

Traditional UN Peace Operation Preventive Deployment for Conflict Management

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The United Nations (UN) is going through an identity crisis for having failed to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine, and for being unable to prevent the conflict. A few African nations have taken matters into their own hands, and are asking the UN to close some ongoing peacekeeping missions. However, traditional UN peace operations deployed in the Middle East remain in place and have been able to contribute to maintaining stability and preventing the recurrence of conflict. Nevertheless, the Ukraine conflict has reignited the debate on the role of traditional UN peace operations in the prevention of conflict.

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Prevention has found a central place even in the UN's New Agenda for Peace.¹ Traditional UN peace operations as a tool of conflict management by preventive deployment thus remain extremely relevant, and demand urgent examination.

The current security situation in Europe, involving one P-5 member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) superpower and another industrialist European nation in an inter-state conflict has posed a daunting challenge to the international community and made the UN look like an ineffectual organisation. Nevertheless, the conflict should urge political scientists and security analysts to revisit the concept of preventive diplomacy and deployment to prevent a conflict, prevent the recurrence of conflict and act as a tool for conflict management. In this context, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, cold war-era peace operations, known as traditional peacekeeping or unidimensional peacekeeping missions, have started to get traction as a possible conflict management tool in preventing conflict.² The idea of Preventive Diplomacy was first articulated by Dag Hammarskjold in the 1960s and it was officially introduced to the UN by Boutros Boutros Ghali as part of the Agenda for Peace in 1992.³ The Agenda for Peace

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- 1 See, for instance, United Nations, "Our Common Agenda Policy Brief No. 9: A New Agenda for Peace", July, 2023, <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>.
 - 2 For example, I was a special invitee to talk on the relevance of traditional peace operations during the EPON presentation of the policy paper on the Protection of Civilians to UN HQs in May, 2022.
 - 3 Bertrand G. Ramcharan, "Preventive Diplomacy at United Nations," UN Chronicle, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/preventive-diplomacy-united-nations>; Yan Shenchun and Guo Yanjun, "Origin and Development of Preventive Diplomacy," *Preventive Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific*, World Scientific Publishing Company, Singapore, 2021, pp. 1-39, https://www.worldscientific.com/doi/epdf/10.1142/9789811218552_0001 and UN General Assembly Security Council, "Agenda for Peace", A/47/277 –

underlined the need to use *Preventive diplomacy* to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and limiting the spread of the latter when they occur; *Peace-making* to bring hostile parties to an agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations and *Peace-keeping* (including preventive deployment), which is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. These three concept elements are not sequential but work in tandem in the conflict zone, with weight from one arm shifting to another depending on the situation. Therefore, it is the art of maintaining a balance between the three arms of the concept of the Agenda for Peace – *peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding* – that becomes the enabling factor to prevent conflict from arising and finding amicable solutions leading to conflict resolution.⁴ Even though the Secretary-General mentioned in the Agenda for Peace that there can be circumstances where a preventive deployment of UN peacekeeping missions may take place in the inter-state conflict to create confidence among the warring parties before hostilities break out, the utility of preventive deployment in intra-state conflict should not be ruled out (as is explained in later sections).

S/24111, June 17, 1992. Also, see S/2011/552. “Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results,” *Report of the Secretary-General*, August 2011, <https://www.un.org/undpa/sites/www.un.org.undpa/files/SG%20Report%20on%20Preventive%20Diplomacy.pdf>.

- 4 Ali Ahmed, “Operational Art in Peace Operations: Balancing the Peace Triangle,” *USI of India*, April-June 2022, <https://www.usiofindia.org/publication-journal/operational-art-in-peace-operations-balancing-the-peace-triangle.html>.

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The need for conflict prevention has been re-emphasised and found a central place even in the New Agenda for Peace.⁵ Conflict prevention as a subject is however part of a larger debate. Hence, this paper will limit its views on conflict prevention to the terms of UN peacekeeping (hereafter, *UN peacekeeping* and *UN peace operations* would be used interchangeably) and will aim at establishing the relevance of traditional UN peace operations in the context of preventive deployment. To argue the utility of preventive deployment as a conflict management tool, I will begin by briefly describing the concept of preventive deployment and its challenges. It will be followed by examining the missed opportunities for the UN to prevent the Ukraine conflict and the feasibility of a UN role in a post-conflict scenario in case of a ceasefire.

PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT

The two components of the Agenda for Peace that are generally overlooked are,

1. if conflict erupts, engage in peace-making (peace-making can be by anyone including the UN) with an aim to resolving the issues that have led to conflict;
2. using peacekeeping, to preserve peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers.⁶

5 The UN, “Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace”, July, 2023,” <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>. Also see, Richard Gowan, “What’s New about the UN’s New Agenda for Peace?” *International Crisis Group*, July 19, 2023, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/whats-new-about-uns-new-agenda-peace>.

6 The UN General Assembly Security Council, Agenda for Peace, A/47/277 – S/24111, June 17, 1992.

Like preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment is another preventive action tool. It differs from preventive diplomacy in the strategy of prevention. The strategy is prevention by positioning military troops rather than using diplomacy.⁷ It involves the deployment of military observers or troops either between two warring states in a temporary security zone or even on one side of the border. The primary objective is to deter armed escalation. If the prevention of armed conflict (including prevention of outbreak or escalation of the conflict) is the ultimate goal of peace operations, it is difficult to draw a clear line between preventive deployment and other peace operations. Accordingly, all peace operations deployed in the middle of the conflict are also preventive. However, the term preventive deployment suggests that such deployment will take place before the outbreak of a conflict. The deployment of UN peacekeeping in Macedonia to prevent the spillover of the Yugoslav war in 1992 is the most popular example of preventive deployment among UN peacekeeping missions.⁸ Preventive deployment is best undertaken with the host state's consent under Chapter VI. In exceptional circumstances, preventive deployment can take place as enforcement operations under Chapter VII.

What are the characteristics of preventive deployment (deployed before the outbreak of war with the consent of the host state)? According to William and Bellamy, preventive deployment must be able to react quickly to unfolding

7 Özçelik, Sezai, "The Theory and Practice of Preventive Diplomacy: The Case of Preventive Deployment in Macedonia", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume 3, No 11, Fall 2006, pp. 103-128.

8 "The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping", UN Department of Public Information, New York, United Nations, 1996, pp. 564-66; UN Security Council, S/24923, December 9, 1992; and UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution S/1995/987* November 23, 1995.

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situations and be able to interposition between two warring parties, monitor and build confidence and act as a deterrent to the outbreak of the conflict.⁹

United Nations Preventive Deployment (UNPREDEP) in the Republic of Macedonia is the single case of a classical preventive deployment UN mission because it carried the official tag of prevention and was based on the principles laid out in the Agenda for Peace.¹⁰ After UNPREDEP closed, there has been no other instance of the UN deploying a peacekeeping mission as part of this concept. It is not very clear why there were no more such initiatives despite this success. One theory could be that there was no organisational learning from the success of UNPREDEP. Another is that the powerful nations who take the final decisions at the Security Council either were more focused on increasing the quantum of complex intra-state violence, or preventive deployment did not serve their purpose for other reasons.¹¹

Since a civil war broke out in Macedonia within two years of the withdrawal of UNPREDEP, the absence of the

9 Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, Polity, Cambridge, 2021, pp. 113 and 129; and UN Security Council, S/24923, December 9, 1992. Also see, Laurie Nathan, Adam Day, João Honwana and Rebecca Brubaker “Capturing UN Preventive Diplomacy Success: How and Why Does It Work?”, United Nations Centre for Policy Research, 2018 and personal account of Lt. Gen. J.S. Lidder, former Force Commander and Deputy SRSG of UNMIS.

10 Tardy, Thierry, “United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP – Macedonia)”, in Joachim A. Koops, Norrie Macqueen, Thierry Tardy and Paul D. Williams eds. *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015, pp. 501-10.

11 Mary Frances Rosett Lebamoff, “Learning from the UN Preventive Deployment Mission in Macedonia: Nothing Fails Like Success?”, Loyola University Chicago, 2015, Ph.D. Dissertations, https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1951.

conflict during the deployment of the peacekeeping mission can be attributed to UNPREDEP. Even during UNPREDEP deployment, Macedonia was going through domestic tension arising out of the rift between the Macedonian Albanian minority and Slav-dominated Macedonians. The Secretary-General also reported that, besides the potential external threat, the sources of violence and instability in Macedonia were internal.¹² In 2001, after the civil war broke out, a NATO peacekeeping force was deployed to disarm the National Liberation Army (NLA) that demanded greater rights for the Macedonian Albanian minority.¹³ The deployment of NATO peacekeeping and its success goes to prove two things. *One*, it was because of UNPREDEP that there was no violence in Macedonia during its deployment. *Two*, preventive deployment can work even during the ongoing conflict to prevent the recurrence of violence. EU deployment of a military operation during the election in DRC in 2006 in support of the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1671 of 25 April, further strengthens this argument.¹⁴

Although not classically termed a preventive deployment, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) can also fall into this pattern. UNMEE was established to solve boundary disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea. But the mission had to be closed because of the withdrawal of consent

12 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution Pursuant to Resolution 871 (1993) S/1994/300", March 16, 1994.

13 Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, op. cit. and Thierry Tardy, op. cit., Also, see "NATO Launches Full Macedonian Mission," *PBS News Hour*, August 22, 2001, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/europe-july-dec01-macedonia_08-22.

14 Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, op. cit., and UN Security Council Resolution *S/RES/1671(2006)*, April 25, 2006.

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by Eritrea. Yet, during the period of its stay, it contributed to peace and tranquillity in the area.¹⁵ Apart from UNMEE, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established in 1978 in the context of inter-state conflict. It was clear from the experience of the 2006 war that UNIFIL was not and is still not capable of preventing a full-fledged war between Israel and Lebanon. The mission however has displayed its ability to prevent a conflict arising out of a misunderstanding of trivial issues that have the potential for escalation. UN operations such as UNMEE and UNIFIL, even though they don't attract much attention unless there is an incidence of violence, can thus be called UN peace operations in preventive deployment.

Preventive deployment is a cost-effective conflict management tool and has better chances of success provided there is adequate early warning available and there is a will to resolve issues using both political and material investment. This will be discussed subsequently. However, before that, considering the current geopolitical and geostrategic changes around the world, the efficacy of preventive deployment will be examined in the context of the Ukraine war, and if there is a ceasefire. It is, however, not to suggest a role for UN peacekeeping in Ukraine but only to consider the conflict in Ukraine as a jumping board.

IS UN PEACEKEEPING IN UKRAINE AFTER A CEASEFIRE AN OPTION?

Gowan, the UN Director of Crisis Group, pointed out that “There is a natural tendency in moments of crisis to raise the

15 Patrick Cammaert and Andreas Sugar, “United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritria (UNMEE),” in Joachim A. Koops, Norrie Macqueen, Thierry Tardy and Paul D. Williams eds., *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015, pp. 671-81.

idea of ‘peacekeeping’ vaguely, much as Poland has done.” He observed that such an idea of using Blue Helmets in the context of a post-ceasefire agreement between Russia and Ukraine also came up earlier, in 2015, and Putin was open to the idea. Comparing the starting points for a peacekeeping mission in 2015 and at present, there was a better chance in 2015, because Putin was at least open to the idea.¹⁶ Gowan reaffirmed his views during his intervention in “Multilateralism and the state of the international order after Russia invades Ukraine,” at the Finish Institute of International Affairs. He believed that, as and when there is a ceasefire, the UN can play a role in the form of peacekeeping (and various other forms) for conflict termination.¹⁷ Before examining the feasibility of the role of UN peacekeeping in the event of a cease-fire (if at all there is one), a brief examination of the question whether the war in Ukraine could have been avoided by preventive diplomacy and giving space to political primacy, would help.

COULD THE UN PREVENT THE UKRAINE WAR IN 2022?

There was a full year’s time for the UN (Secretary-General) and world leaders, when Russia dropped paratroopers near

16 Richard Gowan, “A Tentative First Look at Options for Peace Operations in Ukraine,” *International Crisis Group*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/ukraine/tentative-first-look-options-peace-operations-ukraine>. Please also see, Lloyd Axworthy and Alan Rock, “The United Nations can use its blue helmets to save lives in Ukraine,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 22, 2022, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-the-united-nations-can-use-its-blue-helmets-to-save-lives-in-ukraine/>.

17 Finish Institute of International Affairs, “Multilateralism and the state of the international order after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,” *YouTube*, June 21, 2022, https://youtu.be/D4oA_OOB8QA. Please also see, “Ukraine Options Paper: Peace Operations”, https://www.lcil.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.law.cam.ac.uk/files/images/www.lcil.cam.ac.uk/ukraine/gowan_international_peace_operations.pdf.

the Ukraine border on 21 February 2021 and until the actual invasion on 24 February 2022, to initiate preventive diplomacy and even to consider preventive deployment, before the war started.¹⁸ Intriguingly, that window was lost. The world kept talking about the invasion much before the actual invasion. Sadly, nothing much was done to seize the initiative to reassure Russia and convince Ukraine that their concern could be addressed by using means other than war. A few European leaders tried, but Russia looks at Europe with suspicion. As for non-European nations, India and China could have influenced President Putin's decision for the better. Prime Minister Modi told President Putin during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit at Samarkand in September 2022 that this was not the era of war but democracy, dialogue, and diplomacy,¹⁹ but this was too little too late. Organisational weaknesses in the wake of the involvement of one of the P5 members can be cited as the primary reason for the UN not being able to prevent the war. These, however, are not justifications to prevent the UN from peace-making. Now that the war seems unstoppable for one reason or another (Russia's ending the Black Sea Grain Deal is one such example) and no sign of loss of appetite for threats and counter threats, all that remains is to wait and watch how political primacy can still be put work to bring an end to the conflict and reach some kind of ceasefire agreement. As Posen commented in *Foreign Affairs*,

18 Simon Shuster, "The Untold Story of the Ukraine Crisis", *Time*, February 2, 2022, <https://time.com/6144109/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-viktor-medvedchuk/>.

19 Sachin Parashar, "This is not an era of war, let's talk peace: PM Modi tells Russian president Vladimir Putin on sidelines of SCO summit", *The Times of India*, September 17, 2022, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/this-is-not-an-era-of-war-pm-modi-tells-russian-president-vladimir-putin-on-sidelines-of-sco-summit/articleshow/94250464.cms>.

“There is only one responsible thing to do: seek a diplomatic end to the war now.”²⁰

Supported by documentary evidence, Sach, who has been an advisor to three United Nations Secretaries-General, and currently serves as an SDG Advocate under Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, also reported that Ukraine was provoked.²¹ If it was provoked, it is reasonable to conclude that it could have been prevented and can now be stopped, provided there is political will. How the war can end is, however, outside the purview of this paper. The next section, therefore, will dwell only on the options for UN peacekeeping in terms of its structure in a post-ceasefire scenario. As it looks now, the acceptability of an armed peacekeeping mission by both sides seems unlikely.

OPTIONS FOR UN PEACEKEEPING IN UKRAINE

The probability of success of UN operations in the context of the Ukraine conflict should be studied in the context of, firstly, the kind of role UN peacekeeping can play and, secondly, the probability of its success in the face of several challenges. As of now, even the very idea of using UN peacekeeping as a means of conflict management in Ukraine triggers intense debates and the majority believe that the time has long passed. Besides, using statistical analysis and selected

20 Barry R. Posen, “Ukraine’s Implausible Theories of Victory: The Fantasy of Russian Defeat and the Case for Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 8, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-07-08/ukraine-s-implausible-theories-victory>. Also, see Hasim Turker, “Behind the Demise of the Black Sea Grain Deal,” *Geopolitical Monitor*, July 25, 2023, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/behind-the-demise-of-the-black-sea-grain-deal/> and <https://youtu.be/6OvwGBdc9Bo>.

21 Jeffrey D. Sach, “The War in Ukraine Was Provoked—and Why That Matters to Achieve Peace,” *Common Dreams*, May 23, 2023, <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/the-war-in-ukraine-was-provoked-and-why-that-matters-if-we-want-peace>.

case studies, Doyle and Sambanis observed that the UN would not be effective in intervening in ongoing wars, other than by giving technical advice to non-UN-led multinational peace operations.²²

Yet, optimists believe that the UN has a role in Ukraine if there is a ceasefire agreement. For example, a former Canadian foreign minister and a professor of law at the University of Ottawa Axworthy and Rock believe that the UN can use Blue Helmets to save Ukrainian lives.²³ This was also briefly discussed during the sidelines of EPON week in New York in May 2022, and the participants believed that there is also a possibility that post a ceasefire agreement, there can be some role for UN peace operations in Ukraine.²⁴ At this stage, when exploring the feasibility of peacekeeping as a conflict management tool is only an idea, it is difficult to comment on its effectiveness in Ukraine.

Jacob reported after his visit to Ukraine that “conditions on the battlefield will need to change decisively before either Moscow or Kyiv is willing to enter meaningful negotiations toward ending the conflict. Russia and Ukraine have not reached a mutually hurting stalemate that would force them to the table.”²⁵ According to him, it India’s interest for the war to end at the earliest, and its successful mediation in getting both

22 Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2006.

23 Lloyd Axworthy and Alan Rock, op. cit.

24 Please see <https://effectivepeaceops.net/> for more about EPON. Please also see for details about the round table conference <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zU1jsPvrWurUhaj7MNYJ5dgb-jHr0U28/view?usp=sharing>.

25 Happymon Jacob, “Can India Bring Russia and Ukraine to the Table? What New Delhi’s Diplomacy Can and Cannot Achieve”, *Foreign Affairs*, August 2, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/india/can-india-bring-russia-and-ukraine-table>.

sides to the table will boost its international image. Besides, India is ideally placed to sell the idea of UN peacekeeping to both Kremlin and Kyiv. However, presuming both Russia and Ukraine may be amenable to this idea, such an option would still need to be examined in the context of the basic conditions that must be fulfilled for peace operations to succeed.

This is challenging. One of the primary conditions is the need to adhere to the principles of peacekeeping.²⁶ It is not always easy to strictly adhere to these principles because of the inherent ambiguity in their interpretation. Deploying peacekeepers without the approval of the parties to the conflict is against the first cardinal principle of UN peacekeeping – *Consent*.²⁷ Even if both Russia and Ukraine agree to the UN's intervention to monitor a ceasefire, the consent is not likely to be absolute, but conditional (there will be caveats). Some of the conditions could even be implied (for example how much of the territories both Ukraine and Russia are ready to give up).

As regards the use of force, given the kind of violence and threat of violence that the peacekeepers would be exposed to, the biggest challenge will come from the mercenaries that are fighting for both sides. These are loose organisations and can easily get out of control of their handlers. Besides, these groups are most likely to operate with tacit support from the main parties to the conflict. Therefore, the ceasefire is not

26 *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York, 2008, pp. 31-40.

27 Peacekeeping principles were identified after the establishment of UN Emergency Force I (UNEF I) in Gaza. See United Nations, "Summary Study of the Experience Derived from the Establishment and Operation of the Force: Report of the Secretary-General, A/3943," (October 9, 1958) and Paul F. Diehl, "First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I)" in Joachim A. Koops, Norrie Macqueen, Thierry Tardy and Paul D. Williams eds., *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015, p. 151.

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likely to hold unless there is sincerity on the part of Russia and Ukraine to restrain these irregular fighters. Another challenge is finding the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) that would be willing to participate in such a mission. The member states may not be inclined to make political and military sacrifices by getting caught between the Russian and Ukrainian armed forces and the mercenaries whose ownership does not have any legitimacy. Given the cause and the ferocity of the conflict, Russia and Ukraine's context is far removed from other peace operations deployed in the context of inter-state conflicts UNIFIL, United Nations Disengagement Force (UNDOF) and United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) are the only current armed peace operations deployed in inter-state conflicts. Besides these three, The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which is the first UN peace operation established after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, is an unarmed observer mission. It is therefore unlikely that other than an unarmed (or perhaps, lightly armed, for self-defence) monitoring role, any armed foreign troops would be acceptable to Russia or Ukraine.

Dr. Alexandra Novosseloff, while referring to the role of Cold war era peacekeeping missions, observed that the war in Ukraine has amplified the need for more attention to inter-positional forces and observer missions.²⁸ If the main parties to the conflict are willing to accept it, even a UN civilian observers' mission in line with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) is another option worth considering. So far, these

28 Alexandra Novosseloff, "A comparative study of older one-dimensional UN Peace Operations: Is the Future of UN Peacekeeping its Past?" April, 2022, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/zypern/19099-20220510.pdf>.

observers have performed well.²⁹ If civilian peacekeepers are not possible because of security constraints, as Richard Gowan suggested, the next option is to have a multi-lateral political mission. Past political missions have contributed positively to mediating between the parties, leading to conflict resolution.³⁰

However, putting aside the possibility of a UN role in Ukraine for the time being, as of now, it seems rather difficult to think even of a ceasefire, because the Ukrainian forces have succeeded in taking back a portion of lost territories, followed by Russia declaring martial law in the occupied territories of Ukraine, and the West is worried about a possible nuclear attack by Russia.³¹

Regardless of the form, the peacekeeping mission can place only after a ceasefire agreement, when there is a peace to keep. Putting it differently, unless there is a reasonable chance of even partial success, it would be futile to invest

29 André Härtel, Anton Pisarenko, and Andreas Umland, “The osce’s Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine: *The SMM’s Work in the Donbas and Its Ukrainian Critique in 2014–2019*,” June 7, 2021, https://brill.com/view/journals/shrs/31/1-4/article-p121_121.xml?language=en. Also, see Richard Gowan, “For UN Peacekeeping, Smaller Is Looking Better Again,” *World Political Review*, July 5, 2022, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30655/on-peacekeeping-un-could-turn-to-a-cold-war-model>.

30 Richard Gowan, “Multilateral Political Missions and Preventive Diplomacy,” Special Report 299, *United States Institute for Peace*, December 2011, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR299.pdf>.

31 Elizabeth Piper, “Britain’s Wallace discussed Ukraine security concerns on Washington trip -source”, October 19, 2022, *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/britains-wallace-discussed-ukraine-security-concerns-washington-trip-source-2022-10-19/>. Also see, Chels Michta, “Putin Says the Gloves Are Off — Believe Him,” *Centre for European Policy Analysis*, October 18, 2022, <https://cepa.org/article/putin-says-the-gloves-are-off-believe-him/>; and Anatol Lieven “Ukraine’s War Is Like World War I, Not World War II,” *Foreign Policy*, October 27, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/10/27/ukraines-war-is-like-world-war-i-not-world-war-ii/>.

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in deploying a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. If a non-violent international intervention is either not acceptable or not considered workable, a solution to the conflict will have to be found by Russia and Ukraine themselves, with support from those nations who are working behind the scenes, to support the continuation of the conflict.

PREVENTIVE DEPLOYMENT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

After evaluating the conflict-reducing effect of UN peace operations Hegre, Hultman and Nygard observed, “If the UN had invested US\$200 billion in PKOs with strong mandates, major armed conflict would have been reduced by up to two-thirds relative to a scenario without PKOs and 150,000 lives would have been saved over the 13-year period compared to a no-PKO scenario. UN peacekeeping is clearly a cost-effective way of increasing global security.”³² The speculative data derived from the study refers to the effect of peace operations that are already in place and hence comparing it to the direct cost of deployment of a peace operation before occurrence of the conflict would be misleading. Because unless the conflict breaks out, it is not possible to put a figure on the overall cost of a conflict (besides the cost of the peace operation) that includes human suffering and destruction of property etc. For example, the financial burden of UNDPREDEP was USD 26,296,200.³³ Since there was no conflict during the deployment of UNDPREDEP, there is no data about what could have been the total cost of the peace operation if it was deployed after the occurrence of violence. It is hence reasonable to conclude that the total cost of the peacekeeping mission deployed after the

32 Håvard Hegre, Lisa Hultman, and Håvard Mogleiv Nygård, “Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” *The Journal of Politics*, Volume 81, Number 1, 2019, pp. 215-223.

33 The UN General Assembly, A/RES/50/243 9 August 1996.

commencement of the conflict, would have been much more. Hence preventive deployment is more cost-effective.

The prevention of a conflict by either diplomacy or using force is not an easier option when powerful nations are either party to the conflict or have stakes in the continuation of the conflict. Haass observed that when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, there was a consensus in the international community to use force against Iraq. But as the disorder in the world is on the rise, nothing of the sort can happen now, because one P5 member is the invader and another P5 member is supporting the invasion.³⁴ Therefore, once the conflict occurs and powerful nations are parties to the conflict, the application of the idea Agenda for Peace is not likely to go beyond the conceptual stage. On the other hand, when the conflict is between two states who are not as powerful as the developed nations, and the continuation of the conflict is not in the strategic interests of the powerful nations, there is a high probability that the concept of preventive diplomacy and preventive deployment would succeed.

Nevertheless, coming back to the relevance of traditional peace operations in the context of inter-state conflict, save for UNMEE and UNPREDEP, most other traditional peace operations are still in place. Although these two missions were closed, they helped prevent the occurrence of conflict. UN peace operations missions may not carry the tag of 'preventive deployment'. *But in the spirit of the Agenda for Peace, all peacekeeping missions are preventive in nature.* With enough early warning available and sincere commitment by the UN leadership and powerful nations, skilful diplomacy accompanied by the timely deployment of UN peacekeepers

34 Richard Haass, "The Dangerous Decade," *Foreign Affairs*, September 6, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/dangerous-decade-foreign-policy-world-crisis-richard-haass>.

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can save the day. The composition of the mission for such a purpose need not be the same as UNPREDEP. But the deployment, as well as the operational activities, must be guided by the three principles of peacekeeping. For observing ceasefire verification, the mission can be lightly armed (for self-defence) blue helmeted or unarmed observers or civilian observers, or even a combination of these, in order to perform the role of the verification mission.

The subject of the use of force for self-defence is fraught with ambiguity. Accordingly, the profile of even lightly armed peacekeepers at times can be misinterpreted as a sign of arrogance as well as offensive intent. Hence, rather than an armed observer mission, an observer verification mission comprising peacekeepers from neutral countries supported by a liaison and coordination mechanism is likely more suitable to facilitate a ceasefire in inter-state conflict. The role, composition and size of the mission and modalities can only be worked out after deliberations by the stakeholders and field visits by technical teams. There were contrasting views during the recent annual event of Challenges Forum 22 in New Delhi on 6 and 7 October 2022.³⁵ A few even questioned the very idea of the concept of preventive diplomacy and preventive deployment as a tool for conflict management. Despite that, the final consensus was that peacekeeping is expensive, so prevention with political content in the driver's seat is a better option.

WHY CIVILIAN PEACEKEEPERS?

Military peacekeepers find it easy to deal with foreign militaries in a hostile environment because of their familiarity with the common and basic military culture. When military

35 Challenges Forum, 2022, <https://challengesforum.teamwork.com/#!/files/7387784>

personnel act in a particular manner, because of their training, military peacekeepers can anticipate such actions with greater ease than their civilian counterparts. However, given proper military training and availability in adequate numbers, there is potential for civilians to participate in UN observer missions, either independently or better, by complementing the military peacekeepers, in an integrated UN observer mission. Even though civilians are generally not comfortable working alongside the military, there were earlier instances of both military and civilians working together. During the UN-supervised Angola general election in September 1992, the unarmed military observers were asked to provide only logistic support like transportation (that too only if required) to the electoral teams. But because of the uncertain security situation, several electoral teams were forced to stay at the military observers' bases during the period of the election. Staying together in difficult times brought both military personnel and civilians together, respecting each other's space.³⁶ Besides, as military peacekeepers find it easy to relate to military activities because of their familiarity with military culture, civilians can also bring with them certain nuances of peacekeeping that may go unnoticed by the military peacekeepers in the normal course.³⁷

CONCLUSION

The Ukraine conflict has brought to the fore the relevance of traditional peace operations as a tool for conflict management to supervise post-ceasefire agreements. An

36 Personal experiences of the author from his days as an Unarmed Military Observer in the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM) in 1991-1992.

37 Major General (Dr) A.K. Bardalai, "Ukraine Conflict: Is UN peacekeeping an option?", *Hesperus*, April 1, 2022, <https://hesperus.co.in/research/f/ukraine-conflict-is-un-peacekeeping-an-option>.

examination of the current conflict in Ukraine explores the role of UN peacekeeping after a possible ceasefire agreement. Despite the odds against the role of UN peacekeeping, given the suffering of the civilian population, there are chances that Ukraine might agree to a peacekeeping mission just to alleviate the civilian suffering. M.K. Bhadrakumar notes that 30 left-wing lawmakers from President Biden's Democratic Party were trying to make the President see the advantages of a negotiated settlement.³⁸ While the fine print of the suggestions for a negotiated settlement is not known, the conflict has given rise to the renewed possibility of large inter-state hostilities. Therefore, the idea of a peacekeeping mission needs to be examined further as one possible model.

After exploring the feasibility of a role for peacekeeping in Ukraine, the relevance or utility of traditional peace operations for the prevention of inter-state conflict has been examined. The 'status quo' status of current traditional peace operations helped to maintain stability in the conflict zone and to prevent the recurrence of conflicts that have the potential to escalate beyond the confines of a region. Despite the gradual decline in UN peace operations in intra-state conflicts, the current traditional peace operations are still relevant. Karlsrud also observed that because of increased geopolitical competition and the decline in UN multidimensional peacekeeping going out of style, "traditional observer missions deployed to relatively stable conflict situations may become more relevant as possible compromise solutions."³⁹

38 M.K. Bhadrakumar, "US gets a nasty surprise in Ukraine," *Asian Times*, October 27, 2022, https://asiatimes.com/2022/10/us-gets-a-nasty-surprise-in-ukraine/?mc_cid=e7470fdb79&mc_eid=4fd420b35f.

39 John Karlsrud, "UN Peacekeeping Operations in a Multipolar Era," *Global Governance*, Volume 29, 2023, pp. 219-229.

The UN is best suited for preventing disputes and conflicts from arising out of both inter-state and intra-state relationships. Use of preventive diplomacy and deployment, as conflict management tools, is not only limited to UN peace operations under Chapter VI of the Charter of the UN. These can be effectively used in the interplay between inter-state and intra-state conflicts, and while invoking Responsibility to Protect (R2P) under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Ban Ki-moon, in his letter to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, also underlined that the framework for R2P should aim to encourage a preventive rather than a reactive approach.⁴⁰ If it was done that way, R2P action in Libya would possibly not have received bad press. As observed by Ododa Opiyo, preventive diplomacy interventions can provide only breathing space, as they rarely settle the underlying differences that drive conflicts.⁴¹

As for the efficacy of preventive deployment in intra-state conflicts, the model of an observer mission for a post-conflict scenario in Ukraine may not work. The biggest challenge will be to protect civilians when the state itself is complicit in crimes against civilians, as well as to provide protection against armed groups when no peacekeeping mission is deployed, or is withdrawn, as would happen to Mali once the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) exits at the end of 2023.⁴² In this regard, there are proponents

40 United Nations, "UN Secretary General's letter addressed to the Presidents of General Assembly and Security Council," A/70/741-S/2016/71, February 16, 2016.

41 J. Ododa Opiyo, "The challenges of preventive diplomacy: The United Nations' post-Cold War experiences in Africa," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Volume 12, Number 1, 2012, pp. 61-82.

42 Daniel Forti, in his interview with *SRF News*, July 29, 2023, <https://www.srf.ch/news/international/abzug-der-truppen-aus-fuer-uno-blauhelme-in-afrika>.

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who are of the opinion that the UN should seriously consider hiring private security outfits to protect civilians,⁴³ an issue that needs to be discussed and debated separately.

On a positive note, the Ukraine conflict has reignited the international community's consciousness of the need to unfreeze the frozen concept of the Agenda for Peace by using the tools that have been effectively used in some of the so-called frozen conflicts. A lot will depend on the Secretary General's report on the New Agenda for Peace, scheduled to be published some time in 2023. In the interim, it is heartening to note that prevention has found a central place in the Policy Brief for the New Agenda for Peace.⁴⁴

43 Peter W Singer, "Peacekeeper Inc," *Brookings*, June 1, 2003, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/peacekeepers-inc/> and Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, *op. cit.*

44 UN, "Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace", *op. cit.*

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