Establishment of Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Implications for United Nations Peace Operations

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Abstract

The UN Force Intervention Brigade conceived as the UN's first combat force fundamentally challenges the tenets of traditional peace operations. It is seen as the UN's best chance at ending the cycle of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).The eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been host to one of the longest, most complex, and brutal conflicts despite 21-year presence of the United Nations Mission in Congo. As many as a dozen foreign and local armed groups continue to threaten civilians in the region every year including former Rwandan Hutu genocidaires in the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Ugandan rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and local militia groups known as Mai-Mai. Though currently inactive due to on-going peace negotiations with the Congolese Government, the M23 rebel group has been of concern over the past year due to their strength and brutality. This paper examines the implications of the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade for United Nations Peace Operations. The Intervention Brigade is unique because of both its expansive mandate to take offensive action against illegal armed groups and its robust military capabilities.

Keywords: Conflict, Democratic Republic of Congo, Intervention Brigade, United Nations, Peacekeeping

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a nation located in Central Africa. It also borders the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan to the north; Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi in the east; Zambia and Angola to the south; the Atlantic Ocean to the west; and is separated from Tanzania by Lake Tanganyika in the east. In March 2013, the United Nations Security Council authorized its first combat mission through Resolution 2098 which established a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) as part of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). This composed of infantry battalions, Special Forces, and an artillery company. The Brigade carries out targeted offensive operations against armed groups that threaten civilians or undermine state authority (UN Security Council Resolution 2098 2013). After the Security Council authorized the FIB, UN Secretary General then, Ban Kin Moon described the brigade's enforcement capacity as the most appropriate response to the active conflict environment in which MONUSCO has been operating (UN News Centre, 2013).

It marked a radical departure from the United Nations non-interference and the non-use of force which were the core tenets of traditional peace operations. For their actions to be considered appropriate and legitimate, UN personnel had to demonstrate respect for the principles of neutrality and impartiality. They had to refrain from taking sides in the domestic affairs of host states. How was it possible for the UN to justify a combat mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)? There has been a change in UN practices. UN move towards combat operations in the DRC is part of a broad shift in practices around neutrality and impartiality. Historically, neutrality and impartiality were "general legitimating practices for UN peace operations in their day-to-day activities, UN personnel performed "specific" micro-practices that mobilized and helped reproduce these general practices.

The Force Intervention Brigade is unique because of its expansive mandate to take offensive action against illegal armed groups and its robust military capabilities. The Brigade's new role in the DRC makes the UN a party in the conflict which many member states fear taints the UN's neutrality with future consequences of peacekeeping operations worldwide. The Brigade deployed despite explicit opposition by the M23, and actively fought alongside the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) against the rebels until political negotiations began in September 2013. Those in favour of the Intervention Brigade argue that the brigade's deterrent effect combined with the forceful repulsion of rebel attacks may compel armed groups to the negotiating table and providing a secure environment for the broader peace Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As the first UN-authorized offensive combat force, the Brigade is not restricted to the traditional UN peacekeeping standard prohibiting the use of force except in situations that require self-defence of civilians. Therefore, brigade missions may more closely resemble counterinsurgency operations than peacekeeping operations. During an offensive in August 2013, for instance, Brigade members included South African snipers along with artillery and mortar teams. Unarmed drones were to be deployed at the end of 2013, a first for UN operations. By directly engaging in conflict, the UN will need to determine responsibility for prisoners of war and classification of brigade troops killed in action. Whereas attacking peacekeepers is typically a war crime under international humanitarian law, the UN notably did not use this terminology to describe the combat death of a brigade troop in August 2013, leaving this issue open to dispute. How the UN handles these questions could alter local perceptions of the UN. Instead of impartial peacekeepers, blue helmets may be perceived as combatants, and therefore legitimate targets, which will not only endanger the lives of MONUSCO troops but peacekeepers in 15 other ongoing missions around the world. As the UN becomes a party to the conflict, it could stimulate ethical questions relating to the protection of civilians. Collateral damage by the UN is almost assured and rebel groups are increasingly responding to international actions by retaliating against humanitarian actors and civilians. In the meantime, numerous concerns were voiced as to the potential side effects of this unprecedented move towards active peace enforcement in DRC and the concomitant transformation of aspects of MONUSCO into an active belligerent. Force Intervention Brigade remains exclusive as no previous UN deployment has been given the mandate and tools to proactively pursue armed groups. It has a specific mandate to "neutralise" and "disarm" rebel groups in the eastern DRC which pose a threat to the civilian populace.

The mandate to purse offensive action against armed actors which threaten civilians has never been given to any UN Peacekeeping detachment. It has been observed that nearly all UN peacekeeping missions over the years had mandates to protect civilians; none has had such free ranging authority to proactively confront armed groups. This paper examines the implications of the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for United Nations Peace Operations. First, it looks at new peacekeeping practices; secondly, it views the background of the

conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, thirdly it examines the provisions and functions of the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo and finally provides a conclusion.

New Peacekeeping Practice

The United Nations peace operations have changed since the end of the cold war. The number of peace operations has increased rapidly, as has the number of troops contributing countries and the number of personnel deployed. Between 1948 and 1988, the UN Security Council deployed a total of 13 peace operations. Between 1989 and 1994, the Council created 20 new missions. The Council launched 7 new missions in 1998 alone. At the end of 2011, the UN had 15 missions deployed concurrently with a total budget of almost US$8 billion. Collectively they involved almost 120,000 people (Fre'chette, 2012). In 1991 there were fewer than 15,000 troops, observers, and police serving in UN missions. In 1993, 73 countries participated in UN peace operations compared to 115 in 2012 (Perry and Smith, 2013). The number and scale of UN missions have increased considerably since 1991. The scope and character of these missions also changed. Their goals became more ambitious and the types of activities that were considered appropriate for UN personnel shifted dramatically.

During the cold war, peacekeeping practices were based on the background knowledge of a statist episteme. The intersubjective knowledge of that episteme reflected the norms of what Christian Reus-Smit calls the "equalitarian regime." Established after the Second World War, and enshrined in the UN Charter, equalitarian arrangements recognize the formal equality of states through commitments to territorial integrity and political independence (Reus-Smit, 2005). Equalitarian norms like non-interference constitute a statist where the procedural dimension of legitimacy is crucial. Within this episteme, UN missions derive their legitimacy from compliance with generally accepted principles of right process (Franck, 1990). This concern for procedure is supposed to prevent ideological clashes and maintain ordered coexistence among states (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006; Hurd, 2007; Aoi, 2011). The mandates and practices of traditional peacekeeping missions bring this background knowledge to life; they place a strong emphasis on neutrality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of host states. In practice, this meant that UN personnel were not supposed to take sides or promote particular mode of social and political organization, and they rarely authorized the use of force (United Nations Department of peacekeeping Operations, 2008). Instead, they generally served as unarmed observers, patrolling cease-fires and monitoring the activities of belligerent groups.

The 1990s marked a major turning point for UN peace operations. In 1992, Secretary-General of the UN Boutros Boutros-Ghali viewed that the end of the cold war provided states with a new opportunity to achieve "the great objectives of the [UN] Charter - a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights and of promoting…social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."(United Nations, 1992). These ambitious new goals helped drive the expansion and transformation of UN peace operations, making it possible to justify a wide range of new practices. Conventional accounts of how and why peacekeeping changed during the 1990s tend to emphasize rational adaptation. In this analysis, practices like robust peacekeeping, and other more intrusive types of intervention, are a logical response to humanitarian catastrophes like Srebrenica and Rwanda (Tardy, 2011). These events beget new practices because old practices failed. This practice has lost much of its appeal because inaction has become associated with indifference to human suffering (United Nations, 2000).

As Pierre Bourdieu notes, the way a practice is perceived depends a great deal on context. Practices are a product of habits, which is itself a product of history and past experience. In this case a peacekeeping practice, like passively observing attacks on civilians, becomes shocking and unacceptable because of changes in habits. Instead of assuming that new institutional practices are a

rational response to altered conditions, we must look at changes in the background knowledge that shapes people's ideas about what constitutes a problem, and what type of solution is reasonable and legitimate. Doing so will enrich our understanding of institutional change. When it comes to UN peace operations, it will also help us understand how the micro-practices of the statist episteme fell out of favour, and how new practices emerged.

The ideological rivalries of the cold war, and their repercussions in the Security Council were a driving force behind the UN's commitment to neutrality required in peace operations. They also shaped on-the-ground interpretations of what neutrality required in practice. The collapse of the Soviet Union, and the East-West cooperation that followed, changed the normative context in which decisions about peace operations were made. The UN underwent an "ideological reorientation." (Bourdieu, 1977). It became more open to the concept of "human security" and more willing to re-interpret norms around state sovereignty (Paris, 2004). A human security lens gives the individual rights precedence over the rights and norms like non-interference. This makes it possible to substantiate international intervention if a state is unable to protect its own citizens (Axworthy, 2001). Like other International Organizations, the UN also embraced liberal internationalism, a worldview that treats market democracy as the "surest foundation for peace, both within and between states." (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). It became a vocal proponent of political and economic liberalization, a move that would have been untenable during the cold war. These structural changes relaxed many of the normative constraints under which the UN had operated since its inception.

Brahimi Report argues that robust peacekeeping should be part of the UN toolkit for dealing with armed conflict. UN peacekeepers should, where necessary, be granted more robust mandates, and rules of engagement should not oblige peacekeepers to "cede the initiative to attackers;" instead, they should "allow ripostes sufficient to silence a source of deadly fire that is directed at United Nations troops or at the people they are charged to protect." Today, the UN treats robust peacekeeping as a specific practice that mobilizes the general practice of impartiality. The background knowledge of the human security episteme makes it possible to claim that robust peacekeeping involves the impartial application of an international consensus about human rights. According to the UN's principles and guidelines for peacekeepers, assertive military action is perfectly compatible with impartiality. They state that:

> United Nations peacekeepers should be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but not neutral in the execution of their mandate .The need for even-handedness towards the parties should not become an excuse for inaction in the face of behaviour that clearly works against the peace process. Just as a good referee is impartial, but will penalize infractions, so a peacekeeping operation should not condone actions by the parties that violate the undertakings of the peace process (Paris, 1997).

This explanation allows the UN to give explanation for practices, like exchanging fire with parties to a conflict, which were almost unthinkable during the cold war. This is significant because specific micro-practices can challenge and redefine general practices. Changes in specific practices can tell us a great deal about the instability of the general practices to which they are ascribed (United Nations Department of peacekeeping Operations, 2008). In this case, the UN's rationalization of new micro-practices points to an important shift in the longstanding general practice of impartiality. The episteme based on liberal internationalism also has important implications for how neutrality and impartiality are practiced. Its background knowledge underlies much of the UN's day-to-day peace building work and has enabled a degree of intrusion and prescription that constitutes a radical departure for peace operations. Instead of seeking short-term solutions, proponents of liberal internationalism try to address the root causes of conflict. When it comes to making judgments about legitimacy, this

episteme draws on three main criteria: shared values, effectiveness, and special expertise. In this view, liberal values are broadly shared and liberal institutions are inherently appealing.

According to Roland Paris, contemporary peace builders "act upon the belief that one model of domestic governance - liberal market democracy - is superior to all others (Paris, 2002). The promotion of liberal values is also considered legitimate because of their perceived effectiveness when it comes to building peace. Most contemporary peace building is premised on the belief that "democracy and a free economy encourage people to resolve and express their differences peacefully" (Hansen, 2011). In practice, this often produces a strong focus on formal institutions, and on strategies for rebuilding and strengthening state authority (Newman, 2009). The liberal episteme also treats specialised knowledge as a source of legitimacy. Experts have come to play an integral role in the planning and implementation of UN peace operations (Newman, 2009). For proponents, these solutions derive legitimacy from their basis in technical knowledge that commands a broad consensus among experts. When liberal values are taken for granted and effectiveness is a priority, it seems logical to treat expert knowledge as another source of legitimacy. Critics of liberal peace building believe it is fundamentally incompatible with neutrality and impartiality. They argue that peace building is "inevitably a norm guided activity, aspiring explicitly towards particular aims."(Barnett and Duvall, 2005). When UN staff members help to draft new constitutions, implement market-based economics, or organize elections in the DRC, they inevitably favour some groups and interests over others. Some UN actors seem to recognize this; references to neutrality and impartiality are completely absent from many documents and statements related to peace building (Schaefer, 2010) Some UN personnel readily admit that partiality is an integral part of effective peace building. Yet others insist that peace building can and should be impartial (Confidential Interview, 2014). This claim rests on a contentious underlying belief: the idea that an international consensus exists about the pacifying effects of liberal norms, values, and institutions. Some might argue that this assertion is, at best, disingenuous. Others might claim it is part of an effort to legitimate contentious new micro-practices by associating them with established general practices. Either way, it suggests that neutrality and impartiality, as general legitimating practices, are currently quite unstable.

Background To the Democratic Republic of Congo Conflict

The Conflict is concentrated on the eastern border of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The country's powerful neighbours Rwanda and Uganda have provided overt and tacit support for rebel groups and the region is over shadowed by spectres of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda including reprisals, counter-reprisals and deep ethnic divisions. This was compounded by land tenure disputes, large number of refugees and returnees from neighbouring countries and a struggle for the natural resources of the Congo (Autesserre, 2008). The conflict has been one of the bloodiest in the world since world war II an estimated 5.4 million people died from war related causes from 1998-2007(Coghlan etal 2007). The number of causalities is on the increase. The violence has not only been bloody. It has been brutal, characterized by sexual atrocities leading the UN to name the DRC the rape capital of the world (BBC, 2010). The combatants have shown a vicious disregard for established standards. They took to recruitment of child soldiers and employment of sexual violence used as tact of war. Attacks frequently result in high numbers of casualties and deliberately targeting the vulnerable and innocent.

The perpetrators of violence form constantly shifting and internecine alliances, merging in different locations only to fracture into new and rebranded groups as events dictate. The result is a current tally of more than two dozen rebel groups and numerous fiefdoms and dominions. These include the Movement du 23 mars(M23) emerged in April 2012 as the latest manifestation of a former group, the Congress national Pour la defense du people (CNDP), National Congress For the Defence

of the people (Stearns,2012). The complex operating environment spread across an area the size of Western Europe. The UN has repeatedly attempted to break what former UN secretary General Ban Ki Moon described as the cycles of violence in the country and protect civilians from attack (UNSC, 2013).

In December 2015 there were roughly 70 armed groups operating in the area intermittently fighting each other and the Congolese armed forces (Forces Armees de la Republique Democratique du Congo, or FARDC) are entagled in a constantly shifting web of alliances and animosities. These groups claim diverse motivations from protecting the interests of various ethnic groups (Stearns and Vogel, 2015). However these groups have been able to sustain their operations through the exploitation of the region's natural resources and the violent coercion of civilian populations. According to a 2015 report by the United Nations Environment Programme the protracted conflict cycle and insecurity in Eastern DRC appeared increasingly dominated by economic interests rather than predominantly political motivations (UNEP, 2015). This shift has led to an increase in abusive methods for acquiring resources including but not limited to the exploitation of extractive natural resources, taxation of businesses, market taxes, household taxes, checkpoints, border crossings and outright looting. Nearly every armed group uses a combination of small or all of these methods in exploiting communities around them.

Since the deployment of Peacekeepers to the Democratic Republic of Congo the mission is still struggling to find peace to keep in eastern DRC and rebel groups continue to attack the population. The mandate of MONUSCO is authorized under chapter VII of the UN charter to us all necessary means in protecting civilians (UNSC, 2012). The mission's failure and that of its predecessor, the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MOMUC in providing effective physical protection and to prevent and respond physical protection and to prevent and respond, effectively to large scale attacks on civilian demands a revised to threats facing the region.

Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Force Intervention Brigade is the first of its kind to be created within a UN peacekeeping mission. It is distinct from previous UN troop deployments because of both its comparatively offensive mandate and its advanced military capabilities. If successful, a new precedent could well be set. Indeed, hopes are high that the force could help redress the more fundamental failings of MONUSCO, and its predecessor MONUC. Established to monitor the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire designed to end the Second Congo War, the mission has gradually expanded with the re-emergence of conflict in the east (the result of the region's mineral wealth, porous borders, and tensions between former combatants). Yet despite its 17,000 troops, $1.4 billion yearly budget, and a mandate to support the Congolese army (FARDC) in its fight against non-state armed groups, such groups continue to proliferate. Changes in the UN's approach to dealing with conflict in the DRC are of interest to the public; however, they speak to broader trends in post–cold war peace operations.

UN Security Council resolution 2098 (2013), through which the Force Intervention Brigade was first authorized, stated that the Brigade should:

> "... In support of the authorities of the DRC, on the basis of information collation and analysis, and taking full account of the need to protect civilians and mitigate risk before, during and after any military operation, carry out targeted offensive operations through the Intervention Brigade... either unilaterally or jointly with the FARDC, in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner and in strict compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and with the human rights due diligence policy on UN-support to non-UN forces (HRDDP), to prevent the expansion of all armed groups, neutralize these

> groups, and to disarm them in order to contribute to the objective of reducing the threat posed by armed groups on state authority and civilian security in eastern DRC and to make space for stabilization activities."

For example, Mary Robinson, the then appointed UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, has described the force as "an important tool" in a "moment of renewed opportunity" for peace. Both the Kabila administration and opposition parties in Kinshasa expressed support for the Brigade. The deployment of the Brigade only made sense if we examine neutrality and impartiality having evolved as a general legitimating practice. Two major changes are worth noting, first as legitimating practices, neutrality and impartiality have faded to some extent. They exert less normative pull than they once did, and practitioners and policy makers have become more open to alternatives. Second, when neutrality and impartiality are involved, this often occurs because of their residual association with legitimacy. The willingness of the UN to initiate a plan like the FIB is in large part due to the strong political commitment of the neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes Region. The framework for peace security and cooperation for the DRC and the region was accepted by 11 countries in the Great Lakes Region in February 2013. This gave way for the UN to seriously consider the FIB (originally conceived by the international conference of the Great Lakes Region) as a strategy to break the pattern of violence in eastern DRC. Countries in the region recognize that instability in the region can adversely impact their own political and economic stability.

Significantly the substantially reduced regional patronage of the M23 was critical to the success of the FIB experiment. The willingness of all the relevant (international and regional) actors, particularly among the 5 special envoys to work in unison to ensure that the military strategy that is the FIB concretely supported the ongoing political frameworks and strategy for the DRC is particularly important as it ensured a high level of political cohesion that did not necessarily exist previously. The UN at times justifies new specific practices by claiming that they mobilize these longstanding general practices. UN's involvement in the DRC demonstrates this. The Security Council first deployed the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) in 1999. Its mandate was limited, and its specific practices were in line with the legitimacy requirements of the statist episteme.

However, the Security Council expanded its mandate and the mission's legitimacy was increasingly judged according to criteria like effectiveness and the promotion of shared values. A series of perceived failures led the Security Council to further expand the mission's range of tasks and provide troops with greater latitude around the use of force. The FIB is a logical outgrowth of this trend. The UN also justifies some of its controversial new micro-practices by claiming they reflect a commitment to neutrality and impartiality.

The first Congo War was between 1996-1997 which was known as African's First World War (Gerard, 2009). It was a civil war and International military conflict which took place in Democratic Republic of Congo with major spill over into Sudan and Uganda. The Conflict culminated in a foreign invasion that replaced the then Congo President Mobutu Sese Seko with Laurent Kabila. However after Kabila had replaced Mobutu in May 1997, It was observed that Rwanda and Uganda were determined to exert control over Kabila's government. President Laurent Kabila was distrustful of the power held by these two countries. On the other hand the Rwandan forces were afraid of the possibility of the Hutu militias hiding in the eastern region staging an attack on the Tutsi. In early August 1998, Kabila accused his Rwandan allies 'of plotting a coup against him and expelled them from his country. This has been said to be what triggered the Democratic Republic of Congo's second war. Some experts will prefer to view the two conflicts as one war (Filip, 2009).

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 1998 and 1999, there were 7 different countries involved in the conflict and a wide range of informal armed groups operating in the DRC. The countries involved were: Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, and the DRC (Human RightWatch, 1998&1999). After the Lusaka Peace Agreement was signed in 1999, the UN Security Council established MONUC (Human Right Watch, 2009). Resolution 1279 Requires the Secretary General with immediate effect to take the administrative steps necessary for the equipping of up to 500 United Nations Military observers with a view to facilitating future rapid United Nations deployments as authorized by the council.

This limited role reflects the background knowledge of the statist episteme. In order to be competent peacekeepers, UN personnel were supposed to serve as neutral third parties, staying at arm's length from the conflict. Hostilities continued, however and the Security Council later expanded the mission and strengthened its mandate. In July 2003, the Council expressed concern over grave human rights violation in the eastern DRC and increased the number of UN personnel to 10,800. It authorized MONUC to "take the necessary measures in the areas of deployment of its armed units and as it deems within its capabilities,", in order to protect UN personnel, ensure their security and freedom of movement, protect civilians and humanitarian workers, and contribute to the improvement of security conditions. This transition towards a more active role, both militarily and politically, demonstrates the growing influence of the normative beliefs associated with both human security and liberal internationalism.

Since the establishment of a transitional government in July 2003, widespread violence persisted in the eastern DRC throughout 2003 and 2004. In October 2004, the Security Council authorized the deployment of 5,900 additional troops bringing the total number to 16,431. In July 2006, with extensive help from the United Nations, the DRC held its first free elections and voters adopted Joseph Kabila as their President. MONUC remained on the ground after the elections to assist the new government with capacity building and a range of political, military and rule of law tasks. Although changes had been noticed in UN practices around neutrality and impartiality during this period, an important turning point came in 2008-2009. After years of instability and with a democratically elected leader in place, the Security Council decided that MONUC should support the Congolese Government's operations against the Force Democratique de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR) . The FDLR is an armed group that operates primarily in the eastern DRC. It is largely composed of members of the Rwandan government and army, as well as refugees, who fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. It also has some Congolese members (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1279 (1999).

The UN's willingness to have MONUC act against the FDLR was based on conviction that using force and taking sides is legitimate when the underlying goal is to protect civilians and support nascent liberal institutions. In July 2010, the Security Council renamed its mission in the DRC and once again altered its mandate. Resolution 1925 created the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and authorized it to use "all necessary means to carry out its mandate."

Resolution 1925 is similar to earlier resolutions in that it authorizes a complex, multidimensional peace operation. Yet it also places more emphasis on two core objectives: protecting civilians and strengthening the authority of the Congolese State. It also makes the link between these objectives explicit. The resolution calls for a "strong partnership" between the UN and the government of the DRC. The Security Council declared that two of MONUSCO's main goals should be consolidating state authority through the deployment of Congolese civil administration in areas freed from armed groups and rebuilding the country's security forces. This language suggests that liberal internationalism has surpassed the human security episteme in terms of impact on how the UN

views the mission in the DRC. In resolution 1925 the UN clearly identifies formal institutions, namely a strong Congolese state as the long-term solution to violence and instability. In fact, UN support for the Congolese national army does not necessarily enhance the physical security of civilians in the DRC (Amnesty International, 2010). Cooperation with the Congolese State sometimes comes at the expense of civilian protection. Many members of the Forces Armees de la Republique Democratique du Congo (FARDC) was responsible for looting and attacks against their fellow citizens. As Amnesty International has pointed, locals are often left wandering "whether the UN is there to protect civilians or to support abusive troops" (Amnesty International, 2010).

According to Severine Autessene, state building efforts in the DRC have range of perverse consequences. She argues that international support for the Congolese state has increased an authoritarian government's capacity to harm and oppress its own people (Autessenre, 2012). These critiques go to the heart of tensions between liberal internationalism and the human security episteme. This example suggests that liberal strategies for promoting long term stability are not always compatible short-term goals; like guaranteeing the safety of Congolese civilians. Notwithstanding its size and the strength of her mandate, MONUSCO had a series of experiences between 2010 and 2013 that practitioners, policy makers and locals deemed unacceptable. Repeated failures to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence led many people to question the mission's competence and credibility (Autessenre, 2012). Not too long after resolution 1925 was passed in July 2010, three armed groups carried out a series of mass rapes near Walikale Territory, North Kivu. More than 300 people were attacked over the course of 4 days. The UN did not intervene even though the attacks occurred within 30 kilometres of a base where 80 peacekeepers were stationed (Amnesty International, 2010).

One of the UN's most contentious setbacks came in November 2012 when an armed group called M23 overran Goma, a city of almost a million people, in a matter of days. Although authorized to use force against rebel groups to protect civilians, UN troops stood by while members of M23 took over the city (Plett, 2012). This reflects that the background knowledge of human security episteme has become deeply entrenched in a short period of time. In both situations described above, the practices of UN personnel were exactly as what "competent" peacekeepers would have done during the cold war. The backlash against those practices speaks to a profound shift in habit. The patterns of action by which UN personnel create and maintain legitimacy have changed rapidly and dramatically. For instance, in the Security Council debates that preceded the passage of resolution 2098, the Guatemala's permanent representative to the UN expressed concern that the FIB mandate contravened the basic principles of UN peace keeping. He argued that in peace operations, the UN's presence must be "perceived by all parties as one of an honest broker and not as a potential party to the conflict (Rosenthal, 2013)." People worry that the FIB's involvement in joint combat operations would politicize UN staff and put humanitarian workers at risk, especially those who depend on armed MONUSCO escorts (Plett, 2012).

It is unclear how the Brigade's departure from the principles of peacekeeping will ultimately impact future operations in the DRC and elsewhere. Potential host countries may bar the UN from deploying peacekeepers due to a fear of mission creep, side lining UN peace operations from exercising responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. If the Brigade succeeds in neutralizing and disarming armed groups, critics of traditional peacekeeping mandates may seize on this success as evidence of the inadequacy of previous commitments to deal with intractable conflicts. This carries a two-fold risk: it could reveal other ongoing Chapter VII UN peace operations as inadequate, while also increasing host country demands for similar combat configurations from an already resource-strapped UN.

Despite the risks the Brigade poses to UN peace operations and to local and international actors in the area, it could effect meaningful change in the eastern DRC. The responsibility to protect civilians provides the moral justification to push peace operations into this new frontier. Before the Security Council authorized the formation of the Force Intervention Brigade, MONUSCO was unable to sufficiently protect civilians. Rebel groups terrorized civilians and the rate of sexual and gender-based violence in the eastern DRC was one of the worst in the world. The appearance of MONUSCO as cohabiting with, rather than confronting, the rebels tarnished its reputation among the civilian population. The Brigade thus offers an opportunity to win back local support, as it is better equipped to protect civilians. It has already had a positive effect in Goma, where it repelled the M23 away from the city, the major population centre in the region, saving lives in the process.

The intervention brigade's mandate could also change the calculus for many of the armed groups and spoilers in the region in ways that MONUSCO could not. After military losses to the UN and FARDC forces in August 2013, the M23 has returned to the negotiating table with significantly less leverage than when it posed a direct threat to Goma. Facing military defeat, other armed groups in the DRC may choose to negotiate a settlement rather than risk losing everything in battle. The intervention brigade also challenge Rwanda's role in the conflict. Rwandan-supported rebels took to fighting a brigade composed of soldiers from regional powers including South Africa and Tanzania. Rwanda risks isolation and the loss of international prestige by backing these groups. The Brigade could therefore help remove the threat of local and regional spoilers, which would significantly improve the region's prospects for peace. The strategy of deploying a military force to offensively engage with the rebel groups in eastern DRC was conceived and agreed by African regional powers in the International Conference on the Great lakes Region (ICGLR) in July 2012. Regional heavy weights such as Uganda supported by South Africa sought to address what it saw as the twin failures of the government of the DRC and MONUSCO in clearing eastern Congo of rebel groups, some associated with residual conflicts in the region, such as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and National Union For the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Neighbour governments felt that this melting pot of insurgency presented a significant threat to regional stability (Nkala, 2012).

So far, the Force Intervention Brigade has been successful in its first goal, helping push the M23 to the negotiating table in September 2013. Although other armed groups continue to operate and the M23 could return to battle if negotiations fail, the most serious hostilities have ceased, allowing MONUSCO to amplify its work on security sector reform and developing the rule of law, among other UN-mandated activities. The UN, however, has been in a similar situation before: peacekeepers fighting rebels in the eastern DRC between 2005 and 2007 successfully reduced the potency of these groups. Military success did not translate into long-term peace, as the UN failed to consolidate its gains and properly address the conflict's underlying causes, including ethnic tensions, poor natural resource management, and interference by regional powers. In order to succeed, MONUSCO therefore needs to follow its military successes with a holistic strategy that centres on implementable capacity-building with a goal toward extending state authority in the eastern DRC.

Since the defeat of M23, the intervention brigade carried out offensives in tandem with the FARDC against the remaining rebel groups which continue to pose threat to civilians. The largest of these sequent-Intervention Brigade backed offensives have been directed against the Alliance Democratic Forces (ADF). The ADF is an Islamist group that originated in Western Uganda but has been operating in the Eastern DRC for decades They have carried out a string of horrific attacks against civilians (West,2015). They are held responsible for the kidnapping roughly 1,000 civilians over the last five years (Long, 2015). The intervention Brigade and FARDC begin offensive operations against the ADF in January of 2014 and by April the rebel group had been dislodged from its main base of operations

in Virunga National park (West,2015). The ADF Chief of Staff was killed in the fighting (Long, 2015). It targets the army but also combines forces with local militias, stirs up communal conflicts and perpetrates massacres of civilians often at night under opague circumstances (Congo Research Group, 2017). The UN's failure to tackle this problem has been a source of anger. Residents of Beni city set fire to attacks on civilians that claimed over a hundred lives since the start of a new army offensive in November 2019(AFP, 2019). The situation in the eastern DRC presented the Security Council with a knotty dilemma. Keeping MONUSCO is expensive and offers no clear path in resolving the problem of armed groups.

A number of council member's includingFrance, the UK and the US would like to see the FIB refocus on civilian protection tasks similar to the rest of the mission, perhaps acknowledging that an all out military strategy to defeat the ADF is unrealistic (UNSC,2019). South Africa is a lead contributor to the FIB and was a member of the Security Council 2019-2020 mention the challenge its personnel faced is a lack of good situational and signals intelligence in tracking groups such as the ADF (Carvalho, 2018). Pretoria brokered the political deal ending Congo's war in 2003 does not want FIB to lose its status as an offensive force with its own chain of command separate from that of MONUSCO headquarters. It was observed that the FIB is becoming a source of influence over Kinshasa especially with Tshisekedi administration which seems to focus more on relations with her neighbours including Rwanda, Tanzania, the other major FIB contributor (Reuters, 2019). However the Tshisekedi adminstration has indicated would support more joint operations between the FIB and the Congolese army. It will interest you that some army officers have links to armed groups could compromise such cooperation. `

Given that the mandate names specific rebel groups such as the LRA, M23 Movement, and ADF as targets, the implementation of the Force Intervention Brigade has called the UN's principle of neutrality into question. This has sparked criticism of the Force Intervention Brigade, which some believe undermines one of the fundamental values of UN peacekeeping (Peter, 2014). Some evidence also points to local civilian opposition to the presence of the Force Intervention Brigade. According to Teddy Muhindo Kataliko, president of the Civil Society in Beni Territory, "The population is very hostile to MONUSCO. Firstly because so many people are being killed, but even more so seeing all their arsenal, logistics and soldiers in the area" (Zahra,2016). This opposition stems from the civilian deaths caused by the Force Intervention Brigade, as well as the failure of the Brigade to eliminate most rebel groups despite long-term presence in the region.

Furthermore, scholars warn that the implementation of the Force Intervention Brigade under the larger MONUSCO mandate may be blurring the line between peace enforcement and peacekeeping (Lars, 2015). As a result, rebel groups may begin to target UN peacekeeping officials as well as humanitarian aid workers, even those who are not involved in the Force Intervention Brigade component of the MONUSCO mission. This may make it increasingly difficult for humanitarian aid to be distributed to civilians. The FIB will not be a panacea. Creating sustainable peace in the DRC is beyond FIB's mandate, but its strength is in its ability to create the space necessary for further UN Peace Support Operations (PSO) endeavours. While the conflict's complexities should temper expectations for a quick or simple solution to an enduring conflict, the presence of this new, and so far effective, UN force could finally put the DRC on a path to peace.

Conclusion

The Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was seen as a milestone in UN Peace Support Operations, one which may have important ramifications for how the world seeks to protect civilians in conflict areas. It challenges some of the core notions of the traditional model of UN peacekeeping operations. It introduces the possibility of using more robust peace enforcement strategies in the UN's efforts to

improve the security of civilian populations. Although FIB has succeeded in combating armed groups through a more offensive mandate and military capabilities, we should not be in haste especially when it has not reduced overall level of violence against civilians.

The FIB concept can only be applied in cases it is best suited for. The Brigade represents the future of peace support operation which was tested in the challenging theatre of the DRC. The war-weary populace of eastern DRC believe that the UN will bring lasting peace and security to their region. After almost 20 years of struggling to do so, the imperative is stronger than ever.

The addition of the Brigade created tactical challenges for the MONUSCO Force Commander who found himself having two tiers of troops under his command: the regular MONUSCO troops who are implicitly tasked with offensive operations and the Intervention Brigade that is explicitly tasked with them. This created division within the civilian, military, regular and Brigade elements of the mission. This posed a challenge to leadership in implementing a single mandate with different levels of force posture.

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