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**CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE CONGO  
1960-1964**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper looks at the first UN mission to the Congo (ONUC 1960-1964) to identify several relevant conflict resolution lessons that can be applied to the present UN mission (MONUC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It describes and compares contemporary conflict resolution theory and military doctrine as it applies to peace support operations. Based on the fundamentals and principles identified, the author then assesses the results of the ONUC mission and determines that ONUC missed several opportunities to help resolve the conflict. ONUC, which lacked a clear and transparent mandate, became partial in its dealings with the conflict parties. Its legitimacy was challenged repeatedly and therefore its role as an effective

third party mediator was compromised. It did however successfully experiment with peace enforcement (coercion), though in a haphazard way. The paper states the need to prosecute the conflict resolution effort on a multi-track basis using a multidimensional approach grounded on positive and negative inducements. Military intervention to stop violence cannot be seen as the ultimate solution but only as one component of the multidimensional approach. The military force creates the requisite security space to facilitate the actions of others. The paper concludes that MONUC as presently mandated and structured risks the same experience and failure.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE CONGO 1960-1964**

“In war, soldiers are sent to defeat an enemy. In peace operations, soldiers are sent to defeat a conflict.”<sup>1</sup>

In its fiftieth year of peacekeeping, the United Nations is once again faced with the challenge of trying to bring international peace and security to a country that is in the throes of a costly civil war. The UN first deployed forces to the Congo in 1960 to help restore order following its independence from Belgian colonial rule. The operation known as ONUC, after its French acronym, lasted for four years and created much controversy. Today the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is seeking UN assistance in resolving its current problems. The UN mission known as MONUC, also after its French acronym, is presently trying

to establish the conditions for the deployment of peacekeeping troops to the war torn area.

Richard C. Holbrooke, the US representative to the UN, told the UN that the Congo operation might be the UN's last chance to prove it can get peacekeeping right.<sup>2</sup> As there are many parallels between the current situation in the Congo and the one forty years ago, it is timely and appropriate to examine the ONUC operation to determine whether any relevant conflict resolution lessons can be learned.

## **Thesis**

This paper will argue that based on contemporary conflict resolution theory ONUC missed several opportunities to resolve the conflict. To prove the thesis the paper will review conflict resolution theory as it applies to third parties including military forces, identify several key peacekeeping principles and fundamentals, and then through the ONUC case study examine the latter's application to determine opportunities seized and missed during the mission. Parallels to the MONUC mission will be identified.

## **Definitions**

Modern peace support operations as defined by the UN and embodied in Canadian doctrine consist of five categories: preventative diplomacy; peacemaking; peace enforcement; peacekeeping; and peacebuilding.<sup>3</sup> Humanitarian relief operations may be conducted independently or as part of a peace support operation.<sup>4</sup> As will be discussed further in the paper, military forces play a role in each of the latter though by far the most difficult contribution is

during peace enforcement and peacekeeping operations. Peace enforcement operations are coercive operations undertaken under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and are conducted when the belligerent parties may not consent to intervention. They are designed to maintain, restore or enforce the terms specified in the mandate.<sup>5</sup> Peacekeeping operations are undertaken under Chapter VI of the UN Charter and are conducted with the consent of all major parties to a conflict to monitor and control implementation of a peace agreement.<sup>6</sup> ONUC's military peacekeeping and peace enforcement roles during the conflict escalation and de-escalation stages is the primary focus of the paper.

### **Conflict Resolution Theory**

Conflict resolution as a research discipline and peacekeeping as a recognized international peace activity share a common interest in understanding the theory behind the resolution of contemporary conflict. Both fields saw their genesis in the mid 1950s and evolved relatively independently through to the last decade.<sup>7</sup> Recently, however, the need to link conflict resolution theory to peace support operations has resulted in the publication of several new textbooks and articles by conflict resolution theorists and peacekeeping practitioners. This has lead to the start of a better understanding of the role each play in modern conflicts.

Broadly speaking, conflict resolution can be defined, “as a marked reduction in social conflict as a result of a conscious settlement of issues in dispute.”<sup>8</sup> More specifically, as it applies to contemporary armed conflict, conflict resolution implies, “that the deep-rooted sources of the conflict are addressed and that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer

hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed.”<sup>9</sup> These two definitions clearly reveal that conflict resolution is a complicated process that cannot be accomplished quickly when it concerns protracted social conflicts as defined by Edward Azar in his seminal work, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases* (1990)<sup>10</sup>.

Edward Azar’s theory of protracted social conflict (PSC) evolved from his interest in the fact that the majority of post 1945 conflicts have been intrastate vice interstate. He argued that most theorists were basing their arguments on the Clausewitzian interstate notion of war and therefore were not focusing on the causes, effects and international implications of ethnic and other forms of communal conflict.<sup>11</sup> Specifically the absence of violence within a conflict was associated with a state of peace. Azar wrote that this concept ignored covert, latent or non-violent conflict and therefore was too simplistic to be applied to contemporary intrastate situations. He concluded that: “many conflicts currently active in the underdeveloped parts of the world are characterized by a blurred demarcation between internal and external sources and actors. Moreover, there are multiple causal factors and dynamics, reflected in changing goals, actors and targets. Finally these targets do not show clear starting and terminating points.”<sup>12</sup> He determined that the source of PSC was based on four variables or preconditions: communal content, that is the various identity groups based on religion, race, ethnicity etc within a state; grievances resulting from needs deprivation be they political, economic, developmental or social; governance, usually characterized by incompetent and authoritative regimes; and the role of international linkages used to exploit mainly political-economic relations.<sup>13</sup>

Whether the preconditions turn into overt conflict is dependent upon the “process dynamics” at play. Azar believes that there are three key determinants: communal actions and strategies; state actions and strategies; and the built-in mechanisms of conflict.<sup>14</sup> For example, once an identity group is established and mobilized by a leader it will develop strategies and tactics to advance its political agenda for change. The governing individuals and elites will choose theoretically from an array of options to meet the challenge posed by the identity group. In most cases of intrastate conflict the solution chosen is repression vice accommodation based on a winner take all mentality. Once the conflict turns violent, violence breeds violence leading to a downward spiral which can in many case only be stopped by the intervention of a third party, by exhaustion on the part of the parties to the conflict, or by determination of a winner.

To resolve any conflict, the set of available approaches that can be applied include coercion, mediation, arbitration, negotiation, and adjudication.<sup>15</sup> Traditionally it was believed that the latter two methods were not effective in PSC as they involved the state (adjudication),

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sticks.”<sup>16</sup> Track III is comprised of “peace constituencies within the conflict” who attempt to resolve the conflict through negotiation and grass root efforts.<sup>17</sup>

As Maill et al conclude; “Conflict resolution does not prescribe specific solutions or end goals for society, beyond a commitment to the core assumption that aggressive win-lose styles of engagement in violent conflict usually incur costs that are not only unacceptably high for the conflict parties, but also for world society in general. This does not mean endorsing the status-quo, since unjust and oppressive systems are seen as some of the chief sources of violence and war.”<sup>18</sup> Conflict *per se* is an integral part of human relations and it cannot be entirely eliminated or controlled. The ultimate aim is to transform the violent expression of conflict in to one expressed through non-violent means.<sup>19</sup>

### **Conflict Resolution Theory and Peace Support Operations**

The relationship between conflict resolution theory and the conduct of peace support operations has evolved significantly since the classical Hammarskjold/Pearson peacekeeping principles were articulated in the 1950s. At that time peacekeeping was based on the impartial, non-forcible deployment to a conflict area with the consent of the conflict parties. The aim was to ensure international peace and stability in the conflict area while the parties themselves or through intermediaries resolved the underlying cause of the conflict. However today it is agreed that there is a role for military forces throughout the complete spectrum of conflict resolution. Betts Fetherston suggests three roles for peacekeepers as a third party to a conflict: “First is the role of conflict control which provides the base level of activity of peacekeeping preceding the



application of either of the two other roles. Second is the facilitation of an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and settlement, and in the long-term movement toward resolution. Third is the facilitation of an actual settlement and resolution process.”<sup>20</sup>

Kumar Rupesinghe, the Secretary General of International Alert, believes the military has a role throughout the complete spectrum. With reference to Michael Lund’s book, *Preventing and Mitigating Violent Conflicts: A Guide for Practitioners*, he argues that the complexity of modern PSC may result in military forces being employed as pre-emptive forces prior to the outbreak of violence. During crisis situations prior to open hostilities, they can also be used to help reduce tensions and ultimately, should war breakout, military forces can be used to enforce a peace. They then transfer to the traditional roles during the period of conflict termination and the subsequent peace-building period.<sup>21</sup>

Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, recognized the need to evolve towards a multidisciplinary approach to peacekeeping. “The United Nations must face challenges which do not fit into a neat peacekeeping package: the volatile so called “grey area” operations. If consent carries with it certain rewards, and the failure to consent carries certain costs, this obviously affects the decision as to whether or not consent will be granted.”<sup>22</sup> The force structure must therefore be capable of “inducing consent” through positive incentives or inducements to provide reward and through “coercive inducements” to stop violence. To be effective in coercive inducement operations, the deployed force must have the mandate and capacity to conduct the necessary offensive operations. Annan went on to say that positive inducement includes “civic action”, traditionally used by military forces to win the hearts and

minds of the population, and “peace incentives” designed to further the reconciliation process toward a durable and lasting peace.<sup>23</sup> To employ the latter effectively the combined military/civilian peace support force requires an understanding of the people’s problems in all of their complexity.

David Last’s examination of the linkages between conflict resolution theory and the conduct of peace support operations concluded that conflict de-escalation moves through five stages: “First, the fighting must be stopped, usually entailing separation of combatants. Second, the combatants must be pushed towards settling their disputes non-violently. Third, trust and confidence must be established to permit resolution. Fourth, the conflict is resolved (hopefully). Finally, the conditions which gave rise to the conflict are altered to prevent reversion to violence.”<sup>24</sup> To move violent conflict toward peaceful resolution requires military forces to develop contact skills in addition to combat skills. Contact skills, including professional consultation, mediation, problem solving workshops etc which all contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence, are a necessary prerequisite to de-escalate tensions between belligerents.<sup>25</sup>

In summary the military force creates the security space necessary to facilitate the multi-track conflict resolution activities of others. However it can contribute to the resolution process through a combination of positive and coercive inducements that must be carefully balanced to ensure the force retains its position as an effective third party actor. If peace support forces are to truly contribute to the resolution process they must do more than just end the violence. They must develop their “contact skills” and their understanding of the nature of the

conflict in question to ensure actions contribute to de-escalating the violence and moving toward ultimate resolution.

## **Peace Support Operations - Principles and Fundamentals**

The principles and fundamentals for effective peace support operations are articulated in various military doctrine publications. They have been developed since 1949 based on the peace support experiences in various regions of the world. Let us compare them with the principles espoused in the theory in the context of the previous discussion. The focus here will be on coercion and mediation as they play the principle role when it comes to military third party intervention.

### **Coercion**

To begin, this paper does not argue that coercion will resolve the conflict, as it does not address the conflict's root causes. The discussion of coercion is presented in response to its role in actually stopping violence at a given point in time and space.

When the threat or use of force is contemplated research has demonstrated that the following four factors should be considered. First, sufficient force must be available to influence the parties ie the force capability. Second, the belligerents must believe that the force will be used. The threat of its use must be credible. Third, the application of force must be relevant in actually affecting the interests and decision-making processes of the other side. Fourth, the use of

force must be legitimate in the eyes of those involved. Based on the latter it is generally understood that force can serve to dictate a temporary resolution to permit other activities to occur.<sup>26</sup>

## **Mediation**

Mediation is the use of “a third party to help the conflicting parties come to a mutually satisfactory agreement.”<sup>27</sup> Wehr and Lederach in their research on mediation found that; “the assurance of neutrality in mediation creates the necessary perception of mediator legitimacy, professionalism, and fairness... the third party is not connected to either disputant, is not biased toward either side, has no investment in any outcome except settlement, and does not expect any special reward from either side.”<sup>28</sup> Due to the complexity of international mediation, neutrality can be interpreted as; “even-handedness, or even balance...as balanced partiality...In fact, in some cases mediator connectedness and bias prove to facilitate settlement.”<sup>29</sup> As the latter notion challenges the concept of impartiality, mediator legitimacy and credibility must be reinforced.

## **Doctrinal Principles**

How has the military embraced the concepts presented in the previous paragraphs and sections? A review of Table 1 taken from Last, reveals that present doctrine in most cases is using the words associated with conflict resolution. The focus is on credibility, impartiality, legitimacy, minimum force, mutual respect etc which are all essential to playing a role as a third party.

Table 1 Principles of Peacekeeping<sup>30</sup>

UN	Nordic	UK	Canadian	US
consent and cooperation of the parties	host government authority	consent	mutual consent of belligerents	legitimacy
impartiality	impartiality	impartiality	impartiality	unity of effort
minimum force (self defence only)	avoid use of force	minimum force	force as a last resort	restraint
clear mandate	clarity of intentions	transparency	clear and enforceable mandate	maintain objective
support of international community	firmness	legitimacy	freedom of action and movement	security
freedom of movement	anticipation	credibility	attainable political settlement	perseverance
international composition	integration	mutual respect	mutual respect	
under UN command			negotiations	
			empathy	

UK doctrine, which is the most recently published work, endorses the nurturing and building of consent through six techniques related to: negotiation and mediation; liaison; civilian affairs; community information; public information; and community relations. The objective is,

“to reduce rumour, uncertainty and prejudice on the one hand, and to foster trust and stability in the area of conflict and positive perceptions of the role of peacekeepers and the nature of the peace process on the other.”<sup>31</sup> In response to Annan’s call for coercive inducements the UK advocates for greater use of force with impartiality being the dominant determinant distinguishing forcible peacekeeping from war.<sup>32</sup>

Last also responds to Annan by arguing that “at the operational level, the military arm of third party intervention, represented by the force commander and the civilian arm represented by the SRSB must co-operate in the following tasks: separation of combatant forces, without severing communications; bringing the parties together; building trust and confidence; problem solving and reconciliation; and post-conflict resolution.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally Fishel in his book *Savage Wars of Peace* argues that the seven dimensions of peace operations as defined by a US Operations research group provide for a new paradigm of peace. The dimensions are: unity of effort, legitimacy, support to belligerents, support actions of peace forces, military actions of belligerents and peace forces, and actions targeted on ending conflict.<sup>34</sup> This paper does not permit a detailed discussion of the dimensions but, rather, the reader should note that the variables that make up each dimension embody many conflict resolution ideas such as impartiality, credibility, legitimacy, minimum force etc. For more details the reader is referred to Fishel’s book.

It is apparent from this cursory review that the fundamentals and principles espoused in military doctrine reflect those of conflict resolution theory. The practical application at the

operational and tactical level is at the rudimentary stage but the need is widely recognized in the literature. Now let's turn to an example to examine the theory in practice.

### **Case Study ONUC**

The ONUC operation is extensively described in a variety of memoirs, histories and biographies. For a concise description the reader is referred to *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* by William J. Durch.

The paper will review several key events to assess ONUC's use of mediation and coercion. The application of contemporary theories and solutions to a 40-year-old Congo operation should reveal whether the principles and fundamentals developed by modern theorists and practitioners ring true. The reader must note that the UN was learning by a process of trial and error throughout the evolution of the mission. ONUC and the UN leadership were conditioned by two previous deployments. The first operation was the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) which oversaw the truce that followed the end of the first Arab Israeli war in 1948 and established the UN in the business of monitoring cease-fires. The second was the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) that maintained a buffer zone in the Gaza Strip and Sinai to ensure freedom of movement through the Suez Canal. Again it was principally a monitoring role with the support of all interstate actors. ONUC was first major deployment to an intrastate war zone with all of its complexities.

## **Mediation**

Several developments early on in the mission compromised ONUC's ability to mediate effectively. To begin the UN force began deploying to the Congo without a military force commander. Major-General Von Horn, the Swedish Chief of Staff of UNTSO was appointed Commander on 13 July 1960 but he did not arrive in the Congo until the 18<sup>th</sup>. As Ghanaian and Tunisian units had arrived by 16 July, General Alexander, a seconded British officer serving as Chief of Staff of the Ghanaian Army, assumed the role of temporary force commander. In this capacity he made an agreement with General Gheysen, commander of the Belgian metropolitan forces in the Congo and General Mpolo acting Chief of Staff of the ANC to peacefully disarm the ANC to help restore law and order. This action resulted in an immediate UN loss of credibility and charges of partiality levelled at Ralph Bunche, the SRSG in Leopoldville.

The Congolese began to see the UN force as just another colonial force repeating the same actions as their previous Belgian rulers. A few days prior to the attempt to disarm the ANC in Leopoldville, Belgian paratroopers in Katanga had disarmed ANC soldiers loyal to the central government. Consequently the actions of the white General Alexander later supported by Von Horn led to "the first serious split between the Congolese and the UN."<sup>35</sup> Recognizing the consequences of disarming the ANC, Bunche later ordered the weapons returned.

The second serious incident occurred when President Kasavubu dismissed Prime Minister Lumumba on 5 September 1960 initiating the 13-month constitutional crisis in the country. ONUC under the leadership of Andrew Cordier, the interim special representative, clearly took



sides when, following the dismissal of Lumumba, UN troops closed the airports and radio station in the name of maintaining law and order. This action deprived Lumumba, a leftist leader, of the ability to communicate while Kasavubu was able to use the radio station in the neighbouring state of Congo (Brazzaville). The closure of the airport prevented Lumumbist supporters from flying into the capital on Soviet transport planes.<sup>36</sup> Lumumba argued convincingly in parliament “that the country was not really free if arms, airports, and radio facilities were controlled by the UN. How could the UN justify this interference if it refused to liberate Katanga?”<sup>37</sup> Carole Collins wrote that the UN actions taken to ostensibly preserve the peace were for an international audience only and not for the Congolese. The Cordier decisions resulted in the further erosion of UN credibility and leverage over the Lumumbist forces and contributed to further unrest.<sup>38</sup> Later in November when Lumumba was arrested by the ANC while he was enroute to Stanleyville, ONUC was severely criticized for not preventing his arrest or intervening following it. Several nations withdrew their contingents in protest.<sup>39</sup> Lumumba was to later die in the hands of his captors.

Another incident that impaired ONUC’s ability to mediate was the lack of understanding of the mission’s intent by the central government. Resolution 145, which was passed on 22 July 1960, attempted to remove some of the ambiguity of the previous resolution. It noted that restoring law and order, “would effectively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security” and it called upon Belgium to withdraw its troops “speedily” and authorized the SG to take “all necessary action to this effect.”<sup>40</sup> In the eyes of Kasavubu and Lumumba, the UN was clearly in direct support of the government and therefore should have moved quickly to end the Katangan secession. Hammarskjöld’s policy of non-interference however did not permit UN

troops to interfere in the internal affairs of the Congo. This misunderstanding led the Congolese government to seek support from other third parties such as the USSR for the equipment necessary to prosecute operations against the secessionists.<sup>41</sup>

On the positive side ONUC worked tirelessly trying to mediate a solution to the constitutional crisis. After dealing for seven weeks with Col Mobutu, who had seized control of parliament from Lumumba and put in place the Council of Commissioners in support of Kasavubu, with Antoine Gizenga who led the Lumumbist “government” in Stanleyville, and with the two secessionists Tshombe and Albert Kalonji in Katanga and South Kasai respectively, the UN’s Conciliation Commission of the Advisory Council on the Congo concluded that the only hope for an end to the impasse was the formation of a national unity government between Leopoldville and Stanleyville. This was finally achieved on 2 August 1961 when a new central government headed up by Cyril Adoula and backed by all local actors less Tshombe was formed.

Based on the previous discussion of mediation and contemporary conflict resolution theory it is apparent that ONUC was only partially successful in acting as a third party mediator. Based on the UN’s desire to avoid superpower conflict at all costs Congolese interests took second place. ONUC’s pro-western orientation reflected in support for Kasavubu and ultimately Mobutu discounted Lumumba’s legitimacy and sincerity. No attempt was made to mediate a solution between Lumumba and Kasavubu during the early stages of the government crisis. Collins argues that the UN performed the mechanics of mediation such as facilitating communication and formulating solutions but its predominant mediating style was one of manipulation in support of its own agenda.<sup>42</sup> The UN military force contributed to this effort by

conducting operations that contributed to a loss of legitimacy and impartiality. On the positive side its mediation efforts did lead to a unity government that eventually provided some stability as the UN focused on the secession in Katanga.

## **Coercion**

In support of the UN mandate Hammarskjöld believed that the principles for the use of force as applied in Suez should be used in the Congo. The UN forces were to have freedom of movement throughout the country, force was to be used only in self-defence, and it was not to be initiated by UN troops.<sup>43</sup> In support of this policy the force that deployed to the Congo consisted of combat battalions lightly equipped with automatic rifles. Unfortunately, the UN's determination not to use force was perceived by the Congolese, who were used to their previous Belgian masters, as weakness and within less than a month the Congolese lost respect for the UN force.<sup>44</sup> Later under pressure from nations the guidelines were modified to show greater resolve.

In February 1961 the Security Council passed resolution 161 authorizing the use of force to prevent civil war in that the UN was to take, "all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including arrangements for cease fires, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort."<sup>45</sup> Later in November resolution 169 was passed calling upon the SG to take energetic steps, "including the use of the requisite measure of force, if necessary, for the immediate apprehension, detention pending legal action and/or deportation of all foreign military and paramilitary personnel and political advisors not under the UN command and mercenaries..."<sup>46</sup>

The most dramatic example of coercion was the UN attempt to end the secession in Katanga. As noted previously, by the summer of 1961, the UN had been able to form a fragile unity government and could now focus its attention on the secession by Tshombe. The UN launched Operation Morthor on 13 September 1961 with approximately 6,800 UN troops against eight to ten thousand indigenous Katanganese gendarmerie led by 100 mercenaries. Due to the introduction of air power by the secessionists and the encirclement of UN troops in Jadotville a cease-fire was eventually signed on 20 September. The latter was a significant blow to UN prestige as it was interpreted as a major victory for the Katanganese. Due to this setback resolution 169, discussed previously, was passed.

Following the passing of Resolution 169 attacks on ONUC personnel in Katanga increased. UN troop strengths in the province were increased to 8,450 to include UN fighter and bomber aircraft. Military action was now designed, “to regain and assure UN freedom of movement, restore law and order, and to ensure that for the future the UN forces and officials in Katanga are not subjected to such attacks.”<sup>47</sup> Military operations commenced again and on 20 December Tshombe sued for peace by recognizing the central government’s control of Katanga. However over the following 12 months it became clear that Tshombe had no intention of following the terms of the agreement. Eventually after several attacks by Katanganese gendarmerie forces on the UN, Operation Grandslam was launched on 28 December 1962 to restore freedom of movement. This operation included eight battalions controlled by two brigade headquarters, several independent battalions, and modern weaponry such as mortars, 106 recoilless rifles and armoured cars. The force totalled 13,500 soldiers. By mid January 1963 the

UN forces controlled all of the important centres within Katanga, the gendarmerie ceased to exist as a fighting force, and Tshombe conceded defeat.<sup>48</sup> The UN force by establishing freedom of movement and by responding forcefully ended the secession.

The UN force was unable to coerce Katanga into providing freedom of movement or indeed ending its secession until it had the capability and credibility to apply force meaningfully. “In any peace operation when consent is lacking or marginal, the correlation of force must be considered as one of the primary considerations of analysis – the stronger force is apt to have its way in the end.”<sup>49</sup> Not only were more troops allocated to Op Grandslam but also they were organized into brigades as opposed to individual battalions enhancing their effectiveness.<sup>50</sup> As Last so correctly states, “when consent is limited and conditional, peace forces should be prepared to go big or stay home.”<sup>51</sup>

## **Summary**

In comparison with contemporary conflict resolution theory the ONUC mission failed to come close to resolving the conflict. To begin, the military was unable to create the requisite security space early enough to permit the build up of trust and respect between the parties. Consequently it spent most of its time trying to prevent or stop the outbreak of violence between the various factions, tribes, secessionists, and the unruly ANC. Had the mission deployed with the appropriate force structure it would have been able to establish law and order in the Congo and particularly within Katanga much sooner with less loss of life. A stronger and more capable force would have gained the respect of the ANC thereby reducing tensions. Perhaps it may have

been able to train and re-organize the ANC as it was mandated to do. The ANC proved to be one of the major structural barriers in moving toward conflict resolution. Fortunately the security space that was created permitted over 1000 UN civilians to conduct civic action activities designed to prevent the further deterioration of state structures and to enhance the capabilities of state governance. However these efforts were in vain as the UN left the Congo shortly following the fall of Katanga as the operation was breaking the institution financially and the operation no longer had a constituency of support. Consequently, ONUC was never able to move toward a long-term resolution that one could argue would have involved the establishment of appropriate state structures and forms of governance.

ONUC failed to act in an impartial and neutral manner as a third party mediator. By taking sides with a pro-western viewpoint it overtly supported one party to the conflict. Its legitimacy was lost particularly following the death of Lumumba who had a large and strong following in the Congo. In light of the bi-polar cold war environment and the consequent influence of external actors this conclusion is not surprising. The major powers pushed their agendas and in the end western influence carried the day. The latter reinforces the need to understand the actors, external and internal, to a conflict to address effectively the root causes of the conflict.

## **MONUC**

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, formally Zaire) is very similar to the one in 1960 less the cold war paradigm. “Thus far, all diplomatic efforts to

end what has been described as Africa's First World War have not shown results, while the humanitarian crisis in the DRC remains one of the worst in the world... six national armies from the region and at least three rebel groups make up the cocktail of fighting forces that has torn apart the DRC for more than two years." A peace accord signed in Zambia that had envisaged a ceasefire followed by a political reconciliation process never got off the ground.<sup>52</sup>

## **Commentary**

The parallels between MONUC and ONUC are substantial, noteworthy and similar: a divided country, a variety of external and internal actors, autocratic and dictatorial leaders and governments, a request by the Congolese government for UN support to restore territorial integrity and to remove foreign troops from the country, no freedom of movement, and ambiguity over the UN's role as a third party. Based on the ONUC experience and our present understanding of conflict resolution theory what should the UN do?

The question is not an easy one to answer but the following is suggested. First, as the problem clearly has a social, economic and political dimension the UN must ensure that it understands completely the complexity of the problem prior to deploying into the area. The linkages between the various factions, countries and commercial concerns must be thoroughly examined to ensure an overall resolution approach can be developed with all stakeholders. Second, a strong, verifiable, and tangible commitment is required from the central government to ensure that the UN has freedom of movement, its actions are not subject to government manipulation and propaganda, and there is a sincere desire to change the structural problems

within the country. The mission must be seen as the start of the long road to change leading to free elections and sustainable and responsible government. Third, should peacekeepers deploy to enforce peace and/or respond to a humanitarian crisis they must deploy in significant numbers (25-30,000) with the appropriate command structure, mandate and capability to coerce effectively as required. The build up must be quick and involve countries that are legitimate and impartial in the eyes of the conflict parties. Without the latter prerequisites, the spiral of violence will only continue and the UN will become just another participant within a costly conflict.

## **Conclusion**

Military leaders at the strategic and operational level must be aware of the fundamental need to build trust and confidence amongst the conflict participants. Their impartial and legitimate actions must contribute to the overall requirement to address the conditions that gave rise to the violent conflict in the first place. The ONUC operation, which lacked a clear and transparent mandate, became partial in its dealings with the conflict parties. Its legitimacy was challenged repeatedly and therefore its role as an effective third party mediator was compromised. It did however successfully experiment with peace enforcement (coercion), though in a haphazard way. The violence was eventually controlled in the Congo but the autocratic, dictatorial system of governance remained leading to continued friction caused by individuals seeking power at the expense of the people. Shortly after ONUC's departure the country returned to violent civil war. ONUC had missed several opportunities to resolve the conflict. MONUC as it is presently mandated and structured risks the same experience and failure.



Conflict resolution theory and practice will be challenged as economic, ethnic, environmental, population, and religious pressures build in the future. Fortunately, both the theorists and practitioners recognize the need to prosecute the resolution effort on a multi-track basis using a multidimensional approach grounded on positive and negative inducements. Resolving and accommodating the underlying cause of a conflict is critical to its resolution and, consequently, military intervention to stop the violence cannot be seen as the ultimate solution but only as one component of the multidimensional approach. The military forces create the requisite security space to facilitate the actions of others.

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<sup>1</sup> David Last, Theory, Doctrine, and Practice of Conflict De-escalation in Peacekeeping Operations (Clemensport: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1997) 1.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Crossette, "UN Faces Big Challenge in Any Congo Peacekeeping Mission," New York Times 31 Jan 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Canada, Dept. of National Defence, Canadian Forces Doctrine BGG005004/AF000 Operations, (Ottawa: DND, 10 Feb 2000) 10-1.

<sup>4</sup> CF Operations 10-4.

<sup>5</sup> JWP 3-01 p Glossary-3.

<sup>6</sup> JWP 3-01 p Glossary -4.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Ryan, "United Nations Peacekeeping: A Matter of Principles?" International Peacekeeping Vol 7, No. 1 (2000): 32.

<sup>8</sup> James A. Schellenberg, Conflict Resolution Theory, Research, and Practice (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) 9.

<sup>9</sup> Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, Contemporary Conflict Resolution (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) 21.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Miall, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse 68.

<sup>11</sup> Miall, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse 68.

<sup>12</sup> Miall 72.

<sup>13</sup> Miall 74.

<sup>14</sup> Miall 75.

<sup>15</sup> Schellenberg 13.

<sup>16</sup> Maill 12.

<sup>17</sup> Maill 19.

<sup>18</sup> Miall 63.

<sup>19</sup> Kumar Rupesinghe, Civil Wars, Civil Peace: An Introduction to Conflict Resolution (London: Pluto Press, 1998) 3.

<sup>20</sup> B. Fetherston, Toward a Theory of United Nations Peacekeeping, (London: St Martins Press, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Kumar Rupesinghe 87-92.

<sup>22</sup> Kofi Annan, "Peace operations and the United Nations: Preparing for the Next Century," Conflict Resolution Monitor, Issue 1, Summer 1997, 27-8.

<sup>23</sup> Annan 28.

<sup>24</sup> David Last 25.

<sup>25</sup> John Fishel, ed., The Savage Wars of Peace (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998) 233.

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- <sup>26</sup> Schellenberg 134.  
<sup>27</sup> Schellenberg 13.  
<sup>28</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, ed., Resolving International Conflicts – The Theory and Practice of Mediation (London: Lynne Reimer, 1996) 57.  
<sup>29</sup> Ibid 58.  
<sup>30</sup> Fishel 212.  
<sup>31</sup> Miall 142.  
<sup>32</sup> Miall 142.  
<sup>33</sup> Last 38.  
<sup>34</sup> Fishel 9.  
<sup>35</sup> Indar Jit Rikhye, Military Advisor to the Secretary-General UN Peacekeeping and the Congo Crisis (London: Hurst and Company, 1993) 52.  
<sup>36</sup> Barbara Benton, ed., Soldiers for Peace (New York: Facts on File, 1996) 107.  
<sup>37</sup> Carole Collins, “The Cold War Comes to Africa: Cordier and the 1960 Congo Crisis,” Journal of International Affairs, 47, Vol 1, Summer 1993, 261.  
<sup>38</sup> Collins 261.  
<sup>39</sup> Jane Boulden, The United Nations and Mandate Enforcement Congo, Somalia, and Bosnia (Kingston: Queen’s University, 1999) 31.  
<sup>40</sup> Boulden 28.  
<sup>41</sup> Fishel 80.  
<sup>42</sup> Collins 265.  
<sup>43</sup> Boulden 34.  
<sup>44</sup> Rikhye 101.  
<sup>45</sup> Boulden 31.  
<sup>46</sup> Boulden 32.  
<sup>47</sup> Boulden 39.  
<sup>48</sup> Benton 117.  
<sup>49</sup> Fishel 84.  
<sup>50</sup> Fishel 232.  
<sup>51</sup> Fishel 231.  
<sup>52</sup> Steven Edwards, “Congo War Leaves 16 million Destitute UN Observers Powerless,” National Post 30 November 2000.

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