THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING FORCE: IS THE UN JUST 'STANDING BY'?

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INTRODUCTION – TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

In our modern era there have been continual efforts made towards the creation of an effective world government, to various degrees of success. The initial creation of the League of Nations, in the immediate aftermath of World War One (WWI), was one attempt at global governance that had several shortfalls and that was unable to prevent the onset of a second global catastrophe. The creation of the United Nations also grew from the still simmering ashes, and in some instances still burning flames, of a second global catastrophe, World War Two (WWII). It could certainly be argued that each of these modern attempts at world government and world governance had more to do with the ideology of preventing future conflict and guaranteeing state sovereignty and human security. Indeed, the Atlantic Charter of 1941 uses terminology suggesting that in the absence of total global disarmament there must be the "establishment of a wider and permanent system of global security."[1] It appears that even in the early days of WWII the focus would be on future peace and stability and the prevention of future armed conflict.

It is with this context that we must approach the discussion surrounding a standing UN force. "The UN sought to learn from the failings of League of Nations, which was slow to react to crises and in taking effective action to preserve peace."[2] While the ability to take an issue to the UN Security Council on short notice still remains, the ability to actually force project forces rapidly into a theatre of operations does not. These two factors seem insidiously inverse, in purpose and in practicality.

This paper will first examine the role of the UN on the global stage and within the paradigm of international relations, whilst focusing on peacekeeping operations (PKOs), humanitarian assistance, and human security issues. It will examine how the UN currently force generates forces for deployment and how it employs its forces once deployed, while simultaneously examining how much of the issues associated therein could be alleviated through another operational construct. This examination will also explore some of the equipment and training challenges that are currently present. No paper focusing on the UN would be complete without an in-depth look at the Security Council and some of the challenges associated with the creation of any new peacekeeping operation or force generation. Following this, it will be important to explore the previous attempts at a standing force, including the United Nations Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) and the Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) and why these have never come to be fully functional as a practical capability. It will then deconstruct the current discussions surrounding a standing force with an eye to understanding how this could be most effective, while examining the positives and issues.

This paper will argue that the current construct for the force generation, equipment provision, training, deployment and employment of UN peacekeeping and

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[1] Santora, Marc. "In History: Read the Original Atlantic Charter." *New York Times Company (Online)*, 2021.
[2] Amin, Shahid M. "Role of the UN." *Pakistan Observer,* Jan 17, 2017, sec. 28.

peace enforcement soldiers and civilians is inherently broken, and that a concerted effort that focuses on a permanently established, multidimensional, rapidly deployable, UN standing force would bring additional credibility to a UN organization that can often need legitimacy.

ROLE OF THE UN – INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Before having any comprehensive discussion about the UN and its ability to respond to security challenges around the world, one must first understand and appreciate the role of the UN in global affairs and where it draws from for its legitimacy. As mentioned above, the UN was born out of the desire to ensure global stability, and while it has not been without its challenges the UN has be predominantly successful for the past 78 years.[3] It is the organization that is looked to when there are economic, humanitarian, human security or other such concerns that need to be resolved between states, or in some instances, within a state. While these are certainly noble and lofty goals, which the UN regularly promotes and achieves successes with, the ultimate goal of the UN was "to maintain or restore international peace and security."[4]

The UN, like many state governments around the world, was created with a bedrock and ultimately foundational document – the UN Charter. Not unlike a constitution, or a charter of rights and freedoms, the UN draws its legitimacy and credibility from the UN Charter, which came into force in October of 1945.[5] This key document has only been amended 3 times since its inception (1963, 1965, 1975) and is the document that is agreed to by all 193 member states, speaking directly to the UN's legitimacy.[6] This is the cornerstone document that allows the UN to take action on a "wide variety of issues due to its unique international character and the powers vested in its Charter, which is considered an international treaty. As such, the UN Charter is an instrument of international law, and UN Member States are bound by it."[7]

Within this document resides Chapter VII, "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," where the "the Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken."[8] This Chapter inherently provides the UN, through the Security Council, with the authority to intervene, with force, in conflicts that threaten the rules based international order, international peace and security or any other subset of challenge that falls within that paradigm. Within Chapter VII exists Article 43. This article forms the basis for the provision of UN forces to what eventually

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[3] Amin, Shahid M. "Role of the UN." *Pakistan Observer,* Jan 17, 2017, sec. 28.
[4] "Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," United Nations, Accessed 24 Apr 23, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression (Articles 39-51) | United Nations.
[5] "United Nations Charter," United Nations, accessed 24 Apr 23, UN Charter | United Nations.
[6] "About Us," United Nations, accessed 24 Apr 23, About Us | United Nations.
[7] "United Nations Charter," United Nations, accessed 24 Apr 23, UN Charter | United Nations.
[8] "Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," United Nations, Accessed 24 Apr 23, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression (Articles 39-51) | United Nations.

developed into PKOs. Article 43 states that all member UN states are "to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities…," but more importantly it highlights that these forces will be force generated through negotiation with troop contributing countries (TCCs) "as soon as possible" following a Security Council initiative.[9] One only has to look as far as the words "negotiated" and "as soon as possible" to understand just how problematic force generating forces for a UN Security Council mandate could be. This phenomenon will be discussed below in "Current Construct."

With this being detailed, this paper will also examine how the global community views the role of the UN. This will be briefly scrutinized through the viewpoint of successes and failures/limitations and will thereby provide context to the fact that a UN rapidly deployable standing force would be a force multiplier for the UN's credibility and to its ability to fulfill its mandate. While lending itself more fully to support the arguments in this paper an analysis of the UN's failures is not wholly without context, however these issues can provide the compass direction for the discussion surrounding Force Generation and Force Employment conversations. "While the UN has successfully led a number of peacekeeping missions and promoting peace and security is integral to its mission, it failed to intervene in a timely manner and prevent genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia."[10] This failure has widely been attributed to "institutional shortcomings" that did not allow the UN to respond rapidly, or in a manner required, to ensure the prompt restoration of peace and security.[11] With the requisite political will, these institutional shortcomings could become institutional strengths.

Despite highlighting these limitations, it is important to focus on a few quick successes as well. This paper hopes that the ability to respond rapidly to restore international peace and security becomes a UN success, such as those that are highlighted below. Certainly, the UN has positive image within the majority of countries to which it is a part. Less than 26% of countries hold a negative view of the UN.[12] Overall, opinion has remained stable year over year and there are decidedly regional approaches, opinions and appreciations for the UN. Perhaps most importantly for the future of a healthy world order and a healthy UN organization is that the UN consistently scores high in likeability and opinion amongst the world's youth population. Even within countries that are seeing a rise in populist movements, such as the USA and Brazil, the UN is still considered favourably amongst those under the age of 29.[13] This bodes well for a potential future shift in political will towards the creation and maintenance of a UN standing force.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Katelyn Balakir, "Failures and Successes of the UN," *The Alliance for Citizen Engagement*, accessed 26 Apr 23, Failures And Successes Of The UN | ACE (ace-usa.org).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Moira Fagan, Christine Huang, "United Nations Get Mostly Positive Marks From People Around the World," *Pew Research Center*, accessed 23 Apr 23, Public opinion of UN is mostly positive around the world in 2019 | Pew Research Center.

[13] Moira Fagan, Christine Huang, "United Nations Get Mostly Positive Marks From People Around the World," *Pew Research Center*, accessed 23 Apr 23, Public opinion of UN is mostly positive around the world in 2019 | Pew Research Center.

CURRENT CONSTRUCT – FORCE GENERATION, OR LACK THEREOF

It is no secret that the UN struggles to generate capable forces required to meet the demands of the ever-evolving global threat environment. "Lacking a standing army, the UN relies on its member states to provide troops for peacekeeping operations."[14] Currently, the UN force generates its forces on a per incident basis. While the UN Security Council ultimately authorizes the creation and establishment of the PKO force, it is left up to the members of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to put together the forces necessary to meet the mandate. Currently, the UN process flows as such following the identification of a global security concern: initial consultations, technical field assessment, security council resolution, appointment of senior officials, planning, deployment, and employment.[15] It is abundantly clear, that the process is lengthy and onerous, and while portions of this can be sped up, or slowed down, the post Security Council resolution process is a considerable speed bump.

For the purposes of this paper the portions we are primarily concerned with are the post Security Council resolution aspects. This indeed is where the majority of the force generation delays originate, as it sees multiple sets of negotiation requirements through the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), Department of Operational Support (DSO) and potential TCCs. "The speed with which the UN deploys peacekeepers is critical for the effectiveness and legitimacy of its peacekeeping operations…every day that passes before troops are fully deployed weighs on the prospects of success."[16] The UN has identified and accepted the need for a rapid response force and has fully endorsed the recommendations of the Brahimi Report. To this end, the UN currently defines a rapid deployment (for a simple PKO) as being 30 days, with a rapid deployment of a multidimensional force being 90 days.[17] However, the historical lack of success with either of those timelines lends itself to the conclusion that current frameworks are not designed to handle such rapid responses and this plays directly into a framework where an already formed UN standing force could lend credibility and rapidity to the restoration of international peace and security, arguably much quicker than 30 or 90 days.

Recognizing that "effective coordination between Member States and the UN Secretariat, as well as within the UN Secretariat, is necessary for the generation /recruitment and deployment process to function as smoothly and quickly as possible"[18]

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[14] Magnus Lundgren, Kseniya Oksamytna, Katharina P. Coleman, "Only as Fast as its Troop Contributors: Incentives, Capabilities, and Constraints in the UN's Peacekeeping Response." *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no 4 (2021), 671.

[15] "Forming a New Operation," United Nations, accessed 28 Apr 23, Forming a new operation | United Nations Peacekeeping

[16] Magnus Lundgren, Kseniya Oksamytna, Katharina P. Coleman, "Only as Fast as its Troop Contributors: Incentives, Capabilities, and Constraints in the UN's Peacekeeping Response." *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no 4 (2021), 672.

[17] H. Peter Langille, "Improving United Nations Capacity for Rapid Deployment," *International Peace Institute*, (2014), 2.

[18] "United Nations Manual for the Generation and Deployment of Military and Formed Police Units to Peace Operations," United Nations, *Office of Military Affairs and Office of the Police Adviser Department of Peace Operations*, (2014), 12.

the UN established a High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in 2014. Up until this point there was no single centralizing authority for the force generation and employment of forces, this created the potential for, and the reality of, confusion and delays in force generation. This was often in conjunction with a plethora of other hindering factors such as financial reimbursement, administration, logistics, training, and equipment. The end result was the creation of the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell (SFGCPC) as part of a wholistic approach to Force Generation called "The UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System" (PCRS).[19] This was done to ensure that UN PKOs meet the emerging needs of the future[20] – indeed the UN itself has recognized the issues with its ad hoc approach to peace operations numerous times throughout its existence and have attempted various solutions. To that end, over 80 member states, each region of the globe, and a plethora of thinks tanks and civil society organizations all participated in this review and shared the desire for change.[21]

This SFGCPC does a number of excellent functions, all of which are desperately required, but also all of which could and should be absorbed into a standing force construct. As will be discussed below, this is not the first time that a system such as the PCRS has been attempted. Even though a standing force would mean that this sub organization would likely not be wholistically required in its current design, the SFGCPC could be incredibly effective in an operations and training style role, integral to any standing force. At the very least, it is certainly a place that could start the process of integration and move away from the tried and tried again method of volunteer arrangement forces as proposed by a PCRS style system.

CURRENT CONSTRUCT – EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING, OR LACK THEREOF

As discussed above, the UN is required to negotiate with member states for personnel and equipment contributions to new or ongoing operations. The administrative process for this endeavour is called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This process also means that "it is not possible to mobilize the military and police forces of multinational member states and send them to field missions in a short period of time."[22] This is not a new problem. Poor equipment provisioning has plagued the UN for a number of years, so much so that the UN has implemented a system whereby a member state will be deducted financial compensation if they fail to provide the obligated Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) for two straight quarters.[23]

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[19] "United Nations Manual for the Generation and Deployment of Military and Formed Police Units to Peace Operations," United Nations, *Office of Military Affairs and Office of the Police Adviser Department of Peace Operations*, (2014), 13.

[20] "High Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, accessed 30 Apr 23, 2015-UNGA-HIPPO-Report.pdf.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Muggi Tuvendarjaa, "Challenges of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *Asia Pacific Center for Securities Studies*, (2022), 4.

[23] "Deployment and Reimbursement," United Nations, accessed 23 Apr 23, Deployment and reimbursement | United Nations Peacekeeping.

The idea of being unable to force project forces rapidly also has to do with the inability to have forces at high readiness. It is widely accepted that the future of PKOs, be they not pulled from a standing force, will need to "update the pre-deployment training of military contingents utilizing lessons learned from previous missions to ensure that weapons and equipment of the countries serving in the PSOs are not obsolete."[24] Within a standing force construct, kit and equipment readiness would be maintained in much the same manner as most modern militaries. Modern military practices for maintenance of equipment should address reliability issues, while the same maintenance and equipment generation should eliminate issues surrounding obsolete equipment. This will need to be accompanied by a robust logistical and support network, to include comprehensive in-service support and the proper procurement of equipment based on needs.

Equipment, and especially training issues, relate to overall leadership trends. The ability to be interoperable, to have discipline and to possess a valued code of conduct all relate back to leadership. In the current force generation and force employment construct it is widely accepted that the UN's leadership has failed to address the needs of modern PKOs. This, "combined with poor management discipline, and widespread inefficiency, weakness, and insignificance of some traditional PSO approaches indicate the need to reform and improve the structure of UN PSOs."[25] The current structure does not allow for the selection of key leaders in the same manner as one would experience with a modern western approach to mission leadership. The UN is often at the whim of the TCC for the provision of leadership and quality control may be "lacking." It is argued that a standing force would be able to mentor, develop and train their own leadership and use this leadership to address and influence any institutional shortcomings.

Unfortunately, the current construct also does not allow for a more nuanced and detailed approach to coalition discipline. UN personnel serving in "PSOs have engaged in sexual harassment, behavioral misconduct, and misunderstanding related to local customs, mishandling of UN properties, and discrimination based on age, race, and gender."[26] A relatively recent example of this occurred in 2007 in Haiti, when over 100 Sri Lankan Peacekeepers were repatriated as a result of sexual encounters that were deemed to be "transactional" in nature.[27] This type of behaviour strikes directly at the heart of UN legitimacy and credibility. It also speaks to issues of training, or the lack thereof. A standing force would have the opportunity to ensure that all of its membership were trained properly and trained wholesomely on all aspects of gender and human security issues.

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[24] Muggi Tuvendarjaa, "Challenges of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *Asia Pacific Center for Securities Studies*, (2022), 5.

[25] Muggi Tuvendarjaa, "Challenges of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *Asia Pacific Center for Securities Studies*, (2022), 3.

[26] Muggi Tuvendarjaa, "Challenges of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *Asia Pacific Center for Securities Studies*, (2022), 5.

[27] "Haiti: Over 100 Sri Lankan Blue Helmets Repatriated on Disciplinary Grounds," United Nations, *UN News*, accessed 1 May 23, Haiti: Over 100 Sri Lankan blue helmets repatriated on disciplinary grounds – UN | UN News

Sexual violence being perpetrated by UN peacekeepers has led to the UN Security Council passing UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 with the view to mainstream gender perspectives into all of the multidimensional aspects of UN PKOs.[28] This also included a call for all member states to increase the participation of women in PKOs and in all level of governmental organizations dealing with human security, it urged the Secretary General (SG) of the UN to increase female participation as special representatives, it urges the UN to include and integrate gender perspectives into PKOs, it requests that all member states incorporate gender perspectives training and requests that all member states devote financial resources to gender sensitive training efforts.[29] Of course, coordinating and implementing all of this across 193 member states is a daunting task to say the least. A centralized standing force could easily adopt and apply these themes, meaning gender mainstreaming and gender equality amongst peacekeeping forces would likely be better balanced and better suited for the challenges of today's PKOs.

CURRENT CONSTRUCT – (IN)SECURITY COUNCIL

It is no secret that one key issue and concern with any sort of standing force would be the role of the Security Council. Currently any call for the international community to intervene in the affairs of another state must come from the Security Council via a UNSCR. In reality, this is the raison d'etre of the Security Council – to maintain peace and international security. Unfortunately for the global community, the members of the Security Council are often either deadlocked or at opposite ends of the spectrum regarding conflicts. This has frequently resulted in one of the Permanent Five (P5) members using their veto power to cease any sort of resolution that they deem contrary to their states' national interests. The most recent example of such a failure to maintain international peace and security can be seen with the Russian invasion (special military operation) of Ukraine. "Russia's aggression against Ukraine exposes the extraordinary failure of the UN Security Council to live up to its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security."[30] Despite being widely condemned by the international community the resolution that came before the Security Council was vetoed by Russia. This inability to act in the face of violations to the rules based international order may serve to further deteriorate any support to a standing force, even though the benefits would still outweigh the occasional veto.

All is not doom and gloom, as there have been numerous examples of success as well. One such success, from a combat capable perspective, was the Iraq invasion of

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[28] "Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security," United Nations, *Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women*, accessed 1 May 23, Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (Security Council resolution 1325).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Aldo Zammit Borda, "Ukraine and the Failure of the United Nations Security Council," *CITY University of London*, (2022), accessed 20 Apr 23, Ukraine and the failure of the United Nations Security Council • City, University of London.

Kuwait in 1990. The UN "authorized the use of 'all means necessary' to halt that aggression and restore peace."[31]

Ultimately, while the in ability of the Security Council to address certain security issues is a great topic for further academic rigour, it is not within the scope of this paper. Many academics and international relations scholars have, and are, studying ways to improve, or reform, the UN Security Council. However, the conversation ultimately becomes somewhat irrelevant within the framework of this paper as the potential missions that would be vetoed wouldn't proceed regardless of whether or not the UN possessed a standing force. What is relevant however, is that for those missions that meet consensus, there would be a rapid, agile, multidisciplinary force ready to deploy to assist with disaster or humanitarian relief or to aid in the securitization of a state and its peoples in conflict. While not the "100% solution" this solution is better than none and is certainly better than the currently adopted ad hoc process.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS – STANDBY, STANDBY, GO?

With all of this being said it is important to note that there have been previous attempts at drafting a standard response, or at least at having forces on some version of high readiness in the event of humanitarian relief operations, combat operations or peace support operations. The UNSAS was first discussed in 1992 and was established in 1993, but it is important to note that the conversation surrounding a UN standby capacity has been ongoing since 1948.[32] The goal of UNSAS was to improve the response time of the UN by having member states earmark the necessary and relevant equipment and personnel that they would be able to provide on short notice and fully prepared, subject to national caveats and restrictions.[33] This would allow for the UN to understand the forces and capabilities available to it, while being able to simultaneously plan for rapid deployment and employment.

Unfortunately, while lofty, these goals were never able to materialize. Despite the attempts at ensuring various TCCs had forces at a specified readiness level, or that with this information the UN was aware of the capabilities available to it, the UNSAS or currently the PCRS, ultimately still rely upon member states and their voluntary contribution. This voluntary aspect underpins all of the restrictions and failures that currently plague any UN rapid response. "It's also a conditional arrangement with no binding obligation to respond. Member states may or may not decide to deploy when asked. As a result, this system has repeatedly proven to be slow and unreliable."[34]

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[31] Aldo Zammit Borda, "Ukraine and the Failure of the United Nations Security Council," *CITY University of London*, (2022), accessed 20 Apr 23, Ukraine and the failure of the United Nations Security Council • City, University of London.

[32] H. Peter Langille, "Developing a United Nations Emergency Peace Service," *Palgrave Macmillan*, (2014), 97.

[33] Ibid. 91.

[34] H. Peter Langille, "Improving United Nations Capacity for Rapid Deployment," *International Peace Institute*, (2014), 12.

Post Rwanda and Srebrenica genocides, and the UN failure to intervene in an early enough fashion, the UN once again attempted to reform its existing systems and to create a form of response capacity. This was labelled the SHIRBRIG. This contingent, of approximately 5000 soldiers, was meant to be able to respond within 15-30 days and consisted of a number of western militaries, notably Canada and Australia.[35] SHIRBRIG actually deployed on five different missions within Africa from 2000-2005, however this continual draw on member states eventually meant that fewer and fewer states wished to continue their contributions – thus the SHIRBRIG construct transformed into a smaller niche force which was eventually disbanded in 2009.[36] Once again, the force generation construct failed as a result of the volunteer nature of the existing arrangement. This is a feature that would not be present in a standing force. The SHIRBRIG experiment ultimately showed that there is an incredible demand for just such a force, further cementing the point that not only would this force be more responsive, but it is also desperately needed to address current demands.

The fact that the UN has been attempting, since 1948 to create this type of standby arrangement system, in various iterations, should point to the fact that it is not effective. The challenges have remained and have not been alleviated by any of the previous attempts, as detailed above. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that it is time for the world to recognize this fact once again and to finally act on the idea that a more permanent solution is required.

STANDING FORCE – A NEED RECOGNIZED, MAYBE?

It is widely accepted that the UN and the global community recognizes the need for a new response to evolving and emerging threats. It is also widely accepted that many scholars of the topic believe that a standing force construct would be the best way to approach the current global strife and instability. One such academic is Dr. H. Peter Langille, who suggests an organization called the United Nations Emergence Peace Service (UNEPS).[37]

UNEPS would follow much of the same ideology as has been presented above regarding a standing force and would be a multidimensional force capable of a rapid response, that is independent from any national affiliation. It would still require the authorization of the UN Security Council, much in the same way as is currently required, however the difference being the time between "flash" to "bang." Having a force centralized, with a Headquarters (HQ) with a direct and immediate command relationship to the UN would be instrumental in responding rapidly to all sorts of peace and human

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[35] Koops Joachim A. and Alexandra Novosseloff, "United Nations Rapid Reaction Mechanisms: Toward a Global Force on Standby?" *Contemporary Securities Policy 38,* no 3, (2017), 430.

[36] Reykers, YF and John Karlsrud, "Multinational Rapid Response Mechanisms: Past Promises and Future Prospects," *Contemporary Security Policy 38*, no 3, (2017), 421.

[37] H. Peter Langille, "Developing a United Nations Emergency Peace Service," *Palgrave Macmillan*, (2014), 2.

security issues. Dr Langille, not unlike many of the issues already presented, highlights the "10 Principles of UNEPS:

1. a permanent standing, integrated UN formation;

2. highly trained and well-equipped;

3. ready for immediate deployment upon authorization of the UN Security Council;

4. multidimensional (civilians, police and military);

5. multifunctional (capable of diverse assignments with specialized skills for security, humanitarian, health and environmental crises);

6. composed of 13,600 dedicated personnel (recruited professionals who volunteer for service and are then screened, selected, trained and employed by the UN);

7. developed to ensure regional and gender equitable representation;

8. co-located at a designated UN base under an operational headquarters and two mobile mission headquarters;

9. at sufficient strength to operate in high-threat environments; and

10. a service to complement existing UN and regional arrangements, with a first responder to cover the initial six months."[38]

While a standing force may not be able to address all of the issues that are present within the current construct discussion, it most certainly can serve to address some of the key concerns. It is absolutely apparent that a multidimensional UN standing force – meaning soldiers, civilians, police – could remedy many of the issues currently plaguing the ad hoc approach to peace support operations and their force generation, deployment, and employment.

"Too often, mandates and missions are produced on the basis of templates instead of tailored to support situation-specific political strategies."[39] Having a standing force, with a plethora of different capabilities, would allow UN operations and planning staffs the ability to task tailor their missions, thereby increasing the likelihood of success. This is even more amplified when one takes into consideration the multidimensional aspects of a standing force. Again, allowing for responses to all forms of peace and human security issues would be much easier within this framework. "Rapidly deployable specialist capabilities are difficult to mobilize, and United Nations forces have little or no interoperability."[40] These issues are certainly rectifiable given the right political climate and the proper establishment of a robust, independent standing force of UN personnel that possesses the ability to train and deploy together.

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[38] Ibid. 39-48.
[39] "High Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, accessed 1 May 23, 2015-UNGA-HIPPO-Report.pdf.
[40] Ibid.

STANDING FORCE – PRACTICAL ISSUES

Despite the noteworthy outcomes that are clearly evident in the above detailed commentary, there are still outstanding issues, some of which are practical and some of which are political and financial in nature. These issues have plagued any and all attempts at the establishment of a standing force since 1948.

Politically the climate within the UNSC has never been more fraught with complications and diverse interests. One of the P5 members is currently engaged in a "special military operation" while the other is still reeling from the ramifications of four years of a Donald Trump presidency and a move away from the UN and towards greater NATO participation.[41] The US experience in Somalia certainly did not assist in the efforts of the UN in increasing the support to any sort of standing UN force.[42] However, the late 2000s also saw a US Congress advocate for the establishment of UNEPS, albeit with distinct US political goals in mind.[43] Regardless of the goal, such support is essential in gaining momentum in the creation of such a force and short of another global catastrophe it is unknown just how such political will and financial support can be obtained.

Tied to the establishment and maintenance of a standing force is the fact that there would be a significant financial tab associated with any such endeavour. Some estimates have put the "tab" of a UNEPS style force at $1 billion dollars a year. While sounding daunting, it is suggested that the returns on investment in this instance would far outweigh the real time cost, especially the costs associated with the maintenance and deployment of forces of a member state. Indeed, a standing force may have greater financial feasibility than constantly requiring the training of TCC own forces.

Overall, there are numerous practical problems that would need to be solved. Pay, benefits, housing, basing, parts supply, equipment sourcing, procurement, citizenship, terms of service to just name a few. The ability to have soldiers from a variety of countries and nations but having no national affiliation may prove complicated but would be vitally important to the credibility of any UN standing force.

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[41] Herro, Annie, "UN Emergency Peace Service and the Responsibility to Protect," *Abingdon, Oxon, New York, New York*, (2014-2017). 25.
[42] Ibid. 22.
[43] Ibid 29.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clearly and vitally apparent that the UN needs to address its shortcomings with regards to the ability to restore international peace and security in a rapid and sustainable fashion. This is not only to ensure that the UN as an organization remains reliable, credible, and legitimate, but it is vital in order "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person."[44] These are the fundamental and founding principles of the UN and with no new UN PKO in the past few years, they are at risk of becoming symbolic in nature.

A UN standing force, could address issues connected to obsolete equipment. It could eliminate interoperability concerns. It would be well-trained, and this training could embody the values and ethics of the UN – such as the ability to understand gender conflicts and human security concerns, while also promoting an increase of women in key and vital positions – including on field operations. Its multidimensional capability would mean that it would be able to just as easily respond to an earthquake in Turkey as it would to a civil war in Sudan. Most importantly, its rapid deployment would lend credibility to the UN while allowing other member states the ability to force generate their own forces for follow on activities, if required, and on a timeline of their choosing.

It is understood that there will still be challenges present, such as the veto ability of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. However, with careful selection of basing, equipment and the selection of member states, these issues should be rectifiable. One only has to look as far as the early 2000s experiment with the SHIRBRIG construct to understand just how valuable and in demand such a force would be. If political will, financial donations, and requirements remain steady the UN should be able to field just such a force, a force for good in the world and a force for international peace and stability. Unfortunately, history has shown that any major changes or attempts at change, have come off the heels of "major global events, changes or failures."[45] Let's hope another genocide is not required to get the wheels in motion for a UN standing force.

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[44] "High Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, accessed 1 May 23, 2015-UNGA-HIPPO-Report.pdf.
[45] Herro, Annie, "UN Emergency Peace Service and the Responsibility to Protect," *Abingdon, Oxon, New York, New York*, (2014-2017), 30.

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