

# **Intelligence Assessment and Risk Analysis in United Nations crisis management. A necessity.**

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*'We are fully aware of your long-standing limitations in gathering information. The limitations are inherent in the very nature of the United Nations and therefore of any operation conducted by it.'*

*UN Secretary-General U Thant to the Commander of the UN Operation in the Congo (UNOC), Lt-Gen. Kebede Guebre, in a coded cable on 24 September 1962.*

*"Through error, misjudgment and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to save the people of Srebrenica from mass murder."* Kofi Annan

*At times today it was difficult to distinguish the fighters on this side of the bridge from those on the other side. They wore the same clothes, the same wigs. They carried the same weapons. (Fighters on this side have a penchant for spray-painting their guns.) Neither side seemed to have any purpose beyond defeating the enemy. All sides said they were tired of fighting. One soldier, wearing dirty soccer cleats, described how he came to this side of the bridge. Last February, he was captured by government forces and sent to fight. Then he was captured by rebels and sent to a training camp for three weeks and then sent to fight again. He said he found his former commander and had him executed'. New York Times on Liberia 2001*

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**What I bring to this table is extensive experience in the management of Peacekeeping Operations, including twice as SRSG and once as Deputy SRSG, and more than 25 years in the security and political risk business....**

**Just over a hundred years ago the modern United Kingdom Intelligence Services were born.**

*“In October of 1909, the Royal Navy’s intelligence chief, was tasked with finding a suitable candidate to head up the foreign section of a new agency to be called the Secret Service Bureau. The Admiral scrawled a short letter marked “Private” and had it delivered to a semi-retired naval commander living on a houseboat in the south of England.. “My dear Mansfield Cumming, You may perhaps like a new job. If so I have something good I can offer you and if you would like to come and see me on Thursday about noon I will tell you what it is.” Cumming had fought in operations against Malay pirates before seasickness saw him declared unfit for service at sea. Aged 50 when he received his friend’s letter, he accepted the offer and was the first head of what would become MI6, the British Secret Service.” Known in the Service as ‘C’, by the way, as have all subsequent Chiefs been known.....not ‘M’ as in the James Bond movies.*

**So, leaders in Government, in the Military, have long recognized the need for sound Intelligence assessments and they have put them to good use? What can we learn from that in a UN context?**

**The UN was set up not because keeping the peace, upholding human rights, easing poverty and taming terrorism was easy, but because it was hard.**

**In August 2010 154 women, girls and boys were raped by rebel forces in and around Luvungi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Many were said to have been gang-raped in their homes, in front of their families. Among them were four babies, aged one month, six months, a year and 18 months. United Nations peacekeepers were stationed barely 30 Kilometers away. After events of such horror, it is not unreasonable to wonder what they thought they were there for.**

**Little is simple in the chaos of the DRC, and the exact sequence of events leading to this startling inaction remains murky. Certainly, UN forces were aware that rebels from a Rwandan group known as the FDLR, and also from the Congolese Mai Mai militia, were active in the area. At least two UN patrols are known to have passed through villages while these attacks were taking place, without subsequently reporting anything untoward. Officially, UN forces remained in the dark for a further two weeks.**

**Rape and violence are endemic in the DRC. Before this attack, 8,300 rapes were reported in eastern Congo in the previous year alone. Peacekeepers themselves have been accused of numerous outrages, including looting, rape, and complicity to mineral exploitation. The President has repeatedly demanded their withdrawal, claiming they have failed in their mandate. Yet his command of his own military has not suggested that he is remotely capable of keeping order either. The army in the DRC is often charged with behaving little better than some rebel groups, and the invasion of Luvungi itself is thought to have been the result of its local presence being suddenly removed.**

**The Secretary General, declared the rapes of Luvungi “an outrage” and sent two senior UN representatives to the country. The move was, of course, welcome. Yet the UN’s failure in the DRC is already glaring, and this atrocity is merely a symptom of that. It is not enough merely to provide blue berets. Tasks must be clearly defined and lines of communication must, at least, be competent.**

**The efficacy of the UN as a force for stability in the world is not a given. It must be earned, time and again.**

**When it fails at the delicate business of sanctions and international pressure, that is one thing. When it fails at even noticing the brutal rampages of a militia, despite having an armed force a mere 19 miles away, that is far worse. ( editorial. London Times. Sept 2010)**

**For many years the UN has been very shy about the use of the word Intelligence. People from different cultural and political environments have always reacted**

**unpredictably to the thought that the United Nations might possess its own Intelligence capability, just as they have always reacted, some might say entirely predictably, to the thought that the UN might possess a standing Military Force.....its own Army.**

**As a leading Swedish practitioner has said, a common view within the United Nations system has been that intelligence and an intelligence service are illegitimate elements in a UN context, even in field operations. An organisation like the UN has to be completely open and transparent, according to this view, and must not involve itself in any intelligence activities, which may hurt its relations with the local parties.**

**This attitude, sometimes summarised as ‘intelligence is a dirty word,’ is strange, considering that traditional peacekeeping, emphasising observations and reporting, actually consists mainly of surveillance. In today’s peacekeeping operations<sup>i</sup> this approach could very well jeopardise both the life of the peacekeepers and the success of an operation.**

**Although the paradigm of Cold War peacekeeping was the interposition of impartial forces with the consent of the belligerents where the requirement for intelligence on the belligerents was minimal, the UN mission in the Congo (ONUC, 1961-65) was a premonition of the intelligence needs of UN forces in the post-Cold War era. Major-General Carl von Horn of Sweden, ONUC's first commander, believed that the UN needed an "information gathering and processing agency", as the force was deployed into a situation that was escalating into a series of civil wars.**

**Secretary-General U Thant soberly assessed the situation faced by his force commander: "We are fully aware of your long standing limitations in gathering**

**information. The limitations are inherent in the very nature of United Nations and therefore of any operation conducted by it." As the UN became a target to all sides in the conflict, U Thant authorized the use of force to subdue the secessionist province of Katanga and several roving gangs of mercenaries.**

**In response to the intelligence requirement for this operation, a Military Information Branch (MIB) was created. Its mission was to conduct, gather and analyze SIGINT, IMINT and HUMINT. Initial MIB operation used SIGINT to listen in on Katangese radio traffic. As the conflict deepened, MIB eventually acquired the services of two Swedish photo-reconnaissance aircraft, which clarified the threat posed by the Kataganese Air Force. The failure of MIB's HUMINT capability was exposed in the ambushing of an Irish patrol, with serious losses, by Baluba tribesmen. ONUC continually was the focus of acrimonious debate about the role that the UN should play in internal conflicts, while the lessons learned by MIB staff were quickly forgotten.**

**The cornucopia of intra-state conflicts, similar to the Congo, which the UN has dealt with has spurred a re-evaluation of its system of collecting and analyzing information.**

**Another striking example from Cambodia shows that force commanders had no central organization in the UN from which they could request something as simple as reasonably detailed maps of the country. In the United Nations mission to Cambodia in 1992, one high ranking peacekeeper acerbically remarked that" they deployed us without maps . . . if you go into an area, it would be nice to know where you are . . . . I tried for two months to secure maps and finally, I had to go back down to Phnom Perth and man-handle a staff official and literally threaten his life so that I could get money to buy them on the black market."**

With the emerging of more complicated ‘peacekeeping’ missions like Bosnia or Rwanda the problem of poor intelligence gathering within the UN became even more acute.

The Deputy Force commander of UNPROFOR in Bosnia, Major-General Barry Ashton stated in his End of Tour Report:

*” Operations were frequently impaired by the lack of credible and dedicated intelligence means. While NATO information was often made available, the caveats placed on it made it awkward to use in a transparent international organization. As has been pointed out for other UN missions, operating in a complex and higher risk peacekeeping environment without adequate means of information limits the ability of UN forces to carry out their mandated tasks, impairs operational capabilities, and places UN personnel at greater risk.”*

The Force Commander for the United Nations Mission in Rwanda, Lt.-General Dallaire, already encountered these problems while preparing the mission deployment in New York: *“I had no means of intelligence on Rwanda. Not one country was willing to provide the UN or even me personally with accurate and up-to-date information”. We always seemed to be reacting to, rather than anticipating, what was going to happen. The reason for that was that the Rwandan ambassador to the UN had a seat on the Security Council and was not only privy to the inner workings of the mission but to the Security Council’s*



*attitude towards the mission...the extremists had a direct pipeline to the kind of strategic intelligence that allowed them to shadow my every move.”*

**UNPROFOR-Generals Briquemont and MacKenzie also complained about the problems of availability of intelligence during their time with UNPROFOR. And the Swedish Force Commander General Lars Eric Walhgren already advised the UN in New York in 1993 to “rethink the entire approach to information versus intelligence gathering”.**

**As a result of UNPROFOR’s inadequate intelligence about Srebrenica, the Dutch changed their attitude towards intelligence. They realized that not only was intelligence needed for future peace support operations, but as a force provider, the Netherlands was responsible for protecting its forces. Intelligence capability is now part of the deployed forces package. The Dutch learned the lesson the hard way, and now they now first hand how peacekeeping missions need full intelligence support.**

**In his book ‘The Cloak and the Blue Beret’ Walter Dorn draws the conclusion: “*Many failures in the history of UN field operations might have been avoided had the UN taken a more forthright approach to intelligence and possessed a stronger mandate to gather information and improve its information gathering system”.***

**The UNSCOM mission, which had to look for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, was in many ways an exception, also in the use of intelligence. It had its own SIGINT unit and encrypted communication lines; and received a lot of**

**intelligence from member states. At one point UN officials had to limit access for the weapon inspectors to CIA and allied intelligence agencies reports, because Iraq accused them of spying for the US.**

**The use of intelligence may be less critical to the success of some intervention strategies than others, but there is a general consensus that where military forces are deployed, the availability of intelligence may be critical to the effectiveness of the mission. But besides two exceptions, ONUC and UNSCOM, all field missions had to depend on intelligence from the member states (often the United States), which was of very diverse but usually insufficient quantity and quality.**

**Other lessons learned from peacekeeping include some old truths about signals intelligence, civil-military cooperation must be strengthened and a willingness to use and cultivate HUMINT proved essential. Constant rotating of personnel makes it difficult to maintain a trained and well-functioning intelligence**

**Let me emphasise that peacekeeping organisations (especially the UN) *as they exist today* cannot realistically maintain an advanced, comprehensive and combined intelligence service of their own at a strategic level. Thus, the focus here is on operational/tactical level intelligence and, to some extent, on the national strategic level.**

**The conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the UN operation there demonstrated that some countries do not hesitate to attach well-developed national intelligence assets, outside the UN's control, to their contributions to the UN. ( Both Generals Janvier and Rose had extensive nationally owned intelligence teams, including electronic intelligence at their service) These nations consider it absurd to send troops to a sensitive area without the capability to analyse the situation properly.**

They furthermore co-operate in unofficial ‘clubs,’ often founded on traditional alliances. ‘Membership’ is earned by proof of the ability to contribute useful information and capability for handling the information in a responsible way.

So let us not be afraid of the word ‘intelligence’. I agree with the excellent UN General Cammaert who said ‘intelligence is decision-support.

Everything else is information.

Without tailored decision-support at the strategic level he says, the mandate will not be correct. Without tailored decision-support at the operational level, the force structure and the timing of forces will not be correct. Finally, without decision-support at the tactical level, UN forces and the UN Mission will be at risk’. What is clear is that the principals of war remain the basic tenets of military planning and action –whether in a peace support or peace enforcement operation. First, you must have the right force, with the right equipment and training, at the right place and time in order to conduct operations. Then you have to apply those principles, within a doctrinal frame work and specific rules of engagement (ROE), to execute those operations.

In order to accomplish all of this in a peacekeeping environment, you need to plan correctly, based on the realities of the situation and allowing for possible escalation in the expected levels of conflict and destabilisation that may be encountered. Our goal should be early understanding, not just early warning. *We need to understand why certain things are happening, not just what is happening.*

We need, as well, a dynamic assessment/reassessment process, not a onetime event or static measurement. In particular in terms of gauging the likelihood of crimes and violations against the local population, the rates and direction of change in key indicators are critical. As Robert Luck said recently in New York, ‘We need a

**moving picture, not a snapshot. Crimes against local populations in such situations have multiple dimensions, so we cannot focus on a single factor or event.**

**But let us be clear: early warning is not an end in itself. Early warning without early and effective action would only serve to reinforce stereotypes of UN fecklessness, of its penchant for words over deeds. The Secretary-General's strategy should seek to overcome that prevalent perception.. alas all too often it does not.**

**Planning needs an accurate information base and specific intelligence products. It has, however, been the experience of many Heads of Mission and Force Commanders that the successful execution of operations and remaining within the decision cycle of belligerent, spoiler forces in a complex multidimensional peacekeeping environment, is inevitably problematic, as there is rarely adequate operational- and tactical-level intelligence available. The challenge of intelligence in peacekeeping is that these operations differ considerably from traditional military combat or 'kinetic' (awful word!) operations. Different mandates, special rules of engagement, belligerent 'rules of the game'– almost everything is unique, and this requires that the operational intelligence unit reorients and adjusts itself accordingly. It is important, in conducting peacekeeping intelligence analyses, to understand very clearly that traditional military indicators are not the primary signals that must be perceived and integrated. Unconventional combatants do not drive tanks, they drive 'technicals' – 4x4 pick-up trucks with machine guns crudely mounted in the back. The complex operational environment is unpredictable and asymmetric, and it is precisely in these situations that operations must be 'intelligence-driven' from the perspective of being initiated, guided by and based on accurate, relevant, real-time intelligence products.**

**From force generation down to the utilization of a section of infantry on the ground in a UN PSO, information is needed – accurate, current information, and specifically the analysed information product that we call ‘intelligence’. This is becoming more critical, due to the change from traditional PKOs to increasingly complex multidimensional, and robust PKOs in much more volatile circumstances.**

**While the need for accurate, current intelligence is apparent, there is even now a reluctance to classify and define intelligence in the UN structures clearly. The term ‘military information’ is still being used in many quarters, despite the fact that a mission needs political, humanitarian, socio-economic, security and other forms of intelligence, rather than the mere dispositions, capabilities and actions of militarised forces. NATO has begun to use the word KNOWLEDGE to stand for assessed information from open and covert sources.....maybe we can learn from this.**

**Progress has been made. Especially important has been the emerging concept, doctrine, and practical field implementation of the Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC) capabilities.**

**In an excellent paper on Haiti Walter Dorn says**

**‘ In the slums of Haiti, where pistol and machete wielding gangs dominated the populace through murder, intimidation, extortion, and terror, a UN peacekeeping mission managed to established law, order, and government control. The United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH) succeeded by 'taking on' the gangs in a series of military and police 'search and arrest' operations in 2006-07. The achievement was made possible by thorough 'intelligence preparation of the environment'. His paper tells the story of the 'intelligence-led' military-**

**police-civil operations and how they transformed the Haitian slum of Cite´ Soleil from a foreboding place inaccessible to police for years to one in which the UN workers could safely walk its streets.**

**The functions, structures, problems and challenges of the mission's intelligence capability are described, especially the work of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC). Human intelligence proved to be key, while technologies helped considerably. Within the United Nations, intelligence remains a controversial and sensitive matter but the Haiti mission provides a valuable model of how to gather and use actionable intelligence. ‘**

**Finally, a key lesson from the JMAC experience is that UN intelligence should no longer be considered an oxymoron. At the operational level, JMACs have demonstrated that the UN is capable of producing high-quality and relevant intelligence assessments when given the necessary mandate and human resources. Contrary to the criticisms often levelled at the UN, JMACs in the field have proved capable of protecting the confidentiality of such information against leaks to the host government, staff members’ national governments, and to the public at large. The JMAC experience could then pave the way for increased support on the part of member states for UN intelligence work overall, both at headquarters and in the field, in order to support the UN’s growing role in conflict prevention.**

**A second noteworthy finding is that based on interviews and surveys of JMAC staff, it appears that civil-military collaboration within JMAC works well. Staff do not report clashes between military and civilian work cultures. Based on interviews and surveys conducted in 2010, it appears that the JMAC model has largely proved its value over the course of its five-year existence,**

**even if implementation can still be optimized. JMACs have distinguished themselves especially in larger missions where information-sharing and -management can be a significant challenge. In some of these larger missions, JMACs have succeeded in positioning themselves as “antiestablishment units” within the larger mission, capable of challenging perceived notions or speaking uncomfortable truths. JMACs can also play a key role where self-interest may be affecting the reporting and analysis of other units.**

**The JMACs that are able to take on such a role are typically those that enjoy strong support from senior mission management and that obtain a significant proportion of their information from their own sources (as opposed to exclusively from UN military, police or civilian sources, or from media reports). Conversely, the added value of JMACs is less clear in smaller missions where information flows are easier because there is less information overall and because the smaller number of staff makes personal rapport easier.**

**.....And now some personal observations on the state of Peacekeeping in 2014, and where we should go from here.**

**Peacekeeping is a flagship-endeavour of the United Nations and represents the whole of the Organisation. Millions of people depend, every day, on UN peacekeepers.**

**Peacekeeping operations can only succeed in the right political context, with a readiness for peace on the ground, and a will to work for it in major capitals. No**

**matter how good are the plans developed in New York, or how persuasive a case the Department may make to the Security Council or to troop-contributors, any peace effort will be doomed to failure without these prerequisites.**

**A sensible measured assessment of the situation before committing the UN, and consistent high quality intelligence after deployment will go a long way to avoiding such a failure.....if the UN hierarchy and the legislative bodies allow it.**

**No sensible Government in the world and indeed no sensible multinational operates without the capability to provide its leadership with well informed balanced assessments upon which to make tactical and strategic decisions. The UN has not been good at this in the past. If it is to do better in the future it will not just need to develop systems but attract the best and the brightest, both military and civilian, to make those systems work. Intelligence can often be the difference between success and failure.**

**There have since I last spoke here been two significant \developments in the field of UN intelligence. The first is the use in the Eastern Congo of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles by the UN. Operated by a commercial company these drones, which are unarmed are it is said providing valuable intelligence, not only on the movement of hostile groups but also refugee flows and resource mapping.**

**Sweden's Riksdag decided on 12 June 2014 to approve the Government's proposal on Swedish participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The Swedish contribution to MINUSMA consists of an intelligence unit and a national support unit, and staff officers who are stationed with relevant staffs. The unit consists of around 250**



people on the ground. A small part of the unit initiated operations in Mali during the third quarter of 2014. The main component of the force, the intelligence unit, was deployed in MINUSMA's western sector in the fourth quarter of 2014 and achieved operational capacity in the first quarter of 2015. The aim of the Swedish operation is to contribute to fulfilling MINUSMA's mandate under Security Council Resolution 2100, thereby contributing to improved security in Mali, to the State being able to regain control throughout its territory, and to supporting resolutions to the crisis in the country that are sustainable in the long term.

The proposed Swedish contribution will help develop the capacity of UN missions to gather and process intelligence, which is expected to contribute to more effective implementation of the UN Security Council mandate, not least regarding protection of civilians and operational personnel.

And earlier this year, for the first time ever, a Swedish tactical unmanned aerial vehicle, a TUAV, lifted off under the UN flag in Africa. The aerial vehicle, the UAV 03 Örnén (Eagle), is one part of the Swedish Armed Forces capability for gathering information in support of the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSMA.

The Swedish operation operates alongside the French Serval force, which includes special forces regularly targeting armed groups in northern Mali.<sup>34</sup> With asymmetric threats including liberation movements, jihadists and organised crime, and a mandate to support the extension of state authority and stabilise the country, including the volatile northern region, the Swedish and Netherlands units are the first attempt to incorporate a large-scale intelligence capability in UN peacekeeping. The so called ASIFU is staffed by troops from the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway. The Netherlands has sent 380 troops to Mali, including 70 commandos tasked with collecting, processing and analysing intelligence,

**supported by four Dutch Apache attack helicopters. Norway has deployed about 15 intelligence analysts**

**Introducing new capabilities such as the ASIFU and conducting counterinsurgency operations in a UN context is likely to be controversial at best and clashes between military, development and humanitarian actors are likely to intensify. The UN Humanitarian Country Team stated its position on its relationship with armed actors early in 2013, when the preceding African Union mission, AFISMA, was deployed. The team expressed their strong disapproval of armed escorts and a relationship between humanitarian and military actors based on coexistence. However, the position of the UN Humanitarian Country Team has not been heeded and there are reports of armed escorts being furnished as the only option, as MINUSMA is not able to deploy sufficient troops to provide area security.<sup>39</sup>**

**Combating terrorist groups and stemming migration to Europe have motivated member states contribution of troops, and it is likely that they will try to use the Mission as a laboratory for including some of the lessons learned from network-centric warfare and counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan,.**

**Introducing these concepts to the UN will not be easy, and perhaps not even a wanted development. It will be essential to support this process by providing the new arrivals with a better understanding of the similarities and differences between NATO and UN missions, and the need to take a less combative stance in Mali.**

**I believe that one of the more possible scenarios for Mali is that the aggressive stance of the mission will be self-fulfilling, turning it from a peacekeeping to a counter-terrorism mission, leading to an escalating circle of violence with a high likelihood of civilians being targeted and killed. In this case it is doubtful if the**

**inclusion of Western troops will be of added value. On 16 May 2014 violent clashes between Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) and the MNLA, in connection with a visit to Gao by Prime Minister Moussa Mara, resulted in a number of government officials being killed as well as members of both MDSF and MNLA. Nineteen UN police officers were wounded in the incident. The escalating violence and tension could put the UN in an awkward position, as it is torn between its mandate to be an impartial mediator and the charge to help ‘extend and re-establish State administration throughout the country’.**

**The Western troop contributions to MINUSMA add important capabilities but also pose new challenges for the mission.**

**And by the way.....one of the main challenges with new equipment brought to Mali is the unwillingness to paint helicopters and planes white. The German C130 transport planes and the Apache and Chinook helicopters will continue to be in their combat colours, with a UN logo painted on top. The image is unsettling for many, include those inside the UN: the UN is ‘going green’, ie turning into a combat operation.**

**With all these capabilities the MINUSMA mission is becoming very robust, able to conduct counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations. But the robust posture may also have a self-fulfilling effect, drawing attention to the mission and increasing the chance of targeted attacks against the UN. Retaliatory attacks will most probably be targeted at the soft underbelly of the UN – the funds, programmes and agencies carrying out development and humanitarian work. We will really need to look at the whole question of this new Green Mission over the next few months and decide how to proceed.....**

**In ending let me quote from Heidi Tagliavini's extraordinary report on the Russo/Georgian conflict , published a couple of years ago:**

*Thus a series of mistakes, misperceptions and missed opportunities on all sides accumulated to a point where the danger of an explosion of violence became real. Unlike in the early 1990s, what was about to happen in August 2008 was no longer a localised conflict in a remote part of the world but a short, bitter armed confrontation between two states, fought in the battlefield but also on live television, and carrying major international implications.*

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the UN and others made costly mistakes because decision makers simply did not know enough to avoid them.**

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