CHAPTER 1

PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS: STRATEGIC CONTEXT, CONCEPTS AND DIRECTION

INTRODUCTION

1. It is important that those working in a Peace Support Operation (PSO) environment have an understanding of the strategic context within which a PSO is conducted. An appreciation of the strategic goal, the desired end-state or any interim stages to be achieved will shape the way in which the operation is conducted and the means that are used. Whilst no two PSOs will be the same, the use of generic concepts and principles at the strategic level will aid the initial planning and implementation of an operation.

THE PSO SPECTRUM

2. The AU adopted the principle of collective security. This implies that all authorised stakeholders will participate in identifying and addressing issues of instability and turmoil within their domains. Within the African context, this means that the AU, its regional organisations and mechanisms and member states must contribute to collective security through collaboration in order to maintain a peaceful and prosperous Africa. For the AU, this entails the use of the collateral political, military, police and civilian capacities of member states, organised by the regions, to intervene as is appropriate.

3. The adjacent diagram illustrates the spectrum of contemporary UN peacekeeping initiatives as performed by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO). Initially, the AU team considered this model and recognised that all the activities within the "peacekeeping" range are on a continuum – a political initiative can be any structure in the spectrum from an observer mission to a complex multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation. The AU therefore adopted the term Peace Support Operations (PSOs), which cover all activities and provide the flexibility to move from one "type" of initiative to another, adjusting to changing situations. A PSO thus covers any initiative in support of peaceful coexistence.

4. As a consequence, great focus needs to be placed on the requirement for adopting and initiating multi-functional PSOs that encompass both traditional and new military tasks. The following are some of the likely tasks in the new strategic environment:

   a. Control and verification of compliance with peace agreements, cease-fire agreements or armistices. The exercise of control and the enforcement of compliance may require combat actions.

   b. Assistance with the fulfilment of agreements following the peaceful settlements of a conflict.
c. Contribution to conflict prevention through preventive deployment, training assistance and security sector reform projects.

d. Guarantee or denial of freedom of movement (FOM).

e. Conducting, supervising or supporting Mine-clearing and Explosive Ordnance and Improvised Explosive Reconnaissance and Disposal (EOR), EOD), and mine awareness training programmes to restore human security.

f. Disarmament, demobilisation and assistance to reintegration operations, including those involving foreign military personnel. Supporting humanitarian relief and assistance operations to civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

g. Restoring human security within the broad context of a peace mission, thereby helping to curb human rights abuses.

h. Assisting in the planning, monitoring and conducting of elections.

i. Supporting the restoration of civil order and the rule of law, including the apprehension of war criminals.

j. Enforcement of sanctions and embargoes.

k. Supporting reconciliation and other development programmes as part of the peace building processes.

5. This doctrine provides for the application of tested guiding principles across the spectrum of tension as the best assurance of mission success. The approach is to focus on military and other tasks that are needed to achieve the desired outcomes or the effects envisaged.

**GENERAL CONCEPT**

6. The AU envisions a continent united in preventing and acting against conflict, instability and any incident that can contribute to conflict and instability. This entails capacitating the AU with the operational structures that enable it to intervene in conflict zones and project PSO capabilities where and when required. The principle underlying this is that multinational organisations bear greater credibility and legitimacy for such actions, even though the AU recognises the sovereign rights of nations to decide whether or not to participate in multinational activities. The AU should, even in the light of reservations by some members, be able to address the comprehensive/multi-dimensional requirements for African PSOs.

7. The design of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is such that the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), which is elected by the nations of the continent, will play a key role in mandating the mounting and termination of African Standby Force (ASF) operations. A PSC mandate is a pre-requisite for operations of the ASF, but UN Security Council (UNSC) sanction would be required for forceful intervention as per UN Charter Chapter VII.

8. Fundamental to the success of the ASF is the close involvement of regional organisations. Their role is to provide a multi-dimensional capability consisting of military, police, civil administration and any other necessary PSO components, trained to the
minimum standards of UN peacekeepers, equipped to common standards, and operating to the common doctrine and standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the UN.

9. The ASF is based on the principle of multinationality, where member states contribute within their regions to a Regional Standby Force (RSF) consisting of all elements required for a multi-dimensional PSO (e.g. military brigade, formed police units and specialists, and civilian components consisting of various specialities). The RSF would strive for homogeneity within a regional context with simple command and control arrangements.

10. To be effective, the components of the RSF must be maintained and developed in a manner consistent with the demands that are likely to be placed upon it. They should be part of a fully coordinated and coherent strategy in which the diplomatic, political, military, police and economic elements are as important as the overarching strategy supporting them.

GRAND STRATEGY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE CONTINENT

11. The key to the successful conduct of a PSO is the considered use of the most appropriate mix of instruments in the prevailing circumstances. Although diplomatic means are always employed, they often require economic and other actions to support and enhance their effect. Success can be achieved where diplomatic means are backed-up by an implicit or declared threat to use other means if diplomacy fails. However, any threat, no matter how it is communicated, must be credible and must be capable of being carried out if the conditions warrant it.

12. A competent ASF headquarters (HQ) would then, in collaboration with other APSA components, utilise these regional capabilities to mount missions as tasked to enable the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC) to conduct the mission in pursuit of mission objectives.

13. The PSO planning process must identify the real causes of a conflict and the associated dependencies and linkages in the adjacent “cause and effect” analysis. The PSO environment will be complex and the heads of civilian components and commanders at all levels must endeavour to identify where power and influence resides. They must ensure a comprehensive understanding before they can set about creating the environment for reconstruction by other agencies.

UNDERSTANDING THE PSO STAKEHOLDERS

14. Before a PSO has been formally mandated and established, it is probable that a number of individuals and NGOs are already working in the field to relieve human suffering and to resolve conflict. These individuals and NGOs are grouped under the umbrella term of "peace mission stakeholders" and as such can be defined as:

Representatives from the international community working together with elements affected by the conflict in order to regenerate key facets of the society or nation within the peace mission framework.
15. The number of potential key stakeholders in a PSO is large and will depend on the mandate of a particular mission. They may include the following: international organisations (IOs); non-governmental organisations (NGOs); intergovernmental organisations (IGOs); international and regional organisations that are supportive of the international action plan; external governments contributing to the mission; neighbouring governments (perhaps with vested interests in a conflict); indigenous political parties; the full array of armed groupings; local opinion-formers; and interlocutors. Although the list is likely to be extensive, a serious attempt must be made by PSO planners to identify all of them and to gain an early, clear and full understanding of the motives and drivers of each stakeholder.

STRATEGIC INTENT AND END-STATE

16. The formulation of a clear strategic intent is critical to the successful conduct of a PSO. This is often complicated by the difficulty a mandating authority may have in defining an end-state or desired outcome. The urgency for immediate action to relieve suffering, or prevent or curb further conflict may override the need to first define the outcome. In such circumstances an international agreement can be made to initiate a PSO by drawing up a mandate for an interim result or objective. This may be initiated without engaging local role players, which is a requirement for defining a desired outcome.

17. However, it is against the desired outcome or interim objective that nations will determine their own national strategy and establish their contribution to and the nature and length of their engagement in a PSO and other supporting components. Historically, the final outcome sought is either a degree of stability at which disengagement can occur without the risk of a return to a crisis in the short term, or the point at which a number of criteria have been satisfied, indicating that long-term stability is self-sustaining.

18. It is convenient to consider "steady-state" criteria for PSOs, but the analysis of the required end-state conditions will comprise a broadly based list of essential achievements that must be self-sustaining before a PSO can be considered as having been accomplished. Ideally, the mandate agreed at the strategic level should make unambiguous reference to these criteria, and only exceptionally should the mandate include time criteria. In the absence of an agreement on the desired outcome, "interim criteria" may be agreed as goals to be attained en route to defining and attaining the steady-state criteria. Thus, the success of a PSO will be measured against the intended outcome.

MANDATING AUTHORITY

19. The AU protocol establishing the PSC provides for the establishment of an ASF.¹ This force consists of standby multi-disciplinary contingents with civilian and military components. The force is envisaged to have the capability of enforcing peace in any part of the continent. AU member states have agreed to contribute troops, police and civil elements to the ASF. The AU has developed an organisational capacity and capability that will permit early warning, conflict prevention and, if necessary, the deployment of the ASF. The ASF, the Panel of the Wise and the Military Staff Committee are critical assets that will enable the AU to carry out its mandate.² The attendant humanitarian demands

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¹ Article 13 of the Protocol.
² Article 20 of the Constitutive Act of AU.
that accompany African crises make it imperative that greater effort be made to involve NGOs and other specialised agencies in the planning and execution of PSOs.³

20. Any PSO must be able to demonstrate its international legitimacy from the outset. It must have received a mandate from the mandating authority “… under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In this regard the AU will seek UN Security Council authorisation of its enforcement actions. Similarly the RECs⁴/Regions will seek AU authorisation of their intervention”.⁵ Such well-established and respected authorising bodies will protect the ASF from early accusations of improper partiality or political interference.

21. The unfolding situation of a crisis necessitates the development of a common and integrated doctrine, which the AU has developed for PSOs. The regional arrangements should also be developed to enhance interoperability and capabilities to tackle the emerging crises within the African continent.

INGREDIENTS OF A MANDATING AUTHORITY

22. Political primacy. As peace missions are authorised by a political mandate, the overall authority remains political throughout the mission.⁶ It is vital that all personnel, not just senior staff, understand fully the political constraints placed upon the conduct of a PSO. This emphasises the importance of the legal dimension in the current and future peace mission environment.

23. Mission planning. The mandate, once given, will provide broad strategic-level direction. It will avoid dictating specific objectives or how things are to be done. The SRCC or the Head of Mission (HoM) will turn this broad strategic direction into a comprehensive PSO plan. Military, operational-level planning is discussed in Chapter 4. Civilian elements of the peace mission will lead as regards restoring human security to the country and the regeneration process. Ideally, such planning will have commenced before the establishment of the peace mission and involve all components in a truly “Integrated Mission” in which the overlaps and inter-dependencies between the different aspects of the mission are recognised. Whilst on occasion the military may need to temporarily undertake some key tasks associated with regeneration (mainly as a result of the security environment or a lack of in-theatre expertise), the aspiration will be to reduce military presence and profile as soon as possible.

24. Regeneration roles. The decision on whether to use civilian or military personnel for regeneration tasks ultimately rests with the mandating authority following advice from the HoM. The HoM will take advice from various sources, particularly the Force Commander (FC), the Police Commissioner (COMPOL) and other heads of components who are in a position to advise on the prevailing security environment. The decision to use civilian or military personnel is a major one because putting civilians into an unsafe environment can have significant ramifications that may impact on both local and international attitudes towards the peace mission as a whole. Conversely, delaying the regeneration process can seriously undermine local perceptions towards the peace mission. Whichever route is chosen, it is essential that activities are not conducted in isolation and all are focused on the AU’s objectives.

³ Ibid.
⁴ Arab Maghreb Union, East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC)
⁵ Extracted from paragraph 2.2 of the AU Policy Framework for the Establishment of the ASF and the Military Staff Committee, dated 12-14 May 2003.
⁶ Should the AU be involved in such a PSO, the PSC should define the political parameters within which military forces/police will operate, and will be responsible for issuing political direction and strategic guidance to the FC/COMPOL after coordination with the SRSG or HoM, as necessary.
25. **Composite response.** Complex emergencies require the cooperation and coordination of the actions of the military, civilian (police, rule of law and civilian administration), and diplomatic and humanitarian agencies, including international, governmental, non-governmental and private voluntary organisations. Civil-military mechanisms must be established and properly nurtured at all levels. At all times, and in all places, each of the principal components of a peace mission must be aware of each others’ on-going activities and future intentions.

26. **Mission authority.** Whilst a mandate confers legitimacy to a peace mission in the eyes of the international community, "Mission authority" remains a less clear concept. Mission authority relies on the consent or acceptance of the peace mission by key local players. Perception has an important part to play here; hence the pivotal importance of well thought through and carefully executed communications operations with the specific aim of influencing key opinion-formers and decision-makers in a positive light.

27. The key task for a PSO is to create conditions for lasting peace. This can be a complex and drawn-out process. The challenge is for heads of components at all levels to ensure that performance does not fall below a critical level at which point instability occurs. Although the strategic end-state will require a long-term perspective, heads of components must ensure that intermediate objectives are clearly defined, understood and energetically pursued.

**TYPES OF ACTIVITIES IN A PSO**

28. Peace missions cannot be neatly compartmentalised because all initiatives fit into a continuum of varied activities, complexity and resource requirements. The integrated mission concept would address these.

29. Once prevention of a crisis has failed, three key activities are critical, namely intervention, regeneration and sustainment, but these need not be undertaken sequentially. However, where practicable, PSO planners should strive to ensure that to a greater or lesser extent they all begin concurrently. Looking at each of these principle activities in turn:

   a. **Prevention.** "Prevention" or preventive peacekeeping is likely to have begun some time before a mission is formally established. It will continue even after overt conflict has subsided. Preventive measures need not be focused exclusively on the country in which the conflict has taken place since neighbouring states and other factors may provide the all-important key to sustainable peace.

   b. **Intervention.** Once a peace mission has received a formal mandate from the AU and UN on behalf of the international community at large, the influx of many external role players can begin in earnest. If local security conditions are particularly threatening, the military component of the mission may have to precede the arrival of police and civilian organisations to ensure a sufficiently secure environment for other key elements within the mission.

   c. **Regeneration.** The HoM will target regeneration efforts in accordance with identified priorities as demand will almost always outstrip supply. Police will join the mission to establish/improve public security and confidence, and re-establish or reinforce the law. Electoral or security sector reforms will accompany economic regeneration, including the reconstruction of vital state
infrastructure. Over time, these actions will pave the way for democratic and fair elections. The military may be able to increase the limited engineering, transport and communications capacity of the HoM in the early stages of such activity.

d. **Sustainment.** Although listed last, this aspect of any peace mission is likely to take the longest. External agencies will be seeking a transfer of responsibility to indigenous organisations, whilst not losing sight of the "steady state criteria" that is vital for sustaining the peace. Sustainment should therefore climax when the majority of external agency support eventually withdraws, which will occur when indigenous forces, structures and institutions have begun to assume and finally take full responsibility for the territory and its peoples. At this stage, the mandated "Peace" has become self-sustaining in accordance with or exceeding the steady-state criteria set for the PSO, when sustained preventive action is no longer required.

30. Impartiality, actual and perceived, remains fundamental to the success of the PSO. Components must therefore remain impartial even when one party in the conflict fails to comply with the mandate. Where the level of consent is high, few resources may be required for the mission. Under no circumstance must the components allow themselves to become party to the conflict.

**PSO STANCES**

31. A pre-condition for PSO success remains broad consent for its deployment. Compliance with any local peace agreement that exists between local military and/or paramilitary elements may bear heavily on the consent enjoyed. Both consent and compliance shape the posture that the components adopt. The PSO may be required to follow a number of different stances in response to the threat, dependent on the precise circumstances prevailing in a given spot at a particular time.

32. Three specific stances are identified:

   a. **Prevention stance.** The Continental Early Warning system should provide ample warning for the development of potential conflicts and allow the PSC or the African Union Chairperson of the Commission (AUCC) to initiate actions to defuse or manage the disagreements towards a mutual beneficial solution. The Panel of the Wise and the African Union Commission (AUC's) Conflict Management Division should be in the forefront of these initiatives.

   b. **Enforcement stance.** Enforcement involves the use of national or international military force to implement or uphold an AU/UN-adopted mandate. Coercive action risks triggering a violent and unwelcome backlash that could put the Mission Authority at risk. The ability to "overmatch" force with credible greater force may act as a timely deterrent. Commanders at all levels need to consider thoroughly the ramifications of using force and the potentially negative impact that may arise.
c. **Stabilisation stance.** A permissive environment creates the opportunity for a PSO to adopt a stabilisation stance. It also allows the participation of the police to further stabilise public security. Use of force is restricted to self-defence. Even so, a stabilisation stance must be well positioned to deter and therefore it too must demonstrate a clear ability to bring much greater force into play where absolutely necessary.

d. **Transitional stance.** When Mission Authority is maintained at a high level, a PSO is able to adopt a transitional stance. Conciliatory in outlook, this stance may include assistance with key security sector reforms and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) in order to maintain momentum towards achieving the steady state criteria. The priority shifts toward the handover of security responsibilities to an effective, well-trained and universally accepted institution. Credible coercive force must, however, still be readily available to deter any possible unforeseen resumption of hostilities. In addition, every executive power given to the international police by the mandate must ultimately be transferred to the indigenous police.

**INTERVENTIONS**

33. Within a multi-functional PSO, the military, assisted by the police, is usually required where restoration or maintenance of peace cannot be successfully achieved by states applying diplomatic and economic pressure. The military must stabilise a situation, and create and maintain a safe and secure environment where short and long-term solutions can be put in place.

   a. Short-term solutions primarily address the symptoms of conflict and consequently the military may also be engaged in providing humanitarian assistance (humanitarian assistance is a form of support provided to humanitarian and development agencies in an insecure environment by a deployed force whose primary mission is not the provision of humanitarian aid).

   b. In long-term solutions where further conflict is unlikely, the various components of a PSO may be involved in reforming the indigenous military forces, other combatants and key institutions so that they can maintain the peace. This entails initiating and supporting security sector reform (SSR) efforts and the regeneration and development of capacity for governance.