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Contemporary Challenges and the Role of Japan**

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Peace Support Operations: Contemporary Challenges and the Role of Japan¹

Chiyuki Aoi

The “peace support operations (PSO) doctrine” has developed as a way to manage the complex operations that encompass conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding, thereby enabling long-term solutions to armed conflict and regeneration of war-torn societies through a multi-actor engagement.² As a doctrine, it reflects the way Western nations (primarily NATO member states) have responded, mainly within the framework of UN-mandated missions, to threats to security deriving from the civil wars and other internal disturbances that are now the dominant source of conflict around the world. Understanding the doctrinal perspective of peace support operations today is critical for Japan, particularly given that the country is at a crossroads regarding its future involvement in international peace support and reconstruction operations.

Although the aim of this paper is not to advocate a particular policy position for Japan, the discussion here of recent doctrinal approaches is presented in the hope of

¹ This article is modified from a paper presented at the Fifth Symposium on Canada-Japan Peace and Security Cooperation, Vancouver, 8-9 September 2006. The views expressed here are strictly those of the author and in no way represent those of the Japanese or Canadian governments. The author is Associate Professor of International Politics, Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo.

² A PSO is defined as “an operation that impartially makes use of diplomatic, civil and military means, normally in pursuit of United Nations Charter purposes and principles, to restore or maintain peace. Such operations may include conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and/or humanitarian operations.” This is the NATO and UK definition. Allied Administrative Publication-6 (AAP-6), “NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions,” cited in *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations*, Joint Warfare Publication 3-50 (JWP 3-50), 2nd Edition, June 2004, pp. 1-2.

better informing current efforts by Japan to reassess its legal framework for peace cooperation and reconstruction operations, such as the drafting of a “general law” (*ippanho*) to guide these efforts. In light of PSO requirements, Japan should consider ways to more meaningfully engage in peace support operations, especially given the constraints imposed upon the activities of the Self-Defense Forces (namely the five principles of participation in PKOs and the current restrictive Rules of Engagement, or ROEs). The ongoing discussion about Constitutional revision should also take into account the requirements of peace support operations, although PSO involvement by the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) may not necessarily require revision of the Constitution itself. No matter how the issue of constitutional revision is resolved, issues related to collective self-defense, which relates to alliance relations—currently a preoccupation of many conservatives—should not be allowed to monopolize the debate on Constitutional revision. Peace cooperation or peace support operations do not fall within the realm of collective self defense, as often mistakenly assumed, but are undertaken in support of international peace.

After clarifying the strategic rationale and evolution of the doctrine of peace support operations, this paper will identify the key dilemmas observed in such operations today. I will then examine Japan’s options, in light of the doctrinal discussion and conclude with some practical recommendations for action on the part of Japan in developing peace support mechanisms.

Strategic Rationale for Peace Support

Although major conflicts—the classic forms of warfare between rival great powers—seem a more distant likelihood in the world today, war continues in much greater intensity in other forms: inter-communal violence, insurgency, and terror-based political violence, to name a few. Indeed, there seems no end in sight to war, defined as armed conflicts between political organizations.

During much of the modern era, threats to security were perceived as emanating mainly from external sources, but today threats emerge from *internal* sources. Internal political instability, social unrest, and humanitarian, economic, and environmental situations all have links to international security, directly or indirectly, because of social, economic, and technological changes that have occurred. The post-Cold War practice of the UN Security Council indeed supports such a view. The path-breaking declaration of the Security Council held at the level of Heads of Government in January 1992 (S/23500 (1992)) stated:

The absence of war and military conflict amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security. The non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to peace and security.³

Since then, the UN Security Council has defined a number of internal situations as a “threat to” international peace and security. These included treatment of suspected terrorists (Libya); internal wars and arms transfer (former Yugoslavia, Somalia); humanitarian situations (Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and elsewhere); genocide (Rwanda); the nature of a domestic regime (Haiti); and international terrorism (Afghanistan).

Stability, in short, has become a matter of vital international interest. The international community has a common interest in keeping internal situations within certain boundaries so that political, social, economic, and environmental instabilities do not affect contiguous regions and beyond. Stability further serves as a basis of physical defense of the international community, particularly given the possibility that

³ S/23500 (1992), 31 January 1992.

terrorism and other non-traditional threats may be generated by internal instabilities.

The challenge facing the international community is no longer limited to avoiding major wars or securing borders after wars. The strong international stake in stability drives the need to *(re)build* war-torn societies or unstable regions. The development of Peace Support Operations corresponds to this need, which cannot be met without long-term and multi-actor engagement by the international community.

The Development of Peace Support Operations

Peace support operations (PSO) are a practical invention responding to the security environment prevailing since the end of Cold War. UN and Western experience in dealing with Post-Cold War conflicts, especially in Bosnia, informed reevaluation of traditional approaches to peacekeeping, especially the “trinity” of traditional (or UN) peacekeeping principles, (consent, no use of force—except in self-defense—and neutrality/impartiality). Developed during the Cold War, these principles served the purpose of conflict containment in the Middle East, Kashmir, and elsewhere, where the predominant concern was to prevent the spread or spiraling of regional strife into broader conflicts. These principles proved to have limitations, however, when applied to situations involving strategic fluidity—unstable peace, partial peace agreements, or varied levels of consent—a factor present in most operations since the end of the Cold War.

During the Bosnian conflict (1992-1995), the nascent PSO doctrine, *Wider Peacekeeping*, prescribed a restrictive approach, where consent was taken as a “Rubicon” (or “Mogadishu Line”), a line that divided peacekeeping/wider peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Once that line was crossed, it was considered impossible to regain the consent of the local parties and to ensure the impartiality of the force. This restrictive approach, however, resulted in the loss of credibility of the UN force there and of the supporting NATO presence. Today’s PSO doctrine was developed much as a peace enforcement (PE) construct, designed to fill the “gray

zone” that existed between peacekeeping and war.⁴ Consent is a long-term requirement to achieve a successful mission, but it can no longer be assumed to be a given; rather, consent is a variable that can affect the level of authority of the PSO. Consent is something to be managed and built by a PSO mission through the use of credible force and civilian support activities. The principle of *no use of force* (in Bosnia, this was minimum force) gave way to *minimum force necessary*, including coercive force vis-à-vis “spoilers” of peace,⁵ to defend and accomplish the mission. There is some variation in treatment of the principle of impartiality from one national doctrine to another, but in general, it no longer implies passive inaction in the face of “spoilers” of peace or atrocities against civilians. Rather, it means *proactive impartiality*, implying readiness to take appropriate action in support of peace processes or international humanitarian and human rights law.

Further, corresponding to the need to rebuild, peace support operations now encompass peacebuilding activities. In practice, most PSOs—for example the NATO and EU-led operations in the Balkans (Bosnia and Kosovo) or UN peace operations (such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Timor Leste)—are in fact peacebuilding operations. In PSOs, it is recognized that military forces alone cannot bring about the end-result of the mission, i.e., regeneration of the society. Hence emphasis is put on civilian peacebuilding capabilities and partnership with civilian agencies, and the need has arisen to manage ever-more complex multi-agency relations. In order to better handle the multi-agency aspects of PSOs, most nations that have the capacity to mount PSOs therefore emphasize inter-agency structure and processes that typically involve military, police, foreign affairs, and development affairs offices. Likewise, the UN has created the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office at UN Headquarters to manage the complexities that come with contemporary peacebuilding missions. To enhance coherence in the field between the UN’s humanitarian and development activities and security-peacekeeping activities, the UN has also endorsed

⁴ JWP 3-50, 1st Edition, 1998 and JWP 3-50, 2nd Edition, 2004.

⁵ The term was first defined academically in Stephen John Stedman, “Spoiler Problem in Peace Process,” *International Security* 22:2, Fall 1997, pp. 5-53. It is found also in various UN documents, such as the Brahimi report.

the Integrated Missions model.⁶

In PSOs today, a particular challenge lies in managing the transition from the initial stabilization phase to *self-sustained peace*. Successful transition to self-sustained peace builds upon successful implementation of civilian transition activities, involving the political, security, humanitarian, human rights, and development dimensions. Ultimately, a PSO's nation-building tasks will revive a nation/society's rule of law, education, commerce, humanitarian and health management, information (media) industry, military/defense, economy, and governance, based upon endogenous cultures and values.

For both the credibility of the PSO force and the long-term, multi-agency engagement that is sustained for the duration of nation-building, the mobilization and sustaining power of *political will* is critical to achieve success.

Challenges of Peace Support Operations

The transition from war to self-sustained peace, however, remains particularly difficult. This difficulty derives from the necessity to fill four "gaps" in the process of transition—the stability and reconstruction gap, the mandate/resources gap, the coherence gap, and the technology gap.

The Stability and Reconstruction Gap. First among the challenges is filling the so-called S & R gap ("stability and reconstruction gap") that lies between the initial combat/peace enforcement phase and the stabilization and reconstruction phase.⁷ In an immediate post-conflict situation, security is extremely poor, with few resources to protect civilians and vital infrastructure, as well as to maintain public law and order. In

⁶ Cedric de Coning, "The Future of Peacekeeping in Africa," presented at the conference on "Peacekeeping-Peacebuilding: Preparing for the Future," Helsinki, 29 May 2006. Espen Barth Eide, Anja Terese Kaspersen, Randolph Kent, and Karen von Hippel, "Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations," Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group, May 2005.

⁷ Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, "Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations," Washington, DC., National Defense University Press, 2004.

an environment where the maintenance of security is particularly shaky, introducing civilian nation-building capabilities, especially development agencies at an early stage, is not easy. For example, it is often argued that the S & R gap has widened in Afghanistan and Iraq, as effective maneuver warfare was followed by less effective, poorly planned stability and reconstruction operations. In many PSOs as well, there is a time lag between the initial security intervention that establishes the conditions for PSO deployment and the stability/reconstruction and peacebuilding activities that follow. As in the case of Kosovo after the initial NATO air campaign, local power contenders often seize the opportunity left by this gap to establish parallel security and administrative structures.

Ideally, plans for reconstruction and development should be included at the outset of security intervention planning, but this requires an effective inter-agency planning process as well as inter-agency training and evaluation at all phases—pre-deployment, in-theatre, and post-deployment. If the situation is so precarious that civilian agencies cannot be deployed, the military should be mandated to do reconstruction during a limited period of time, but in such a manner that enables the realization of long-term goals.

Further, during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the rule of law (RoL) is one critical element of a functioning society that is missing, especially if these wars had resulted in the collapse of the government, as happened in Somalia, Liberia, and elsewhere. When societies emerge out of conflict, their rule of law institutions need to be rebuilt, but in many cases, they suffer from lack of adequate legal systems, absence of an impartial and functioning police force, adequate detainment facilities, or experts in legal affairs. Thus, in post-conflict societies, the task of developing RoL institutions is urgent and requires external resources and experts. Especially needed is a functioning police, particularly formed units. Given the likelihood that local police are either non-existent or dysfunctional, the deployment of international police capabilities is often required. International police forces supervise and train the local police forces, and if necessary, take up executive functions, including arrest, search, and detainment. Bringing in RoL experts, especially civilians, at an early stage, however, may be risky

and difficult if security is precarious.

The Mandate/Resources Gap. Another major challenge in peace support operations is filling the gap between the political mandate (the mission's strategic objective) and the resources provided for its achievement. This gap remains particularly in UN PSOs, less, yet still seriously, in U.S.-led, or NATO-led operations. The gaps tend to be pronounced in the following specific areas:

Security. There is continued need for a robust military capability in order to keep and enforce the precarious peace and implement peace agreements. Many post-conflict situations require a continued security presence by outside personnel, as in the cases of the Balkans, West Africa, and East Timor. In some situations, the hardest part is dealing with continuing atrocities, such as the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Darfur. Further, effective conflict prevention often requires a rapid reaction capability, which may be in short supply especially in UN missions. One of the recommendations of the Brahimi report was that the UN needs to be deployed within 30-90 days after a peace agreement to better support the peace process⁸. As part of the effort to realize this recommendation, the UN has established the UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS), covering both military and police personnel, and is assisted by other rapid-reaction mechanisms such as the Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG), led initially by Denmark and currently chaired by Canada. SHIRBRIG, for instance, was instrumental in rendering headquarters support for the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in its initial deployment phase. Rapid response, however, is still a challenge, because the structure of UN mission planning makes it difficult to achieve the goal of deployment within 30-90 days. There is also a need for sophisticated mission support and intelligence capabilities in contemporary PSOs. SHIRBRIG also needs to be expanded to enable it to assist more missions.

⁸ Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

Policing. Inability to meet demands for CIVPOL and formed police units (*gendarmerie*). In some cases, the police represent more than 10 % of the overall force⁹. It often falls on the UN to provide the police, as was the case in Bosnia where NATO forces were initially deployed, but the UN has a constant shortage of police to participate in its Peace Operations. The provision and training of impartial police continues to be especially challenging in the US-led operation in Iraq as well as in Afghanistan, undermining the coalition effort to stabilize these countries.

Sustained support. Development assistance needs to be sustained over a long period of time. Nation-building requires an extended political and financial support over a long-term, well beyond the holding of first formal elections. Institutions, once built, still need to be supported to the point where self-sustained social and economic development is possible. A recent study indicated the UN's weakness in this area, although the UN has done initial institution building fairly effectively.¹⁰ For instance, the UN successfully paved the way for a broadly representative government in Cambodia after organizing the election there. Its limited mandate in terms of time, scope and resources, however, precluded adequate preparations for lasting democracy in that country.

*Regional institutions.*¹¹ One obvious focus of the support needed for regional institutions is Africa. Africa remains the focus of the UN, hosting 8 of 18 UN Peace Operations (of which 6 are complex operations), or 75 percent of 88,000 military, police and civilian UN peacekeepers.¹² Also it is here where the mandate/resources gap is chronic. The unfortunate situation in Darfur, for instance, where the UN has yet to establish a peacekeeping presence and where the African Union force (due in large

⁹ James Dobbins et al., *The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq*, Rand Corporations, 2005.

¹⁰ Dobbins, 2005.

¹¹ See also the recommendations of the Challenges Project in "Meeting the Challenges of Peace Operations: Cooperation and Coordination," *Challenges Project Phase II Concluding Report, 2003-2006*, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2005.

¹² De Coning, 2006.

part to lack of resources) is particularly weak, is not by any means an exception to the general trend. In addition, where peacebuilding efforts are called for, for instance, in West Africa, African institutions lack resources to engage in civilian peacebuilding activities. Therefore, it makes a great deal of sense to invest in strengthening local capacity in Africa, most importantly that of the AU, so that it can develop balanced peace support capabilities, consisting of both robust military and police capabilities as well as limited civilian capabilities so that it can, in coordination with the UN, work out optimal long-term solutions.¹³

To turn to Asia, this region is filled with situations that call for PSO involvement. In places such as Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Mindanao, and more recently Aceh, security intervention or international mediation was followed by PK/monitoring missions, coupled with peacebuilding /development assistance. Although this region lacks an institutionalized PSO capability, there are signs of nascent collaboration taking place among participating states of ASEAN and ARF, involving external actors as well. For instance, in the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) operation in East Timor (1999), some ASEAN nations (Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) took part, a participation made possible by Japan's financial contribution of \$100 million. A notable development has taken place in Aceh recently, where an EU Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM), with the participation of ASEAN countries (Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), as well as Norway and Switzerland, has been deployed since September 2005. The scope of the mission includes monitoring of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR), human rights, legal reform, and political affairs. In Mindanao, an International Monitoring Team, with the participation of Malaysia, Brunei, and Libya, has been deployed, while Japan leads the facilitation of reconstruction and development in the region.

¹³ "Draft Policy Framework for the Civilian Dimension of the African Standby Force" (an AU tentative position paper), Technical Experts Workshop on the Civilian Dimension of the African Standby Force, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, Ghana, 28 August-1 September 2006.

Although there are limitations to the capability of ASEAN and ARF to address regional conflicts, the region would benefit from (a) a stronger capacity for coordinating security interventions and peacekeeping/observer missions, and (b) a capacity for long-term regional peacebuilding, centering on civilian capabilities, so that long-term assistance to democratization, RoL, SSR, and economic liberalization could be facilitated in coordination with the UN.

Achieving Coherence. Despite much focus on civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), civil-military coordination (CMCoord), etc., there are still problems in achieving coherence within a particular mission. Different organizational cultures, preferences, and interests lead to the setting of different priorities. Different operational procedures and tools are often adopted side-by-side without coordination. Also daunting is that in PSOs, many policy objectives must be pursued simultaneously, resulting in considerable gaps in policy coordination. For instance, contradictions and trade-offs are said to exist between political and economic liberalization and stability; justice and peace; local ownership of political processes and multi-ethnic peace, to name a few. These difficulties notwithstanding, ensuring coherence among strategic, operational and tactical-level goals and means is critical to a mission's effectiveness.

*Technology.*¹⁴ Finally, it must be pointed out that there is a significant gap in the technologies being made available for UN Peace Operations. There is a tendency for all PSOs to be short of necessary resources and equipment, but in the case of UN missions, there is a significant gap between the severe security situations in which the UN must now operate and the quality of equipment the organization is able to procure. This technology gap can be observed in the range of weapons and other equipment

¹⁴ I would like to thank Professor Walter Dorn for making this point explicit. See also his contribution to the Fifth Symposium on Canada-Japan Peace and Security Cooperation, Vancouver, 8-9 September 2006. Interviews at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in New York conducted by this author in March 2005 also indicated a prevalent support among them for strengthening technological aspects of UN Peace Operations. Many also singled out technology as an area in which Japan's contribution could make a difference.

(armored personnel carriers [APCs], helicopters, etc.) made available by UN Member States to the peacekeeping missions. Surveillance may be another area where technological investment would make a difference in UN missions. The challenges of managing security today make imperative a fundamental review of technologies available to UN Peace Operations. The effectiveness of UN Peace Operations could be significantly improved if Member States were prepared to assist the UN better in this regard.

Options for Japan

Currently, Japan does not have the capability to provide support for the military-security arm of PSOs, in particular the peace enforcement element, due to the terms of its Constitution. It does, however, have the capability to engage in traditional peacekeeping missions.¹⁵ The choice Japan now faces is therefore whether to develop a full PSO capability, or to rely, as it has done so far, on other countries for the provision of security. If the choice is the former, Japan would engage most typically the maintenance of security in the area of its operations, which would involve limited and selective use of force in self-defense in order to defend and implement the mission mandate. In this case, the preparation Japan needs to take would include: revision of the so-called Five Principles of participation in PKOs¹⁶; preparation of a general law (*ippanho*) on participation in PSOs; and reconsideration of the Rules of Engagement for the Japan Ground SDF (JGSDF), to apply to PSO circumstances. The government may first examine these changes without revising the Constitution.

Even without significant revisions in the laws, however, Japan should be able to contribute more to UN Peace Operations, especially by providing logistical support to UN POs and other PSOs. Japan's option in this case would also include joining the UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) and SHIRBRIG. Both mechanisms support UN operations and allow for member governments to acquire diet or congressional approval before deployment, presenting less of an obstacle for Japan than is typically understood to be the case. Another area where Japan could contribute significantly with some amendment of the laws is the provision of advanced technology, in the area of surveillance for instance, for use in UN Peace Operations. This, however, may require revision or modification in Japan's three-point policy banning arms export.

Regardless of its posture on exercise of military force, Japan could still increase its civilian participation in peace support operations. The recommendations

¹⁵ International Peace Cooperation Law (1992), revised in 1998 and 2001.

¹⁶ These are: existence of a peace agreement; consent of the local parties; impartiality; the freedom of Japan to withdraw whenever it chooses; and minimum use of weapons for self-defense.

contained in the 2002 Report of the Advisory Group on International Cooperation for Peace remain highly relevant. Among the more feasible possibilities for Japan is to increase the number of civilians participating in election monitoring. In addition, humanitarian assistance and election monitoring should be made exempt from the application of the Five Principles of participation in PKOs. Another priority area would be participation by Japan's civilian police in UN Peace Operations. Japan's development assistance in the area of peacebuilding would also need to move from the level of theory and guidelines to implementation. Japan's expertise in infrastructure building should be given more attention in peacebuilding, especially through rapid deployment in the stabilization/post-conflict phase.¹⁷ A change in the institutional culture of civilian agencies has to occur, however, before nascent civil-military cooperation for post-conflict phase assistance can be implemented.

Japan should, in collaboration with interested parties, identify realistic ways to support and strengthen regional capabilities to conduct PSOs in Asia. Region-level or region-UN dialogues there could be facilitated to explore possibilities for regional cooperation in PSO. Further, possibilities for creating a regional PKO/peacebuilding training center have been suggested in some circles. In the context of Africa, Japan's financial and in-kind assistance should target the strengthening of regional PSO institutions, such as the AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD).

Priority Areas of Future Japanese Contribution to PSOs

Strengthening global PSO capabilities should be a priority area for Japan. Priority areas could include:

1. Organizing training of CIVPOL forces, also involving other Asian nations, with a view to strengthening UN Peace Operations;
2. Holding training programs for civilian personnel on PSO affairs (humanitarian relief, human rights, gender issues, legal and political affairs, DDR, mission planning and

¹⁷ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has conducted reconstruction projects in the post-conflict phase in places such as Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan (Kandahar), where JICA arrived even before/without the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).

support, electoral affairs, civil affairs) to strengthen region-level PSO capability in Asia;

3. Identifying areas where Japan's development assistance can more effectively support conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. Priority should go, for instance, to support of recovery in Afghanistan;

4. Working out ways to strengthen UN rapid reaction capabilities by strengthening existing mechanisms, such as UNSAS and SHIRBRIG;

5. Identifying which advanced technologies are helpful for use in UN Peace Operations that Japan can feasibly provide; and

6. Working out ways to support African PSO capabilities, via political, financial and in-kind support—with special emphasis on immediate PSO needs of Africa (e.g., financial support for the AU Peace Support Operations Division [PSOD], and helping to develop the planning, logistics, and civilian arms of AU PSOs).