

**OPSEC v. RTK:
Media Restrictions in United Nations Peacekeeping**

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Abstract

The United Nations currently adopts media policies for peacekeeping missions on an ad-hoc basis, often relying on US or NATO rules. Some have suggested that a standardized media policy for all peacekeeping missions should be the norm. This project examines that proposition with an eye to the tension between the right to know and operational security. Looking at UN intervention in the Gulf War, Somalia, and Rwanda, the problems with such a rigid media policy appear significant. Instead, a dual-level approach to media restrictions is advocated, allowing broad principles of independent coverage as well as flexible in-country negotiations to take place.

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Introduction

Throughout history, the government and the media have maintained a precarious balance between the government's desire for operational security and the media's demand for uncensored publication. This is especially true in the United States, where the friction between officials and the press began prior to American independence from Britain. Even before he became President, George Washington bitterly complained about published information that endangered the operations of the Continental Army. In 1777 he wrote, "it is much to be wished that Printers were most discreet in many of their Publications. We see almost every Paper, Proclamations or accounts transmitted by the Enemy, of injurious nature. If some hint or caution could be given them of the subject, it might be of material Service."¹ Indeed, many of the early American leaders had similar sentiments regarding what they considered to be excesses of the press, yet the First Amendment protected the freedom of the press, and officials were unable (and largely unwilling) to take measures to restrict the press.² For, as James Madison noted, freedom of the press is a mixed blessing.

This liberty is often carried to excess; that it has sometimes degenerated into licentiousness, is seen and lamented. But the remedy has not yet been discovered. Perhaps it is an evil inseparable from the good with which it is allied; perhaps it is a shoot which cannot be stripped from the stalk without wounding vitally the plant from which it is torn. However desirable those measures might be which might correct without enslaving the press, they have never yet been devised in America.³

¹ Cited in *Washington Post*, June 27, 1971.

² Haynes Johnson, "The Irreconcilable Conflict Between Press and Government: 'Whose Side Are You On?'" in *Secrecy and Foreign Policy*, edited by Franck and Weisband (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 166-7.

³ Quoted in Johnson, "Whose Side Are You On?" 178.

In this manner, the delicate relationship between the government and the media has existed in limbo for most of United States history.

In the 1960s and 1970s, however, this balance was rudely disrupted. Writing in 1974, Haynes Johnson argued that “the Vietnam War – the longest, most controversial, and most divisive in our history – is primarily responsible for the profound challenges now confronting the press and its role in American society.”⁴ In effect, the Vietnam War had accomplished what no other event in history had done – it had given the American government the impetus to restrict severely the press from reporting on military operations in progress. At the heart of the restrictions was the “concern that media coverage had the potential to undermine public support for an operation and erode troop morale on the ground. As such, perceived American credibility and resolve in the world was undermined.”⁵ Nearly thirty years later, this concern continues to fuel media restrictions on military exercises. In large part, these restrictions limit field access for reporters, and, in some cases, includes censorship of broadcasting material. In the more extreme cases, the government has imposed the doctrine of prior restraint on the press and halted publication of current news of vital importance to the American people.⁶ Journalists protest these actions, claiming that government censorship over military coverage violates their First Amendment rights.⁷ The government responds by arguing that national security, especially the safety and well-being of American troops, which may be compromised with irresponsible reporting, should take priority over broadcasting

⁴ Johnson, “Whose Side Are You On?” 167.

⁵ Steven Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention.” *Research Paper* (June 1997) Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government: 4.

⁶ For more information, see the Pentagon Papers case of 1971.

⁷ See Johnson, “Whose Side Are You On?” 167.

privileges. The debate remains undecided, with both viewpoints claiming that American legal precedents support its side of the argument. At the center of this tension lies the unresolved question: can the United States government ensure the operational security of American troops without compromising the people's right to know? Most discussion regarding this contention has revolved around the legal rights of the press in covering US military operations. Yet little of this debate has fully appreciated the role of the United Nations, the new venue of American intervention.

Most of United States military action in the 1990s has taken place under a UN mandate. Thus, any evaluation of media restrictions must include attention to the United Nations and its initiatives to curb media access to field operations. This is especially true of UN peacekeeping operations, which have encompassed a large number of military exercises, particularly since the end of the Cold War. At present, the United Nations imposes media restrictions for peacekeeping operations on an *ad hoc* basis, often relying on US- or NATO-led media restrictions to guide UN policy. This creates serious problems, because these rules are often implemented without press consideration, without prior knowledge of the media, and with troublesome results for peacekeepers trying to control media in the field. Jennifer Lee, in the January 1997 issue of the *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, suggested the need for standard media rules during UN peacekeeping operations. This policy, she claims, would help alleviate some of the tension between journalists and peacekeepers in the field.

On the surface, this plan appears sound and logical. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the call for standardized media restrictions is based on assumptions that remain unexamined. For example, does the true tension between the

military and the media concern the balance of operational security (OPSEC) and the right to know (RTK)? After all, the press claims that the military insist on media restrictions simply to protect themselves from exposure in times of error. As *Washington Post* reporter Keith Richburg puts it, “I believe military officers are often obsessive about secrecy, and in fact, use operational secrecy as a pretext simply to limit information.”⁸ But while the desire to limit morale-damaging or embarrassing information is certainly desirable from the military’s standpoint, it does not fall under the category of operational security concerns and, thus, cannot be withheld from the public without violating the right to know. So, before an assessment of media restrictions can be made, it is imperative to establish whether or not the conflict between operational security and the right to know is the true issue at stake in a peacekeeping media policy. Comparing peacekeeping missions and their concurrent media restrictions can determine to what extent media restrictions are a direct result of operational security concerns. The probability that OPSEC concerns forecast most media restrictions seems logical. For as the likelihood of troop casualties increases, so should concern about compromises in secrecy by the media – thus, higher levels of media restrictions.

This paper seeks to answer the question: *can the United Nations ensure the operational security of peacekeeping troops without compromising the people’s right to know?*⁹ Moreover, *is a standardized media policy for UN peacekeeping missions a feasible way to accomplish this goal?* But before jumping into any analysis, I want to first address the question: why is a UN peacekeeping media policy important?

⁸ Keith Richburg, interview by author, email, 9 July 2000.

⁹ The “people’s right to know” is defined as the right of a citizen to know about the actions of his government. Thus, “people” includes any citizen whose state is a member of the United Nations. More broadly, “people” may encompass all those concerned with a potential intervention.

Peacekeeping and Media: So What?

Currently, the United Nations adopts media restrictions for peacekeeping operations on an *ad hoc* basis, usually relying on US- or NATO formulated policies. Thus far, no breaches in operational security have resulted in serious setbacks for peacekeeping troops and the media generally agree that peacekeeping operations are more open to independent coverage than American-led military interventions. Why then is a standardized UN peacekeeping media policy even under consideration? Why fix a problem that does not exist?

The answer is simple: the problem does exist. The fact that UN peacekeeping operations are ordinarily supportive of open media coverage, especially in comparison to American-led interventions, does not mean that there is no friction between the peacekeepers and the media. Interviews with reporters covering peacekeeping missions reveal that there is often tension between the military officials wanting to withhold information and the journalists trying to report back to their news organizations.¹⁰ A standardized policy, agreed upon in advance, offers the best chance for military/media cooperation.

Obviously, the military wants to restrict information. Just as obviously, the media will always demand full access to the field of operations. No amount of negotiation will change these fundamental facts; however, upon two things both parties can agree. First, everyone acknowledges that a military operation's top priority must be the success of the mission, of which operational security is a critical factor. Second, both military and media of the international community subscribe to the democratic theory of rule 'of the

¹⁰ See Chapter 3 for details on covering peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Rwanda.

people, by the people.’ As such, both parties recognize that citizens must have accurate information upon which to base their decisions. This information must be complete and accurate, especially why the lives of a nation’s troops are at risk. Thus, operational security and the right to know both fall under the fundamental tenets of democratic society. A study conducted by the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center supported this conclusion, stating that both the military and the media recognize the value of military secrecy (in the name of mission success) and uncensored information.¹¹

With the military and the media in concurrence, the main obstacle towards harmony is an implemented agreement defining the parameters of these conflicting ideals. A pre-arranged strategy for facilitating media coverage from the field can help alleviate some of this friction. Such a policy benefits both the military and the media. As Jennifer Lee points out, a “precommitment to an established set of guidelines prevents the United Nations from implementing arbitrary revisions, absent a specific need by a particular operation, and encourages media compliance by ensuring the media of consistent and familiar rules.”¹²

And while most of the attention to the relationship between the military and the media resides at the national level, it is now being recognized as a serious issue at the global level. The need for a multilateral policy on media regulations even garnered the attention of Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who stressed that

So that all elements of a United Nations operation are giving out a consistent message, there needs to be a comprehensive, long-term information strategy, integrated within the overall operational planning

¹¹ Frank A. Aukofer and William P. Lawrence, “America’s Team: The Odd Couple – A Report on the Relationship Between the Media and the Military” (95-FO4) *The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center*.

¹² Jennifer Lee, “Peace and the press: media rules during UN peacekeeping operations,” *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* V30 n1. (January 1997).

and coordination. An early and comprehensive strategy is also required at the local level, to ensure effective communication with the people about the purpose and goals of United Nations involvement.¹³

Thus, the tension between operational security and the right to know is still alive – and has also reached the United Nations, the new venue of military intervention. Having been acknowledged as an issue for future peacekeeping operations, the relevance of a standardized media policy for future missions is clear.

Researching a UN Media Policy

In order to examine the implications of a standardized UN media policy, I looked at three things in particular. First, I examine the historical precedents behind the main issues. Because the RTK and OPSEC are paramount concerns for an effective media policy, it is necessary to have a more complete understanding of the tension between the two before attempting any further investigation. Chapter 1 is devoted to this topic.

Chapter 2 narrows the scope of the paper to United Nations security operations. Because the United Nations deploys troops for various purposes – ranging from election supervision to peace enforcement – I distinguish among peace exercises. Chapter 2 identifies various types of intervention, looks at various ways of classifying missions, and examines the implications for each method.

Third, it is essential to determine if a standard media policy is feasible as a way to eliminate RTK/OPSEC tension. After all, if media restrictions are administered without regard for operational security, then the military and the media are in conflict for other reasons. As noted above, this project seeks to determine the extent to which OPSEC concerns forecast media restrictions on journalists in the field. I evaluate this question

¹³ *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992 – 1996*, Department of Public Information. (New York: United

through historical case studies (Chapter 3 – History of Media Restrictions in UN Intervention). I will look particularly at the cases of UN intervention in the Gulf War, Somalia, and Rwanda. While the Gulf War does not fall under traditional peacekeeping definitions (rather, it is the quintessential collective security enforcement), action in the Persian Gulf marks the beginning of a renewed interest in utilizing the UN mandate as a legitimizing factor. The Gulf War also represents the height of military/media tensions and set a precedent for media restrictions in the modern world of real-time information.

Somalia and Rwanda were selected for different reasons. Whereas, the Gulf War was a collective security exercise, the UN action in these African countries falls under the category of peacekeeping. I chose these specific case studies because of their similar timing (both missions occurred between 1992-1996). In addition, the operation in Somalia included a significant number of Americans, while the Rwanda mission involved fewer than 50 Americans. This helped to determine if media restrictions are based on the participation of American citizens, or if they are applied across the board – controlling for American involvement. Finally, both missions progress through different types of peacekeeping, discussed in detail in Chapter 2. This provided a comparison between the two cases to determine the level of media restriction according to operational security, as well as according to American involvement.

Reaching a Conclusion

From the outset, I realized that an analysis of the case studies could yield one of three outcomes. First, the primary assumption – as a mission’s risk increases (and thus OPSEC concerns), so do media restrictions – could hold true. This would suggest that a

Nations,1996), 87.

media policy should be tailored to the type of mission, instead of a single standardized policy. Thus, a low-risk operation would have a more open media policy, and a high-risk operation would have another, more restrictive policy. If the case studies leaned this way, the main concern would be deciding what constituted risk, how that level of risk would be decided, and by whom.

But, however, if media restrictions increased as risk increased in situations where Americans were involved, but NOT where Americans were absent, then the need for a standardized UN media policy had to be questioned all together. In this case, the main research questions would revolve around determining the actual role of the United States in media restrictions, and how this might affect future UN peacekeeping operations, both with and without American participation.

A final option was also possible. If media restrictions had no relation to risk in either case, then a single standardized media policy was more realistic. If analysis of the case studies pointed to this conclusion, then the focus of investigation would lie in deciding how to construct a standardized media policy relevant to UN peacekeeping. Such a policy must ensure the balance between operational security and the right to know. Above all, it must be tailored to meet the unique needs of UN peacekeeping operations. This includes its extremely limited resources (including financing, personnel, equipment, and training), multinational composition (with different nations desiring different levels of autonomy), and evolving nature (where military invasion has pretty much remained strategically the same for millennia, the goals of peacekeeping are constantly being redefined).

In the end, the case studies supported the third and final option. When comparing the Gulf War, Somalia, and Rwanda, it appeared as though changes in media restrictions were unrelated to variance in operational security concerns. As noted above, this suggested that a standardized media policy was feasible. Thus, attention in Chapter 4 turned to devising a workable policy applicable to UN peacekeeping operations. First, I examined the previous attempts to define media restrictions during times of military intervention. I also looked at the steps necessary for a successful negotiation between the military and the media, relying on Weber's model of collaborative action. Finally, I applied Weber's model to the unique situation of UN peacekeeping, addressing the problem of flexibility – critical to ensuring operational security and the right to know.

The United States Connection

For many reasons, the majority of the research necessary for evaluating a standardized media policy comes from US military history. First, the majority of UN peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War era have occurred with major US support – in the form of both troops and/or funding.¹⁴ For this reason, the United States has a great deal of control over peacekeeping regulations. This influence is likely to continue in the future. Second, the issues of the right to know (RTK) and operational security (OPSEC) have played a large role in American history- both in political theory and in legislative and judicial interpretation. By examining these theories and interpretations, the legitimacy of hypothetical media regulations may be more fully appreciated. Finally, the United States has taken an active role in negotiating media restrictions for military

¹⁴ See Weiss, Thomas G., Forsythe, David P., and Coate, Roger A. *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*, 2nd edition. (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).

conflict in response to previous US military interventions.¹⁵ As such, the United States offers a broad history of success and failure for attempted media policies. The lessons learned from America's past offers a helpful glimpse into the potential problems associated with implementing United Nations media restrictions.

In the case of a media policy, it is also important to realize the limitations of applying American experience to the United Nations. The American military has the best public affairs system in the world – with substantial resources, in terms of personnel, training, and funding. With these advantages, the American military has the best control over the media situation on the battlefield of any nation in the world. Thus, while using research from the United States offers many benefits, several things should be kept in mind. First, any UN media policy cannot be resource intensive. The United Nations has a skeletal public affairs department at best – in fact, the United Nations does not supply designated public affairs officers in the field during peacekeeping exercises. Instead, all media regulation comes from the headquarters level. So any attempt at a standardized media policy must be extremely flexible in regard to enforcement in the field. It cannot require substantial personnel, expensive equipment, or intensive training. Similarly, any UN peacekeeping force is comprised of multiple nationalities. While theoretically the troops are fighting under a unified blue flag, the reality is that contributing nations often insist on a certain level of autonomy. Any media policy must take into account the lack of cohesion between troop contingents. Keeping these provisions at the forefront of any research provided a much narrower scope of analysis.

After the research had been done, after the interviews had been conducted, and after the case studies had been researched, a solution to the problem of balancing OPSEC

¹⁵ See the Sidle Panel (Grenada) and The “Statement of Principles” (Gulf War).

and RTK began to emerge. What resulted is best described as a two-pronged approach to a UN peacekeeping media policy. I realized that combining pre-negotiated principles at the headquarters level with flexible face-to-face interaction between peacekeepers and the media on the ground formed an equilibrium that protected both the importance of operational security and the right to know. Moreover, such an approach was feasible in light of the United Nation's unique characteristics of scant resources and multinational components. The final chapter deals with my proposal in greater detail, analyzing the two-pronged approach as it applies to United Nations peacekeeping.

Chapter 1:

The Right to Know (RTK) vs. Operational Security (OPSEC)

The Supreme Court has consistently upheld the notion that a free press is essential to democracy. Justice Potter Stewart explained in a 1974 speech that the primary purpose of the First Amendment was “to create a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check on the three official branches.”¹⁶ The right to a free press, however, is necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure that American citizens can hold the government accountable for its actions. In democratic societies, there is also a basic *right to know* (RTK), to be informed about what the government is doing and why. This is not a Constitutional right – the right to know cannot be found in the Bill of Rights, nor is it referred to in the Declaration of Independence.¹⁷ Rather, the right to know has evolved over two centuries of political thought, as well as from legislative and judicial interpretation. James Madison, architect of the First Amendment, captured the essence of the argument.

A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power that knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.¹⁸

Jeremy Bentham based his constitutional system on the motive of “personal interest corrected by the widest publicity” and took publicity as the principle check against

¹⁶ Quoted in Lee C. Bollinger, *Images of Free Press*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 177.

¹⁷ The language of the First Amendment comes closest through its statement: “The Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or of the right of the people, peaceable to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

¹⁸ Quoted in Joseph Stiglitz, “On Liberty, the Right to Know, and Public Discourse: The Role of Transparency in Public Life” *Oxford Amnesty Lecture* (Oxford, UK) January 27, 1999.

misrule.¹⁹ The great political theorist John Stuart Mill, in his famous essay *On Liberty* (1859), held that “subjecting arguments to public scrutiny was unconditionally beneficial and provided the most assured way of sorting out good from bad arguments.”²⁰ Thus, while not explicitly *defining* the right to know, the RTK principle permeated the political thought of early democratic theorists. It was clear that freedom of the press from government intervention was not sufficient for accountability, but must be accompanied by a free flow of information. Only then could democracy truly be representative of the people.

As noted above, one of the basic tenets of American democracy is the accountability of government. But if effective oversight is to be achieved, then the voters must be informed. John Adams regarded the press as the natural instrument for informing the citizenry about their government. “None of the means of information is more sacred, or have been cherished with more tenderness and care than the Press,” he declared, urging his countrymen not to be “intimidated from publishing with the utmost freedom.”²¹ According to journalist Alan Barth, “the men who established the American Republic sought censorship of government by the press rather than censorship of the press by the government. This concept of the press was expressed by Americans even before they became a nation.”²² But while the right to know was present in early American thought, it did not become a salient issue until the twentieth century.

¹⁹ “Without publicity, all other checks are fruitless: in comparison of publicity, all other checks are of small account. It is to publicity, more than to everything else put together, that the English system of procedure owes it being the least bad system as yet extant, instead of being the worst.” [Bentham 1838-43, vol iv. P. 317.]

²⁰ Stiglitz, “Role of Transparency”

²¹ Herbert N Foerstel, *Freedom of Information and the Right to Know: The Origins and Applications of the Freedom of Information Act*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 3.

²² “Freedom and the Press.” *The Progressive*. June 1962. P. 29.

The Right to Know in Contemporary American Society

Prior to the twentieth century, the right to know was an issue of political theory and was discussed primarily in philosophical terms. Only within the last century has the concept taken on legal and judicial significance. In fact, the term “right to know” was actually coined as late as the 1940s by Kent Cooper, who spent forty-five years with the Associated Press and retired as its executive director. In his book of the same name, he wrote,

American newspapers do have the constitutional right to print. That is the so-called freedom of the press. But they cannot properly serve the people if governments suppress the news. To have that which the people are entitled to is a concept which long ago I first defined as ‘the Right to Know’.²³

Arguably the most powerful argument for a constitutional right to know appeared in the twentieth century from First Amendment scholar Alexander Meiklejohn. Meiklejohn believed the right to know was the basis upon which all the First Amendment protections rested. He wrote, “The First Amendment does not protect a ‘freedom to speak’. It protects the freedom of those activities of thought and communication by which we ‘govern’.”²⁴ Similarly, House Government Affairs Committee staff attorney Wallace Parks interpreted the right to know as follows:

It is clear that the primary purpose of the freedom-of-speech and press clause of the First Amendment was to protect the government from interfering with the communication of fact and views about governmental affairs, in order that all could properly exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a free society. This clause was intended as one of the guarantees of the people’s right to know. It is certainly reasonable to conclude that freedom of the press and speech under contemporary conditions includes the right to gather information from

²³ Kent Cooper. *The Right to Know: An Exposition of the Evils of News Suppression and Propaganda* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Cudahy, 1956), xii-xiii.

²⁴ Alexander Meiklejohn. “The First Amendment is an Absolute” *The Supreme Court Review* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 103.

government agencies and stands as a constitutional prohibition against all forms of withholding information beyond that reasonably required for the exercise of delegated power or the protection of other rights.²⁵

Constitutional scholar Thomas I. Emerson agreed with Parks, but took the right to know to a higher level, arguing that this principle has two key components.

It is clear that the right to know fits readily into the first amendment and the whole freedom of expression. Reduced to its simplest terms the concept includes two closely related features. First, the right to read, to listen, to see, and to otherwise receive communications; and second, the right to obtain information as a basis for transmitting ideas or facts to others. Together, these constitute the reverse side of the coin from the right to communicate. But the coin is one piece, namely the freedom of information.²⁶

James Russell Wiggins of the *Washington Post*, agreed with Emerson's two components, asserting that "the right of one to speak is another's right to hear; the right of one to write is another's right to read. The right is not solely concerned with either one or the other aspects of this process, but with both of them. Together the two processes are indispensable to the people's right to know."²⁷ He further defined the citizen's right to know as:

- The right to get information from the government,
- The right to print it without prior restraint,
- The right to print without fear of reprisal, so long as the publication does not offend the laws,
- The right to have access to printing materials, and
- The right to distribute.

Because the press is ideally suited to this function of gathering and disseminating information, the right to know and the freedom of the press are inextricably entwined.

Not surprisingly, the press has been foremost in propagating the notion of the right to

²⁵ Foerstel. *Freedom of Information*, 11.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 12.

²⁷ James Russell Wiggins. "The Role of the Press in Safeguarding the People's Right to Know Government Business" *Marguette Law Review* 40. (1956), 74.

know. In light of this connection, James A. Pope, chairman of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), regards the right to know as an inference, “an inference that if the Founding Fathers wanted government to keep its hands off the press, they expected that government to be conducted openly. Otherwise a free press would be unable to serve its intended purpose.”²⁸ This view led Pope and other supporters of press freedom to assume a privileged role for the press as “standard-bearer” for the public’s right to know.²⁹ Justice Potter Stewart concurred, noting that “without an *informed* and free press there cannot be an enlightened people.”³⁰ Thus we have come full circle, and back to the importance of a free press – one which is able to freely gather information without restraint for public dissemination.

As Joseph Stiglitz argued in an Oxford Amnesty Lecture, “a free press is necessary for a democratic society to work effectively, but without access to information, its ability to perform its central role is eviscerated.”³¹ The Supreme Court has long agreed with this sentiment, and in the 1936 *Grosjean v. American Press* asserted that the predominant purpose of the free speech and press clauses of the First Amendment was “to preserve an untrammelled press as a vital source of public information... Since informed public opinion is the most potent of all restraints upon misgovernment, the suppression or abridgement of the publicity afforded by a free press cannot be regarded otherwise than with grave concern.”³² This role was reaffirmed in 1972 with *Branzburg v. Hays* establishing that the right to publish includes the right to gather news.³³ This

²⁸ James A. Pope. “The Suppression of News” *Atlantic Monthly* (July 1951), 50-51.

²⁹ Foerstel. *Freedom of Information*, 16.

³⁰ Quoted in James C. Goodale, “The First Amendment and Freedom of the Press,” *USIS* (February 1997) Available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0297/ijde/goodale.htm>

³¹ Stiglitz, “Role of Transparency”

³² *Grosjean v. American Press*, 297 US 233 (1936)

³³ *Branzburg v. Hays*, 408 US 665 (1972)

ability to freely gather news is particularly important when the press covers government agencies, for the public's right to know is directly related to official accountability. Government agencies have a general responsibility to sustain transparency, allowing a free flow of information from the government to the public. Indeed, as Joseph Stiglitz argues,

The less directly accountable a government agency is to the public, the more important is it that its actions be open and transparent. By the same token, the more independent, the less directly politically accountable, a government agency, the greater the presumption for openness.³⁴

Thus, even (and especially) when a government agency is not directly responsible to the public, the citizen's right to know is not abrogated. Instead, the need for accurate and timely information is all the more crucial to the public interest. Unfortunately, without a law to enforce the people's right to know, mid-twentieth century media found it impossible to gather vital news, stonewalled by government secrecy.

The Right to Know and The Freedom of Information Act

In 1953 Harold Cross prepared a report on federal, state, and municipal information policies and practices called *The People's Right to Know*. It confirmed the fears of newspapermen around the country that basic government information was being systematically denied to them and thus to the American people. In response, Congress established the Special Subcommittee of Government Information in 1955, known as the Moss subcommittee after its chairman, Representative John E. Moss. The Moss subcommittee conducted a comprehensive review of restricted information and found widespread dissatisfaction with government information policies. As John B. Oakes, member of the *New York Times* editorial board, wrote, "I believe most newspapermen

would agree that during the past few years news has been censored at the source in various departments of government with increasing effectiveness. A kind of paper curtain has been set up by a multitude of government press agents.”³⁵ Clearly, the issue of freedom of information needed to be addressed at the legislative level. Top newspaper lawyer Harold Cross defined the battle line, arguing that

The public business is the public’s business. The people have a right to know. Freedom of information about public records and proceedings is their just heritage. Citizens must have the legal right to investigate and examine the conduct of their affairs. They must have a simple, speedy means of enforcement. These rights must be raised to the highest sanction. The time is ripe. The First Amendment points the way. The function of the press is to carry the torch.³⁶

With the support of members of the press and the Moss Committee, the right to know made a giant stride towards enforceability with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The FOIA (1966) is the most notable attempt by Congress to ensure the public’s right to know, requiring that “each agency, in accordance with published rules, shall make available for public inspection and copying” all internal information that affects the public (with various exceptions).³⁷ While the FOIA has major implications for the individual’s access to government information, it also has a profound impact on the media and its right to publish or broadcast questionable material. For example, FOIA regulations on indecency, or variable obscenity (not fit for children but OK for adults) are based not on the speaker’s rights but on the listener’s or viewer’s right to hear. (The right to hear is a generally accepted subset of the right to know.³⁸) As the court wrote in *HBO*

³⁴ Stiglitz, “Role of Transparency”

³⁵ John B. Oakes. “The Paper Curtain of Washington.” *Nieman Reports* (October 1958), 3.

³⁶ Foerstel. *Freedom of Information*, 18.

³⁷ Title 5 United States Code sect. 542.

³⁸ CAPT Jon Mordan, “Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War.” Available at: <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/mordan.html>

v. FCC, “The point of ultimate interest is not the words of the speakers, but the minds of the hearers.”³⁹ These rulings speak to the heart of prior restraint objections, and support prior restraints only in the most extreme circumstances.⁴⁰

While these precedents seem to establish a conclusive right to know, the issue is far from clear. In a number of cases, the right to know is superceded by other vying interests, such as privacy, confidentiality, and national security. In these instances, the courts and the legislature have upheld the notion that the public may have the right to know, but does *not* have the right to know *everything*.

The Right to Know and National Security Issues

One of the traditionally accepted exceptions to the right to know is the issue of national security. As Executive Order on Classified National Security Information puts it

Our democratic principles require that the American people be informed of the activities of their Government. Also, our Nation’s progress depends on the free flow of information. Nevertheless, throughout our history, the national interest has required that certain information be maintained in confidence in order to protect our citizens, our democratic institutions, and our participation within the community of nations.⁴¹

National security will always be a compelling interest for government intervention. In the landmark 1919 case of *Schneck v. Unites States*, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes expressed the views of a unanimous court. He argued, “when a nation is at war, many things that might be said in times of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight, and no Court could

³⁹ *HBO v. FCC*, 567 F.2d 9 (DC Cir. 1977).

⁴⁰ Mordan, “Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War.”

⁴¹ Executive Order 12958 of April 17, 1995. Published in the *Federal Register*. April 20, 1995. Volume 60, Number 76. Available at: <http://wais.access.gpo.gov>

regard them as protected by any constitutional right.”⁴² In *Snepp v. United States*, former CIA agent Frank Snepp printed a book about his experiences while employed at the agency. The CIA sued to prevent further publishing, arguing national security and breach of contract. The court sided with the CIA, finding that “Snepp’s book had caused the country irreparable harm even if the information in it wasn’t classified.”⁴³ Indeed, the classification system currently used by the American government allows documents pertaining to national security to be exempted from FOIA regulations. This loophole was, and continues to be, exploited by the government. When challenged in the Supreme Court in *Environmental Protection Agency v. Mink* (1973), the Court held that

The national security exemption meant whatever the executive branch determined, since in passing FOIA Congress had not intended the courts to review the propriety of particular classifications. Even when a decision to classify appeared to be “cynical, myopic, or even corrupt,” the federal courts were obligated to respect the executive branch’s determination and exempt the document from disclosure under the act.⁴⁴

More alarming is a General Accounting Office (GAO) report released in June 1993 revealing that there were more than 304 million pages of documents awaiting declassification. These figures refer only to documents that are at least 30 years old. No one knows how many newer classified documents exist, although each day during the FY93 the government “cranked out an astonishing 17,558 pages of classified material.”⁴⁵

The military is a government institution where the issue of national security is taken to its highest level, although at some level there is an acceptance of media freedom and the public’s right to know. For instance, regulations specifically encourage Air Force

⁴² Ted Galen Carpenter, *The Captive Press: Foreign Policy Crises and the First Amendment* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 1995), 1.

⁴³ Mordan, “Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War.”

⁴⁴ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 80.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 88.

personnel to discuss the military by accepting interviews with the media, accepting speaking engagements, publishing professional writings and becoming active in the community.⁴⁶ The military is also anxious to avoid controversy or accusations of withholding embarrassing information that is otherwise restricted. For example, Air Force Policy Directive 35-206 explicates the official policy of maximum disclosure and forthright openness.

In the execution of any program to increase and enhance the Air Force's image with both the public and the media, no information shall be classified or otherwise withheld to protect the Air Force from criticism or embarrassment... Any attempts to protect members who violate policy will only damage the institution's morale and integrity, tarnish the Air Force image and reputation, and violate the American public's trust and confidence.⁴⁷

Maximum disclosure, however, does not permit complete transparency. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) restricts the ability of military members to express personal opinions. As Mordan points out, "asking a soldier for opinions about the war could unwittingly create problems because 'attacking the war aims of the United States' is considered disloyalty, and the UCMJ forbids disloyal statements."⁴⁸ Moreover, the UCMJ expressed prohibits any military member from criticizing public officials.

Any commissioned officer who uses contemptuous words against the President, Vice President, Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of a military department, the Secretary of Transport, or the Governor or legislature of any State, Territory, Commonwealth, or possession in which he is on duty or present shall be punished as a court-martial may direct... The truth or falsity of the statements is immaterial.⁴⁹

This is not simply an idle threat. For example, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney fired Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Dugan in 1990 after Dugan openly

⁴⁶ Title 10 and 32 of the United States Code governs the Armed Forces and the National Guard.

⁴⁷ Air Force Instruction 35-206, sect. 1.1

⁴⁸ Mordan, "Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War."

expressed his opinions on the record for the press, “opinions that were critical or non-conformal to administration policy.”⁵⁰ Specifically, Dugan was dismissed after publicly discussing the option of a heavy bombing of Baghdad that would decimate Iraqi leadership. Dugan’s arguments in favor of relying on air superiority had been rejected in private by “officials who wanted more time for diplomacy and by General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, an Army man who backed ground combat that would showcase his branch of the military service.”⁵¹

Above and beyond personal restrictions placed on military members, however, there are also profound restrictions on media coverage of military actions – restrictions enforced to protect the integrity of military involvement. The most significant case is during times of military conflict, in which the press reports directly from the field of operations.

The Department of Defense handles security measures for the military, both in times of peace and times of war. This includes internal security (ensuring the secrecy of material within the chain of command) as well as external security (ensuring the secrecy of material from sources outside the military).

DOD directives designate those officials who have the authority to classify information and to decide which individuals in the military need to know this information. These latter must then be granted security clearances for access to a given category, following a background investigation to verify their trustworthiness. There are detailed rules specifying the type of secure storage which must be provided for information, depending on its degree of classification. Loss or compromise of classified information can result in criminal penalties for culpable persons. Military personnel live and work in an environment in which they must be constantly aware of the security classification of the information they are using. Not only must

⁴⁹ Article 88, Uniform Code of Military Justice (10 USC 836)

⁵⁰ Mordan, “Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War.”

⁵¹ Jeffrey A. Smith, *War and Press Freedom: The Problem of Prerogative Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 49.

they be careful not to reveal classified material to persons outside the military, they must also know who in their unit is and is not authorized to have access to the material.⁵²

The key point is that military members are conditioned to be extremely cautious about information dissemination. The consequences of a mistake are real and immediate. As a result, they are trained to withhold information on a regular basis. No where is this training more valuable than in times of conflict. Secrecy is vital to the success of military operations. Military commanders know that even unclassified information poses risks during wartime and thus train all members in an area known as ‘operation security’. OPSEC is based on the premise that a clever enemy can analyze a mass of unclassified, seemingly innocuous information, from both press and military sources, and make a correct assessment of US capabilities and intentions. The armed forces have trained intelligence specialists who monitor unclassified transmissions and advise commanders about corrective actions. The military, of course, cannot counter press reports this way.

When the United States engages in a military conflict, the most urgent national interest is the safety of American troops and the successful completion of the operational objectives. Everything else, including press coverage of the mission, is clearly secondary. Thus, while military leaders may acknowledge the need for full and accurate media coverage of an operation, they also have a quite reasonable fear of the possible consequences of free press access. The main concern is that reporters will inadvertently disclose facts of value to the enemy, which may endanger operational security and possibly affect troop morale.⁵³

⁵² Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”

⁵³ Bagdikain argues that this danger has been exaggerated: “We have been conditioned to accept the alarming scenarios of harm that is supposed to come if a particular piece of information becomes known to the public and therefor to potential adversaries. We are seldom reminded of the disasters that occur

This apprehension is not unfounded. For instance, during WWII the Chicago Tribune unwittingly reported that the US has broken the Japanese message-encoding system when the newspaper printed a story that named Japanese ships involved in a battle. The names were known only because the US had deciphered Japanese messages.⁵⁴ A more recent example occurred during the Persian Gulf War. Norman Schwartzkopf related the following tale:

It was reported (by an American television network) that at this time, right now, we are witnessing an artillery duel between the 82nd Airborne Division and the Iraqis. If they (the Iraqis) had any kind of halfway decent intelligence, they would have made note of the time... and through their intelligence network they would have pinpointed the location of the 82nd Airborne. Until that time everything they saw of the 82nd was on the east coast. All of a sudden they would have found the 82nd was to the west and it would certainly have telegraphed something to them.⁵⁵

In effect, the media compromised operational security, advertising the buildup of American military 200 miles west of Kuwait City. While the Iraqi intelligence apparently missed the crucial tidbit, this media mistake might have cost thousands of lives. It is easy to see why the military might be nervous about uninhibited media coverage.

The Problems with Secrecy

As noted above, over the past two hundred years the American legislative and judicial systems have condoned secrecy in specific circumstances. Yet even secrecy in the name of national (or operational) security has its problems. Judith Raine Baroody outlined the following concerns.

regularly throughout history because important information has been kept from the public.” In his foreword to Donna Demac, *Keeping America Uninformed: Government Secrecy in the 1980's* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984), X.

⁵⁴ Mordan, “Press Pools, Prior Restraint, and the Persian Gulf War.”

- Excessive secrecy can upset the internal balance of power of a democracy, whether among decision-makers in the executive and legislative branches or even within the executive branch itself.
- Withholding information may keep it from enemies, but it may also keep it from decision-makers in one's own camp.⁵⁶
- Failure to provide information can antagonize the press and threaten the leadership's credibility.
- Maintaining a lid on secrecy on matters of national concern can give rise to rumors, which may be exploited by enemy agents.
- By withholding official information, the government is denied the feedback of public opinion when making decisions of national importance.
- Providing little or false information may skew the event's recording in history.⁵⁷

More specifically, recent criticism of government secrecy has focused on existing restrictions for media (and its accompanying technology) during times of conflict. Some have aptly pointed out that, when considering restrictions on media coverage, the military has not taken account the “realities of modern warfare.”⁵⁸ Commercial satellites can be used by virtually anyone for reconnaissance purposes – and this ability is only going to increase in the future. In addition, while the American military is extremely wary of exposing logistical details, it often compromises itself. For example, during the Gulf War the Iraqi defenses were considered so weak after continuous air attacks that the Fourth Psychological Operations Group in Fort Bragg set up a radio station, *Voice of the Gulf*, that announced the precise targets of daily bombing runs in a successful effort to

⁵⁵ Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect,” 5.

⁵⁶ During Operation Desert Storm, a US Senator stated that American people found out more information about the military conflict from open press briefings than did members of Congress through classified briefings. From an opening statement of Senator Herbert Kohl, Wednesday, February 20, 1991, in a hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, US Senate, 102nd Congress, First Session. In *Pentagon Rules on Media Access to the Persian Gulf War*, US Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 1991. P. 3.

⁵⁷ Judith Raine Baroody, *Media Access and the Military: The Case of the Gulf War*. (Maryland: University Press of America, 1998), 10-13.

⁵⁸ Smith, *War and Press Freedom*, 204

encourage desertions.⁵⁹ Similarly, coalition soldiers in the Gulf War used multiple, high-speed, flanking movements based on the fundamental American military doctrine dubbed AirLand Battle and described in a manual sold by the Government Printing Office.

Even if his command and control links had not been cut or jammed as they were in the ground war, Saddam Hussein would not have been able to make much sense of what was happening and could hardly have adjusted his orders fast enough, because American-led forces, unlike his own, had field commanders with considerable discretion to act in quickly changing conditions.⁶⁰

Analysts also point out that the wide variety of information presented by the media can add to the enemy's confusion. During the Gulf War, coalition forces and the news media sent so many mixed signals before the ground war that Iraq had little idea what to anticipate.⁶¹ The media regards this as a mixed bag, with some feeling used as a source of misinformation on the part of military briefers.

Beyond questions about the effectiveness of media restrictions, there looms another concern: press coverage has the effect of a "force multiplier."⁶² That is, positive reporting of troop activity develops public awareness and enhances morale. Even some members of the military admit that media restrictions can hamper operational success in the form of public support for a mission. Colonel Larry Icenogle, public affairs special assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave the following account of a story that went unpublished because a ship captain would not allow any press coverage:

Mike Doubleday, now the EUCOM PAO [European Command public affairs officer] was General Schwarzkopf's deputy PA. He was working on the night shift in Riyadh. I had the night shift in Dhahran, on the east

⁵⁹ This raises questions about General Schwarzkopf's assertion that CNN compromised the 82nd Airborne's operational security when it seems that the division was far from hiding its intentions.

⁶⁰ Smith, *War and Press Freedom*, 205.

⁶¹ For example, the wide publicity by the media of a possible amphibious assault masked the true flank invasion of US forces into Iraq.

⁶² Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*.

coast. I'll never forget that night that Doubleday calls me, and he says, 'Hey, are you aware that we've got the *Missouri* firing naval gunfire support for the first time since World War II?' And as he is saying that – I kid you not – I had this vision of a split screen. You remember the great Nighthawk shots we got off the *Wisconsin* [early in the war]? Well, I had this vision of a split screen with "2 September '45" and Tokyo Bay with General MacArthur on one side. And on the other side is the "Mighty Mo" blasting away. I could visualize this. And, of course, the skipper wouldn't take any press aboard. It was unreal.⁶³

This much-touted example is now seen as the preeminent example of how the press could have supported the war effort by raising troop morale and support at home had the military been more receptive to press coverage. Despite the admission that more press coverage could have been helpful in the war effort, however, not all accounts of the media in the Persian Gulf are negative. Indeed, a joint media-military report states that

There is no question that the American people received an unprecedented amount of real-time information on Desert Storm. Though some of the information was incomplete or inaccurate at the time because of "the fog of war" and the commanders' desire to maintain secrecy to avoid casualties, the amount of news disseminated supports the view that Desert Storm was the most completely covered – perhaps the best-covered-war in history.⁶⁴

The press – at least the top fifteen Bureau Chiefs – did not agree. In a statement to Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, they wrote,

Our sense is that virtually all major news organizations agree that the flow of information to the public was blocked, impeded, or diminished by the policies and practices of the Department of Defense. Pools did not work. Stories and pictures were late or lost. Access to the men and women in the field was interfered with by a needless system of military escorts and copy review. These conditions meant we could not tell the public the full story of those who fought the nation's battle.⁶⁵

⁶³ Aukofer and Lawrence, "America's Team"

⁶⁴ Aukofer and Lawrence, "America's Team"

⁶⁵ Washington Bureau Chiefs, letter to Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, "Covering the Persian Gulf War." May 30, 1991.

Needless to say, the fight between the right to know and operational security is far from over and, despite several attempts to negotiate media-military agreements, the issue remains unsolved. It is safe to say that no compromise will satisfy all parties. It is more difficult to resolve these tensions and find a workable solution to media coverage during military operations that will meet some level of acceptance from both sides.

The majority of US intervention takes place under a United Nations mandate, therefore any negotiations for upcoming media restrictions must take place in the context of UN peacekeeping. We now turn to that subject in an attempt to define and categorize types of UN peacekeeping relevant to this study.

Chapter 2:

Classifying UN Security Operations

Peacekeeping is an uncertain, unpredictable, and unregulated international operation. –
K. Venata Raman⁶⁶

The signing of the UN Charter on 26 June 1945 ushered in a new era of international cooperation. Two world wars, the Holocaust, the advent of nuclear warfare, and a failed League of Nations had driven the nations of the world to establish a new set of guidelines for world politics – for which ‘security’ was the top priority. In the Charter’s preamble, the role of the UN was to save “succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”⁶⁷

Previous attempts at ensuring the peace had failed. The League of Nations assumed that war was caused by emotionalism and mistaken perceptions. The cooling-off period mandated by the League was clearly inadequate in light of Hitler’s premeditated aggression.⁶⁸ Similarly, the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawed war as a tool of force. It did nothing to change the nature of world politics, and failed to provide a means of maintaining the peace without force. It simply made war illegal.⁶⁹ So when diplomats met in San Francisco to draft the UN Charter, they decided to try a new approach to the idea of collective security. First, they made the use of force illegal except in self-defense. Unlike the previous agreements, however, they also authorized the United Nations to

⁶⁶ K. Venata Raman, “United Nations Peacekeeping and the Future World Order,” in Henry Wiseman ed., *Peacekeeping: Appraisals and Proposals*, (New York: Praeger, 1983), 372.

⁶⁷ UN Charter, preamble.

enforce the peace through, diplomatic, economic, and even military actions in response to “threats to the peace,... acts of aggression, or... breaches of the peace.”⁷⁰ In this way, the UN Security Council was given the power to prevent war through a new implementation of collective security theory.

Collective Security and the United Nations

The idea of collective security is deceptively simple: all states would join forces to prevent one of their members from using coercion to gain advantage. Under such a system, “no government could conquer another or disturb the peace for fear of retribution from all other governments. Any attack would be treated as if it were an attack on each of them.”⁷¹

The United Nations expanded this relatively straightforward notion to include the international communities right to prevent war. Unfortunately, the problems involved in applying collective security to world politics are numerous – leading some skeptics to questions whether collective security can be relied upon to protect or restore the peace.⁷² Among the many theoretical problems, several can be applied to experience in recent history.⁷³

First, some states refuse to join collective security agreements because they have pre-formed alliances. This problem was particularly acute during the Cold War, with the United States leading the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet

⁶⁸ Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 21.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 22.

⁷¹ Ibid, 25.

⁷² Ibid, 26.

⁷³ Unless otherwise stated, the information in this section comes from Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 26-7.

Union heading up the Warsaw Pact. It was inconceivable that either superpower would join in any UN-led collective security action against one of its allies.

Second, the fact remains that all countries are not equal. The international community would have a difficult, if not impossible, time trying to impose collective security against a nuclear state. Even beyond this, the economic ramifications of collective security may be highly disruptive to the international community. For this reason, “the international community has had to content itself with diplomatic oppositions to such acts as the US invasions of Grenada and Panama in the 1980s, knowing full well that any attempt at military or economic sanctions would be disruptive and ineffectual.”⁷⁴

Third (and closely related), collective security requires the sacrifice of member nations’ national interests. Sanctions cut both ways and in many cases, the price of collective security outweighs the benefits of protesting a renegade aggressor.

Fourth, the concept of collective security is predicated upon the notion that all victims are equal – that the international community will respond with similar vigor to all casualties of aggression. History, however, indicates that most states differentiate between states worth defending and otherwise. This helps explain the United States rapid reaction to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, but its dalliance in Bosnia.

Finally, there is disagreement within the international community as to the definition of ‘aggression.’ To be sure, some of the variance comes as a result of the four problems listed above. When it is not in a state’s national interest to join a collective security action, it may withhold its support by relying on the legalistic side of the agreement – arguing that the act did not constitute aggression and therefore a response is

not warranted. An example of this comes from UN intervention in Rwanda, where the resolution condemning the slaughter of Tutsis did not include the word ‘genocide.’ Had it been included, UN member states would have been legally obliged to act in defense of the Tutsis.

Because of these problems, collective security has been the exception rather than the rule. Only when a state of relative weakness commits a clear act of aggression on a state deemed worthy of defense does collective security become a reality. The Persian Gulf War of 1991 and the NATO-led action in Bosnia in late 1995 are the only examples in recent history that can qualify as true collective security operations. Yet the sheer number of international acts of aggression called out for some sort of international action. In response to this need for an alternate form of hostility prevention, the United Nations introduced the concept of peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping and the United Nations

Clearly, relying on collective security to prevent international conflict is an unrealistic solution to the problem of war. Instead, the United Nations opted for a different solution – peacekeeping. The UN did not simply begin to establish peacekeeping operations around the world, however; rather, it meandered its way into situations that were later classified as peacekeeping. In fact, even today the United Nations itself has no established definition of peacekeeping. Some UN members use the term to cover any action by the world organization in the maintenance of international peace and security as provided by the Charter. Others give it a more restricted interpretation. Generally, the United Nations refers to peacekeeping as “an operation

⁷⁴ Ibid, 26.

involving military personnel, but without enforcement powers, undertaken by the United Nations to help maintain or restore international peace and security in areas of conflict.”⁷⁵

Under this presumption, the United Nations may undertake a peacekeeping operation whenever ‘international peace and security’ is threatened. But it is certainly not this simple. Once an international situation arises, UN member states must agree to participate in a peacekeeping operation. Former Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Sir Brian Urquhart summarized the political requirements for peacekeeping as follows:

1. The consent of parties involved in the conflict to the operation’s establishment, mandate, composition, and appointed commanding officer
2. The continuing and strong support of the operation by the Security Council
3. A clear and practicable mandate
4. The non-use of force, except as the last resort in self-defense, which includes resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent the peacekeepers from discharging their duties
5. The willingness of troop-contributing countries to provide adequate numbers of capable military personnel and to accept the degree of risk that the mandate and the situation demand
6. The willingness of the member states, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, to make available the necessary financial and logistical support.⁷⁶

If all of these conditions are present, then a peacekeeping mission is considered legitimate. The Security Council approves a mandate and troops are deployed, initiating another peacekeeping operation.

⁷⁵ Karen A. Mingst and Margaret P. Karns, *The United Nations in the Post-Cold War Era*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), 68.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 70.

Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding Defined

Actually, under the broad term of ‘peacekeeping,’ the UN really engages in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Distinguishing between these three functions is critical in understanding the historical evolution of UN peacekeeping, as well as predicting the future of peacekeeping operations. Briefly defined, peacekeeping is a form of third party intervention aimed at facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this sense, “peacekeeping is a tool for the maintenance of the status quo, largely indifferent to the deep-rooted economic and social issues which accompany protracted conflict.”⁷⁷

Peacemaking, on the other hand, broadens its goals to include diplomatic negotiations. According to Boutros-Ghali, peacemaking is “action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.”⁷⁸ This section of the Charter states that parties to a dispute should “seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.”⁷⁹ The relationship between peacekeeping and peacemaking is clear. Peacekeeping is the effort to stop the violence between two or more parties, and peacemaking is the attempt to restore the severed interactions.

Peacebuilding is the third main area of UN activity associated with the peaceful settlement of disputes. Although it has been less recognized than both peacekeeping and peacemaking as a means of preventing the recurrence of hostilities, reconstructing economic and social interactions, and facilitating resolution, peacebuilding is crucial.

⁷⁷ Fetherston, *Towards a Theory of United Nations Peacekeeping*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 129.

Boutros-Gali pointed to the importance of post-conflict peacebuilding, which he defined as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”⁸⁰

Each concept can be found within UN peacekeeping missions in the post-Cold War arena, with varying relationships to one another. It is important to note, however, that while each operation is different in regards to the aspects utilized, there are several generalizations that can be made.

First, peacekeeping generally occurs at the micro-level of a peacekeeping operation. That is, the troops deployed to an area of conflict are the primary executors of the peacekeeping mission. Similarly, peacemaking and peacebuilding usually occur at the macro-level of a mission, with overall goals and objectives for restructuring the area of conflict.

Second, the degree to which these functions are found in an operation correlates with the type of peacekeeping mission to which the troops are deployed. Historically, the United Nations only involved itself with peacekeeping in its functional sense. Peacemaking was seen as a complementary service that accompanied peacekeeping, but was generally relegated to the back burner. Only recently has peacemaking joined the list of top priorities in a UN peacekeeping mission. And only very recently has peacebuilding become a concern for UN peacekeepers. Now peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding can be clearly seen working together in peacekeeping missions currently operating.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 129.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 131.

Where once peacekeeping was limited in function, a plethora of new ideas concerning the role of UN peacekeepers has emerged. As peacemaking and peacebuilding joined peacekeeping as legitimate undertakings, the mandate for peacekeeping operations expanded dramatically- from traditional peacekeeping to multilateral operations, from humanitarian intervention to peace enforcement. Theoretical ideas on peacekeeping had dramatic practical applications, radically altering the United Nations' views on peacekeeping missions.

Yet while the delineation between peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding is helpful, it fails to create the adequate taxonomy of peacekeeping missions necessary for empirical study. A number of peacekeeping scholars have attempted to remedy this oversight. For instance, Mackinlay and Chopra have developed nine peacekeeping categories on a continuum of risk. At one end of the spectrum are the lowest intensity operations, involving the smallest number of assets and the least risk of conflict to UN contingents. At the other end the conflict level is high and involves commensurately larger military assets.⁸¹ Diehl, Druckman, and Wall have expanded these nine categories into twelve distinct groups in order to predict outcomes based on conflict resolution theory.⁸² However, for the purposes of this study, four categories will suffice.⁸³ The

⁸¹ In order from least risk to greatest risk the categories are as follows: conventional observer missions, traditional peacekeeping, preventative peacekeeping, supervising a cease-fire between irregular forces, assisting in the maintenance of law and order, protecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the guarantee of rights of passage, sanctions, and enforcement. John Mackinlay and Jarat Chopra. "Second Generation Multinational Operations." *Washington Quarterly*. Volume 15, No. 3. Unpaginated.

⁸² The twelve categories are as follows: traditional peacekeeping, observation, collective enforcement, election supervision, humanitarian assistance during conflict, state/nation building, pacification, preventative deployment, arms control verification, protective services, intervention in support of democracy, and sanctions enforcement. Paul Diehl, Daniel Druckman, and James Wall. "International Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Volume 42, No. 1. February 1998.

⁸³ Most peacekeeping missions incorporate several of the nine or twelve categories into a single mandate. The logic behind using the four categories is based on this fact, and reduces the categorization to the overall type of mandate given for the mission

following information is based upon the Stimson Center research on United Nations peacekeeping.⁸⁴ It collapses multiple types of peacekeeping into several basic groups. For example, where others delineate between election supervision and state/nation building, the Stimson Center refers to both these activities as multidimensional peace operations. For evaluating level of risk, these categories will provide adequate comparison across the various missions discussed in the next chapter .

Traditional peacekeeping

Traditional peacekeeping was the primary form of peace operation during the Cold War. This method served US and Soviet desires to avoid direct armed conflict in regions of tension.⁸⁵ With the exception of the Congo operation (1960-64) and a small political transition mission in West New Guinea (1962-63), all UN missions between 1945 and 1988 were of this type and involved military components only.⁸⁶ In this sense, traditional peacekeeping sought solely to cease hostilities, and therefore utilized the notion of peacekeeping alone. Any incorporation of peacemaking was secondary at best.

Traditional peacekeeping missions are unique in a number of ways.⁸⁷ First, unlike a traditional military operation, peacekeeping troops are not designed to restore order or stop the fighting between rivals. Peacekeeping troops are usually only deployed *after* a cease-fire agreement has been settled. Thus, unlike a collective security operation, deployment occurs after fighting is halted rather than before or during military conflict.

⁸⁴ Durch, William, ed., *UN Peacekeeping, American Policy, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

⁸⁵ Mackinlay and Chopra. "Second Generation Multinational Operations."

⁸⁶ www.un.org/dept/pko

⁸⁷ The following internationally recognized principles of peacekeeping are explained in "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 340 (1973)." UN Security Council. S/11052/Rev. 1. October 27, 1973.

Second, whereas a traditional military mission involves the defense or attempted seizure of territory, the territorial role of a peacekeeping force is considerably different. Peacekeeping troops occupy a given area, but act as a buffer zone between local belligerents. This means that they have no offensive role (and no offensive capability) in the conflict. Indeed, the peacekeeping force does not try to hold a given piece of territory and has no legal or professed sovereignty over the territory it occupies. Its main goal is to prevent incidents that might permanently jeopardize a cease-fire agreement. Peacekeeping forces achieve this goal as much by serving as a confidence-building mechanism as they do by their military capabilities. Thus, a large part of a traditional peacekeeping mission involves patrolling a deployment area, searching for violations of the cease-fire agreement, and attempting to resolve conflicts related to the agreement by acting as a conciliator between the hostile parties.⁸⁸

Traditional peacekeeping operations also have the distinguishing feature of limited military capability. Use of force by peacekeepers is authorized only for self-defense or defense of the mission, and then largely to deter small-scale threats, not to prevent a general resumption of fighting.⁸⁹ For this reason, a typical peacekeeping soldier is armed only with a rifle, and peacekeeping units have access only to vehicles for transportation purposes and not to those that might be used for attack. Facing the latter threat, peacekeepers have generally been withdrawn or have stood aside after token resistance.⁹⁰

An important conceptual component of traditional peacekeeping is that of neutrality. Peacekeeping troops are not designed to alter the prevailing power

⁸⁸ Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 56-7.

⁸⁹ Mackinlay and Chopra, "Second Generation Multinational Operations."

distribution, nor do they wish to appear threatening to the local population. This is not to say that the UN does not pass judgement on one side of a conflict. Yet peacekeeping forces do not usually overtly favor one party in a conflict. This concept of neutrality goes beyond the purpose of the mission, and includes the composition of troops. Most UN peacekeeping missions are made up of troops from nonaligned states. Soldiers from the major powers, or those from other states with a vested interest in the conflict at hand, are explicitly not used for the very reason of neutrality.

But perhaps the most prevalent feature of traditional peacekeeping, one that is not necessarily found in more modern interpretations of peacekeeping, is that they must have full consent of the host state in which troops will be deployed. Traditional peacekeeping operations recognize the sovereignty of states and assign a role for implementing agency proportionate to the authority granted by the states involved. The absence of such permission could endanger the mission of the entire operation. It is likely that any attempts to station troops without the consent of the host country would precipitate military attacks on those forces by the host country. Not only would this defeat the purpose of limiting hostilities in the area, but it would also be suicidal for the troops that have neither the military equipment nor the training to resist actions from a well-armed and determined enemy.⁹¹

Undoubtedly, traditional peacekeeping has been the most prevalent form of peacekeeping employed by the United Nations, and it continues to be utilized today. Yet as time progressed, traditional peacekeeping was not applicable to many of the security-threatening situations in the world. The electronics revolution opened the door for

⁹⁰ Ibid, 57.

⁹¹ Ibid, 56.

publicized humanitarian disasters. Genocide, ethnic expulsion, and crimes against humanity were now broadcast via satellite-linked cameras on the nightly news. It was obvious that simple peacekeeping did nothing to stop the underlying causes of conflict. The public cried out for government action to stop these atrocities. But under the rules of traditional peacekeeping, these crises were internal, to be dealt with by the local government. In order for the UN to legitimately intervene, a new theory on peacekeeping was essential.

Multidimensional Peace Operations

Multidimensional peace operations emerged near the end of the Cold War. As the number of conflicts with East-West dimensions came to a close, the members of the Security Council were able to agree on more ambitious missions to help belligerents make the transition to a sustainable peace.⁹² The mandates for these missions are not limited to facilitating the reduction of tensions between former foes (as in the case of traditional peacekeeping), but also help implement a peace accord that addresses the causes of the conflict. This was a significant development for the United Nations, as member-states for the first time attempted to resolve the underlying structure of international strife. Incorporating this notion of positive peace – not merely the absence to war) into the traditional peacekeeping mission was essential for the post-Cold War world.

In most cases- unlike traditional peacekeeping- multidimensional operations have an implementation schedule and a timeline. This operational deadline gives the UN and other external actors more leverage over the local parties than would an open-ended

⁹² Mackinlay and Chopra, “Second Generation Multinational Operations.”

mandate. The UN utilized this leverage in Cambodia and Mozambique, offering the local factions one, time-limited chance to implement their peace accords with outside help.⁹³ However, local parties must believe that the worst consequences of compliance (losing a UN-supervised election) is preferable to taking up arms again. Otherwise, peace may fall apart, as it did in Angola in 1992.⁹⁴

Because multidimensional peace operations primarily occur in intrastate conflicts, they operate in a much more complex domestic political environment than does traditional peacekeeping. And although they usually operate with the consent of local parties, they may use limited force against local elements that actively work to hinder progress. This entails the greater risk of casualties than traditional peacekeeping, and a greater pressure to use force to keep a peace accord on track.⁹⁵

Also unlike traditional peacekeeping missions, multidimensional UN operations have civilian components that may outnumber the military, and a civilian chief of mission who usually carries the title “Special Representative of the Secretary General.” The civilian components may include administrators, election supervisors and/or poll watchers, an information section to educate the public about electoral procedures and help develop grass-roots democratic institutions, a refugees and displaced persons resettlement unit, a component to monitor and report human rights abuses, and civilian police observers. The military helps maintain a secure environment in which the civilian components can work, a role that may involve a number of tasks not found in traditional peacekeeping, such as guarding polling stations, transporting refugees to resettlement areas, and assisting with the demobilization and disarmament of local forces.

⁹³ See Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Humanitarian Intervention

Humanitarian interventions, unlike the previous two mission types, are undertaken to relieve suffering in the midst of an ongoing conflict or situation of anarchy. By employing this type of mission objective, the UN has openly embraced the idea of 'positive' peace. In multidimensional operations, peacemaking was a dual goal, in conjunction with peacekeeping. In humanitarian intervention, peacemaking takes the primary role, assuaging the structural violence that precipitates and prolongs conflict-which is the key concept for positive peace.⁹⁶

These operations are considered a temporary measure to help non-combatants survive the stresses of war. As the UN discovered in Yugoslavia, however, once deployed they can be difficult to terminate unless the conflict is brought to an end or, as in Somalia, the circumstances on the ground literally drive them out of the country. Humanitarian interventions may parallel diplomatic initiatives to reach a negotiated settlement of the conflict, as in Bosnia, or that task may be assigned to the leadership of UN forces on the ground, as in Somalia.⁹⁷

The advantages to UN-led humanitarian intervention are great. First, peacekeepers can protect relief agencies already located in the area, ensuring that supplies reach the affected locations without interference from the belligerents. This benefits all sides in the conflict, as well as being the optimal solution for the distressed population. It relieves the central government and the rebels of the burden of providing food and other assistance to those in the areas they control. Such protection not only guarantees that the affected population receives the supplies it needs but increases the

⁹⁵ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

likelihood of more assistance, as international donors will be more generous when they know that supplies will reach their intended destination. The disputants will also have less incentive to attack supply convoys headed to their opponent's sector; they no longer have to fear that those supplies will be diverted to military personnel. Despite the seeming advantages, however, humanitarian intervention has significant problems which cannot be ignored.

Many have pointed out that local sovereignty is at stake in missions of humanitarian intervention. Indeed, the UN Charter prohibits interventions "in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction" of a state.⁹⁸ Yet by claiming that a situation constitutes a "threat to international peace and security" the Security Council can overrule this stipulation. These threats may include the risk of conflict spreading to other states or an exodus of refugees that threatens political and economic stability in a region. The argument is also put forth that humanitarian interventions are an effort to protect the source of a state's sovereignty, namely, its population, from the devastation of civil war or a renegade government.

Operationally quite difficult, peacekeepers may be violently opposed by local factions as they try to support and protect the civilian, non-combatant, section of the population. The intervention force may take limited offensive action to counter local forces that threaten the mission, but at the risk of the whole operation sliding into peace enforcement (see next section). This leads to the main concern with humanitarian interventions; limiting these missions to the safeguarding of civilian food and medical

⁹⁷ See Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*.

⁹⁸ UN Charter. www.un.org

supplies has proven exceedingly difficult. As William J. Durch, senior associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center, points out

One mission requirement leads to another. Once supplies have been escorted to regional distribution centers, they may need safeguarding from local looters. If further distribution to needy populations is not supervised and protected by the intervention force, supplies may be siphoned off by local power brokers. Thugs and militias may have to be reasoned with forcefully but, conversely, the whole operation may have to look the other way at times to avoid being dragged wholesale into whatever local disputes caused the humanitarian crisis in the first place. Such assiduous efforts to draw a line between protecting food and protecting its recipients may eventually come to be seen as morally (and politically) untenable, leading to a broadening of the intervenors' mandate anyway.⁹⁹

The presence of multiple national, international, or non-governmental relief groups whose activities on the scene predate the UN's intervention, and whose protection may have been the proximate cause of that intervention, are a leading cause of the intrinsic complexity associated with humanitarian intervention. The peace force must interact with these groups, who have their own policy priorities, field objectives, and sources of funding, to coordinate activities and share information. Even beyond these tasks, the groups may need direct assistance with transportation and communications, in addition to intelligence briefings and medical support. But while they may need peacekeepers for the security of supply depots and relief convoys, aid providers are often reluctant to cooperate. Such cooperation can damage their image of neutrality (and thus their effectiveness) and make them even more prominent targets of local factions. They may also have preexisting security arrangements with local "protectors" who may prove reluctant to give up their (extorted) incomes.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

In addition, there are logistical problems with humanitarian intervention. Unlike traditional peacekeeping operations, those distributing food and medicine may have to operate in a war zone. One must expect casualties even under the best of circumstances; as part of their assignment, peacekeepers will have to venture into the most dangerous areas. Furthermore, not being deployed at fixed positions in a neutral area increases a peacekeeping force's vulnerability. In the air and on the ground, a peacekeeping force will move frequently and cannot secure the areas in which it travels, which requires the cooperation of the belligerents and perhaps some changes in the normal procedure of UN peacekeeping. Indeed, one analyst argues that NATO, a traditional military group, is a better institution than a UN peacekeeping operation for this kind of mission.¹⁰¹

Examples of such humanitarian intervention would include the U.S.- and UN-led operations in Somalia (1992-95), the UN operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1993, prior to NATO involvement), and the U.S.-led Operations Provide Comfort in northern Iraq (1991-96).¹⁰² In each of these situations, disaster, in the form of famine, massacre, and oppression, beset hundreds of thousands of people – and prompted international assistance. In each case the UN first opted for a purely humanitarian operation. In Somalia, care packages were air-lifted in by planes and helicopters. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United Nations Human Rights Commission supervised humanitarian assistance in the form of food, medicine, and protection. In 1991, the Security Council passed Resolution 688, calling for Iraq to allow access to international relief organizations so that they could care for the repressed Kurdish and Shiite populations.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, 153.

¹⁰² Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*.

¹⁰³ United Nations Peacekeeping website, www.un.org/pko

In each of these cases, however, the mandate calling for humanitarian assistance was incomplete. The US-led Operation Restore Hope (a peace enforcement) was called in to Somalia when it became apparent that aid packages were not finding their way to the needy. In Bosnia, Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suspended humanitarian assistance in 1993 – forcing policymakers to address the deeper problems in the area and leading to NATO involvement in the form of another peace enforcement. In Iraq, humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people proved inadequate and the implementation of a no-fly zone and economic sanctions against Iraq continue to this day.¹⁰⁴

Overall, it is generally agreed that humanitarian interventions are the most problematic of current UN peacekeeping operations.¹⁰⁵ After the disasters of Bosnia and Somalia, the UN has been reluctant to send in intervenors, especially without the complete support of all sides of a civil conflict. More likely than not, in these cases, the UN will simply opt for peace enforcement.

Peace Enforcement

Peace enforcement, unlike the previous categories, relies on the idea that peacekeeping forces should be allowed to initiate military force and restore order. The idea that a peacekeeping force, rather than a military army, should initiate action is a revolutionary idea, and conflicts with the original conditions set forth by Undersecretary General Urquhart.¹⁰⁶ For in this type of operation, the full consent of all local parties is not a requirement. Instead, peacekeeping troops may enter an area without permission in

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

order to reestablish peace and security. This change in philosophy can be directly attributed to the incorporation of peacemaking and peacebuilding into the traditional notion of peacekeeping. Specifically, peacekeepers must work to resolve or eliminate the causes of conflict; otherwise diplomatic efforts to stop the violence may be useless. In order for this to occur, troops may need to be inserted before permission can be granted.

To this effect, peace enforcers may use coercive means to suppress conflict and create a *de facto* cease-fire and facilitate negotiations among local belligerents, or to protect non-combatant populations facing a general collapse of governance (as in the case of U.S.-led intervention in Somalia in late 1992).¹⁰⁷ This type of mission may also be authorized to use coercive means to maintain a cease-fire or implement a peace accord in particularly dangerous circumstances (as in the case of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) for Bosnia-Herzegovina in late 1995).¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, when intervenors have the political will to escalate the involvement and decide that the only way to protect civilians is to suppress or stop the conflict through the use of coercive force, a humanitarian intervention can evolve into peace enforcement.

The rules of engagement for a peace enforcement operation, which define the circumstances under which deadly force may be used, will seek to minimize casualties, among both the peace enforcers and the local population. In consequence, peace enforcement may rely more heavily on non-lethal weaponry than a traditional combat force. In an attempt to remain impartial, an enforcement operation may also employ the “minimum necessary force” evenhandedly- that is, against any party violating a cease-fire. The reluctance on the part of peacekeepers to use force, however, can be interpreted

¹⁰⁷ Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

by belligerents as weakness or as a lack of will. In this way, peace enforcement may actually encourage continued violations of a cease-fire.¹⁰⁹

Crucial to the success of any peace enforcement operation is an accompanying diplomatic mission. In practice, although clear superiority over combined local forces may suppress fighting, diplomatic action must work to resolve underlying disputes, lest fighting reemerge at lower levels in the form of guerrilla or terrorist activities. Ultimately, successful conclusion of any kind of peace operation must entail some form of political settlement. The UN has developed a set of “crucially important” innovations that help manage the making of peace on a consensual basis. Among them is diplomatic device called Friends of the Secretary General. This brings together multinational leverage for UN diplomacy to help make and manage peace. Composed of ad hoc, informal, multilateral diplomatic mechanisms that join together states in support of initiatives of the secretary general, it legitimates with the stamp of UN approval and supervision the pressures interested states can bring to bear to further the purposes of peace and the UN.¹¹⁰

The general problem with peace enforcement missions is their sporadic nature. In general, “the international community’s response to dire emergencies has left much to be desired, reflecting its basically anarchical nature and its members’ disparate definitions of national interests.”¹¹¹ Even in the face of genocide, peace enforcement is the exception,

¹⁰⁹ An example of this situation arose in Rwanda during April of 1994. UN peacekeepers were told not to use force against Hutu extremists. As a result Belgian troops were taken hostage, tortured, and murdered – along with the Prime Minister they were assigned to protect. See Chapter 3 for more details.

¹¹⁰ Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, ed. Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention. Columbia University Press. New York. 1999. Page 200.

¹¹¹ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 6.

rather than the rule. This may stem from confusion regarding the inclusion of enforcement as a type of peacekeeping operation.

Once enforcement is included in a peacekeeper's mission, the international perspective on peacekeeping becomes clouded. This may undermine support for the strategy, as people and governments object to various enforcement actions taken by peacekeeping troops. Likewise, it may make states less inclined to accept even a traditional peacekeeping force, perhaps fearing that the troops might take actions against national interests and in violation of sovereignty. The end result may be that the stature of peacekeeping, and therefore the likelihood that it will be adopted by international and other organizations, will be diminished by the failures liable to accompany the expansion of peacekeeping roles to include enforcement.¹¹²

As noted above, prime examples of peace enforcement include UN intervention in Somalia (discussed in detail in chapter 3), Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Gulf War. A simpler illustration of peace enforcement, however, comes from the 1994-5 multilateral intervention in Haiti. Its aim was to restore democracy and, by doing so, to stop the human rights violations of the de facto military regime. It differed from traditional combat in that US forces did not plan to destroy the Haitian military unless it offered resistance as the legitimate government was restored. It differed from traditional peacekeeping in that the troops were obviously partisan – in favor of the democratic government and against the regime in power. It did not have the consent of the local government and its troops were heavily armed. It operated solely under the understanding that the international peace had been 'breached.' Once the threat of

¹¹² For a detailed analysis of sovereignty and its affect on UN peacekeeping, see Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 3-11.

coercive force was effective in obtaining a negotiated settlement, the Haiti operation shifted from peace enforcement to multidimensional peacekeeping with “residual responsibility for maintenance of civil order.”¹¹³

Comparing the Categories

According to the Stimson Center, all peacekeeping operations undertaken to date can be reduced to these four categories- traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peace operations, humanitarian intervention, and peace enforcement.¹¹⁴ There are several ways to view the progression from traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement. First, as theories of peacekeeping move towards peace enforcement, the level of local consent decreases. Remember, in traditional peacekeeping, all local parties have agreed to a UN presence. Multidimensional operations also involve nominally full consent, but their mandates tend to be more complex, leading to reduced levels of acceptance as some local factions maneuver for advantage. Humanitarian interventions require even less local consent, and peace enforcement missions may be deployed before conflict has begun to wane.

Another way to view peacekeeping operations is by complexity of the mandate. Again, this follows the trend seen previously- that is, complexity increases as missions move away from traditional peacekeeping and towards peace enforcement. Similarly, the probability of coercive force increases along the same parameters. This probability is directly correlated with the risk to peacekeepers and the local population. Specifically, traditional peacekeeping missions are far less likely to involve casualties than

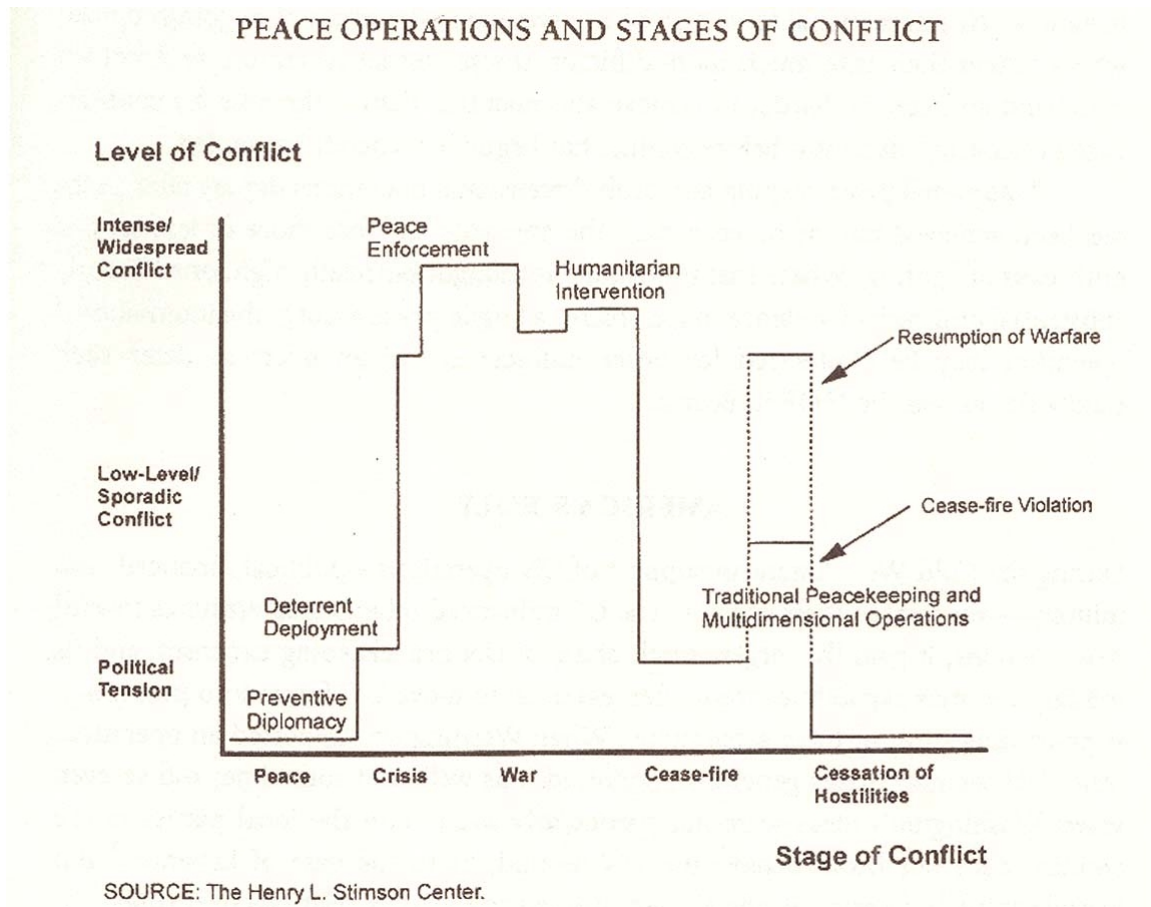
¹¹³ Ibid, 7.

¹¹⁴ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 3.

multidimensional operations, which in turn are less hazardous than humanitarian missions. And of course, peace enforcement operations are the most treacherous of all.

There is also a natural progression of peacekeeping seen in the stages of conflict. Figure 1 locates the various types of peace operations according to the phase and intensity of conflict that they typically face when first deployed. The vertical axis represents the nominal intensity of conflict, from political tension through high-intensity warfare. The horizontal axis portrays that nominal phases of a conflict, from start-up through cessation of hostilities, although an actual timeline could show repeated cycles of fighting and cease-fires, as suggested by the dotted lines in the graph.

Figure 1¹¹⁵



Finally, there is increased use of positive peace as the mission moves from traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement. Specifically, traditional peacekeeping uses the idea of negative peace alone, and focuses on the functional definition of peacekeeping. Multidimensional operations attach an equal importance to both peacekeeping and peacemaking, including positive peace for the first time as a crucial element of the mission. Humanitarian interventions place a primary role on peacemaking, leaving the peacekeeping to other sources. And last but not least, peace

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 9.

enforcement incorporates all three ideas, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, into its mandate, completing the cycle of positive peace.

These theoretical aspects of UN peacekeeping provide the following chapter, a brief history of UN intervention, with a broad, conceptual foundation. Instead of being a dry recitation of factual information, the history of UN intervention in Chapter 3 helps to explain and concretize the abstract underpinnings of the term ‘peacekeeping.’ Moreover, the special attention paid to UN interventions in Somalia and Rwanda brings together the theoretical and historical implications of this project. Specifically, what role does the media play in peacekeeping, and how can the United Nations best facilitate the relationship between their peacekeepers and the media?

Chapter 3:

A Brief History of Media Coverage and UN Interventions

The first significant effort to cover UN-mandated interventions began with the Korean War in 1950.¹¹⁶ Journalists were initially granted virtually unlimited access to the front lines, with “only a voluntary code of war reporting aimed at preserving military secrets.”¹¹⁷ General MacArthur’s original system of voluntary censorship changed to full military censorship at the request of reporters. In the absence of official guidelines, correspondents found that the definition of security was so loose that they were forced into “severe self-censorship in an attempt to stay within the nebulous boundaries.”¹¹⁸ This war, while legitimized by the United Nations, was not a real peacekeeping operation; rather, it can be best characterized as a US-led collective security enforcement.

The first true attempt at UN peacekeeping occurred as a result of the Suez Crisis of 1955-6. On November 4, 1956, the General Assembly authorized the secretary-general to set up a UN force to be dispatched to the region. The stated goal was to facilitate 1) a cease-fire, 2) the withdrawal of forces, and 3) the reopening of the Suez Canal. Unfortunately, there was no ready plan for implementation. A peace observation group was inadequate to the task, but collective enforcement was politically impossible. Without a clear precedent to follow, the resolution authorizing the peacekeeping force

¹¹⁶ To be clear, the Korean action was not led by UN peacekeepers; rather UN authorization was used as a legitimizing factor to garner support from the international community. The Korean action was largely a US-led initiative. “All important strategic and tactical decision pertaining to Korea that carried the UN’s name were in fact made in the White House or the Pentagon. A number of other states fought for the defense of South Korea, but the military operation was, in fact, a US operation behind a blue international fig leaf.” Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 48.

¹¹⁷ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

“did not make clear what kind of force was envisioned, spelling out neither a fully articulated strategy nor guidelines for its operation.”¹¹⁹ Instead, it was Canadian foreign minister Lester Pearson who developed many of the ideas behind UN peacekeeping and designed the framework adopted for the peacekeeping force. As a result, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) was the first real peacekeeping operations. What made it unique was the combination of peacekeeping components.

First UNEF I was under the direction of the secretary-general and under the field command of a neutral officer appointed by the UN executive head. This was a significant step forward from any previous peace observation missions in which units were directed by their own national commanders... Second, UNEF I troops did not include any force contributions from the major powers, a strategy used in a few observation missions in the past that now became a guiding principle for peacekeeping operations. Third, UNEF I was designed to be a strictly neutral force in action and purpose, in addition to troop composition. The force was not designed to affect the military balance in the area or to favor one side or the other in its activities. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, UNEF I acted as an interpositional force between the protagonists. This represented a qualitative difference from any peace observation forces before, which had neither the personnel nor the mission to serve as a physical barrier between hostile parties.¹²⁰

Thus, UNEF I provided the conceptual and logistical foundation upon which virtually all future UN peacekeeping operations were based. In fact, Brian Urquhart gleaned his six characteristics (discussed in Chapter 2) for successful UN intervention from this first attempt at peacekeeping in the Suez Canal.

This emphasis on impartiality and extremely limited activities helped the United Nations remain viable throughout the Cold War. With both the United States and the USSR holding veto power in the Security Council, only through consensus could the United Nations navigate the often turbulent waters of global politics. And for the most

¹¹⁸ Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 53.

¹¹⁹ Diehl, *International Peacekeeping*, 30.

part, the United Nations stayed on the sidelines, instigating peacekeeping operations in only the most politically acceptable situations. In the majority of cases, diplomatic avenues were investigated, as the thought of placing international troops in between East-West tensions was considered untenable. During the Cold War, media attention on UN-mandated operations was scarce, with most coverage during this time concerned with image development of the United Nations.¹²¹ Diplomats, however, usually discouraged press coverage of negotiations-in-progress, and “program planning and development lacked the headline-grabbing character of international hostilities.”¹²² The few press members interested in reporting from the ground lacked the ability to transmit time-sensitive information, thus, operational security concerns remained at a minimum. Likewise, most missions during this era can be classified as traditional peacekeeping operations and there were few, if any, military strategies which might be withheld from the public. Media restrictions for journalists covering the field of operations, therefore, were not an issue during this period.

Lack of media attention changed forever in 1988, when UN peacekeeping operations received the Nobel Peace Prize for their continuing efforts at international peace. Weiss, et al, notes that a “veritable cottage industry of peacekeeping publications has emerged since the award.”¹²³ With this recognition, combined with the unprecedented expansion in the number and scope of UN missions, peacekeeping operations have attracted significant media attention ever since. In the late 1980s and the beginning of 1990, UN peacekeeping operations in Namibia, Central America, and

¹²⁰ Ibid, 31.

¹²¹ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*.

¹²² Lee, “Peace and the press.”

¹²³ Weiss, Forsythe, and Coate, *Changing World Politics*, 55.

Cambodia involved the implementation of international peace accords, agreed upon by the local parties and the international community.¹²⁴ In recent years, however, UN intervention in Somalia, the Persian Gulf, and Bosnia has “required the military enforcement of UN mandates. It is in these cases that the question of media restrictions has come into controversy and debate.”¹²⁵

UN Collective Security – The Persian Gulf War

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 prompted a swift and vigorous response from the international community – leading to one of the few collective security actions in recent history. But how was this possible, given the notoriously difficult precursors to collective security?¹²⁶ As Ted Galen Carpenter points, out, the Persian Gulf War was one of the few times that all the conditions for collective action were in place. Carpenter argues that the international community operated under a series of assumptions that allowed the United Nations, under the leadership of the United States, to pursue action against Iraq.

...(1) the invasion was a dangerous precedent that jeopardized the stability of the entire post-Cold War international system; (2) Saddam’s takeover of Kuwait was probably the prelude to aggression against Saudi Arabia and the gulf emirates, a step that could make Iraq the dominant power in the region; (3) Saddam was in a position to control the world’s oil supply and, therefore, have a ‘stranglehold’ on the economies of the United States and the rest of the industrialized world; (4) it was a ‘vital interest’ of the United States not only to protect Saudi Arabia but to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait and restore the political status quo in that county; (5) if the United States did not lead an international effort to counter Iraq’s aggression, no other nation or combination of nations was willing to do or capable of doing so; and (6) because Saddam was ‘the new Hitler,’ failure

¹²⁴ See Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*.

¹²⁵ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

¹²⁶ These conditions, as noted in the previous chapter, are (1) the existence of pre-formed alliances, (2) the power of states involved, (3) national interests of the state involved, (4) the absence of a clear victim, and (5) the absence of clear aggression.

to stop Bagdad's aggression would lead to a repetition of the 1930s, eventually culminating in a global war.¹²⁷

Thus, the Persian Gulf War cannot be considered a UN peacekeeping mission; rather, it neatly falls under the definition of collective security. Despite this distinction, however, the UN-authorized action against Iraq has important implications for this project. This is because the Persian Gulf War marked the height of tensions between media and military in UN interventions. That is, the relationship between the military and the media formed during the Gulf War has directly influenced media coverage of peacekeeping missions over the past decade. Similarly, media restrictions for recent peacekeeping operations are based largely upon the Statement of Principles, a document written as a result of the Persian Gulf War. As a consequence, an investigation of the media restrictions placed on journalists in the Gulf War offer important insights into the military/media relationship of recent peacekeeping missions. It also helps to predict the future of media restrictions by evidencing the benefits and costs of standardized media regulations. What follows is an account of media restrictions placed on field reporters during the action.

Chronology of Events

On 2 August 1990, two Iraqi armored divisions invaded the northern border of Kuwait. Kuwait City was completely dominated within five hours; Saddam Hussein's troops controlled the entire country within twelve hours. The United Nations immediately imposed economic sanctions on Iraq. At the request of King Fahd and with the approval of the United Nations Security Council, troops were dispatched to protect Saudi Arabia from further Iraqi aggression.

¹²⁷ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 186.

Initially, the United Nations did not place any formal restrictions on media coverage of the conflict. Instead, the biggest problem for the press was the reluctance of Saudi officials to issue visas to Western media.¹²⁸ Negotiations between US officials and the Saudi government, and between US news organizations and the Saudi government, resulted in the Saudi government permitting a limited number of journalists to enter the country. The provision set by the Saudis, however, required all entering correspondents to be members of the DOD National Media Pool (DDNMP). In addition, reporters were required to sign the Pentagon's 'ground rules', which contained the following provision: "You MUST stay with your military escort at all times until released, and follow their instructions regarding your activities... [These rules] are not intended to hinder your reporting. They are only to facilitate troop movement, ensure safety, and protect operational security."¹²⁹ In addition, the military established an accreditation system that required journalists to agree to ground rules in order to be accredited. These rules included:

1. prohibitions on the identification of casualties,
2. description of future military plans,
3. identification of units or bases,
4. description of specific methods of operations, and
5. provision of other types of information.¹³⁰

Most of these rules, however, were standard restrictions that US reporters had adhered to in the past.

The express purpose of the DDNMP was to facilitate immediate entry into the field. At the request of news media, it was extended until Saudi cooperation was assured.

¹²⁸ Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 73-77.

¹²⁹ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 199.

¹³⁰ These included coverage of religious services, as per the request of the Saudi government. Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 89.

The pool system was dismantled on August 26 and the press began to file unilaterally. During this time, however, there was concern that the lack of official rules (the DDNMP ‘ground rules’ was considered a voluntary agreement) governing field reporting would lead to breaches in operational security. In this case, the military was particularly concerned with the instantaneous transmission of television broadcasts. Lee notes, “the speed and accuracy with which television could communicate troop locations and battle images, and the ability of enemy forces to monitor the Cable News Network (CNN) and other US broadcast media, added new dimensions to the power and danger of the news media.”¹³¹ Livingston agrees, adding that, “as communication equipment becomes more mobile and global in its reach, and real-time reporting of all types becomes more pervasive, the danger to operational security will become more pronounced.”¹³² As a result, within 10 days of the Bush administration’s announcement that troops would be deployed to the Gulf region, the US Central Command (which led the coordinated effort in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm) drafted a 10-page secret memo. Entitled Annex Foxtrot, this memo “constituted a detailed blueprint for the Pentagon’s information policy in the gulf theater.”¹³³ This policy, however, did not go into effect until later in the operation. Between the time the pools were disbanded and hostilities began, the Joint Information Bureaus (JIB), which were in charge of military-media issues, “arranged trips and interviews for independent news coverage. Open coverage was allowed in the theater of operations, subject to military restrictions, although there was little to report other than troop arrivals and training.”¹³⁴

¹³¹ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

¹³² Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect,” 5.

¹³³ Carpenter, *The Captive Press*, 196.

¹³⁴ Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 84.

During this time, negotiations between the Pentagon and media organizations aimed towards a media policy in the event of escalation. On 6 October 1990, the Pentagon sent a joint public affairs team into Saudi Arabia. The team concluded, “given the size of the area of probable operations, the possibility of Iraq using chemical warfare, and the violence of the armor battle, pools would be necessary for coverage of the ground war, at least at first.”¹³⁵

In coming to this decision, military planners pointed to the logistical difficulties encountered in accommodating the large number of journalists who wanted to cover the war.¹³⁶ With this issue in mind, the military implemented a pool system that served to limit the number of correspondents in combat areas. The military granted pool membership based upon affiliation with media organization. Within the pool, journalists shared their information and work product among all the pool members. Non-pool members were restricted from combat zones and risked violating local security measures. Lee notes, however, that “the military expanded the number of pools from eleven to twenty-five, permitting 200 reporters to accompany the troops in the invasion of Kuwait.”¹³⁷

These negotiations finally resulted in a system of press pools, military escorts, limited access, and security reviews, to be implemented at the beginning of any combat initiative. According to Assistant Defense Secretary Pete Williams, these ground rules “were not intended to prevent journalists from reporting on incidents that might embarrass the military or make military operations look sanitized. Instead, they were

¹³⁵ Ibid, 90.

¹³⁶ Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect,” 4.

¹³⁷ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

intended simply and solely to prevent publication of details that could jeopardize a military operation or endanger the lives of US troops.”¹³⁸

The contingency plan espousing these restrictions was issued on December 13, 1990. Its stated objective was to “ensure news media access to combat areas from the onset of hostilities, or as soon thereafter as possible, in Operation Desert Shield.” In Phase I of the plan, to begin immediately, two pools, each consisting of eighteen news media already in Saudi Arabia, would be “exercised” simultaneously in order for the media and the military to become familiar with the pool system. Phase II activated these pools when the war began. Additional pools would be sent out to “fill the gaps in coverage.” Phase III would begin when “open coverage is possible and would provide for the unilateral coverage of activities.” At this stage, pools would be disbanded and media would operate independently, though under military escort.¹³⁹ After some dispute over these restrictions, the Pentagon issued a memo with revised ground rules on 7 January 1991. This version contained provisions requiring media to work in pools for the duration of the conflict, and spelled out twelve categories of information that should not be reported.¹⁴⁰

When the coalition’s air attacks began on 16 January 1991 the press pools went into action. As Navy Lieutenant Walker remembers it: “Initially we had 10 or 15 ground

¹³⁸ Williams. “View from the Pentagon: Let’s Face It, This Was the Best War Coverage We’ve Ever Had.” *Washington Post*. 17 March 1991.

¹³⁹ Department of Defense Contingency Plan for Media Coverage of Hostilities, Operation Desert Shield, December 13, 1990, reprinted in Congress, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access*, 297.

¹⁴⁰ They were 1) specific numbers of troops, weapons systems, 2) details of future operations, 3) specific locations of military forces, 4) details of rules of engagement, 5) intelligence collection activities, 6) information on troop movements that could endanger their security, 7) identification of aircraft origin, 8) effectiveness of enemy war systems, 9) identification of downed aircraft while search and rescue missions were underway, 10) information of special forces, 11) specific operating methods and methods, and 12) information on operation or support vulnerabilities or support vulnerabilities that could be used by the

rules and the day before the air war began, almost all of them disappeared, because Pete Williams was being approached by a lot of editors and news directors who didn't agree with those ground rules. The main thing we were concerned with, of course, was security."¹⁴¹ The pools functioned smoothly, with few numbers of ground rules appealed and no serious violations. Still, some reporters refused to abide by the pool system and attempted to cover the conflict unilaterally. The dangers of this approach were readily apparent. Four days after the start of the air war, CBS correspondent Bob Simon and his crew of three were captured by Iraqi forces while driving their four-wheel drive vehicle to the Kuwait-Saudi border. This revealed another aspect of operational security, one which the US government was quick to point out. Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Halls recalled:

When Bob Simon got lost, we had calls every day, ten times a day. We had the *New York Times* and NPR and a lot of the very publications that are always saying 'Don't worry about us, we'll take our own chances' calling here and writing editorials saying 'Don't sign a cease-fire until they free our reporters. Don't end the war until we have our reporters back. Don't send any American troops home until we get our reporters back.' That puts the lie to the idea that reporters take their own chances; it just doesn't happen that way. The commander's got responsibility for what happens on the battlefield and he has responsibility for any civilian who's out there.¹⁴²

On 12 February 1991, US Central Command's Public Affairs Office issued a contingency plan for media coverage of the impending ground war. The office said that with the beginning of the land battle, "the handling of media pool products and enforcement of ground rules governing media coverage becomes even more critical to the

enemy. Operation Desert Shield Ground Rules and Supplementary Guidelines, 7 January 1991, in Congress, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access*, 327.

¹⁴¹ Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 101-2.

¹⁴² Baroody, *Media Access and the Military*, 119.

success of the operation.”¹⁴³ When the ground war commenced on 23 February 1991, US Defense Secretary of State Dick Cheney announced that regular press briefings would be suspended, in lieu of the dangers reporting may have posed to the Allied forces. On the same day, the office of the Secretary of Defense sent a “flash” cable to military public affairs officers saying that all sensitive media pool reports, videotape, photos, and audio tape would be held at a forward staging area “to protect sensitive OPSEC concerns during the early stages of the campaign.”¹⁴⁴ This so-called ‘blackout’ was later lifted, although restrictions on information on casualties and damage in Iraq remained in place.

On 28 February 1991, a cease-fire was declared and Iraq agreed to a meeting of military commanders to arrange terms. At this point the Air Force and the Navy ended pool operations, but the Marines and Army continued theirs – citing the possibility of possible ongoing Iraqi attacks. The US Central Command shifted to unilateral coverage in Kuwait City, and expanded independent coverage throughout the theater of operations in the middle of the next week.

According to the chronology above, the case for operational security as the impetus for media restrictions seems reasonable. After all, at the initial offset of each phase (troop deployment, air war, ground war) when uncertainty and risk would be the greatest, media restrictions also increased. When the operation, for example – troop deployment to the Saudi border – was successfully underway and the threat of conflict diminished, so did the restrictions. And immediately following the cease-fire, the

¹⁴³ Cable from USCINCCENT 191325Z, “Public Affairs: Guidance for Contingency Use at Commencement of Ground Phase,” February 19, 1991, in Congress, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access*, 486.

¹⁴⁴ Cable from Secretary of Defense, 232229Z February 1991, subject “Public Affairs – Guidance for Contingency Use at Commencement of Ground Phase Desert Storm,” in Congress, *Pentagon Rules on Media Access*, 486.

military made the shift from press pools to unilateral coverage. The assumptions laid out in the introduction seems to hold. As risk increased, so did media restrictions. Therefore, the tension between the military and the media must be about operational security versus the right to know. Right?

In retrospect, the media did not agree.

Livingston notes that “fear of an unsanitized presentation of the carnage of battle was perhaps central to the military’s efforts to control the media through the use of press pools and military escorts.”¹⁴⁵ Journalists have cited this restriction as a major source of the overly-positive media coverage. As one editor remarked, “the pictures coming out of pool arrangements are quite ordinary. There are no negative aspects to the war.”¹⁴⁶ Captain Greg Hartung, a DOD National Media Pool Coordinator during Desert Storm, disputes this idea, claiming that “some escorts were overzealous in their enforcement of the requirement that a PAO [Public Affairs Officer] had to be present and about security review. But for every one of these there were 20 hardworking PAOs doing the right thing. Trust me, the outcry would have been much more severe if all PAOs had done this.”¹⁴⁷

The media protested the restrictions required by the Pentagon’s ground rules, especially the system of military escorts and the implementation of press pools.¹⁴⁸ The

¹⁴⁵ Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect,” 4.

¹⁴⁶ “Editors Criticize Picture Limits.” *The New York Times*. February 21, 1991.

¹⁴⁷ Greg Hartung, interview by author, Instant Messenger, 29 June 2000.

¹⁴⁸ Although it is beyond the scope of this project, it is also interesting to note that the military was accused of manipulating the press *off* the field. *Washington Post* reporter Bart Gellman cites the following two examples of unnecessary government secrecy as ultimately characteristic of the military’s desire to control ‘spin,’ 1) flat refusal of the Joint Information Bureau during the Gulf War to allow reporters to visit mortuary services units, even long before operations began, and 2) the Army decision after the Gulf War to maintain false reports on cause of death, in about 30 friendly fire fatalities, until it could orchestrate a press conference and explanation many months later. Bart Gellman, interview with author, email, 10 July 2000.

press claimed that both the escorts and the pools limited reporting by excluding the press from areas of interest. John J. Fialka, a *Wall Street Journal* correspondent, remarked, “we were escorted away from most of the violence because the bodies of the dead chopped up by artillery, pulverized by B-52 raids, or lacerated by friendly fire don’t play well, politically.”¹⁴⁹

In addition, the press asserted that the military discriminated in media pools membership, favoring those media organizations that “had a long-term presence of covering Department of Defense military operations over ‘alternative’ media organizations.”¹⁵⁰ Livingston argues that “control of the reporter was a central component of the military’s effort to limit the potential for public relations damage.”¹⁵¹ As such, no reporter from *The New York Times* bureau in Saudi Arabia was given official access to a pool slot before February 10.¹⁵²

Despite these accusations, the military denies manipulating the press. In a speech to the National Newspaper Association shortly after the Gulf War ended, General Colin Powell said the military was “as truthful as possible within the necessary and reasonable constraints of security.”¹⁵³

Did the military systematically withhold information vital to the American public? Was the people’s right to know violated during the Gulf War? Or did the threat to operational security justify the military’s demand for secrecy? Unfortunately, these questions may never be answered. There is, however, a subtler question that *can* be

¹⁴⁹ John F. Fialka, *Hotel Warriors: Covering the Gulf War*, (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1991), 2.

¹⁵⁰ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

¹⁵¹ Livingston, “Clarifying the CNN Effect,” 6.

¹⁵² RW Apple, “Correspondents Protest Pool System.” *The New York Times*. February 12, 1991.

¹⁵³ Smith, *War and Press Freedom*, 203.

investigated – a question that deals with logistics. Is there a way to preempt these tensions before the relationship between the military and the media devolves to name-calling and wild accusations? Is there a realistic way for troops in the field to facilitate the right to know while simultaneously ensuring operational security? And how might the United Nations implement such a plan for its future peacekeeping operations? The next section investigates these questions through an analysis the peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Rwanda.

Broadening the Scope

For the purposes of this study, a comparative analysis of the UN interventions in Somalia and Rwanda will help to examine the above questions. As noted above, the reasons for selecting these two cases are numerous. First, the UN peacekeeping missions in Somalia and Rwanda have similar timing (both missions occurred between 1992-1996).¹⁵⁴ In addition, the operation in Somalia involved a significant number of Americans, while the Rwanda mission involved fewer than 50 Americans. This should help determine if media restrictions are based on the involvement of American citizens, or if they are applied across the board. Finally, both missions progress through different types of peacekeeping, including, traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peace operations, humanitarian intervention, and (in the case of Somalia) peace enforcement. This will provide a comparison between the two cases to determine the level of media

¹⁵⁴ While other UN peacekeeping operations were also occurring at the same time, none of them had enough similar characteristics. For instance, the operation in Cyprus had only 1,000 troops and could not be adequately compared to Somalia or Rwanda. Similarly, the operation in Cambodia, while it had 19,500 troops, did not pass through different stages of peacekeeping, and was therefore inappropriate for use in the risk/restrictions analysis. The same can be said of the operation in Mozambique, which had 6,500 troops, and can be characterized only as a multidimensional peace operation.

restriction according to risk level (and therefore OPSEC concerns), as well as according to American involvement.

If the assumption holds true, as the mission's risk increased, so should the media restrictions. This might suggest that a media policy should be tailored to the type of mission, instead of a single standardized policy. If the assumption does NOT hold true, then we must further investigate. For example, if media restrictions increase as risk increases in situations where Americans are involved, but NOT where Americans are absent, then the need for a standardized UN media policy must be questioned altogether. If the media restrictions have no relation to risk in either case, then a single standardized media policy may be more realistic.

Both cases are analyzed chronologically, taking into account the overall type of peacekeeping exercise at a particular time as well as individual acts of aggression within a phase that may have heightened the perception of risk to peacekeeping troops. This is compared with a chronology of media restrictions to ascertain whether or not risk affects restrictions on covering peacekeeping missions.

UN Intervention in Somalia

Below is a chronology of events occurring in Somalia from 1991-1995. By analyzing the level of risk throughout the UN peacekeeping mission and comparing it to the experiences of field journalists, a clear sense of the relationship between operational security and media restrictions may become clear. But before this comparison can be

effective, a brief history explaining the necessity of United Nations intervention is essential.¹⁵⁵

Chronology of Events

Basically, the events in Somali can be collapsed into three phases beginning with the initial deployment of UN peacekeeping troops (UNOSOM I) into Somalia from 24 April 1992 through 8 December 1992. The events leading to the 1992 creation of the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I, and its eventual successor, UNOSOM II), however, began as early as 1969, when Somali President Abdirashid Sharma'arke was assassinated. Armed forces seized power in a coup, placing General Mohamed Siad Barre in the position of Head of State and President of the Supreme Revolutionary Council. In the following years, several opposition parties were founded, including the Somalia Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), the Somalia National Movement (SNM), and the United Somali Congress (USC). These groups acted as guerrillas, occupying various regions of Somalia, and continuously clashing with government forces.

In response to large-scale violence in December 1990 – January 1991, President Siad Barre declared a state of emergency, leading to the closure and evacuation of the United Nations office in Somalia. On 26 January 1991 President Siad Barre fled Mogadishu, which then fell to USC forces. One faction of the USC proclaimed an interim government headed by Mr. Ali Mahdi Mohamed as interim president. General Mohammed Farah Aidid, Chairman of a rival USC faction, immediately challenged this move. In the next two months, forces loyal to the ex-President Siad Barre staged an

¹⁵⁵ The chronology of events comes from *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992-1996*. Department of

unsuccessful attempt to retake the capital. In response to the continuing turmoil, two separate conferences of faction leaders were held in June-July 1991; however, they failed to resolve the political crisis.¹⁵⁶

On 5 July 1991, at its third congress in Mogadishu, the USC elected General Aidid as its chairman. By September 1991, ex-President Siad Barre's militia had seized Baidoa in the south; fighting continued until April 1992. This resulted in large population displacements, looting of grain stocks, and serious damage to agricultural systems in Somalia's main farming area. This was the main direct cause of the famine in 1992.¹⁵⁷

War again broke out in Mogadishu on 17 November 1991 between the factions of the USC, led by General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi. Fighting continued for over four months, producing heavy loss of life and the de facto division of Mogadishu.¹⁵⁸

In December 1991, the Permanent Mission of Somalia to the United Nations transmitted two letters from the interim Prime Minister.¹⁵⁹ This eventually led to the meeting of USC factions (General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi) in New York and culminated in the signing of an immediate cease-fire in Mogadishu on 3 March 1992.¹⁶⁰ The cease-fire was generally effective, although fighting continued in the south.

Negotiations to establish the composition of UNOSOM troops began in April of 1992, and it is therefore used as the opening date for the first phase of the UN intervention in Somalia. These meetings between Somali factions and United Nations

Public Information. (New York: United Nations, 1996).

¹⁵⁶ *The United Nations and Somalia*, 91.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁵⁹ UN Security Council, S/23445, 20 January 1992.

¹⁶⁰ UN Security Council, S/23693, 11 March 1992.

officials concluded on 23 June 1992, when the Secretary General announced that both factions in Mogadishu had agreed to the immediate deployment of cease-fire observers.¹⁶¹ Beginning 5 July 1992, UNOSOM cease-fire observers arrived in Mogadishu¹⁶² - a group of 50, these troops were inadequately prepared for their task, and the Security Council agreed to consider adding troops.¹⁶³ On 12 August 1992, the Secretary General informed the Security Council that General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi had approved the deployment of a 500-member United Nations security force to protect humanitarian operations in Mogadishu.¹⁶⁴ A week later, the Secretary General recommended increasing the strength of UNOSOM to 3,500 military personnel, a suggestion approved by the Security Council on 28 August 1992.¹⁶⁵ The deployment of the first 500 troops began on September 14, 1992.

On 28 October 1992, General Aidid suddenly declared that the United Nations peacekeepers would no longer be tolerated in the streets of Mogadishu, demanding the expulsion of UNOSOM's coordinator of humanitarian assistance, and rejecting the deployment of UNOSOM forces.¹⁶⁶ On 12 November 1992, General Aidid further demanded the withdrawal of UNOSOM troops from Mogadishu airport two days after the peacekeepers had taken up positions there. The Special Representative refused; the next day, UNOSOM forces at the airport were attacked.¹⁶⁷ Mr. Ali Mahdi prevented ships

¹⁶¹ UN Security Council, S/24179, 25 June 1992.

¹⁶² UN Security Council, S/24480, 24 August 1992, and addendum S/24480/Add.1, 28 August 1992.

¹⁶³ UN Security Council, S/24343, 22 July 1992.

¹⁶⁴ UN Security Council, S/24451, 12 August 1992, S/24452, 14 August 1992, and S/24480, 24 August 1992, and addendum S/24480/Add.1, 28 August 1992

¹⁶⁵ UN Security Council, S/24480, 24 August 1992, and addendum S/24480/Add.1, 28 August 1992, and S/RES/775, 28 August 1992.

¹⁶⁶ UN Security Council, S/24859, 27 November 1992.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

from entering Mogadishu's port; a WFP ship that was allowed entrance is shelled as it attempted to enter the port.¹⁶⁸

On 24 November 1992, the Secretary General reported to the Security Council that it had become "exceedingly difficult for the United Nations operation to achieve the objectives approved by the Security Council" and that "it may become necessary to review the basic premises and principles of the United Nations effort in Somalia."¹⁶⁹ After some review, the Security Council adopted resolution 794, welcoming the offer by the United States to take the lead in organizing a military operation to ensure the delivery of relief supplies to Somalia. In addition, the Security Council authorized the Secretary General and Member States to "use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia."¹⁷⁰ This Security Council authorization of Resolution 794 marked the transition to phase two of the operation.

Thus, the first phase remained primarily a multilateral peace operation, with a limited mandate that allowed the use of force as a last resort and only for self-defense. Admittedly, this was not an effective mandate, as see in the television images from Mogadishu of Pakistani troops trapped at the airport, surrounded by "protection," unable to perform their tasks.¹⁷¹ Although there is temptation to classify this period as a humanitarian intervention, aid into Somalia at this point was conducted mainly through non-governmental organizations and independent UN departments. Any troop support for these groups was done on an individual basis – it was not part of the overall UN goal.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ UN Security Council, S/RES/794 (1992), 3 December 1992.

¹⁷¹ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 319.

It was not until early December 1992 that the humanitarian aspect of the peacekeeping mission, as led by the United States, was included as part of the mandate.

In a letter to US President George Bush on 8 December 1992, the Secretary General suggested that a US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) bring the heavy weapons of organized factions under international control, disarm the irregular gangs and extend its operations to the whole of Somalia, prior to handing over operational responsibility to a new peacekeeping force under UN command.¹⁷² This officially opened phase two of the operation. In the following several weeks, the first units of UNITAF arrived in Somalia, building up to a peak of 37,000 troops. They secured control of nine key towns in southern and central Somalia. UNITAF units also guarded ports, airports, and food distribution centers, and escorted food convoys to areas hit by famine.¹⁷³

During the first week of January 1993, fifteen Somali factions reached an agreement to cease hostilities, demobilize their militias, hand over heavy weapons to a cease-fire monitoring group constituted by UNITAF and UNOSOM, and prepare for a conference on national reconciliation.¹⁷⁴ At the end of March 1993, however, in violation of the cease fire provisions of the January 1993 Addis Ababa Agreement, forces commanded by General Said Hersi “Morgan” (son-in-law of ex-President Siad Barre) captured Kismayo after weeks of fighting with the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) faction led by Colonel Omar Jess, allied with General Aidid. On March 26, the Security Council approved resolution 814, establishing UNOSOM II.¹⁷⁵ The following day, fifteen Somali faction leaders signed a national reconciliation agreement, committing

¹⁷² UN Security Council, S/24992, 19 December 1992.

¹⁷³ UN Security Council, S/24976, 17 December 1992 and S/25126, 19 January 1993.

¹⁷⁴ UN Security Council, S/25168, January 1993.

¹⁷⁵ UN Security Council, S/RES/814 (1993), 26 March 1993.

themselves to disarmament and transition to the formation of a new national Government.¹⁷⁶ Thus began the third and final phase of the operation.

To recap, the second phase of the UN mission in Somalia began with the deployment of the Unified Task Force, led by the United States. Because Resolution 794 authorized troops to use “all necessary means” under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UNITAF phase of the Somali mission qualifies as a peace enforcement operation. As described in Chapter 2, peace enforcement operations have the highest level of risk, due to the high degree of uncertainty and the low levels of consent from local parties. Despite this high level of risk, the UNITAF Operational Plan, divided into four phases, was accomplished in an “exemplary manner. Not only did US military personnel professionalism show through, but forces demonstrated adaptability to a difficult situation and an unfamiliar culture.”¹⁷⁷

Although the third phase of the operation began in March, it was not until 4 May 1993 that UNOSOM II formally assumed responsibility for creating a secure environment in Somalia. It gradually reaching its authorized troop strength of 28,000, supported by a Quick Reaction Force, led by the United States.¹⁷⁸ During the night of 6 May 1993, forces of the militia faction of Colonel Jess conducted a night attack on Kismayo and were repelled by Belgian forces of UNOSOM II. On 5 June 1993, Pakistani troops under UNOSOM II were ambushed, resulting in the death of 34 peacekeepers.¹⁷⁹ The next day, the Security Council adopted resolution 837, authorizing

¹⁷⁶ Addis Ababa Agreement concluded at the first session of the Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia, 27 March 1993.

¹⁷⁷ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 325.

¹⁷⁸ UN Security Council, S/26317, 17 August 1993.

¹⁷⁹ UN Security Council, S/26022, 1 July 1993.

UNOSOM II to take “all necessary measures” against those responsible for the attack on UNOSOM II personnel.¹⁸⁰

Beginning on 12 June 1993, UNOSOM II began a systematic effort in south Mogadishu to reduce USC/SNA weapons. Over the next four months, clashes between UNOSOM II and USC/SNA resulted in casualties on both sides and numerous civilian deaths.¹⁸¹ 17 June 1993, the Special Representative issued a warrant for the arrest of General Aidid – detaining a number of people suspected of being involved in armed attacks against UNOSOM II personnel.¹⁸²

Leaders of factions and clans in Jubaland (southern Somalia) meet on 16 August 1993, and sign a regional peace accord.¹⁸³ On 1 October 1993, after a demand from local Somali authorities that all United Nations personnel withdraw from north-west Somalia, the Security Council expressed the hope that UNOSOM II would be able to continue its work in the area.¹⁸⁴ During a 3 October 1993 raid in south Mogadishu by United States Rangers, 18 Rangers and one Malaysian peacekeeping soldier were killed.¹⁸⁵ President Clinton announced, on 7 October 1993, the withdrawal of all United States combat forces by the end of March. Several other countries followed suit.¹⁸⁶ A unilateral cease-fire was declared on 9 October 1993 by USC/SNA forces.¹⁸⁷

Between December 20-21 of 1993, the General Assembly appealed to all the Somali parties concerned to terminate hostilities and respect the security and safety of

¹⁸⁰ UN Security Council, S/RES/837 (1993), 6 June 1993.

¹⁸¹ UN Press Release SC/5647-SOM/24, 14 June 1993, UN Press Release SC/5650-SOM/28, 18 June 1993, S/26022, 1 July 1993, and S/26738, 12 November 1993.

¹⁸² UN Security Council, S/26022, 1 July 1993.

¹⁸³ UN Security Council, S/26317, 17 August 1993.

¹⁸⁴ UN Security Council, S/26526, 1 October 1993, and S/26527, 1 October 1993.

¹⁸⁵ UN Security Council, S/26738, 12 November 1993, and S/1994/653, 1 June 1994.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

personnel of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and of non-governmental organizations. The Assembly also urged all Somalis to guarantee the protections of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Somalis.¹⁸⁸

On 17 January 1994, in accordance with Security Council resolution 885, UNOSOM II released the last eight prisoners held in connection with the incidents of June-October 1993. At this time, the Imam of Hirab, the principal religious leader of both the Abgal and Habr sub-clans organized a Hawiye peace conference in Mogadishu.

In February 1994 inter-clan fighting resumed in Kismayo, in violation of the regional peace accord of 6 August 1993.¹⁸⁹ In March 1994 the United Nations brought together General Aidid and Mr. Ali Mahdi. On March 24, they signed the Nairobi Declaration, proposing that a national reconciliation conference be convened on May 15 to select a president, vice-presidents, and a prime minister.¹⁹⁰ During this time, the United States and several other countries had completed their withdrawal from UNISOM II, reducing the operation's troop strength from 29,000 to 19,000.¹⁹¹

During April 1994, the USC/SNA of General Aidid seized Merca and clashed with the Hawadle sub-clan of the Hawiye in Mogadishu and Belet Weyne.¹⁹² Five Nepalese soldiers died in cross-fire between rival factions in Mogadishu on 16 May 1994.¹⁹³ On 22 August 1994, an attack on UNOSOM II forces near Baidoa killed seven Indian peacekeepers and wounded nine others. On 25 August 1994, the Security Council strongly condemned the attack and expressed grave concern over the fact that the national

¹⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, A/RES/48/146, 20 December 1993, and A/RES/48/201, 21 December 1993.

¹⁸⁹ UN Security Council, S/1994/614, 24 May 1994.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ UN Security Council, S/1994/12, 6 January 1994, and S/1994/614, 24 May 1994.

¹⁹² UN Security Council, S/1994/614, 24 May 1994.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

reconciliation conference, scheduled for May 15, did not take place.¹⁹⁴ On 31 August 1994, three doctors of the Indian contingent of UNOSOM II died in an attack on a field hospital in Baidoa.

In December 1994, the Security Council called on individuals, national, and international organizations to forward information relating to violations of the mandatory arms embargo established against Somalia. The General Assembly appealed to all the Somali parties concerned to terminate hostilities, engage in a national reconciliation process, and respect the security and safety of personnel of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and of NGOs.¹⁹⁵

With the support of a combined task force of contingents from France, India, Italy, Malaysia, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, UNOSOM II completed a safe withdrawal from Somalia in March 1995.¹⁹⁶ The Secretary General stated that the efforts of the international community to facilitate the search for peace and reconciliation and to bring humanitarian assistance would continue.¹⁹⁷

In sum, UNOSOM, the final phase of the operation, continued to invoke Chapter VII authority until 4 February 1994, when Resolution 897 reduced the organization's military tasks to protecting lines of communication. Thus, UNOSOM II went from peace enforcement back to a multilateral peace operation during its mandate, which ended March 1995.

Thus, it would appear that risk in Somalia gradually built up through UNITAF and the initial months of UNOSOM II and then decreased until the withdrawal of troops

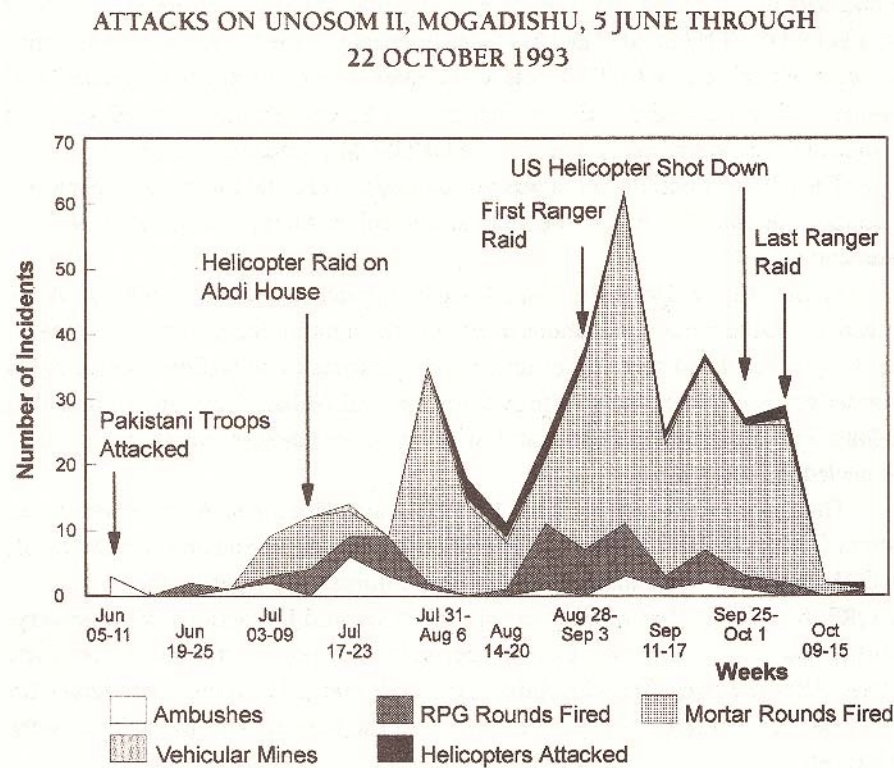
¹⁹⁴ UN Security Council, S/PRST/1994/46, 25 August 1994.

¹⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, A/49/456, 30 September 1994, and A/RES/49/21 L, 20 December 1994.

¹⁹⁶ UN Press Release SG/SM/5571-SOM/66, 2 March 1995.

¹⁹⁷ UN Security Council, S/1995/231, 28 March 1995.

in 1995. Yet, even within each phase of the operation, the level of risk varied dramatically, as seen in Figure 2.



SOURCE: United Nations, *Note by the Secretary-General, S/1994/653*, 1 June 1994, annex 4.

Figure 2

Although this diagram does not specifically discuss risk, it does give an overall picture of the situation in Somalia. For instance, during the latter part of August 1993, the number of mortar rounds increased dramatically. While more mortar shells does not necessarily mean there is greater risk, it does mean increased uncertainty, as the chances for casualties increased with increased artillery action. And with increased uncertainty, operational security – along with the risk of a security leak – becomes a primary concern.

Because of this variation in risk level throughout the Somalia peacekeeping operation, one would also expect the UN media policy to shift in accordance with the threat to operational security. But surprisingly, this was not the case.

UN Media Policy in Somalia

Most striking about the media policy in Somalia is the complete absence of an explicit message on media regulations throughout the operation. Boutros Boutros-Ghali remarked on this situation, noting in the lessons learned from Somalia that

So that all elements of a United Nations operation are giving out a consistent message, there needs to be a comprehensive, long-term information strategy, integrated within the overall operational planning and coordination. An early and comprehensive strategy is also required at the local level, to ensure effective communication with the people about the purpose and goals of United Nations involvement.¹⁹⁸

Indeed, there were several early snafus regarding the lack of official policy, both from the United Nations and its member states. Perhaps the most recognized military/media blunder occurred when the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) stormed the beaches of Mogadishu, during the early hours of 9 December 1992. Wary of the welcome they would receive, the troops were ready for potential conflict with local warlords. *Washington Post* reporter Bart Gellman recalled the incident.

The Marine captain that took me into his company task force before hitting the beach believed – I know, because I sat in on the briefings – that he had a pretty good chance of taking fire as his vehicles arrived. He arrived locked and loaded, with ammo broken out and pretty liberal rules of engagement. That was high risk, high access, from the vantage point of the moment.”¹⁹⁹

Instead of gunfire, however, troops were met by the blinding lights of cameras, as hundreds of reporters recorded the amphibious landing. Although this breach of operational security did not result in any overtly negative response from local belligerents, it did create a sense of frustration between military officials and journalists.

¹⁹⁸ *The United Nations and Somalia*, 87.

¹⁹⁹ Gellman, interview.

Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Pete Williams, remembered the occasion with chagrin.

We had what we thought was an excellent plan, we took reporters to Mombassa, Kenya. They formed up with the units, they got on helicopters, they went out to the Marine amphibious ships, they joined up with units, they went ashore. But what happened was, there just wasn't enough planning for news organizations that had already long been in Somalia. And as the special-ops guys were coming ashore, there they were, blinded by cameras. It was not a great moment for either the military or the media. That was a mistake in planning. *There just has to be a lot more thought about how these things are going to be covered and incorporated into the military planning.* They can't just be thrown in at the end."²⁰⁰

Chicago Tribune correspondent Liz Sly agreed that the media blitz on the Mogadishu beaches was a miscalculation on the part of military planners.

It was US officials who quietly put out word that it would be that night. But even if they hadn't, there is no way the Marines would have landed undetected under any circumstances. The whole world knew they were coming at any time, because Bush had said they were. Thousands of journalists were in Mogadishu, and TV cameramen were already spending the night on the beach on the off-chance they would land."²⁰¹

The storming of the beaches, however, was the height of military/media conflict in Somalia and, in general, the relationship between peacekeepers and journalist was a great improvement over the Persian Gulf War. Navy PAO CDR Matt Brown explained that "when Somalia came around, there was much more of a willingness to sit down with the media, talk about what particular operation units were doing, describe the operations, and be as open and frank as you could be."²⁰² Liz Sly concurred, noting that she was "given more access to better, more meaningful stories, in Somalia, than in any other conflict involving Americans. The fact that it was supposed to be a humanitarian mission

²⁰⁰ Pete Williams, interview by author, telephone conversation, 5 July 2000. Emphasis added.

²⁰¹ Liz Sly, interview by author, email, 6 July 2000.

²⁰² Matt Brown, interview by author, telephone conversation, 5 July 2000.

also probably contributed to a relatively friendly press policy. America's hand wasn't forced on this one: it was a voluntary gesture of extraordinary boldness and generosity."²⁰³ *Washington Post* correspondent Bart Gellman also attributes this military candidness to US military attitudes toward peacekeeping situations, which attempts to "make a conspicuous display of evenhandedness, and open access dispels doubt on that score."²⁰⁴ Commander Matt Brown summed up the military attitude in Somalia, saying, "it was in everybody's best interest to help out. They [the media] have a story to tell and we are certainly interested in getting that story out."²⁰⁵

This sense of press accessibility was generally consistent throughout the Somalia mission, despite varying levels of danger. As noted above, the UN progressed through several stages of peacekeeping in Somalia. Yet the United Nations did not tailor its overall media policy to the varied levels of risk as one might expect in response to changing threats to operational security. Instead, it pursued a standardized set of briefings, similar to the official Pentagon briefings during the Gulf War. In a report submitted on 17 August 1993, the Secretary General addressed this issue.

The peace-enforcement mandate of UNOSOM and the large numbers of Member States contributing military personnel have heightened the attention of the international media. To serve their needs for information, as well as that of the local Somali press, UNOSOM continues to extend its media outreach through press briefings, the issuance of media releases and fact sheets, answering the media inquiries and coordinating media interviews of senior UNOSOM officials. Regular daily briefings by the UNOSOM civilians and military spokesmen ensure an outflow of information on political, military, and humanitarian aspects of the work of UNOSOM. Summaries of these briefings are prepared daily and transmitted to United Nations Headquarters in New York and to the United Nations Information Centres in Nairobi for redissemination. UNOSOM has organized visits to several different areas in Somalia for

²⁰³ Sly, interview.

²⁰⁴ Gellman, interview.

²⁰⁵ Brown, interview.

journalists and these have enhanced media coverage of UNOSOM humanitarian activities, such as flood relief or the distribution of food rations. Journalists have also accompanied UNOSOM officials engaged in consultations with community leaders throughout Somalia on the establishment of district and regional councils.²⁰⁶

Consequently, while the United Nations *did* devote substantial resources to media relations, this occurred mostly at the headquarters level, leaving public affairs offices dispersed throughout the field to fend largely for themselves.

In Somalia, the former American embassy compound functioned as the in-country headquarters for public affairs, headed by US General Johnson. This public affairs headquarters, although under a UN mandate, functioned at the will of the United States. As Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Pete Williams noted, “there was some coordination with the UN, but it was basically a US military operation.”²⁰⁷ Smaller, autonomous public affairs offices were located at the Mogadishu airport, as well as scattered throughout the country with peacekeeping troops. These offices were usually multinational in nature, and functioned at a more multilateral level.

The contrast between these two levels of organization is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the media policy in Somalia. While the embassy compound functioned like a US-led military operation, local offices were allowed a great deal of independence in negotiating media access to the field. Navy PAO Commander Matthew Brown recalled that “there was no formal structural organization set up for [coordination at the airport]. Up at the embassy compound, they did have a formalized process by which the NGOs and the various military organizations would get together and talk about

²⁰⁶ UN Security Council, S/26317

²⁰⁷ Williams, interview.

what their plans were. So there was a formalized exchange that took place there. Down at the airport it was mostly making due with what we had.”²⁰⁸

Journalists, as well as military officials, noticed the difference in media access – depending on where they were located. *Washington Post* reporter Bart Gellman explained that initially

There were not many complaints about the military abusing its control of the field because it didn’t have control. Later, as the operation grew, they set up another Joint Information Bureau with briefings and professions PR officers and forms for requesting access to a unit, and it was as close to the bad old days as they could get in a country that had essentially no government and no authority with power over all the terrain.²⁰⁹

Indeed, many reporters found that once the public affairs office was fully set up, cooperation between the press and the military located at the American embassy compound was tenuous at best. *Chicago Tribune* correspondent Liz Sly characterized military/media relations at the compound this way:

In every respect, media policy was organized in accordance with routine Pentagon practices. The daily briefings, the media center, the rules and pools were all typical of any American military operation. It was the same as Panama, same as the Gulf, and even many of the individuals were the same. I had the misfortune to be assigned to a Pentagon pool in the wake of the dragging of the US soldier through the streets. It was organized, just like every Pentagon pool, in Washington, at meetings attended by the bureau chiefs of the major news organizations and Pentagon media folk. It was as restrictive and as boring as any military pool; confined to the compound, shepherded around, fed stories.²¹⁰

As Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Pete Williams said, “You wanted to cover it, you worked with the US military.”²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Brown, interview.

²⁰⁹ Gellman, interview.

²¹⁰ Sly, interview.

²¹¹ Williams, interview.

But while cooperation at the headquarters level was not deemed auspicious, reporters were not confined to gathering information from that source alone. As *Washington Post* reporter Keith Richburg put it, “reporters were free to go into and out of the ‘theater’ – and had been doing so regularly before any of the foreign troops arrived. Thus, the reporters had a better feel for the area, and could navigate around easily with their own cars and translators, well before the troops landed. Our access was not determined by any outside military officials.”²¹² *Chicago Tribune* correspondent Liz Sly agreed, stating that

In Somalia, you would hear bombing at night, go onto the roof of the hotel and watch the firework display, then get up in the morning, stroll over to in the direction of the flashes, inspect the damage, talk to eyewitnesses, go to the hotel and interview the victims, then head over to the UN compound for the 5 PM briefing and ask the US military spokesperson what was going on. If it wasn’t so dangerous, it had to be the easiest war reporting ever.

Likewise, you could stroll over to the US compound, get a briefing on what the latest strategy for dislodging Aideed was, then wander over to his headquarters and get the reaction from his guys. I remember being told that Osman Atto, Aideed’s right-hand man, was on the American’s ‘wanted’ list for smuggling arms into Somalia, then walking round to his house a few blocks away and asking him what he thought about that.²¹³

But although these reporters were able to get large amounts of information through independent means, the local public affairs offices located throughout Somalia were another source of help. Navy PAO Commander Matt Brown ran one of these autonomous offices at the Mogadishu airport. He described his role this way: “As media arrived in-country and as they departed, they checked in through my office and then I diverted them off to where ever they wanted to go, and tried to get interviews set up for

²¹² Richburg, interview.

²¹³ Sly, interview.

them.”²¹⁴ He further characterized his involvement in Somalia as part of “a very good working relationship with the media. I think there was a very open and honest exchange from what I could tell. Certainly, my operation at the airport, there was a definite give-and-take with the media coming through.”²¹⁵ Being in one of the smaller, independent public affairs offices, Commander Brown had a very different experience with the media that those at the headquarters level.

The airport was a great place to coordinate with other nation’s contingents in Somalia. The former American embassy was largely a US command-and-control, US forces, even though multinational and multilateral meetings took place there. The airport was a very UN kind of operation.²¹⁶

For this reason, many reporters found these public affairs offices more helpful than those at the embassy compounds. In fact, the Mogadishu airport provided unique opportunities for journalists to meet with troops of various nationalities, since it functioned as a meeting place for all the contributing nations.

Depending on where you went around the airfield, there were any number of nationalities represented. I lived right next to the runway, right next to us was a French group. Going the other direction, you get down to the Australians and the New Zealanders, Zimbabwe was there, Botswana was there. The Pakistanis had a small office right next to where my office was in the old terminal building. Yeah, that was major international cooperation.²¹⁷

This multinational atmosphere greatly facilitated coverage of the Somalia operation and allowed journalists access to different viewpoints of the mission. As *Washington Post* reporter Keith Richburg noted, “in Somalia, I found my best sources to be the Pakistanis,

²¹⁴ Brown, interview.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

the Indians, the Nigerians, and other – who often told me stories that made the front-page, but that the Americans denied.”²¹⁸

An international coordination office on the airport compound assisted the cooperation between reporters and the troops. While not specifically set up for media relations, it was used by public affairs officers from all the contingents located at the Mogadishu airport. This office had little, if any, structural organization designed for public affairs. For instance, there were no regularly scheduled meetings. But, as Commander Matt Brown said,

If I knew that a reporter who wanted to meet with other countries’ forces, I could go into that office. They would have a little command-and-control cell going there. And I would just tell them, ‘Hey, I have a reporter here from the *New York Times* and she’s interested in meeting with people from other countries tomorrow. She’ll be here at noon, if anybody is interested in participating in that.’²¹⁹

In essence, the relationship between reporters and military officers in Somalia appears to be an improvement over relations in the Gulf War. This was certainly the case at the local level, such as the public affairs offices at the Mogadishu airport. At the headquarters level, specifically at the former American embassy compound, media were still frustrated at the Pentagon policy of pools and briefings. By and large, however, both sides were content with the military/media relationship and operational security was not a problem. As Commander Matt Brown stated, “to the best of my knowledge, there were no breaches in operational security due to media slips. Both the media and the military were pretty satisfied with one another.”²²⁰

²¹⁸ Richburg, interview.

²¹⁹ Brown, interview.

²²⁰ Ibid.

UN Intervention in Rwanda

United Nations intervention in Rwanda differs significantly from the Somalia case in several ways. As mentioned above, there was little American involvement. Instead, France took the lead, with several other African countries lending substantial support. Secondly, the Rwanda peacekeeping mission was prompted by genocide, whereas the operation in Somalia came as a result primarily of famine. Despite these differences, however, the peacekeeping operations in Somalia and Rwanda have several things in common, which make them suitable for comparison. First, they both occurred in Africa between 1992 and 1996. They evolved through a range of peacekeeping types, and both were influenced by the lessons of the Gulf War. Thus, a chronology of events in Rwanda will be a useful comparison to the Somalia exercise, and will help bring the relationship between operational security and media restrictions into focus.

Chronology of Events

Rwanda is made up of three ‘ethnic groups’ although its inhabitants “speak the same language, have the same culture, live on the same hills, and, for centuries, have intermarried.”²²¹ Known as the Hutus (85%), Tutsis (14%), and Twas (1%), the Tutsis ruled as monarchs over the Rwandan territory until 1961. At this time, the Hutu majority, through a revolution, installed a new president, Gregoire Kayibanda. Fighting between the Hutus and the Tutsis continued, forcing thousands of Tutsis to flee. Massacre of the Tutsis continued throughout the next decade as they were purged from society. In 1973, General Juvenal Habyarimana seized power, pledging to restore order and setting up a

²²¹ Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda. <http://rwandemb.org/>

one-party state. A policy of ethnic quotas was entrenched in all public service employment, restricting Tutsis to nine percent of available jobs. Habyarimana's political party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), formed in 1975, continued the policy of Tutsi exclusion through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1986, exiles formed Rwanda form the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-dominated organization.²²²

Under pressure from the West, Habyarimana conceded the principle of a multi-party democracy in July 1990. Three months later, RPF guerillas invaded Rwanda from Uganda. French and Zairean troops called in to assist the government force a cease-fire in 29 March 1991. During this time, the Rwandan army began to train and arm civilian militias, Habyarimana stalled on the establishment of a multi-party system, massacres of Tutsis continued, and opposition politicians and newspapers were persecuted.²²³

During February 1993, the RPF launched a fresh offensive and the guerillas reached the outskirts of Kigali. French forces were again called in to help the government side. Fighting continued for several months.²²⁴

The UN Security Council, in June 1993, established a peacekeeping observer mission to verify that no military goods cross over from Uganda to Rwanda. The mission, the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR), consisted of about 80 military observers based in southern Uganda.²²⁵

Following months of negotiations, on 4 August 1993, Habyarimana and the RPF signed a peace accord, called the Arusha Accords, that allowed for the return of refugees

²²² *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*, Frontline (1998). Available at: www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/shows/rwanda/etc/cron.html

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

and a coalition Hutu-RPF government. President Habyarimana, however, continued to stall the process.

On 5 October 1993, the Security Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in order to oversee implementation – marking the first phase of UN peacekeeping involvement in Rwanda.²²⁶

UNAMIR, conducted at the behest of the former belligerents, had all parties' formal consent. Authorized as a consensual operation, the use of force was limited to self-defense. Within weeks, 2,500 UN troops were dispatched to Kigali, although President Habyarimana continued to delay putting the Arusha Accords into action.

During this time, extremist radio station, *Radio Mille Collines*, began broadcasting exhortations to attack the Tutsis. Human rights groups warned the international community of impending calamity and many activists evacuated their families from Kigali, believing massacres were imminent. In his 30 March 1994 report to the Security Council, the Secretary-General wrote

Owing in part to the continuing stalemate, the period under review [January – March 1994] has seen a rapid and dramatic deterioration in the security situation in Kigali. January and February saw increasingly violent demonstrations, roadblocks, assassination of political leaders, and assaults on and murders of civilians, developments that severely overstretched the resources and capabilities of the national gendarmerie.²²⁷

On April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira were killed when Habyarimana's plane was shot down near Kigali Airport. Extremists, suspecting that the president was finally about to implement the Arusha Peace Accords, were believed to be behind the attack. Within 45 minutes of this event,

²²⁵ UN Security Council, S/RES/846, 22 June 1993.

²²⁶ UNOMUR is not considered in this section because it took place in Uganda and had relatively no effect on activity in Rwanda. UN Security Council, S/RES/872, 5 October 1993.

the Presidential Guard, other members of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), and members of the militias erected barricades on major thoroughfares in Kigali and began to kill Tutsi who attempted to pass. The next day, the FAR and the civilian militias went from house to house killing Tutsis and moderate Hutu politicians. Thousands died on the first day and UN forces stood by while the slaughter continued. They were forbidden to intervene as that would breach their monitoring mandate. The RPF launched a major offensive on April 8 to end the genocide and rescue 600 of its troops surrounded in Kigali, based in the city as part of the Arusha Accords. On this same day, ten Belgian soldiers assigned to guard the moderate Hutu prime minister Agathe Uwilingimana were taken hostage. The prime minister was killed and the Belgians were disarmed, tortured, and shot and hacked to death. They had been told not to resist violently by the UN force commander, as this would have breached their mandate. As a result of this act, Belgium withdrew its forces and Bangladesh indicated it was about to withdraw.²²⁸

On April 21, 1994 the United Nations unanimously voted to reduce the UNAMIR mandate and simultaneously cut its forces from 2,500 to 250. The new role of the UNAMIR peacekeepers was to mediate a cease-fire, but nothing more.²²⁹ During this time, UNAMIR forces were basically inactive. Thus the first phase of UN peacekeeping in Rwanda, which began with the deployment of UNAMIR I forces on 5 October 1993 ended on 21 April 1994, when troops were evacuated in the midst of genocide. This phase can be considered a multilateral peace operation, as its primary responsibilities were to mediate the Arusha Accords cease-fire, demobilize former belligerents, and integrate refugees back into Rwandan society. The reduction in UNAMIR I's mandate to

²²⁷ UN Security Council, S/1994/360, 30 March 1994.

²²⁸ *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*.

traditional peacekeeping on 21 April 1993 during the height of the massacres signified the end of UN power in the area. (It is important to note that in this case, traditional peacekeeping was extremely risky – despite the usual characteristics of this type of mission. Because the peacekeepers focused on protecting themselves, and several thousand Rwandans with them, and not enforcing their mandate, the time from 21 April 1993 to 22 June 1994 is not considered a phase of peacekeeping for the risk assessment.)

The UN Security Council met on April 30, 1994, spending eight hours discussing the Rwandan crisis. The resolution condemning the killing omitted the word ‘genocide’. (Had the term been included, the UN would have been legally obliged to act to ‘prevent and punish’ the perpetrators.) Meanwhile, tens of thousands of refugees fled into Tanzania, Burundi, and Zaire. In one day, 250,000 Rwandans, mainly Hutus fleeing the advance of the RPF, crossed the border into Tanzania.²³⁰

The slaughter of the Tutsis continued through May. On May 17, 1994, the UN agreed to send 6,800 troops and policemen to Rwanda with powers to defend civilians as part of a renewed peacekeeping effort. Named UNAMIR II, the operation’s mandate confirmed that “acts of genocide may have been committed.”²³¹ Deployment of the mainly African UN forces was delayed because of arguments over who would pay the bill and provide the equipment. The United States argued with the UN over the cost of providing heavy armored vehicles for the peacekeeping forces.

On June 22, 1994, with still no sign of UN deployment, the Security Council authorized the deployment of French forces in southwest Rwanda.²³² French troops,

²²⁹ UN Security Council, S/RES/912, 21 April 1994.

²³⁰ *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*.

²³¹ UN Security Council, S/RES/918, 17 May 1994.

²³² UN Security Council, S/RES/929, 22 June 1994.

operating under the name Operation Turquoise, created a 'safe area' in territory controlled by the government. The operation was authorized to use 'all means necessary' to achieve its humanitarian ends, although did not invoke Chapter VII peacekeeping, so it cannot be considered a peace enforcement. Killings of Tutsis continued in the safe area, although some were protected by the French. The United States government eventually used the word 'genocide' to describe the situation.

During July 1994, the RPF captured Kigali. The Hutu government fled to Zaire, followed by a tide of refugees. The French ended their mission and were replaced by Ethiopian UN troops. The RPF set up an interim government of national unity in Kigali. A cholera epidemic swept through the refugee camps in Zaire, killing thousands. Different UN agencies clashed over reports that RPF troops had carried out a series of reprisal killings in Rwanda, numbering several hundred. The killing of Tutsis continued in refugee camps.²³³

In August 1994, the new Rwandan government agreed to trial before an international tribunal established by the UN Security Council. This tribunal, which would oversee prosecution of suspects involved in the genocide, was established in November. The French-led humanitarian assistance mission, Operation Turquoise, also ended.²³⁴

Thus, the second phase of peacekeeping ran from 22 June 1994, when the United Nations authorized the French-led Operation Turquoise, through 20 August 1994. Even though UNAMIR II was authorized before June 1994, no troops were deployed to the area until well after Operation Turquoise was underway. Operation Turquoise was a

²³³ *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

humanitarian intervention, with higher levels of risk and an expanded mandate as compared to UNAMIR I.

The third phase began on 30 November 1994 with the Security Council again expanding the UNAMIR II mandate. At this time the French-led forces of Operation Turquoise turned over responsibility to UNAMIR II troops, who had finally arrived in-country directing peacekeepers to provide protection to UN-affiliated personnel in Rwanda, including members of the International Tribunal.²³⁵

During the first half of January 1995, the United Nations began the process of finalizing plans with Zaire and Tanzania that would lead to the repatriation of 1.5 million Hutus to Rwanda over the next five years. The UN Security Council refused to dispatch an international force to police refugee camps, but on 27 February 1995 urged all states to arrest people suspected of involvement in the Rwanda genocide.²³⁶

On 9 June 1995 the United Nations agreed to withdraw more than half the number of UN peacekeeping troops in Rwanda after a direct request from the Rwandan government to withdraw all UN forces.²³⁷ This request came directly after squabbles between the United Nations and Rwanda over the lack of international financial aid flowing into Rwanda. Throughout the summer of 1995, more than 720,000 Hutu refugees around Goma refused to return to Rwanda and Pope John Paul II urged an end to the bloodshed in Rwanda and Burundi.²³⁸

During mid-December 1995, the United Nations Tribunal for Rwanda announced its first indictments against eight suspects and charged them with genocide and crimes

²³⁵ UN Security Council, S/RES/965, 30 November 1994.

²³⁶ *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*.

²³⁷ UN Security Council, S/RES/997, 9 June 1995

²³⁸ *Rwanda: A Historical Chronology*.

against humanity.²³⁹ The United Nations agreed to extend its peacekeeping mandate for three more months, and also agreed to reduce the number of troops occupying the area.²⁴⁰ The last UNAMIR II peacekeepers departed Rwanda by 19 April 1996, ending the final phase of the Rwandan peacekeeping mission. This phase, like the previous one, can also be considered a multilateral peace operation, with a more limited mandate and fewer military responsibilities. As such, the final stage of the operation lasted at a relatively stable level until 9 June 1995, at which point the peacekeeping force began to dwindle until its eventual withdrawal in April 1996. These phases of the UN peacekeeping operation in Rwanda can be seen more concisely in Figure 3.

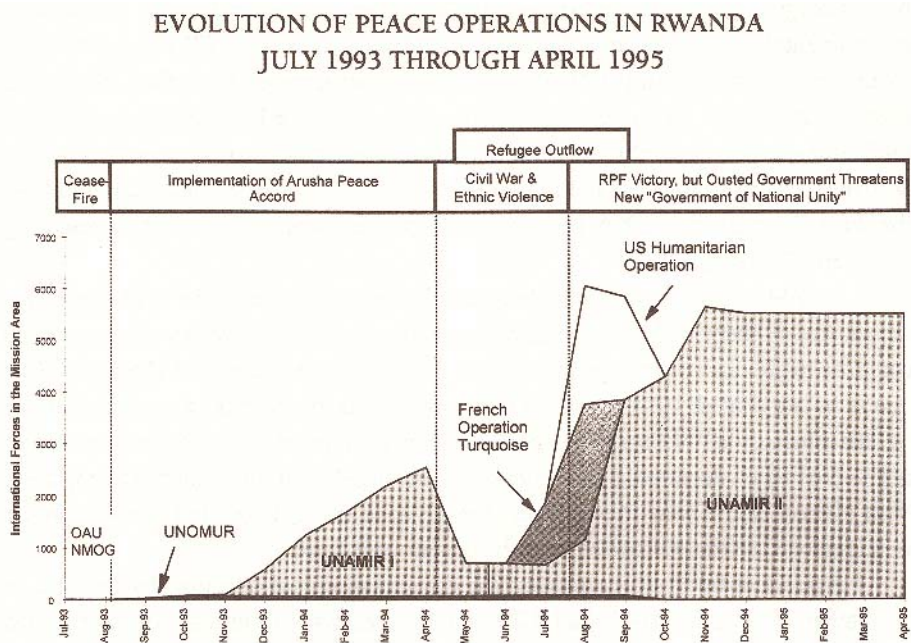


Figure 3

As evidenced by the diagram above, the level of risk in Rwanda varied throughout the duration of the mission – similar to the operation in Somalia. Yet once again, the

²³⁹ The first trial, however, did not begin until 10 January 1997.

media policy of the United Nations did not change in accordance with the danger of the exercise.

UN Media Policy in Rwanda

Without the presence of American troops in Rwanda, the media policy in-country was somewhat more relaxed than it might have been. As *Washington Post* reporter Keith Richburg put it: “I think the Americans tend to be hyper-sensitive to information management.”²⁴¹ Instead, the primary contingent in Rwanda was French, and reporters generally found them to be media-friendly.

In Rwanda, I found the French forces quite helpful to journalists. Also, once I got in my car and drove to an isolated area under French command; the French colonel in charge welcomed me in, let me stay the night with his troops, and gave me a full briefing.²⁴²

Chicago Tribune correspondent Liz Sly also found UN peacekeepers “very helpful.”

But again, because of the circumstances in Rwanda, journalists weren’t dependent on UN help for stories. I remember them promising rations to journalists who registered with the UN – a big incentive because no food was available. But otherwise, I don’t think anyone would have bothered.²⁴³

Instead of military/media tension, most interesting about the Rwanda peacekeeping mission was the absence of media coverage of the genocide in general. According to Philip Gourevitch of *The New Yorker*, the international media missed the story behind the 1994 genocide for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the presidential election of Nelson Mandela in South Africa.²⁴⁴ “It was hard to find anyone

²⁴⁰ UN Security Council, S/RES/1029, 12 December 1995.

²⁴¹ Richburg, interview.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Sly, interview.

²⁴⁴ Ruth O’Brien. “Speed of Rwandan genocide frazzled an uninformed press, author says.” *The Freedom Forum Online*. 23 November 1998.

who would rather go to this place Kigali, which they knew very little about, to cover a mass political slaughter” said Gourevitch.²⁴⁵ He further accused the Rwandan government of carefully calculating its decision to carry out the mass murders in only three months to knock the media off balance.²⁴⁶

Up through the first weeks of the genocide, most information came from non-governmental organizations. Newspapers like the *New York Times* relied on the International Red Cross and CARE for death estimates.²⁴⁷ Those who were in the area portrayed the genocide as “atavistic tribal savagery” and only rarely venturing into the complicated political situation as an explanation for the killings.²⁴⁸

During the 100 days of genocide, there were few, if any, military-imposed restrictions on media. Rather, it was the media that restricted themselves. As Keith Richburg pointed out, “the restrictions in Rwanda applied particularly to black Americans or black African journalists, who might have been mistaken for Tutsis during the massacre.”²⁴⁹ Another *Washington Post* reporter, Bart Gellman, noted that the *Washington Post* removed reporters from Rwanda completely when the risk seemed “unacceptably great.”²⁵⁰

But when the war was over and UNAMIR II troops were positioned in Rwanda, access to the scene of the genocide was available to journalists. This access was facilitated by the UN peacekeepers, who helped escort reporters to various locations in order to chronicle the events of April-June 1994. One of these reporters was Philip

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, 377.

²⁴⁸ Jane Hunter. “As Rwanda Bled, Media Sat on Their Hands.” *Extra!* July/August 1994.

²⁴⁹ Richburg, interview.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

Gourevitch of *The New Yorker*. Escorted by UN peacekeepers in the three years immediately following the genocide (and thus, during the second and third phases of the mission), and using UN helicopters, Gourevitch spent several years researching the genocide in Rwanda, culminating in his book *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: stories from Rwanda*. In this book, while highly critical of UN actions in Rwanda, Gourevitch openly expresses the high level of cooperation between the United Nations and reporters coming into the country.²⁵¹

Thus, it appears that, as with Somalia, the United Nations did not alter its media policy to correspond with levels of risk. In cases where there were restrictions, these were instigated by the media organizations themselves. On the whole, reporters covering the Rwanda peacekeeping mission were satisfied with access to the field of operations.

Conclusion

After examining three case studies, several things are clear. First, the presence of American troops does appear to have some effect on military/media relations, at least at the headquarters level, where Pentagon-like restrictions tend to cause friction between officials and members of the media. Secondly, the relationship between United Nations peacekeepers and the media seems to be better than the relationship between the United States and the media. Third, and most important, the United Nations does not alter its media policies in accordance with risk. Instead, it pursues a standard policy of openness, although this policy is not explicit and varies on a case-by-case basis.

This information supports the proposal for a standardized, explicit media policy for all future United Nations peacekeeping operations for three reasons. First and

²⁵¹ Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, (New York:

foremost, the need for an explicit, long-term media policy that is integrated with the overall peacekeeping strategy has been long-desired by the Secretary-General.²⁵² Second, the fact that the United Nations does not tailor its media policy to the specific types of peacekeeping missions makes the possibility of a standardized policy more realistic. Finally, while the relationship between troops and the media during peacekeeping operations has been somewhat better than during collective enforcement missions, this has been largely based upon the sparse resources at the headquarters level. As seen, especially in Somalia, the desire to control media coverage certainly existed with the strategists in New York (and at the designated in-country headquarters). Only when resources ran scarce (as in the airport in Mogadishu) did the media and the military have good working relationships. As it stands currently, there is nothing in place to ensure that the right to know will be honored in the future. Should the United Nations ever implement a serious public affairs team at the ground level, the relationship between these two parties is likely to sour quickly. So a standardized media policy is beneficial to both operational security and the right to know. As such, both parties should be eager to pursue negotiations.

In the following chapter, the requirements for this proposed policy are considered. The idea of a media policy for UN peacekeeping is related back to the original notion of the tensions between the right to know and operational security. The legal ramifications of an international media policy are analyzed and previous attempts at media policies are examined. Finally, recommendations on a two-pronged policy are made.

St. Martin's Press, 1998).

²⁵² *The United Nations and Somalia: 1992 – 1996*, 87.

Chapter 4:

Establishing a Standard for UN Peacekeeping Media Restrictions

The key to standard media restrictions for United Nations peacekeeping operations is to strike a balance between 1) ensuring independent media coverage from the field (and therefore protecting the right to know) and 2) limiting the potential harm by the media to UN mission success (thus guarding operational security). This balance must take into account both the establishment of media restrictions *and* the enforcement of these rules. Only by creating a system to which all parties can agree will media coverage of peacekeeping operations ensure the public's right to know without compromising operational security.

Power of the UN to Restrict Media Coverage

While the example of collective action in the Persian Gulf War illustrates the height of United Nations media restrictions, similar problems have beset the United Nations in operations in the following years. Operations in Cambodia, Namibia, Bosnia, and others have come under fire for excessive media restrictions.²⁵³ As such, media restrictions remain a contested issue in UN peacekeeping. Lee writes that

while the United Nations has never formally restricted the media during peacekeeping operations, the concerns over restrictions imposed by the US military and other national military commanders during these operations are applicable to the role of the United Nations in the relationship between the media and the military during peacekeeping operations.²⁵⁴

The debate comes down to two main points. First, operational security and success are central to UN peacekeeping efforts. That is, the United Nations has a

²⁵³ See Durch, *Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*.

responsibility to ensure (to the best of its ability) the safety of its troops and the success of the mission objectives. Second, the media has a responsibility to provide the world with accurate and timely information about the military operations in which its nations are engaged. This gets to the heart of the right to know.²⁵⁵ Resolving these conflicting roles is critical to the implementation of standard United Nations media restrictions. As Lee aptly points out

With every restriction imposed on the media, the possibility exists that the military and the media will be in opposition at a time when cooperation is needed to ensure the safety of both the military and reporters. Therefore, before advising the United Nations to restrict the media during its peacekeeping operations, one must consider the many relevant international policies and agreements.²⁵⁶

A substantive review of the UN Charter and the UNESCO Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Helsinki Accords and the Geneva Convention, and several regional agreements, including the Latin American Convention of Human Rights, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms reveals a general consensus. In all cases, these agreements constitute an international standard, recognizing freedom of expression and the free flow of information – in other words, acknowledging a universal right to know. Moreover, “when national security or public order and safety interests are the reasons for a restriction upon expression or access to information, the right to freedom of expression and information is justifiably abridged.”²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁵⁵ See Jonathan Mermin, *Debating War and Peace: Media Coverage of US Intervention in the Post-Vietnam Era*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

²⁵⁶ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁵⁷ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

This international standard is applicable to United Nations peacekeeping operations, because the United Nations has the power to establish media rules and restrictions concerning press coverage of all UN peacekeeping activities. This ability is evident from the powers delegated to the Security Council as designated by the UN Charter. Specifically, Chapter VII's Article 39 empowers the Security Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression and ... *make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken* ... to maintain or restore international peace."²⁵⁸ Not only does the Security Council determine whether a threat to the peace exists, but it also determines what the appropriate response will be to that threat and provides the parameters of the responsive action that member states are obliged to follow.²⁵⁹

But while the United Nations may have the authority to restrict media coverage of peacekeeping activities, it lacks the power to effectively curtail access to the field. As noted in the previous chapter, journalists were on the ground in Somalia and Rwanda long before peacekeepers arrived. The United Nations simply does not have the resources, both in terms of time and energy, to manage the media against their will. As a result, the United Nations must be very careful in choosing mutually acceptable standards for media coverage, lest the media completely flaunt their power to the detriment of the mission.

²⁵⁸ United Nations Charter, emphasis added.

²⁵⁹ UN Charter. Article 48 reaffirms the obligation of member states under Article 25 to accept the binding decisions of the Security Council in the peacekeeping context.

Interests of the United Nations in Coverage and Restrictions

In furthering its interests in overall operational success and troop safety, the United Nations has the additional interest of ensuring that nothing threatens the tactical execution of its peacekeeping operations. To this end, maintaining the element of surprise is crucial to the successful execution of any peacekeeping exercise. Thus, “the publication by the media of certain information may endanger the security of a peacekeeping operation or peacekeeping troops. Moreover, the presence of the media during peacekeeping operations creates a concern for the United Nations in the safe transportation of reporters as well as peacekeeping troops.”²⁶⁰ This is a familiar argument, one used by the United States government in appealing to the public for operational security measures.

In addition to operational security, however, the United Nations has a second interest. A large part of the United Nations deals mainly with administration, promoting the “necessity and wisdom” of its peacekeeping actions to the international community.²⁶¹ Consequently, the United Nations has a vested interest in seeing its actions portrayed to the public in a positive light.²⁶² According to one commentator, “public opinion is now a major factor in international conflict management and conflict resolution. In order to achieve their goals, UN peacekeeping operations ... need an overall positive image, both inside the territory in which they are deployed and in the international community at large.”²⁶³ Because instantaneous reporting from the field creates lasting images in the public mind, garnering support or opposition for an

²⁶⁰ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² For information about how the Marines used the media to foster a high public opinion of their action in the Persian Gulf War, see Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”.

operation, the United Nations must strive to maintain a healthy relationship with the media. If reporters feel unduly restrained from accurate and unbiased coverage, they may frame their stories in a way that suggests illiberal practices on the part of peacekeepers.²⁶⁴ Such reporting may foster negative public opinion throughout the broadcasting audience, increasing pressure on member states to withdraw from the operation. This creates a difficult situation, for the United Nations must balance its interests for operational security and media cooperation in order to fulfill both its operational and administrative duties. Any tendency to favor one side will result in non-cooperation from the other.

Media Interests in Coverage and Restrictions

As a public forum, the media play an important role in American democracy. A survey of American political writings drawn from the pronouncements of its most renowned political leaders and from the opinions of Supreme Court justices and First Amendment scholars suggests that the media have five main functions.

First, a free press, reflecting the diversity of opinions throughout the country, provides forum for discussion of many conflicting ideas. This widely publicized interchange reveals the strengths and weaknesses of various proposals and, ultimately, leads to the adoption of the soundest ideas. Second, a free press furnishes citizens with the information that they need to perform the duties of citizenship adequately. It permits citizens to evaluate the performance of their current leaders and of candidates for office. It also permits them to judge the soundness of past and proposed governmental actions and alerts them to the need for citizen intervention into ongoing political affairs. Third, a free press is the public's agent in communicating with government officials. It articulates the public's interests to the government and gives voice to public opinion. Fourth, a free press provides an outlet for public expression of unpopular minority views. Fifth, acting as the public's agent, a free press constitutes

²⁶³ Quoted in Lee "Peace and the press."

²⁶⁴ Some journalists have accused the military of deliberately manipulating information to favor secrecy. For more information, see Aukofer and Lawrence, "America's Team".

the citizens' eyes and ears to detect and report corruption, abuses of power, and other misconduct by government officials.²⁶⁵

Applied to peacekeeping coverage, media's role can be stated this way. First, the media serve as a monitoring purpose during peacekeeping operations. In addition, the media both shape the perceptions of the public and provide a channel for public opinion. The public and the UN member states need to make sound judgements on the validity of peacekeeping missions, yet worthwhile public debate and decisions will only result from honest and full information. "The role of the media is to provide the international public with as much information as possible in making such determinations."²⁶⁶ Moreover, it is imperative that this information comes from a source independent of the United Nations. These two conditions – complete and independent coverage – are vital for ensuring the people's right to know. For these reasons, the media require admittance to peacekeeping sites and uncensored reporting. Only with unhindered access to the field can the public guarantee that decisions made by the Security Council accurately represent the wishes of its member states. Only with independent coverage can the people of the United Nations truly believe that the international organization follows their wishes. Only then can the right to know be protected.

At the same time, however, the media rely, at least in a marginal sense, on the goodwill of the United Nations. While the journalists are often in place before troops and may have their own sources of information and transportation, the United Nations provides overall strategic information unavailable through other sources. The press is, in effect, bound to the public affairs offices of the United Nations if for no other reason than

²⁶⁵ Doris A. Graber, "Press Freedom and the General Welfare." *Political Science Quarterly*. Volume 101, Issue 2. 1986. Page 258.

²⁶⁶ Lee, "Peace and the press."

simple efficiency. The information disseminated at the headquarters, while canned and screened, provides a necessary foundation upon which journalists in the field can build. In this sense, both the United Nations and the media must rely on each other. Without finding some middle ground on the topic of media restrictions, both parties are destined to fail. The United Nations and the media appreciate this fact – and agree that some measures may be necessary to regulate media coverage of the field. This agreement is the foundation upon which successful collaboration must rest.

Case Study- Weber's Proposal for Successful Collaboration

Edward Weber has extensively researched the issue of negotiating environmental regulations. In this context, he has proposed a guide to successful collaboration between the various parties of an issue.²⁶⁷ Although the issue of media restrictions and environmental regulation are quite different, his principles serve our purpose as well. Environmental regulations affect a large number of parties, many of whom have divergent interests. In the same way, media restrictions have profound implications for several groups, who also have conflicting desires. As such, Weber's proposal applies as a basis for collaboration between the media and the military on the issue of media restrictions during UN peacekeeping operations. He highlights the following six "components of successful collaboration":

1. Transaction specific conditions. The feasibility of a successful collaboration often depends of preexisting conditions. There must be an opportunity for the kinds of creative compromises that are critical in the bargaining process. The more conditions are met, the lower the

²⁶⁷ Weber used the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990: the reformulated gasoline (RFG) program as a case study of successful negotiation between the EPA, NGOs, and private business interests. Edward Weber, "Successful collaboration: negotiating effective regulation." *Environment*. November 1998. Volume 40, Number 9.

degree of difficulty that will be encountered during the collaborative process.

2. Entrepreneurial political leadership. Political and bureaucratic leaders have the primary responsibility for convincing all affected parties to commit to collaborative arrangements. They must be skillful enough to bring self-interested individuals and organizations in line with the collaborative goals. Thus, the leader's challenge of establishing a credible commitment to collaborative strategies stretched beyond mechanical, incentive-based solutions. It is a leader's job to build trust, reduce information asymmetries among participants by forging open lines of communication, and share the eventual success in a meaningful way with stakeholders. Firm evidence of the leadership's own commitment to collaboration and fairness (which depends on its past performance), as well as a willingness to use authority to promote, enforce, and protect consensus deals are needed as well.
3. Agency commitment. Collaboration is facilitated to the extent that the public agency pursuing it has a reputation for commitment to collaborative processes and their outcomes as well as for fairness when disposing of unforeseen contingencies, such as disputes among competing interest groups over the specification and operation of the regulatory program in question.
4. Formal binding rules. Collaborative strategies based on reputation and leadership are necessary but not sufficient to induce affected interests to trust the institution or agency in charge of the rule- much less their traditional political enemies – with the information that makes it possible for the group to make efficient decisions. Improving the likelihood that participants' good faith bargaining efforts will not be wasted requires formal binding rules governing the collaborative negotiation process and its aftermath. Such rules restrict the ability of both public sector leaders and stakeholders to pursue self-interested behavior at the expense of long-term cooperation.
5. Inclusiveness. Participants with valid interests in the regulation policy with the power to block or undermine outcomes must be included and given a credible stake in the collaborative process. Otherwise, the participants seeking more effective regulations will encounter added uncertainty and face a greater likelihood of failure.
6. Repetition. A final measure of credible commitment helping to reduce regulatory uncertainty is the long-term nature of stakeholders' involvement in the policy arena. Viable, ongoing entities that interact regularly on a number of issues are more likely to perceive collaboration from a long-term perspective than as a one-time opportunity to advance their self-interest.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Weber, "Successful collaboration."

The above rules provide helpful hints as to how a standardized media policy might be formulated, but what, specifically, should be involved? How do these conditions apply to a multinational, multilateral, peacekeeping media policy?

Collaboration Applied to UN Peacekeeping Restrictions

First and foremost, the United Nations must provide well-defined media rules before the implementation of a peacekeeping operation. By doing this prior to troop deployment, the Security Council would avoid *ad hoc* media restrictions and potential conflicts between peacekeeping forces and the media amidst an operation in progress.²⁶⁹ The Security Council could potentially include these restrictions in the peacekeeping mandate itself, under which all other parameters for the operation are established. This fulfills Weber's first recommendation of transaction-specific conditions, as both the media and the military engage in 'creative compromise' on regulations ahead of time. The advantages of creating these rules prior to troop deployment increase the incentives for collaboration.

Weber's second proposition of entrepreneurial leadership is more problematic, as the media generally views the military as uncooperative. However, the two previous collaborative efforts (discussed below) have established a clear precedent for negotiation. In addition, the implementation of these previous regulations also confirms the military's commitment to collaboration, Weber's third requirement.

Once media restrictions have been determined by the Security Council, these restrictions must be formally presented to the media and to peacekeepers. This complies with Weber's fourth component: formal binding rules. By distributing rules to the press

²⁶⁹ This was one of the chief complaints by the media in the Persian Gulf War.

and the peacekeeping forces, a common understanding between the parties can be articulated. The *International Peace Academy* in its Peacekeeper's Handbook emphasizes the importance of clarity in effectuating guidelines for peacekeeper interaction with the press.²⁷⁰ The Handbook states, “a member of a peacekeeping Force/Mission can at anytime be approached by members of the press corps, whether by arrangement or not. It is important that clear instructions are issued indicating how the peacekeeper should act towards the press.”²⁷¹ Of course, holding to these guidelines during a peacekeeping operation may present difficulties, and a level of trust is necessary. Only with repeated trials will both sides be satisfied with the efforts of the other.

The United Nations should consult with participating member states of a peacekeeping mission and the media covering the operation before deciding on media restrictions in order to fulfill Weber's fifth proposition of inclusiveness. This type of discussion yielded a general agreement between the military and the media concerning media restrictions during the Persian Gulf War.²⁷² This event suggests that a successful covenant can be reached most effectively with the input of all the actors involved in a peacekeeping situation.

Finally, the parties involved in the negotiations must continue to meet regularly. This would allow both the media and the military to express difficulties and to tweak the regulations for a more effective policy.

These steps will help ensure the timely application of media restrictions, avoiding the *ad hoc* method currently employed, and will facilitate cooperation between troops in

²⁷⁰ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁷¹ Peacekeeper's Handbook. International Peace Academy. 1984.

the field and media covering the operation. With a clear understanding of the dual priorities of operational security and the right to know agreed upon up front, peacekeepers and the media will have a foundations upon which to negotiate the particulars of media coverage. Not only will an agreed-upon policy ensure that media are given adequate access to the field, but it will also help both parties understand their responsibilities in the conflict.

Towards a UN Media Policy

While individual peacekeeping operations may require operation-specific media rule in proportion to security risks, the United Nations should adopt basic guidelines for media coverage during peacekeeping operations. “This precommitment to an established set of guidelines prevents the United Nations from implementing arbitrary revisions, absent a specific need by a particular operation, and encourages media compliance by ensuring the media of consistent and familiar rules.”²⁷³ The media’s biggest fear in consenting to standardized guidelines is that the United Nations has the ability to rescind access privileges under the ambiguous claim of “operational security.” To alleviate this concern, as a general rule the United Nation should intrude as little as possible on news reporting, restricting media access to the field only when the presence of journalists would compromise operational security or place themselves or troops in physical jeopardy. When a situation arises when access must be limited, peacekeeping personnel *must* be able to articulate the rational behind the restrictions to the media. Even if particulars are not given, journalists must understand and appreciate the justification for

²⁷² For a more detailed analysis, see Debra Gersh, “War Coverage Guidelines: After Six Months of Talks, Media and Military Agree on Proposed Principles for News Coverage of Battlefield Operations.” *Editor & Publisher*. March 21, 1992.

secrecy. In cases where operational security is at risk, most journalists will willingly abstain from reporting – even to the detriment of the right to know. This, of course, is contingent upon the military clarifying the circumstances to the media at the time of the restrictions.

At the same time, the United Nations must be prepared for any negative reaction to implemented media restrictions. As one commentator noted, “Some control over the media in a war zone is necessary. However the military should be aware of the potential backlash that may result from a hard-line approach to media relations. When controls are necessary, they should cause as little intrusion into news gathering as possible.”²⁷⁴ Some members of the press will be extremely reluctant to give up pursuing the right to know, and may attempt to circumvent limitations under the impression that media restrictions are in place due to unwarranted (and thus suspicious) secrecy.

It is helpful to note the two previous efforts by the US military and the media to create clear guidelines for media coverage of military operations, which provides a useful framework for future media restrictions. The first was the Sidle Panel recommendation, which followed the US invasion of Grenada in 1983.²⁷⁵ The second was the “Statement of Principles” negotiated by the Pentagon and the media after the Persian Gulf War.²⁷⁶

Below is a brief summarization of their findings.

²⁷³ Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁷⁴ Quoted in Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁷⁵ Maj. Gen. Winant Sidle, USA (Ret.), *Final Report of the CJCJ Media-Military Relations Panel*, 23 August 1984.

²⁷⁶ *DOD Principles for News Coverage of DOD Operations*. March 11, 1992.

The Sidle Panel

Major General Winant Sidle led a panel, comprised of representatives from journalism schools, the media, and the military, in response to media dissatisfaction with the Grenada invasion of 1983. The panel's report included these eight recommendations to improve military-press relations.

1. Public affairs planning for military operations should be conducted concurrently with operational planning.
2. When news media pooling provides the only feasible means of early access to an operation, planning should support the largest possible press pool, but only for the minimum length of time necessary.
3. The Secretary of Defense should study whether a list of accredited journalists or merely accredited news organizations is necessary.
4. The media should voluntarily comply with security guidelines.
5. Qualified military personnel should assist journalists covering combat operations.
6. The military should provide media communications as early as feasible, provided they do not interfere with combat operations.
7. Military planning should consider media transportation.
8. The military should meet regularly with media leaders to discuss mutual problems.

The main outcome of the Sidle Panel was the institution of the Department of Defense National Media Pool (DDNMP), the first media pool of its kind. In general, the reaction of the media to the report was supportive, and the report was seen as a fair compromise between protecting the right to know and operational logistics and security. Unfortunately, a mere five years later, the flaws of the Sidle Panel recommendations became all too apparent. By the time American troops were stationed in the Persian Gulf, there was ample room for complaint.

Statement of Principles

In reviewing the Persian Gulf War, a group of Washington bureau chiefs representing the major American news organizations concluded that “the combination of

security review and the use of the pool system as a form of censorship made the Gulf War the most undercovered major conflict in modern American history.”²⁷⁷ They further claim that the military systematically denied the people’s right to know by using the claim of operational security as a cover for manipulation. Authorities on the Persian Gulf War dispute this idea, claiming that “Desert Storm was the most completely covered – perhaps the best covered – war in history.”²⁷⁸ Regardless of the merit of this complaint, the military attempted to remedy the situation with another set of military/media talks. The ‘Statement of Principles’ demonstrated the continuing effort of the US military and the media to find common ground for media restrictions. At the heart of the statement was the acknowledgement that the right to know was easily violated in the heat of battle – and that rules should be in place to help ensure its protection in future conflicts. After six months of negotiations, the Pentagon and the media reached an agreement on the following principles concerning press coverage of military operations.

1. Open and independent reporting will be the principle means of coverage of US military operations.
2. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering US military operations. But pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity- within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early-access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage from journalists already in the area.
3. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.
4. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the US military and will be required to abide by clear military security ground rules that protect US forces and their operations. Violation of the ground rules can result in suspensions of the credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalist involved. News organizations will

²⁷⁷ Washington Bureau Chiefs, letter to Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, “Covering the Persian Gulf War.” May 30, 1991.

²⁷⁸ Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”.

- make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and to make them familiar with US military operations.
5. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special Operations restrictions may limit access in some cases.
 6. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.
 7. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders will permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.
 8. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs with facilities to enable timely, secure, compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by new organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.
 9. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing Department of Defense National Media Pool System.²⁷⁹

Originally, the media proposed a tenth principle, which said, “News material – words and pictures – will not be subject to security review.”²⁸⁰ Pentagon negotiators instead proposed one that said, “Military operations security may require review of news material for conformance to reporting ground rules.”²⁸¹ The two sides could not agree, so this principle was dropped.

Creating a UN Media Policy

Both the Sidle Panel and the “Statement of Principles” suggest two general principles for media coverage during military operations. First, press regulations must be determined by the media *and* the military prior to troop deployment. Second, media coverage should be as open as possible in order to protect the right to know, with only operational security or logistical concerns worthy of further restrictions. Therefore, in

²⁷⁹ *DOD Principles for News Coverage of DOD Operations*. March 11, 1992.

²⁸⁰ Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”.

order to strike the proper balance between the media and military, “UN media rules should generally create open media coverage and only restrict such coverage in very limited circumstances.”²⁸²

The “Statement of Principles” has set the foundation for media coverage of the US military. Moreover, the “Statement of Principles” has had great success in recent operations. One report noted that “the level of military/press cooperation in Somalia and Haiti was unprecedented. In planning prior to the invasion of Haiti, for instance, the Pentagon worked with news organizations to structure a component of independent-coverage reporters who were positioned for entry into the country immediately after the DNMP.”²⁸³ This suggests that the tenets guiding the “Statement of Principles” could potentially form the basis for a UN peacekeeping media policy. Not only were peacekeepers satisfied with the level of operational security, but the media were also content with their ability to report at will. Without the imposition of security reviews (which were instead replaced with ‘security at the source’²⁸⁴) the media was confident that the people’s right to know was fulfilled. Could this be it? Is the correct balance between OPSEC and RTK found in the “Statement of Principles”? Not quite.

In addition to these nine principles, the United Nations must agree to institute a planning period before troop deployment that would include members of the media. That way, any additional restrictions may be negotiated at the time. The media would also be made aware of any potential hazards to operational security that they may encounter in

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Lee, “Peace and the press.”

²⁸³ Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”.

²⁸⁴ Security at the source refers to when military escorts point out operational security hazards to journalists in the field. Journalists are then expected to restrict their reporting to non-dangerous material. Voluntary compliance with these rules is the norm, and most members of the military and the media seemed satisfied with this plan. For more information, see Aukofer and Lawrence, “America’s Team”.

the field. This preemptive strike against *ad hoc* decisions will facilitate cooperation among journalists in the field. Moreover, pre-deployment arrangements will help assure military leaders of the media's willingness to abide by the ground rules.

Returning to Weber's recommendations for successful negotiation and collaboration, it seems that the "Statement of Principles" can indeed become the charter UN media policy. However, Weber's sixth point, that ongoing collaboration is necessary to facilitate long-term cooperation, must also be included into the adopted policy. For instance, the policy might include a statement establishing a yearly conference between media and military personnel to address potential problems with media coverage. In addition, the policy may need to be reviewed every 5 years, or after every major military conflict. The key to these regulations is flexibility. Even though a standardized policy may be implemented, situations change, and the United Nations as well as the media must be able to adjust to new circumstances. The particulars for ongoing collaboration can be worked out jointly, but they *must* be agreed upon before any policy is adopted. With these few precautions, the possibility of a standardized UN media policy can become a reality.

The Right to Know and Conflict Situations

The creation of a standardized UN media policy is only the first step in facilitating a good military/media relationship – and even this stage is likely to prove difficult. For one reason, members of the media are almost universally against standardized policies, believing that conflict situations lend themselves too easily to restricting the right to know. As Keith Richburg said, "I never think standardized media policies are a good idea. In most cases, you don't need them – reporters will get there anyway, on their own.

The only policy should be: do not restrict.”²⁸⁵ His colleague, Bart Gellman agreed, stating that “I’m not a big fan of bureaucratically arranged media policies. First choice: don’t write one. Second choice: express a broad principle of open access to the conduct of the public business at hand, with narrow reasons a commander may cite to restrict it.”²⁸⁶

Journalists have good reason to fear standardized media policies that restrict access on the basis of “operational security.” Because military leaders prioritize secrecy, they have structured the system to work against disclosure. For instance, members of the press may be limited to reporting on official briefings without a reasonable explanation as to why they are denied candid interviews. Because the military has an inherent desire to control the situation, abuse of the “operational security” category is a very real concern for the media.

But this fear should not be exaggerated. As noted above, the military, especially the United Nations, relies heavily on the press for image management and information dissemination. In addition, members of the international community are well aware of the backlash against censorship. The United Nations is doubly aware that it lacks the resources of other countries (such as the United States) to control the media. Thus, any overt attempts to misuse the operational security restriction will inevitably result in a backlash against the United Nations and, by extension, its peacekeeping operations. With support for peace missions already tenuous, the United Nations will be very reluctant to exercise media restrictions. This fact should ease media concerns over the safety of the right to know.

²⁸⁵ Richburg, interview.

²⁸⁶ Gellman, interview.

Enforcement and Coordination

Even beyond the effort of convincing the media that a standardized policy is mutually beneficial, there lies a second problem – enforceability. Unless the rules and restrictions within the policy are enforced, the efforts of negotiating the policy are all for naught. Even the Statement of Principles that resulted from the Gulf War has some skeptics. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Pete Williams is among them.

I think its fair to say that those principles, while they would guide any pool operations, certainly, or any coverage of the media on the battlefield, there really has been very little of that. What would happen in a situation where operational security was really important, how that would work when the news media is transmitting its own material on itself, I think that's untested. I have no reason to think that is wouldn't work, but its untested. There really hasn't been a hard test of the 10 principles.²⁸⁷

And there is reason to believe that enforcement during UN peacekeeping missions will be an even more significant problem. Bart Gellman spoke to the heart of the matter: “Negotiating an agreement is an exercise in frustration for all concerned, and neither party has much influence with those who will have to live with the deal. Terms are ultimately vague and unenforceable, and I strongly doubt whether they will have much relevance the first time they are tested in difficult situations.”²⁸⁸ Pete William also voiced concerns, saying “Would it be good to have such principles? Yes. The limitations are: it takes people to carry out principles. The iron rule is the further up the chain of command these people are, the more likely they're removed from it, the less likely they are to be on the ground.”²⁸⁹ Captain Greg Hartung, DOD National Media Pool Coordinator in Desert Storm, agreed that a generalized policy might work, but that it

²⁸⁷ Williams, interview.

²⁸⁸ Gellman, interview.

²⁸⁹ Williams, interview.

would take major organization. “On the scene policy coordination,” he suspects, “would be a nightmare.”²⁹⁰ Pete Williams agrees.

First of all, the UN press apparatus is virtually non-existent in the field. They don’t have any field people to do that sort of thing. They just don’t have it. They are a headquarters operation mostly. So that’s never going to work. There are challenges. The more truly multinational a military operation is, the more multinational the press corps is. Every country brings with it its own mores and operating principles for its reporters.²⁹¹

Captain Greg Hartung experienced this firsthand in the Gulf, where “everyone on the ground including the Saudis had their own policy. It is my experience in multinational contingencies that is it easier that way... coordination is too hard.”²⁹²

So is the idea of a standardized media policy for UN peacekeeping unrealistic in light of the logistical difficulties of enforcement? Perhaps the structure of the United Nations is too different from the United States to make an application of the Statement of Principles worthwhile. The lessons of Somalia, however, suggest that this cynicism is premature. There just might be a solution – a middle ground.

The final section of this project is a proposal for a dual-level approach to a UN media policy. This involves a standardized policy similar to the Statement of Principles, coupled with a series of local international coordination offices on the ground designed to facilitate military/media relationships. The proposed dual system will allow a broad standard of open coverage to guide peacekeeping operations, but would also ensure that troops and reporters on the ground are engaging in face-to-face contact as part of media access to the field. This is the best chance for the right to know and operational security to exist in a mutually beneficial coexistence during peacekeeping operations.

²⁹⁰ Hartung, interview.

²⁹¹ Williams, interview.

²⁹² Hartung, interview.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The preceding research has established the logic behind, and the reasoning for, a standardized media policy for UN peacekeeping. Yet, they have also shown the problems with coordinating multinational contingents of both troops and media. It seems clear that a happy medium must be found, somewhere between a broad, all-encompassing policy and a completely ad-hoc, state-by-state media system. As Commander Matt Brown has indicated, a UN media policy “needs to be coupled with the nature of the operation that’s being run.”²⁹³ This thought was the impetus behind the following proposal – a two-level approach to military/media relations.

The first level is a standardized policy, similar to the Statement of Principles. This level of generalization serves to establish a consensus among UN member states that the goal of any media policy is to ensure open, independent coverage. A policy based upon the Statement of Principles is inclusive enough to guide the highly dynamic nature of multinational operations, as well as promote the people’s right to know. The creation of the policy should follow the guidelines of successful negotiation described earlier in this chapter. As such, it originates at the highest level (UN General Assembly) and is delegated to the peacekeepers on the ground.

The second level of the policy is a series of semi-autonomous offices located on the ground, dispersed throughout the theatre of operations of any peacekeeping mission. Offices would be primarily located at the main embarkation/debarkation points of the operation. As Commander Matt Brown noted, in Somalia, “just from the logistics standpoint, an airport is a great place to do that kind of operation, because people are

coming and going. So, there it made sense.”²⁹⁴ This would allow a certain level of coordination among different nations and the media, but also allow a measure of independence on the part of each country – an essential aspect to consider, since national autonomy is considered vital even within UN peacekeeping operations. These offices would not disperse policy, but merely serve as a point of contact between troops and reporters wanting to cover the operation from in-country.

The need for face-to-face contact cannot be overemphasized. As Pete Williams has pointed out,

The thing to bear in mind is that at the bottom line everybody here is a human being. Military commanders are human beings, reporters are human beings – they’re people. Human relationships will control what happens. So, I think it’s nice, it’s good, it’s helpful, to have a list of going-in propositions. And it is an evolving thing and the military and the media have to keep coming together to remember what it is they’re trying to do. That’s good. It would be even better to allow human nature to take over. The key to it always – the more time you can spend together, the better its going to work.²⁹⁵

Pete Williams goes on to note that the lack of face-to-face contact between the military and the media is partly to blame for the friction amid military operations.

It’s really kind of naïve for the military to expect the press to behave themselves when the military doesn’t really work with the press when it trains. It’s naïve of the press to think that they can suddenly dispatch a bunch of reporters to a military operation who don’t know which end of the tank the bullet comes out of.²⁹⁶

But with these tensions existing between the US military and the press, how can the United Nations be expected to facilitate a good working relationship with the media?

²⁹³ Brown, interview. In this situation, Commander Brown is an expert. Having run one of these semi-autonomous public affairs offices in Mogadishu during the Somalia peacekeeping operation, he knows firsthand about the benefits and costs of a dual system media policy.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Williams, interview.

²⁹⁶ Williams, interview.

As noted before, the US has a skeletal operation for pulling public affairs people in the field that can make the rules work. The UN does not. How can the loosely-organized peacekeeping structure hope to enforce a media policy? The answer lies in the second prong – local public affairs offices. The UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia is proof that this type of system can work. Commander Matt Brown related the following thoughts:

There's no question that being able to sit down and hash out what was going to happen, and what these different opportunities and availabilities were, being able to discuss – that was beneficial. That office, I would also say, was not putting out any kind of policy. It was more just an information exchange. I think it would have been difficult, especially in the early days of Somalia, to say 'OK, these are the standardized rules, this is how you are going to operate' because, frankly, even between the [American] services, there were differences.²⁹⁷

This speaks to the heart of coordination problems. While a standardized policy, negotiated at the headquarters level would serve as the guiding statement of media coverage, the local offices would be authorized to negotiate between themselves and the media, as well as among other national contingents in the field. This will lead to greater understanding among all the parties involved, as well as allow both groups to negotiate issues that they feel are problematic. As Pete Williams noted, "it's just a matter of trust. That is always the ideal. The more you can do that – the more you can let humans interact with humans, the more reporters will instinctively not need rules to be told what not to report."²⁹⁸

Not only will this local-level negotiation allow greater latitude for human interaction, it will also facilitate the right to know, since reporters will be able to directly address a local public affairs officer with intimate knowledge of the field operations.

²⁹⁷ Brown, interview.

These officers are much more likely to facilitate coverage of situations that would be blacklisted at the headquarters level. And in this way, the local offices also ensure operational security. Commander Matt Brown explains:

Anytime I am going to do something with the media and a front line or an operational unit, I always talk to those people in advance. If there is something that appears to be classified, or I'm unsure if it's classified, then I negotiate with the commanding officer of that unit or his representative and determine if there's something there that shouldn't be covered. At the same time, I'm sure that there's guidance, saying 'these things shouldn't be covered.' It's a little bit of both.²⁹⁹

In this way, both levels of the media policy work together, ensuring operational security *and* the people's right to know. So while at the headquarters level there is a standardized policy that works for all future peacekeeping operations, the local level is allowed a degree of freedom that eases the tensions inherent in the military/media relationship.

This flexibility is crucial, as Commander Matt Brown emphasizes.

As far as coordinating contents and expenditures of public affairs efforts – I think it's going to have to be on a case-by-case basis. In general, you want to coordinate, you want to talk, and I think having some kind of organization or framework that allows you to do that is good. But you also need to have the ability to be flexible and, in some cases, to allow countries to operate independently and coordinate with the media on their own. And within that framework, have some coordinated effort as well.³⁰⁰

The proposed UN peacekeeping media policy meets all of Commander Brown's criteria for coordination. It allows a broad statement of principles, committing member states to facilitating open and independent coverage of all future peacekeeping operations, guaranteeing the people's right to know. It also provides a mechanism for on-the-ground enforcement, by allowing military officers and members of the media to negotiate the details of coverage at the local level, where officials are bound to have a greater

²⁹⁸ Williams, interview.

²⁹⁹ Brown, interview.

understanding of the operational security risks. Finally, it leaves room for individual countries to negotiate with the media on their own, provided they adhere to the broader policy goals. This is essential when dealing with the disparate operating procedures of UN member states. All in all, this proposal provides the necessary guidelines for protecting operational security as well as the people's right to know, while facilitating cooperation and coordination between and among peacekeeping contingents and members of the media. As the role of UN peacekeeping continues to grow as the primary source of intervention in the post-Cold War world, this policy becomes all the more important for ensuring the successful role of the media in United Nations peacekeeping.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

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