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THE UK AND UN PEACE OPERATIONS: A CASE FOR GREATER ENGAGEMENT

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Executive Summary

- In mid-1995, Britain provided over 10,000 United Nations (UN) peacekeepers, more than any other country in the world. By 1996 this number had plummeted to a few hundred and has been consistently below 400 since 2005. In September 2015 Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the UK would deploy up to 370 British troops to UN-mandated peace operations in Somalia and South Sudan, more than doubling the UK's personnel commitment to UN-mandated operations. Combined with the withdrawal of UK forces from Afghanistan, the release of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and the UK's hosting of the next Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in September 2016, this decision has intensified debates about whether and how the UK should increase its participation in UN peace operations. This report reflects on how UN peace operations could be integrated into UK foreign policy and makes a case for why Britain should enhance its participation in UN peace operations.
- Currently, the UK contributes to UN peace operations in four main ways:
 - It influences the strategic direction of operations through its permanent membership of the UN Security Council;
 - It is one of the largest financial contributors to the UN peacekeeping budget;
 - It helps build the capacity of other troop- and police-contributing countries; and
 - It deploys a small number of its own uniformed personnel to UN missions.

The UK could also provide more peacekeepers and thereby help to fill some key capability gaps facing UN missions, perhaps most notably in the areas of rapid deployment, mission start-up, and specialist capabilities such as engineering and medical units.

- By helping to fill these gaps and increase the UN's capacity to keep the peace and protect lives, the UK itself could also derive, political, security, and institutional benefits:
 - Politically, greater participation in UN missions could bolster important bilateral relations, enhance UK leadership in the UN Security Council, and promote a fairer international division of labour for peace operations, thereby strengthening this important mechanism of international conflict management.
 - In turn, this would help implement the 2015 SDSR vision of a 'secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence'. There is also a distinct possibility that a new generation of UN operations will deploy in and around Europe and the Mediterranean, potentially increasing Britain's direct security interests in such operations.
 - Institutionally, participating in UN peace operations that involve 'stabilisation' tasks will provide new operational experiences for the British military in diverse, civilian-led missions designed to deliver political effects.
- Enhanced UK participation in UN missions could, in part, be determined by the structure and niche capabilities of existing forces, and would have important implications for their training and doctrine. The British Armed Forces have the potential to deploy larger high-readiness capacities in early-entry or stabilisation roles as well as specialist capabilities, such as aviation assets, military intelligence/surveillance, engineering, logistics support, and medical units. However, enhanced engagement is likely to require reforms to the government's institutional structures for decision-making, mission support, and oversight. Deployments into peace operations will also require UK personnel to undergo requisite training and acquire relevant capabilities and a sophisticated understanding of contemporary peace operations.

- At a strategic level, the UK Government should seek to develop greater expertise in peace operations and develop more effective institutional mechanisms for participating in UN operations. Specifically, it should:
 - build on the commitments given in the 2015 SDSR, by outlining a coherent strategic UK government approach to UN peace operations over the next parliament.
 - regularly conduct assessments of where and when it might deploy uniformed personnel in UN peace operations.
 - ensure that funding mechanisms for practical contributions to UN peace operations have the necessary flexibility and sustainability to facilitate greater UK participation.
 - facilitate greater participation of British personnel in UN operations by establishing frameworks to ensure UN service is a desirable career-enhancing activity.

At an operational level, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in particular should develop coherent departmental strategies to normalise and encourage greater participation in UN peace operations. Specifically, these departments should:

- assess the feasibility of deploying specialist military capabilities to ongoing UN missions and of the UK becoming a 'Technology-Contributing Country' (TechCC) in the peacekeeping field.
 - evaluate models of co-deployment and/or operational partnerships with European partners for deploying into UN peace operations.
 - reward military and diplomatic personnel who serve in the UN peace operations system and encourage greater institutional knowledge of UN peace operations among government and military officials.
 - undertake regular, comprehensive lessons learned studies of the new UK deployments in Somalia and South Sudan.
- At the oversight level, Parliament should play a more active role in scrutinising UK commitments to UN peace operations, especially through the work of the Commons Defence and Foreign Affairs select committees and the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. These committees should:
 - investigate the roles that UN peace operations can play in achieving the UK's wider defence and foreign policy objectives. Inquiries should outline current departmental approaches to the UN, how the UK parliament oversees military commitments to UN operations, and the sustainability of UK military contributions to the UN.

1. Introduction

The United Kingdom (UK) makes significant political and financial contributions to United Nations (UN) peace operations but it has not deployed many of its own uniformed personnel as peacekeepers since the mid-1990s. This report presents a case for why it would be in the UK's interests to reconsider this policy and enhance its participation in UN peace operations, particularly in light of the November 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). It argues that there are reasonable grounds to conclude that such enhanced participation would bring political, security, and institutional benefits, not least by strengthening the UN system, itself an important stated objective of UK foreign policy. For the British military, greater participation in peace operations would boost skills retention, facilitate relevant retraining, and further refine specialist capabilities developed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Historically, UK-UN relations with regard to peace operations have gone through various, sometimes turbulent, phases. From rocky beginnings, when Britain's invasion of the Suez precipitated the first armed UN peacekeeping force (UNEF 1) in 1957, by 1995 Britain briefly became the UN's top troop-contributing country (TCC) through its deployments in Bosnia. Britain's most enduring contribution of UN peacekeepers has been its post-colonial deployment with the UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Today, Cyprus is the only mission with British 'blue helmet' contingents deployed but the UK also maintains a small number of staff officers and military experts scattered across a few other UN missions, mainly in Africa.¹

Recently, however, there have been signs that UN peace operations might play a more significant part in British foreign policy. In September 2014, for instance, UK Permanent Representative to the UN Sir Mark Lyall Grant stated that as UK forces 'draw down in Afghanistan, we are looking actively at how we can increase our existing contribution, particularly in ... niche-enabling areas'.² Four months later, General Sir Nicholas Houghton, Chief of the Defence Staff, concluded that the UK must 'be far more pro-active in our investment in UN Operations' because 'such operations come pre-funded and with the benefit of an extant legal mandate which confer legitimacy'.³ Then, at the September 2015 Peacekeeping Leaders' Summit, Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to deploy up to 70 personnel to the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and 250-300 personnel to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).⁴ In November, the SDSR formalised this pledge, stating that the UK would 'double the number of military personnel' that it contributes to UN missions, as well as committing to establish a cross-Whitehall joint UN Peacekeeping Policy Unit.⁵ In September 2016, the UK will host the follow-up to the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping.⁶

It is, of course, difficult to know whether such sentiments and pledges to UN peace operations reflect a short-term, pragmatic response to domestic and international trends, or part of a more fundamental rethinking of how Britain pursues its foreign and security policies. In part, this is

¹ For overviews see Paul D. Williams, 'United Kingdom' in Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); David Curran and Paul D. Williams, 'Contributor Profile: United Kingdom' (International Peace Institute, hereafter IPI, *Providing for Peacekeeping*, 23 October 2014), <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ipi-pdf-document-store/ppp-profiles/europe/ipi-pub-ppp-United-Kingdom.pdf>; and Adrian Johnson, 'Back in Blue?', *RUSI Journal*, 160:1, 2015, pp.14-24.

² *Statement by UK Permanent Representative Sir Mark Lyall Grant on Strengthening United Nations Peace Operations* (New York, 26 September 2014).

³ *Lecture by General Sir Nicholas Houghton GCB CBE ADC Gen, Chief of the Defence Staff, UK Ministry of Defence*, <https://www.rusi.org/events/past/ref:E5284A3D06EFD>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁴ See UK Government press release, 28 September 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-pledges-uk-troops-to-support-stability-in-somalia-and-south-sudan>

⁵ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom: National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015* (London, The Stationery Office, 2015), p.60.

⁶ The 2016 Summit is to be at the level of Defence Ministers.

because historically, and regardless of which political party is in power, Britain has always taken a pragmatic approach to engaging in crisis management through the UN.

This report supports an enhanced role for Britain in UN peace operations and sets out a case for greater engagement in four main sections. First, we briefly summarise current UK policy towards UN peace operations. Second, we examine the potential political, security, and institutional benefits that might flow from greater UK participation. Economic issues are also analysed, although providing more UN peacekeepers would require the UK to invest more financial resources. Third, we examine the extent to which increasing UK contributions to UN peace operations would strengthen the UN system and Britain's position within it, an important dimension of contemporary UK foreign policy. Finally, we discuss three prudential questions that should influence consideration of potential UK peacekeeping deployments: what might the UK contribute; is Britain prepared to deploy peacekeepers into violent contexts; and is the UK military prepared for such deployments?

2. UK Policy on UN Peace Operations

Until late 2015, it was difficult to find a single clear statement on the role(s) UN peace operations might play to support British interests abroad. In part, this is because the government faced little pressure to make such a statement. Peacekeeping is rarely debated in the House of Commons or House of Lords and when relevant debates occur they are usually country-specific rather than addressing general peacekeeping issues. Despite a relatively favourable opinion of the UN amongst the British public, the armed forces have rarely been called on to deploy more frequently in UN peace operations.⁷

Official statements have therefore usually been vague commitments to strengthen the UN via a wide range of initiatives.⁸ For instance, the UK's 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy (BSOS) argued that because 'our prosperity is intertwined with peaceful development and security across the globe', the UK must engage with 'fragile and conflict affected states'. One way to do this was apparently to strengthen international organisations, with the UK ideally playing a leading role to improve the 'efficiency and effectiveness' of peace operations, to ensure such operations support peace processes, and that they 'stay no longer than necessary'.⁹

The UK's 2013 International Defence Engagement Strategy was similarly vague, emphasizing the need to improve 'peacekeeping operations' but not elaborating how this should be done or the UK's role in it.¹⁰ Cryptically, it also stated that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) would 'take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the end of UK combat operations in Afghanistan to seek to commit greater effort to upstream prevention activity'.¹¹

⁷ For instance, a 2013 Pew poll found that 6 in 10 saw the UN in a 'favourable light', while a 2015 YouGov/Chatham House survey found 68% of respondents agreed that the UK has a 'responsibility to maintain international security', and 58% that the UK should provide more troops for international peacekeeping missions. Pew Global, *Survey report: UN Retains Strong Global Image* (Washington, Pew Global, 2013), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/09/17/united-nations-retains-strong-global-image/>, accessed 10 June 2013, and Thomas Raines, *Internationalism or Isolationism? The Chatham House–YouGov Survey: British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities* (London, Chatham House, 2015), p. 7.

⁸ HM Government, *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* (London, The Stationery Office, 2010), pp. 61-2.

⁹ HM Government, *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (London, DFID, FCO, MOD, 2011), p. 30.

¹⁰ HM Government, *International Defence Engagement Strategy* (London, MOD, 2013), pp. 2-3.

¹¹ Ministry of Defence, *Corporate Report: The International Defence Engagement Strategy* (London, MOD, 2013), p. 4.

In 2015, things became a little clearer. In July, the former UK Ambassador to the UN, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, became the Prime Minister's National Security Advisor.¹² In November, the new SDSR reiterated Britain's commitment to strengthen 'the rules-based international order and its institutions,' including the UN, and built on the UK's 2015 Aid Strategy, which committed Britain to 'work to build stability and tackle the root causes of conflict – both to improve the lives of millions around the world and to make UK citizens safer'.¹³ But the 2015 SDSR also made some more practical commitments. First, the British military would prepare to 'conduct operations to restore peace and stability'.¹⁴ Second, in relation to UN peace operations, the UK would double the number of its military personnel deployed in UN operations, increase the numbers of its law enforcement and civilian experts in these missions, and continue training peacekeepers.¹⁵ Third, it also called for a 'cross-Whitehall joint UN Peacekeeping Policy Unit to maximise our military and civilian impact' and 'formulate UK policy on peacekeeping missions'.¹⁶

At present, UK contributions to UN peace operations can be divided into four broad categories. First, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Britain wields political influence over the creation, design and renewal of peace operations, including the ability to veto any operation it does not approve of. Along with France, Britain has been one of the most active P5 members at proposing Security Council resolutions, including those related to peace operations.¹⁷ The UK is the designated 'pen holder' – the member of the Security Council which takes the lead in drafting resolutions – on several relevant issues, including Cyprus, Libya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Darfur, and Yemen, as well as the thematic areas of 'peacekeeping operations',¹⁸ protection of civilians in armed conflict, and Security Council Resolution 1325 (on Women, Peace and Security). Britain's status as penholder and chair of the Protection of Civilians Informal Working Group has also provided a 'useful forum to discuss protection language' in the process of mandate formulation in arguably the most important area in contemporary UN peacekeeping.¹⁹ The UK mission in New York has also used its seat on the Council to support the report of the UN High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and recently reiterated three priority areas of reform: 'better protection of civilians; better planning of missions and more targeted and focused mandating; and a more strategic approach to force generation'.²⁰

Second, the UK makes a major financial contribution to UN peace operations. Until 2016, the UK was the fifth highest provider of assessed contributions to UN peacekeeping (behind the USA, Japan, Germany, and France), providing 6.68% of the UN's annual peacekeeping bill (currently estimated at

¹² Prime Minister's Office, Press Release, 7 July 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-security-adviser-appointment-sir-mark-lyall-grant>, accessed 27 November 2015.

¹³ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p. 29 and HM Government, *UK Aid: Tackling global challenges in the national interest* (London, The Stationery Office, 2015), p.13. This also included a commitment to increase funds for the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (discussed below).

¹⁴ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p. 29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 60, 84.

¹⁷ See Thierry Tardy and Dominik Zaum, 'France and the United Kingdom at the UN Security Council' in D. Malone, S. Einsiedel and B.S. Ugarte (eds.), *The UN Security Council* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2015), pp. 121-38.

¹⁸ In this capacity, Britain works with the chair of the Peacekeeping Operations Working Group (in 2014/15 this was Rwanda) in drafting resolutions on this topic. It has been observed that the penholders 'trump' the chairs of the working groups. See, for instance, Security Council Report, *February 2013 Monthly Forecast* (Security Council Report, 2013), p. 20.

¹⁹ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *UK National Strategy on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, (London, FCO, 2012), p. 2; Security Council Report, *Cross-Cutting Report: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict* (Security Council Report, 2015), p. 2.

²⁰ *Statement by UK Ambassador Matthew Rycroft to the UN at the General Assembly Debate on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, 15 October 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/together-we-can-and-must-make-un-peace-operations-the-best-that-they-can-be>, accessed 27 November 2015.

\$8.5 billion).²¹ In 2016, the UK assessed rate dropped to 5.8%, placing it sixth, behind the US, China, Japan, Germany and France.²² These expenses are accounted as part of defence spending in the UK budget. Britain also makes a notable contribution to the UN's regular budget, which funds the UN's special political missions. It is the fifth highest contributor, providing 5.179% of the annual total, which in 2014-15 was approximately \$5.5bn. The UK thus currently provides around \$850 million (about £590 million) in assessed contributions to UN peace operations annually and has also made additional voluntary contributions (either in cash or in kind) to support UN peacekeeping, and is the leading donor to the UN's Peacebuilding Fund.²³

A third form of UK contributions is assistance and capacity-building initiatives used to support other troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs). These include the deployment of specialists as part of various regional and bilateral capacity-building programmes, including in Kenya (British Peace Support Team East Africa, and British Army Training Unit Kenya), South Africa (British Peace Support Team South Africa), Sierra Leone, and the Czech Republic (both latter countries house an International Military Advisory and Training Team).²⁴ They provide training, advice and assistance packages to T/PCCs engaged in UN and non-UN peace operations.²⁵ At times, Britain has also provided strategic airlift for UN missions in Mali and South Sudan, supported several EU training missions, including in Somalia and Mali, which have supported UN operations in these theatres, and provided short-term engineering assistance to the non-UN Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai.²⁶

Fourth, Britain deploys some uniformed personnel to UN missions, although this has significantly reduced since the major commitment of UN peacekeepers in the Balkans during the 1990s (see figure 1). As of 31 April 2016, Britain deployed 302 uniformed personnel in five peacekeeping missions and the UN's political mission in Somalia, UNSOM. 275 of these peacekeepers are in Cyprus. Britain's contribution thus accounts for only 0.29% of total UN uniformed peacekeepers (see table 1). While committing only small numbers of military peacekeepers, since the late 2000s, the UK has contributed senior mission personnel, including Deputy Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General in UNMISS (South Sudan) and MINUSCA (Central African Republic). The preparation for senior mission leadership has been institutionalised through the UK Stabilisation Unit, which provides training and support for civilian experts to deploy on international missions. With Prime Minister Cameron's pledge at the Peacekeeping Leaders' Summit in September 2015, the UK should more than double its military contribution to UN operations, with 'up to 70' personnel heading to UNSOS in Somalia and between 250-300 heading to UNMISS in South Sudan.²⁷ As of May 2016, ten UK troops have deployed to Somalia and zero to South Sudan.²⁸

²¹ UN, *Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236: Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/224/Add.1)*, 27 December 2012 (New York, UN, 2012); UN, *Approved resources for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015: Note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/69/17)*, 14 January 2015 (New York, UN, 2015).

²² UN doc. A/70/331, 19 August 2015, Annex III.

²³ UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, *The Peacebuilding Fund*, <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000>, accessed 10 June 2015.

²⁴ UK Army, *The British Army in Africa*, <http://www.army.mod.uk/operations-deployments/22724.aspx>, accessed 10 June 2015; MOD, *British Military Advisory Training Team (Czech Republic)*, <https://www.gov.uk/british-military-advisory-training-team-in-the-czech-republic>, accessed 10 June 2015.

²⁵ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, pp. 57.

²⁶ HM Government, *Defence Secretary announces UK support to peacekeeping mission*, 25 February 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defence-secretary-announces-uk-support-to-peacekeeping-mission>, accessed 26 February 2016.

²⁷ UK Government press release, 28 September 2015.

²⁸ The UK will begin to deploy in South Sudan during summer 2016 but it is expected that deployment will be staggered to take account of the wet season.

Figure 1 - UK Uniformed Personnel in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 1990-2016

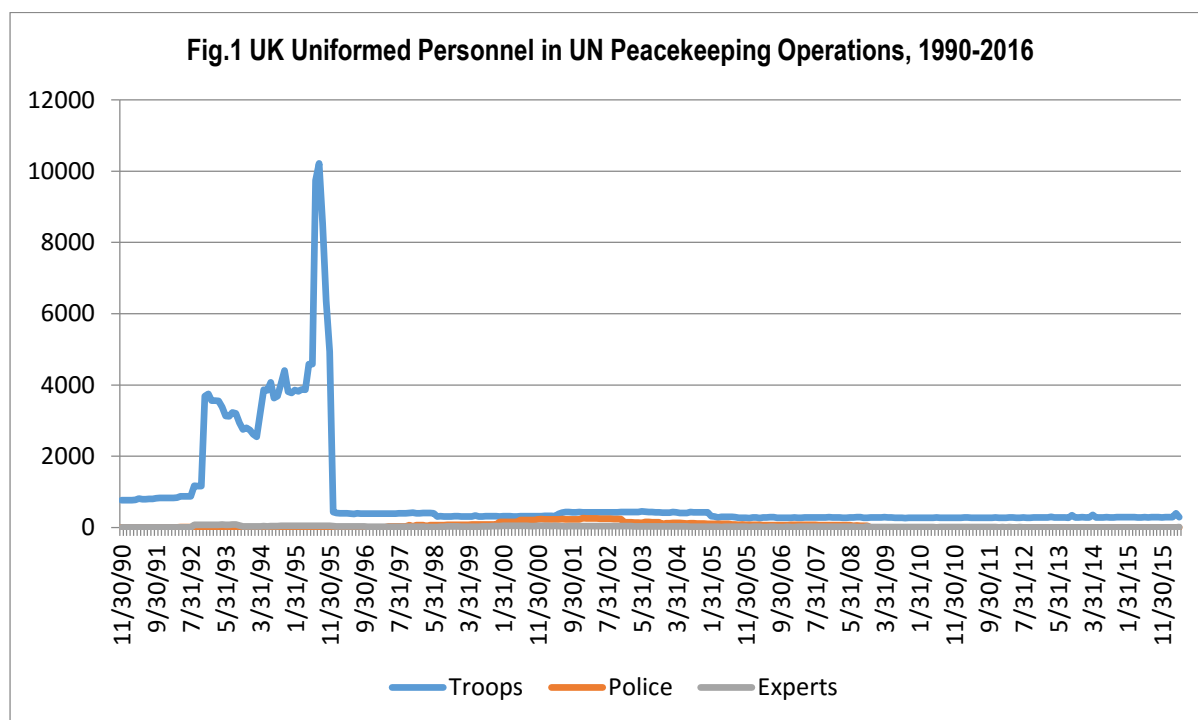


Table 1 - UK Armed Forces and Current Contributions to Peace Operations

Active Armed Forces ²⁹	Defense Budget (US\$)	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
154,700 World Ranking (size): 32	2015: \$56.2bn (2.05% of GDP)	302 (24 female) (31 April 2016)	MINUSMA 2 troops	Afghanistan 450 (NATO)
Army: 88,300 (inc. 2,700 Gurkhas)	2014: \$61.5bn (2.22% of GDP)	Ranking: 53 rd	MINUSTAH 1 police	Iraq 275 (Op. Shader)
Navy: 32,500 (inc. 7,050 Royal Marines)	2013: \$58bn (2.25% of GDP)	(7 th largest contributor from EU states, 5 th from NATO)	MONUSCO 5 troops	Sierra Leone 27 (Op. Gritrock)
Air Force: 33,900	2012: \$61.3bn (2.51% of GDP)		UNMISS 6 (3 troops, 3 police)	Serbia/Kosovo: 14 (1 NATO, 13 OSCE)
Reservists: 84,000			UNFICYP 275 troops	Bosnia: 32 (31 EU Op. Althea, 1 OSCE)
			UNMIL 2 police	Ukraine 29 (OSCE)
			UNSOM 12 experts	EUTM Mali: 26 EUTM Somalia: 5

²⁹ Data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2016* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2016) and UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

3. A Case for Greater UK Participation

UN peace operations continue to struggle. At the strategic level, too many UN deployments are not tied to an effective strategy for conflict resolution, which leaves them, at best, instruments of damage limitation in ongoing war zones.³⁰ At the operational level, two particular shortfalls are frequently identified. First, the UN remains unable to rapidly deploy most of its missions in the field. In his address to the 2015 UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (the C34), Hervé Ladsous stated that the UN's six-month force generation process needs to be shortened dramatically, with 'specialized capabilities that are critical in the start-up phase of an operation, including enabling capacities like engineering, air transportation and medical support, as well as better ways to establish camps and deploy units across a country' being prioritized.³¹ Within this, Ladsous also highlighted the need to investigate standing peacekeeping capacities.³²

Second, there remain considerable gaps in specialist capabilities. This includes 'enabling elements' such as helicopters, as well as a list of other identified 'priority areas', outlined by Ladsous as being 'rapid deployment, standing capabilities; increased mobility of all units in-theatre including aviation support; enhanced medical support; IED survivability measures; improved information and analysis; expertise to address transnational threats such as organized crime, and last but not least planning and implementation'.³³ More broadly, Ladsous identified the need for 'consistency in capacity, equipment and training,' as well as the development of new approaches to 'training, planning, information gathering, analysis and intelligence' to cope with asymmetric threats to operations.³⁴

The UK could help overcome these operational shortfalls in rapid deployment and specialist capabilities by utilizing more of its own personnel in UN peace operations. By doing so, the UK government could derive, political, security, and institutional benefits. Economically, such a course of action would require additional funds.

Political benefits

Providing more British UN peacekeepers could bolster important bilateral relations, enhance UK leadership in the UN Security Council, and promote a fairer international division of labour for peace operations.

First, deploying more British peacekeepers could strengthen important UK bilateral relationships. Within Europe, several states have recently indicated they will make greater contributions to UN peace operations. Britain could improve its political relationships with these countries by joining that endeavor. In 2014, for example, the German and Italian governments launched an initiative entitled 'EU-UN Cooperation in Crisis Management and Peace Operations', which aimed to 'facilitate an exchange of lessons learned and best practices' in the relationship. Germany will now deploy 650 troops to the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA).³⁵ This followed the UN's attempt to align European

³⁰ See the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (UN doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015).

³¹ *Statement of Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous, Debate of the Fourth Committee on Peacekeeping*, 28 October 2014.

³² It is worth noting that UNISFA was able to deploy within one month (in 2011); ONUC was able to deploy in 14 days (in 1960); and UNIFIL was able to deploy in 8 days (in 1978).

³³ *Statement of Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous, Debate of the Fourth Committee on Peacekeeping*, 28 October 2014.

³⁴ *Statement by Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, 20 February 2015.

³⁵ 'Germany to send 650 troops to Mali', *BBC News*, 25 November 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34924231>

Union policies on peacekeeping with its own and the specific operations in Mali and Central African Republic (CAR), where both UN and EU forces deployed and therefore had to integrate policy.³⁶

French deployments in Mali and CAR – both preceding or in tandem with a UN peacekeeping operation – brought renewed attention and assessments of the impact such operations have sometimes had on French military activity.³⁷ Additionally, the Netherlands and Sweden have deployed hundreds of troops, aircraft and intelligence capabilities to MINUSMA – many as part of the innovative All Sources Information Fusion Unit. The Dutch government sought to link this deployment with wider diplomatic initiatives aimed at increasing European contributions, including a high-level conference in Amsterdam, with participants from the UN and over 40 member states.

These developments also have important implications for the UK's relationship with the United States.³⁸ The Obama administration has made a concerted effort to increase European contributions to UN peace operations, including through two US-led peacekeeping summits on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in 2014 and 2015.³⁹ In September 2015, President Obama released a new policy on US support for UN peacekeeping operations, the first in over twenty years.⁴⁰ Although the UK answered Washington's call, its relatively small pledges led some observers to note that London is at 'the bottom of the pack,'⁴¹ compared to some European states. For instance, French-led deployments in Mali and CAR prompted some analysts to suggest that 'if the UK wants to keep a special relationship with the United States, it should become more like France.'⁴² Perhaps in an effort to reverse such perceptions, the UK has agreed to host a follow-up Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in London in September 2016.

Greater engagement in UN peace operations could also strengthen bilateral ties with non-NATO states including in the G7⁴³ and the 'BRICS' – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.⁴⁴ This is particularly true with China and Brazil. First, China has reiterated its official commitment to supporting peacekeeping operations and is the only P5 member to have significantly increased its deployment of UN peacekeepers since 2004.⁴⁵ Beijing sees this as one way of demonstrating it is a 'responsible' power.⁴⁶ Working directly with Chinese troops on this issue has been cited by the SDSR as a way to build a deeper relationship with China.⁴⁷ It could provide a concrete example of former

³⁶ Thierry Tardy and Richard Gowan, *Building EU-UN Coherence in Mission Planning & Mandate Design* (Berlin, ZIF, 2014); ZIF, *EU-UN Peacekeeping Partnerships Initiative*, <http://www.euun2014.eu>, accessed 10 June 2015.

³⁷ Thierry Tardy, 'The Reluctant Peacekeeper: France and the Use of Force in Peace Operations,' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37:5 (2014), p. 771.

³⁸ Patrick Porter, 'Last charge of the knights? Iraq, Afghanistan and the special relationship,' *International Affairs* 86:2 (2010), pp. 355–75, Steven Erlanger, 'Britain's Drift From the Global Stage Becomes an Election Issue,' *New York Times*, 27 April 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/28/world/europe/britains-drift-from-the-global-stage-becomes-an-election-issue.html?_r=2, accessed 10 June 2015.

³⁹ See, for example, Samantha Power, *Remarks on peacekeeping in Brussels*, 9 March 2015, <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/238660.htm>

⁴⁰ *United States Support to United Nations Peace Operations* (The White House, 28 September 2015), <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2015peaceoperations.pdf>

⁴¹ See David Curran, *The UK and United Nations Peace Operations* (London, UN Association UK, 2015), p. 9.

⁴² Judy Dempsey, *Judy Asks: Is the UK-U.S. Special Relationship Over?*, Carnegie Europe, 22 April 2015, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59867>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁴³ The 2015 SDSR cites UK support for increased Japanese contributions to peacekeeping as a positive example of defence, political and diplomatic cooperation. See HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p. 57.

⁴⁴ Niu Habin, *BRICS in Global Governance: A Progressive Force?* (New York, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012), p.2.

⁴⁵ Zhao Lei, 'Two Pillars of China's Global Peace Engagement Strategy: UN Peacekeeping and International Peacebuilding,' *International Peacekeeping*, 18:3 (2011), p. 346.

⁴⁶ Courtney J. Richardson, 'A Responsible Power? China and the UN Peacekeeping Regime,' *International Peacekeeping*, 18:3 (2011), p. 289.

⁴⁷ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p. 58.

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague's call for London and Beijing to 'work together to address the global challenges of our time'.⁴⁸

Peacekeeping could also strengthen Britain's political and security relationship with Brazil, another major UN contributing country.⁴⁹ Particularly through its leadership of the MINUSTAH operation, UK policymakers concluded that Brazil was increasingly 'ready to accept a global "leadership" role'⁵⁰ Increased cooperation in peacekeeping would support the UK/Brazil Defence Cooperation Agreement's stated objectives of exchanging 'information and experiences regarding security issues including those acquired in the field of operations, and in the use of foreign and national military equipment, as well as in connection with international peacekeeping operations'.⁵¹

Providing more British peacekeepers could also strengthen UK leadership on related matters in a key multilateral forum: the UN Security Council.⁵² Successful peacekeeping is clearly crucial to the Council's credibility and effectiveness but with so few deployed personnel the extent to which the UK can understand contemporary challenges in the field is open to question.⁵³ Increasing contributions would not only emphasize the global, collective nature of UN peace operations, but would enhance UK credibility with a wider range of existing partners on the Security Council, particularly those larger T/PCCs and non-permanent members.

Peace operations could form part of a broader UK effort to consolidate existing relationships and forge a more forward-thinking approach to being a permanent member of the Council.⁵⁴ This is particularly important when the UK is engaged in the process of Security Council reform, including advocating an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent members with new permanent seats for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan alongside permanent African representation. Providing more UN peacekeepers would raise Britain's credibility and strengthen these political bonds.

Greater UK participation in UN missions would also help create a fairer international division of labour for peace operations and increase UN effectiveness, thus strengthening one important global collective security mechanism. The 'ambivalent' relationship between the great powers of the West and UN peace operations has led critics to argue that UN peacekeeping policies are devised predominantly by Western states on the UN Security Council, yet undertaken by military personnel

⁴⁸ William Hague, *UK and China: Partners for growth: address to the UK-China Leadership Forum* (London, 14 September 2011), at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-and-china-partners-for-growth>, accessed 7 August 2015. See also FCO, *Press Release: UK and China talks on foreign policy and security* (London, 28 February 2014), at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-china-talks-on-foreign-policy-and-security>, accessed 7 August 2015.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, William Hague, *Britain and Latin America: historic friends, future partners*. Canning Lecture, 9 November 2010. In 2010 the UK and Brazil signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement. See also Kai Michael Kenkel, 'Contributor Profile: Brazil' (IPI *Providing for Peacekeeping Project*, 6 November 2015), <http://ipi-pdf-document-store.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/ppp-profiles/south-america/ipi-pub-ppp-Brazil.pdf>

⁵⁰ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *UK–Brazil Relations Ninth Report of Session 2010–12* (London: The Stationery Office, 2011), p. 25.

⁵¹ HM Government, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil regarding Defence Cooperation, Rio de Janeiro, 14 September 2010* (London, The Stationery Office, 2010), p. 3.

⁵² Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), *Joint Doctrine Note 5/11: Peacekeeping: An Evolving Role for Military Forces*, (Shrivenham, UK MOD, 2011), p. 1-9.

⁵³ The growing disjuncture between New York perspectives and field perspectives was a major theme of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

⁵⁴ This would be in line with Article 24(1) of the UN Charter, which places 'primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security' on Security Council members.

from the global South, which has left numerous missions short of the critical mission enablers noted above.⁵⁵

This fact has not been lost in the UN itself. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon has argued that the separation of those who contribute funds and those who contribute troops complicates the UN's collective approach to conflict management.⁵⁶ Former Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Aameera Haq noted that the top 10 UN TCCs – which provide over half the uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations – fill just 17% of heads of mission and deputy heads and consequently have little say in the strategic direction of peacekeeping.⁵⁷ Amongst member states, the disparity has been highlighted. Major troop contributors have argued that 'developed countries and others with requisite capacities must also shoulder the responsibility' of deploying in UN missions.⁵⁸ They have also highlighted the negative consequences of separating 'those who wield the pen' in peacekeeping from those who 'wield the gun'.⁵⁹ Similarly, US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, recently concluded that it is 'unsustainable and unfair' that developed countries fund peacekeeping while developing countries populate the operations. She went on to note that such a division will not 'produce the peacekeeping forces that today's conflicts and our national security demand'.⁶⁰

To be clear, this is not just about the UK increasing the number of its peacekeepers simply to climb the TCC rankings. As we discuss below, it is up for debate how Britain could best contribute to particular missions and whether it makes more sense to deploy larger, battalion sized contributions, or smaller specialist contributions which fill critical gaps in areas such as aviation, engineering, medical and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR).

Security Benefits

The UK might also derive national security benefits from providing more UN peacekeepers. First, it would help implement the vision outlined in the 2015 SDSR of a 'secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence', potentially ensuring that such reach and influence is more benignly exercised.⁶¹ Naturally, the security incentives to deploy in a UN mission would increase the closer it was to areas the UK government considered strategically important or helped counter transnational terrorism. Hence, while UN missions in CAR or DRC might resonate only very slightly with security concerns in Whitehall, potential calls for peace operations in Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and even Ukraine might raise the stakes considerably.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, 'The West and Contemporary Peace Operations', *Journal of Peace Research*, 46:1 (2009) and Phillip Cunliffe, *Legions of Peace: UN Peacekeepers from the Global South* (London, Hurst, 2013).

⁵⁶ See, for example, Ban Ki-moon, speech to the UN Security Council, 26 August 2011, www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=1275, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁵⁷ *Statement by Under-Secretary-General Ameerah Haq to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, 24 February 2014.

⁵⁸ *Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan in the Fourth Committee Agenda Item 53: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects*, 29 October 2013. See also: Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, *Broadening the Base of United Nations Troop- and Police- Contributing Countries* (IPI Providing for Peacekeeping Study No. 1, 2012).

⁵⁹ *Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative, at the Opening Session of the Annual Debate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Committee (C- 34)*, 24 February 2014.

⁶⁰ *Reforming peacekeeping in a time of conflict: A conversation with US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power*, 7 November 2014, <http://www.aei.org/events/reforming-peacekeeping-time-conflict-conversation-us-ambassador-united-nations-samantha-power/>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁶¹ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p. 9.

Existing models of European engagement to tackle threats at source through peace operations have arguably reached their limits. The level of European participation in peace operations for the past ten years has never provided more than 8% of the personnel of UN forces.⁶² This has led critics to bemoan the ‘outsourcing’ of conflict management on the African continent, where African personnel are trained and equipped to ‘bear the burden’ of complex operations.⁶³ They argue that the attractiveness of this policy in financial terms is far outweighed by the ‘ugly reality’ of African Union (AU) and UN missions in Somalia, CAR and Mali, where interveners have struggled to restore order.

A major consequence of this – an unprecedented movement of refugees – has seriously affected states in the ‘European Neighbourhood’ as well as southern Mediterranean countries.⁶⁴ Although not all refugees are from countries with UN missions, they account for a large proportion of recent population movements.⁶⁵ Instead of building a ‘higher wall’ around the continent, the EU (and its member states) should invest more in peace operations as one instrument to help manage the violent conflicts fuelling such forced migrations.⁶⁶

It is likely that the UN will feature prominently in future responses to security issues in the European Neighborhood. In Libya, the EU’s NAVFOR operation could expand and scenarios involving a future UN peace operation cannot be ruled out entirely. In Syria, the UN has already deployed one failed observation mission during 2012 (UNSMIS) and may be asked to deploy another more robust mission when the war eventually winds down. Other missions around the European periphery (such as UNDOF in the Golan Heights, and UNIFIL in Lebanon) are also being tested to their limits. One respected body concluded that the mix of old and potentially new operations around the European neighborhood leaves the UN requiring ‘some serious reinforcements’.⁶⁷ Without them these missions ‘will eventually crack under the strain—with unpredictable and potentially dangerous implications for Europe in particular’.⁶⁸ Nor should the prospect of a UN operation in Ukraine be completely dismissed, especially given the Ukrainian government’s support for this option.⁶⁹

Institutional Benefits

Providing more UN peacekeepers could also represent an opportunity for the British armed forces as they reflect upon their future roles after the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns. First, it would bring the UK military up-to-date with contemporary challenges in non-NATO peace operations. Second, some UN missions are increasingly likely to provide useful operational experience to UK personnel. Third, investment in the capabilities required to support UN peace operations could fit with the current restructuring of the British armed forces.

⁶² Norrie MacQueen, *Europe and Peacekeeping: Rediscovering a Role?* (Edinburgh, Scottish Global Forum, 2015), p. 3.

⁶³ Richard Gowan and Nick Witney, *Why Europe must stop outsourcing its security* (London, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015), p. 3.

⁶⁴ The European Neighbourhood policy covers 16 states – Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

⁶⁵ UNHCR, *Asylum trends 2014: Levels and Trends in Industrialised Countries* (Geneva, UNHCR, 2015), p. 23.

⁶⁶ See Gowan and Witney, *Why Europe*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Security Council Report, *December 2014 Monthly Forecast: UNDOF (Golan Heights)* (Security Council Report, 2014), p. 22.

⁶⁸ Richard Gowan, *UN Peacekeeping: A Focus for Japanese Cooperation with the United States and Europe?* (Washington, German Marshall Fund, 2015), p. 4.

⁶⁹ ‘Ukraine requests UN peacekeeper deployment’, *Al Jazeera America*, 13 March 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/3/13/ukraine-requests-un-peacekeeper-deployment.html>, accessed 10 June 2015); Elizabeth Paton, *Ukraine calls for UN peacekeepers*, 19 February 2015, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/027c0a78-b80b-11e4-86bb-00144feab7de.html#axzz3bWYchaQc>, accessed 10 June 2015.

First and foremost, there is growing awareness within official circles that Britain needs to refine its approach to peace operations. The 2011 publication of Joint Doctrine Note 5/11, entitled *Peacekeeping: an Evolving Role* (hereafter JDN 5/11), begins by recognising that as a result of involvement in stabilisation operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the MOD has ‘not managed to keep pace’ with the peacekeeping domain.⁷⁰ Moreover, when discussing how ‘peacekeeping’ is framed, JDN 5/11 argues that the NATO definition, which heavily influences Britain’s approach, ‘no longer reflects the peacekeeping environment’ and is more akin to Cold War conceptions of the activity.⁷¹ Deployments to UN peace operations beyond Cyprus would bring the UK armed forces up-to-date with the contemporary peacekeeping challenges, providing an opportunity to refine policy. For instance, policymakers and practitioners in the Netherlands have incorporated the Dutch Army’s experience in UN operations in South Sudan and Mali with that of their contribution to the ISAF deployment to develop new approaches to civil-military cooperation and their ‘comprehensive approach’.⁷² Other European states are also learning that the transition from Afghanistan to UN operations is not always easy or smooth.⁷³

Deployment to many current UN peace operations might also provide useful operational experience in developing the skillsets of UK military personnel. Most entail, ‘working in difficult conditions, in large areas with rugged terrain and limited infrastructure, dealing with multinational coalitions and building working relationships with international civilian and military counterparts’.⁷⁴ One analysis of European contributions to MINUSMA noted that deployment offered these states ‘a better appreciation of the rationale behind certain aspects of UN peacekeeping and the benefits of a diverse, civilian-led, UN mission focused on advancing a political solution.’⁷⁵ UN peace operations would also afford British troops the opportunity to work alongside a wider range of partners beyond NATO and former ISAF allies, such as personnel from China, Brazil, India and Indonesia – all countries that the UK has identified as important bilateral relationships.

Deploying the types of specialist units called for by Hervé Ladsous (including medical, engineering, logistics, ISR and explosive ordnance disposal units) would also synergise with debates over how to restructure Britain’s armed forces. As part of the 2015 SDSR, the Government committed to ‘Joint Force 2025,’ which sets the baseline number of regular British Army personnel at 82,000, and includes the reconfiguration of a ‘number of infantry battalions... to provide an increased contribution to countering terrorism and building stability overseas’.⁷⁶ There is some debate as to how these battalions are to be used, including whether they should focus on countering Mumbai-style attacks on the UK homeland or counter-insurgency abroad. However, the UK military would undoubtedly continue its defence engagement and capacity-building, as well as the provision of training, assistance, advice and mentoring to UK partners.

⁷⁰ DCDC, ‘Joint Doctrine Note 5/11’, p. 1-1.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 1-5.

⁷² GPPAC, CORDAID, PAX, *Towards a Comprehensive Approach? Civil Society and Security Sector Perspectives on Dutch Missions* (The Hague, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, 2015).

⁷³ John Karlsrud and Adam C. Smith, *Europe’s Return to UN Peacekeeping in Africa? Initial challenges and lessons learned from Mali* (IPI Providing for Peacekeeping Study No.10, June 2015).

⁷⁴ Johnson, ‘Back in Blue?’, p. 21.

⁷⁵ Karlsrud and Smith, *Europe’s Return*, p. 6.

⁷⁶ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p.31.

Additionally, as part of the UK's restructuring (which included the 'Future Force 2020' process⁷⁷), in 2014 the House of Commons Defence Committee called for more flexible deployment capabilities.⁷⁸ Examining the development of UN peace operations in theatres such as Mali, the Committee argued that the MOD should re-examine 'the successes of Sierra Leone and Bosnia, and ask what capabilities might be required to improve the chance of success in current crisis zones such as Libya, Yemen, Ukraine or Iraq'.⁷⁹ It is notable that the Committee linked these developments to earlier UN missions and conflict zones that might end up hosting a UN operation. If Britain does develop such flexible capacities, employing them in UN missions would be a logical way to gain operational experience.

Economic Issues

Deploying more British peacekeepers would cost money. However, two issues are worth discussing. First, the UN provides a favorable rate of reimbursement for deployments in comparison with other multilateral institutions. Second, there are some relevant financial possibilities created by the establishment of the UK's new Conflict Security and Stability Fund (CSSF).

With the drawdown of a costly Afghanistan campaign, mixed with austerity-led government policies, questions have been raised over the UK Treasury's willingness to fund additional large-scale operations.⁸⁰ For instance, in 2013 the government requested that the MOD contribute £25 million to the Deployed Military Activity Pool (DMAP), which funds 'the initial and short term costs of any unforeseen military activities, as authorized by the National Security Council'.⁸¹ Although the DMAP does not replace the Special Reserve – the budget line that covers large scale UK deployments – it has brought concerns from parliamentarians over the willingness of the UK Treasury to fund operations.⁸² In this financial climate, deploying more units to UN operations would cost the UK money but the UN may offer a more financially viable model for deploying such forces than other options. Increasing contributions to UN peace operations has even been proposed as one of a range of measures to adapt the UK military to policies of austerity.⁸³

T/PCCs in UN operations recoup some of the costs of deployment through the UN's reimbursement process. For the first time since 2002, the level of allowances for troops and formed police units has risen.⁸⁴ In 2014, the UN General Assembly agreed a single rate of reimbursement to contingent personnel in UN operations to the amount of US\$1,332 per person per month, from 1 July 2014. Over the next two years, this will increase to US\$1,365 per person per month as from 1 July 2016, and US\$1,410 per person per month as from 1 July 2017.⁸⁵ In addition, US\$68 per month is given

⁷⁷ MOD, *Fact Sheet 5: Future Force 2020 – Summary of size, shape and structure*, Crown Copyright, p. 1, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62487/Factsheet5-Future-Force-2020.pdf, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁷⁸ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Future Army 2020: Ninth Report of Session 2013–14* (London: The Stationery Office, 2014).

⁷⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Re-thinking defence to meet new threats: Tenth Report of Session 2014–15* (London, The Stationery Office, 2015), p. 35.

⁸⁰ See for instance: Malcolm Chalmers, *The Financial Context for the 2015 SDSR: The End of UK Exceptionalism?* (London, RUSI, September 2014).

⁸¹ House of Commons Defence Committee, *MoD Main Estimates 2013-14, Second Report of Session 2013-2014* (London: The Stationery Office, 2014), p. 9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁸³ Richard Reeve, *Cutting the cloth: Ambition, austerity and the case for rethinking UK military spending* (Oxford, Oxford Research Group, May 2015), p. 21.

⁸⁴ Katharina P. Coleman, *The Political Economy of UN Peacekeeping: Incentivizing Effective Participation* (IPI Providing for Peacekeeping Study No.7, May 2014), p. 15.

⁸⁵ *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 June 2014 [on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/918)] 68/281: Rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries* (New York, UN, 2014).

in 'personal clothing, gear and equipment allowance' and US\$5 per month on 'personal weaponry and training ammunition'.⁸⁶

Unlike for some poorer countries, UN reimbursements will not cover the costs of recruitment, training and deploying UK military personnel.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the UN model may be more beneficial than the financial support packages available from NATO and the EU. In NATO operations the costs lie where they fall. Countries that participate thus have to carry the burden almost exclusively, as opposed to sharing it through a joint funding mechanism.⁸⁸ Some states view this system as a disincentive to become involved in extensive deployments.⁸⁹ Some UK policymakers criticized this system when NATO was establishing its Reaction Force and similar concerns were raised at the 2014 summit in Wales.⁹⁰ The EU, in contrast to NATO, has adopted the 'Athena Mechanism' – a method of cost-sharing whereby 27 Member States⁹¹ pool resources to help finance the common costs involved in EU military operations.⁹² The problem lies with the practical implementation of this system. As Tardy notes, since the Treaty of the European Union prohibits expenditure arising from operations with military or defence implications being covered by the EU budget, in practice a system similar to NATO's 'cost lie where they fall' system may actually operate for EU missions.⁹³

In 2013, the UK established the CSSF to replace the existing Conflict Pool, which until 2014-15 had covered the peacekeeping budget. The Conflict Pool was a joint FCO-MOD-DFID mechanism with a budget of £683 million in 2014-15, of which a minimum of £374 million would be spent on the UK Government's peacekeeping budget.⁹⁴ However, the unpredictable volatility in peacekeeping costs had the potential to severely impact budgets in other areas. In 2009-10, for instance, rising

⁸⁶ Coleman, *The Political Economy*, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Figures for this vary: A 2015 letter from the MOD (in Response to a Freedom of Information Request) identified the 'estimated full costs per recruit' for an Infantry Soldier to be £34,000. See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397258/Army_Training_Costs_Per_Recruit.pdf, accessed 5 August 2015. A 2013 report (using data from 2010-11), calculated the total costs of recruitment and Phase One training for Standard Entry Recruits as being between £42,818 - £48, 812 (this does not include annual salary). See: Child Soldiers International, ForcesWatch, *One Step Forward: The case for ending recruitment of minors by the British armed forces*, (London, Child Soldiers International, ForcesWatch, 2013), p. 12. For pay scales of UK armed forces, see: Armed Forces' Pay Review Body, *Armed Forces' Pay Review Body Forty-Third Report 2014* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2014), p. 46, at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/288713/AFPRB_Report_43rd_2014.pdf, accessed 5 August 2015.

⁸⁸ House of Commons, *Written Evidence from Dr Bastian Giegerich, House of Commons Defence Committee: The future of NATO and European defence (Ninth Report of Session 2007–08)* (London, The Stationery Office, 2008), Ev 90.

⁸⁹ *On Alliance Solidarity in the 21st Century: Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen*, Tallinn, Estonia 22 April 2010.

⁹⁰ House of Commons, *House of Commons Defence Committee: The future of NATO and European defence (Ninth Report of Session 2007–08 Report)* (London, The Stationery Office, 2008), p. 51 and *US Project Meeting Summary, Implementing the NATO Wales Summit: From Strategy to Action, 30-31 October 2014* (London, Chatham House, 2014), p. 4.

⁹¹ Denmark has opted out of the CSDP on Military Matters.

⁹² European Council, *Athena - financing security and defence military operations*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/athena/>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁹³ Thierry Tardy, *Funding Peace Operations: Better value for EU money* (EU ISS Brief, November 2013), at http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_38_Funding_peace_operations.pdf

⁹⁴ Independent Commission for Aid Impact, *Evaluation of the inter-departmental conflict pool, independent commission for aid impact* (London, ICAI, 2012), p. 12. This included the assessed contributions to the UN, OSCE, EU Security and defence Policy military and civilian missions, NATO operations in the Balkans, and the International Criminal Courts and Tribunals.

peacekeeping costs led to a reduction of around £80 million in other Conflict Pool activities.⁹⁵ This created uncertainty in the wider planning for the Conflict Pool, and led to ‘disincentives’ for staff to engage with the Conflict Pool. The CSSF has an expanded budget of over £1 billion (to be increased to £1.3 billion by 2019/20),⁹⁶ Instead of being managed by three departments it is run by the National Security Council. This new mechanism might make it easier for the government to spend money on a relatively small but unexpected peacekeeping deployment without causing as many opportunity costs as under the previous system.⁹⁷

4. A Strengthened System of UN Peace Operations

UN peace operations have come a long way since UK engagement in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – both of which created a largely negative ‘popular mythology’ in the UK about the shortcomings of the UN system.⁹⁸ The ‘back end’ of UN support for peacekeeping has been undergoing reform since the 2000 so-called Brahimi Report, which set out a significant agenda for restructuring and professionalizing the UN’s capacities for undertaking peace operations.⁹⁹ The UK and France have played important roles in this process, including launching a ‘non-paper’ in 2009, intended to begin a process of addressing ‘priority’ challenges in three areas: effective strategic oversight, resource constraints, and lessons from implementation. The non-paper advocated for ‘monitoring capabilities in New York’ to be strengthened, evaluation of missions to be improved, and ‘coordinated action’ to implement ‘a more effective process of preparation and management’ of troop contributors. This push for reform resulted in three notable policy developments.¹⁰⁰

First, it facilitated the UN’s ‘capability-driven approach’ to peacekeeping contributions and force generation.¹⁰¹ This sought to replace a ‘numbers only’ approach to force generation with one focused on delivering the ‘skills, capacity and willingness of personnel, as well as materiel, to deliver required results’.¹⁰² This shift reflected the belief that too often ‘the imperative to deploy has taken priority without due regard for the equipment, self-sustainment, training, and capabilities that catalyse the ability of troops to function effectively – and safely’. Thus ‘boots on the ground’ are important, but they need to be accompanied by key ‘enablers’.¹⁰³ This approach could stand or fall based on whether or not European states contribute specialized capabilities, especially ‘relating to heavy lifting, engineering, mobility, intelligence, medevac and hospital provision, and rapid reaction or high-intensity capabilities’.¹⁰⁴

Second, the establishment in 2013 of the UN’s Directorate for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership provides a mechanism to oversee the peace operations system. Under General Assembly Resolution 67/297, the office’s main functions are to identify gaps that have an impact on mandate delivery,

⁹⁵ Independent Commission for Aid Impact, ‘Evaluation of the inter-departmental conflict pool’, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁶ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, pp. 64

⁹⁷ See Oliver Letwin, *Conflict Stability and Security Fund Settlement, Financial Year 2015-16: Written statement, 12 March 2015*, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-03-12/HCWS392/>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁹⁸ See, for example, the BBC Drama ‘Warriors’, a production based on interviews of 90 soldiers involved in UNPROFOR 1992 and 1993. See Richard Norton Taylor, ‘TV drama comes under fire from army’, *The Guardian*, 20 November 1999, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/1999/nov/20/richardnortontaylor>, accessed 10 June 2015.

⁹⁹ For a good overview of the professionalization of UN peacekeeping see Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler and Philipp Rotmann, *The New World of UN Peace Operations* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ *UK/France Non-Paper on UN Peacekeeping* (January 2009), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰¹ Adam Smith, and Arthur Boutellis, *Rethinking Force Generation: Filling Capability Gaps in UN Peacekeeping* (IPI Providing for Peacekeeping Study No.2, May 2013), p. 3.

¹⁰² *A new partnership agenda: Charting a new horizon for UN peacekeeping* (New York, UN DPKO/DFS, 2009), p. 29.

¹⁰³ Haq, ‘Statement Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations’, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Bellamy and Williams, *Broadening the Base*, p. 10.

make recommendations on 'systemic issues relating to United Nations peacekeeping operations', offer recommendations to ensure safety, security and welfare of peacekeeping personnel, work with senior mission leadership, and troop-contributing countries, and make recommendations to incorporate lessons learned and best practices from previous missions into future ones.¹⁰⁵

Third, the reforms generated the UN's Global Field Support Strategy, which sought to improve financing, human resources, and supply chain management for deployed operations.¹⁰⁶ Clearly there is still a long way to go amongst the organs of the UN to implementing a fail-safe approach.¹⁰⁷ And despite the stalling of this agenda and multiple complaints from field personnel about inadequate forms of mission support, there is enough promise in the overall concept to warrant a renewed effort to make these reforms work effectively to deliver improved performance in the field and in UN headquarters.

To date, however, UK engagement in these reforms has been confined to the policy level. As Johnson argued, 'this is a contradiction, not a mitigation'.¹⁰⁸ And as Smith and Boutellis observed, increased European involvement after the reduction of commitments in Afghanistan could present 'a window of opportunity to consolidate the shift from numbers-driven to capability-driven peacekeeping'.¹⁰⁹ This has been evident in European participation in the MINUSMA operation in Mali, where European engineering capacities to build base camps demonstrated the potential to enable a UN mission in the start-up phase. European countries also provided important operational assistance and mentoring to other T/PCCs on how to operate in asymmetric environments and how to counter improvised explosive devices (IEDs). As Karlsrud and Smith suggest, the individual and collective experiences of European contributors to MINUSMA provide an opportunity 'for the UN system to learn and adapt to the changing environment it is facing on the ground'¹¹⁰

It is important to consider these developments in the institutional architecture of the UN, particularly as UK policymakers have for the past fifteen years preferred alternative models of deploying force internationally. The problematic experiences of being part of UNPROFOR in Bosnia led the UK policymaking establishment to see NATO as the multilateral vehicle of choice for British military deployments. This NATO/UK relationship has been strengthened through British participation in the ISAF deployment in Afghanistan. Additionally, even when Britain deployed forces to Sierra Leone in 2000 in an operation that ultimately assisted the UNAMSIL deployment, UK forces remained outside the UN operation, a decision in large part down to the considerable skepticism within the MOD about UN competence and its command and control mechanisms.¹¹¹ As a result, British troops worked in parallel with but not as part of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone; their first objective being the evacuation of UK citizens, not supporting the floundering UN operation.¹¹² Post-ISAF, it remains to be seen whether Cameron's apparent support for UN peacekeeping initiatives represents a restoration of UK trust in UN-led peace operations.

¹⁰⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution A/Res/67/297, 29 August 2013; Herve Ladsous, 'Statement to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations'; Bianca Selway, *Beyond Haiti: Enhancing Latin American Military and Police Contributions to UN Peacekeeping* (New York, IPI, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ *Global Field Support Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/633)*, 16th January 2010 (New York, UN, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ Smith, and Boutellis, *Rethinking Force Generation*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, 'Back in Blue?', p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, and Boutellis, *Rethinking Force Generation*, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Karlsrud and Smith, *Europe's Return*, p. 5.

¹¹¹ Dorman, *Blair's Successful War*, p.88.

¹¹² CDS, *A Review of Peace Operations*, p.73.

5. Questions for Future UK Participation

Even if it is accepted that an abstract case can be made for greater UK participation in UN peace operations, real policy challenges and crises revolve around decisions made about particular issues in particular places at particular times.¹¹³ Three prudential questions therefore need to be discussed: what the UK could contribute, what type of missions it would consider, and what preparations would need to be made?

1) *What might the UK contribute?*

It is too early to judge whether the UK's pledges to deploy troops to UNMISS and UNSOS will represent a model of future British engagement with UN peace operations. Nevertheless, JDN 5/11 outlines a range of UK options that could be made available to UN peace operations; specifically, how to fill UN capability gaps concerning rapid deployment, reacting quickly to ceasefires, or 'unexpected shocks in extant UN peacekeeping missions'.¹¹⁴ This would include using 'the UK's high-readiness military capability either in an early-entry or contingency peacekeeping role.' An indication of this rapidly deployable capacity may be seen in the establishment of the Royal Navy 'Response Force Task Group' – a rapid reaction force that 'deals with unexpected world events that require military intervention'. Established under the 2010 SDSR, the task group concept was intended to allow a deployment similar to the UK's operations in Sierra Leone in 2000, which supported an existing UN operation.¹¹⁵

Other options referred to by JDN 5/11 involve specialist capabilities. These are listed as support helicopters, military intelligence/surveillance, logistic support, and field hospitals and evacuation capabilities, as well as some newly established mechanisms such as the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG), the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit, Stabilisation Response Teams, and Female Engagement Teams.¹¹⁶ One option for deploying such capabilities would be in a 'package contribution' wherein a country deploys enough personnel – including special forces, ISR capabilities, close air support, and assets for casualty evacuation – to limit its reliance on the UN system and other T/PCCs within the mission. This has been adopted by other European states. In 2013, for example, the Dutch government made a 'package contribution' to MINUSMA with a deployment of 579 peacekeepers, as well as four Apache attack helicopters.¹¹⁷

Challenges have been identified in each of these options. Specialist capabilities have limitations when deployed in missions that encounter fundamental obstacles that are 'too great for such a niche force to offset'.¹¹⁸ Larger contributions may mean that Britain takes on a greater burden regarding the success or failure of a peace operation as a whole. In the post-Afghanistan context, where the limitations of the UK's military apparatus are apparent, policymakers may shy away from the risks associated with another sizeable deployment but it would be unwise to rule such a deployment out in principle.

One pragmatic approach may lie in engaging more with like-minded European states that already deploy considerable contributions in UN peace operations. The model of co-deployment or operational partnerships wherein two or more countries combine their personnel to form a single

¹¹³ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, 'Explaining the National Politics of Peacekeeping Contributions' in Bellamy and Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers*, pp.417-36.

¹¹⁴ DCDC, 'Joint Doctrine Note 5/11', p. 1-9.

¹¹⁵ HM Government, 'The Strategic Defence and Security Review', p. 21.

¹¹⁶ DCDC, 'Joint Doctrine Note 5/11', p. 1-9.

¹¹⁷ Jair Van Der Lijn, and Stefanie Ros, 'Contributor Profile: The Netherlands' (IPI, Providing for Peacekeeping Project, 2014), p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Gowan and Witney, *Why Europe*, p. 6.

military unit is increasingly utilised across a range of UN missions.¹¹⁹ The UK could certainly benefit from the burden sharing approach, and can draw from its experience of engaging with European partners in a range of non-UN joint deployment initiatives (such as the UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force). There are indications that the UK is at least considering this line of thinking. In January 2015, for example, the MOD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Irish Department of Defence to enhance cooperation in supporting 'UK Armed Forces engagement in peacekeeping operations, through the provision of peacekeeping training and addressing the potential of joint Ireland/UK contributions to UN mandated and UN led peacekeeping operations'.¹²⁰ Ireland could provide a useful and highly experienced partner for such co-deployment. The Irish military has a long history of providing UN peacekeepers and is known for its willingness to 'serve the UN in places where other European countries would not'.¹²¹

Finally, there is the option of Britain aiming to become what Walter Dorn has called a 'technology-contributing country' or TechCC.¹²² Designed to complement existing notions of troop – and police – contributing countries, under this new concept, the TechCC provides other contributors, field missions and UN headquarters with technological concepts, equipment, advice and support. While TechCCs can also contribute personnel they focus on providing strategic enablers through technology.

2) *Is the UK prepared to deploy peacekeepers into violent contexts?*

There is already an expeditionary element to the UK's future defence plans, which would likely involve deployments in volatile areas.¹²³ In 2014 the UN's Department of Safety and Security assessment concluded that more than 40% of the UN's areas of deployment were 'substantially, highly, or extremely dangerous' – up from 25% in 2011.¹²⁴ Additionally, more than two-thirds of all peacekeeping personnel are operating in 'contexts with significant levels of on-going violence', (including complex operations in Darfur, South Sudan, Mali, CAR, Somalia, and DRC).¹²⁵ These regions often lack clear political frameworks to manage belligerents, are beset by violent armed actors, deliberate attacks against civilian populations, transnational criminal networks, and organisations that engage in terrorist acts.¹²⁶ In such circumstances, force protection cannot always be guaranteed and yet most policymakers remain extremely sensitive to taking casualties. Both the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns generated significant numbers of British casualties and concerns would rightly be raised were UK peacekeepers deployed into highly volatile environments.

Casualty sensitivity often leads governments to use 'caveats' aimed at averting risk to their own personnel. While caveats are often inserted into the MOU between the TCC and the UN, the UN

¹¹⁹ See Donald C. Daniel, Paul D. Williams and Adam C. Smith, *Deploying Combined Teams: Lessons-Learned from Operational Partnerships in UN Peacekeeping* (New York, IPI, Providing for Peacekeeping Study No.12, August 2015).

¹²⁰ HM Government, *Memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Department of Defence Ireland on the enhancement of bilateral engagement on certain aspects of defence and security cooperation* (London/Dublin, UK MOD/DoD Ireland, 2015), p. 5.

¹²¹ Edward Burke and Jonathan Marley, *Walking Point for Peace: An Irish view on the state of UN peacekeeping* (New York University Centre for International Cooperation, 2015), p. 4.

¹²² A. Walter Dorn, *Smart Peacekeeping: Towards Tech-Enabled Operations* (IPI, Providing for Peacekeeping No.13, forthcoming 2016).

¹²³ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, p.29.

¹²⁴ Haq, 'Statement Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations', 2014.

¹²⁵ Herve Ladsous, *New Challenges and Priorities for UN Peacekeeping: Speech made to The Brookings Institution, 17 June 2014*, <https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/HL-remarks-brookings.pdf>, accessed 10 June 2015.

¹²⁶ UN doc. S/PV.7275, 9 October 2014.

sometimes has no knowledge of a caveat, which can lead to huge planning and operational difficulties for UN Force Commanders and contingents from other countries.¹²⁷ Caveats highlight concerns that contributing countries hold about the capacities of the mission and the wider UN system to react if their peacekeepers are targeted. UN systems and standards may differ in key areas, such as casualty evacuation of wounded personnel and access to hospitals. Moreover, questions over command and control have often been raised in relation to how operations react to armed attacks on peacekeepers. This was highlighted during mid-2014, when a Philippine contingent in the Golan Heights ‘stood their ground’ when surrounded by Syrian rebels. The order to do so came not from the UNDOF Force Commander, but from the unit’s commanding officer in Manila. This illustrates a ‘fundamental problem’ with peacekeeping, namely that ‘when bullets fly, [national contingents] have no problem disobeying U.N. force commanders and taking orders from home’.¹²⁸

The UK would be well placed to lead by example in publicly rejecting the use of caveats as a counter-productive policy that undermines unified command and control, and hence the effectiveness of UN field missions.

3) *Is the UK military prepared for deployment in UN peace operations?*

The UK’s Joint Doctrine Note 5/11 recognises that for the British military to increase its participation in contemporary UN peace operations it will need the ‘requisite training, capability, and understanding of peacekeeping operations to be effective’.¹²⁹ Working on the basis that ‘a peacekeeper will not be able to function effectively without a credible level of understanding of the mission’s mandate’, JDN 5/11 advocates that UK commanders become ‘immersed’ as soon as possible in relative knowledge as soon as a decision is made to deploy.¹³⁰

Such immersion would help overcome the current gap between the skills required for contemporary peace operations, and what has been defined as the ‘warfighting ethos’ of the UK military. Again, this is not a new concern.¹³¹ However, it has been a topic of special reflection with regards to Afghanistan. King’s analysis of the UK’s Helmand Campaign in Afghanistan, for instance, examined the utility of the ‘Warfighting Ethos’ of UK forces, particularly its impact on wider processes of stabilisation in the country. Whilst King found this ethos was ‘highly effective’, he argued that at times a fine line could be identified ‘between a willingness to act decisively and accept the risks associated with that action and a positive alacrity to become engaged in combat as a professional good in itself’.¹³² This meant that tactical activity would often trump ‘careful political consideration’ of the situation or long term priorities, with such activity taking precedence over less spectacular but strategically decisive missions- such as training Afghan national security forces, or negotiating with local leaders in order to learn about the environment.¹³³ Deployment in some UN peace operations may well require the tactical use of force but they are primarily missions designed to facilitate political effects and troops should be trained accordingly.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ See, for example, UN doc. S/PV.7464, 17 June 2015.

¹²⁸ Louis Charbonneau, and Manuel Mogato, *How U.N. troops defied orders, opened fire and escaped Syrian rebels*, Reuters, 12 September 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/12/us-syria-crisis-peacekeepers-un-insight-idUSKBN0H724T20140912>, accessed 10 June 2015.

¹²⁹ DCDC, ‘Joint Doctrine Note 5/11’, p. 1-10.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 3-1.

¹³¹ General Sir Charles Guthrie, ‘The UK’s armed forces: warfighters or peacekeepers?’, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 35:1 (2001).

¹³² Anthony King, ‘Understanding the Helmand campaign: British military operations in Afghanistan’, *International Affairs*, 86:2 (2010), p. 324.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 325.

¹³⁴ David Curran, ‘Training for Peacekeeping: Towards Increased Understanding of Conflict Resolution?’ *International Peacekeeping*, 20:1 (2013).

Fortunately, there exists a lineage of peacekeeping training amongst UK military personnel. For instance, the UK's military officer training programme, run at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (RMAS) incorporates a range of topics run by the department of 'communication and behavioural sciences', which includes training on negotiation skills and techniques for the military practitioner.¹³⁵ Officer training simulations at RMAS have also been developed to reflect deployment in civilian environments.¹³⁶ As seen above, this is supported by research and development into doctrine undertaken by the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), and supported by other groups that have developed specialist capabilities to work with civilian organisations in stabilisation contexts.¹³⁷

Doctrinally, the UK military has proved adaptable to the challenges likely to arise in UN peace operations. The experience of UNPROFOR in the mid-1990s led to considerable debate on the future direction of peacekeeping, and ultimately the publication of *Joint Warfare Publication 3-50: Peace Support Operations*.¹³⁸ JWP 3-50 was a significant step forward in peacekeeping doctrine, including on the role of consent, the need for effective civil-military cooperation, and a range of wider skills and techniques.¹³⁹ Attempts to re-orientate some of the UK's armed forces to the demands of peace operations will not be a quick-fix, particularly if resistance emerges from those who believe that peacekeeping is not an appropriate use of Britain's military. This is not unusual. Other European countries that have pledged to increase contributions experienced a lag between political commitment and the deployment of forces.¹⁴⁰ In the UK context, it remains to be seen how the changes brought about by 'Joint Force 2025' will develop a strategic acceptance that peace operations are part of UK military activity.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The UK's position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council gives it a special set of responsibilities. One of them is to ensure that peace operations work effectively. While Britain has a track record of providing financial and political support to UN peace operations, as well as training other T/PCCs, this does not (and should not) preclude greater military contributions, including the deployment of sizable contingents of UK forces.

The signals emanating from the UK government since 2015 are encouraging. But in a time of austerity, a clear strategic case needs to be made to justify and explain a greater focus on peace operations. This is possible but the 2015 SDSR remains incomplete on that score. Moreover, the momentum generated by the 2015 SDSR and diplomatic initiatives in New York need to be maintained and built upon before they dissipate. The UK's decision to host the September 2016

¹³⁵ Deborah Goodwin, *The Military and Negotiation: The Role of the Soldier Diplomat* (London: Frank Cass, 2005); RMAS, *An Officer and a Problem Solver: Developing Problem Solving and Thinking Skills in Officer Cadets at Sandhurst* (Sandhurst, Department of Communication and Applied Behavioural Science, 2011), p. 2.

¹³⁶ Donal A. O'Neill, 'Experiential Learning through Simulations', *Sensor: The bulletin of the Department of Communication and Applied Behavioural Science* (Sandhurst, RMAS, 2013); Ann Stow, 'Introducing Culture to Officer Cadets', *Sensor: The bulletin of the Department of Communication and Applied Behavioural Science* (Sandhurst, RMAS, 2014).

¹³⁷ See for instance the UK's Military Stabilisation Support Group:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/military-stabilisation-support-group> and the UK Government Stabilisation Unit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/stabilisation-unit>

¹³⁸ Permanent Joint Headquarters, *Joint Warfare Publication 3-50: Peace Support Operations* (London, MOD, 1998).

¹³⁹ Phillip Wilkinson, *Peace Support Under Fire: Lessons From Sierra Leone* (International Security Information Service, 2000); Tom Woodhouse, 'The gentle hand of peace? British peacekeeping and conflict resolution in complex political emergencies', *International Peacekeeping* 6:2 (1999).

¹⁴⁰ Curran, *The UK and United Nations Peace Operations*, p. 15.

follow-up to President Obama's 2015 peacekeeping summit should provide the necessary political focus.

Greater British participation in UN peace operations would increase their effectiveness and hence strengthen the overall UN system. This is not an insignificant point for a state that will increasingly rely on multilateral endeavours for its foreign policy impact. Britain could help fill some key capability gaps in existing UN operations and help deliver a more effective international division of labour for the peace operations system. UK leadership in this area might encourage other UN member states to do likewise.

Initiatives now coming to fruition such as the Capability Driven Approach derive in part from UK and French efforts to improve UN operations. It would be a missed opportunity not to support these reforms in the field as well as in New York. As European contributions to MINUSMA are demonstrating, greater European engagement in UN missions can improve standards and modernise systems.¹⁴¹ But, if Britain's political leadership chooses greater engagement in UN peace operations, the UK military will need time to prepare, including revising some elements of doctrine and conducting the resulting training and education.

At a **strategic level**, the UK Government should seek to develop greater expertise in peace operations and develop more effective institutional mechanisms for participating with UN operations. Specifically, the UK Government should:

- build on the commitments given in the 2015 SDSR by outlining a coherent strategic UK government approach to UN peace operations over the next parliament. This should include a commitment to increase contributions of British military capabilities.
- conduct regular assessments of where and when it might usefully deploy uniformed personnel in UN peace operations.
- ensure that funding mechanisms for practical contributions to UN peace operations have the necessary flexibility and sustainability to facilitate greater UK participation.
- facilitate greater participation of British personnel in UN operations by establishing frameworks to ensure that serving in the UN is a desirable career-enhancing activity, cultivating greater institutional knowledge of UN peace operations, and engaging in joint training and planning initiatives for UN operations with European partners.

At an **operational level**, the FCO and MOD in particular should develop coherent departmental strategies to normalise and encourage greater participation in UN peace operations. Specifically, these departments should:

- assess the feasibility of deploying specialist military capabilities to ongoing UN missions, thereby helping to fill capability gaps outlined by the UN, and of the UK becoming a TechCC in the peacekeeping field.
- evaluate models of co-deployment and/or operational partnerships with European partners for deploying into UN peace operations.
- cultivate a cultural and organizational shift to appropriately reward military and diplomatic personnel who serve in the UN peace operations system and encourage greater institutional knowledge of UN peace operations among government and military officials.

¹⁴¹ Karlsrud and Smith, *Europe's Return*, p. 6.

- undertake comprehensive lessons learned studies of the new UK deployments in Somalia and South Sudan.

At the **oversight level**, Parliament should play a more active role in scrutinising UK commitments to UN peace operations, especially through the work of the Commons Defence and Foreign Affairs select committees and the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. These committees should:

- investigate the roles that UN peace operations can play in achieving the UK's wider defence and foreign policy objectives. Inquiries should outline current departmental approaches to the UN, how the UK parliament oversees military commitments to UN operations, and the sustainability of UK military contributions to the UN.

About this Report

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Photo:

Photo of a disused UNFICYP Observation Post. Taken by Paul D. Williams, September 2014.



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