The Future of Peace Support Operations: Strategic Peacekeeping and Success

CHRISTOPHER DANDEKER AND JAMES GOW

The character of peacekeeping operations changed in the first half of the 1990s, and with that change became more controversial.\textsuperscript{1} Describing how peacekeeping changed is, perhaps, a part of the dispute. Yet there is wide agreement that, in recent years, military operations in support of peace increased in number, size, scope, and complexity.

Following the end of the Cold War, the number of actors involved in peacekeeping increased. Besides the United Nations (UN), the global organization concerned with international peace and security, regional organizations such as ECOWAS (the Economic Organization of West African States) and NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), also provided military elements for peacekeeping operations. So too did a

CHRISTOPHER DANDEKER, B.Sc., (Soc) Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of War Studies, King’s College, London, and co-founder of the British Military Studies Group (BMSG) that is affiliated with the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. His research focuses on sociological issues in civil-military relations, both historical and contemporary. His publications include \textit{The Structure of Social Theory, Surveillance, Power and Modernity}, and numerous articles on military sociology focusing on recent changes in the military establishment of industrial societies, including the employment of women, the role of reserve forces, and the emergence of “flexible forces.” His latest book as an editor, \textit{Nationalism and Violence}, will be published in 1997.

JAMES GOW is Lecturer in War Studies at King’s College London and a research associate in the Centre for Defence Studies, University of London. He is author of \textit{Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis} (1992) and \textit{Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War} (1997). He has written extensively on military, military-political, and diplomatic issues relating to the former Yugoslavia, as well as on questions of international order and of civil-military relations and security policy in Central and Eastern Europe. In August 1994, he became expert advisor to the Office of the Prosecutor at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. \textit{Address for correspondence}: Department of War Studies, King’s College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS

number of countries, notably the United States, which in the course of this half decade committed itself to international peacekeeping in previously unthinkable ways, including the acceptance of UN command in Macedonia and its role in peace enforcement operations, outside of UN command, in Somalia and Haiti.

Not surprisingly, the number of operations increased as well. Between 1988 and 1996, seventeen new UN peacekeeping operations were conducted, employing 70,000 personnel. That is more than the number of UN operations in the preceding four decades, and it does not count operations conducted under other auspices. As for costs, between 1990 and 1994, these increased twofold to $3.3 billion. In sharp contrast with many expectations in the 1980s, about seventy percent of UN peacekeeping expenditure has been spent on operations within Europe—in Cyprus, Georgia, and the former Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{2}

Many of these operations displayed the characteristics of peacekeeping as it was traditionally conducted by the UN during the Cold War. Before deployment, there had to be an agreement to cease hostilities. Belligerents had to consent to the peacekeeping effort. And the peacekeeping force was to be impartial in its dealings with all parties to the conflict. Following the traditional UN model, these characteristics were essential for peacekeeping to be successful.

Nevertheless, many peacekeeping operations in the 1990s departed from tradition, leading some to refer to them as "second generation" peacekeeping operations. The size of the force deployed was much larger in these cases. The force was equipped to undertake forceful defense and the tasks it had to accomplish were more numerous and widespread than in traditional peacekeeping. Their operations seemed to have a wholly different character, although this was not understood conceptually at the outset. They were launched in situations where conflicts were not yet terminated at the time of an international deployment, and the concept of peacekeeping they followed was broadened to encompass new, more "muscular," or forceful forms of operation.

The wisdom of this evolution has been doubted. Those holding what might be termed a "traditionalist view" have argued against expanding the peacekeeping role. They have drawn a sharp contrast between traditional peacekeeping, as it has been done, for example, in Cyprus, and peace enforcement operations like Desert Storm. They sought a retreat from the overenthusiastic expansion of UN peacekeeping operations that were judged (in some cases more correctly than others) to have failed in such places as Somalia and Bosnia, and to have discredited the UN. They were particularly concerned about deploying peacekeeping troops in situations that
might require the use of force. They felt that significant use of force had no place in UN peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{3} To use a term coined by General Sir Michael Rose, the British commander of the UN force in Bosnia, operations of this kind, traditionalists argued, should not cross the "Mogadishu line." The reference, of course, is to the mistake the U.S. is supposed to have made in Somalia when it relied on force to try to capture Aidid and compromised its impartiality as a peacekeeper. Using force meant losing consent, an essential requirement for keeping peace.

Contrary to the traditionalist view, we argue here that one cannot simply rule out the need for complex multilateral military peace support operations because they do not fit the traditional peacekeeping (or peace enforcement) model. This is not to deny that it would be wise "to do less and better" in the future.\textsuperscript{4} And, obviously, a broadly consensual environment and a limited resort to enforcement measures are highly desirable. But we do hold that attempts to integrate enforcement measures into peace operations are not inherently contradictory, self-defeating, and lacking in any practical purpose.

Our task is to examine the nature of such peace support operations and to consider the conditions for their success. There are two crucial elements in our argument. First, peace support operations that mix consent and the use of force to achieve success differ from traditional peacekeeping missions at the strategic level. We use the term "strategic peacekeeping" to refer to operations in which an international force is inserted into a continuing conflict to assist in creating conditions for conflict termination, but without taking sides in the conflict. Second, success in strategic peacekeeping operations does not rest solely on either the consent of the conflicting parties or the use of force. It depends ultimately on a process of legitimation. Legitimation is required to maintain sufficient support (or a suitable absence of opposition) in the eyes of many different audiences, both in the host state and further afield. Needless to say, legitimation is difficult to achieve when consent is less developed than in traditional peacekeeping and a resort to force is more constrained than in peace enforcement operations.

Our argument involves three steps: First, we identify the circumstances that give rise to the type of operation under consideration. Second, we define strategic peacekeeping and distinguish it from its traditional cousin. Finally, we suggest a preliminary framework for understanding why the problem of legitimation must be solved for strategic peacekeeping to succeed.
Why Intervene? The Rationale of Strategic Peacekeeping

Any number of factors affect support for military peace support initiatives such as those recently undertaken in Bosnia, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, and Somalia. But the most salient perhaps have been humanitarian, strategic, and security considerations, usually all three mixed together. In every case, the decision to deploy such a peacekeeping force is made by the state (or international organizations) under external pressures that would both launch the action and also constrain the types and range of acts to be performed.

Conflicts, especially the intrastate and ethnic conflicts of the 1990s, seem often to create a humanitarian crisis in their wake. Public opinion and the media, especially real time global television, are likely to be mobilized demanding that states "do something" to mitigate the conflict. State leaders are not misled to suppose that they are free to do anything. The public is unlikely to support full-scale peace enforcement operations unless a clear threat to national interests can be unambiguously established. Nevertheless, a position of inaction is equally difficult to sustain, unless the public is encumbered by "compassion fatigue"—a distinct possibility but not yet encountered. And so, in recent years, when 'something must be done,' peacekeepers have been called on to do it.\(^5\)

Mounting peacekeeping initiatives involves strategic considerations also, not least because, with limited resources, some choices have to be made about which crises have priority. Take the example of the interventions in the former Yugoslavia. The key objectives were to contain the spread and intensity of the conflict, to encourage the conflicting parties to reach a settlement, and to mitigate the scale of the humanitarian disaster. Given the historical memories of the Second World War, brought into focus by "ethnic cleansing" and massacres, it was far more difficult than some care to admit for Western political elites to adopt a simple policy of 'let them fight it out.' In addition, a policy of inaction may well have called into serious question the legitimacy of Western security institutions, including NATO.

Nonetheless, it is always difficult for political elites of advanced industrial societies to argue that national security interests are at stake in strategic peacekeeping initiatives. It might be established, for example, that a country has a vital national interest in maintaining international peace and stability in connection with a specific region such as the Balkans because, for instance, of the risk persistent conflict poses for the economic and social security of the European Union. Even if proven, such an
interest is less palpable than a direct threat by some state to one’s own sovereign territory, as was the case in connection with the Cold War Soviet threat. But there is some evidence to suggest that the task is far from insuperable. Rather it is a case of recognizing that such missions have what has been referred to in another context as a “fragility of legitimacy”: the commitment to a mission, especially a willingness to suffer casualties over a lengthy period of time, is tenuous. The public can be open to persuasion by political elites on the price (in terms of materiel and human cost) that might be worth paying for a mission in which an immediate national interest is lacking and (or) obscure. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that when missions are explained clearly, the public can be persuaded to support them even when, as in some peace support missions, the task is clearly humanitarian relief rather than one related to immediate national interests. On such questions of security policy the critical point is that the evidence indicates that the public is more independent of elite and media manipulation and less fickle or irrational than some suppose.

When considering the sorts of reasons that might be adduced in support of strategic peacekeeping operations, it might be argued that these are best understood in ad hoc, case by case terms from which might emerge, as it were, a common law tradition to underpin the doctrine outlined in the concept of strategic peacekeeping. Yet there is reason to think that a more principled approach is a possibility, although thinking this issue through will depend upon an appreciation of particular cases. Our basis for a principled approach stems from reflecting on the recent experience of UNPROFOR.

The UNPROFOR operation was inspired by a mixture of motives: to contain the conflict, mitigate its effects, and produce a political settlement between the parties. In this case, we identify three political objectives for strategic peacekeeping that have general relevance for other ethnic conflicts characterizing the “hot peace” of the post-Cold War era.

First, the boundaries between one state and another should not be altered by force. This is the fundamental basis of international society, even if, as is the case in Africa, the boundaries owe more to the logic of colonialism than to indigenous political cultures and ethnic identities. This principle was central as the international community sought first to prevent the dissolution of Yugoslavia and again as the basis upon which the dissolution of that communist federation and its siblings in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia was accomplished.

Second, policies of ethnic cleansing and the formation of ethnic states are not acceptable to the international community. In the first place, they
contradict principles of civic citizenship under which different ethnic groups can coexist in one state because of a commitment to a shared political culture and a set of constitutional arrangements. Furthermore, even if one can establish ethnic states as acceptable in the lexicon of political morality, there remain pragmatic objections: the idea that unraveling multiethnic populations in order to establish a number of separate ethnically based states would produce a lasting peace in southeastern Europe is moot to say the least. Given the shift of populations associated with the globalization of economic relations that shows no sign of decelerating, such ethnic state solutions seem to us to be unrealistic.

Third, and, finally, the primary way in which ethnic groups can be persuaded to coexist in one political community rather than press for secession to form a separate state or to join another existing state (such as Bosnian Serbs and Croats are likely to do) is to reinforce an international regime that protects minority rights and questions the absolute sovereignty of states in their own internal affairs.

As indicated, there are powerful reasons of pragmatism and principle that shape international society and that determine engagement in the management of armed conflicts. Armed conflicts are unlikely to cease in the foreseeable future, and those reasons (both of pragmatism and principle) to act are sure to remain, as are the political and practical constraints that affect operations. Therefore, there is a reasonable probability that the ‘Ostrich’ option favored by those we have dubbed traditionalists will not be tenable. At some stage, circumstances, as in the case of Bosnia, will force policymakers to drag their heads from the sand and address a problem that they will judge requires attention, but does not justify a resort to war.

The Spectrum of Peace Support Operations: Traditional and Strategic Peacekeeping

The UN Charter provides the Security Council with two different mechanisms for dealing with conflicts. The first of these, in Chapter VI, relates to the pacific settlement of disputes through diplomacy and with the consent of the parties concerned. In contrast, Chapter VII provides for enforcement measures. These include both military and nonmilitary mechanisms, such as economic sanctions, by which parties might be compelled to comply with the demands of the UN Security Council if that body judges that there is a threat to international peace and security. Traditional peacekeeping activity, although not identified in the UN Charter, is
regarded as an aspect of the pacific settlement of disputes under Chapter VI.

Peacekeeping activities are a form of peace support operations. Such operations are military activities designed to support diplomatic efforts at peacemaking: to generate a settlement between conflicting parties. They encompass a spectrum ranging from UN observation missions through what can be termed "classic peacekeeping" to peace enforcement. This spectrum may be briefly characterized as follows.

Observation missions involve small groups of military personnel in the monitoring of an already existing political settlement between belligerent parties. The personnel are only lightly armed, if at all; are present only with the consent of the parties, and have no enforcement powers. In terms of the use of force, their role is entirely passive.

Traditional or classic peacekeeping missions also require the consent of the parties but involve more substantial military units (usually infantry battalions) in order to play, for example, an interpositional role between parties who have, again, already reached a political settlement. The force available to the peacekeepers is defensive and passive. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, enforcement or collective security operations, such as in the Korean and Gulf wars, involve the active use of force to compel a recalcitrant state to conform with UN resolutions.\(^{14}\)

The forms of peacekeeping that combine coercive and noncoercive measures occupy the middle ground in that spectrum. As we shall see presently, it is the site of strategic peacekeeping. The traditionalist view is hostile to any extension of peacekeeping into this middle ground, especially in connection with the issue of enforcement.\(^{15}\)

Classic UN peacekeeping evolved under the label of "Chapter Six-and-a-Half" largely because of the constraints of the Cold War. While peacekeeping could be construed as being based on Chapter VI and the idea of consent and noncoercive mechanisms for resolving disputes, the use of military personnel and the possibility of the use of force, although in self-defense rather than as coercive enforcement, suggested the relevance of Chapter VII. However, as Eide has argued, any attempt to ground peacekeeping in Chapter VII, with its resonance of enforcement, "would have been flawed. It would have triggered a Soviet veto."\(^{16}\) That said, as Cold War peacekeeping operations were fairly modest in scale and ambition, it was not difficult for them to gain the assent of the superpowers and their client states.\(^{17}\)

The underlying concept of UN classic peacekeeping was developed through the experience of peacekeeping in the Middle East—in the Sinai and Golan in the 1950s and in Cyprus since the 1960s. The concept is
based on the following combination of features. The first of these is the consent and cooperation of conflicting parties to the presence of neutral, third party military contingents under UN command. Second, these forces act in an impartial manner; they are not on the side of any of the conflicting parties. Third, UN peacekeepers are tasked to monitor agreements that have already been reached by the conflicting parties, such as ceasefires. Fourth, as a result of their work, peacekeepers contribute to the creation of a climate in which a lasting settlement between the parties can emerge. Fifth, troops involved in such operations are drawn from a variety of countries but preferably not those that, by virtue of their position in the UN (e.g., as Security Council members), have particular interests in the outcome of UN peacekeeping operations, or are regional powers in the area in which such an operation is to be conducted. Finally, the peacekeeping troops themselves are only lightly armed, largely for self-defense, in order to play their neutral role in deterring through their presence, rather than their use of offensive capacity, any resumption of hostilities.

The post-Cold War context led to a more adventurous (some would say too adventurous) approach to peacekeeping, as the termination of the superpower confrontation facilitated a new UN activism with its operations in Cambodia, Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, and, of course, in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

In general terms, more muscular forms of peacekeeping focused on a wider and more ambitious range of tasks than hitherto, including the separation, disarming, and attempted restoration of peace between conflicting parties, the protection of safe havens and the rebuilding of failed states, and military-assisted delivery of humanitarian aid. It was in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in particular that the boundaries of peacekeeping were extended significantly, not least through "an odd succession of Chapter VI and Chapter VII resolutions." As will be argued below, it is in this context that strategic peacekeeping, or what Tharoor has termed conflict mitigation, has evolved. While extremely useful, this concept does not address the vital distinguishing mark between traditional peacekeeping and more radical ones.

The principal difference between traditional and strategic peacekeeping lies at the strategic level. In the former, the parties have decided to settle a dispute and desire to use the UN as an international service in order to assist this process. In this case, the peacekeepers are following a strategic agenda defined by the parties to the conflict. In the latter, other powers in international society, operating through the UN regional arrangements, and normally under resolutions of the UN Security Council,
take the initiative in providing a force designed to limit the effects of a conflict and assisting in creating the conditions for its termination. In this case, peacekeepers are intended to alter the strategic environment as international actors take some strategic initiative.

One corollary of this is that strategic peacekeeping operations are more likely to involve globally or regionally powerful states with an interest in stability in the area of the conflict, as, for example, in the case of the participation of France and the UK regarding Bosnia, and the U.S. regarding Macedonia (and Bosnia, later, as well). Although it would be foolish to regard strategic peacekeeping alone as a panacea for the intractable problems of intercommunal conflicts and the risks they pose to international peace and security, it is likely these states will find it hard to do without a peacekeeping option at the strategic level.

This is reflected in discussion emerging in the summer of 1996 on the possibility of the UN’s mounting peace restoration operations. These would be based on the authority of the UN rather than the consent of the conflicting parties; they would have limited objectives but would involve the impartial enforcement of the objectives even against opposition from one or more of the belligerents. The operations would be neither too large nor too complex—no greater, say, than the French Operation Turquoise in Rwanda. Their purpose would be to prevent a conflict from escalating into a major regional security problem or a humanitarian disaster, thus leading to public pressures to mount an operation that would likely be more difficult, costly, and risky than a more modest, preemptive operation.²⁴

However, while the term peace restoration is a welcome addition to the lexicon of peace operations and implicitly recognizes the salience of the strategic level, it remains limited. The concept of strategic peacekeeping may be applied more broadly to operations that, aside from their strategic aspect, share the following cluster of features. First, although they depend upon a degree of consent from the conflicting parties, the level of such consent will be less than that to be expected in traditional peacekeeping. Indeed, the legitimacy of the instigation of the mission derives more from the authority of the UN and Security Council resolutions and less from the consent of the conflicting parties.

Second, in contrast to both an enforcement operation²⁵ where there is a sharply defined political objective or end state to be achieved, and a traditional peacekeeping operation, where a political settlement has already been reached, here the situation is both more fluid and opaque. The aim of the operation is to “hold the ring,” dampen the conflict and its negative humanitarian effects, while work at the diplomatic and political
levels seeks to establish a momentum from which a settlement can be reached among the conflicting parties.  

A third feature of a strategic peacekeeping operation is that it will involve a mixture of coercive and noncoercive actions. In support of diplomatic and political efforts to generate a settlement to the conflict, peacekeepers might be involved, for example, not only in humanitarian aid activities, or in the guarding of weapons that have been given up by the parties, but also in more coercive action against those who have broken agreements or as a spur to their movement towards settling the dispute.

A fourth component of strategic peacekeeping is the need for peacekeeping troops to be able to provide a response greater than that required for self-defense, although less than that required for a full enforcement operation. This will be reflected in the numbers of personnel employed and the capabilities of their equipment. The heightened tempo of violence to be found in a strategic peacekeeping operation (more volatile than that to be found in traditional peacekeeping) stems from the fact that the conflicting parties have not reached a settlement or that the parties themselves are too fractured for any settlements to operate effectively. These features are likely to be especially pronounced in intrastate conflicts.

Fifth, these operations will be complex and multifunctional in character, requiring the military to cooperate with a variety of other professional and organizational bodies—political agencies, NGOs, the media, and, of course, the contingents of other contributing countries. The media in particular provide a glare of publicity in which the successes and flaws of such operations are exposed. Whether leading or led by public opinion, the media can complicate the security policymaking process by placing pressure upon political elites to mount operations to exercise caution in connection with the use of coercion in the course of operations, as well as to withdraw from them if the casualties among peacekeepers appear to be unacceptable.

Sixth, and finally, due to the functional complexity of the operation and the need to finely tune the competing demands upon it—for example, containing the intensity and spatial extent of the conflict; maintaining delivery of humanitarian aid; maintaining cooperation from the parties, using coercion to deal with those who persist in breaking agreements, and/or in order to provide incentives for them to move towards a settlement of the dispute—the pressures upon the force commander will be immense and heighten the need for the operational autonomy of that commander to be respected. This can be expected to produce strains in
civil-military relations if the commander is drawn from a democratic society in which the image of the military professional is that of the apolitical technician.

The range of characteristics identified indicate that a mission of this type could never be simple and straightforward, however necessary it might be. This set of features also points to the burdens inherent in such operations, including that of mixing coercive and noncoercive measures and the possibility that this will lead to a contradictory and self-defeating approach to peacekeeping, at least if situations are not well-judged. The purpose of our final section is to outline the importance of legitimation in reconciling the inherent burdens of strategic peacekeeping operations. This is essential to any process seeking to understand those principles, if any, that should underpin such operations.

**Legitimation and the Concept of Strategic Peacekeeping**

For the peacekeepers involved, the key problem in strategic peacekeeping is to ensure that they build successful working relationships with the wide variety of different groups and agencies involved in such multifunctional and volatile operations: for example, with their own government and civilian society; with the UN; with other regional security organizations such as NATO that might be involved in the operation; with partner military contributors; with NGOs and the media involved in providing resources to and monitoring the performance of the operation; and with local authorities, political organizations, and the civilian groups in the area of deployment. Thus, where some commentators have argued that the integration of coercive and noncoercive means in peacekeeping should only be undertaken on the basis of the consent of the conflicting parties,⁴⁹ we argue that the key imperative for a strategic peacekeeping operations is legitimation.

Legitimacy should not be equated with legality. Rather, it connotes three quite different meanings. The first of these concerns the legal principles and normative values that justify or underpin an action, both those that are claimed to be and those that are perceived to be guiding it. Clearly, the legal basis of a strategic peacekeeping action is potentially more fragile than a classic peacekeeping activity because it is based on a less robust environment of consent and the initiative stems more from international powers than from the conflicting parties themselves. It is, therefore, critical that the action not be perceived as the unwarranted intervention of major powers into the sovereign affairs of another state. It
must be rooted in the UN’s authority as an impartial agency and regular Security Council resolutions; peacekeeping actions must be conducted within specific UN mandates; and the UN must retain control of operations, although this last point has given rise to major controversy.30

By referring to legal principles and normative values, attention can be drawn not only to the legal mandates governing a strategic peacekeeping operation but also to the body of custom and precedent that is built up in its evolution. As UNPROFOR has illustrated, the more room for interpretation in mandates—and the sets of additional rules set up by those authorized to enforce them (such as rules of engagement established by countries with different military and political cultures contributing peacekeepers to an operation)—the more important will be such a body of custom and precedent.31

Problems will arise if there is a wide gap between what the mandates authorize and what is practicable given the conditions on the ground and the means provided (political will, people, and equipment) to the peacekeepers.32 Further difficulties are caused if there is a perceived inconsistency or lack of clarity in the goals underlying the mandates of the operation. Yet, to some extent, these latter problems are inherent in strategic peacekeeping operations because, as we indicated earlier, the political logic being served by military action is necessarily more obscure than would be the case in a classic peacekeeping or enforcement action. Both sets of difficulties can compound one another, leading some audiences to judge the operation to be either ineffective, contradictory, or both. In turn, this can lead those responsible for the operation to attempt to use the media in order to remind the public that, for example, it is not the job of peacekeepers to mount an enforcement operation “against” one of the conflicting parties, or to remind critics that, contrary to some perceptions, the humanitarian achievements of an operation are far from being inconsequential.33

In interpreting mandates and managing the military/political interface of an operation whose political logic is dynamic and ongoing, the role of senior military personnel necessarily becomes more politicized. Given the complexity of the linkages between military, political, civil affairs, humanitarian, and other agencies on the ground, and the critical need for effective liaison with the political leadership of the belligerent parties, the political and diplomatic skill requirements of military commanders have increased greatly. These skills are required at both both vertical and horizontal points in the command, control, communications, and information systems if the various strands of the operation are to be pulled together effectively. Thus it is not unreasonable to suggest that any attempt to
confine the military commander on the ground to technical military matters fails to recognize the nature of the volatile environment in which the operation exists, and the blurring of skills boundary between military and other actors that environment produces. This, of course, is an extension of Janowitz’s pragmatic, constabulary concept, designed largely for dealing with the strategic consequences of nuclear weapons for those considering the use of force as an instrument of security policy during the Cold War.

The second element of legitimacy is performance. Here the issue is the extent to which those authorized to perform a strategic peacekeeping operation do so in a manner that is (and is perceived to be) competent. By competence, one refers to actions that are effective, or produce the desired results, rather than the technical meaning of being performed by a legally competent authority.

A history of effective performance can provide a reservoir of credibility, goodwill, and legitimacy that might withstand one serious failure while, in contrast, a serious failure might do terminal damage to an organization with a less impressive record. In strategic peacekeeping operations, it is vital that the criteria of success and failure are established clearly and that misperceptions about the objectives and mandates underpinning the operation are minimized. That said, as the experience of UNPROFOR confirmed, unless the political momentum towards a settlement of the conflict is maintained it is difficult to sustain the view that an operation is a success even if gains from the point of view of the delivery of humanitarian relief and containment of the spatial extension and intensity of the violence are not inconsiderable. Finally, success is important not only in legitimizing the operation in the eyes of different audiences but also to the peacekeepers themselves. If peacekeepers feel that an operation is not providing sufficient opportunities for professional achievement in which they have some control of events, their morale and commitment to the operation will be fragile.

The third element of legitimacy concerns the social support provided by various groups and institutions to those authorized to carry out a strategic peacekeeping operation. These will include not just the conflicting parties themselves, whose conflict the operation is seeking to mitigate, but also the wide variety of components characteristic of such multifunctional operations, which include the public of the various contributing nations. Here one is concerned with the degree to which such groups are attached to the sets of relationships provided by the operation: to their legal and normative underpinnings; to the performance of the peacekeepers and those who are politically responsible for them. As we argued
earlier, in sustaining support from various parties, it is critical that information about the nature and purpose of the operation is used effectively. In addition, it is vital that the operation is not perceived as some kind of de facto enforcement exercise in which one of the parties is to be coerced in order to accept the terms of another. Here the question of maintaining impartiality as a condition of maintaining the support of the different conflicting parties looms large; yet, as will be shown below in connection with the use of coercion, serious difficulties will arise if impartiality is confused with neutrality. Indeed, this has been the case in the UNPROFOR operation.

The essential point about this way of conceptualizing legitimation is that those involved in a strategic peacekeeping operation have to balance the competing demands of these three different elements and, in particular, manage the serious tensions that arise necessarily in operations of this kind. One way in which this balancing act can be illustrated concerns the use of force, what has been called "the challenge of coercion." Indeed, those who are skeptical about the value of strategic peacekeeping argue that the use of coercive force in order to assist diplomatic efforts to push the conflicting parties to a settlement ensures that peacekeeping drifts toward confusion and/or de facto enforcement when there are neither the political means nor will to sustain it. The specific examples of the use of force during the operations of UNPROFOR concern the defense of "safe areas" and the prevention of ethnic cleansing during the period 1994–1995.

It became apparent that the social support for UNPROFOR emanating from Bosnian and Croat quarters was eroded by its failure to fully implement parts of its mandate, for example in connection with deterring Serbian attacks on the so-called safe areas. However, such deterrent activities risked damaging relationships with Serbian political authorities and the civilian population and, accordingly, became one element in any subsequent attempts to reach a settlement to the conflict. At the same time, such caution on the military front posed risks of producing negative reactions from sections of political elites in contributing countries who wished to see firm action. However, in addition, there were those who were concerned to ensure that military action remained not just within what was mandated but also what had been politically authorized or regarded as politically acceptable by, for example, political representatives of national governments, or NATO.

One way of reducing tensions arising from situations such as this, in which there is an apparent gap between what a mandate authorizes in terms of military actions and what is actually undertaken, is to alter the
mandate to, as it were, close the credibility gap, for example, for the UN to withdraw elements of the mandate authorizing the use of force to deter attacks on safe areas and to seek to rely on the consent and good will of the Serbian authorities. However, the risks involved in such an approach are profound: the withdrawal of support from the Bosnian government, and the perception of the Bosnian Serbs that UNPROFOR (and thus the UN) was simply a body from which one could easily extract an endless series of concessions.

In connection with the Serb bombing of Sarajevo in June 1995, a more robust use of force than that authorized by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi, in response to requests for NATO air support, would have been likely to lead to more positive consequences. Indeed, it was reported that Akashi had intimated to the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs that the NATO reaction force to be deployed in order to reinforce UNPROFOR would operate under the same rules of neutrality characteristic of earlier UNPROFOR actions.39

We contend that greater use of coercive force in that context would have had four significant consequences. First, it would have generated more compliance from the Bosnian Serbs, judging from past behavior, when a prudent and credible use or threat to use force had produced compliant behaviour. Second, it would have provided a firmer basis on which to retain Bosnian government support. Third, it would have undercut those who wished to promote a view of UNPROFOR and the UN as ineffective amongst the belligerent parties as well as in wider circles of public opinion. Fourth, it would have increased the morale and self-respect of UNPROFOR peacekeepers so critical, as we suggested earlier, in carrying through such difficult operations.40

Events showed that it was the force deployed by the NATO Rapid Reaction Force that pushed the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiations table, even though the force used was beyond that authorized by the UN mandate.41 This limited the use of force to the protection of UN peacekeepers rather than to the implementation of UN mandates such as that concerning the protection of safe areas or the prevention of ethnic cleansing. Such limits, according to Morillon (and the present writers), revealed a fundamental confusion between impartiality and neutrality and a failure to adapt the principles of classic peacekeeping to the realities of strategic peacekeeping. To be sure, UN policymakers in New York and Zagreb were fearful that, as in Somalia, with the extension of force beyond that of the self-protection of UN personnel, peacekeepers would lose their neutrality and become linked to one side in the conflict. However, this view of neutrality confines the peacekeeper to a humiliating role of pas-
sive observer. It fails to recognize that impartiality means the even-handed application of coercive force in pursuit of UN mandates; this might involve the application of force more to one side than another at a given point in time but only if that side is the one most in breach of the mandate on, say, the issue of ethnic cleansing or safe areas.

This discussion of the use of force and especially the distinction between neutrality and impartiality illustrates the importance of maintaining a balance among the elements of legitimation in a strategic peacekeeping operation. It stands in contrast to those who argue that peacekeeping operations in a volatile environment must be driven exclusively by consent, or the support of the belligerent parties. In strategic peacekeeping, the initiative lies with the intervening powers who are seeking to promote a settlement. The effectiveness of that intervention in terms of obtaining compliance from the conflicting parties, and respect for the peacekeepers, will depend upon their being able to use coercive or enforcement measures and not being tied exclusively to consent. The latter criterion, if regarded as sovereign, can, indeed, lead to a withdrawal of support and respect for the operation by the belligerent parties and wider public opinion. It can also create an embittered and humiliated force, in turn providing firm evidence for those who wish to argue that middle-ground operations in general and strategic peacekeeping in particular are misconceived and doomed to failure.

**Conclusion: The Future of Strategic Peacekeeping**

As the experience of UNPROFOR indicates, a more robust use of force could have produced more effective results without endangering the impartial status of the force. The Mogadishu line, therefore, may be a concept of limited usefulness. Thus, both the Mogadishu and what might be termed Akashi lines have to be avoided. Contrary to the judgment of many traditionalists, the integration of coercive and noncoercive measures in peacekeeping operations does not, of necessity, indicate a flawed concept destined to lead to failure. Rather, the use of enforcement measures in strategic peacekeeping operations and the need for broad consent should both be guided by the complex demands of legitimation. The concept of legitimation is vital to any intellectual or practical reconciling of the complexities and difficulties that occur in strategic peacekeeping.

Strategic peacekeeping serves diplomacy and cannot of itself guarantee success—the emergence of a lasting settlement between the parties. A strategic peacekeeping force is, perforce, normatively committed. The
objective is the impartial implementation of a mandate, not a value-free observation of a conflict and the use of force to protect the peacekeepers only. This may require the blending of various diplomatic and military instruments, including possible uses of force. Indeed, the use of force may be necessary to the momentum or success of an operation. Ultimately, however, the mission depends on diplomacy; without political momentum the operation cannot succeed.

Notes

AUTHORS' NOTE: This article draws from an ongoing research project on “The Problem of Military Legitimacy in Post Cold War UN Multilateral Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations,” supported by a grant from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Earlier versions were delivered to the Biennial Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Baltimore, 20–22 October, 1995, and as a public lecture to the Military Studies Institute, Texas A&M University, 21 March 1996. We are grateful to the following for their comments on earlier drafts: James Burk, James Higgs, John Hillen, and a number of military and other officials who consented to be interviewed for the project. We would also like to thank Francoise Marie Derome, who provided research assistance in connection with interviews conducted with French officials. Some of the ideas developed here are presented briefly in James Gow and Christopher Dandeker, “Peace Support Operations: The Problem of Legitimation,” The World Today 51 (8–9) (August/September 1995). See also J. Gow, “Strategic Peacekeeping: UNPROFOR and International Diplomatic Assertion,” in Peacekeeping in Europe, ed. Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Peacekeeping and Multinational Operations, Number 5, 1995, 75–94.


5. As Shashi Tharoor has acutely observed, and pace Edward C Luck, "(i)t has been suggested by some that . . . conflict-mitigation tasks involving the use of force are simply not peacekeeping and do not need to be reconciled with it. The problem is however, that the Security Council has given such tasks to peacekeepers, as part of an operation in which they have also been given tasks that require them to cooperate closely with all parties. To suggest that peacekeeping rules need not apply to peacekeeping tasks is somewhat sophistical if those tasks are allocated to peacekeepers in a peacekeeping operation whose very viability could be undermined by pursuit of peace enforcement methods." Shashi Tharoor, "The Role of the United Nations," 49 (Emphasis in original).


7. We are indebted to discussions with James Burk for this point. For related arguments in connection with UN operations in Somalia, see W. Clarke and J. Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," Foreign Affairs (March/April 1996), 70–85.

8. See C. Dandeker, "Review Essay: Public Opinion, The Media and the Gulf War Armed Forces & Society 22,2 (Winter 1995/6):297–302. As we mentioned earlier, however, the fact that some members of the political elite are concerned that the public is fickle does have an impact on their own behavior, e.g., in their sensitivity to the issue of casualties. This became apparent in interviews with government officials in connection with the operations of UNPROFOR in Bosnia.


10. For an argument that it would (not least because the prospects for building western-style civic nation-states are so limited) see T. Barber, "Learning the Bitter Lessons of Bosnia" The Independent, London, 21 March 1996, 17. Even assuming that the creation of ethnic states might work in the medium to long term, without a strategic peacekeeping operation in the shorter term, European Union countries like Germany would face an influx of refugees fleeing the conflict, leading to either a forcible border control operation (raising unpleasant images and memories of the Second World War) or a political controversy on the already sensitive issue of immigration. Even a best-case scenario of ethnic states would leave a disenchanted, even embittered, Muslim enclave consequent upon an ethnic partition of Bosnia and Hercegovina, with serious implications for the peace and stability of the European Union.

11. Such a view also underplays the extent to which the European Union can use economic and other mechanisms to persuade potentially ethnic states that their future prosperity will be damaged by such a strategy. That said, the current prospects for the
survival of Bosnia as an integrated multiethnic political community do not appear strong, and, we suggest, less strong than would have been the case with a more coherent application of the strategic peacekeeping concept. Some critics have argued that the implementation force (IFOR) in Bosnia did not adopt a robust approach to the use of force, continuing a key mistake of UNPROFOR. See, for example, the leader in the London *Times*, "Mission Possible. The Peace Effort in Bosnia Must be Given Every Chance." *The Times*, London, 3 April 1996, 17.


15. Hillen's work cited earlier provides a forceful statement against the line of argument pursued in this article. We, in turn, consider the traditionalist account overly restrictive.

16. Espen Barth Eide, *Peacekeeping in Europe*, 7. As John Hillen has argued, "UN Security Council recommendations under Chapter Six during the Cold War were not enforceable, while full-scale military intervention under Chapter Seven could never be agreed upon by the superpowers." See John Hillen III, UN "Collective Security Chapter Six and a Half," *Parameters, U.S. Army War College Quarterly* XXIV, No. 1 (Spring 1994), 27–38; 28.


18. As will be argued later, confusion over the meaning of the concepts of impartiality and neutrality has dogged recent operations of UNPROFOR and clarification of the issues involved is essential in order to produce a more workable concept of strategic peacekeeping for the future.


20. But, as John Hillen has noted, traditional peacekeeping is not risk free; significant casualties can be incurred; see "The United Nations and the Use of Force," 1995, 18–24.


also be emphasized that it is too simplistic to construe the post-Cold War era in terms of a shift from traditional to second-generation peacekeeping. Apart from the fact that some evidence of the latter could be found during the Cold War, today one can observe both kinds. For example, as Tharoor has noted in connection with events in Europe, traditional forms of peacekeeping have occurred with UNPROFOR in Croatia, Georgia, and Cyprus, and preventive deployment in Macedonia; the observation of non-UN forms of peacekeeping in Georgia; the provision of humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Hercegovina; and, finally, the attempt to mitigate the conflict in Bosnia and Hercegovina by UNPROFOR—what is termed here as strategic peacekeeping. See S. Tharoor, “The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping,” 44.


24. This argument draws on recent discussions with British and French officials in June 1996. We are grateful to the Centre for Defence Studies, King’s College London, for facilitating these discussions, which reflect the concept of strategic peacekeeping quite closely, with one important exception: peace restoration is conceived as a subtype of peace enforcement, whereas we contend that strategic peacekeeping is best considered as the concept that delineates the middle ground operations between classic peacekeeping and peace enforcement that mixes coercive and noncoercive measures: the ground where a good deal of future peacekeeping is likely to evolve notwithstanding the objections of the “traditionalists.”

25. In characterizing the middle ground between classic peacekeeping and peace enforcement, it should be noted that peace enforcement is not war; the latter state, while constrained by the laws of war is likely to be less constrained than UN enforcement operations such as Desert Storm. This point emerged in recent discussions with British army officers.


27. If armed forces are to prepare for more Bosnias than Desert Storms then this has serious implications for future purchases of military equipment as well as force design and doctrine. See M. Clarke, “British Defence Policy,” London Defence Studies, 30/31, 1996, 132.

28. There are complex issues here. The capacity of the media to lead opinion in peacekeeping or other military operations may well have been overstated, and the same can be said for the supposed irrationality of public opinion in giving or withholding its support for such operations. That said, judging from interview material derived from the UNPROFOR operation, it seems that political elites often perceive that the public is sensitive to casualties and emotionally unpredictable in their responses to events.


30. Not least because the U.S. is reluctant to place its forces under the command of any non-U.S. agencies, which would, according to some critics, be unconstitutional; and this is quite apart from the practical difficulties arising from UN and national government structures of command and control revealed by the experience of UNPROFOR. See, S Tharoor, "The Role of the United Nations," 50–52.

31. A senior French officer referred to the task of interpreting UN mandates in connection with UNPROFOR as rather like trying to make sense of the Koran. As to rules of engagement, it is well known that the British operated with far more restrictive ones than those used, for example, by the French.


33. These issues became very apparent during the tenure of General Sir Michael Rose as UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia. Information was provided in briefings in London and from UN Secretariat officials in New York.

34. Some officers involved in UNPROFOR felt this in connection with their relations with UN policy makers.


36. This point about political momentum was a constant theme in interview discussions between the authors and officials concerned with the UNPROFOR operation.


40. The theme of self-respect was particularly pronounced in interview discussions with French peacekeepers. General Phillipe Morillon put this position most persuasively and has now done so in public. See, for example, Ed Vulliamy, "Only Passivity is Dishonourable," *The Guardian*, London, 12 January 1996, 10.

41. See the comments by Morillon in Ed Vulliamy, "Only Passivity," 10.

42. We are indebted to James Burk for the analogy between the neutral peacekeeping force and value-free social science.