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**MEXICO AND UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS:
A PENDING COMMITMENT, THE SHIELD AND THE SWORD**

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JCSP 40

Exercise Solo Flight

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STATE SECURITY AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

State Security includes the preservation of territory, values, development, and the quality of life of their population¹. To achieve this vital condition states have to identify possible risk or threats that could affect this condition and jeopardize the life of the state as a whole. These risks may come from inside or from abroad; then the state is in the need to interact with other states and established agreements, alliances, or institutions to provide and ensure the security condition. This situation gives rise to new theories regarding the security of the states in an international context as *collective security*, which refers to collective action in response to a collective identified threat².

The United Nations (UN) is probably the most important international institutions established by the states as an attempt to seek and keep international peace and security. The UN involves and listens to the voices and opinions of all member nations³. At the same time, to meet with this world responsibility, the UN has developed several internal mechanisms. One of these is the peacekeeping operations, which refers a model of action that is based on the international system of collective security. From 1948 to 2013, the UN has established a total of 69 peacekeeping operations around the world⁴, and has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries

¹Orakhelashvili, Alexander. *Collective security* (Oxford University Press, Inc. New York, 2011), 5.

²Ibid., 6.

³Ibid., 20.

⁴United nations, web page, list of peacekeeping operations 1948-2013, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf>, last visited 4/19/2014

navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace⁵. To successfully conduct these activities, the UN requires different capacities for implementation that only come from the contribution of Member States. Military contributions continues to be the most difficult to coordinate, because the UN does not have its own military force and it is a temporarily loan from its Member States⁶. Sometimes it is difficulty for Member States to contribute troops to the UN due to restrictiveness of the constitutional mandates of each state; such is the case of Mexico.

Since Mexico signed the UN charter in 1945, it declared that it will not contribute whit troops for peacekeeping operations, because these kinds of operations are contradictory to the Mexican's foreign policies principles⁷. However Mexico has played an important role in such operations by funding them and placing itself as the ninth largest contributor spending around \$32M dollars annually⁸. On the other hand Mexico has been part of the UN Security Council non-permanent member on four times: 1946, 1980-81, 2002-03 and 2009-10⁹. During these periods, Mexico has participated in the discussion, design, evaluation and even implementation of peacekeeping operations. Such participations has left Mexico in a paradigm, as was viewed during the

⁵United Nations, web page, peacekeeping operations
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peacekeeping.shtml>, last visited, 4/24/2014.

⁶María Cristina Rosas, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 68.

⁷Ibid., 80.

⁸Ibid.82.

⁹United Nations web page, Security Council, states no permanent members,
<http://www.un.org/es/sc/members/elected.asp> last visited 4/19/2014.

commemoration of the international day of UN Peacekeepers in 2010, when the resident coordinator of the UN system in Mexico, Magdy Martinez-Soliman said:

...Mexico indeed is one of the largest financial contributors for UN peacekeeping Operations, but it would be even more appreciated if it is incorporated with his troops to the community of nations in peace¹⁰...

The main argument to not whether Mexico should contribute troops for UN peacekeeping operations; rather if Mexico send troops abroad, this could represent a violation of Mexican constitutional Foreign Principles of self-determination and non-intervention. Such principles were established in the Mexican constitution according to historical dating back 1930s. According to the constitution, Mexico is forbidden to send troops to other nations unless war is declared. Such interpretation has left México with a feeling of isolation, as described in the following: *If the Mexican decision making process adopt a more comply and openly interpretation of all the Mexican constitutional foreign principles according with the current global reality, this action could allow the participation of Mexican troops in peacekeeping operations without violating such principles, allowing Mexico to project an international commitment image, gain international prestige to promote its national interest and provide one option to boost the professionalization and equipment of the Mexican armed forces.*

In order to prove that, will be exposed ideas which show the position of the UN contributions made by Mexico to financial UN peacekeeping operations, exposition about the implementation of the constitutional Mexican foreign principles and the interpretation

¹⁰Martinez-Soliman, Magdy, official speech in commemoration of the international day of UN Peacekeepers in 2010, México, UN program to development <http://www.undp.org/mx/spip.php?article2097> last visited, 5/1/2014.

made principally in current times and finely expose the benefits that may be reached by the Mexican armed forces taking part in UN peacekeeping operations.

REALITY ABOUT THE MEXICAN UN PEACEKEEPING CONTRIBUTIONS, ANOTHER APPROACH

UN membership assumed responsibilities as well as rights, and one of the responsibilities is to help people in need¹¹. Perhaps for many of the people in Mexico the status of financial contributor seems to be sufficient. In other words, “pay-on-time and complete” is enough to keep Mexican troops out of peacekeeping operations. But in all honesty such ideas could be not be more false. First, because each member state is legally obligated to pay its fee of peacekeeping, as provided in article 17 UN Charter¹², and second, while the decision on the establishment, maintenance or expansion of an operation rests with the Security Council, the financing of the operations is the collective responsibility of all Member States¹³. By Magdy Martinez-Soliman, the message is a little suggestive but at the same time clear, the international community expects a little more from Mexico. The economic contributions are very important for such cause, but in the end Mexico is obligated to pay from the moment it signed the UN charter. In other words “pay-on-time” only means Mexico meets its commitments in properly and responsible way, and nothing more.

¹¹María Cristina Rosas, *La seguridad internacional en el siglo XXI, retos y oportunidades para México*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Facultad de Ciencias políticas y sociales, México, 2010), 259.

¹²United Nations, we page, financing the operations of peacekeeping, <http://www.un.org/es/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml>, last visited, 4/20/2014

¹³Ibid.

Other points which support this idea include the fact that Mexico figures in currents times between the fifteen economies of the world¹⁴, which means it is less difficult to it make the economic contributions at the UN, than other countries less fortunate, but paradoxically of the countries that are in those fifteen global economies, the only one that not contribute with troops to UN peacekeeping operations is Mexico¹⁵, at this point the financial contributions mentioned only means the responsibility of Mexico to the UN according whit the economic level already it has. But something is missing, another type of contributions are needed. The decision makers in Mexico cannot avoid the fact that, the Mexican public currently has a favorable opinion of its armed forces, and they have the status of being professional well trained and more importantly experienced¹⁶.

Since the end of the Cold War the risk of a conflict between states has declined, but internal conflicts, organized crime, terrorism, extreme poverty, and the environmental degradation, had become the new national and international threats¹⁷. In 1988 former President of México, Miguel de la Madrid declared that drugs trafficking and organized crime are key threats for Mexico's national security. Hence, Mexican Armed forces have played a key role in the actions to content and defeat such illegal activities¹⁸. Another key

¹⁴María Cristina Rosas, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 70.

¹⁵Rosas, María Cristina, *La seguridad internacional en el siglo XXI, retos y oportunidades para México*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Facultad de Ciencias políticas y sociales, México, 2010), 249.

¹⁶Ibid., 249

¹⁷Ibid., 49.

¹⁸Jorge I. Dominguez and Rafael Fernandez de Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*, (Routledge Editors, New York, 2009), 37.

aspect is when in 1969, the Mexican Minister of Defense created Plan DN-III-E. This plan has served to provide aid to the civilian population in disaster cases. Of note, it has not only been applied successfully during hundreds of cases within Mexico; but also abroad. To date, the Plan has been used to provide humanitarian assistance to a total of 20 countries when they faced disaster situations¹⁹. This experience and expertise could be of great benefit to the UN to enhance security and safety around the world, mostly in countries less fortunate than Mexico. So, the question is: Why not put these skills under the UN flag? Maybe these are the type of contributions that the international community expects from Mexico.

THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION: THE SHIELD AND THE ISOLATION.

Mexico has been involved in peace keeping operations but only providing civil personnel and police officers in three occasions: 1949 in Kashmir; 1991 in El Salvador; and 1999 in East Timor. However, Mexico has not participated by providing military troops²⁰. As mentioned, this is due to an internal struggle between ideology, principles and pragmatism, and conflicting interpretation of foreign policy and national interest²¹. As an attempt to understand this situation, the roots of Mexican foreign policy must be defined in order to explain at current times why sending troops abroad is an internal conflict of foreign policy.

¹⁹México, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, Plan-DN-III/Ayuda Humanitaria, <http://www.sedena.gob.mx/plan-dn-iii-e/ayuda-humanitaria>, last visited 5/1/2014.

²⁰María Cristina Rosas, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 70.

²¹Gardini, Gian Luca and Peter Lambert, *Latin America foreign policies: between ideology and pragmatism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011), 229.

The Mexican foreign policy is viewed as a state's instrument to protect its sovereignty, defend and promote its national interest with external and internal limitations; in a general manner is the group of attitudes, positions, decisions and actions which have the Mexican state beyond their national borders²². Mexico's foreign policy is a part of the national policy and its conduct is assigned to the executive power, the president of Mexico. This policy observes the following principles established by Article 89 of the Mexican Political Constitution:

*Self-determination of the peoples; non-intervention; peaceful settlement of disputes; proscription of the threat of the use of force in international relations; juridical equality of states; international cooperation for development; and respect, protection and promotion of human rights and the struggle for international peace and security*²³.

Of these principles of foreign policy, to send troops abroad, particularly attention must to be given to the principles of non-intervention and self-determination. The first was established by former Mexican President Venustiano Carranza in 1918 based on the experiences of historical interventions by other countries into Mexican territory (eg United States in 1845-47 and 1914, and France 1862-67). Basing this principle on the premise of "equality among states", it opposes and disapproves any intervention into the

²² Vázquez, Flores Rafael, *Características Contemporáneas de la Política Exterior de México*, (Universidad de Quintana Roo, México, 2004), 35.
http://dzibanche.biblos.uqroo.mx/Cursos_linea/Rafael_Velazquez/Articulo01.htm, Last visited 4/26/2014.

²³México, Camada de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, (México, 2012), 79-80.

internal matters of another nation, as well as the equivalence of the national and foreign rights before the legislation of one country²⁴. The principle of self-determination was incorporated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Genaro Estrada in 1930. This means that in cases where there is a change of government through the rupture of the constitutional order, or a coup, the Mexican Government does not judge, for good or bad, governments or changes in governments in other nations, because it would imply a breach to their sovereignty²⁵, and its principle is based in the background of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and United States²⁶. It is now possible to appreciate how Mexico has used these principles as a shield to survive and maintain its' national identity as independent, self-reliant state without intervening in other nation's matters. However in some cases these somewhat traditional principles have left Mexico isolated and out of touch with the rest of the world²⁷.

Undoubtedly the U.S. played a significant role in Mexico's foreign policy, but U.S. does not represent the entire international community. On the contrary Mexico has been able to project an image of political independence, especially on the international stage. For example, in 1924 Mexico was the first Western hemisphere country to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and Mexico was the only Latin

²⁴México, Universidad Autónoma de México UNAM, *Enciclopedia Jurídica Mexicana*, (Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas Porrúa, México, 2002), 609.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 609.

²⁶Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*, (Routledge Editors, New York, 2009), 93.

²⁷Mota-Allen, Alfonso J., *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Mexico's Response to an Emerging Security Paradigm*, (Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2008), 107.

American country that maintained uninterrupted relations with socialist Cuba²⁸. This characteristic of the Mexican foreign policy, on one hand has a special relationship with its northern neighbour and on the other hand seeks to interact with other states in the international arena. Hence Mexico and is susceptible to external pressures and changes which have *pragmatic characteristics*. What this mean is Mexico is conscious of the prevailing constraints posed by the international community, especially the U.S.²⁹. in other words taking a stance to avoid committing itself to the solution of other country's affairs, thus evading positions that go to the political roots of the problems of the international community. These principles of foreign policy also take an anti-militaristic approach, and generate the perception and interpretation that if Mexico sends troops abroad, Mexico would be violating the principles of non-intervention and self-determination³⁰. This so called traditional interpretation was a very useful resource for those who opposed Mexico's participation in peacekeeping operations. However at the same time, such position has generated a criticism regarding the credibility of commitment by Mexico's ability and commitment to international security affairs.

THE INTERPRETATION CHANGED AND THE SWORD APPEARS.

One of the most interesting aspects about Mexico's foreign policy and national interests is that they were written a long time ago and into specific characteristics as

²⁸Salaverry, Jorge, *Evolution of the Mexican Foreign Policy*, (Heritage Foundation, 1988), 638.

²⁹Mota-Allen, Alfonso J., *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Mexico's Response to an Emerging Security Parading*, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2008), 108.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 110.

mentioned. A perfect and most recent example was the change of political party and presidency in 2000. After 70 years of political domination by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), (1929-2000), the National Action Party (PAN), led by Vicente Fox Quezada. Won the 2000 presidential election. With him came the promise of changes including Mexican foreign and internal policies³¹. Recognizing the previous passive nature of México's foreign policy, the new administration stated that the Mexican diplomacy cannot only be a central instrument for the preservation of national sovereignty and security. Moreover, it must become also a lever to promote and support México's socioeconomic development³².

Such changes in Mexico's foreign policy would now directly challenge its ideology, principles and pragmatism. In the beginning Vicente Fox's administration attempted to be more open rather than strict following of the constitutional principles of non-intervention and self-determination. This was a highlighter for the constitutional principles of international cooperation for development; and the respect, protection and promotion of human rights and the struggle for international peace and security³³. Fox set out five axes of development. One of these was to: play a more active role in the construction of the international system of the new millennium, highlight the advances in terms of democratic institutions, and the advance of the democratic culture, reflecting a

³¹Gardini, Gian Luca and Peter Lambert, *Latin America foreign policies: between ideology and pragmatism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011), 218.

³²*Ibid.*, 111.

³³*Ibid.*, 223.

plural, transparent, safe and culturally vibrant Mexico³⁴. This was aimed at Mexico's new foreign policy and promoting democracy and human rights abroad³⁵. These themes of the five axes (or corridors) allowed the administration to resume the topic about sending Mexican troops to UN peacekeeping operations and the role Mexico should assume in these contexts, especially given the situation lived in Haiti during 2004³⁶.

From this discussion, a new confrontation about constitutional ideology, interpretation and tradition raised. The potential participation in peacekeeping operations promoted primarily by the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs Luis Ernesto Derbez. Derbez promoted the initiative to send Mexican troops abroad, based on the premise that Mexico cannot remain isolated as in the past, especially in a contemporary world defined by globalization, technological revolution and uncertain conflict, and for consequence the constitutional principles and foreign policy must have shaped and adjusted to respond at the global demands. In his Derbez aptly claimed:

...If we are already funding them, the question of Mexican society should ask itself is whether we are not hypocritical by not providing personnel...

Unfortunately for Mexico, the goal to send troops under the UN flag was not achieved during Fox's tenure, however it was not vain. For example the majority of the Mexican troops participation in providing humanitarian assistance took place during this

³⁴Ibid., 217.

³⁵Gardini, Gian Luca and Peter Lambert, *Latin America foreign policies: between ideology and pragmatism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011), 214.

³⁶Ibid., 216.

administration³⁷. What this did was to change the interpretation of article 89 of the Mexican Constitution which prohibits sending troops outside the borders of Mexican territory for purposes that not involving the use of force. Clearly these troops did not use force and therefore it does not really constitute an act of war.

During the next PAN administration (2006-12), the Mexican government was more focused in an internal policy, tackling issues that led the campaign against drugs trafficking to work more closely with the U.S., and unfortunately Mexican troops became more committed to these internal functions situation³⁸. However since the return of PRI in 2012, the axes in which the administration is based have become very interesting. Even when the focus strategy is on economic growth and development of the country, one of the foreign policy axes is: International projection for Mexico with Global Responsibility³⁹. Simply put, this means that Mexico need to strengthen its presence abroad to enable the state to ensure national interests and increase the projection of Mexicans abroad. This could also be interpreted as keeping the windows open to send troops aboard on UN peacekeeping operations?

So why is the window potentially open? Because, currently international security has become a central issue in international relations and Mexico needs to have a vested interest, especially in the local region. In particular commerce, information technology

³⁷Alfonso J. Mota-Allen, *Mantenimiento de paz selectivo: Una propuesta para México*, (Centro de Estudios y Programas interamericanos, CEPI, documento de trabajo No. 19), 127.

³⁸Gardini, Gian Luca and Peter Lambert, *Latin America foreign policies: between ideology and pragmatism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011), 227.

³⁹México, Poder Ejecutivo Federal: presidencia de la república, web page, *Plan nacional de desarrollo 2013-2018*, <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/> last visited, 5/4/2014.

and health are key issues for many South Americans and Caribbean nations⁴⁰. To demonstrate a deeper commitment to international peace, Mexico may also need to provide troops for UN peacekeeping operations in the region or even further abroad. If so, then the current Mexican administration could find an opportunity to gain international recognition, and use it to project its national interests, seeking new areas to strengthen economic growth and project a reliable Mexican commitment with global responsibility; and with credibility. Of course this example is not new. Another example is Brazil who took special interest in participating in peacekeeping operations in Mozambique, Angola, Lebanon and East Timor. This allowed Brazil to promote its national interests and South-East Asian that speak Portuguese. Brazil has also been central to peacekeeping operations in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Brazil has led these operations and here they have been able to exert regional influence in the Americas and showing solidarity with other peoples and their capabilities of international cooperation⁴¹.

THE OPTION AND THE DECISION BY TO TAKE

Important debate and discussion took place during the Vicente Fox's PAN administration about providing troops for peacekeeping. As result this impacted academia, especially in the area of Mexican politician decision making. Scholars started to offer differ points of view regarding whether Mexican troops could take part UN-type

⁴⁰Orakhelashvili, Alexander. *Collective security* (Oxford University Press, Inc. New York, 2011), 7.

⁴¹María Cristina Rosas, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 158.

operations without violating the principles of Mexican foreign policy. One of these scholars, Ph Alfonso J. Motta Allen, who through his thesis *Selective Peacekeeping: a proposal for México*, who opened the possibility for participation of Mexican troops under UN chapter VI (Pacific settlement of disputes). Allen claims that Mexican troops can perform specified functions and tasks designated, which requires the consent of the conflicting parties and thus the principles of non-intervention and self-determination are not violated⁴².

Allen also argues that the use of force is not a strategic goal for Mexican troops. On the contrary, in fact is an operational necessity and inherent right of every individual to use self-defence. This is not expressly prohibited by the Article 89 of the Mexican constitution⁴³. Therefore through such analysis it is possible to incorporate peacekeeping operations as part of the Mexican foreign policy. Which promote the constitutional principle of respect, protection and promotion of human rights; under the auspices of the struggle for international peace and security. The real solution will be the way in which society wants to presents the name of Mexico around the world and what are it's global responsibilities in these terms. All this and keep in mind that peacekeeping may be a way to promote Mexico's national interest, and at the same time demonstrate commitment with the international peace and security realm. That said, the window remains open and the options are on the table.

⁴² Motta, Allen Alfonso J., *Mantenimiento de paz selectivo: Una propuesta para México*, (Centro de Estudios y Programas interamericanos, CEPI, documento de trabajo No. 19), 75

⁴³ Motta, Allen Alfonso J., *Mantenimiento de paz selectivo: Una propuesta para México*, (Centro de Estudios y Programas interamericanos, CEPI, documento de trabajo No. 19), 80.

ANOTHER BENEFIT: THE MAIN ACTORS, MEXICAN ARMED FORCES.

The argument to whether send or not send troops in peacekeeping, raises the question of what could be achieved for the Mexican troops if they take part in such operations. According to an interview with an Argentine military officer who has participated in different UN peacekeeping operations in different contingents, said the most valuable thing the Argentine Army has earned by take part in peacekeeping operations is leadership, operational and logistical training combined with the military experiences produced by working with other military officers, and wider experiences that may qualify as invaluable⁴⁴. Two words arise and could be of great benefit for the Mexican armed forces; those two words are education as basis of professionalism and training in order to conduct successful operations. This is achieved by joining with military forces from others countries participating in peacekeeping operations and by developing a range of military and non-military activities⁴⁵. Such activities force military personnel to be prepared and to be able to deal with a complex and diverse operations. Cultural challenges and language differences, coupled with other military organizations and the way they operate will enhance the wider Mexican military education. Training of individuals and teams will allow the Mexican military to act in social, economic and

⁴⁴Aranda, Jesús, La jornada diario, México participara en misiones de paz de la ONU, tarde que temprano, advierten militares, web page <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2012/05/07/politica/015n1pol> . Last visited, 5/5/2014.

⁴⁵United Nations, web page, peacekeeping <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peacekeeping.shtml>, last visited, 4/24/2014.

political situations, as well gain knowledge and experience about different causes and types of conflicts and the management of such conflicts⁴⁶.

The education and training will always be the basis in which members of the armed forces conducts their activities, and Mexico is not the exception. The education and training of military members is planned and conducted by the University of the Army and Air Force, and is oriented to provide its members with the knowledge and skills required to fulfill their missions⁴⁷. As previously mentioned, the international communities, or at least several UN experts, believe that the Mexican armed forces have a high level of professionalism. However, it is possible find a weakness, and it could be that the education and training is inwards focused, aimed at the domestic environment. That said, it is obvious that because the Mexican armed forces have not participated in UN-type military operations (less humanitarian assistance). This could viewed as a lost opportunity to further develop Mexican professionalism through education and training.

An important aspect that must be considered by Mexico as an argument to take part in peacekeeping operations; is the education and training given to the peacekeepers in focus areas such as human rights and gender perspectives⁴⁸. Why is this so important? First, because it is completely in accordance with the Mexican constitutional foreign policy of *respect, protection and promotion of human rights*. This could be away to

⁴⁶Rosas, María Cristina, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: Lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 166.

⁴⁷México, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, Web Page, educación militar, objetivos principales, <http://www.sedena.gob.mx/educacion-militar/informacion-general>, last visited 4/21/2014.

⁴⁸Peace Operations Training Institute, web page, Peacekeeper training courses, <http://www.peaceopstraining.org/courses/>, last visited 4/22/2014.

project a foreign policy based on democratic values, using its armed forces as a benchmark to protect the rights of the people in difficult situations. Enhance, internally speaking in 1996 the Mexican Human Rights Commission was raised at constitutional level⁴⁹, with the purpose to implement, observe and promote these rights into the Mexican state, and to fulfill and cooperate with such commission the Mexican Ministry of defense uses as a basis for teaching, promoting and monitoring these rights the military education and training system⁵⁰. Then, given that peacekeeping training considers these activities as fundamentals, the participation in peacekeeping operations would further professionalize the armed forces, especially from an international perspective. As a positive consequence, this could bring a huge benefit not only for the military forces, but also for the Mexican society having better prepared military forces for both internal and external operations in this aspect.

Another aspect that must be taken in consideration by Mexico in taking part in peacekeeping operations has to be the material benefits that may be given to the Mexican armed forces if they get involved in peacekeeping operations. While this should not be central to the argument, it cannot be ignored. Due to the fact that the UN reimburses part of the cost (equipment and training) to the troop contributing nations; several countries that have participated in UN missions have had fiscal benefit for their armed forces. A

⁴⁹ México, Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, (*Constitución Política de Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, México, 2014*), The Article 102, paragraph B, of Mexican United States Constitution, established the following: The congress and the legislatures of the states, in the scope of their respective powers, established agencies for the protection of human rights which protect the Mexican legal system. The organization established by the congress shall be called Human Rights National Commission.

⁵⁰ México, Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, (*Manual de Derechos Humanos para el Ejército y Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos, Dirección General de Derechos Humanos, E.M.D.N., 2013*), 58.

good example from this side of the word is Uruguay, who participated in the peacekeeping mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), In so doing so. Uruguay was able to buy ships using funds from the UN, and once finished its participation in the mission, the same ships are now employed to provide security on its coast⁵¹. Another benefit is an extra income for personnel participating, in an especially for lowers ranks personnel. In the case of Uruguay, peace operations between 1991-2006 provided about \$200M dollars for its armed forces. This figure is significant when compared to the annual budget of the Uruguay ministry of defense is normally around \$170M dollars. This is 15% increase for the military⁵².

This situation could be palatable to Mexico, especially if is considered the fact of the Mexican Armed forces budget represent only 0.6% of the Mexican GDP, which is considered as one of the lowest in the Americas. If it is compared with countries that have a similar economic growth as Brazil, (2.4%) or Argentina (2.3%)⁵³. This fact is more accentuated considering that the majority of the budget which is allocated to the Mexican armed forces, is used to cover the expenditures on personal services (eg military salaries), facilities and purchase of materials for routine operation of the armed forces. This represents almost 98% of the total of the referred Budget⁵⁴; leaving a very small

⁵¹Rosas, María Cristina, *La Seguridad Internacional en el siglo XXI: retos y oportunidades para México*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, UNAM, Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 2010), 264.

⁵²Rosas, María Cristina, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: Lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 165.

⁵³Alfonso J. Mota-Allen, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Mexico's Response to an Emerging Security Parading*, (Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada, 2008), 127.

⁵⁴México, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional web page, transparencia, rendición de cuentas, informe de rendición de cuentas 2006-2012, <http://www.sedena.gob.mx/transparencia/rendicion-de->

amount to investment in equipment expenses. It is then that the paradigm of Mexico and its armed forces appear: How to maintain a modern and well-equipped armed forces, within a strict and limited budget?

This is a paradigm because the possible answer to the question above could be simple by sending troops to take part in peacekeeping operations may generate additional income that may solve part of the problem with the budget assigned to the armed forces. However, a problem rises with the involvement in peacekeeping operations; the participation by some countries in peacekeeping operations has received several critiques specially for some countries that are only involved because of the financial reimbursements and to make matters worse such benefits do not always end up in the armed forces. This kind of action shows little commitment to international peace, and might be referred as “mercenary”⁵⁵. It is a critical point to be considered by Mexico if it decides take part in peacekeeping operations. Mexico will have to define what is the real reason to get involved in peacekeeping operations conducted by UN. Getting involved may help overcome budget problems, but it also may expose Mexico to critiques if the financial benefits become the main reason to participate. There are two possible outcomes if Mexico decides to get involved Mexico might be seen as altruist

[cuentas](#), last visted 4/22/2014, Note: Calculations made by the author, based in information available in the web site of the Mexican Minister of Defense, data from first semester of 2010, in order to identify areas and budget percentages and exercises.

⁵⁵Rosas, María Cristina, *Las operaciones de mantenimiento de paz de las Naciones Unidas: Lecciones desde el mundo*, (Universidad Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, México, 2008), 177.

country that provides aid to less fortunate countries or been seen as a mercenary hoping to receive payment for its services.

CONCLUSION

In a world vastly influenced by phenomena called globalization, maximum use of technology and easy access to information, has helped several states and its societies achieve great benefits; While aspects related with the security for the states become unstable. The risk and threats experienced by nations have gained global importance; and today's world it is almost impossible to maintain confined within the limits of the geographical boundaries. That means that global problems require global solutions. Where the participation of all states and their resources become the foundation to create the condition of "collective security". No taking globalization into account for formulate foreign policy and national interest by the states, it would mean for the state itself to remain in an isolated position and sooner or later the state will suffer the impact of its' decision or lack there of.

Mexico's case regarding UN peacekeeping operations could be summarized as a case of isolation and lack of commitment. Even though Mexico has participated financially in such operations and as non-permanent member of the security council the international communities expect more from Mexico. They expect Mexico to put its "boots on the ground" under a UN flag. The position to simply contribute financially and risk living in the modern world is frankly indefensible, even for Mexican decision

makers. Mexico must share the purpose of the UN in to prevent conflicts, to defend the rights and dignity of human beings, to preserve our freedom, and share some of the wealth of the wealthiest nations to help development of the disinherited land. Each and every single one of those words is implicit into its foreign principles. Mexico can no longer ignore those words and it should be reminded that it is precise to intervene, help is to intervene.

Two aspects should be highlighted about Mexican foreign policy and the relationship this has with the possibility to provide troops to the UN peacekeeping. First. Mexican principles of foreign policy are not the problem; it has been interpreted at the convenience of the Mexican political entity to best fit their government policy this position is a little traditional and needs to be interpreted in accordance with the global reality. Second. The two principles of self-determination and non-intervention were set in stone as a traditional shield against the powerful neighbor of the north. However at the same time, this traditional defensive policy has left Mexico somewhat isolated from the rest of the world, especially in matters related to international security. Yes, the financial relationship between Mexico and the UN is of great importance but there is a world around such relationship, other horizons, other commitments and opportunities.

Conversely, the same foreign policy principles offer Mexico another option: especially when the principles of international cooperation for development; and respect, protection and promotion of human rights and the struggle for international peace and security are the main focus. These principles provide Mexico with to framework to create a more

open, realistic and modern policy according to the current reality of the world. These principles could become the sword, the tool to seek and gain international prestige and credible commitment with international peace, and the way to find its national interest.

The Mexican armed forces play a key role maintaining the security policy in Mexico by either dealing with or eliminating threats from organized crime, drug cartels and firearms trafficking: as well as providing humanitarian assistance. These functions have become an everyday activity for its armed forces, and in reality they have developed enormous experience and professionalism in conducting such activities. Currently such threats have gained key importance for global stability; UN peacekeeping operations are an opportunity for Mexico to contribute. Providing skills to help create a better world and at the same time the UN peacekeeping operations help Mexican armed forces improve their professionalism in several areas under the auspices of “world’s best practices”. Last but not least, sending troops to participate in peacekeeping operations would represent a significant contribution to the world, Mexican society and its armed forces.

Possibilities, expectations, contradictions and benefits are words that revolve around Mexico’s participation in peacekeeping operations by sending its armed forces. Mexican government should not forget that while it debates whether to commit troops under the UN flag. The international community will continue to make decisions, and these decisions will be made with or without the Mexican armed forces. Mexico must

decide between participation or insolation, Mexico must to decide which the best to the future is: shield or sword.

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