The Importance of Capitals in Peace Operations, or why Intelligence is not a Substitute for Intelligence

Intelligence, Information and Peace Operations: Some Observations and Some Proposals

Executive Summary

One of the most interesting themes in the work which has followed the publication of the Brahimi Report in 2000, and the parallel search for ways of avoiding a repetition of the kind of 'failures'—real or imagined—of peace operations in the 1990s, has been the increased interest in the use of what is broadly termed 'intelligence' in those operations in the future.

The debate has not advanced very much, partly because of conceptual and linguistic confusion, partly because, quite simply, the special combination of expertise required, both in 'intelligence' as well as the principles of peace operations, is not very widely disseminated. This paper first attempts to distinguish 'Intelligence' with a capital 'I'—the gathering of covert material and its subsequent analysis—from the range of activities involving the collection and analysis of open material often, and confusingly, described as 'intelligence'. In this debate, the two are often hopelessly confused.

Taking the reference model of a medium-sized state, the paper then attempts to explain what classic Intelligence is and why it is needed, how it is used and what its limitations are, and then discusses whether it has a role in peace operations. The conclusion is that Intelligence, in the classic covert sense of that term, is not appropriate, and anyway usually not required, for peace operations. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the practical obstacles to the creation of a genuine Intelligence capability could ever be overcome.

In particular, it must be stressed that, whilst popular culture credits 'intelligence' with semi-divine powers that it does not have, it is not a 'magic bullet', which will provide information somehow capable of preventing humanitarian catastrophes or mass atrocities, and should not be treated as such. It is simply a technique, and its inputs, as well as its products, may be as unreliable as any other sources of information.

UPCOMMING PAPER*

Author: David Chuter worked for more than thirty years for the UK government in the defence and security area, on a wide range of international security issues. His last job was as Special Adviser to the Policy Director of the French Ministry of Defence in Paris. He took early retirement at the end of 2008 and is now an independent author, lecturer, translator and consultant based in Paris. Dr Chuter teaches courses in Intelligence and Policy-making, and in Crisis Management at Sciences Po in Paris. He is also Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Defence and Security at Cranfield University, on whose behalf he teaches security-related subjects in various countries, and is Chair of the Governing Board of the International Security Information Service Europe. He is the author of four books and numerous articles on security questions. His personal website is www.davidchuter.com and his blog is at davidchuter.wordpress.com

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By contrast, the paper argues that 'intelligence,' in the sense of deliberately gathering and analyzing open information to facilitate the mission, is extremely useful and should be prioritized within peace missions. The intellectual disciplines of intelligence analysis can be applied just as well to open material, and experienced former analysts can and should be part of peace missions. Not only is this important for mission protection, it may be essential in an environment where one or more actors is trying to sabotage the operation, or deliberately conceal important information. With due regard for the risk of manipulation, sensitive information may also be sought in confidence from states if the situation warrants it.

Finally, there is a range of intermediate techniques, from satellite photography, through encouraging locals to give information in return for favours, up to overflights and monitoring of communications, which might be appropriate in certain rare cases, and subject to appropriate political approval.

One of the most interesting themes in the work which has followed the publication of the Brahimi Report in 2000, and the search for ways of avoiding a repetition of the kind of 'failures'—real or imagined—of peace operations in the 1990s, has been the increased interest in the use of 'intelligence' in those operations in the future[1].

The debate has not advanced very much, partly because of conceptual and linguistic confusion, partly because, quite simply, the special combination of expertise required to write usefully both on 'intelligence' and on the principles of peace operations, is not very widely distributed. It does not help, either, that most writing on Intelligence is by Anglo-Saxons, describing their own (complex and highly capable) systems, and much of the writing about other systems is devoted to issues of reform and 'oversight'. This study therefore attempts to explain what Intelligence (here capitalized) is, and why it is needed, how it is used and what its limitations are, and whether it has a role in peace operations. The conclusion is that Intelligence, in the classic covert sense of that term, is not appropriate, and anyway usually not required, for peace operations, except possibly in certain specific areas. In particular, 'intelligence' (as it is often conceived) is not a 'magic bullet', which will provide information capable of preventing humanitarian catastrophes or mass atrocities. By contrast, 'intelligence' in the sense of gathering and analyzing open information is extremely useful and should be prioritized.

1 See particularly Robert David Steele and others (eds) *Peacekeeping Intelligence: Emerging Concepts for the Future*, OSS International Press, 2003, as well as Steele's site at www.oss.net. See also Mark Malan, 'Intelligence in African Peace Operations: Addressing the Deficit', KAIPTC Paper No 7, 2005, and Frank Neisse, 'Information/Renseignement' at http://www.operationspaix.net/69-details-lexique-information-renseignement.html, as well as other studies cited directly in the footnotes.

What is Intelligence?

It should be apparent from the preceding paragraph that the question of the use of 'intelligence' in peace operations is greatly complicated by the absence of any clear definition that explains what it is, and how and why it is different from simple information or knowledge. Partly, the problem is linguistic. If we take the two languages (English and French) in which the debate is usually conducted, we find scope for confusion in each, as well as between them. In English, 'intelligence' a few hundred years ago meant something like 'news', whereas today it means both the technical products of specialized covert agencies, and, in cases such as 'economic intelligence' more simply information not available to the general public. In French, until recently, *renseignement* meant any kind of information, whereas *renseignement militaire* referred to what in English was called 'intelligence'. Recently, the French have begun to use *renseignement* in the more particular sense of 'Intelligence', as well as using 'intelligence' itself in both the English senses. And of course in both languages 'intelligence' has other, quite different, meanings. In other languages, meanwhile, (German *nachrichten* and Arabic *mukhabarat* for example) the sense of 'news' or 'information' has been retained in the equivalent words.

It was for this reason that, when the British government decided to set up a single foreign espionage organisation after the First World War, they called it the *Secret* Intelligence Service (by which name it is still known) to emphasise that it was concerned with the collection of secret material by covert means. Likewise, the French *Direction du Renseignement Militaire*, created from a number of separate agencies in 1992, is so called because it deals with information relevant to defence and the military, and so unlikely to be freely available. Over time, however, these qualifications have tended to be forgotten, and the verbal distinction between secret information and other kinds has been lost.

If this sounds complicated, that is because it is. The way to understand this issue is not through definitions, but rather by explaining what Intelligence (in this context covert and secret, and thus with an initial capital) is actually for, and how a need for it arises in the actual process of government. The reference model used is of the Intelligence apparatus of a medium-sized well-organised state. The intention is not to suggest that the UN or other organisations should adopt a similar system (indeed my argument is the reverse), but rather to provide an indication of what the creation and maintenance of a genuine Intelligence capability actually requires in practice. Examples are taken from Foreign Intelligence processes, since it is hard to see how the procedures for Domestic Intelligence could be relevant[2].

All governments need information to function. This may be to deal with current problems, to anticipate issues that may arise in the future, or to guide the formulation and implementation of policy. Much of this information, depending on the subject, is available openly. More is available through normal government and diplomatic channels,

2 Except insofar as peace missions will be the subject of attack by hostile intelligence services, and need to develop procedures and capabilities to protect themselves.

some through privileged contacts between close allies, and a little through highly-privileged contacts between individuals from different governments. Not all of this information is equal in value: much of what is reported in the media, for example, is exaggerated if not actually false, and apparently dramatic or scandalous information received in confidence sometimes proves just too good to be true. Any competent government will therefore analyse the information it receives carefully, and attempt to arrive at an accurate overall estimate of the situation as a basis for decision-making. None of this involves Intelligence, though it should certainly be done intelligently.

In many cases, the process described above is adequate for a government to learn what it needs to know, but in others more is required. This may be because the entity the government is interested in (organised crime for example) does not make public statements or give interviews. It may also be because there are many subjects where governments actively seek to conceal information from each other. Where the information gap is sufficiently serious, and where the information cannot be acquired in any other way, then governments may resort to the special capabilities of Intelligence services.

They will do so with due awareness of the difficulties. Intelligence is expensive, difficult and sometimes dangerous to collect, and even when collected, is not always accurate or useful. Intelligence sources may be partly or wholly mistaken, or may even be lying. Certain types of Intelligence- gathering involve political risks if discovered, and in any state the resources for gathering and interpreting Intelligence are necessarily limited. Many governments, indeed, have a central priority-setting process designed to isolate those cases where the costs and risks are justified in terms of the expected return.

Intelligence *gathering* is therefore a special kind of information *collection*, whose main characteristic is that it is covert and unacknowledged, and involves a willingness to engage in illegal activities if necessary. But it is also an example of a *systematic* process, and it shares this characteristic with other reputable research methodologies, based on open sources. On the other hand, Intelligence analysis is a discipline similar to other types of information analysis, although accompanied in this case by extra sensitivities and particular procedures. In general terms we can say that Intelligence as a process is the *acquisition and use of information from another entity that that entity does not want you to have, and without them knowing that you have it*.

How is Intelligence Organised?

Intelligence specialists talk about the *Intelligence cycle*, by which they mean the process of deciding what to collect, collecting it, analysing it and making use of it. In the context of this study, I pass quickly over some elements of the cycle, concentrating on others.

Intelligence collection priorities will reflect the strategic priorities of government as a whole. This means that traditional targets of Intelligence

organisations—military forces and preparations—may not be the most important targets: indeed they may be much less important than issues such as political stability, trade and the economy or likely changes in government. The essential requirement is for a system capable of turning agreed national strategic priorities into specific Intelligence tasks, attributing them to specific agencies, and making sensible use of the results.

Since the information which is being sought is in principle protected, attempts to acquire it involve breaking the law of the country concerned. This accounts for the political sensitivity of Intelligence gathering, and for the need, in many countries, for specific political approval of operations. In addition, many of the means of acquiring such information are not only illegal (bribery, for example) but also morally debatable. It is important to stress this point, because discussions of Intelligence collection can rapidly become highly technical, and so ignore the ethical and political dilemmas that governments have to confront. Any move to integrate Intelligence into peace operations would necessarily confront the same ethical dilemmas, as will be described later. It is for this reason that much popular writing on Intelligence glosses over the covert collection aspect, and concentrates on the less questionable process of analysis.

Whilst there is a technical vocabulary describing Intelligence collection[3], the essential distinctions, for our purposes, are between active and passive intelligence gathering, and between technical and non-technical means. The first distinction is essentially between those methods where there is a higher, as against a lower, risk of discovery, with consequent political embarrassment. Active methods include the classic recruitment of human intelligence sources, but also include theft or purchase of documents, placing of recording devices, information-gathering operations in unauthorised places, unauthorised overflights, and technical attacks on information systems. All of these methods can go wrong, and risk discovery with unforeseeable consequences. Passive methods include monitoring of communications, tracking the movements of military units, or the use of satellite imagery. Here, the risk of discovery is much less.

Some technical means, active and passive, have already been noted. In general, they involve fewer ethical dilemmas than do non-technical methods, but, even so, listening in to telephone calls or breaking into someone's bank account are not to be done lightly. Non-technical means almost always involve human beings, by definition, either to gather information (covert patrolling, for example) or to provide information, as a result of bribery, blackmail, ideological conviction or some other incentive offered or demanded.

Governments need a number of capabilities if they are to gather and analyse Intelligence usefully. Most obviously, they need specialist organisations capable of collecting and processing raw Intelligence. In

3 The vocabulary, largely of US parentage, is essentially concerned with technical distinctions, which is why it is not employed here. It includes Human Intelligence (Humint) Signals Intelligence (Sigint), Imagery Intelligence (Imint) and many others.

the field, these organisations need people with advanced personal skills, capable of manipulating others, of lying convincingly over long periods of time, and of both operating under diplomatic cover if necessary, and mingling equally convincingly with everyone from extremist political groupings to organised crime. They will generally need linguistic and cultural skills as well. They need to be able to judge what information is worth forwarding and what is not, to have the skills to liaise with the Intelligence services of the host country is that is part of their job, or to conceal their activities from them if it is not. When back in HQ they need the capabilities of a government official in dealing with other departments as well as good intellectual and analytical skills, and the ability to manage their colleagues in the field. Other Intelligence organisations need scientists, engineers, experts on information technology, linguists, interpreters of photographs, experts on military and police organisations and political analysts. In all cases, these people have to be prepared to spend their careers working under conditions of great secrecy and security, unable to tell even their closest family exactly what they do, and subject to periodic invasive scrutiny of their private and financial lives.

But such organisations, however skilled, are of no value unless their product is used. So secure mechanisms need to be established to allow the transmission of useful, processed Intelligence to those who need to see it. Most governments limit access to Intelligence material to those who have passed special checks (which can be lengthy and expensive) and who are explicitly allowed to have access only to certain designated Intelligence on what is usually called a 'need to know' basis. People with such security clearances will be found in defence and foreign ministries, of course, but often also in ministries of the interior, and even of economics and trade. All governments have to strike a balance between the value of distributing sensitive Intelligence material on one hand, and the dangers of leakage and the high costs of operating a secure system, on the other. Special security precautions and procedures are needed for the distribution, control and destruction of the Intelligence material. Finally, since hostile Intelligence services will no doubt try to penetrate ministries which use Intelligence, an elaborate system of counter-espionage and protective security will have to be put in place.

And all of this is no good, of course, unless there is a system for acting on the Intelligence, after it has been assessed against what else is known. This means first a central system of some kind for analysing and correlating intelligence from different sources, and integrating it with information from elsewhere. This usually involves the creation of a special organisation under the office of the head of state or government. It also implies a population of decision-makers wise and experienced enough to make use of Intelligence without being dazzled by it, and understanding its limitations. In particular, they know that information obtained through Intelligence means is inherently no more reliable than other information, and often less so[4]. What makes Intelligence special is not the content,

4 As the UK enquiry into the misuse of intelligence before the Iraq war noted, 'Intelligence merely provides techniques for improving the basis of knowledge. As with other techniques, it can be a dangerous tool if its limitations are not recognised by those who seek to use it.' (Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction: Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, London, The Stationery Office, 2004, p.28)

but the context, and the way in which it is collected. A simple example, relevant to peace operations, may make this clearer.

Leaders of two factions in a country where a peace mission is in progress decide to meet in a neighbouring state to try to resolve their differences. This may be announced by an official spokesman, or may become known in the capital concerned, it may also be leaked to the press. But the information may also be passed in confidence by the embassy of a national government or by an international organisation. Finally, of course, the information may come from an Intelligence source within the entourage of one of the leaders, or the government concerned.

The information may be similar in all cases, but the means of transmission is different, because the context is different. At one extreme, the two leaders may wish to get public recognition for their initiative. At the other, one or both may be concerned for their personal safety if news of the meeting were to leak out, and so insist on complete secrecy.

For all these reasons, governments try very hard to protect both the sources and the methods of their Intelligence. In the case of sources, there are ethical questions of personal safety and political problems of damage if things go wrong. But there are also severely practical reasons: an Intelligence service that cannot protect its sources will soon have no sources. Likewise, if the methods by which Intelligence is collected become known, targets can change their behaviour to make such collection impossible. Clearly, both sources and methods are best protected by limiting distribution to the absolute minimum.

Could Peace Missions Use Intelligence?

As has already been indicated, it is not being suggested that peace operations, or the organisations responsible for them, develop anything like the Intelligence systems of even a medium-sized country. However, in considering how far, if at all, peace operations should think in these terms, it is nonetheless useful to have an idea of the complexities and pitfalls involved.

As already indicated, there have been a number of attempts to argue that peace missions need an 'intelligence' capability, although the authors seldom seem to know what they mean by that term. These attempts are in general undermined by a confusion of vocabulary, and an unwillingness to recognise the nastier aspects of Intelligence collection. Indeed, the Brahimi Report's recommendation (para 68) for a 'professional system in the Secretariat for accumulating knowledge about conflict situations, distributing that knowledge efficiently to a wide user base, generating policy analyses and formulating long term strategies' is often regarded as an argument for Intelligence, whereas in fact the word is not mentioned, and the description would better apply to the work of a think-tank or the planning department of a major company. In any case a 'wide user base' is not necessarily consistent with the inherent sensitivity of Intelligence. As a result of this confusion, many studies describing the existence and development of a 'UN intelligence system' are not really

describing Intelligence at all, but rather a structured process of gathering and interpreting data which is common in many areas of life. It is therefore no 'misconception' to suggest that intelligence is 'the result of a covert process.' Intelligence agencies would be most surprised to be told otherwise[5]. The confusion arises from a failure to distinguish between three types of activity, often mistaken for each other, and all referred to indiscriminately as 'intelligence,' (here with an initial lower case).

• The active or passive gathering of information by covert means using human or technical methods. This is *Intelligence collection*.

• The analysis of information of this type, provided by others, as part of a wider analysis of all relevant information from all sources. This is *Intelligence analysis*

• The analysis of non-covertly obtained information, including information from governments and others. This is not intelligence as such, but is better called *information analysis*.

It is hard to discuss this subject coherently without keeping these distinctions in mind.

The first question is whether peace missions (and here I will discuss essentially the UN) could develop an *Intelligence collection capability*, and whether in any event it would be worth the effort. The answer is clearly no. A UN Intelligence organisation would be openly acknowledged, advertising posts publicly and defending its budget before the Fifth Committee. Its activities could never be protected, and it would be a magnet for the major Intelligence services of the world, who would immediately try to infiltrate it. Its operatives would be well known, and would be closely watched in any country they attempted to work in. It would be unable to communicate with its personnel securely, other than by purchasing a communications system to which at least one of the world's major Intelligence agencies would necessarily have access

It is slightly easier to conceive of a capability in theatre, at the level of the Special Representative of the Secretary General. Nonetheless, this would have to be specially organised for each mission, and it is unclear where the experts would come from, and how they would work together. The cultivation of human sources takes time, even when the motive is essentially financial, and this is not easy to reconcile with the short tours of many UN personnel. With human sources, and even more with technical ones, it is hard to see how a mission HQ could be made secure enough to withstand attack from the Intelligence services of the host country. UN HQs have always been a magnet for intelligence services[6]. Finally, all sorts of ethical issues arise in Intelligence collection that someone would have to decide in a peacekeeping mission. Is it acceptable to listen in to the telephone of the daughter of a political leader, who is

5 Melanie Ramjoué, 'Improving United Nations Intelligence: Lessons from the Field' *GCSP Policy Paper n°19*, August 2011, available at www.gcsp.ch

6 The interpreters who worked for the UN in the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica were frequently observed visiting the offices of the Intelligence section of the 28th Muslim Division, which was garrisoning the town. The calls were unlikely to have been social. See Nederlands Instituut vor Oorlogsdocumentatie, *Srebrenica: A 'Safe' Area*, pt3, chap 5, sect 9.

gravely ill and whom he calls daily? Is it acceptable to recruit someone as a source who is involved the trafficking of drugs or children? Who decides, and how? And who takes responsibility if things go wrong?

At both levels, the most difficult problem in the politics of Intelligence would be posed: that of cooperation between nationals of different nations. This is problematic even at the bilateral level, where nations usually insist on special additional safeguards, since they worry about organisations outside their control accidentally disclosing sources and methods. As the number of nations involved increases, the complexity of the relationships increases geometrically. Moreover, Intelligence sharing is generally done on grounds of self-interest: small nations without much to contribute in exchange will seldom receive very much. In addition, large nations may share Intelligence with small nations in the hope of influencing them, rather than informing them. This is why organisations like NATO and the European Union only have 'intelligence' capabilities in the loosest sense of the term. For an international peacekeeping mission, the problems would be an order of magnitude greater[7].

Finally, as we have seen, Intelligence collection presupposes a set of priorities established according to national objectives. With peace operations, this is effectively impossible. The nations of the Security Council may well agree a mission mandate for reasons that are different, and even mutually opposed, before handing off the issue to DPKO, which is unlikely to be able to define strategic objectives beyond the simplest level. There is little chance, therefore, of a UN Intelligence organisation receiving effective strategic direction about what to collect. In the field, it may be possible to establish a list of agreed priorities, including mission protection, but these will essentially be at the tactical level.

The second option assumes a purely analytical organisation, relying in general on material provided by national governments. There are two ways in which this could be done. One is the classic national pattern, where an organisation of experts receives and analyses Intelligence from different national sources, tests it against non-Intelligence sources, and produces highly classified reports for limited distribution. Such a system would be extremely difficult to operate, even in a mission-specific context, and probably very insecure. It might be possible to collect a group of experienced analysts to work together (accepting that some will be covertly reporting to their parent governments) but it would be effectively impossible to ensure that those who might receive their reports (and they might change every few months) have been security checked to an appropriate standard. The second option would be to make use of sanitised Intelligence material from states. Because, as indicated above, the sensitivity of Intelligence relates much more to its collection than its content, it is sometimes possible to sanitise ('scrub') Intelligence reports in such a way as to disguise methods or sources. Whilst such reports could not be shown to everyone, a more mundane level of security (booking documents in and out, clearing desks and locking cupboards at night)

7 For the debate in the US about sharing information with peace operations see Simon Chesterman, 'Does the UN Have Intelligence?' *Survival*, No 48, 2006.

would probably be adequate. Whilst the lower level of sensitivity would probably make the organisation less attractive as an Intelligence target, nothing could stop governments seeking to manipulate it with partial or even misleading information.

The final option is, in effect, what most people actually mean when they talk about 'peacekeeping intelligence'. It amounts, in practice, to the use of standard analytical methodologies applied to information from all sources except covert ones, and is becoming a standard part of UN peace operations, notably in the form of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre. It would share with classic Intelligence much of the methodology and intellectual rigour. That is to say, information would be deliberately sought in support of the operation, information would be assessed, compared with what was already known, and find its way into recommendations and actions.

It should be noted that this process is not the same as simply reading the newspapers or passively monitoring the Internet. For example, let us assume that a rash of stories appears in newspapers in several countries denouncing one local political leader's involvement with militia atrocities in a recent conflict. Does this mean that the Head of Mission immediately breaks off contact with the individual? A professional analyst might be asked to examine the stories, and would ask a certain number of questions. Do the allegations fit with what we know already? Have there been such allegations before? Are the details plausible in themselves? Are there differences in the allegations and what are they? What do we know about the sources of the stories? Do the stories have verbal similarities or is there evidence of translation from other languages? How reliable are the sources and the writers? The analyst may conclude that the stories are all based on a single source and probably spread to undermine the political future of the individual. This is an example of the virtues of developing a professional analytical capability, although in this case all the sources would be overt.

Do Peace Missions Need Intelligence?

Recalling that Intelligence is a special case of information, we might now go on to ask what the information requirements of peace missions are, and whether they are now being adequately met. At the strategic level, it is clearly not the case that decisions to launch peace missions by the UN (or for that matter the EU or the AU) are made on Intelligence-related grounds. Such decisions are usually purely political in nature and may indeed even be taken against the advice of experts (as was the case in Bosnia in 1992), especially where there is a political need to 'do something.' If anything, Intelligence typically paints a complex and nuanced view of a crisis, which is more likely to discourage intervention than to encourage it. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is a long history of the manipulation of Intelligence to justify political decisions that have already been made, most recently over Iraq in 2003. The more the UN moves in the direction of a serious Intelligence capability, the more we can expect this kind of manipulation to be practised there as well.

More generally, proposals for a 'UN intelligence' capability reflect a belief that crises can be better managed if there is more information available about them. To a limited extent, this is true, and it has been shown to be true for peace operations on the ground. Managing crises with inadequate information is not easy. But the reverse is also true, and it is easy for decision-makers to drown in information ('paralysis by analysis') unless it is rigorously verified and filtered. Even then, much information will be inconsistent or even contradictory, and will hinder, not help analysis and subsequent decision-making. And there is an entire literature on what happens when even the best Intelligence is disregarded because it does not fit the preconceptions of decision-makers[8]. As anyone who has been through a major crisis knows, there is almost no limit to the layers of complexity that could in theory be presented to decision-makers. In fact, the opposite is more useful: reducing the information to its essentials so that decisions can be taken.

As indicated above, Intelligence is not in itself inherently more or less accurate than other types of information. It may often simply confirm what is known. Thus, an SRSG may be informed that UN Intelligence assets in the area, or those of a major power, have evidence suggesting that a factional leader has despaired of the political process and is about to return to the armed struggle. Getting this information may have required technical attacks on private communications, recording and transcription of conversations, translation by reliable, security-cleared experts, and background knowledge sufficient to elucidate problematic parts of the transcript. But in fact the SRSG may have already reached the same conclusion from informal contacts with the leader's retinue, and it may be the consensus among embassies of major powers and neighbouring states. The JMAC may already have picked up indications of troops being remobilised. The marginal benefits of Intelligence sources, therefore, may be extremely small, especially considering the inherent costs and risks involved. Any consideration of the use of Intelligence by the UN has to have a clear process for taking this cost-benefit approach into account.

The problem is that lack or presence of information (and especially 'intelligence') is often presented in a teleological fashion. If we had only, known about X, sigh peacekeeping experts, we could have done Y or prevented Z. In particular, the debate has become hopelessly entwined with the currently fashionable idea that peacekeeping forces should be capable of 'protecting the civilian population' in the area in which they are operating, and that if they cannot it is their fault or the fault of the system. It is often assumed, without any evidence, that 'information' or 'intelligence' has been lacking or has not been properly acted upon in past operations. In general, this is not true[9].

It is a curious characteristic of the international system in general that

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8 For a good popular survey of why wrong decisions are often taken even with good-quality information, see Carol Travis and Elliot Aronson, *Mistakes Were Made, But Not by Me,* London, Pinter and Martin, 2008.

9 Jacob Aasland Ravndal, 'Developing Intelligence Capabilities in Support of UN Peace Operations: An Institutional Approach' Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2009, is based on interviews with members of peace missions, some of whom demonstrate a disturbing ignorance of the limits of intelligence.

it attempts to reproduce the features and structures of religious belief in a largely post-religious world. Thus, in all monotheistic religions, the Creator is assumed to be all seeing and knowing (the omniscience of God), all-powerful (the omnipotence of God) and all wise and judging (the justice of God). These sentiments are especially developed in societies that have a Protestant, and particularly Calvinist, intellectual heritage, with its tradition of a belief in the detailed involvement of God in the daily affairs of individuals.

As religious belief has decayed, the wish for these divine capabilities to exist has not gone away, but simply been transferred to secular organisations. Thus, the omnipotence of God has been ascribed, in theory, to organisations like the United Nations, or to the wraith-like 'International Community.' The justice of God is now to be supplied by the International Criminal Court and its analogues. The omniscience of God, as should by now be obvious, has been, somewhat arbitrarily, attributed to intelligence agencies. Taken collectively, these authorities are confronted with a modern, secularised version of the Problem of Evil. When we ask 'how could the world have allowed such terrible things to happen?' we are in fact reproducing the classic theological question of how an omnipotent God could allow Evil in the world, but we are posing it in a secular form. And alas, human creations can never meet divine standards.

To a far greater extent than is often realised popular culture invests Intelligence organisations with magical and miraculous powers, and it is this fantasy view of 'intelligence' that has coloured the 'peacekeeping intelligence' debate. Code-names, secret ciphers, initiation rituals, secret identities, names of power, access to mysterious capabilities …. All these assumptions about the Intelligence world faithfully reproduce the traditional formulas of magic and magicians. Thus, on the one hand the world has an atavistic yearning for an omniscient power, and on the other it thinks it has found it, in the magic-like operations of Intelligence services. And with omniscience must inevitably go omnipotence: so if the world's intelligence agencies know everything, why is Evil still allowed to happen?

If anything, this assumption has been strengthened by the revelations in 2013 of the American Intelligence contractor Edward Snowden. Surely, the dazzled observer must ask, the Intelligence agencies of the world must know *everything*! In fact, not so. The capability to vacuum up huge amounts of data, mostly public or poorly protected, is essentially a function of technological developments, and is not in itself a surprise. The surprise, if there is one, is the moral and political freedom that the users of the technology have given themselves, but that is another story.

This whole debate about the need for 'peacekeeping intelligence' has been indirectly inspired, in turn, by studies of what are known as 'Intelligence failures': either in the collection or the use of Intelligence, and on which there is an immense literature. In almost all cases, historians have come to one of two conclusions about these episodes: either the information needed did not exist, and could not reasonably have been expected to

appear, or it was available but was not appreciated, or was undervalued. There are few if any cases where information was easily available but was not collected: there are many more where decision-makers and analysts drowned in conflicting information.

In certain situations, even the theoretical possibility of acquiring information does not exist. In the Soviet Union during the early years of the Cold War, for example, it was effectively impossible to find out anything at all about the capabilities and intentions of the country, until technical means became available in the early 1950s. Much the same is true of North Korea today. In other cases, a great deal of information may be available as background, but may be no help in establishing what will actually happen. Thus, to take an incident that is still relevant but no longer controversial, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was long thought to have been a 'surprise' and a 'failure' which better information could have predicted. In fact, western governments had known for a long time that the Politburo was wrestling with the question of whether to move or not, and had a very good idea what factors they were taking into account. The only thing that was not known was what decision the Politburo would eventually take: and intelligence was no use because the decision itself was only taken at the last minute[10].

In some cases, the problem is not lack of 'intelligence', but lack of understanding, or even of simple humility. In 1993, many independent observers thought that the Arusha Accords, negotiated between the Rwandan government and the invading Rwandan Patriotic Front, were doomed from the start. This was because western pressure obliged each side to give the other more than they wanted, whilst awarding them in turn much less than they felt entitled to. It was also because a society with no tradition of democracy or compromise was suddenly being asked to accept power sharing over the security forces, the basic tools of power. Western inability to recognise this criticism meant that it failed to foresee the likely problems. Nonetheless, it was not hard to see that the dormant civil war was likely to erupt again, and that if it did it would be accompanied by horrifying violence, as had been the case in the past. Preparations by the parties to renew the fighting were observed at the time. What could not be anticipated was what incident might set the fighting off. This episode is a good example of how crises actually erupt: unpredictably, and in confusion, chaos and fear. Often, the best and most accurate Intelligence about intentions is of no value, because nobody is actually in control of the crisis.

In this type of situation, as in the 'intelligence failure' debate more generally, the temptation is therefore to obsess over tactical issues at the expense of strategic ones, since they are more easily understandable. So an endless literature on Pearl Harbour debates the fine detail of who said what to whom, who saw which information, who should have done what when, who should have foreseen what and so forth. The real issue, never debated, is why anyone ever thought it was wise to use sanctions to back the Japanese into a situation where their only choices were war,

10 See Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgansty: The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-1989*, Profile Books, 2011.

or humiliation and surrender. Such questions, of course, are politically awkward to answer. Similarly, obsessional Rwanda groupies have endless debates about who said what, when, who should have predicted what, who said what at the Security Council, who shot down the Rwandan President's plane, who planned to do what and when, largely as a way of confronting the larger and more embarrassing questions.

Sometimes, all the information you need may be available, but makes no final difference. Thus, the French Army was aware, years before the defeat of 1940, that the Germans were experimenting with innovative armoured tactics, and military observers in Poland in 1939 gave a detailed account of them. But the fact was that in 1940 the technical counters to these tactics simply did not exist, and it would be several more years before they were developed.

On other occasions, even a wealth of actual Intelligence does not permit one to guess what will happen. It is worth citing one example where a large amount of actual Intelligence was available—not to the UN but to the warring parties—but where it proved useless at predicting what was to happen.

In 1995, the town of Srebrenica was garrisoned by the 28th Division of the Bosnian Muslim Army (the ABiH). The Division had a listening station in the hills around the town, which for several years listened to radio traffic from the Drina Corps of the Bosnian Serb Army (the VRS). The 28th Division had a direct reporting line to President Izetbegovic in Sarajevo. The Intelligence operators had all the advantages: they spoke the same language, they were familiar with the military terms used, and over the years they had even come to recognise the voices of the senior commanders. For their part, the VRS commanders were reasonably good at radio security, but often lapsed into unguarded language, especially at times of stress. The Muslim authorities were sufficiently interested in the outcome of the first Srebrenica trial, that of General Krstic, the Corps Commander, that they were prepared to hand over transcripts of the intercepts to the prosecutors in The Hague, and to allow the operators to be interviewed.[11]

For several years, the 28th Division had been attacking Serb villages in the hills around the town. The strategic purpose was to keep the Drina Corps overstretched, and prevent VRS troops being moved elsewhere to counter attacks by the (numerically-superior) Muslim forces. With the end game approaching in the summer of 1995, and the VRS under great pressure, an attack against the town was universally agreed to be probable. It was not necessary to resort to Intelligence material to reach that conclusion.

But it is of note that, even with all the intelligence material at its disposal, the Sarajevo government never claimed any forewarning of the attack, which was itself conducted amidst great security and approved only a few days before it started. The Sarajevo government was taken completely by

11 The author was personally involved in the preparations for the Krstic trial, and the Tribunal kindly allowed me to consult many of these documents while I was writing my book War Crimes (Lynne Reinner, 2003).

surprise by the first probing attack on 6 July, and did not even answer the desperate calls from the 28th Division for reinforcements. For its part, VRS Intelligence assumed that the town was defended by about 15,000 troops (twice the actual number) and that the defenders would fight hard (they did not). When the attacks encountered almost no resistance, and the VRS decided to try to take the town itself, this came as a complete surprise to Sarajevo. The decision by the 28th Division to break out of the town, taking other adult males with them, seems to have been completely unanticipated by either of the leaderships. The ferocity with which the ABiH troops fought their way through came as a shock to the VRS. For their part, the Muslims were monitoring Krstic's frantic attempts to stop the breakout towards Tuzla, and intercepted an instruction from him that prisoners taken were entitled to the protection of the Geneva Convention, and were not to be harmed.

How and why and when this instruction was countermanded, and about 7000 of the escapees captured along the road were taken away and shot, is something on which there is simply no information. The archives of the Drina Corps were captured and examined by investigators, but yielded only a small amount of circumstantial evidence. The best guess is that the decision was taken personally by General Mladic on the night of 11/12 July 1995, but that is indeed only a guess. The Muslim authorities never claimed to have any forewarning of the executions: such planning as there was for them must effectively have been done overnight.

If two antagonists with years of experience of fighting each other, with good Intelligence capabilities and speaking the same language, made such gross errors of appreciation, is it really credible to imagine that some hypothetical UN Intelligence capability could have done better? Unless information can somehow be conjured out of thin air, the answer must surely be no.

Should Peace Missions Have Intelligence?

The final question to address is whether peace mission should, ethically and politically, be able to make use of Intelligence. Here again, the debate is limited by the confusion of overt and covert notions of 'intelligence', as well as poor understanding of how Intelligence itself works. Inasmuch as the debate is about open collection and analysis of data, and JMAC-style activities in theatre, then the answer is clear. Such activities are not only permissible: they are essential for the success of the mission. Criticism should be rejected, especially when such criticism is based on confusion between overt and covert methods.

But is it acceptable for missions to use covert techniques, assuming the practical limitations described above can be overcome? This depends very largely on the context. The openness and impartiality of UN operations, which are usually held to make Intelligence inappropriate, is a pragmatic rule, not a normative principle. It assumes that the peace mission is generally welcome, that everyone is cooperative, and that the mission will be told what it needs to know. In fact, the rule has been much more the manipulation of peace missions and their personnel, and attacks,

both Intelligence and sometimes physical, on the organisation. In such circumstances, it is not reasonable to prevent the UN defending its personnel and its mission.

As well as overt collection, are there any methods that the UN could employ, if necessary, which raise relatively few ethical and political problems? One possibility is satellite reconnaissance. The resolution of current commercial satellites is now good enough (around 1 metre) for Intelligence-gathering purposes. Of course satellites have to be targeted properly: the area covered by each sweep (the 'swath width') is correspondingly small, and satellites cannot be retargeted infinitely. Weather is also a factor: those familiar with the DRC, for example, will know how frequently the sky is cloudy there. A budget would be needed to purchase the imagery, and special facilities and trained personnel would be needed to interpret it. It remains a theoretical option, however. A second is the deliberate cultivation of sources by experts in Intelligence gathering, but at a local and tactical level. Mission personnel have informal contacts all the time that may yield interesting and valuable information. Some of their contacts may be prepared to offer a little more information in return for incentives—not necessarily financial. This kind of activity would require the approval of the SRSG, and perhaps a small budget for which he was personally accountable. It would require sensitive handling, since once it became known that the UN was offering financial rewards for information, the system would naturally become open to abuse. A more controversial possibility is the passive monitoring of unprotected communications, such as mobile phones. How easily this can be done depends on a number of technical factors, and a security-protected infrastructure would be required to support the capability, but, once again, it is a theoretical option. Finally, useful information could be gained from cameras mounted on commercial aircraft following registered flight plans. Again, the existence of such an operation would be sensitive, but the value of imagery of this kind, taken from a few thousand metres rather than a hundred or more kilometres, could be substantial.

All of these methods could be defended in a context where a host government, or one of the factions, was deliberately withholding information, and even trying to undermine the objectives of the mission. But, as before, they are not capabilities which are easy to create, and they should only be considered where it is clear that traditional, open source, methods of information gathering and analysis are seriously inadequate for the success of the mission. Nor should they be employed without a properly organised system of analysis and exploitation to support them, and without suitable political clearance.[12]
Intelligence, after all, is not a substitute for intelligence.

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12 General Patrick Cammaert has noted that, while commander of MONUC in the DRC, he had technical means available capable of being used for intelligence gathering, but rarely any trained personnel to use them. See Patrick Cammaert, 'Intelligence in Peacekeeping Operations: Lessons for the Future', in Steele (ed) *Peacekeeping Intelligence.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

Like any political initiative, a peace mission has a requirement for information to enable it to do its work properly. At the moment, organisations conducting peace operations generally realise this, but do not necessarily attempt to deal with the issue in an organised fashion. And in any case, whilst information is generally useful to have, it needs to be properly analysed and utilised if it is to help, rather than hinder, the operation. This means that the kind of disciplines used in Intelligence analysis (but not unique to that area) are often of value in processing all kinds of information received. It does not follow that Intelligence, in the classic sense, is necessary or even advisable.

In general, it would be best if the term 'intelligence' were not used in a peacekeeping context unless it was clear that the task involved covert collection, or analysis of material collected covertly. Where only open source information is used, the word 'intelligence' should be avoided, even if the information is processed using skills similar to those of intelligence analysis, and by trained analysts. The terms 'information gathering' and 'information analysis' should be used instead. Anything else sows confusion, and actually undermines attempts to give peace mission a better open-source information capability, because nations react with distrust and when the vocabulary of Intelligence is used to describe it.

It should be part of the planning of a peace mission to conduct a thorough analysis of its likely information requirements. This would also take into account the likely environment, including the potential threat to the mission and its personnel. Every effort should be made to fill these requirements from open sources, and consideration should be given to employing retired analysts with appropriate skills, drawn from countries with no strategic stake in the operation.

The use of open, but unacknowledged, information, such as that from satellite imagery, may be appropriate under certain circumstances, but its use has to be accompanied by high-level political clearance on the one hand, and appropriate measures of security on the other. There also needs to be a clear system for tasking collection, against clear needs that cannot otherwise be met.

If there is a really serious information gap at the strategic level that cannot be filled from open sources, then it might be appropriate to draw on the Intelligence capability of states. Approaches should as far as possible be made to states which have no strategic stake in the operation, and so little interest in supplying incomplete or misleading information. This kind of step should only be taken if the mission itself has staff familiar with the process of Intelligence analysis. It is hard to imagine a situation where the UN or similar organisation might develop a covert Intelligence gathering capability, except possibly ad hoc, at the tactical level. Even then, such operations would require careful clearance and thorough justification: 'because we can' is not a justification.

Finally, the SRSG and his or her senior officials need a properly organised induction to information and its use before they go on mission. On the one hand they should not shy away from JMAC-style activities because

they are misleadingly described in the language of covert activities. On the other hand, if covert collection is ever required, they need to be aware of what it involves, and the limits of its effectiveness and usefulness, as well as the political and other difficulties it can give rise to.

Abstract

There has been much interest in recent years in the concept of —'peacekeeping intelligence' but the debate has suffered from confusion about the meanings of words and concepts, and ignorance of how Intelligence works in practice. This paper tries to address the confusion by explaining in simple terms what classic covert Intelligence collection and analysis is about, while distinguishing it from the structured collection and analysis of open source material which is already, and should increasingly, be part of peace missions. Noting that Intelligence, in the classic sense, is not a classic remedy for all problems, the paper argues that it is essentially inappropriate for peace operations. Nonetheless, some of the disciplines, of collection and analysis can be valuable, even in the context of information openly obtained.