposition together comprise the repertoire of traditional peace-keeping. Transition, security for humanitarian aid, and peace enforcement go beyond traditional peace-keeping and are therefore considered more-ambitious operations. Peace enforcement occurs when the Security Council responds forcefully to recalcitrance during operations conducted under Chapter VII. Each type of operation is described separately below.

Observation

In this type of operation, the peace force is expected to monitor compliance with agreements, international law, or resolutions of the Security Council; report violations; and often mediate resolution of violations among the parties.

There are two subtypes of observation with different implications for decisionmakers. The first subtype is intended to help implement agreement among the parties. There is no implied commitment that the Security Council would respond in any particular way if violations occur. The second subtype is intended to deter. There is an implied commitment that the Security Council or member states acting on its behalf would respond with particular alacrity and severity in the event of violations.

Interposition

The peace force is expected to control a buffer zone between the parties. *Control* implies that the force will detect violations and challenge those responsible for them, not that the force will defend the buffer zone against large-scale incursion. Interposition is more intrusive than observation, because the parties relinquish sovereign rights over the territory within the buffer zone. By relinquishing those rights, the parties allow their forces to disengage, diminishing the likelihood of confrontation, and in some cases the parties gain strategic warning of attack.

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Transition

The peace force is expected to assist the parties in changing the status or condition of a country. A transition operation can be extremely difficult and highly intrusive, even to the extent of placing a country or parts of a country under temporary governance by the United Nations. Transition requires a high degree of consent—not just acquiescence but active cooperation in achieving the new status or condition.

The peace force may facilitate demobilization, arms limitations, referenda, national reconciliation, elections, and creation of new governmental forms. For example, the peace force may facilitate demobilization by establishing collection points, receiving and safeguarding arms, and protecting former soldiers during the process.

The Security Council has invoked both Chapter VI and Chapter VII for transition operations. Transition operations under Chapter VII are the usual origin of peace enforcement.

Security for Humanitarian Aid

The peace force is expected to secure humanitarian aid that alleviates suffering caused by conflict. The Force Commander's primary task is to secure aid—not to provide it—although he may also assist in providing it. Parties consent by agreeing not to obstruct humanitarian aid and to respect the force that secures it.

This type of operation extends only to humanitarian aid. Securing populations in safe areas or protected areas would exceed its bounds and imply a transition operation. Security of populations is the fundamental responsibility of a sovereign. The Security Council could not assume such responsibility indefinitely, unless it were to create an interminable trusteeship; therefore, it must look to an inevitable transition, e.g., resumption of power by a legitimate government, assumption of power by some newly created authority.

Security for aid goes beyond self-defense of the force; therefore, the Security Council, logically, should invoke Chapter VII. But on several occasions the Security Council has invoked Chapter VI for this type of operation.

Peace Enforcement

The peace force is expected to coerce recalcitrant parties into complying with their agreements or with resolutions of the Security Council. Normally, peace enforcement occurs in the context of an operation under Chapter VII when a party or parties withdraw consent and the Security Council decides to enforce its will. The critical decision is whether to invoke Chapter VII, not whether to attempt peace enforcement subsequently. Chapter VII implies willingness to coerce parties if they withdraw consent, putting the decision to attempt coercion in their hands.

There is a large practical difference between *peace enforcement*, which presumes impartiality, and *enforcement* against a uniquely identified aggressor: During peace enforcement, the Security Council precludes itself from allying with any party.

Overview of an Operational Typology

Peace operations, including variants of the basic types, are summarized in Figure S.1.

Figure S.1. Peace Operations and Their Variants

	Peace Operations						
	Peace-Keeping				More-Ambitious Operations		
	Observation		Interposition		Transition	Security for Humanitarian Aid	Peace Enforcement
	Facilitate agreement	Deter violations	Facilitate agreement	Deter violations			
Chapter of the U.N. Charter	Chapter VI (self-defense)			Chapter VI (self-defense)	Chapter VII (potential aid)	Chapter VII (secure aid)	Chapter VII (enforce will of UNSC)
Consent Required from the Parties	Allow access to observers		Acquiesce in impartial control of a buffer zone	Cooperate in achieving new condition and status of a country	Allow provision of aid	None: occurs when party <i>withdraws</i> consent	
Typical Mandate	Observe compliance with agreements; report violations; mediate among parties		Create buffer zones; control entry into buffer zones; monitor arms limitations	Provide secure conditions; oversee demobilization, demilitarization, arms limitations; provide security for electoral activities; facilitate reconstruction; cooperate closely with civilian component and NGOs	Provide security for humanitarian aid	Coerce recalcitrant parties into complying with UNSC resolutions and parties' agreements	
	Plus responded forcefully to violations		Plus responded forcefully to violations				
	Chapter VI			Chapter VII			

Evaluating Peace Operations

The Security Council has often succeeded in traditional peace-keeping and has had some success in more-ambitious peace operations under Chapter VI. But the Council has failed repeatedly and sometimes catastrophically when it has attempted operations under Chapter VII, even when great powers participated.

Defining Success

From an operational perspective, *success* means fulfilling the mandate. The operation should be considered successful when it accomplishes the tasks implied by the mandate, even when conflict resumes for reasons beyond the control of the peace force. If, on the other hand, the peace force does not fulfill the mandate, either because it lacks required capabilities or because the parties refuse to cooperate, the operation should be considered a failure, whatever happens in the conflict.

To assume that an operation succeeded because the conflict subsided is to fall into a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* fallacy. Almost every conflict will subside sooner or later, largely as a result of its own dynamics, whether or not there is any peace operation. Moreover, most peace operations are not coercive. They are intended to facilitate a process that parties agree to accomplish, not to coerce them; therefore, volition of the parties weighs more heavily than actions of the peace force. Even peace enforcement, decisive as it may be at the time, is only a temporary expedient.

Peace-Keeping

Traditional peace-keeping has helped parties to implement their agreements. It has tended to succeed when the agreements were viable, i.e., were concluded bona fide, because the parties believed the agreements were compatible with their interests and preferable to continuing a violent conflict.

But why should the Security Council be expected to help parties implement agreements that are in their own interests? There are several, often interrelated reasons:

- The parties may be so swayed by mutual animosity and suspicion that they need an impartial intermediary.
- Each party may hesitate to fulfill agreements unless it is reliably informed that other parties are also in compliance.
- The parties may be willing to disengage their forces, yet may be fearful that their adversaries will renege and gain advantages.

A peace-keeping force can allay these fears by controlling buffer zones that include strategically important terrain. In addition, peace-keeping can affect states that are not parties yet are interested in the outcome. For example, the great powers have used peace-keeping to help limit and contain their own rivalry, especially in the Middle East.

More-Ambitious Operations

Under Chapter VI. Transition operations under Chapter VI have tended to succeed once the parties had exhausted their hope of obtaining better results through violence and when other states had given active support to the peace process, keeping the parties under pressure to

maintain their agreements. Operations in Namibia, Nicaragua, and Mozambique fit this pattern.

As might be anticipated, some parties reneged on their agreements when their power appeared threatened. Examples include the Pol Pot faction of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) in Angola, and Serbs in Croatia. In these examples, the Security Council deplored breaches of agreements but did not attempt to enforce compliance. It allowed parts of the original mandate to fall into abeyance (Cambodia), terminated the peace operation (Angola), or accepted a lesser mandate before the U.N. operation was swept away (Croatia). While such behavior may appear ignoble for an organization with the authority of the Security Council, it is surely preferable to half-hearted attempts at enforcement.

Under Chapter VII. By invoking Chapter VII, the Security Council has indicated a willingness to apply force, if necessary, to coerce parties that defy its resolutions. The Council has therefore assumed the role of a potential combatant, compelling the parties to assess the probable consequences if they oppose the Council. Parties were unlikely to defy the Council if they believed it had the political will and the military force to coerce them successfully. Such deterrence occurred when the United States deployed powerful forces under its own control (Multinational Force in Haiti, Unified Task Force in Somalia). Although international in a formal sense, these operations were fundamentally U.S. initiatives conducted under authority of the Security Council.

Absent strong U.S. participation, the Security Council has neither demonstrated the political will nor assembled the military force needed to coerce parties. Perceiving this weakness, parties have ignored resolutions under Chapter VII and have openly defied the Council. Examples include Mohammed Farah Aideed's faction in Mogadishu and the Bosnian Serb authorities in Pale. In these instances, the Council made half-hearted attempts at peace enforcement and suffered ignominious failures.

Peace enforcement has failed for the same reason that collective security has failed: lack of a sufficiently strong consensus for action among permanent members of the Security Council. Moreover, peace enforcement has special complications and difficulties. Complications ensue because more than one party can be recalcitrant, either successively or simultaneously. For example, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs both violated provisions concerning safe areas, although the Serb violations were more egregious. Difficulties arise because impartiality demands that the Security Council forgo the benefits of having allies among parties to the conflict. In the same example, it was precluded from arming and training Bosnian Muslim forces to resist attacks on safe areas.

Usefulness of the Typology

An operational perspective generates a useful typology of peace operations. Such a typology promotes a differentiated view, allows fruitful comparisons among operations of similar type, and provides a point of departure for reform.

A Differentiated View

It is tempting to idealize peace operations at one extreme or to denigrate them at the other. Those who believe that a responsible international community exists or can be created are inclined to romanticize peace operations. To a sympathetic observer, the mere appearance of a peace operation is immensely appealing. Contingents from many states join forces not to fight a war for national interests, but to promote peace for the common good. But those who believe that a responsible international community is fantasy or an undesirable trammel are inclined to denigrate peace operations. To an unsympathetic eye, they seem an excuse to remunerate impecunious states—at best a make-work project and at worst a pious hoax.

There is little point in undifferentiated praise or condemnation. Peace operations will not bring in the millennium, but they can make valuable contributions to peace. These contributions should be understood in the context of an operational typology. Some types of operations, especially those associated with traditional peace-keeping, have been competently performed through the U.N. system and have been well worth the expense. Other types of operations, especially those under Chapter VII that went to peace enforcement, have demanded more commitment from great powers than those powers were willing to make and have brought costly failures. The primary cause of these failures was lack of determination among the great powers, not some failing of the admittedly imperfect U.N. or some inherent flaw in peace operations.

Fruitful Comparisons

The typology presented in this report allows fruitful comparisons among peace operations of the same type. It is fruitful, for example, to review the records of observer forces to discern what activities are accessible to observation, what reconnaissance means are required, and how much cooperation is needed from the parties. Comparisons are also helpful when they reveal prerequisites for success and root causes of failure. Particularly instructive are comparisons among transition operations, a type that has burgeoned in past years, involves complex mandates, and demands close coordination with numerous civilian organizations.

Comparing operations of the same type can support efforts to develop rapid response within the U.N. system. It appears unlikely that the Security Council will ever command large-scale forces commensurate with its responsibilities under Chapter VII. But the Council may well have small-scale forces at its disposal that are ready to conduct the repertoire of traditional peace-keeping under Chapter VI. Comparison of past operations should allow planners to discern accurately what organization, equipment, and training would be appropriate for such forces undertaking a particular type of operation.

Basis for Reform

Peace operations must be reformed; otherwise, their future will be very bleak. By early 1996, the Security Council was suffering a severe loss of reputation through humiliating failures in places such as Mogadishu and Srebrenica. At the same time, the U.N. system was plunged into financial crisis by refusal of member states, especially the United States, to pay their assessments. These two developments were related: Congressional reluctance to pay for peace operations was deepened by failures, especially what was seen as betrayal of the Bosnian Muslims.

The most urgent reform is for the Security Council to see peace operations from an operational perspective rather than a largely political perspective. In recent years, the Council

has passed far more resolutions than previously, including many that the parties have ignored. Being ignored is problematic because it diminishes the prestige of the Security Council. But the Council has done far greater harm by giving unrealistic mandates to Force Commanders. An operational perspective on peace operations should help decisionmakers to frame mandates that are appropriate to the situation and to the capabilities of the peace force.

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Notes

- [\[1\]](#) Definitions of terms associated with peace operations are presented in Appendix A.