



Geneva Centre for Security Policy  
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## **Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security**

### **GCSP Policy Brief Series**

The GCSP policy brief series publishes papers in order to assess policy challenges, dilemmas, and policy recommendations in *all aspects* of transnational security and globalization. The series was created and is edited by Dr. Nayef R.F. Al-Rodhan, Senior Scholar in Geostrategy and Director of the Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security.

## **Editorial of GCSP Policy Brief No. 4 Peace Operations: Reflections of, Responses to, and Victims of, Globalization**

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## Review and Critique

A peace operation, whether mandated through the UN or as a unilateral move by a state, is a politically, economically, and militarily complicated task. The question of state sovereignty is a key element in the successful implementation of peace operations and in their lasting impact in post-conflict situations. Since the first deployment of troops in a peace operation in 1956 to assist in the Suez crisis, these operations have been facing obstacles on both operational and political levels. Naturally, such management tools in post-conflict and crisis situations have been duly affected by globalization.

In the history of the UN alone, there have been more than 60 peace operations since 1948.<sup>1</sup> These have made a large contribution to the security and stability of the international system when they have been effectively deployed. As one might imagine, there is significant debate within the international community regarding operations and their effectiveness. These missions have been viewed and implemented very differently and are even referred to by different names depending on the geographic location of the mandate, the country sending troops, and the political necessity surrounding a specific operation.<sup>2</sup> Peace operations are by nature a transnational solution for inter- and intra-state conflicts.

Thierry Tardy, in his policy brief “Peace Operations: Reflections of, Responses to, and Victims of, Globalization,”<sup>3</sup> addresses this issue. He contends that “peace operations are simultaneously a product of globalization, a response to globalization, and a victim of globalization.” He claims that, due to the fact that globalization shapes and impacts the way in which conflicts develop and the overall framework of their management, the impact is largely felt throughout the peace-operations community and it is an important aspect to assess.

## Dilemmas and Recommendations

While the dilemmas raised between states have been at the forefront of discussions related to peace operations in recent years due to the conflicts in Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire (among others), peace operations have received further attention. Presented on the following page are eight dilemmas and our recommended state action for dealing with these issues.



When discussing UN peace operations with states in terms of proper actions and reactions in conflict situations, many dilemmas and solutions are raised. However, the dilemmas that we have identified here provide some of the most fundamental challenges that states face: namely, the need for a clear UN mandate, as well as diplomatic solutions versus the need for peace operations. In addition, the responsibility to intervene quickly to prevent humanitarian disasters and the logistical ability of states to get involved place large burdens on a state's ability to react and respond. The recommendations in this section provide potential means of improvement. All operations need to be led by a UN mandate wherever possible; diplomatic efforts need to be extensive, multilateral, and coordinated with early conflict detection and clear post-conflict plans.

Furthermore, state sovereignty is a large stumbling block for most nation-states. Related is the dilemma between true humanitarian peace operations and those that have ulterior political, financial and/or security motives. The only effective way to deal with such issues is to

guarantee the transparency, credibility, accountability, and non-financial remuneration of missions and to empower individuals in conflict-torn areas. It is also important to facilitate shared responsibility and empowerment of the conflict areas and in the regional organizations to ensure a timely withdrawal of troops to avoid perceptions of neo-colonialism.

Finally, the type of personnel that make up peacekeeping forces and the way in which they conduct themselves are critical to the success of missions. Respect for local customs, in terms of dress codes and etiquette, versus the potentially problematic behavior of peacekeeping forces must be kept in proper balance. Only then will states be able to conduct such missions effectively. The best way of ensuring this is to educate peacekeepers about these cultural sensitivities, as well as to include personnel that have ethnic and religious relevance to the area of conflict. There must also be strict, accountable and ethical behavior by peacekeepers. In this way, these dilemmas can be dealt with in a meaningful way that does not prevent the success of such operations.

## Conclusion

The impact that the globalization process has had on peacekeeping operations is complex and can be seen at any given time from a number of angles. The dilemmas that we have presented here are very important to the success of such missions at both the state and regional levels. Without taking into consideration these eight dilemmas, states will not be able to properly deal with the challenges that they face when participating in UN mandates. By taking them into consideration and revising state responses in order to act in accordance with these recommendations, states will make conflict prevention and their reactions to conflicts much more successful and valuable in their contributions to transnational security.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> T. Tardy, "Introduction", in T. Tardy (ed.), *Peace Operations After 11 September 2001* (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For the brief in its entirety, please see the policy brief series as part of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy's Program on the Geopolitical Implications of Globalization and Transnational Security, <http://www.gcsp.ch/e/publications/Globalisation/index.htm>.