



The Future of UN Peacekeeping and Parallel Operations¹

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The UN has long recognized the value of partnerships to reinforce the effectiveness of peace operations.² Since the end of the Cold War, UN missions have increasingly operated alongside operations deployed by regional and subregional organizations, alliances, and coalitions, the vast majority of which have had a mandate from the Security Council. Some forty parallel deployments have been authorized or welcomed by the council since 1992, compared to fewer than ten that the council has not approved or endorsed.³

At their best, parallel operations are based on complementarity and comparative advantage, including rapid deployment, regional political influence and legitimacy, or greater willingness—if not always capability—to engage in peace enforcement. At their worst, they can result in competition, conflicting strategic goals, partiality, and operational confusion.

As a result of changes in the nature of armed conflict and shifting global and regional geopolitics, the field of peacekeeping and peacemaking is likely to remain crowded, and new actors may emerge, with consequences for how the UN conducts future operations.

Every parallel operation is unique. Each has different characteristics and raises different issues and challenges for UN peace operations.⁴ There are various ways of categorizing parallel operations deployed alongside the UN:⁵ whether or not they have been approved or endorsed by the Security Council, either under Chapter VII or Chapter VIII of the UN Charter; the type of entity leading the deployment (bilateral, multinational ad hoc coalition, regional or subregional organization, or non-state actor); the composition of the operation (civilians or uniformed personnel or both); the command-and-control structure vis-à-vis the UN (independent, coordinated, or integrated); the principles it abides by (i.e., whether it is aligned with UN peacekeeping principles);⁶ and mandate and aim (e.g., capacity building, crisis response, deterrence, combat operations).⁷ In addition, the

¹ This is an edited version of a paper prepared for the UN Department of Peace Operations in 2020, available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/the_future_of_peacekeeping_and_parallel_operations.pdf.

² From the Brahimi Report, in 1999, to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations, in 2018.

³ See Alexandra Novosseloff and Lisa Sharland, “Partners and Competitors: Forces Operating in Parallel to UN Peace Operations,” International Peace Institute, November 2019, p. 28. Those that have not been authorized or welcomed by the council do not involve the use of force and include, for instance, the Multinational Force and Observers, the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, and EU capacity-building missions.

⁴ Bruce Jones, with Feyal Cherif, “Evolving Models of Peacekeeping Policy Implications and Responses,” Center on International Cooperation, 2004.

⁵ See: Novosseloff and Sharland, “Partners and Competitors.”

⁶ Regional and subregional organizations leading peace operations under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter generally share the same principles as the UN. These include the European Union, African Union, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This is not necessarily the case for organizations or coalitions that intervene under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

⁷ See: Novosseloff and Sharland, “Partners and Competitors.”

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geographic scope of deployment, the size of the operation, the timing of deployment, and the duration of deployment have varied.

RECENT TRENDS AND POSSIBLE FUTURES

Current and plausible future trends in parallel deployments, and their implications for the UN, include the possibility that other security providers will become more multidimensional, particularly in response to the diminishment of the UN role; greater demand on the UN for operational support; increased regional and subregional leadership for security, especially in Africa; diversification of the countries and entities deploying parallel operations; “disalignment” of strategic intent; and the need for high-value, high-tech capabilities that, while authorized by the Security Council, remain outside of UN command.

NARROWER UN MANDATES, EXPANDING NON-UN MANDATES, AND SUPPORT FOR COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

Parallel forces have typically been deployed to provide security support to UN missions. They may provide reinforcement when peacekeepers are unable to adequately respond (e.g., Operations Sky Monitor and Joint Endeavor in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Operational Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), provide a deterrent capacity when UN capacities are under strain (e.g., the EU force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), or conduct combat operations beyond the remit of UN peacekeeping (e.g., Operation Barkhane and the G5 Sahel Joint Force in Mali and the African Union Mission in Somalia). As a result, they have been primarily composed of armed troops (versus unarmed military observers, police, or civilian personnel).⁸ The extent to which this trend continues is likely to be influenced by the extent to which multidimensional UN peacekeeping continues to be viewed as an appropriate crisis-management response. While stalled political agreements and continued (if not worsening violence) in Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan are likely to see the continued need for these missions, there are opposing views on whether the Security Council would deploy a multidimensional mission in response to future risks of atrocities or political violence.⁹

Declining consensus within the Security Council in support of multidimensional missions, particularly for aspects like human rights and peacebuilding, could prompt parallel operations to take on more civilian functions traditionally conducted by the UN. EU Common Security and Defense Policy missions, for example, are already engaged in security and justice reform.¹⁰ With many European member states strongly advocating for the protection of human rights, an erosion of UN mandates could see EU missions develop their capacity to take on a greater role in monitoring.¹¹ The African Union (AU) has similarly argued that, because it is a political organization, its missions, including the AU Mission in Somalia, should take on a wider set of roles than security provision. The AU has ambitions to develop such capacities, though they still lag far behind those of the UN.¹²

⁸ Corinne Bara and Lisa Hultman, “Just Different Hats ? Comparing UN and Non-UN Peacekeeping,” *International Peacekeeping* 27, no. 3 (2020).

⁹ See: Adam Day, “The Future of Multidimensional Peacekeeping,” *IPI Global Observatory*, September 15 2020. Conversely, geopolitical tensions among the five permanent members could result in a resurgence of lighter UN political or “Chapter VI” roles alongside an external security presence (e.g., the Organization of American States’ Inter-American Peace Force and the Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic in 1965; and the Commonwealth of Independent States’ peacekeeping force and the UN Observer Mission in Georgia between 1994 and 2008).

¹⁰ Italy recently pushed for deployment of a “UNIFIL-like,” UN-authorized, European-led peacekeeping force to Libya. “Italy ‘Ready to Send Troops to Libya,’” *Italian Insider*, January 13, 2020.

¹¹ See, for example: Wanda Troszczyńska-van Genderen, “Human Rights Challenges in EU Civilian Crisis Management: The Cases of EUPOL and EUJUST LEX,” EU Institute for Security Studies, July 2010.

¹² Interviews with AU officials, April 2019.

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The continued spread of violent extremism and terrorism as a security threat could also diminish demands for UN peacekeeping in favor of non-UN military operations—possibly with rising demand for other forms of UN support, including political or operational support missions (e.g., an equivalent of the UN Support Office in Somalia for the G5 Sahel). Whereas, historically, most parallel forces have been deployed to support UN operations, UN operations have increasingly been requested to support non-UN operations, including the AU Mission in Somalia and the G5 Sahel Joint Force.¹³ Indeed, “regional forces of the willing” like the G5 Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram are likely to become more common as countries grapple with the regional nature of armed groups. These parallel operations are primarily security-focused, which raises questions about UN operations’ real or perceived impartiality and the suitability of the UN providing logistical and other operational support to them.¹⁴ This may ultimately undermine the legitimacy and relevance of the UN in contexts where most stakeholders regard counterterrorism or counterinsurgency as the priority.

Particularly in situations where non-UN operations are undertaking peace enforcement or counterterrorism operations for which the UN is not suited but where non-UN forces lack self-sustainment capabilities or raise concerns about conduct, the UN may increasingly be pushed into a “support role,” including the provision of logistics support or the monitoring of compliance with human rights law. Several parallel operations have struggled with self-sustainment beyond their initial deployment. Regional and subregional organizations like the AU, for example, have faced challenges with securing adequate financing for troop reimbursement, maintaining and replacing equipment, and providing adequate rations, water, and fuel. The availability of funding is likely to be aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which may impact the budget of the UN and other organizations.¹⁵ Conversely, a worsening of the financial crisis that has faced peacekeeping could result in inadequate financing to maintain or deploy large multidimensional UN operations, requiring other entities to step in—for example, to prevent a sudden risk of a mass atrocity.

Scenario 1. The UN increases operational support to counterterrorism operations

The global recession following the COVID-19 pandemic forces member states to re-prioritize their spending, including by reducing their voluntary contributions to the UN and, in some cases, deferring their assessed contributions to peacekeeping. Major donors also step up their push to close several longstanding missions. The resulting compromise leads to the premature closure of the UN missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic and the downsizing of the mission in South Sudan. Following an “accidental” attack by Russian forces on US troops in Syria and China’s move to end sanctions against North Korea, the Security Council is largely paralyzed. A series of deadly terrorist attacks by the Islamic State across the Sahel, which result in the death of the French ambassador to Chad, affirm that counterterrorism is one of the few remaining areas of consensus. With the backing of its five permanent members, the Security Council authorizes a new UN Support Office for the Sahel with a mandate to provide logistical, procurement, and “other relevant operational support, including the exchange of information” to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. However, a

¹³ Examples include Operation Sky Monitor by NATO in support of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992; Operation Deny Flight by NATO in support of UNPROFOR and UN Peace Forces in 1995; Operation Turquoise in support of the deployment of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda in 1994; Operation Licorne in support of the UN Mission and UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire; and NATO’s International Security Assistance Force in support of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

¹⁴ John Karlsrud, “Are UN Peacekeeping Missions Moving Toward ‘Chapter Seven and a Half Operations?’” *IPI Global Observatory*, February 12, 2018.

¹⁵ This may lead, for example, to delays in the operationalization of the AU Peace Fund beyond its 2021 deadline and could impact coalitions such as G5 Sahel Joint Force that do not have sufficient resources to self-sustain their operations. Cedric de Coning, “Examining the Longer-Term Effects of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping Operations,” *IPI Global Observatory*, May 13, 2020.

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renewed push by France and the three elected African members of the council to consider using UN assessed funding for the AU fails after the US threatens a veto.

The logistical support package includes rations and water, fuel and oil, medical evacuation, camp security, mine-resistant armored-personnel carriers, and equipment maintenance. Equipment and supplies are channeled through the UN Regional Service Centre in Entebbe and a newly established Regional Service Centre in Accra. Supply chains are increasingly targeted by non-state armed groups, and the number of casualties, particularly of UN civilian staff, rises.

With little attention to a political solution and an emphasis on shoring up fragile governments in the region—many of which cracked down on popular protests following the post-COVID-19 economic collapse—human rights violations committed by state security forces spike. Civil society organizations throughout the region and beyond criticize the UN's complicity in human rights violations. France and several elected members of the Security Council propose the creation of a permanent UN human rights compliance framework, to be overseen by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with commensurate staffing and resources. The G5 Sahel Joint Force would have to abide by the framework or risk withdrawal of UN support. Facing the threat of a veto, France instead offers that the monitoring be outsourced to an expanded regional EU training mission, which is narrowly approved. The UN secretary-general tasks the UN Department of Peace Operations with developing a strategy for public education to reassure communities that their reports will be treated confidentially and to help hold national security forces accountable.

REGIONAL DIVERSIFICATION AND NEW AND NONTRADITIONAL PEACEKEEPING PROVIDERS

Some regional organizations, such as the EU and NATO, have deployed forces outside the territory of their member states, alongside UN operations. Recently, however, there has also been an increase in regional and subregional entities deploying operations within the territory of their own member states (e.g., the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, the AU Mission in Somalia, the African-led International Support Missions to Mali and the Central African Republic, and, earlier, the Economic Community of West Africa States Monitoring Group). On the one hand, these regional or subregional entities are often perceived by host states and neighboring countries as more legitimate actors to intervene, they have political relationships and local cultural knowledge they can leverage, and they may be able to deploy rapidly. On the other hand, they can lack impartiality, with associated risks for the UN. The growing focus on regionalized approaches to crisis management will likely require the UN to assess its role in supporting these regional deployments.

As regional, subregional, and bilateral partners continue to take the lead in political processes, the UN could also be called on to provide a security guarantee to non-UN civilian missions. The AU Technical Support Mission to the Gambia, for example, has provided advice to the government on the rule of law, democracy, transitional justice, and security sector reform and is seen as a possible turning point in the operationalization of the AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development capacity.¹⁶ While the situation in the Gambia was relatively stable, in more volatile environments, the UN could be requested to provide security to non-UN missions. During the drawdown of the UN Mission in Liberia, the UN planned for the possible deployment of a quick-reaction force from the mission in Mali in the event of a reversal in security around the 2017 elections. A residual UN presence or quick-reaction force could similarly be deployed to provide security to a non-UN civilian mission in extremis.

¹⁶ Chido Mutangadura, "Will the Gambia Be a Turning Point for AU Peace Efforts?" Institute for Security Studies, May 2019.

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While most peace support operations have been led by regional and subregional organizations in the past, the organizations leading these deployments have been diversifying. While NATO initially led a majority of the operations in the 1990s, the establishment of the AU and of the EU's development of a European Security and Defense Policy in the early 2000s led to their increasing involvement. This evolving landscape, as well as the prerogatives, resources, and needs of each organization, have shaped their relationships with UN stakeholders. As the geopolitical landscape continues to shift, and conflicts become increasingly internationalized or regionalized, the UN could face increasing demands to operate alongside other security providers with which it has less institutionalized partnerships, particularly operations led by Russia and China. Just as past UN peacekeeping missions in Georgia and Tajikistan operated alongside operations led by the Commonwealth of Independent States, future instability in Eurasia could see efforts by the Collective Security Treaty Organization or Shanghai Cooperation Organization to play an increased role—even if this role is likely to be viewed with skepticism by some members of the Security Council.

Private military and security companies are not new to peacekeeping, having provided personnel, guard services, logistics, intelligence and risk assessment, and other support.¹⁷ There has been regular attention to the possible role of these companies as a supplement or alternative to member-state-provided peacekeeping troops.¹⁸ While private military and security companies carry operational and reputational risks for peacekeeping, including with respect to compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, they also have potential advantages as well-trained, well-equipped, and coherent forces with clear command-and-control structures and the ability to deploy rapidly. These characteristics could make them well-suited to respond to a crisis.¹⁹

While pushing the boundaries of a “parallel operation,” the UN is also increasingly likely to have to content with quasi-state/quasi-private military entities like the Wagner Group, which is actively believed to be engaged in combat roles in Libya, while providing training and advice in the Central African Republic, Sudan, Syria, and elsewhere.²⁰ Such entities could be deployed in support of government or non-state allies, including to provide advice during peace agreements, as in the Central African Republic, but without acknowledgement by the countries responsible for their deployment.

Scenario 2. Multiple stakeholders support the transition in South Sudan

One year after the formation of a government of national unity, the Security Council initiates the drawdown of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Despite the widespread voluntary return of internally displaced persons, thousands remain at protection of civilians sites due to loss of livelihoods from a prolonged drought, and lingering pockets of violence remain due to criminal gangs. As a result, several members of the council back the deployment of a UN special political mission to train national security forces, support camp security, and monitor the human rights situation. The South Sudanese government, however, supports a rival proposal by Uganda, an elected member of the council, for a small, geographically limited peace support operation led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). With the backing of the three elected African members, the council approves the Intergovernmental Authority Mission in South Sudan (IGAMISS) and requests that UNMISS provide

¹⁷ Rebecca DeWinter-Schmitt, ed., “Montreux Five Years On: An Analysis of State Efforts to Implement Montreux Document Legal Obligations and Good Practices,” Center of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and NOVACT, 2013.

¹⁸ Lauren Grace Fitzsimons, “Should Private Military Companies Be Used in UN Peace Operations?” 2015.

¹⁹ Following the Rwandan genocide, Executive Outcomes claimed it would have been able to get forces on the ground within fourteen days. Ibid.

²⁰ Russia is “neither a signatory to the Montreux Document nor a member of the International Code [of] Conduct [for] Private Security [Service] Providers’ Association. The former outlines how international law applies to [private military contractors] and is supported by fifty-five countries, including the United States. The latter sets standards for [private military contractors] to adhere to international law and human rights, as well as best practices in management.” Nathaniel Reynolds, “Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 2019.

embedded technical experts and in extremis protection for the mission for six months to help it start up.

Three months before the closure of UNMISS, the president of South Sudan is ambushed and assassinated during a visit to Jonglei. In reprisal, ethnic militias, backed by the army, carry out a series of massacres, leading to a rapid reversal in the security situation. IGAMISS is unable to contain the violence. UNMISS is able to prevent IGAD forces from being overwhelmed but does not have the military strength or mobility to contain the deteriorating situation. During an emergency session, the Security Council requests the secretary-general to explore the use of a private military company. The UN contracts a company based in the United Arab Emirates, which, two weeks later, deploys two mobile battalions as reinforcement.²¹

Following the stabilization of the situation, the South Sudanese government expels the private military company, citing an alleged lack of transparency in the conduct of its operations and accusations that its personnel were involved in an incident involving the killing of civilians during an operation. Neither the company nor the United Arab Emirates takes action, and no one is ever held to account.

UNILATERAL ACTION AND STRATEGIC “DISALIGNMENT”

In the Security Council, the threat of a veto in response to an emerging crisis due to increasing geopolitical competition and the resulting erosion of consensus could plausibly lead either the P2 (China and Russia) or the P3 (France, the UK, and the US) to undertake unilateral action through a “friendly” configuration in areas where the UN is already operating, or to request a UN presence to add legitimacy to their operation (e.g., the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq following the US invasion).²² This would be most likely to occur in these countries’ perceived spheres of influence. Conversely, the threat of a veto could lead the P3 to undertake unilateral action through NATO (as in Kosovo) or another configuration. Both situations raise questions about how the UN should cooperate—or, at a minimum, de-conflict—with parallel operations that have not been approved by the Security Council. The challenge is one of legitimacy (political and in principle) and legality (particularly pertaining to the use of force).

Many of the situations envisioned above could contribute to “disalignment” of strategic intent—missions with different objectives working at cross purposes, whether unintentionally or not. This lack of alignment may be reflected in mandates and in political objectives of parallel forces that might be working toward competing goals or have conflicting interests.²³ This can present challenges and risks for the UN. Operations by parallel actors could impose political constraints on the UN, including on its ability to engage with certain armed groups targeted by those parallel forces (especially those designated as terrorist groups), as was the case in Afghanistan. In other instances, parallel operations could seek political bargains that undermine UN principles, including accountability for crimes against humanity, or that strengthen certain parties at the expense of others. In situations where parallel forces are authorized by the Security Council to use force or to take enforcement action, strategic alignment is especially critical.²⁴

²¹ The United Arab Emirates is not a signatory of the Montreux Document. See: “Participating States of the Montreux Document,” available at <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/dfa/foreign-policy/international-law/international-humanitarian-law/private-military-security-companies/participating-states.html>.

²² Security Council Report, “Cooperation between the UN and Regional Organisations,” August 2019.

²³ On competing goals, see: Novoseloff and Sharland, “Partners and Competitors.” On conflicting interests, see: Paul Williams, “Global and Regional Peacekeepers,” Council on Foreign Relations, 2016

²⁴ Authorization by the Security Council allows for enforcement action to be taken under the UN Charter’s regional arrangements (Art. 53, Chapter VIII).

Scenario 3. A breakdown in Security Council consensus leads to more non-sanctioned parallel operations

Following the fall of the last opposition stronghold in Idlib in Syria in late 2020, the government of Bashar al-Assad requests a Russian-led peace operation to stabilize military gains, invest in state building, and help pull Syria out of its financial crisis. Facing a severe economic recession due to the COVID-19 pandemic and US and European sanctions, Russia approaches China to propose a jointly led coalition force in exchange for Chinese access to the Doubayat gas field.

The Russian-Chinese coalition requests Security Council authorization to deploy the peace operation to Syria. In a bid accompanied by a letter from the government of Syria, Russia and China emphasize the value of the UN Charter, respect for international law, and UN principles, including the consent of the host state. Despite this compelling approach, the P3 veto the deployment of the parallel operation to Syria, arguing that such an engagement would be likely to further raise tension in the region.

Russia accuses the P3 of double standards, citing its approval of multiple NATO operations in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. Facing a lack of consensus in the Security Council, Russia and China finally decide to move forward without authorization, citing precedents like the deployment of the Multinational Force and Observers to oversee the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Once deployed, the joint force hinders the movement of other international forces operating in Syria. In retaliation for the P3 veto, Russia and China block the renewal of the UN mission in Mali, pointing to its support to the French Operation Barkhane and the EU training mission. As violence in Mali escalates, France and the EU members of the council seek authorization for an EU-led reaction force, which is similarly vetoed. They elect to deploy anyway, citing the consent of the Malian government. Fearing that a proliferation of unilateral interventions is undermining the Charter, the secretary-general, acting under Article 99, proposes the establishment of a small, civilian UN mission in Syria to “facilitate coordination and exchange of information between any international forces in Syria” in an effort to secure minimal Security Council acknowledgement of the Russian-Chinese force while satisfying P3 demands for some measure of international visibility.

NEW THREATS AND HIGH-VALUE, HIGH-TECH, AND NICHE-CAPABILITY OPERATIONS

There have been several instances where UN operations have benefited from the deployment of specialized enhancements that significantly increased their capabilities, including the All Sources Information Fusion Unit to provide military intelligence for the mission in Mali and, earlier, the Strategic Military Cell to augment command and control in the mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Electronic countermeasures to jam improvised explosive devices are already being used, including in Mali and Lebanon, and some troop-contributing countries have deployed capabilities to intercept hostile communications. Similarly, UNIFIL’s Maritime Task Force, the first of its kind for a peacekeeping mission, helps interdict unauthorized material by sea and build naval capacity.

While these capabilities were part of UN missions, in the future, small high-tech or niche-capability operations may provide operational support to UN missions while operating outside of their command. In 2008 and 2009, the UNIFIL’s Maritime Task Force was commanded by the European Maritime Force, putting this European force under a UN mandate. Peacekeeping is increasingly likely to require highly specialized capabilities, including cyber capabilities, that only a few member states are able to provide. Where there are sensitivities about the non-transfer of these technologies, certain troop-contributing countries may elect to deploy outside of the UN in order to control when and how these capabilities are shared with UN missions. Such deployments would require the consent of the host state but could nonetheless raise concerns from the host government or troop-contributing countries about the nature of the units’ activities.

In addition to traditional threats to international peace and security, the future threat landscape is likely to be characterized by climate change, forced migration, hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns, public health crises, and cyberattacks. These situations have already resulted in new models of UN missions such as the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response in 2014 and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)–UN Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria in 2015, as well as operations like EU’s Operation Sophia to rescue migrants at sea and Operation Atalanta to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa.

Scenario 4. Rising geopolitical tensions in the Arctic lead the UN to deploy a maritime peace operation to mitigate interstate conflict

Following several years of record-high temperatures, Arctic thawing opens new sea routes and leads to the discovery of oil and gas fields. Countries scramble to compete for economic and security gain, rapidly building up their military presence in the region. Without a comprehensive coordination mechanism in place, states independently pursue their own interests.²⁵ China is vocal about its policy on the “Polar Silk Road” and asserts its legitimacy as a “Near Arctic State” by deploying nuclear-powered ballistic submarines. In response, Russia, until that point cooperative with the other Arctic countries, increases its military activities into the central Arctic area. China, Russia, and the US deploy nuclear-powered icebreakers.

The rise in tension pushes the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR), composed of European and North American nations, to deploy an observer force to monitor what it considers illegal activities in the Arctic.²⁶ Perceiving this as a provocation, Russia and China call for a closed Security Council meeting on the issue. To break a diplomatic impasse, Canada, an elected member of the council, suggests the deployment of a UN maritime presence.

After a heated negotiation about whether it should include a mandate to monitor and assess the impacts of climate change on international peace and security in the Arctic region, Security Council members finally agree to deploy the UN Maritime Arctic Task Force (UNMATF) for an initial period of six months. The UN Secretariat has to rapidly boost its expertise on the laws of the sea and calls on troop-contributing countries with previous UN maritime experience to deploy. The UN operation de facto operates in parallel to the ASFR observer mission until the ASFR member states agree to end the mission and merge it with UNMATF.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Over the coming decade, parallel operations are likely to continue to shape UN peace operations. In anticipation of likely and plausible changes, the UN should continue to adapt in order to maintain its comparative advantages, including its versatility—the range of functions and mandates it is able to undertake, the universality of its membership and their widespread participation in peacekeeping, and a foundation of policy and practice resulting from its long history of working alongside different types of missions deployed by diverse entities. Below are several recommendations for further policy development and operational capacity. The recommendations are both inward-facing (for the UN Secretariat’s consideration) and outward-facing (for consideration by the members of the UN Security Council and actors involved in parallel operations).

²⁵ The Arctic Council does not have a mandate to deal with military and security affairs.

²⁶ Russia has been excluded from the ASFR since 2014, and China is not a member.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UN SECRETARIAT

- **Undertake an independently led lessons-learned exercise.** This exercise could assess the impact of UN support operations on the perceptions of different stakeholders, including host communities, and the extent to which different aspects of this support may affect the UN's perceived impartiality and its role as an impartial mediator. The review should develop a risk matrix for different types of support activities, make recommendations on steps that the UN could take to mitigate associated risks (e.g., strategic communication, community engagement), and possible activities that the UN should not engage in.
- **Assess the impact of the G5 Sahel's Human Rights Compliance Framework.** The UN should develop a standardized model to be replicated across parallel deployments to ensure respect for its Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and request appropriate additional resources for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (these capabilities could also be used to enhance vetting of private military and security companies used by the UN).
- **Assess the implications of regularly classifying UN peacekeeping missions as parties to conflict under international humanitarian law** if UN operations supporting parallel forces or closer coordination between UN operations and parallel forces, including information sharing, become more common.
- **Ensure that after-action reviews, including lessons-learned exercises, have been undertaken following recent joint and specialized missions** (e.g., the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria). A clear focal point within the UN Secretariat should be the repository for institutional knowledge on these experiences.
- **Review and update the 2012 UN Guidelines on the Use of Armed Security Services from Private Security Companies** to ensure that they (1) cover not only security but all potential uses of these companies by the UN; (2) specify which services cannot be outsourced to these companies; and (3) identify clear mechanisms to hold these companies accountable for potential misconduct and abuse.
- **Commission an independently led evaluation of progress toward a "spectrum" approach to UN peace operations**, nearly two years after the secretary-general's creation of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations. If the UN can tailor the design and deployment of its peace operations, it would be able to provide modular services and technical expertise that partner organizations deploying parallel missions may lack.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ACTORS INVOLVED IN PARALLEL OPERATIONS

- **Continue to develop partnerships, including through regular high-level and expert-level engagement with emerging regional organizations.** This could involve exchanging views on situational analysis, developing channels for information sharing, and sharing practices on mission planning, gender-sensitive conflict analysis, human rights compliance, and other areas.
- **Harmonize regulatory frameworks with key partners**, particularly the African Union, to facilitate the mutual use of procurement arrangements for goods and services.

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- **Review or, where absent, develop memoranda of understanding with likely partner organizations to facilitate the exchange of technical support**, including the short-term secondment of UN staff in areas like human rights, security and justice sector reform, and mediation support.
- **Consider developing and running table-top scenario exercises with regular partner organizations**, including for crisis management and contingency planning.
- **Consider replicating the UN-AU staff exchange with other regional and subregional organizations** to facilitate knowledge transfer and interoperability on operational support matters.