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policy BRIEF 08-02

Simply a Matter of Timing?

Examining the Effectiveness of Peacekeeper Deployment During Different Phases of a Conflict

by Daniel S. Carik and Megan Carniewski

SUMMARY:

This is the second in a series of policy briefs in which the Ford Institute will examine the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations in African conflicts. The first policy brief in this series (08-01) identified factors which, its authors estimate, led to the increased effectiveness of peacekeepers in protecting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from attack. These factors include deployment under a United Nations Charter Chapter 7 Mandate, the ratio of the size of a peacekeeping force to the number of displaced persons, and the density of the force in relation to the geographic area of deployment.

This brief will examine the conditions under which the timing of deployment in a conflict increases a force's effectiveness in reducing incidences of violence and promoting the rule of law. Future policy briefs in this series will examine the composition, function, and operational capability of peacekeeping forces.

According to the United Nations, a "successful" peacekeeping mission is one that "ensure[s] that its mandate and capabilities are tailored to the requirements of the situation" (1). Researchers at the Ford Institute examined specific measures to evaluate the success of a peacekeeping mission including: 1. a decrease in the number of attacks on IDP and refugee camps; 2. a decrease in the number of displaced persons; and 3. a shift in a country's rankings according to the Failed State Index (FSI) (2). The authors of this brief suggest that introducing a peacekeeping force as early as possible in a conflict is critical in preventing attacks on camps and violence against civilians. However, as the findings of this study substantiate, in order for early deployment to be effective, it must take those factors introduced in the prior policy brief (08-01) in this series into consideration.

In order to analyze how the timing of deployment relates to the success of a mission, researchers from the Ford Institute examined seven African conflicts involving peacekeeping operations. Researchers distinguished three distinct phases of deployment: early, peak, and post conflict. Figures 1through 3 illustrate three case studies where peacekeepers were introduced at different phases of a conflict. The number and timing of attacks on camps is displayed in each figure in orange while the number of peacekeepers deployed is

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1. United Nations (2008). *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines.* http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf.
2. For an explanation of the Failed States Index, please visit: www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?page=1&story_id=4350.

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- *intrastate conflict and human rights;*
- *internal displacement, forced migration, and refugees, and*
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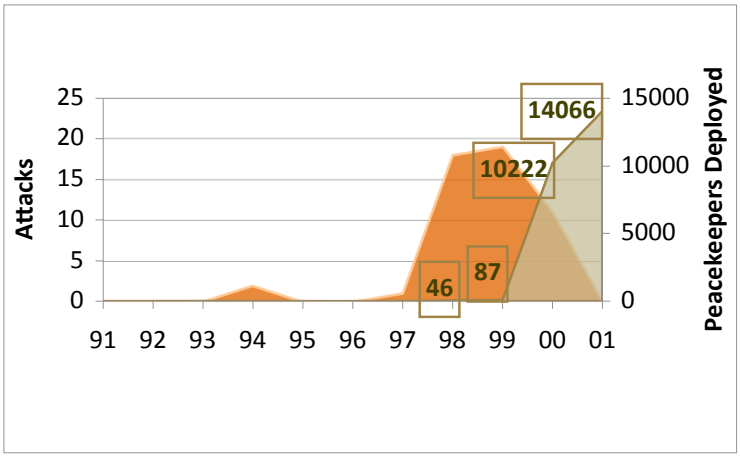
depicted in gray. Tellingly, no peacekeepers were deployed before hostilities were initiated. In Figure 1, in the case of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL forces were deployed at the height of the conflict. In contrast, Figure 2 demonstrates that ONUB forces in Burundi were deployed toward the end of the conflict. Finally, Figure 3 depicts the situation in Liberia, where UNMIL forces were deployed after the secession of violence.

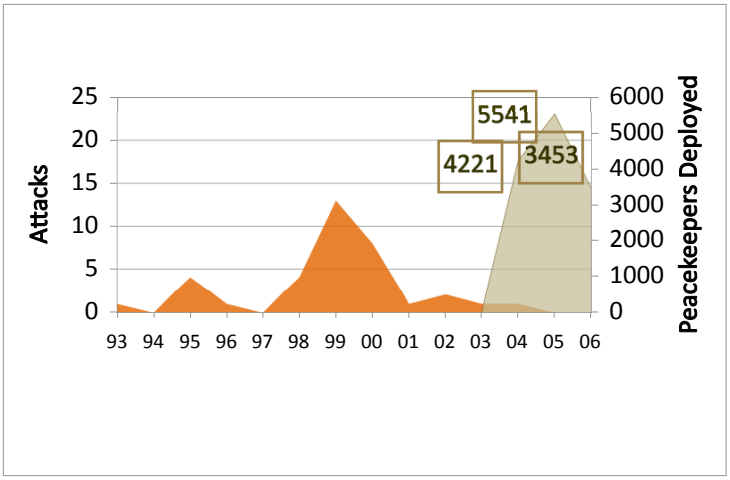
In Sierra Leone (Figure 1), UNOMSIL, a small observer mission, was deployed under a Chapter 6 Mandate prior to 2000. At its height in 1999, the UNOMSIL force was very small, comprised of only 87 peacekeepers. Instead of mitigating the conflict, the observers were ineffective as the violence increased. As Figure 1 shows, attacks on camps increased from 1 in 1997 to 19 in 1999. In 2000, the UNAMSIL mission replaced UNOMSIL. This much larger mission (10,222 peacekeepers by 2000) was deployed with a specific Chapter 7 Mandate authorizing the use of force to protect civilians. As Figure 1 indicates, its presence had an immediate impact on reducing attacks on camps. In 2001, the numbers again increased to 14,066 while attacks on camps ceased. Work by the Ford Institute researchers corroborates the view that there seemingly is a relationship between the dramatic decline in attacks on camps and UNAMSIL's introduction. **The timely deployment of a force proportionate to the size of the displaced population and the total size of the country helped thwart attacks on camps**.

Figure 1: Attacks on Camps and Force Deployment in Sierra Leone



Prior to the introduction of ONUB force in Burundi (Figure 2), attacks on camps fluctuated over a ten year period. In 2003, prior to the introduction of peacekeeping forces in Burundi, there were a total of 34 attacks on camps, the peak being in 1999 when 13 camps were attacked. Reduced incidences of violence were reported in 2003 and 2004 despite the amount of peacekeepers. Nonetheless, the trend was downward and by 2005,

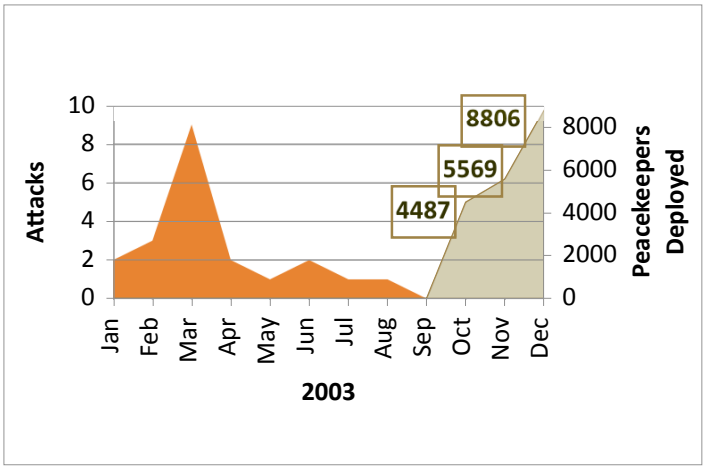
Figure 2: Attacks on Camps and Deployment in Burundi



3.United Nations (20 Dec 2006). UN Mission in Burundi Completes Peacekeeping Mandate. PKO/157. See: www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/pko157.doc.htm.
4. One such report indicates that as many as 100 persons were killed and another 300 were wounded in just a 5 day period in July of 2003. See "Liberia: More than 100 Killed in Monrovia Fighting." UN Office for Coordination of Human Affairs. July 22, 2003. Available: http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=45085.

following ONUB's deployment, all attacks on camps ceased. Figure 2 substantiates the claim that the deployment of ONUB was strategically key in reinforcing and sustaining a decline in the cycle of violence. As in Sierra Leone, the size of the ONUB force was large enough in proportion to the number of IDPs (32.07 displaced persons/peacekeeper) and the geographic size of the country (4.99 square kilometers/peacekeeper) to help consolidate security gains in Burundi. That force remained in Burundi after the violence subsided and was instrumental in guiding Burundi through the delicate process of societal reconstruction (3).

Figure 3: Attacks on Camps and Force Deployment in Liberia in 2003



UNOMIL, the original peacekeeping mission in Liberia, helped to negotiate peace between the warring factions in the first civil war that lasted from 1989 to 1996. By 1999, the fighting had again ensued without the presence of such a force. Attacks on camps and violence against civilians progressed unchecked in Liberia from 1997-2003. As Figure 3 illustrates, in the first five months of 2003, there was a significant number of attacks against camps (4). By September, however, attacks on camps ceased. Thus, while large in proportion to the number of IDPs and size of the country, the introduction of UNMIL in October 2003 did not have an effect on reducing the attacks on camps and preventing civilian casualties. While UNMIL may have attributed to Liberia's rebuilding process, there is no clear evidence that it prevented attacks on camps and saved civilian lives (5).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains one of the few examples where peacekeepers were introduced in the relatively early phase of a conflict. However, as recent reports indicate, the MONUC mission has been unable to contain violence. Across the course of the conflict, attacks on camps have fluctuated regardless of the number of peacekeepers deployed within the country. Rather than a failure in timing, the mission's failure may be due to the force's density with regard to the country's geographic size and the number of displaced persons it needs to protect (see Brief 08-01). The peacekeeper per kilometer ratio in the DRC is 123.13 square kilometers per peacekeeper. By contrast, in Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Liberia, square kilometer per peacekeeper ratio is 5.38, 4.98, and 6.04 square kilometers per peacekeeper respectively. Additionally, the ratio of displaced persons compared to peacekeepers deployed in the DRC is far higher than those at the heights of the other conflicts discussed. There are currently 88.97 displaced persons per peacekeeper in the DRC compared to 5.07 in Sierra Leone in 2003, 32.07 in Burundi in 2005, and 35.45 in Liberia in 2005. As was discussed in Brief 08-01 (6), simply introducing a force in the early phase of a conflict does not necessarily prevent attacks on camps

5. Though beyond the scope of this policy brief and necessitating further research, given the examples addressed by Ford Institute researchers, peacekeeping operations may serve some utility in post-conflict rehabilitation and societal reconstruction if they are deployed during the latter phase of a conflict in sufficient numbers.
6. See the First Policy Brief in this series: "Does Deployment Matter? Examining the Conditions under which Peacekeeping Missions Effectively Protect Displaced Persons" September 2008.

The Principal Investigator for this Project is Professor Simon Reich who can be contacted at reichs@pitt.edu.

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and protect civilians unless other conditions such as the geographic size of a country and the ratio of the force in relation to the size of the displaced population are addressed.

Given these examples, the preliminary findings of this Ford Institute brief suggest that:

1. The timing of a peacekeeping mission may prove critical. Ideally, peacekeepers should be introduced early in a conflict in order to prevent attacks on camps and violence against displaced persons.
2. Early intervention is relevant only if the mission is deployed under a Chapter 7 Mandate permitting the use of force and if the density of the force in proportion to the geographic size of the country and the ratio of the number of peacekeepers to the number of displaced persons and are both appropriate.

The next policy brief published in this series will address the composition of a peacekeeping force and how this relates to that force's effectiveness, regardless of when it is deployed.

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