



**STRATEGY
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**PEACE OPERATIONS:
THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Peace Operations: The Cost Of Doing Business

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ABSTRACT

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The end of the cold war and the emergence of the United States as the last remaining super power have forced the US to lead the world in peace operations. The demise of the Cold War's bipolar balance of power has led to an increase in ethnic, religious and nationalist conflicts throughout the world. The US has increasingly been drawn into peace operations in order to stabilize the international security environment in support of its national interests. This increased involvement in peace operations coupled with the United States' post-Cold and Gulf War military force reduction has stretched the military component of US national power to the limits of acceptable readiness. A detailed cost/benefit analysis of past, ongoing, and potential future peace operations is necessary to ensure that US national interests are protected.

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PEACE OPERATIONS: THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION AND THESIS:

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the last remaining super power have forced the US to lead the world in peace operations. The demise of the Cold War's bipolar balance of power has led to an increase in ethnic, religious and nationalist conflicts throughout the world.¹ The US has increasingly been drawn into peace operations in order to stabilize the international security environment in support of its national interests.² This increased involvement in peace operations coupled with the United States' post Cold and Gulf War military force reduction has stretched the military component of US national power to the limits of acceptable readiness. A detailed cost/benefit analysis of past, ongoing, and potential future peace operations is necessary to ensure that US National Interests are protected.

Successful peace operations undertaken in support of vital and important national interests can represent a cost-effective application of military force. However, the military cost of all peace operations must be gauged with respect to overall readiness impacts on the military's ability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous Major Theater Level Wars (MTW).³ This readiness impact and cost analysis are critical given the fact that the most recent use of US military force in peace operations has taken place in the Balkan Region of Europe and in Haiti. The generally accepted and most likely locations for US involvement in MTW remain Southwest Asia and the Korean Peninsula. If one accepts that current US force structure is designed to, in the worst case scenario, fight and decisively win two nearly simultaneous major MTWs in South West Asia and Korea; then one must also conclude that participation in the most recent and ongoing peace operations of Haiti and the Balkans degrades US military readiness to fight and win the most likely major theater level wars. This is not to say those peace operations in the Balkans and Haiti does not advance important US national interests. A strong argument can be made that they do. However, an honest cost to readiness vs. benefit analysis must be undertaken to ensure that our vital national Interests and strategic objectives are not placed in jeopardy through over extension of the military component of national power in support of important and sometimes peripheral peace operations.

DISCUSSION

For the purposes of clarity and brevity, the term 'peace operation(s)'⁴ will be used throughout this paper as a broad operational term that encompasses military participation in peace keeping and peace enforcement. A brief discussion of the differences between peacekeeping and peace enforcement⁵ as well and their operational and combat readiness implications is in order. Peace keeping operations can be generally characterized as those peace operations that are undertaken with the consent of the major parties to a dispute and are designed to monitor and facilitate the agreement⁶. Peace enforcement operations are the application of military force or threat of force to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace⁷. The training and combat readiness implications of these different types of peace operations are significant. Classic United Nations Chapter VI peacekeeping operations tend to be the most restrictive with respect to rules of engagement and application of conventional military power to accomplish the mission. Peace enforcement operations, most often associated with Chapter VII of the UN Charter, are more akin to the application of conventional military power and are less restrictive in their attendant rules of engagement. Obviously, not all peace operations degrade combat readiness at the same rate. Peacekeeping tends to degrade high intensity readiness the most while peace enforcement operations decrease readiness at a slower rate. It may even help maintain certain readiness skill sets such as command and control and logistics. Since all peace operations are unique, many fall between the extremes of true peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The readiness effects of each peace operation will be different and should be measured and accounted for accordingly.

This paper focuses on the use of US military forces in support of peace operations and will not discuss the very significant contributions made by other governmental and non-governmental agencies to the peace operations effort. The focus of this paper is on the readiness costs associated with US military involvement in peace operations.

Any analysis of a component of national strategy and its effectiveness must begin with a consideration of national interests. US national interests are broken down into three broad categories⁸: vital interests, important national interests and humanitarian and other interests. One can infer from the categories and their sequencing that they are listed in order of priority. President Clinton states that

recent peace operations in Haiti and the Balkans fall into the "important national interests" category.⁹ It may be argued that the Haiti and current Balkan peace operations may fall into the third humanitarian category as opposed to the stated important interests. On the other hand, few would claim that war in the Pacific Rim lands (Korea) or South West Asia (Saudi Arabia) would not affect our vital national interest of economic well being. Recent and current US military participation in peace operations in support of important/humanitarian interests degrades readiness to fight in the most likely major theater level wars that support vital interests.

US National Military Objectives that support the US national interests include: Promote Peace and Stability, Defeat Adversaries, Shape the International Environment, Respond to the full spectrum of crises, and Prepare Now for an Uncertain Future.¹⁰ Peace operations clearly support the objectives of promote peace and stability and shape the international environment. However, over-commitment to peace operations can degrade the military's 'worst case' objectives of defeating adversaries and responding to the full spectrum of crises. The accepted purpose of the US armed forces is to deter war and if deterrence fails, achieve decisive victory.¹¹ The US Military's second purpose is to protect US national interests in priority (vital, important, and humanitarian).¹² I contend that the size of US military involvement in current peace operations, coupled with the duration of recent and ongoing peace operations, is at odds with protecting US vital interests and accomplishing the most important and difficult US military objective of defeating dangerous adversaries.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE OF TASK FORCE SMITH

The readiness implications and risks of current peace operations can be best illustrated with the historical example of the Task Force Smith debacle during the Korean conflict of 1950. The historical parallels between the current post cold war period and the post World War II time frame are disturbingly familiar. Both periods were characterized as bringing forth a New World order and possibilities of world peace as a result of profound change. The post World War II worldview was based on the notion that nuclear weapons and the terrible carnage of World War II made future conventional war unthinkable. The formation of the United Nations as a world wide political body with the ability to stop crisis before it spun out of control and US nuclear dominance validated the rapid US demobilization. Correspondingly, the military was focused on nation building and constabulatory duty in Europe and Japan. The rapid

demobilization of the military after 1945 coupled with the concentration of those who remained on constabulary (peace keeping) duty had rendered the US Army unready and untrained for ground combat. Units were undermanned, poorly trained and poorly equipped for combat. As a result, the US Army was totally unprepared for the North Korean invasion of the South and Truman decision to deploy US conventional ground forces in the defense of South Korea.

The quick answer, and probably the only answer was to launch an ill conceived and ill prepared force, Task Force Smith to halt communist aggression. A lot had changed since the heady days of VE and VJ day. The Soviets had become our cold war enemies, enslaved Eastern Europe, and were attempting to gain world dominance. Mao forced the Nationalist Chinese to Formosa and established the Communist Peoples Republic of China as the dominant force on the Asian landmass. The Soviets rendered our nuclear monopoly moot by developing their own nuclear arsenal. Limited conventional war through proxies was now possible. The Soviets selected Korea as their first testing ground for nuclear age limited conventional war. Truman decided to contest the Soviet move by throwing the US Army into the breach. Task Force Smith was born.

Essentially, Task Force Smith was an adhoc conglomeration of the 24th Infantry Division that was currently on occupation duty in Japan¹³. They were poorly trained and equipped. They were told that their mission was a "police action"¹⁴ and that they would be back to Japan in short order. Five days after deployment from Japan, Task Force Smith was engaged by well-trained and equipped North Korean troops outside of Osan, South Korea and was soundly defeated. Task Force Smith essentially fell apart from lack of training, poor equipment and poor combat discipline. It was much the same story for all US Army units in the first few months of the Korean War. The once proud US Army that had defeated Hitler's Third Reich and Japan's Empire of the Rising Sun just five years earlier had grown soft and complacent due to occupation/constabulary duty and nation building. Training for combat had suffered and dead US soldiers and mission failure were the result. It took many months of intensive combat and behind the lines training to bring US Army units up to the combat standards necessary to beat the North Koreans and later the Communist Chinese.

In many ways, the current post Cold-War strategic climate and the US reaction to it are similar to the post World War II period. The demise of the Soviet Union is being touted as an opportunity for

utopian world peace. The current revolution in information technology and resultant precision weapons advantage that the US currently possesses leads some to believe once again that dirty conventional combat is passé, much like the nuclear revolution of the late 40's. The proliferation of peace operations that have been largely precipitated by the power vacuum left by the demise of world communism are disturbingly familiar to the occupation and nation building duties of the post World War II military. The results of both post war time frames are also much the same with respect to training for war. Time, as we all know, is a finite resource. Time for realistic combat training is one of the most precious resources that a military possesses. If it normally takes all available time in any given year to train active component combat units to standard, then those units must suffer significant degradation in combat training proficiency if they must train for, deploy to and serve on peace operations for an extended period of time.

The potential for the US Army to produce a contemporary Task Force Smith is present today. Currently a great deal of valuable training time is dedicated to preparation for, execution of, and recovery from peace operations. Correspondingly, less time is dedicated to training for war. Ongoing US Army War College Strategy Research Projects from 1997 to 1999 that have focused on measurement and assessment of peace operations impacts on combat readiness confirm that peace operations are degrading combat readiness¹⁵. The series of surveys measuring peace operations impacts of combat readiness have been administered to US Army War College students from 1997 to present. These surveys confirm that former battalion commanders believe that unit and individual combat skills are degraded during peace operations. The surveys also confirm that the extent of combat readiness degradation due to participation in peace operations varies by unit and by the specific peace operation. Finally, the War College surveys show a trend of acceptance of peace operations readiness impacts¹⁶ as "the cost of doing business". In many cases, army leaders are rewarded and promoted for successful execution of peace operations while contemporaries that focus on training for war are overlooked. Most disturbing may be the effect that repeated peace operational deployments is having on the junior leadership of the army. Many of today's squad leaders platoon leaders and company commanders' only operational experiences are during a train-up for and execution of a peace operation. They either miss combat maneuver center rotations and gunnery densities all together or execute these critical formative training experiences in a peace operations mode. These junior leaders move on to assignments of

increased responsibility with little to no practical experience in training for war. As a result, the army's future war fighting capability is placed at risk. Many would argue that today's army retains much of the training proficiency of the Desert Storm military of the early 90's. Military leaders of great experience such as General of the Army Douglas MacArthur would have made the same argument in early 1950, prior to the deployment of Task Force Smith. Those leaders had defeated the combined Axis powers just five years earlier and they were dead wrong. Contemporary military leaders that do not admit to combat readiness degradation due to peace operations are also dead wrong. Combat readiness is a hard won and fleeting thing.

PROBLEM

The problem lies with the limited military means available to accomplish the ever-expanding peace operations while also remaining ready to decisively win two nearly simultaneous major theater level wars. The limited scope and size of this paper preclude a detailed analysis of all available US Military resources and demands on them by current peace operations and war plans. Consequently, I will provide one example of limited means and the readily apparent first order effects of current peace operations as well as some examples of second and third order effects of over-extension because of peace operations.

A simple example of limited means and the over extension effects of peace operations is that of the current US Army commitments to the Balkan peace operations. Currently the Army has 10 Active Divisions resourced at varying percentages of personnel and equipment fill based upon priorities due to preparation time required for deployment to a major theater level war. Ongoing Bosnian peace operations require a theater level three star commander and staff, a division commander and staff, a brigade combat team, combat aviation brigade and numerous additional divisional, corps, theater and army level assets. The theater and division commanders and staffs deploy for one year while the brigade elements rotate at six months. All forces require a train up and preparation for deployment period of at least six months and a retraining for high intensity combat and recovery time frame of six months to a year dependent on resources. The current open-ended requirement for Kosovo is much the same. Kosovo requires a brigade combat team, Brigadier General (one of the Assistant Division Commanders)

and a portion of a division staff, aviation battalion, other army, theater, corps and divisional assets. All rotate on a six-month cycle. Preparation and recovery time is the same as Bosnia units.

The result of both ongoing requirements to support the open-ended Balkan peace operations is the relative unavailability of two plus Army divisions that are either deployed to or preparing for and finally recovering from Balkan peace operations. Additionally, a theater level three star commander and staff are permanently deployed in the Balkans. Without discussing war plans in detail, we can see that the effect on the Army's ability to fight the worst-case scenario is readily apparent. Some of the forces expected to arrive in theater will be unavailable while others will be untrained and improperly configured for high intensity conflict. Army National Guard ground combat units that could not be made ready for combat with six months lead time for the Gulf War have also been reduced as a result of the Cold War draw down. Current open-ended peace operations requirements render the two major theater level war strategies nearly unattainable. Any future peace operations in addition to the current open-ended Balkan requirements may even risk decisive victory in a single major theater war.

The problem of over-extension is further compounded by the degradation of combat skills that result from extended peace operations. Again, a simple example should suffice to demonstrate the problem. One of the most common and critical small unit combat skills is precise execution of the battle drill "React to Contact". A battle drill is a set of collective, leader and individual actions taken by a small unit in reaction to a situation on the battlefield and does not require detailed analysis. Execution of a battle drill is time sensitive and can be the difference between life and death; mission success or failure. The first actions of a small unit when it makes contact with the "enemy" should be to shoot to gain fire superiority, develop the situation (deploy/maneuver) and then report. Peace operations rarely have a defined enemy, almost never allow a small unit to shoot first upon contact, and almost always demand that higher headquarters is called first in any contentious situation. Failure of a small unit leader to abide by restrictive rules of engagement and not seek higher approval before acting usually results in disciplinary action or outright relief. Peace operations require great discipline and minimal use of force. As a result of their very nature, most peace operations are the antithesis of combat. So while higher headquarters command, control and intelligence as well as many combat support and service support

functions can be trained and strengthened during peace operations, fundamental combat skills at the individual, leader, and small unit collective level suffer greatly.

The US must pursue alternate ways to accomplish the increasing peace operations requirements of the post-cold war world. The next few sections will detail both options and recommendations for this process

OPTIONS:

Several options exist to help ameliorate the current readiness dilemma caused by military overextension in peace operations. I will review four of the most apparent and realistic options available.

Option A:

Adjust the Current national Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS) to reflect the current reality of peace operations readiness impacts. Move to a sequential vs. "nearly simultaneous"¹⁷ Major Theater Level War (MTW) strategy. Accept risk in one MTW while prioritizing another. As an example, prioritize the Southwest Asia MTW in order to safeguard the West's most valuable source of energy. Accept risk in the Korea MTW due to the relative strength of the South Korean military and increasing weakness of the North Koreans. In case of simultaneous out break of war in both regions, hold with air power and currently stationed US ground forces in Korea while fighting to win decisively and rapidly in Southwest Asia. Adjustment of US strategy to one MTW at a time would allow for a significant amount of force to be allocated to peace operations that support our national military objective of Promote peace and Stability¹⁸.

Option B:

Develop a triage model for ongoing and future peace operations that measures cost of the peace operation against the potential benefit to US national interests. Ongoing peace operations that do not currently support vital national interests or measure up to the cost/benefit test should be terminated by transitioning to a regional or UN force if continued operations are deemed necessary by those organizations. Future application of US forces in peace operation must be measured against a realistic and rigorous cost/benefit model. Elements of the peace operations triage model should include peace operations objectives that are definable, attainable and decisive with respect to our national interests. Metrics should be developed for all peace operations to track mission accomplishment. An exit strategy

should be tied to the aforementioned metrics. All elements of national power should be considered in addressing the potential peace operation. Regional security organizations and the UN should be considered first as force providers when contemplating use of military force. Congressional resolution and participation of reserve component forces as needed should assure popular support. Readiness costs of the peace operation should be balanced against the potential benefit to regional peace and stability. Those that fail to measure up to the triage model should be addressed by other components of national power. Non-critical peace operations that require military force should be handled by regional organizations most concerned with the problem and if necessary, by the UN. Senior US military leaders must be disciplined in the application of peace operations triage and not be tempted to recommend acceptance of missions that fall short of the cost/benefit threshold because of service rivalry or the desire to prove value to the nation by "doing something".

Option C:

Increase the end strength of the Army to support ongoing and future peace operations. Increased end strength and the attendant increased force structure would allow the Army to conduct peace operations at current levels and maintain ground force capability to execute the current two nearly simultaneous MTW strategy. End strength and structure could be increased to equate to current and forecasted peace operations requirements. The force structure and end strength increases could either take the form of conventional ground force units or dedicated peace operations and humanitarian assistance operations units. In either case, ground force combat readiness could then be maintained to execute the current NSS and NMS.

Option D:

Increase integration and use of US Reserve Component and Army National Guard forces (RC/NG) to augment the active component (AC) forces currently employed in peace operations. While the Army is currently pursuing this option on a limited scale with current employment of the Texas 49th Division in Bosnia, increased employment of RC/NG forces would help to retain combat readiness in active component formations even more. Currently, RC/NG units are activated for 270 days and deployed for six months. These RC/NG units are relatively adhoc in nature in that they are formed of volunteers from throughout the region or state. This is in contrast to the popular belief that these units are

activated in total for the peace operation. The adhoc and volunteer nature of the activation is understandable given the peacetime nature of the mission. This type of RC/NG augmentation could be increased and institutionalized. RC/NG units could be trained for and focused on the more restrictive peacekeeping tasks and missions. AC units could be integrated where necessary and focused on the peace enforcement task on the higher and less restrictive end of the peace operations spectrum. Employment of forces in this way would best retain the combat readiness of AC forces while simultaneously focusing the RC/NG forces on missions most suited to forces that are relatively adhoc in nature and activated specifically for peace operations. Additionally, inclusion of RC/NG units in peace operations insures that the US populace is both informed of and supports those operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations for solving the peace operations vs. readiness dilemma contain aspects of all of the options mentioned above. First and foremost, the US military strategy must be addressed. Existing force structure and strategic lift do not support the prosecution of two nearly simultaneous MTW's in any case. Current and future peace and humanitarian operations further exacerbate force structure and lift shortfalls. Forces that are currently double allocated to MTW war plans are, in essence, triple allocated to peace operations. The US should move to a sequential MTW strategy that resources current and future peace and humanitarian operations, allocate requisite forces for decisive operations in the most critical MTW and plans to hold and sequentially win in a second MTW if necessary.

Even with an adjusted military strategy, the US must establish a rigorous peace operations triage system that applies a dispassionate consideration of national interests to potential involvement of US forces in peace operations. Application of a realistic triage model that measures cost vs. benefit with respect to combat readiness and national interests could have a Weinberger doctrine¹⁹ like effect on the future employment of US forces in peace operations. An acceptable triage model would provide the National Command Authority, Congress and the people a common frame of reference with which to view the potential costs and benefits of peace operations.

If the current military strategy is not changed, the Army and Department of Defense should pursue, with the Congress, a plan to increase Army end strength and force structure. The increased end strength and force structure should be used to create additional divisional combat formations and CORPS

level logistics necessary to support current and future projected peace operations while retaining combat readiness in the current ten-division force. Formation of peace operations specific units should be avoided as they would be both an eventual burden to man and inflexible in case of general war²⁰. A ten-division force is the accepted minimum force required to execute the current strategy.

Further integration of unit level RC/NG forces in peace operations would help to retain AC combat readiness and ensure public knowledge and support of peace operations deemed critical to the nations interest. RC unit formation and activation should continue to be conducted in the manner currently used. Volunteer formations can be trained for and precisely execute peace keeping duties. AC units should be integrated with RC/NG units and should be focused on peace enforcement duties such as quick reaction force missions etc. In many cases, AC combat arms formations could be deployed to an intermediate staging base close to the peace operations area of operations in a "over the horizon" quick reaction force readiness posture. Employment of AC units in this manner could best retain combat proficiency by focusing the force on training and rehearsing for missions most akin to combat.

The aforementioned recommendations would go a long way towards solving the peace operations vs. combat readiness dilemma. Adjustment of the national military strategy coupled with the increased integration of RC/NG units seems most likely in the short run. A new administration and National Command Authority as a result of the fall 00 election may also bring increased scrutiny and a possible Weinberger type doctrine for future peace operations. An increase in Army end strength and force structure seems to be unlikely in the near term. Our senior military leaders must be jealous stewards of our combat readiness and ensure that ongoing and future readiness impacts are minimized.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

The counter arguments to my thesis that current peace operations are over-extending US military capability fall into two general areas. The first counter argument is that the two major theater level war strategic framework is a flawed scheme to rationalize Cold War force structure. This counter argument contends that the two regional threats do not exist and that current force structures can be further reduced. Apparent easy victory in the Gulf War and recent air operations in Kosovo are mentioned as proof of current superiority and excess force structure. This school of thought is closely allied with the precision weapons and Air Power theories of future war. In the meantime, so the argument goes, the US

has plenty of excess military force and might as well do something with it. Peace operations are 'something' of value. The reduced threat school of thought contends that the military can be much smaller and supports the use of the military in peace operations as a visible return on investment.

The second counter argument to the readiness cost argument against over-extension in peace operations is the utopian/new world order school of thought. Their argument is that the time is ripe for the UN to come to the fore and for the international community, world court etc. to take charge of the world and bring about universal peace. They would argue that sovereignty is in decline and that global and regional organizations can bring all bad actors to heel if the US would just commit a few more troops (And pay our UN dues). For the most part, this group ignores the potential of major theater level war, focuses on the couple of theoretical successes (Bosnia, Kosovo) and mostly ignores the multitude of horrible ongoing wars and suffering in the non-white, non-western world. Bosnia may turn out to be a partial success with respect to the cessation of hostilities. It will be difficult to ever 'spin' Kosovo into a success story. Other less attractive but more important peace operations will never be attempted by the "New World order internationalists" because they are in the former Soviet Union, Africa, Asia or just too tough. Meanwhile, new regional hegemon and bad actors are quickly filling the void left by the demise of the Soviets and their proxies. The world is not a safer place.

CONCLUSION

Peace operations can contribute to the accomplishment of national military objectives and support national interests. Over-extension of the military element of power in peace operations that support lower order national interests or purely humanitarian interests risks the readiness of the military to fight and win our nation's wars. The readiness costs of peace operations must be evaluated and reported to the National Command Authority and Congress. The benefits of US military involvement in peace operations must be measured against our enduring national interests. Our nation demands that we fight and decisively win in war while minimizing US casualties. Maintaining combat readiness is the key to accomplishing our most vital national interest, National Survival.

(WORD COUNT 5,326)

ENDNOTES

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⁴ David Jablonsky, Peace Operations (Carlisle Barracks, PA US Army War College, 1999) 50

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¹⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Joseph P. Nizolak, Jr., Peace Operations and Their Impact on Combat Readiness (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1999), 33

¹⁶ Ibid. , 34

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