

**Centre Thucydide Seminar Organised for the DAS**  
**on February 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**THE UNITED NATIONS' PEACEKEEPING DOCTRINE**

**HCCEP Study # 2006 / 198**

**SUMMARIZATION**

1. On the basis of the DPKO project, elaborating a doctrine on peace operations, *Peace Operations 2010*, and as part of a research agreement with the Ministry of Defence DAS, the Centre Thucydide has organised a seminar on February 9th and 10th, 2007, in Paris, on peacekeeping operations' conditions for success. This seminar has benefited from the input of many stakeholders in these operations: militaries from various nationalities and DPKO officials, including the SGA, as well as independent experts.

2. After the seminar's framework and objectives had been exposed, the following points have been dealt with: designing and planning operations (problems associated with the UN decision-making process ; problems associated with the mandate elaboration); capacity-related problems (relations with troops and police contributors; the weight of Western nations and the case of UNIFL) ; leadership and control questions (dual leadership chain ; the first lessons that can be drawn from the DPKO UNIFL strategic unit) ; integrating civilian and military assignments (distributing tasks between civilian and military departments ; coordinating military activities and police assignments); the part played by regional actors in crisis management (input of the AU and sub-regional organisations to crisis management in Africa ; the dedication of the European Union to the UN - the case of Eufor / Congo ; coordination problems between the UN, the EU and the others) ; local partnerships (identifying and selecting field actors ; contacts and negotiations with local populations : the Haiti case) ; a case study : the Ivory Coast (its articulation between OPEX and PKO ; peacekeeping and political reconstruction).

3. This report puts discussions within the general context of peacekeeping operations and their evolution. Then, it deals with the main questions studied during the seminar, pertaining to: (a) the legitimacy of operations decided by the Security Council, the operation mandate

and commitment rules ; (b) the capacity, leadership and control issue ; (c) articulating civilian and military assignments, with the input from NGOs and specific problems, with the insertion of police assignments ; (d) regional actors and local partnerships ; (e) two case studies : the Ivory Coast and Lebanon, situations in which France has played a particularly significant part, and continues to do so. These two cases have made it possible to evoke the innovation that was the establishment of a strategic military unit for Lebanon, and, concerning the Ivory Coast, the protection mechanisms for a peacekeeping force, by an exterior operation able to use weapons.

4. The specific observations expressed and discussed during the study of these different points can hardly be summarized in some phrases that would deface their pithiness and diversity. The gist of these presentations and discussions will be evoked here instead. It points more towards adjustments in peace operations than towards a conceptual and institutional breach, considering that political and structural constraints still frame the operations, determining their limits as well as their achievements. The peace operations instrument has evolved, and it will do so again. It is pragmatic by nature and must make the most of acquired experiences and field situations. Considering its existential nature, it must adjust both to the demands resulting from ever-changing crises and conflicts and to the responses that the United Nations and their member states may be able to have, with the help of other international institutions, especially regional institutions, NGOs and local partnerships.

5. If one goes through the criteria set up by the DPKO for an operation's success, in its draft doctrine *Peace Operations 2010*, one notices that several of these, yet not all of them, have been explored during the seminar. These are the following:

- The existence of a peace that must be maintained
- The Security Council's unanimous support
- The main regional actors' support
- A clear and achievable mandate, with the resources necessary to its accomplishment made available
- Setting up a comprehensive strategy ensuring an orderly transition between the different post-conflict intervention phases.

Such an approach may be somewhat academic, or bureaucratic. A different spirit prevailed during the seminar. The emphasis was put more on making a critical analysis of the

operations' reality than on defining optimal options, in the logic of experience feedback. Pointing towards the path yet to be trodden to comply with criteria or provisions, rather than pondering their meaning, is the benefit that derives from this. Another benefit is to draw on more concrete data: judging from those criteria as a whole, and if all of them should be complied with as of now, it does seem that no peace operation could have been launched for decades and could not be in the foreseeable future.

6. For instance, the provisions for disengagement have not been studied. Certain criteria or provisions have been looked at from another angle, or left unstudied. Thus, the actions' legitimacy has seemed more important than Council unanimity. That peace should still be established when the operation is being set up is not a sure fact either. Mandates always retain some ambiguity, especially when they are analysed on the field. The comprehensive strategy is always subject to changes. In other words, this seminar aimed at being political and operational more than theoretical and dogmatic. It should be noted that pragmatism has prevailed in most interventions, as well as the idea that peace operations had several traits that should not be changed. First, the practice of operations is long and subject to evolution; if it calls for conceptualisation and streamlining, there are little chances that it may experience a conceptual breakthrough. Then, each operation is special, so that general directives should be flexible enough to adapt to all of the conditions specific to each situation, on the side of demands as well as on the side of responses. Finally, the logic of consent prevails over the entire process: the consent of all interested parties, states, institutions, partners in a conflict situation, so that peace operations thrive in this framework, which they must strengthen and enlarge, but also that other mechanisms are called for as soon as coercion is necessary.

7. This does not mean, in any way, that the lessons to be drawn from the seminar point towards a disabused empiricism. On the contrary, many improvements have been suggested, based on a critical analysis of current experiences. Yet they are marginal adjustments, or a continuous strengthening process, rather than a doctrinal revolution. The thinking done and its different orientations can be grouped around three axes:

(a) *The intensity of peace operations is meant to stay low.* This is due to their resulting from an ensemble of lacks: the impotence or insufficiency of local or regional authorities; the failing of collective security mechanisms; the will of powers able to intervene to do so only minimally. Hence the importance of the legitimacy issue, at the operation's start as well as in its outcome: the operation must be construed as legitimate by all interested partners, and it aims at reinstating legitimacy in

international behaviours and interior authorities that would make it possible to rebuild and stabilise peace.

(b) *They call for streamlining rather than for a conceptual breakthrough.* This streamlining would include different aspects, on the whole of a practical nature. On the central echelon, a single liability during the course of an operation, excluding a sharing of authority within the DPKO; reinforcing the UN military expertise, its military strategy unit representing an early stage of it; reinforcing also its capacity to analyse field situations, through relevant political or sociological expertise, making it possible to anticipate crises and to define exit conditions. On the field, the quality and homogeneity of contingents, and of NGOs which should be involved as well; this may call for a selection and assessment procedure; prior training, theoretical and practical, of contingents, together if possible; clarity of involvement rules, and, as far as possible, uniformity of these rules for the various contingents; regulating relationships between the diverse components of an assignment, but also between state and institution partners; clarifying relations between the civilian and military dimensions, including police assignments. There is no argument against the establishment of model MOU, which must remain adjustable, according to specific situations. Thus, several models could be prepared, according to the operations' complexity as well as to the assignments' diversity and to their actors.

(c) *They are an open process.* The SGA has made the relevant observation that peace operations are under construction. They are under construction on the central echelon, for the elaboration of general directives that govern them, as much as they are for the decision-making bodies that support them. Insofar as operations obey more to the logic of demand than to the logic of supply, that is to say they have to adapt to very different situations whose future gist remains unpredictable, this adaptation process must take field data into account with neither prejudice nor automatism. Hence, the difficulty lies in harmonising the structural constraints that limit operations and the general rules that frame them with the specific requirements deriving from the crises they are faced with. This may call for regular seminars to be held within the DPKO with exterior experts, governmental or not, to proceed to the assessment of general directives as well as the experience feedback of ongoing operations and to the analysis of potential crisis situations, in order to anticipate the organisation of possible operations. It can be said that this seminar somewhat partook of this modest and pragmatic spirit.