

THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE

QUO VADIS?

Francois Vreÿ • Thomas Mandrup
EDITORS



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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| AAR | After Action Review |
| ACCORD | African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes |
| ACIRC | African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis |
| ADF | Allied Defence Force |
| AFISMA | All African led International Support Mission to Mali |
| AGA | African Governance Architecture |
| AGF | Anti Government Forces |
| AMIB | African Union Mission to Burundi |
| AMISOM | African Union Mission to Somalia |
| AMU | Arab Maghreb Union |
| APSA | African Peace and Security Architecture |
| APSTA | African Peace Support Trainers Association |
| AQIM | Al Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb |
| ASF | African Standby Force |
| AU | African Union |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| BRICS | Brazil Russia India China South Africa |
| CAR | Central Africa Republic |
| CCCPA | Cairo Regional Centre for Training and Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping |
| CEAMDS | Council of Eastern African Ministers of Defence and Security |
| CEWS | Continental Early Warning Systems |
| CIMIC | Civil Military Coordination |
| CISS | Chief of Integrated Support Services |
| CMO | Chief Medical Officer |
| CNT | National Transitional Council |
| COIN | Counter Insurgency |
| COMESA | Common Market for Eastern and South Africa |
| CONOPS | Concept of Operations |
| CPX | Command Post Exercise |
| CR | Combat Ready |
| CRM | Crisis Response Mechanism |
| CSSG | Civilian Strategic Support Group |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| DSRCC | Deputy Special Representative of the Chair of the AU Commission |

| | |
|------------|---|
| EAC | East Africa Community |
| EACDS | East African Chief of Defence Staffs |
| EASF | East Africa Standby Force |
| EASFCOM | EASF Coordination Mechanism |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOMOG | Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EPS | Exercise Planning Staff |
| ESF | ECOWAS Standby Force |
| EU | European Union |
| FIB | Force Intervention Brigade |
| FID | Foreign Internal Defence |
| FLS | Frontline States |
| FOC | Full Operational Capability |
| FOMAC | Economic Community of Central African States Standby Force |
| FTX | Field Training Exercise |
| GOJ | Government of Japan |
| GWOT | Global War on Terror |
| HL | Human Rights Law |
| HLU | Humanitarian Liaison Unit |
| HMS | Head of Mission Support |
| HOM | Head of Mission |
| HRDDP | Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (United Nations) |
| ICGLR | International Conference on the Great Lakes Region |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| IED | Improvised Explosives Device |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Agency on Development |
| IHL | International Humanitarian Law |
| IPI | International Peace Institute |
| IU | Investigation Unit |
| JLOC | Joint Logistics Operations Centre |
| KAIPKTC | Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Centre |
| MICEMA | ECOWAS Mission in Mali |
| MICOPAX | Mission for Consolidation of Peace in the Central Africa Republic |
| MINUSCA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central Africa Republic |
| MINUSMA | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali |
| MINUSMA UN | Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali |
| MISCA | African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic |

| | |
|----------|--|
| MNLA | National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad |
| MONUSCO | United Nations Mission to the Congo |
| MOOTW | Military Operations Other than War |
| MORW | Military Operations Related to War |
| MPT | Military Psychological Team |
| MUJAO | Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa |
| NARC | North African Regional Capability |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| NUPI | Norwegian Institute for International Affairs |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance |
| ONUC | United Nations Operation in the Congo |
| ORBAT | Order of Battle |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PD | Psychological Debriefing |
| PLANELM | Planning Element |
| PMC | Private Military Company |
| POC | Point of Contact |
| PPU | Personal Protection Unit |
| PSC | Peace and Security Council |
| PSCAU | Peace and Security Council of the African Union |
| PSO | Peace Support Operations |
| PTSD | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| QIP | Quick Impact Project |
| R2P | Responsibility to Protect |
| RDC | Rapid Deployment Capability |
| REC | Regional Economic Community |
| RISDP | Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan |
| RM | Regional Mechanism |
| ROL | Rule of Law |
| RPTC | Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SADCBRIG | Southern Africa Standby Brigade |
| SADCC | Southern African Development Coordination Conference |
| SEA | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse |
| SHIRBRIG | SIGLA Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa |
| SIOU | Security, Information and Operations Unit |
| SIPO | Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SADC) |
| SMLT | Senior Mission Leadership Team |
| SOP | Standing Operations Procedure |

| | |
|---------|--|
| SRCC | Special Representative of the Chair of the AU Commission |
| SMSG | Special Representative of the Secretary General (UN) |
| SSF | SADC Standby Force |
| SSR | Security Sector Reform |
| STCDSS | Special Technical Committee on Defence Safety and Security |
| STEPP | Strategic Education Planning and policy |
| TCC | Troop Contributing Countries |
| TOE | Table of Organisation and Equipment |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMSIL | United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone |
| UNEF | United Nations Emergency Force |
| UNOSOM | United Nations Operation in Somalia |
| UNITAF | United Task Force |
| UNMISS | United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| UNSOM | United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia |
| WARN | West Africa Early Warning Network |
| WHAM | Winning Hearts and Minds |

1

Introduction

Francois Vrej¹ & Thomas Mandrup¹

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been undergoing constant development since the establishment of the African Union (AU) itself officially in 2002 in Durban. The results have thus far been mixed in the sense that, whereas the AU was deemed successful in establishing institutions like the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) only two years after the establishment of the AU in 2002,² the implementation of the other elements of the APSA has been slower, and less convincing.³

Different attitudes to the nature and roles of the AU in African conflicts continue to characterise the slow and differential progress of the APSA and brought about its own set of tensions in how to merge the human security and state or regime security agendas. In essence one finds laudable goals of being liberal and human rights driven pitted against leaders with security and interest driven agendas more often than not dominating the agenda. AU member states persistently argue for “African solutions to African problems”, but continue to rely on international actors to finance and facilitate the preferred “African solutions”. Whether this is a mere consequence of global responses to global threats to international security is a question of opinion, but one also open to academic inquiry. Difficulties facing the AU’s Rapid Deployment Capability⁴ pathway, alternative thought and competing institutions, as well as slow progress or regression in the regional communities, collectively call for closer scrutiny in the aftermath of repeated failures to meet AU instituted time-lines.

In spite of calls for Full Operational Capability (FOC) of the AU’s rapid reaction forces, and setting of repeated time-frames, non-compliance with the corresponding operational goal posts set by the AU persists and still constitutes a challenge. Competitive and exclusionary agendas hinder the desired progress towards combat ready African Standby Forces (ASF) for the AU. The discussions offered here frame and explain important inconsistencies operating at the institutional, regional and

national levels. They play a collective role in the AU not achieving the envisaged 2010 and 2015 objectives of operational capabilities through ASF arrangements. In spite of a clear declaratory AU stance on future objectives for the ASF, operational arrangements at the regional and national levels in particular remain out of step with the time-line and rapid deployment status envisaged by the AU. Both institutional as well as regional matters serve to explain slow progress and overall perception of non-compliance. The discussions first attend to the conceptual inconsistencies operating at institutional levels, before moving to an explanation of difficulties at the regional level where standby arrangements and readiness levels fall victim to sets of local dynamics in the respective regional communities.

THE AFRICAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Collaboration within the area of security was from the outset one of the cornerstones underpinning the economic integration of Africa. It was seen as a way of creating the necessary peace and stability to provide room for economic growth and development. It was also important for the dominant states on the continent in the sense that the institutionalisation of relations is always a means of stabilising and disseminating a particular order. Such institutions invariably depict the power relations prevailing at the time of their establishment, which can, however, change over time.⁵ Through the Cairo decision of 1993 the members of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had expressed the ambition that that organisation, and consequently from 2002 the AU, should be able to deal effectively with the mounting challenge of conflict and destabilisation that afflicts the continent.⁶

The establishment of the AU in 2002 also signalled a paradigmatic shift in the way that the continental body envisioned acting upon and viewing security-related issues in the future. Moving away from non-interference to a principle, at least in theory, of non-indifference became a popular but difficult change factor in the continental outlook.⁷ Two sets of principles – state centric and human security – were set to underpin the new organisation, principles that were not necessarily compatible. The AU Constitutive Act called for a common vision of “a united and strong Africa”,⁸ while at the same time it acknowledged the obstacles this “development and integration agenda”⁹ faced as a result of conflict and underdevelopment. The AU’s main objective was to “achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the people of Africa”.¹⁰ This was to be done by introducing new principles in the field of peace and security and by ensuring respect for human rights. The AU Constitutive Act also introduced a number of principles that were heavily influenced by the widened

concept of security to include softer and non-military issues as part of the (in-) security discourse. The Constitutive Act therefore stressed the principles of peaceful resolution of conflicts and non-use of force as one of the barring principles in the future AU.¹¹

The new human security discourse that accompanied the AU Constitutive Act included norms of respect for human rights, sanctity of human life and democratic principles, and good governance. This was significant in the sense that it accentuated principles that member states signed up to, requiring of them to reform domestically and to comply with these principles. In addition to establishing the rejection of impunity and unconstitutional changes of governments as fundamental principles on the continent, the AU was given the right to intervene in a member state in the case of grave circumstances. All the above principles signal that the AU, and thereby the member states on the continent, has taken a step away from the African past of the Westphalian logic of non-interference.¹²

However, there remains a tension between these new principles and the Westphalian principles in the sense that they are included in the same document, and African states through their leaders have been divided on how to interpret and prioritise these somewhat contradictory principles. The authoritarian regimes (for example, Sudan and Zimbabwe) tend to focus on the (regime's) right to non-interference and self-determination, while the reform-minded states, led by South Africa amongst others, stress principles of peaceful resolution of disputes, good governance and rule of law. The resultant tension has been visible in the setting up of the security architecture and responses of the AU to threats to peace and security. On a positive note the AU has, compared to its predecessor the OAU, been more active in attempting to settle conflicts and deploy peacekeepers to secure post-conflict situations. However, in its responses so far the AU has shown that while it has some capacity in military deployments, there are capability deficiencies where deployments are more often than not dependent on external support and funding.¹³ This external dependency remains unresolved, a focus of debates, and an issue defying a simplistic overarching solution.

THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE: PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The July 2002 establishment of the ASF was the culmination of a long process in which African states had expressed the ambition of creating a military capacity and thus of providing themselves with a tool to deal with and manage conflicts on the continent. Article 13 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC as one of the AU's institutions stated that:

“In order to enable the Peace and Security Council to perform its responsibilities with respect to the deployment of peace support missions and intervention pursuant to Article 4(h) and (j) of the Constitutive Act, an African Stand-by Force shall be established. Such a Force shall be composed of Stand-by multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and be ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice.”¹⁴

It was therefore stipulated that the ASF should include standby multi-disciplinary components with civilian, police and military components located in home countries.

Each of the AU’s five economic regions (not identical to the existing sub-regional organisations in Africa) became responsible for setting up an extended brigade-size formation of up to 6 000 military and civilian personnel. The first phase of the formation ran until June 2005. In Phase 2, from 2005 to 2010, the AU and its regions were scheduled to build capacities enabling them to handle situations like the ones outlined in scenarios 5–6 listed below. The AU developed early on six scenarios describing the types of missions that it expected to be deployed on. The following six missions and scenarios to be achieved by 2010 informed the ASF structure:

- ◆ *Scenario 1:* AU/regional military advice to a political mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate resolution.
- ◆ *Scenario 2:* AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN Mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate resolution.
- ◆ *Scenario 3:* Stand-alone AU/regional observer mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate resolution.
- ◆ *Scenario 4:* AU/regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peace building). Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate resolution.
- ◆ *Scenario 5:* AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers. ASF completed deployment required within 90 days of an AU mandate resolution, with the military component being able to deploy within 30 days.
- ◆ *Scenario 6:* AU intervention, for example in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly. Here it is envisaged that the AU would have the capability to deploy a robust military force within 14 days.

Furthermore, the first road map plan for the ASF stipulates that in the case of genocide (scenario 6), the ASF contingents must be able to deploy within two weeks,

and not the 30 days required for the military component of traditional Peace Support Operations (PSO) missions. This means that brigade HQ capacity and logistic support must be in place at all times, i.e. the ASF structure needs its own permanent logistical capacity in order to be able to deploy within this timeframe. It is moreover acknowledged that individual members – in effect certain regional powers – are the only states possessing this capacity.¹⁵

In 2009 the concept of Rapid Deployment Capabilities (RDC) was introduced by AU members, partly to be able to live up to the ambition in scenario 6, which requires a 14-day deployment time. The existing ASF brigades did not have that capability and it was also realised that, because of the difficulties of setting up standby brigades, it would be easier to set up national standby RDCs – one in each region.¹⁶ The RDC went from being a supplement in the ASF structure to being the key element, but one showing limited progress. A number of AU member states in 2013 decided to establish the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) as a temporary measure until the RDC and ASF concepts have reached full operational capability.¹⁷ The ACIRC doctrine is in many ways a more functional and operational structure than the ASF's RDC ambitions, because it cuts across the existing regional structures and refers directly to the continental AU level.¹⁸ ACIRC holds the potential to be more responsive to AU needs and a lesser drag as its funding derives from voluntary participation by African states and sharing of the costs and other burdens.¹⁹

It was realised early in the process of setting up the standby brigade structure that if the AU and its regions were to be able to live up to the ambition of intervening with military capabilities in crisis situations within a short response time, there was a need for a supplementary structure within the existing ASF brigade model. The AU Commission therefore created the RDC concept, consisting of self-contained battalion-sized nationally owned units. In East Africa, for example, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have set up national RDCs for the use of the East African Standby Force. The concept envisages the establishment of a rapidly deployable, robust capability within each region. The capability needs to be flexible in its composition and capable of reacting to urgent situations with the right tools on 14 days' notice. The RDC by its very nature is a reaction capability, and will be replaced by a regular follow-on PSO force. As part of developing and operationalising the RDC concept a number of elements was identified by 2011 for the ASF structure to reach Full Operational Capability (FOC) by December 2015. The Road Map III plan of action argued that the following concerns must be dealt with:

- ◆ The AU should organise a roster to ensure that at any one time there will be two different regions providing this standby capability, through a cycle of training and standby and, where necessary, deployment and recovery.
- ◆ Each of the regions has developed RDCs to a greater or lesser extent.²⁰ What is now required is refinement of the concept, harmonisation where there are issues that need to be harmonised, and detailed operational planning between the AU and REC/RMs on deployment and logistic planning.
- ◆ It is recommended that the RDC concept should be tested, evaluated and made operational by 2012.²¹

One of the problems facing the ASF system, including the RDCs, is different perceptions on the distribution of power and roles between the regional and continental levels. The AU would like to be responsible for the doctrinal development and training. However, it lacks the capacity to do so and this has furthermore been met with resistance from the regions. Are the ASF/RDC structures something that the regions set up for the use of the AU, or are they forces that are controlled by the regions? Either way, regional RDCs reflect difficulties and complexities generally not unknown in the history of setting up and employment of rapid deployment forces.²² The ASF, or even ACIRC for that matter, are not exempt from such difficulties in their creation, sustainment and deployments. Rapid deployment forces face uncertainty, dangerous missions, high-intensity operations and generally missions that sap their institutional, psychological and physical make-up.

This chapter informs and sets the research frame for the individual chapters. The different authors have been asked to relate to the question of full FOC of the AU ASF-forces. Is it possible for a group of states, where many of them suffer from different levels of state fragility themselves, to set up an effective standby capability, and thereby providing the AU and its member states an effective tool for achieving the ambitions of “African Solutions to African Problems”? The different authors have been asked to address this question from different angles, but related to this basic question. The benchmark for the concept of FOC is AU’s formulated sets of standards and ambitions, which each chapter uses as a reference. This allows for a general conclusion in the end, answering the stated question.

Two broad themes inform the following chapters: first, aspects relevant to bringing about particular institutions and capabilities within the APSA and the complexities it raises, and, secondly, overviews of progress or stasis in four selected regions. For the latter, Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa and North Africa are covered as they

present a combination of progress, stasis and sources of information that made their coverage possible. Unfortunately such coverage and information were not readily forthcoming for Central Africa and this leaves a void in the regional contributions sought by this publication.

Chapter One by Michelle Nel and Pieter Brits (Stellenbosch University) employs the legal basis for intervention and posits a dissonance between the AU's non-indifference and non-intervention stances. By shifting to non-indifference, it appears that the AU claims powers that seem to supersede those of the UN. The shift from non-interference towards non-indifference took place with the launch of the AU, replacing the OAU, in 2002. The Constitutive Act of the AU, authorising intervention in the internal affairs of member states under certain prescribed conditions, was followed by a Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSCAU) in July 2002 (PSC Protocol). This protocol established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), a framework inter alia providing for an African Standby Force to enable the AU to carry out its mandate. The aforementioned shift to non-indifference was even more remarkable considering that not even the UN has such far-reaching powers. Therefore, can a supranational organisation like the AU thus overrule the UN, especially if the UN Charter determines that in the event of any conflict between the obligations of states in terms of the Charter and any other international agreement, the Charter must take precedence?

In Chapter Two Thomas Mandrup (Stellenbosch University & Royal Danish Defence College) questions the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union as the UN-styled peace operations concept and instruments are perceived as out of step with the realities of African armed threats. The AU has come to realise that it is more often than not confronted with an asymmetric opponent, requiring a mandate and military tools different to those preferred in traditional UN-led PSOs. For this reason, the AU is determined to set up robust rapid response capabilities across the continent and has already deployed military contingents to several African conflict zones. However, what is the consequence of the AU's increased use of force to stop or prevent conflict, and what results might this have for future mandates of UN PSOs in Africa if the AU employs more robust and intrusive styled missions that the UN mandates allow?

Taking the debate forward, Chapter Three by Cedric De Coning (Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI), Irene Limo, James Machakaire (ACCORD) and Jidifor Okeke (AU) highlights the growing presence of civilian components and in AU missions in particular. The authors underline the progress, but low awareness of

the role of a civilian component in missions such as Somalia and the Central African Republic (CAR). Different perceptions reign on whether the civilian component is necessary or if missions are about military and hard security matters with little room for civilian contributions. The AU is unclear on this component, although it is catered for in the ASF Civilian Policy Framework. Civilian participation is not opposed, has increased in spite of uncertainty, and offers scope for assessment of its contributions within AU/ASF missions.

In keeping with requirements for expertise and professional services to rapid deployment forces, Gideon van Dyk (Stellenbosch University) and Roscoe Kasujja (Makarere University) enquire in Chapter Four about the absence of the international practice of assisting soldiers on peace missions through military psychology. The chapter conceptualises combat readiness and analyses the factors that will challenge combat readiness levels and the state of mind of ASF soldiers. In this vein current developments in Africa bring to bear dangerous security challenges to military forces, and ASF brigades are not exempt. Complexities and dangers of future operations (as demonstrated in Somalia, Nigeria, Mali and the Sudan) are bound to test the combat readiness levels of ASF soldiers, and of those involved in future rapid deployment operations even more so. The lingering demand is to develop, support and sustain combat readiness through professional military psychological services for the ASF and its rapid deployment forces in particular.

Chapter Five by Eeben Barlow (Chairman of STEPP International) offers a practitioner's view, gained from practical field experiences while working in the private security industry in Africa. This contribution steers away from the academic theories underpinning most chapters in favour of operational experiences. Unless countries on the continent co-operate and share common values and goals, they risk losing out to those who seek Africa's demise. Africa's leaders need to reach consensus on their nations' futures, their values and the direction they intend to take politically, economically and socially. The continent's leadership must translate their visions into action, and embed them in the AU. The status quo is problematic and conflict-prone, giving rise to the ASF as well as ACIRC, reflecting the inability of the continent's law enforcement agencies and national armed forces to fulfil their mandates. Alongside an apparent weakness, the AU's unwillingness or inability to engage in preventive and coercive diplomacy in the embryonic stages of conflict, threats escalate rapidly. Driven by political and military will and guided by actionable and predicted intelligence, the ASF represents a future asset that can be deployed to deter, intervene, contain and/or neutralise contemporary threats.

In Chapter Six Malte Brosig (University of the Witwatersrand) and Norman Sempijja (North West University) address ACIRC and review some of the challenges rapid response is encountering. They outline the development of rapid response mechanisms as a way to overcome the slow and often frustrating timelines of traditional peacekeeping reactions. Sovereignty and non-interference for a long time have been near sacrosanct concepts, this despite mass atrocities, war crimes and even genocides occurring. However, in the post-Cold War era the need to make states more accountable for internal matters has become compelling. One instrument of stopping gross human rights abuses like war crimes and genocide has been to set up rapid intervention tools within international organisations. Indeed traditional peacekeeping has often been slow and insufficient in halting these crimes as deployment times are long. A number of efforts to institutionalise rapid intervention have been put in place, such as the EU battlegroups, the UN Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), the AU's ASF and most recently ACIRC. All of these instruments have been problematic to some extent.

Anthoni van Nieuwkerk (University of the Witwatersrand) turns the attention in Chapter Seven to the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Making and keeping of the peace – and rebuilding broken states and communities – are a task for Africa and reflect a timeline of growth. The AU introduced a new approach and energy to challenge its predecessor's lethargy. It established the African Standby Force as part of a comprehensive approach entitled the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Following the principle of subsidiarity, Africa's various regions and regional bodies were given complementary tasks in conflict management. In the case of Southern Africa, the SADC in 2008 established a SADC Standby Force (SADC SF or SSF). Leaving aside the question of the effectiveness and efficiency of the APSA and ASF, this chapter examines the state of readiness of the SADC to address conflict in the context of the broader regional challenges of poverty alleviation and development. Initial progress was encouraging, but SADC had to contend with aspects that drained away attention as competing priorities such as differential strategic cultures and South Africa's inherent capability, but unwillingness, to assume a lead role collectively acted as a brake on bringing about an operational regional RDC.

Chapter Eight by Mustapha Abdallah and Joana Osei-Tutu (Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Centre) reviews the rapid response brigade of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Originally established as a regional integration scheme, ECOWAS was transformed from an economic into a political-security organisation to respond to multiple security challenges. Through its Peace and

Security Architecture, ECOWAS is mandated to prevent, manage and restore peace and security through peace support operations and peace-building interventions. A critical component of the architecture is the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF). As one of the five building blocks of the ASF, the ESF is crafted to respond to crisis situations in West Africa and contribute to the ASF as a continental response mechanism. Although the ECOWAS architecture with its standby force, in its current status (2016), is arguably well developed, the emergence of violent extremist and terrorist groups, especially in mission theatres, has the potential to hinder the ESF and ASF to effectively respond to conflict situations. This raises critical questions, such as to what extent are ECOWAS structures, particularly its Standby Force, ready and capable to respond to regional threats in West Africa?

Chapter Nine is by Musambai Katumanga (Nairobi University). He attends to East Africa and the case of the East Africa Standby Force (EASF) in particular. Several contingents from the EASF milieu are engaged in peacekeeping and enforcement under both multilateral and state-centric initiatives. The fact that none are deployed under the auspices of the East Africa subsystem's security architecture points to both challenges and the need for creating a durable FOC within the EASF. This chapter reviews the process while describing its current geopolitical, economic, strategic and security dilemmas. The chapter builds upon the impact of the apparent military overstretch of EASF core states when it comes to force generation, readiness and financial sustenance in relation to achieving FOC for the EASF. While the existence of multiple economic and military asymmetries provide a challenge for the security architecture, if innovatively exploited, they can serve as platforms for constructing a viable regional security architecture.

Mohamed Hatem Elatawy (Cairo Centre for Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution in Africa) contributes in Chapter Nine by discussing the progress of the North African Regional Capability (NARC). Given the recent events in North Africa, an operational North African mechanism would have been the logical vehicle for regional action. However, instead of playing this role the regional setup specifically designed by the ASF suffered a setback because of disruptive developments in some North African countries. The chapter reviews how the NARC was established as the regional mechanism for North Africa within the APSA as opposed to the defunct Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) that was not integrated. It will also outline the initial expectations from the NARC proportionate to the military, political and economic capabilities of some of its member states. The initial steps taken to operationalise NARC will be reviewed, as well as the challenges that followed its establishment,

especially after the upheavals in North Africa in 2010/2011. Current attempts to revitalise the NARC and a future outlook conclude this chapter.

Violent African conflicts feature side by side with extensive institutional growth, planning activities, hyper- coordination, intricate deployment schedules and eventual employment of dedicated or hybrid African intervention forces. In all cases African governments are primary catalysts for the success or failure of the use of coercion in all its different forms to attain mostly political outcomes. African threat complexities are increasingly mirrored in the difficulties raised by multinational intervention forces and, added to this, one finds the intricacies of setting up and using multinational rapid deployment capabilities compounding the difficulties. Adding regional idiosyncrasies of co-operation and competition, African decision-makers are faced with home-grown difficulties. The resultant complexities lead to a crucial crossroads of turning to simpler but more unilateral RDC forces such as ACIRC or continuing down the very difficult pathway of regional ASF brigades to uphold the RDC status quo that the AU embarked upon.

ENDNOTES

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- 21 African Union. 4th Ordinary Meeting of Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security. Preparatory Meeting of experts and 6th Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defense Staff and Heads of Security and Safety Services. Progress report on the status of the operationalization of the African Standby Force. 3–7 December 2010. Addis Ababa. p 1. This test only happened as part of the combined AMANI II exercise in 2015.
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2

A Legal Basis for Legitimate AU Deployments: A Cautionary Tale

Michelle Nel¹ & Pieter Brits¹

BACKGROUND

Although the first joint field training exercise of the African Standby Force (ASF) started in South Africa on 19 October 2015,² the idea of a joint military force for the continent enjoyed support even before the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. Already in 1961 the Casablanca group of African states,³ under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, advocated the creation of a federation of African states with joint institutions and a joint military command with powers not only to defend African States but also to intervene in inter-state as well as intra-state conflicts.⁴ Despite assurances that intervention in internal conflicts would take place only on invitation of the host state, the majority of states present at the establishment of the OAU remained wary of any imposition on their new-found independence.⁵ Preference was given to the gradualist approach of the Brazzaville group⁶ (later the Monrovia group), who advocated a looser unity with the emphasis on national sovereignty, and states opted for a far less authoritative OAU Defence Commission instead.⁷

In October 1963, at the first meeting of the OAU Defence Commission in Accra, the Ghanaian delegation presented an elaborate proposal for a unified military structure with a Joint Supreme Military Command Headquarters as well as four Joint Services Regional Headquarters for the four free regions of Africa (North, East, Central and West).⁸ Once again Nkrumah's proposal was rejected, due to concerns that a unified military structure would jeopardise states' independence.⁹ Although the idea of a unified continental military force flared up from time to time, states preferred to rather concentrate on greater economic co-operation.¹⁰

The tide started to turn in the early 1990s.¹¹ The end of the Cold War in 1991 and the consequent withdrawal of the superpowers from Africa sparked an unprecedented increase in violent conflicts on the continent,¹² threatening the goals of the recently concluded 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.¹³ The challenges posed by these armed conflicts led to the establishment of an OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in 1993, paving the way for the future creation of the ASF.¹⁴ Despite its good intentions the Mechanism proved ineffective to, among others, halt the genocide in Rwanda (1994), to stop the civil wars in Sierra Leone (1991–2002) and Liberia (1990–1997), or to put an end to the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1994–2003).¹⁵ While inadequate financial resources played a role, it should be noted that the OAU's continued endorsement of the principle of non-intervention without the consent of the host state proved to be fatal to the adequate addressing of human rights abuses.¹⁶

An opportunity to address the shortcomings presented itself at the end of the millennium, when on 8 and 9 September 1999 a record of 43 heads of state and government gathered in Sirte, Libya, to discuss the establishment of a “United States of Africa” with its own central bank, military and parliament.¹⁷ The meeting led to the adoption of the Sirte Declaration,¹⁸ which provided for the establishment of the African Union (AU).¹⁹

The legal unit of the OAU thereupon drafted the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU Act),²⁰ followed by three further summits: the Lomé Summit (2000), which adopted the AU Act;²¹ the Lusaka Summit (2001), which drew up the plan for the implementation of the AU;²² and finally the Durban Summit (2002), which launched the AU.²³

The period preceding the formation of the AU was characterised by two serious human tragedies: the Rwandan Genocide (1994) and the Bosnian War (1992–1995), which reached its peak with the Srebrenica Genocide.²⁴ Following these events, the international community began to seriously debate how to react effectively in the event of gross human rights violations. The growing international concern and consequent importance attached to human rights was also reflected in the AU Act.²⁵

While the OAU was not perceived as a collective security organisation and its Charter hardly contained any provision in this regard,²⁶ the AU Act introduced huge normative changes in the areas of peace and security, human rights, democracy and intervention.²⁷ The objectives clause, Article 3, provides for the promotion and protection of “peace, security and stability on the continent”,²⁸ the promotion of

“democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance”,²⁹ and the promotion and protection of “human and peoples’ rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and other relevant human rights instruments”.³⁰ The principles clause, Article 4, provides for the promotion of “gender equality, respect for democratic principles, human rights, the Rule of Law and good governance”³¹ as well as “respect for the sanctity of human life”.³² Member States that fail to adhere to these standards may be subjected to sanctions.³³

None of the changes were as drastic as Article 4(h) and 4(j), which introduced the right to intervene in a Member State. While Article 4(h) deals with intervention by the AU on its own initiative, Article 4(j) deals with intervention by the AU on request of Member States. Article 4(h) limits intervention to three “grave circumstances”, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Article 4(j), which provides for “the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union to restore peace and security”, should not be confused with the OAU’s “intervention upon invitation of the guest state”. Any Member State or group of Member States can request the Assembly of the AU to intervene in any situation that may disturb peace and security, irrespective whether it is of intra-state or inter-state nature.³⁴ This opens the scope for intervention considerably.

On a procedural level intervention will be subject to approval by the Assembly, which makes decisions by consensus, failing which a two-thirds majority of eligible Member States is required.³⁵ It should be noted that while the crimes mentioned in Article 4(h) had already been defined by the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which came into operation during the same month that the AU was launched in Durban, the AU Act itself contains no guidelines to clarify the “situations” mentioned in Article 4(j).³⁶ Concerns were raised with the proposed Amendment Protocol to the Constitutive Act, expanding the grounds for intervention to include “a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability in the Member State of the Union ...”, which is regarded by some as a means of a regime to hold on to power where its citizenry is forcing change,³⁷ but this view has not yet enjoyed wide support in the literature. It is, however, a concern that warrants some consideration against the background of African states’ history of keeping regimes in power in spite of the existence of grounds for intervention.³⁸ Article 4(h) is not the only potential challenge. The absence of definitions of the “situations” in Article 4(j) may lead to instances where unclear grounds are used as an excuse not to intervene due to a lack of political will – dressed up and excused as unclear guidelines.

The movement from non-interference or non-intervention to non-indifference has been described as “groundbreaking” and a “paradigmatic shift ... from state security to human security”.³⁹ According to Kioko, it is a movement from non-interference or non-intervention to what can be referred to as the doctrine of “non-indifference”.⁴⁰ It becomes even more remarkable when realising that, unlike the AU, the UN itself has no institutional right to intervene in Member States’ domestic conflicts.⁴¹ Article 2(7) of the UN Charter clearly states: “Nothing in the present Charter shall authorise the UN to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.”

At first sight the right to intervene created in Articles 4(h) and 4(j) may appear to be contradictory to Article 4(f), which prohibits use of force or threat to use force among Member States, and Article 4(j), which prohibits the interference of any Member State in the internal affairs of another. In trying to explain this dichotomy, Abass & Baderin argue that the distinction lies in the nature of the persona that may not interfere. Although Member States are restricted in accordance with the customary international law principle of non-intervention, Article 4(h) awards a right to the AU itself to intervene, turning the AU into a supra-national organisation with greater powers than the component States that established it.⁴² Article 4(h) thus establishes a right to intervene on a collective basis, rather than a unilateral basis.⁴³ This argument does not, however, satisfactorily address this contradiction.

The absence of any legal requirement to obtain UN Security Council permission for intervention in terms of Article 4(h),⁴⁴ a point initially keenly emphasised by AU members,⁴⁵ raised the question whether the AU could possibly have an inherent right to intervene outside the UN framework.⁴⁶ Chapter VII of the UN Charter provides for the Security Council to take enforcement action in cases of a threat to or breach of international peace and security. Article 53 of the UN Charter states: “The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilise such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorisation of the Security Council.” Considering that the AU is classified by the UN as a regional organisation,⁴⁷ Article 53 determines that no enforcement action can be undertaken without approval of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Article 103 of the UN Charter is also clear that in the event of any conflict between the obligations of States in terms of the Charter and any other international agreement, the Charter must take precedence. This means that even if Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act

does not explicitly require UN authorisation, the AU does in fact have to obtain authorisation in terms of Article 53 of the Charter.⁴⁸

Although the past is not free from examples of intervention without previous UNSC approval, it is submitted that these examples are very limited in number and by no means represent international state practice. In 1999 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) intervened in Kosovo. In answer to allegations that the intervention was illegal the United States Secretary of State invoked the doctrine on humanitarian intervention as an alternative source of legitimisation.⁴⁹ In spite of using the need for humanitarian intervention as justification, the Kosovo Commission still found that the NATO intervention was “illegal but legitimate”.⁵⁰ A similar justification was offered when the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened in Liberia in 1991 and in Sierra Leone in 1999.⁵¹ While it seems that the UNSC never seriously objected to the usurping of its powers and various explanations have been offered,⁵² it is also true that no one considered it a serious threat to the continued existence of the Security Council’s role as protector of international peace and security.

Despite the fact that as late as April 2005 it still claimed that it did not need to adhere to the letter of Article 53 of the UN Charter, but could obtain approval ‘after the fact’ in urgent circumstances, the AU to date has not yet invoked Article 4(h) to override the will of a sovereign government.⁵³ It has sought UN Security Council support for all its missions and not only for “enforcement action”.⁵⁴

Rather than being a challenge to Article 53 of the UN Charter and the authority of the UNSC, Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the AU Act reflected a perceived sense of frustration with the UNSC’s bureaucratic procedures and the lack of a mechanism that could be utilised towards speedy resolution of conflicts on the continent.⁵⁵

With the normative framework in place, the next step was the development of an institutional framework to enable the AU to carry out its mandate. This was done through the adoption of a Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSCAU) in July 2002⁵⁶ (PSC Protocol). The PSC Protocol established a framework known as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), consisting of the AU Peace and Security Council as central institution supported by a Panel of the Wise, a Continental Early Warning System, an African Standby Force and a Military Staff Committee.⁵⁷

The AU PSC, established to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa,⁵⁸ consists of 15 members⁵⁹ and functions as the standing

decision-making organ of the AU tasked with the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.⁶⁰ The Council, which exercises its powers in conjunction with the Chairperson of the AU, may anticipate and prevent potential disputes, undertake peace-making and peace-building actions, authorise the deployment of peace support missions, support and facilitate humanitarian action where necessary, and recommend to the AU Assembly intervention in a Member State pursuant to Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the AU Act.⁶¹

To enable the Peace and Security Council to carry out its responsibilities with respect to the deployment of peacekeeping missions and intervention pursuant to Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the AU Act, the PSC Protocol provides for the establishment of an African Standby Force⁶² as well as a Military Staff Committee to advise and assist the Council on all questions relating to military and security requirements.⁶³

In terms of Article 13(1) of the PSC Protocol the ASF shall be composed of “standby multidisciplinary components, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin”. Although it may contain a small permanent component with its headquarters in Addis Ababa,⁶⁴ it is important to note that the ASF is not a fully centralised Pan-African army as envisaged by Kwame Nkrumah, but is built around an African version of the UN Standby Arrangement Systems in terms of which States select and prepare specific units for AU operations and keep them ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice.⁶⁵ The Force itself is provided by five Regional Capabilities, a brigade each from the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the East Africa Standby Force, the Economic Community of Central African States and North Africa. The five regional headquarters together with their planning elements collaborate with the AU’s Peace Support Operations Directorate (PSOD) to act as clearinghouses for national contributions and ensure interoperability as well as common training standards.⁶⁶

The PSC Protocol sets out the function for the ASF,⁶⁷ which found voice in the Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and the Military Staff Committee (ASF-MSM) Part I in the form of six possible scenarios.⁶⁸ The possible ASF mission scenarios are as follows:

- ◆ Scenario 1: AU/Regional advice to a political mission.
- ◆ Scenario 2: AU/Regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission.
- ◆ Scenario 3: Stand-alone AU/Regional observer mission.
- ◆ Scenario 4: AU/Regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and other preventive deployment missions.

- ◆ Scenario 5: AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping mission with low-level spoilers.
- ◆ Scenario 6: AU intervention in cases of grave circumstances where the international community does not comply.

Scenarios 1 to 5 do not deviate from the type of missions the AU have historically been involved in. These scenarios mainly relate to peace support and would generally be in line with the prescripts of the UN Charter.⁶⁹ These are also the type of operations easily justifiable in terms of international law. In general the PSC Protocol acknowledges the UNSC's supremacy in taking responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.⁷⁰ More importantly though, it retains responsibility for peace-making and peace-building functions on the continent, while still acknowledging the respect for the sovereignty of Member States and non-interference in the internal affairs by any Member State.⁷¹ Taking responsibility for Africa's peace and security, even where the UN does not agree with the intervention is, as stated, *prima facie* contrary to the UN Charter.⁷² Therefore, deployment of the ASF in scenario 6 instances is more challenging to justify. This scenario refers to the Article 4(h) instances where specifically defined circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, trigger an intervention.⁷³ Unlike the other five scenarios, this scenario does not necessarily require UN authorisation before the ASF is deployed. This raises the question of whether these types of deployments would be regarded as legal and legitimate.

THE LEGAL BASIS FOR INTERVENTION

To answer this question it is necessary to analyse the legal basis for the AU's interventionist approach. The African formalisation of a right to humanitarian intervention not only represented a major qualitative deviation from the approach of the OAU, with its emphasis on non-intervention and territorial sovereignty of its members,⁷⁴ but it also accentuated the underlying tension between state security and human security,⁷⁵ that was so accurately described by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan:

“We confront a real dilemma. Few would disagree that both the defence of humanity and the defence of sovereignty are principles that must be supported. Alas that does not tell us which principle should prevail when they are in conflict.”⁷⁶

Humanitarian intervention is not a recent concept in international law, having found acceptance as early as the 1800s.⁷⁷ During the ages, however, especially after the advent

of the UN Charter, humanitarian intervention has become a controversial concept.⁷⁸ Considering the fact that the Charter was adopted in the wake of the Second World War, it is no surprise that the Charter was drafted with the absolute prohibition on the use of force against the “territorial integrity and political independence” of any of its Member States.⁷⁹ The sovereign integrity of states was paramount. State sovereignty in this context referred to concerns in the protection of the state’s interests. Traditionally the manner in which the state treated its citizens was regarded as a domestic issue and therefore fell outside international jurisdiction.⁸⁰ States had no authority to interfere in each other’s domestic matters. Allowing any use of force in another’s territory, even for a lofty goal of humanitarian concern, created the possibility of an abuse of power. Chen postulates that “humanitarian intervention is a weapon for the powerful and is highly susceptible to abuse and misuse.”⁸¹

A number of international humanitarian atrocities and the UN’s inability to stop them resulted in a paradigm shift towards accepting the need for intervention. The Canadian government took the lead in creating an Independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) to answer the question posed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan:

“[I]f humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity.”⁸²

The resulting report that coined the concept “Responsibility to Protect”⁸³ (R2P) in its title redefined the concept of “sovereignty” from sovereignty to control to sovereignty as responsibility.⁸⁴ In terms of this redefined concept states as responsible members of the international community carry the responsibility to protect the people within their borders. It acknowledges that international order is still best maintained by non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states, but R2P adds the characteristic of “respect for human rights” in its understanding of sovereignty as a concept.⁸⁵ If a state is therefore unwilling or unable to protect its people, the responsibility shifts to the broader international community.⁸⁶ Massingham articulates R2P best where he states that “R2P effectively makes a promise to the world’s most vulnerable people that when their own governments fail them, the international community will intervene to protect them.”⁸⁷ This promise echoes those made by African nations after the Rwanda genocide glaringly exposed the shortcomings in the OAU’s non-interventionist approach.

It is important to note that R2P remains a policy document and does not have the legal weight of a treaty. It did not change the legal doctrine of non-intervention that permeates the UN Charter. It also did not legitimise the use of force, even for humanitarian reasons. R2P may be morally legitimate but cannot be seen as a legal use of force.⁸⁸ Although it has received extensive support from the international community,⁸⁹ it is still regarded by some as a “loose policy narrative in the UN Charter [that] vaguely encourages international institutions ... to intervene ... in order to protect civilians against regimes alleged to be committing human rights abuses”.⁹⁰ This perception is strengthened by Africa’s experiences of mass atrocities in a number of states over a period of decades, underscored by the UN’s inability to intervene. Since Africa could not depend on the UN to solve its peace and security challenges it has taken up the challenge in its Constitutive Act.

It is acknowledged that the AU Act reflects Africa’s acceptance and incorporation of the R2P principle.⁹¹ The African version of this principle finds expression in the “non-indifference” principle and the AU is the only international and regional organisation that officially prescribes this principle for its members.⁹² By incorporating the principle in its Constitutive Act, the AU attempted to create a legal basis for interventions in Member States in situations of grave breaches or by request from a Member State.⁹³ In contradiction, a number of Articles in the Constitutive Act seemingly still support non-intervention.⁹⁴ A number of systems having been adopted within the APSA to support and enhance peace and security on the continent – the ASF being most pertinent to this discussion – it is necessary to investigate the legality in international law of possible and future use of the ASF.

As mentioned, the UN Charter does not allow for the use of force or intervention in the territory of its Member States. The general acceptance of R2P at the 60th World Summit and subsequent adoption of Resolution 1674,⁹⁵ where the UNSC officially referred to the R2P principle for the first time,⁹⁶ did not change international law in this regard. There is no international consensus on the legality of this type of humanitarian interventions – it is more a support of morality than law.⁹⁷ Since international law is based on consent, this creates quite a challenge for proposed interventions. By allowing an intervention in the territory of Member States, even without UN sanction, the AU has in effect usurped more powers than even the UN is endowed with – in spite of the fact that the AU is a regional organisation vs the supra-organisation of the UN. With the ASF as a manifestation of the AU’s means to intervene it begs the question – what is the legality of future deployments of the ASF in the instances of scenario 6 situations? Are 1–5 less problematic or unproblematic?

The first hurdle the AU needs to clear is the contradiction in its Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol regarding its understanding of support of sovereignty. While Article 3(b) and Articles 4(a), (b), (f) and (g) of the Constitutive Act and Articles 4(e)–(h) of the PSC Protocol can be regarded as pro-sovereignty, it is contradicted by Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act and Articles 4(j) and 6(d) of the PSC Protocol.⁹⁸ If one accepts the R2P interpretation of sovereignty as “sovereignty as responsibility” rather than “sovereignty to control”, the pro-sovereignty clauses can still be interpreted in such a way as to embrace the responsibility to protect since protection of citizens where the state cannot still remains true to the principle of sovereignty – albeit the sovereignty to protect.

Whether African countries in fact support the R2P interpretation of sovereignty can be contested. The AU and some of its Member States have been very critical of the UN’s R2P principles. Arguments in this regard centre on the disproportionate application of the principle to African states.⁹⁹ Even applying the R2P principles by AU Member States in the African context of non-indifference raises questions regarding acceptance of a definition of sovereignty. Not all African countries are in agreement regarding what sovereignty entails.

Witt¹⁰⁰ elaborates on the different approaches proposed by the 18 African delegations that addressed sovereignty at the 2005 World Summit. The approach to sovereignty as a responsibility was generally supported by countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Somalia and Sierra Leone.¹⁰¹ Support for sovereignty as possession (control) was expressed by countries such as Libya, Zimbabwe and Sudan.¹⁰² The divergent approaches clearly demonstrate that the AU Member States are not in agreement on the R2P sovereignty principle. The continent was eventually able to reach a common position by converging the two contested approaches in what came to be known as the *Ezulwini Consensus*.¹⁰³ Although this did not solve all contestations, its representation of “African solutions for African problems” seems to be more acceptable on the continent.¹⁰⁴

Considering the divergent understanding of sovereignty, the question can be raised whether there was a *de facto* paradigm shift from non-intervention to non-indifference. Although the pervasive opinion is that the new approach of non-indifference was indeed accepted,¹⁰⁵ Welz argues that no comparative empirical material supports this assertion. He discusses a number of instances where the AU has indeed showed a willingness to deploy in spite of a lack of resources.¹⁰⁶ The African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) as well as the peacekeeping missions in Darfur, Somalia and the Comoros reflect the AU’s willingness to ensure “peace,

security, and respect for human rights”.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately there are also a number of instances where the AU has failed to intervene, such as the situation in Zimbabwe in 2008. Welz regards this as a manifestation of some AU states’ continued support for a non-interventionist approach.¹⁰⁸ This results in situations where some AU states may still regard sovereignty in the context of sovereignty as control, unwilling to submit their sovereignty to the AU.¹⁰⁹ Although the Constitutive Act legally limits the sovereignty of its Member States, this may not necessarily reflect the *de facto* situation. “Diplomatic sensitivity” may result in a continued unofficial support of non-intervention.¹¹⁰

It is generally accepted that the “intervention” referred to in both the Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol refers to military intervention.¹¹¹ Military intervention denotes a use of force. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter is clear on its prohibition on the use of force “against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purpose of the United Nations”. There are only two exceptions to this prohibition: (1) the right to self-defence enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter; and (2) the use of force with the authorisation of the UNSC in terms of Chapter VII of the UN Charter.¹¹² A combined force will therefore be able to intervene only with the consent of the UN. The conflict between Article 4(h) and Article 53 of the UN Charter has briefly been discussed above. In no instance does the UN Charter allow for military intervention without UNSC approval.

Since Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act does not expressly require UN authorisation, it may be politically convenient for African states to turn a blind eye to requesting UN authorisation. It should be kept in mind that Africa historically has not experienced the UNSC in a positive light. When the UN Charter was adopted and the UNSC was formed, African states – at that time still labouring under colonial rule – were not adequately represented in the UN. Five superpowers received veto powers, enabling them to influence decisions and exercise their veto powers to the detriment of the African continent, leaving the continent without proper recourse. At the end of the Cold War, when their political situation created a number of conflicts on the African continent, these same superpowers failed to assist in circumstances that could partly be attributed to their political agendas. The recent deterioration of AU–UN relations only exacerbates the problem.¹¹³

In the absence of UNSC authorisation, two arguments have been raised regarding the legality of such interventions.¹¹⁴

First, it has been argued that intervention on humanitarian grounds or R2P would make such interventions legal. The discussion above has shown that the R2P, being a principle and not a treaty, did not in fact change international law. R2P can at most support an argument for moral obligation but does not make the intervention legal.

The second argument is based on the premise that intervention would be legal owing to the fact that AU Member States signed the Constitutive Act, thereby consenting to the possible use of force within their states. The concept of consent in international law is an important one. International law depends on the consent of those states that are governed by it.¹¹⁵ Accepting that AU states have consented to intervention could circumvent the prohibition against the use of force found in Article 2(4).¹¹⁶ The use of force against another state would be classified as an internationally wrongful act,¹¹⁷ but the consent of the other state in question would preclude “the wrongfulness of the act in relation to the former State to the extent that the act remains within the limits of the consent”.¹¹⁸ It is argued that by ratifying the Constitutive Act the AU Member States have consented to AU intervention, accepting limitations on their sovereignty for this purpose.¹¹⁹

Two valid questions flow from this assertion:

- ◆ Can consent to intervention be given in advance?
- ◆ Can consent, once given, be withdrawn?

The grounds for intervention envisaged by the Constitutive Act are grave breaches of human rights – war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Protection of human rights is owed to all. Kuwali¹²⁰ argues that the AU states have empowered their multinational organ, the AU, to intervene internally to prevent or end such mass atrocities. Consequently, Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act is regarded as an “*a priori* invitation in the form of a statutory intervention to prevent or halt mass atrocity crimes”.¹²¹ The AU states have therefore consented in advance to the intervention where those states allow genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.¹²² It is further an accepted principle in international law that treaties signed by current governments are enforceable on successive governments.¹²³

The exposition on consent as a legal ground for intervention is based on the widely held view that AU members readily agreed to all the terms as set out in the Constitutive Act – their unanimous adoption and swift ratification a manifestation of this agreement.¹²⁴ Witt¹²⁵ raises a persuasive argument to the contrary. She argues that the perceived consent is not a reflection of the actual truth. The subsequent developments and disagreements within the AU is a clear indication to the contrary.

A number of amendments were proposed within a year of the adoption of the Constitutive Act, a clear indication that some states did not agree with the original terms. Gadhafi was one of the Heads of States that argued that the Constitutive Act was not comprehensive enough and postulated that it was “only adopted in order to avoid delays”.¹²⁶ The overall climate of change brought about during the necessary transition from the OAU to the AU created a perception of “African unity and renewal”, which in reality lacked a consensual basis.¹²⁷ The divergent views of state sovereignty and R2P as discussed above should also be kept in mind. The lauded consent as legal ground allowing intervention in spite of the UN’s prohibition on the use of force may consequently not be as clear as originally perceived.

Where a state does not agree with the provisions of the Constitutive Act and refuses to submit to intervention and the Constitutive Act’s limitation of sovereignty, it may withdraw from the AU. The prescribed procedure for withdrawal from the Constitutive Act requires notification to the Chairperson of the AU Assembly and the state will still be subject to all its rights and duties for a period of 12 months after notification.¹²⁸ This means that even if a country attempted to prevent intervention in its sovereignty owing to grave breaches, it could still be subjected to the intervention within that 12-month period, theoretically allowing the AU – utilising the rapid deployment of the ASF – to at least stop the atrocity. After the 12-month period the AU would have to withdraw. The Constitutive Act does not allow for partial withdrawal. If a state wishes to withdraw its consent for an Article 4(h) intervention, it will have to withdraw from the whole Constitutive Act.¹²⁹

A matter of future concern may be the proposed Amendment Protocol to Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act discussed above. Once the required number of ratifications is lodged, Member States will be able to approach the AU and request assistance “to [prevent] a serious threat to legitimate order [or] to restore peace and stability in the Member State of the Union”. Considering the AU’s commitment to reject unconstitutional changes of government,¹³⁰ this stance should be lauded. It is generally accepted that such unconstitutional changes of government refer to *coups d’état*, but Witt raises a valid concern regarding “constitutional manipulations”.¹³¹ There are several instances within the AU where a serving government has changed the constitution to allow the incumbent president and government to remain in power. Human Rights Watch have reported on countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe and, most recently, President Nkurunziza of Burundi, to name a few examples. Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo similarly seeks to extend his reign, in spite of protests in Brazzaville that were met with lethal force by government forces.¹³² On whose side will the AU – possibly using the ASF – act?

In spite of muddied legal waters regarding the legality of interventionist deployments, it is no longer a question of whether the ASF should be deployed.¹³³

“Sometimes ... the use of military force may become necessary to defend human rights. But the grounds for its use in international law urgently need clarification ... Finally, the legitimacy of such use of force will always be controversial, and will remain so, so long as we intervene to protect some people’s lives and not others.”¹³⁴

The question is rather one of *when* it should be deployed. Political support of the ASF deployment is critical for legitimacy.¹³⁵ The AU is faced with a challenge in deploying its forces in the event of grave breaches (scenario 6 deployments). Although African conflicts are mostly inter-state in nature, one must accept that regional actors will always be involved. This has a very detrimental effect on regional stability.¹³⁶ It creates a quandary. Due to regional instability, intervention may be required to maintain peace and security. The AU may need to deploy the ASF, composed of a regional brigade with troop contributors from within the unstable region. Such an intervention may be very difficult to accept where neighbouring countries may have additional agendas apart from the protection of human rights. Although, as argued above, states may not be in a position to refuse the intervention, this may create a situation where the state is vehemently opposed to the intervention, resulting in the ASF in conflict with government forces and unable to execute their mandate in terms of peacekeeping.

Burundi is a case in point. Burundi has had a long history of conflict. The latest crisis resulted from President Nkurunziza’s bid for a third term in power.¹³⁷ The AU has been sending out peacekeeping missions since 2003, when AMIB deployed its first operation wholly planned and executed by the AU.¹³⁸ On 17 December 2015 the PSC recommended that a peacekeeping mission be deployed to Burundi, requesting UNSC authorisation.¹³⁹ To date the AU has not entered into any peacekeeping mission or intervention without the consent of the host country, in spite of Article 4(h) allowing it to do so. Burundi is vehemently opposed to the deployment and has argued before the 26th Ordinary Summit of the AU that they would see any move to send peacekeepers to Burundi as an invasion. On 31 January 2016, after two days of deliberations, the AU announced that it would not be deploying peacekeepers in Burundi.¹⁴⁰ This would have been the ideal opportunity for the AU to prove its commitment to human rights and non-indifference. What it has shown is a continued support for a non-interventionist mindset – realising the concerns raised above.

Arguments for the legality of interventions have been made and although international law may be vague in this regard, the history of regional deployments, with or without UN authorisation and R2P, has shown the international community's tacit acceptance of these interventions. This newest decision by the AU regarding Burundi has shown a lack of political will, analysts postulating that African nations are wary of setting a precedent of deploying troops against a state's wishes.¹⁴¹ This does not bode well for the future of humanitarian interventions on the continent. With the political will reflecting an outdated OAU mindset it would seem as if many African leaders have still not made the shift from regime security to human security. Strong political leadership is necessary to ensure decisive action in support of non-indifference.¹⁴² Unless the AU leadership shows the political will, the old culture of non-intervention will remain, limiting the ASF's effectiveness before it has the opportunity to reach its full potential beyond 2015.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Colonel Pieter Brits and Dr Michelle Nel are both affiliated researchers to SIGLA Department of Mercantile and Public Law, Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University.
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- 5 Beza, Y.T. "The 'African Solutions for African Problems': Challenges for the African Standby Force (ASF)". *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(4): 450. 2015. Also see Aneme *op cit* p 1.
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- 20 Constitutive Act of the African Union done at Lomé, Togo in 11 July 2000. The full text of the Act is available at http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ConstitutiveAct_EN.pdf [Accessed 31 October 2015].
- 21 Lomé Declaration, 36th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, Lomé, Togo. 11 July 2000. AHG/Dec.143 (XXXVI). <https://www.iccnw.org/edocuments/cssdca-solemndeclaration%5B1%5D.pdf> [Accessed 26 October 2015]. However, the AU Act itself only came into operation on 26 May 2001, one month after Nigeria became the 36th OAU Member State to ratify it.
- 22 Lusaka decision, 37th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, Lusaka, Zambia. 9–11 July 2001. AHG/Dec.1 (XXXVII). https://www.issafrica.org/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/oau/hog/11HoGAssembly2001.pdf [Accessed 30 October 2015].
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- 38 By 2013, 27 out of the required 30 States have ratified the Amendment Protocol while 47 States have signed it, indicating that it is merely a question of time before the amendment becomes operational, realising the possibility of preventing regime changes as feared – see Witt in this regard *op cit* p 17.
- 39 Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 4.
- 40 Kioko *op cit* p 819.
- 41 Abass & Baderin *op cit* p 15. Also see the discussion on Article 2(7) of the UN Charter by Kindiki *op cit* p 106.
- 42 Abass & Baderin *op cit* p 15.
- 43 Abass & Baderin *op cit* p 18.
- 44 Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 9 and Kindiki *op cit* p 108.
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- 52 Kioko *op cit* p 821.
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- 56 "Protocol relating to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union". African Union. 2002. http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/treaties/7781-file-protocol_peace_and_security.pdf [Accessed 30 November 2015].
- 57 Articles 2(2) and 8 of the PSC Protocol.
- 58 Article 2(1) of the PSC Protocol.
- 59 Ten members selected for a period of two years and five members selected for a period of three years, to ensure continuity. Article 5(1) of the PSC Protocol.
- 60 Article 2(1) of the PSC Protocol.
- 61 For a complete list of the functions of the AU Peace and Security Council, see article 7 of the PSC Protocol.
- 62 Article 13(1) of the PSC Protocol.
- 63 Article 13(8) of the PSC Protocol.
- 64 Douala in Cameroon was selected in 2011 as the site of the AU's Continental Logistics Base (LOGBASE).
- 65 Franke *op cit* p 13.
- 66 Franke *op cit* p 13.
- 67 Article 13(3) of the PSC Protocol.
- 68 ASF-MSA *op cit* p 3. Also see Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 7.
- 69 Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 9.
- 70 See the PSC Protocol preamble in this regard. The chronic shortage of funds and need for logistical support makes any deviation from the prevailing order of seeking UNSC authorisation highly unlikely. This has been the practice within the continent for the past 15 years – see Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 9.
- 71 Article 4 of the PSC Protocol.
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- 84 ICISS Report para 2.14 *op cit* p 13.
- 85 Massingham *op cit* p 805.
- 86 ICISS Report para 8.1 p 69.
- 87 Massingham *op cit* p 805.
- 88 Massingham *op cit* p 825.
- 89 See the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 30(1) 2005 World Summit Outcome, where 150 Heads of States accepted the R2P principle at the 60th World Summit. It should be noted in the context of this research that only 18 African delegations directly addressed the issues of sovereignty and intervention – see the discussion by Witt *op cit* p 19 in this regard.
- 90 Edozie, R.K. & Gottschalk, K. *The African Union’s Africa: New Pan-African Initiatives in Global Governance*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press. 2014. p 135.
- 91 Kioko *op cit* p 812; Murithi *op cit* p 16; Baimu & Sturman *op cit* p 40 and the discussion in Fogwell, S.A. “The Legality of the African Union’s Right to intervention”. Thesis presented for partial fulfilment of the LLM degree. University of Pretoria. 2013. pp 38–44.
- 92 Edozie & Gottschalk *op cit* p 135. The UN maintains a staunch non-interventionist stance for Member States.
- 93 Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the Constitutive Act.
- 94 See *inter alia* Articles 3(b), 4(a), (b), (f), and (g) of the Constitutive Act.
- 95 Resolution 1674 on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict adopted on 28 April 2006.
- 96 Massingham *op cit* p 809.

- 97 Massingham *op cit* p 814.
- 98 Also see Edozie & Gottschalk *op cit* pp 135–136.
- 99 Edozie & Gottschalk *op cit* p 136.
- 100 Witt *op cit* pp 19–21.
- 101 A number of the countries that supported this approach had a history of internal conflict, probably explaining their support for accountability of individual states “towards a greater community of states as well as ... responsibility to react in cases of grave norm violations” – see Witt *op cit* p 20.
- 102 These countries regarded R2P in purely military terms, being used as an excuse by powerful states for military intervention – see Witt *op cit* p 20.
- 103 See Witt *op cit* p 21. This approach is a compromise between those fearing military intervention by superpowers abusing the R2P principle and those urging greater responsibility and accountability.
- 104 Witt *op cit* p 21.
- 105 Kioko *op cit* p 812; Engel, U. & Porto, J.G. “The African Union and African Security”. In: Hentz, J.J. (ed). *Routledge Handbook of African Security*. London: Routledge. 2014. pp 190.
- 106 Welz, M. “From Non-interference towards Non-indifference: An Ongoing Paradigm Shift within the African Union”. In: Engel, U. & Porto J.G. (eds). *Towards an African Peace and Security Regime: Continental Embeddedness, Transnational Linkages, Strategic Relevance*. England: Ashgate Publishing. 2013. p 31.
- 107 *Ibid* p 47.
- 108 *Ibid* p 48.
- 109 *Ibid* p 51.
- 110 See *ibid* p 17.
- 111 Amvane *op cit* p 283. The military force for purposes of this discussion is the proposed ASF.
- 112 See Fogwell *op cit* p 17.
- 113 See Amvane *op cit* p 282.
- 114 Fogwell *op cit* p 19.
- 115 Lister, M. “The Legitimizing Role of Consent in International Law”. *Chicago Journal of International Law*. 2011. p 1; Guzman, A.T. “The Consent Problem in International Law”. *Berkley Program in Law and Economics, Working Paper Series*. 2011. p 4. Also see Fogwell *op cit* p 19.
- 116 Fogwell *op cit* p 20.
- 117 See Article 2 of the International Law Commission *Articles on Responsibility of States for International Wrongful Acts* 2005, where conduct is considered wrongful where it results, *inter alia*, from a breach of an international obligation of the state. http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/draft_articles/9_6_2001.pdf [Accessed 31 January 2016]. Also see Fogwell *op cit* p 22 in this regard.
- 118 Article 20 of the “Articles on Responsibility of States for International Wrongful Acts”.
- 119 Fogwell *op cit* p 23; Abass & Baderin *op cit* p 17.
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- 121 Kuwali *op cit* p 69.

- 122 Kuwali *op cit* p 70. Also see Fogwell *op cit* pp 24–26.
- 123 Dugard, J. *International Law: A South African Perspective*. 4th Edition. Cape Town: Juta. 2011. pp 427.
- 124 Witt *op cit* p 15.
- 125 Witt *op cit* pp 15–17.
- 126 Witt *op cit* p 15.
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- 128 Article 31 of the Constitutive Act. Also see Fogwell *op cit* p 27.
- 129 Fogwell *op cit* p 27.
- 130 Article 4(p) of the Constitutive Act.
- 131 Witt *op cit* p 18.
- 132 Van Woudenberg, A & Sawyer, I. “Africa’s Softer, Gentler Coups d’Etat”. *Human Rights Watch*. 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/tet/node/282986> [Accessed 31 January 2016].
- 133 Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 6 regards the ASF as one of the most important elements of the APSA, seeing it as critical in enabling the AU to intervene in situations of grave breaches. The ASF will come into action in the prevention of violent conflicts, where conflict is already under way or where needed to intervene in grave circumstances.
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- 135 Dersso 2010 *op cit* p 11.
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- 137 Institute for Peace and Security Studies. “Burundi Crisis: Peacekeeping or Invasion by AU?” Addis Ababa University. 2015. http://www.ipss-addis.org/new-ipss/news-events/burundi_crisis-_peacekeeping_or_invasion_by_au-_/ [Accessed 26 January 2016].
- 138 Murithi *op cit* p 104.
- 139 The proposed African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) consists of approximately 5 000 personnel for a deployment period of six months. See the Addis Ababa University opinion peace for a more detailed discussion on the mission mandate.
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- 141 *Ibid.*
- 142 Murithi *op cit* p 106.

3

From “Inhumanitarian Non-intervention” to Protection of Civilians (POC) – A Paradigmatic change in AU and UN Peace Missions?

*Thomas Mandrup*¹

INTRODUCTION

“Robust peacekeeping should not be considered a new form of peacekeeping, but rather be normalised in a non-permissive environment.”²

The overarching theme of this book focuses on level of operational capability (FOC) of the African Standby Force (ASF). However, it is also an attempt to scrutinize and unpack the doctrinal and operational realities that carries and informs the design of the force. The current state of readiness was tested with a brigade-size field exercise, AMANI II, held in October/November 2015. It was the positive feedback from this exercise that led to the announcement in January 2016 that four of the five regions had managed to reach FOC. The validation of the FOC was delayed, and only happened in 2017. This shows how far the process of establishing the ASF has come, and stands in contrast to much of the literature on the ASF and the AU in general. In 2013 Antonia Witt, among other critics, argued that “the initial euphoria has somewhat vanished and been replaced by a rather pessimistic assessment of the future of the African Union”.³ Since this critique was raised the AU has experienced significant progress in its operations in Somalia (AMISOM), where together with the Somali National Army, it has managed to exercise presence in most parts of south-central Somalia, something that a few years ago would have been considered very unlikely.⁴ To illustrate this success, the regional organisation on the Horn of Africa, the Intergovernmental Agency on Development (IGAD), held its summit in Mogadishu, and national elections have been relatively successfully organised. The

AU has in recent years sanctioned and launched peace-operations in for instance the Gambia, in Sahel and the regional anti-Boko Haram force, whilst African soldiers constitute more than 50 per cent of the deployed soldiers in current UN operations. This illustrates that the AU, and its regional entities, have come a long way in implementing the security architecture, and providing the AU and its member states with an effective tool handling and addressing the security challenges and conflict still facing the continent. It also illustrate that the AU have evolved from the first unarmed observer missions in Darfur and the peace-keeping mission in Burundi, to undertaking more robust operations. However, the ASF has been long in the making, and the tasks, mandates and operations the African and UN led peace missions are asked to undertake have changed. Current mandates are seemingly increasingly robust, and have more to do with peace-enforcement, than more traditional peace-missions. The operations in Somalia, Mali and Northern Nigeria are cases in point. This raises a number of issues for the AU and UN, something that was also highlighted in the so-called 2015 Hippo Report. The ASF was initially not designed to undertake these types of operations, which also led to the initiation of the Maputo 2020 reform process. It furthermore also led to the establishment of the interim ACIRC intervention force, spearheaded by South Africa that is thought of as a tool to deal with robust operations, something that Brosig addresses later in this book. This chapter therefore scrutinises the development of mandates that the AU will be expected to undertake in the future, and what role the AU likely will be asked to undertake in future operations. The chapter furthermore also addresses some expected consequences of the increased use of force in peace missions, why the missions are mandating increasingly robust operations, and whether softer tools have been lost on the way?

THE ASF

The ASF constitutes one element in the combined AU African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and is mentioned in Articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the Peace and Security Council Protocol, which constitutes the legal framework for the APSA and consequently the ASF.⁵ The APSA therefore constitutes an institutional framework in which the different tasks involved in handling peace and security have been given to the various elements of the APSA. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki's stated ambition of creating an African renaissance has been confronted with a reality in which the development and the institutional capacity-building of the AU and the APSA have been slower than anticipated. Furthermore, the political will amongst

the AU member states to find consensus on both implementing and establishing of the APSA and ASF structures, and on how to use them has often been difficult to achieve. The publication of policy documents such *2020 Silencing of the Guns*, and the *2063 – The Africa we want*, are important normative documents that gives some guidance and indication on the direction the AU want's to strive for. It also provides guidance for the use of the ASF, and its military instruments.

One explanation of why the establishment of the ASF has been slower than planned is found in the impact that the Arab Spring and the fall of the Libyan and Egyptian regimes, formerly staunch economic and military AU supporters, had on the AU. These two countries, together with Algeria, South Africa and Nigeria, have so far paid the largest share of the contributions to the AU.⁶

Despite its shortfalls, since its formation the AU has become increasingly important in handling peace and security on the African continent, both in its own name and as part of so-called hybrid missions. Its increased involvement features on several levels, as both diplomatic initiatives and actual military deployments. This has altered the structures that handle peace and security on the continent, as well as the power balance within Africa. As Møller *et al*⁷ argued in 2009, dissatisfaction with the structure of the international system and its lack of representativeness mean that the principle of subsidiarity has been a significant driving force in setting the new agenda of the AU. The AU is today a political force to reckon with, driven by the mantra of "African Solutions to African Problems", as well as the principle of local ownership. However, this principle is so often driven more by national interests than by a normative idea of pan-Africanism, a term in which this principle is often rhetorically wrapped.

THE PSC

When it comes to the AU's ambition to increase its capacity to pre-empt, prevent and eventually stop conflicts, the African Peace and Security Council (PSC) has become the forum that mandates and stipulates the AU's political ambitions. Its experiences have meant that the AU increasingly provides the military forces it deploys under a robust mandate. In trying to get the UN Security Council (UNSC) to provide what are considered to be the "necessary" mandates, the reasoning used is to ask why we should deploy a peacekeeping force when there is no peace to keep. In June 2015 the Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations published the so-called "Hippo Report", in which it argued that:

“There is a clear sense of a widening gap between what is being asked of UN peace operations today and what they are able to deliver. This gap can be – must be – narrowed to ensure that the Organisation’s peace operations are able to respond effectively and appropriately to the challenges to come. With a current generation of conflicts proving difficult to resolve and with new ones emerging, it is essential that UN peace operations, along with regional and other partners, combine their respective comparative advantages and unite their strengths in the service of peace and security.”⁸

However, the AU is a product of its member states and their interpretations and policy ambitions for the future. Algeria for example has continuously supported the principle of non-interference and opposes the new principles of human security and non-indifference being promoted in the AU Charter.⁹ Algeria also illustrates the difficult balance that has been struck between supporting the principle of the non-acceptance of unconstitutional changes of government, and the decision to alter the constitution to allow President Boutiflika to secure a third term in office in 2008.¹⁰ Another example of this double standard was the decision to appoint Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni as the mediator in relation to the constitutional crises in Burundi and in the DR Congo, even though he himself had altered the Ugandan constitution to be able to stay on as president.

Furthermore, the problems of insurgency and international terror facing the Sahel region have once again challenged the norms promoted in the AU Charter. As Williams argues, and as seen in the reaction of the dominant non-Western states to the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, the R2P norm has been accepted by UN member states only to the extent that it does not make possible interventions outside the UN system.¹¹ After the Libyan intervention, for instance, BRICS member states made it very clear that they do not support the concept of R2P in its present form, since it is seen as a tool whereby the more powerful states in the current international system can target other states and political systems they find problematic.¹² Another example of the difficult relationship between norms and real politics in Africa was the announcement by South Africa, Burundi and Gambia in October 2016 that they were leaving the Rome Statute and therefore the International Criminal Court (ICC), a decision South Africa had to retract from due to domestic political and judicial issues. However, it illustrates the ongoing normative battles amongst AU member states, and which informs the decisions on how and when to use military tools. Since the AU’s inception, politics and security have meant a constant struggle between the

norms of human security, including the right to intervene and R2P, set against the principle of non-interference with sovereign state actors.

UN PEACE-MISSIONS AND THEIR OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

“A number of peace operations today are deployed in an environment where there is little or no peace to keep ... the strain on their operational capabilities and support systems is showing, and political support is often stretched thin.”¹³

The UN and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) have concluded that, beyond of a certain level of battlefield violence, peacekeeping operations generally cease to be capable of significantly influencing the course of events.¹⁴ Along the same lines, Nadin, *et al.* in 2015 concluded that:

“The current UN operations constitute the worst of two worlds, decentralised military command, and strong political control ...”¹⁵

The latter is, of course, a harsh judgement that is also very dependent on the context within which operations are carried out and also on what one believes to be the operational role and responsibility of the military. Naturally this statement also needs to be viewed in light of the fact that never in its history has the UN deployed as many soldiers in peace-missions as it is doing in 2017, with more than 100 000 being deployed around the world, but primarily in Africa.¹⁶ However, this level of deployment was based on experiences from UN and AU PSO operations since the publication of the Brahimi Report in 2000, which put forward a whole range of reform proposals, many of which were never implemented, or overtaken by the new reality of more robust and complex mandates.

In late 2014 the UN decided there was a need for another review of its peacekeeping operations, so it established a panel under the chairmanship of José Ramos Horta. The UN missions have changed dramatically, as was evident, amongst other things, from the sheer rise in the number of casualties among UN peacekeepers (38) in 2014. In addition, the increasingly complex mandates, including demands for, and execution of the Protection of Civilians (POC) being integrated into mission mandates, played a role as well. The increasingly robust tools being mandated moved beyond the principle of using force in only in defence of the mission, which characterised earlier peace-missions. The UN deployed increasingly into so-called stabilisation force operations, with the purpose of neutralising an often strategically asymmetric enemy and promoting and protecting the legitimate political order.¹⁷ However, it is also

important to recognise that stabilisation missions in UN terminology, for instance the United Nations Mission to the Congo (MONUSCO). Congo, has since 2010 been called a stabilisation mission, which was supposed to signal a move from a more dominant and robust UN role, to a more passive and less robust role. A second tendency was that UN peacekeepers have increasingly been the target of attacks by insurgents. This also has to do with the increasing numbers of troops the UN has deployed since the end of the Cold War, often into non-permissive environments.

It was former UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld who, with the establishment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF 1) in 1956, laid down the principles for what became known as UN peacekeeping operations right up to the end of the Cold War. The only exception was the UN force (United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC)) in post-colonial Congo in the 1960s, the first multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation.¹⁸ The principles that characterised these typical Chapter VI operations included consent from the parties to the conflict, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence.¹⁹ This norm came to constitute the framework for UN PSOs and can still be found in many interpretations of mandates in the 21st century. The consequence was, and still is, that UN peacekeepers have generally been lightly armed, since they were not being deployed to enforce compliance.²⁰

Current UN operations are multidimensional and comprehensive, and there is close co-operation between military and civilian efforts. Nonetheless, the norm of the non-use of force is still prevalent in the international system, and the Brahimi Report stressed the fact that military peacekeeping cannot replace political efforts or the process of solving a conflict or crisis peacefully. However, the argument here is that military means are increasingly being used to create the space for a negotiated settlement. This is in line with Galtung's argument that a conflict needs to have reached a certain "ripeness" before it can be solved. The parties to a conflict need to have reached a point where they believe that the cessation of hostilities and a negotiated settlement best serve their interests. However, this also calls for a comprehensive approach to this type of mission, since the robust military tool can only solve certain military-related tasks, such as neutralising or clearing an enemy force while other types of institutions need to hold and rebuild the freed areas.

The trend of providing the UN mission with more, often Chapter VII mandates, started in 1992 in the US-led United Task Force (UNITAF) and later the UNISOM II forces deployed to Somalia to counter the collapse of the Somali state and the consequences of the ensuing multi-actor civil war.²¹ The reason for sending in the UNITAF force was that one of the main actors in the civil war, Mohamed Farah Aidid, withdrew his

consent to the deployment of the initial UN force, which had severe consequences for the delivery of food aid to the civilian population. Instead of withdrawing the UN force, the UN Security Council decided to expand it and its mandate, with the focus on the protection of the civilian population and the delivery of food aid. The UNISOM II force, which replaced the short-term UNITAF force, was, among other things, given a mandate to disarm the different militia groups, something that proved rather difficult. The clash on 5 June 1993, when 24 peacekeepers lost their lives trying to access one of Aidid's weapons caches, was an important event since it started a process of "mission creep" that turned the deployment into an enforcement operation under Article 42 of the UN Charter. This meant giving up the principle of impartiality, imposing peace in the midst of war and implementing the terms of a peace agreement.²² As Nadin *et al.* argues, this type of operation resembles fighting a war, and the lessons learned from this ill-fated operation were to be included in the Brahimi Report. One of the conclusions argued that the UN was good at peacekeeping, but that peace enforcement was more difficult, since it depended on troop contributions from its member states.

The UNISOM II experience, operating in parallel to the US Task Force Ranger, provided other important lessons for future UN operations, namely that this type of force needs to be under joint command, or at least co-ordinated in its efforts. This later became relevant when the SADC Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was deployed to the DR Congo as a supplement to the existing MONUSCO force. Another change in the UN's operations in Africa after the end of the cold war has been that AU forces have often been deployed as Chapter VIII operations and then later been re-hatted into a UN operation, as happened in Mali, Darfur and CAR, but not in Somalia.²³ Then UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, averred that AMISOM was too dangerous a mission for the UN to undertake. However, this does not mean that the AU has been left to its own devices – rather, it illustrates a new division of labour in which AU member states provide the troops on the ground, whilst international actors like the USA, UN and EU provide the funding and enablers to operationalise the mission. This division of labour was partly mentioned in the Brahimi Report, which produced important doctrinal recommendations for future operations, including what was to become known as the "new impartiality", which implied impartiality in relation to the objective of the mandate, but not necessarily impartiality in relation to the parties to the conflict. However, the Brahimi Report also recognised that for UN missions to be successful

there was a need for a commitment to peace amongst the actors on the ground, or alternatively a need for alternative solutions.²⁴

The role of UN missions has been changing in the sense that, in deploying contemporary military forces, the international community has become more ambitious. Thus the deployed forces are there not just to oversee a negotiated peace settlement between two or more opposing parties, but often have a peace-making element built into the mandate. Post-Cold War operations have increasingly been conducted without the consent of all the parties to the conflict and before any settlement has been reached. Since 1990 there has been a paradigmatic change away from state-based military interventions to a situation in which more than 50 per cent of all military interventions in Africa are being conducted by the UN, the AU or regional organisations like the EU and more often than not with interlocking institutions.²⁵ However, it is not only on the practical side that increased co-operation between these three institutions can be detected. Norm convergence emerged as well to the extent that the protection of civilians has become the core business of peacekeeping.²⁶ This norm has trickled down from the UN into the policies of the two other institutions.

With the approval of the R2P concept in the UN General Assembly in 2003, the protection of civilians in PSOs was also institutionalised as an integral part of the mandates issued to deployed PSO operations. A good example of this is the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (), which, since the start of the civil war in 2013, has opened camps to provide protection and shelter for the civilian victims of the fighting. However, despite the fact that UNMISS has seen POC as one of its primary duties, the force Commander, Lt Gen Ondieki of Kenya, was relieved of his duties by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for failing in this task. POC has also, for instance, affected the Indian contingent in MONUSCO, which has been criticised for a similar failure. In November 2008, in North Kivu, the force failed to intervene to stop what has become known as the Kiwanja massacre, which left 150 villagers dead in a village located just half a kilometre away from an Indian peacekeeping base. Human Rights Watch subsequently published a report *The UN's Inability to Protect Civilians*, which was highly critical of the UN Peacekeepers' role in DR Congo.²⁷ Adding to the UN's embarrassment was the fact that then force commander MONUC, Lt Gen Gaye, in his force commander's directive of January 2008, had stressed the importance of the deployed forces' responsibilities for protecting the civilian population against threats and actual violence.²⁸ Consequently, there were no excuses for the deployed force not intervening. However, this also has to be combined with the fact that the Special Representative of the Secretary General (UN) (SRSG) for

MONUC, Alan Doss, had continually warned that if the MONUC force did not get the additional 3 000 troops and sixteen helicopters it had been promised, it would seriously hamper the force's flexibility, response time and operational capability, and consequently the ability of the operation to fulfil its mandate.²⁹ The Kiwanja tragedy had several consequences in addition to the embarrassment it caused the UN in general, especially for the MONUSCO mission, which was severely criticised for its inability to protect the civilian population. It was no longer acceptable for the UN to witness atrocities passively without interfering. Such experiences prompted the negative attitude often found among African military and political leaders, who calls for robust answers and asks why peacekeepers are sent in if there is no peace to keep.

THE AU MISSIONS AND THE APSA – STRUCTURE

In the Constitutive Act of the AU, its mission is stated as the creation of

“an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”.³⁰

Since the formation of the AU in 2002, the organisation has deployed or mandated twelve PSOs, either as hybrid AU/UN missions or as pure AU operations.³¹ The AU has therefore been a game changer and has actively attempted to manage security challenges and conflicts on the continent. However, the debate on the effectiveness of these deployments, especially the FOC of the forces, has been called into question, as the quote above illustrates. The AMANI II exercise showed that in conjunction with one of the continental powers, willing AU member states can field relatively effective military forces. However, the deployments undertaken by AU member states so far tell different stories about their capabilities and effectiveness to conduct and sustain military operations. It can also be argued that a serious question mark hangs over the ability of the AU to play the role envisaged for it in the Hippo Report as the UN's strategic partner in promoting peace and security. It is doubtful whether AU member states have the strategic assets to conduct robust military operations over longer periods of time, or to project military power over long distances due to limited strategic lift capabilities and air assets in general.

The legal framework is in place in the Constitutive Act of the AU to mandate and deploy for robust operations. Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act allows the AU to intervene without prior consent from the government of the state in question – a so-called humanitarian military intervention. However, the AU and its member states have yet to authorise any such mission, and for various political reasons it is

seems very unlikely that they will be willing to do so in the near future.³² The AU Summit in January 2016 was an interesting illustration of this, despite the changes in the organization's attitudes towards interventions that were also evident. However, the concept of Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC), and subsequently the interim force labelled the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC), will, in principle, provide the AU and its regional actors with a tool capable of performing such a task, something that has been absent until now. During the escalating crisis in 2015 in Burundi the AU PSC actually threatened and prepared an intervention to stop a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation from turning into genocide. This was vehemently opposed by the Burundian government, which argued that it had the situation under control and would consider any intervention an act of aggression against Burundi. The threat to use force did not materialise, since there was no political appetite amongst AU member states for an intervention without Burundian consent.

This example is interesting at several levels, since it shows the weakness of the AU in handling crises by using military force, alongside a shift towards the rhetoric of the AU becoming increasingly forceful and robust, something that was previously not the case in what was a consensus-based political environment. Burundi also illustrates the increasingly important role that the PSC is playing in the daily handling of peace and security issues in Africa, a development in which the AU is making greater use of robust military measures. Again, the mantra that has emerged within the AU is that there is no need to send in a peacekeeping force if there is no peace to keep. As mentioned earlier, international and regional peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War has often failed and been unable to effectively protect civilians against attacks from armed actors, i.e. fulfil its POC mandated tasks. Such deployments create a false feeling of security and protection, since in many cases the deployed forces have failed to protect the very civilians they were sent there to protect in the first place. The regional, AU and UN forces in CAR, Mali, Sudan and DR Congo are excellent cases in point. If one then adds the problems that several AU and UN missions have had with alleged cases of sexual abuse, the feeling that deployments do not serve the interests of local populations become even more compelling.

The *raison d'être* for the establishment of the ASF as an element of the APSA was to create a tool that could be used and introduced to pre-empt or stop violent conflict from erupting or to intervene under grave circumstances.³³ However, the ASF also functions as a tool that can be used to support the other elements of the APSA, this flexible use of the ASF being foreseen in the Protocol. This has been the case ever

since the AU has deployed forces (yet to be in the regionally envisaged formation) in many different types of operations, ranging from observer missions to peace enforcement. It was written into the protocol that AU missions, and therefore the ASF force, should be multidimensional and nationally owned and established, but during a mission it should be the responsibility of the Chairman of the PSC, which also has the responsibility for providing the funds for the operation.³⁴

Since its creation the AU has been heavily involved in both classic PSO operations and, in recent years especially, in so-called stabilisation and even enforcement operations. The organisation has conducted and deployed for hybrid operations in co-operation with the UN (in the form of regional operations) and for AU operations, with a force drawn from a coalition of willing African partner states. The APSA structure has a whole range of tools available to it, which means that, for instance, it can send in its Panel of the Wise to mediate and pre-empt conflicts or prevent them escalating, but it also has military tools ranging from unarmed observers to an envisaged strengthened battalion-sized RDC. In reality the AU and its five regions lack the necessary capabilities, especially enablers that would allow them to operate independently. This means that, for AU forces to deploy, they need international financial and logistical support.

In 2015 more than 90 per cent of the costs of AU operations was covered by international donors, who provide the majority of the funding available in the African Peace Fund. The AMISOM forces in Somalia is a good illustration of this reality. However, does this mean that the AU forces are defunct? Yes, and no. The different regions are at very different stages of development in setting up the structures for the regional brigades to be operational: the EASF declared its force fully operational in December 2014, whereas North Africa has hardly started. However, this only applies to the technical side of things, since the importance of the creation of increased interregional trust and co-operation, which has resulted in several of the regions, should not be underestimated. Eastern and Southern Africa are both excellent examples of this, regions that have been plagued by conflict and hostility between states since independence, but where this has to some extent been replaced by increased co-operation in the handling of a whole range of cross-border challenges, such as smuggling and cattle-rustling, and therefore not just co-operation on military issues.

One of the immediate realisations of AU members when it came to designing the ASF and writing its doctrine was the need for a more robust force than the doctrine for the UN Standby Force (SHIRBRIG) had allowed, since the post-Cold War trend in

UN operational mandates had been to increase the use of force, as well as introducing an element of responsibility for the protection of civilians since 2003. In April 2013, African leaders realised – among other things as a direct consequence of the AU’s inability to intervene in Mali and the failure of the South African intervention in CAR – that to be able to live up to the POC principles there was a need to create a continental rapid-response capacity. Accordingly ACIRC was established, though amidst controversy.³⁵ Critics in AU member states themselves argued that establishing such a capacity would undermine attempts to establish the ASF and its RDCs. However, what this also demonstrated was the existence of an ideational commitment to the norm of protection of the civilian population.³⁶ Missions realities are unfortunately another story, where the AU, according to Dembinski & Schott, finds it difficult to live up to the principle of doing no harm.³⁷ The difficulties faced by AU forces were illustrated by the first AU mission to be deployed with an explicit mandate to protect the civilian population, the AU mission in Sudan (AMIS), which was sent to Darfur to stop atrocities taking place. In 2004 the mandate was expanded with a protection element. A key to this development was also the mantra, at least in theory, that the establishment of the AU was a move away from the principle of non-interference to one of non-indifference. By 2013 the AU had deployed an impressive total of more than 80 000 peacekeepers in either AU or hybrid missions in Africa.

THE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT: WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING – BUILDING OR BUYING PEACE?

“However, in the face of these advances, Al-Shabaab continued to adapt, launching asymmetric attacks and blocking access to some of the newly recovered areas. It also expanded its presence in Puntland and became a more significant threat within the sub-region.”³⁸

It is always good to start with some positive facts. The number of wars and conflicts in Africa has declined tremendously since the end of the Cold War and reached an all-time low in 2005. However, in recent years conflicts have increased again, but is still significantly lower than the average level in 1990–1999.³⁹ However, the difficulties and casualties experienced by AMISOM forces in Somalia in late 2015 and early 2016 at the hands of Al-Shabaab illustrate the problems highlighted above. Furthermore, the attacks are an illustration of the fact that PSO operations have become increasingly dangerous for peacekeepers. It is also important to note that violence in armed conflicts serves a strategic purpose and should not be considered an irrational consequence of war.⁴⁰ However, several states in Africa continue to be

plagued by war, and then AU Commission Chairman, Dr N Zuma, concluded in her opening speech to the IGAD summit in 2015 that, for instance, South Sudan was facing one of its worse food-security crises in its history, a direct consequence of the continued internal struggle between the different factions of the SPLM.⁴¹

Some of the concepts we are often faced with and that constitute conventional wisdom in contemporary military planning – “hybridity” and asymmetry for example – are seen as threats and as constituting new and different security threats to national security and to participants in so-called “multi-dimensional” peace-missions. But the questions that need further scrutiny are, first, to what extent this really is the case; secondly, what is meant by “hybridity” and “strategic asymmetry” to begin with; and, thirdly, what implications this might have for African PSOs, if any. The logic seems to be that, because of the changes mentioned above, a very different approach to the organisation and training of their security forces is needed. The reality for the force commander is often that, in this type of environment, it can be difficult to determine who the civilians needing protection are, who the combatants are, where the zones of conflict are.

THE OPPONENTS FACING EXTERNAL INTERVENTION FORCES

“A United Nations peacekeeping mission in Somalia would be a ‘high-risk undertaking’, considering the threats posed by Al-Shabaab militants and despite advances made by the African Union Mission in the country (AMISOM) ... ‘Progress would not have been possible without the continuing sacrifices of AMISOM troops and the Somali National Army. Their heroism deserves our collective tribute.’⁴²

The AU’s recent peacekeeping experiences in, for instance, CAR, Somalia and Mali suggests dangerous missions and that the strategic response, subsequent military planning and tactical implementation must and will be very different. For instance, in CAR 300 highly specialised and well-trained RSA special forces and paratroopers were faced with a much larger and relatively well-equipped Seleka rebel force consisting of an estimated 7 000–10 000 effectives. The AU MISCA force and the French forces were faced with mobs and militias spread out all over CAR, requiring mobility and a large number of troops. In the latter case it can be argued that the need is for a larger number of police or gendarmerie-type forces (FPU), because in general soldiers are not trained to conduct police work.⁴³ In short, the experience of CAR highlights the need for a conventionally robust force and an agile or mobile force with specialised units, including a large police element. At the same time, it is necessary

to take the size of the deployed force into account, as argued in Noel Anderson's article on AMISOM and Paul D Williams's paper on African peacekeeping.⁴⁴ That is, if the deployed mission is to be effective in achieving its mission, it needs the necessary mandate and the means, in terms of both numbers and quality, to fulfil its mandate. This is most often not the case as some conventional African forces can win the war against a supposedly asymmetric enemy, but have difficulties in winning the peace. Nigeria's experiences in northern Nigeria tells a similar story, namely that a well-trained and mobile force can win the military confrontation with relative ease against an asymmetric enemy, but if the state does not fill the governance vacuum left behind, the insurgents will regain their lost territory. The Chairman of STTEP International, Eeben Barlow, stated at a seminar in Copenhagen that the biggest challenge in winning the war was getting the state party to win the peace, i.e. to fill the institutional vacuum after a successful military intervention.⁴⁵

In Somalia, as in Mali, the opposition has assumed many shapes and forms, including that of internationalised Jihadist insurgencies.⁴⁶ AMISOM is fighting a counter-insurgency war with a very robust engagement strategy. This mission is not a peace mission, and it can be argued that robustness and the use of force are common denominators when talking about African PSO deployments. The Ethiopian and later the Ugandan experiences in fighting the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and later Al-Shabaab, provide important lessons regarding the need for tactical house-to-house searches and a trench war in Mogadishu against an often invisible enemy. Has the AMISOM mission been a success? Maybe. Has Al-Shabaab been beaten? Not likely. It has been weakened, but is still capable of regaining strength, "sleeping" and waiting.

The cases above have illustrated the importance of military momentum and of not prolonging military operations because one's opponent will then learn one's modes of operation. This illustrates that the rebels have time on their side, whilst an occupying force like the AU has only limited time to resolve the situation. This is an important factor about how you must structure your force, and especially what components need to be included, comprehensiveness being the key issue. In a later chapter in this publication, Eeben Barlow argues that Western-led military training programmes most often train African armies to fail, since this training is not based on what is needed locally, but on the donor countries' conventional model army – an army that African states often cannot afford and which very often are not called on to fight an asymmetric opponent. Some African military leaders make the same kind of mistake in organising their forces around a conventional Western military model that is not affordable within the existing budgetary framework and also not in the years to come.

Another matter of concern in the Somali case is the increased internationalisation of the conflict and its actors. Consequently, to view a conflict like that in Somalia as a "national" conflict is too limited. Another lesson is that the decision to deploy regional troops into a conflict zone is often problematic, not only in respect of solving the conflict but also because of the destabilising effects this might have on the troop contributors themselves – Kenya being a prime example. Another issue is the extent to which the intervention is conducive to supporting the host government. For a long time the idea of the formal state has been the driving force in post-conflict reconstructing, but in the case of Somalia it can be argued that the central government is a key problem in solving the conflict, indeed *the* problem! In addition, local ownership is an issue that negatively influences all operations, especially AMISOM, where a high number of recruits have deserted, and it might be argued that local ownership does not exist or is limited.

The Somalia analyst Joakim Gundel recently commented that it was fine for the Somali government to call for more international support in curbing and fighting the challenge from Al-Shabaab, but it would be better if it had started by using the vast resources made available to it, paid its military forces and created the capabilities it needs. This actually points to another dimension of shaping deployed forces, which is that military leaders should use the funds made available to them efficiently – an excellent point made by Gerhard Louw concerning South African forces – but also that it is not enough to do what you do efficiently: it is also necessary to do the right things efficiently.⁴⁷

In Mali the PSO forces have been faced with yet a different kind of enemy, but with some similarities to the type of conflict we have seen in other regions in Africa, a local conflict that has become part of a global struggle, or what Mark Shaw refers to as "glocal". Using rhetoric and concrete elements and support from international jihadists groups and their ideas, the marginalisation of the Tuareg has become an international problem. The struggle itself has had several phases: an initial insurgency or rebellion, a more conventional phase, and an insurgency against an invisible enemy using asymmetric fighting tools. Similar to CAR, and Somalia for that matter, the geography to soldier ratio for the occupying force is problematic. In the case of Mali, the UN force finds it difficult to dominate and sustain its operations in the north of the country. Another problem for African and international forces is that, as the conflict becomes internationalised, the methods used by the opposition also become more sophisticated, such as the advanced use of IEDs, which means that the international force needs different kinds of equipment, such as armoured cars in

place of soft-skinned vehicles. The question then is the extent to which this is new and different: if you ask South Africans about their early experiences in Angola and northern Namibia, they would recognize several of these points.

THE OPERATIONS

“The... prognosis is not good. Analysis reveals that AMISOM is undermanned; that the Federal Government of Somalia fields too few Somali National Army units, that both AMISOM and Somali forces lack the resources and force enablers needed to accomplish their objectives, and that neither force possesses the capacity to sustain combat operations over the long term... [T]he optimism many have expressed for the mission is misplaced.”⁴⁸

The African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established under a UN Chapter VII mandate in February 2007 as a replacement for the Ethiopian occupation force in south-central Somalia. It was a campaign that had cost the Ethiopian forces heavy losses, the urban fighting in Mogadishu proving especially difficult for them.⁴⁹ AMISOM was initially represented as an AU peacekeeping mission, which, of course, it was not. Peacekeeping requires, among other things, consent, impartiality and the use of force only in self-defence or in defence of the mission.⁵⁰ It was also not a peace enforcement operation, which would traditionally be defined as “coercive action...to restore or maintain international peace and security”.⁵¹ However, peace enforcement is reactive in its use of force, whereas a counter-insurgency (COIN) operation will typically focus on attacking the enemy. David Galula once argued that COIN focuses on:

“Destroying or expelling from an area the main body of guerrilla forces, preventing their return, installing garrisons to protect the population, tracking the guerrilla remnants – these are predominately military operations.”⁵²

In Iraq and Afghanistan the COIN strategy was based on a people-centric approach, the key words being “clear, hold, and build”.⁵³ In Somalia the AMISOM approach has been inspired by a similar strategy of separating the population from the insurgents and providing it with protection. This, of course, has to be combined with effective and well-coordinated information campaigns, all of which have been visible during the multidimensional AMISOM mission, which has been combined with a civilian UN and EU presence.

AMISOM is illustrative for several reasons. It was an operation deployed with the expectation amongst certain members of the AU that the UN would take over responsibility for it after the initial AU deployment – a modus that can be seen in several similar operations in Africa. However, the UN never promised to re-hat the AMISOM mission, and the mission has to large extent become a much-needed success story for the AU, and indeed for the whole narrative of “African Solutions to African problems”. By adopting a US-inspired counter-insurgency strategy the force has managed to turn the negative momentum of the war against the Al-Shabaab insurgents.

The background to this relative success can be found on several levels. There was the determination on the part of the AU and the coalition of states to make this a success. There has been massive international support for the operation in both logistics and training, as well as, especially, financing. However, this illustrates an important point, namely that most African countries cannot deploy themselves without international support because, among other things, they lack the necessary enablers and the logistical supply chains. This highlights one weaknesses of the current ASF structure, namely that it will be able to operate and sustain an operation only if it receives international support. The AMISOM operation also illustrates the lack of capacity in the civilian dimension of the ASF, which has so far been narrowly focused on the military dimension. However, the question of course being to what extent this is a capacity that the AU should build itself. Alternatively, should it rely on foreign partners like the UN or the EU to provide and undertake the civilian responsibility and focus on the military and police dimension?

In DR Congo the SADC countries operationalised an old plan that meant sending in a robust regional force, the SADC FIB, to effectively handle the rebel groups that were disrupting the potential for peace in that country. When the UNSC passed Resolution 2098 on 28 March 2013 it created history in more than one respect. The deployment of a parallel force of 3 000 soldiers from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania as a robust supplement to the existing UN stabilisation mission, MONUSCO, meant that a combat force had been deployed to effectively handle the militias that were creating continued instability in the eastern DR Congo.⁵⁴ Experiences from UNISOM II had shown that a parallel operation between a UN blue force and a green force possesses a number of challenges, especially if the two operations are not properly co-ordinated and are under separate command structures.⁵⁵ However, the recent FIB deployment, the operations in Mali and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) show that this combination can work.

The deployment of the FIB is interesting for several reasons. It is an example of the increased use of robust means that the AU has been calling for, representing, one could argue, the “militarisation of peacekeeping”, with its increased reliance on the use of force. This is a not unproblematic, since it signifies a decreasing faith in non-violent means of conflict resolution. The more robust tools also do not necessarily deliver the desired result unless they are supported and accompanied by other types of engagement, such as a political process and dialogue, civilian presence and capacity-building. The FIB is also illustrative on another level, since it is an example of the type of division of tasks between regional organisations and the UN that are envisaged in the Hippo review. The FIB is a robust instrument, regionally owned, with a separate mandate, whilst the MONUSCO force still operates as a regular UN PSO under a Chapter VII mandate. The FIB is also illustrative in another way, since its initial success against the M23 rebel group has not provided the desired momentum against some of the other rebel groups. One of the problems facing the FIB, and MONUSCO in general, has been opposition from the host government, making it difficult to deploy and operate.

THE CAPABILITY AND NUMERICAL GAP

“... [M]any peace operations in Africa have suffered from a gap between expectations and capabilities.”⁵⁶

In a seminal report from 2010 Paul D Williams argued that, for a peacekeeping force to be effective in a zone of crisis, the ratio of deployed forces needs to be around two to ten per thousand affected civilians, meaning that the actual UN force in North Kivu should not have been the 6 000 total actually deployed, but between 10 000 and 50 000 troops, depending on how you measure the affected zones and individuals.⁵⁷ This is, of course, a problematic way of estimating the required number of forces, since the nature of the forces, the capabilities that they bring and the extent to which they are tailored to the actual needs of the operation are equally important factors. In addition, there are problems related to the time lines of deployments, since many Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) are slow to commit and then deploy troops late, making it difficult to reach the full authorised force strength. In addition, the forces made available to the UN and AU mostly come from less-developed countries, which often lack the strategic enablers required. However, and more importantly, developments within the field of PSO operations during the last decade also point to the fact that distinctions have to be made between the different types of operation, that is, peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and COIN, which are conceptually and

doctrinally different. It is, of course, of the utmost importance that the forces deployed are trained and configured to handle these types of operations, which is often not the case. The AMISOM, MONUSCO, MINUSMA and UNMISS operations are all recent examples of this, where, for instance, the requested air assets have not been made available by the troop-contributing countries.

CONCLUSION

One of the biggest threats to security is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the situation on the ground. A good example of this is the operations in DR Congo, Somalia and CAR, where knowledge at the outset of the operation was outdated, so that it was not known what was actually going on. Consequently, one of the challenges for future operations is to collect proper intelligence, tactical-level information and understanding of the situation on the ground. Calling all rebels jihadist is dangerous, but underestimating the importance of these religious elements is equally dangerous. Another issue we need to take into account is the categories we tend to use in our attempts to explain "the facts" we see, such as criminal/legal, formal/informal etc. The way ahead in future peace missions may well be the "intervention brigade model", but this has its limitations, one of which is the consequences of the increased reliance on the use of violence. The militarisation of peace-building and peace initiatives also entails the risk of aggravating the situation on the ground, with dire consequences for the civilian population. The robust approach can never stand alone, as conflicts need strong civilian tools to operate in parallel with the military, an area where the APSA still needs to increase its capabilities.

The threat of terrorism is widespread and increasing in Africa, a continent that is attractive to terrorists for the simple reason that security is less tight. This type of threat also illustrates another point, which is that conflicts are becoming increasingly complex, so that intervention forces need to be able to handle a broad spectrum of opponents, ranging from a small militia in CAR to Islamist insurgents and conventional armies like that in Burundi. There is therefore a real need for a reform of the ASF concept and doctrine, as well as a show of willingness on the part of African states themselves to put real content into the concept. The ASF, the ACIRC/RDCs and the APSA need to be fully developed and transformed from a good idea into real functional tools. Several regions have managed to create certain capabilities, but they still need to show ownership and a willingness to sustain the concept. As long as the ASF FOC and the political will amongst African leaders to intervene in conflict is limited, it is doubtful whether the AU can play the role envisaged for it in

the Hippo report, and therefore whether the suggested distribution of labour between the AU and UN is actually possible. Another question is whether AU member states will continue to be willing to deploy their soldiers into these high-risk operations, which also means increased risk and dangers for the deployed African personnel.

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4

The Role of the Civilian Component in African Union Peace Support Operations

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INTRODUCTION

The AU has struggled to develop a narrative of why it includes a civilian component in its peace support operations (PSOs). It is well established in the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU) contexts that PSOs are essentially political and need to be multidimensional if they are going to effectively sustain peace. This common wisdom is also reflected in the AU's Constitutive Act, its Peace and Security Protocol and its ASF concept and doctrine. However, some of the AU's partners see the role of AU PSOs as limited to ensuring physical security and stability, whilst they take the lead on the political and developmental dimensions of a broader international strategy. Some senior officials in the AU Commission (AUC) have a somewhat similar view, namely that AU PSOs is a physical security instrument, whilst other elements of the AU provide the political, governance and socio-economic elements of a broader AU strategy. There is thus a lack of consensus within the AUC and among the AU's partners regarding the role of AU PSOs, and as a result, the AUC has not been able to consistently and convincingly articulate why it needs multidimensional PSOs. In this context it is thus perhaps not surprising that the AUC has also not been able to create a convincing narrative that explains how the AU's civilian components relate to similar civilian functions in UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

The Report of the 2013 Independent Panel of Experts on the African Standby Force (ASF) observed that, despite some progress achieved towards the establishment of the civilian component of AU PSOs, the role that civilians play in these PSOs is

still little known. Further work is required to explain the necessity, form, timings of deployments and comparative advantages of deploying civilians as part of AU-led PSOs. The Report recommended that there is a need for a clear articulation of the role of civilians, including in high-intensity AU PSOs like the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Unfortunately, there has been little progress on this front since 2013. In February 2017 at the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) ten-year lessons learned workshop, the assessment was that the mission's civilian, police and military elements are weakly integrated, and that the role of the civilian component was not clearly defined or understood.²

ACCORD, with encouragement from the AUC, decided to follow up on the recommendations of the ASF Panel of Experts, and undertook a research study into the roles that civilians performed in the AU PSOs in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and Somalia (AMISOM) that started in late 2014 and concluded in early 2017. The aim of the study was to identify and analyse the actual roles that civilians played in these PSOs in order to determine whether the 2006 AU Policy Framework on the civilian dimension of the ASF needs to be updated or further developed.

The ASF Civilian Policy Framework of 2006 was aspirational, although it was informed by some of the experience the AU had gained from its civilian components in the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB). Although the *2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU* (PSC Protocol) provides for a multidimensional AU PSO capacity, at the time, the civilian and police components were not yet developed. The 2006 policy was thus aspirational in that it set the foundation for the future development of the AU's civilian PSO components. Subsequently the AU deployed multidimensional PSOs to CAR, Mali and Somalia. In the following sections we analyse the actual roles, functions and contributions of the civilian components in two of these missions, namely the AU mission in CAR (MISCA) and the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

We start with a general introduction of the role of civilian capacities in PSOs, and then address the civilian components in AU PSOs provided for in the ASF's Civilian Dimension Policy Framework. In the following section we analyse the civilian components in MISCA and AMISOM. In the last section we analyse the two cases to identify shared challenges and conclude with a number of policy recommendations.

CIVILIAN CAPACITIES IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The end of the Cold War era brought about a significant shift in the nature, scope and prevalence of international PSOs. The change from interstate to intra-state conflict meant that peacekeeping operations had to adapt from a role of observing and monitoring ceasefire agreements between states to assisting with the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements. This required new skills and expertise in areas such as political analysis, negotiation and mediation, legal and constitutional development, elections, human rights, reconciliation, justice and Rule of Law (RoL), institutional development, governance, and Security Sector Reform (SSR). Many of these new skills had to be drawn from people with experience in the civilian public sector or in non-governmental organisations (NGOs). During deployment some of these experts were seconded by their governments, but the UN, AU and others mostly hired civilians with the required education, knowledge and experience. For the UN, this resulted in the original military concept of peacekeeping operations being expanded in the early 1990s to embrace a new multidimensional approach to PSOs, with military, police and civilian components, served by a separate mission support component and headed by a civilian head of mission.

Today civilians make up approximately 20% of all UN peacekeeping personnel and perform many roles that are critical for achieving mission mandates.³ Civilians also perform most of the roles in the mission support component, which include functions such as finance, human resources, logistics, administration, engineering, information technology, communication and security.⁴ As of 30 September 2014, 70% (11 700) of 16 961 civilians in UN PSOs were local personnel.⁵ Of these, approximately 90% of national staff are from Africa, and approximately 60% of the international staff are from Africa.

Both the PSC Protocol and the policy framework establishing the ASF provide for a multidimensional PSOs capacity, including a civilian component. In 2006 the AU developed a Policy Framework for the Civilian Dimension of the ASF, which remains the guiding framework for roles and responsibilities of the civilian component in AU PSOs.

The ASF Policy Framework provides for a civilian component for AU PSOs that include functions such as Political Affairs, Public Information, Planning and Co-ordination, Human Rights, Humanitarian Liaison, Legal Advice, Conduct and Discipline, Child Protection, and Gender. These functions are essential tasks that should be performed in each AU PSO, regardless of the mandate. In addition, and

depending on the mandate, further functions may include RoL, Electoral Affairs, Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), Civil Affairs, and SSR. As part of the civilian component, the policy framework also provides for mission support functions in human resources, and financial management, logistics, procurement, engineering, geographical information services, information technology and communications. In addition, transport, contingency owned equipment, security and integrated training services to the military, police and civilian components of the mission are equally important mission support functions. A proposed civilian component per brigade and per roster are illustrated in the table below as set up by an AU-ASF workshop held in Kampala, Uganda in 2008. In practice however, the numbers of the civilian components per mission are fluid, unpredictable and difficult to set out.

Table A: Proposed ASF Brigade Civilian Capacity⁶

| FUNCTION | POSITION IN REGIONAL BRIGADE | NUMBER IN ROSTER |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| SRCC | 1 x ASG/D1 | 10 |
| DSRCC | 1 x D1/D2 | 10 |
| Special Assistant to the SRCC | 1 x P3 | 10 |
| Administrative Assistant to the SRCC/ DSRCC | 1 x GSA | 10 |
| Personal Protection for SRCC/DSRCC | 8 persons ranging from P4 to P1 | 30 |
| Legal Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| General Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| Protection Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| HIV/AIDS Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| Conduct and Discipline Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| Post-conflict Reconstruction Advisor | 1 x P4 | 10 |
| Planning and Coordination Unit, including Humanitarian Liaison | 6 persons ranging from P5 to P3 | 20 |
| Political affairs unit | 6 Persons ranging from P5 to P3 | 20 |
| Human rights unit | 6 Persons ranging from P5 to P3 | 20 |
| Public Information unit | 3 persons ranging from P5 to P2 | 20 |
| Training Unit | 1 x P3 | 10 |
| Mission Support | 20 persons ranging from D2/P5 to P3 | 80 |
| TOTALS | 60 | 300 |

THE CIVILIAN COMPONENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SOMALIA (AMISOM)

Since 2007, AMISOM has played and continues to play an invaluable role in stabilising the country. In 2017 AMISOM is still the largest peace operation in the world, with approximately 22 000 personnel including military, police and civilian components. AMISOM assisted the government to gain control of Mogadishu and large parts of the rest of the country. However, Al Shabaab remains a dangerous threat.

The AU, with the support of the international community, supports the vision of the Somali government to consolidate the stability gained and advance the peace and security efforts in the country. The role of the civilian component of AMISOM is to support and facilitate peace- and state-building processes in Somalia. The mandate of the civilian component of AMISOM was extended from minimal support to the government to providing capacity-building assistance to Somalia's main institutions.⁷ The civilian component of AMISOM has served as a pioneer for the AU's experience in peace- and state-building initiatives.⁸

AMISOM operates with very limited resources in a very unstable, fluid and unpredictable environment. The working environment is rendered dangerous by the operations of the extremist Al Shabaab insurgency. These security challenges have constrained the civilian components of this mission in performing some of their roles and functions, because movement outside the secured airport area can only take place in armed convoys, and routine civilian meetings with counterparts are low on the list of priorities. AMISOM civilian components have instead tried to arrange most meetings in the secured area, which means their counterparts needed to come to them.

Mission management

The AMISOM mission is headed by a civilian head of mission, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC). The SRCC is appointed by the Chairperson of the AUC and reports to the PSC via the Chairperson. The SRCC is supported by a Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (DSRCC), who is expected to act as head of mission when the SRCC is away from the mission. The DSRCC also has a special responsibility for the civilian component of the mission, including the mission support component. The SRCC and the senior leadership team is supported by a mission Chief of Staff, who is responsible for the co-ordination of mission-wide planning and reporting processes.

The senior leadership team is made up of the SRCC, the DSRCC, the Chief of Staff, the Head of Mission Support, the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner.

Substantive components

The civilian component of AMISOM consist of seven units, namely: the Political Affairs; Public Information, Humanitarian Liaison; Protection, Human Rights and; Civil Affairs, Security and Safety, and Mission Support Units.⁹

The Political Unit is responsible for operationalising the AU PSC's political decisions on Somalia. The section monitors, interprets and reports on the political developments and provides advice to the SRCC on political dynamics in Somalia. At times the unit's focus has been to assist the Somali government in building its capacity for public service. Between 17 and 29 May 2014, for instance, the Political Unit of AMISOM conducted a ten-day intensive training for 80 Executive Leaders and Managers in the Somalia Civil Service. As of March 2017 the Head of the Political Affairs section position has been vacant for more than a year, and the unit was staffed by one senior political affairs officer and one political affairs officer.

The Humanitarian Liaison Unit (HLU) serves as a bridge between AMISOM and humanitarian agencies. It co-ordinates, facilitates and liaises with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) and other UN agencies as well as Somali and international NGOs. The unit also works closely with AMISOM's military component, and especially its Civil–Military Coordination (CIMIC) cell, to respond to requests for support from the humanitarian community. As of March 2017, the unit was staffed by two seconded consultants.

The Human Rights, Gender and Protection Unit is mandated to implement the AU's commitments and policies on human rights and protection as well as gender equality and other related issues. The Unit ensures the mainstreaming of human rights, protection and good gender practices in AMISOM and supports the Federal Government of Somalia. This Unit has been involved in the pre-deployment training and verification of troops before they deployed especially in the domain of adherence to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights Law (HL). As of March 2017, the unit's head acted as the mission's Chief of Staff, which meant that another officer had to act as the head of the unit. The Unit was staffed by two gender officers as well as by two seconded consultants, one of which served as a protection officer and the other as an international humanitarian law and human rights expert.

The Civil Affairs Unit works at the social, administrative and local political levels to facilitate the implementation of AMISOM's mandate and to support efforts at ensuring sustainable peace in Somalia. The unit conducts activities aimed at confidence-building, effective governance management, and support to reconciliation. The unit also assists the state in restoring and extending its authority. As of March 2017 the unit was staffed by one senior and two civil affairs officers.

The Safety and Security Unit is charged with undertaking safety and security programmes and activities in AMISOM to protect civilian staff and property. The unit comprises three sub units: Security Information and Operation Unit (SIOU), Personal Protection Unit (PPU) and Investigation Unit (IU). This unit is tasked with the management of mission security and it also manages the security for high-level events, conferences and meetings in which the mission is involved. As of March 2017 the unit was staffed by three security officers.

The Public Information Unit is responsible for sharing information on AMISOM's activities and ensuring accurate reporting through regular interaction with local Somali and international journalists. By so doing, the unit helps to display the credibility and accountability stance of AMISOM to Somali community and the international community. As of March 2017 the unit was staffed by one officer and one assistant. The work of the unit is complemented by a private sector company hired through a contract with the UN.

The Mission Support Unit encompasses the Logistics, Transport, Supply, Engineering, Information and Communications, Technology, Finance, Personnel, Procurement, General Services, Medical, Travel and Protocol, Asset Management and Verification, and Contingent Owned Equipment functions of the mission, among others. As of March 2017, this unit had approximately 19 staff members and 7 consultants, as well as approximately 25 national staff, most of whom are language assistants.

The Medical Unit is responsible for the management, oversight, provision, and reporting on all clinical activities that may incur costs to the mission. The Senior Medical Officer serves as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the Mission, under the delegated authority of the Chief of Integrated Support Services (CISS), and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of all clinical services in the mission area, except for services offered by contingent-owned level one medical facilities. As of March 2017, this unit had one staff member, a medical doctor, in a seconded consultant position.

Other elements of the civilian component include, amongst others, legal affairs (the three positions are vacant), conduct & discipline (one consultant), a civilian casualty tracking and reporting cell (one consultant), a Mission Analysis cell (two positions are vacant, one consultant), and Security Sector Reform (SSR) unit, (the two positions are vacant).

Through some of these civilian components, AMISOM is meant to support the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia to strengthen the capacity of various government departments to provide public services and to extend state authority, especially in newly liberated cities and territories, and with a special focus on the security and judicial sector. The civilian component of AMISOM is also meant to train, mentor and advise state administrators on how to attain efficient local governance.¹⁰ Although AMISOM has conducted various training exercises for Somalia's civil servants as well as military and police officers over the years, due to the size of the civilian component, these efforts have not had much effect in the larger context.

Other civilian components are more inward looking in that they generate advise to the mission leadership and mission planning processes, they provide analysis, they provide internal training and guidance, and they investigate, track and report civilian casualties and conduct and discipline cases.

The security situation necessitates that all staff who leave the protected airport area require an armed escort. There is limited escort capacity and escort needs are thus prioritised. Routine liaison with civilian counterparts is low on the priority rankings. Visiting civilian counterparts, other than those in the government's Villa Somalia compound, with an armed escort can have negative consequences, including putting those counterparts at risk. The end-result of these constraints is that most civilian staff rarely leave the airport compound. Instead of visiting their counterparts they have to invite their counterparts to visit them in the airport compound.

The civilian component suffered from significant understaffing. Of approximately 240 approved posts, approximately 100 were vacant as of March 2017. This seriously undermined overall mission capacity to perform effectively and efficiently. It takes the AUC more than a year to recruit personnel for an AMISOM civilian position. Often the candidates are no longer available once this process reach the contracting stage. As a result, several key positions have been supplemented with staff hired on a consulting basis, including, for instance, the acting head of mission support. The recruitment challenge does not only impact on the effectiveness of the mission, but

is also demoralising for all involved, including the mission leadership, who feels their needs and concerns are not prioritised at the AUC.

The AMISOM Head Quarters (HQ) and United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) HQ compounds are neighbours, and the differences in the way the two missions are resourced is obvious, although they are both supported by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). These differences are demoralising and a source of tension and resentment for AMISOM staff. AMISOM staff are not allowed into the UN compound except on official business, for example, and thus do not have access to the restaurant located inside the UN compound. There are no recreation facilities or other forms of after-hours relief for AU mission staff. This situation impacts negatively on the effectiveness and efficiency of the mission and results in a high rate of absenteeism and frequent travel.

Realising a multidimensional approach

AMISOM's three components – military, police and civilian – seem to operate as three separate pillars. Collective briefing for the components is not a norm and there are inadequate mechanisms and processes for the sharing of information. At the time of the research there was limited integrated analysis, co-ordination, training and mission planning. Interaction among the components is by need and not by form or structure, and this exacerbates the negative misconceptions about the relevance, roles and functions of the civilian components because the mission does not have a platform for integrated interaction, co-ordination and co-operation.

In January 2015 during its Mission Implementation Plan meeting, AMISOM leadership decided to adopt a cluster based approach aimed at integrating the civilian, police and military components of the Mission. This approach was also geared towards promoting greater effectiveness with the limited staff capacity within the Mission. Six thematic clusters were identified namely: inclusive politics, stabilisation, protection (including the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)), Security Sector Reform, main supply routes and humanitarian. Some of these clusters have been relatively functional but the time-bound rotations of uniformed personnel as well as the overstretched capacity of AMISOM personnel in general have hampered the consistency of meetings and overall performance of these cluster-based working groups.

Relations with the UN and other partners

AMISOM has established co-ordination mechanisms to avoid duplication or overlap with its UN counterparts and other international partners and NGOs. These include working groups on specific topics, task teams to support specific initiatives, and co-operation with AMISOM's Civil–Military Coordination (CIMIC) cell, as well as the Joint Logistics Operations Centre (JLOC), in those cases where there are specific requests for military or mission support. During the assessment sessions of areas liberated by the mission, the team undertaking the assessment is comprised of the military, police and civilians as well as external stakeholders, thus encouraging co-ordination and effective use of resources, where initially each partner would undertake separate assessments.

CIVILIAN COMPONENT OF THE AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MISSION TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (MISCA)

The AU mission in CAR was established following the civil war that broke out in CAR on 10 December 2012, when the predominantly Muslim Séléka rebels battled against President Francois Bozize's government, which was accused of failing to honour the peace agreements of 2007 and 2011. The Séléka rebels seized the capital on 24 March 2013 and installed the rebel leader Michel Djotodia as president. The National Transitional Council (CNT) and the Constitutional Council, which were respectively established on 15 April and 16 August 2013, remained incapable of resolving the crisis in CAR. The conflict rather took on a much more sectarian overtone as the predominantly Christian anti-balaka movement attacked Séléka rebels and communities associated with them.

On 5 December 2013 the AU, in accord with UN resolution 2127, established the AU mission in CAR, known as MISCA, an acronym for its name in French: *Mission Internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite africaine*. MISCA was established to replace the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in CAR (MICOPAX) that was led by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). As authorised by the AU PSC during its 385th meeting on 19 July 2013, MISCA was mandated to consist of a total force strength of 3 652, including 3 500 uniformed personnel (2 475 for the military component and 1 025 for the police component) and 152 civilians.¹¹ During the 408th meeting of the PSC on 13 December 2013, the mission was increased to a force strength of 6 000. Nine-months later, on 15 September 2014, upon successful completion of MISCA's mandate and in accordance

with UN Security Council Resolution 2149 (2014), MISCA was transferred to a new UN Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Mission management

MISCA was headed by an appointed civilian Head of Mission (HoM), the SRCC, who was responsible for the overall management of the mission and the attainment of the mission mandate. A deputy SRCC (DSRCC) was appointed to support the SRCC in the execution of his duties and serve as the Acting SRCC whenever the SRCC is out of the mission area. In addition to the management of the mission, the SRCC was responsible for leading the implementation of the AU's strategy in CAR, for managing relations with the government of CAR, and for soliciting international support for MISCA and for CAR. The DSRCC was further responsible for the management of the substantive civilian component of the mission. Apart from the SRCC, the DSRCC, the Police Commissioner, the Force Commander and the Head of Mission Support constituted the Senior Mission Leadership Team (SMLT).

Substantive components

MISCA's civilian substantive components, headed by the DSRCC, consisted of the Political Affairs, Humanitarian Liaison, Protection, Human Rights and Gender, DDR/SSR and Public Information sections.

The Political Affairs Unit was mandated to monitor and analyse the political environment and work towards the realisation of the political agenda of the AU in CAR. The role of the political affairs office was to analyse the situation in the country, advise the SRCC and suggest solutions for the gaps identified. The unit was also responsible for supporting the electoral process. One challenge that was noted was that there were no resources to travel to the provinces to assess the situation on the ground. This section interacted with the different government agencies responsible for issues of peace and security in the country.

The HLU was responsible for liaising with the government of CAR and other humanitarian actors in the country, monitoring the humanitarian situation in the country, identifying the gaps in the field and making recommendations on what the mission could do to bridge the gaps identified. The unit also performed a liaison role between the military components and humanitarian workers. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) comprised a further task, for instance the rehabilitation of infrastructure and building of roads. Some of the humanitarian actors have criticised the mission for

infringements on humanitarian space, for instance when the mission responded to requests from Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by providing relief items.

The Protection, Human Rights and Gender Unit was charged with monitoring, observing, reporting and responding to human rights violations across the state and ensuring protection of civilians. The section was also charged with ensuring that gender issues within the mission were addressed. This section was the largest civilian section in the mission, with eighteen civilian human rights observers and human rights officers. The role of the human rights officers involved monitoring human rights violations as well as responding to human rights issues.

The Public Information Unit was responsible for the implementation of MISCA's public information strategy in support of the mission mandate. Its roles involved communicating all public information to the citizenry and other external actors.

The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) Unit were responsible for co-ordinating the provision of all support by MISCA to the development of the CAR security sector and for serving as the interface between the mission and the CAR authorities, the UN and other actors on support to the security sector and the DDR process.

The Mission Support Component was the responsibility of the Head of Mission Support (HMS) and the unit was comprised of Logistics, Transport, Supply, Engineering, Information and Communications Technology, Finance, Personnel, Procurement, General Services, Medical, Travel and Protocol, Asset Management and Verification, Boards of Inquiry, and Contingent Owned Equipment functions. The Mission Support Component was responsible for the overall management of all support functions for the mission and its responsibilities included co-ordinating all the logistical activities, finance and management, human resources, and procurement activities of the mission, including contract management. The unit had forty staff, of which twenty-two were civilians.

Realising a multidimensional approach

The co-ordination between the military, police and civilians was relatively well established. For instance, the humanitarian section worked with the military component in responding to the humanitarian crisis and supplying the relief items in IDP camps. The strategic directive provided for a general benchmarking of the success of the mission, but there were no specific benchmarks for measuring the

impact and contribution of the civilian component in the overall implementation of the mission mandate.

Relations with the UN and other partners

In light of the growing presence of other actors in the mission area, in particular the UN, ECCAS, EU, other foreign international militaries, and humanitarian and development partners, co-ordination strategies and mechanisms were developed by the HoM to ensure unity of effort, coherence and co-ordination in the implementation of the MISCA's mandate. The mission operated with limited resources and duplication or overlap of effort and resources were minimised by such co-ordination efforts. All civilian sections highlighted that, owing to limited resources at their disposal, they forged partnerships to help them in the implementation of the mission mandate.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Significant challenges persist in developing and clarifying the role of the civilian component of AU PSOs. The following are some issues that were observed during the course of the study of the civilian components in AMISOM and MISCA.

ASF doctrine

The primary challenge deterring the development of the civilian dimension is inadequate understanding of the role of civilians in PSOs within the AU PSOs community. Closely linked is the view among the AU's partners, and some within the AUC, that the AU should primarily or exclusively perform military PSOs functions and leave the civilian functions to either partners or other parts of the AUC that are not deployed as part of the PSO.

The AU's PSC Protocol, and subsequent policies, are clear that the AU's PSO was always intended to be a multidimensional instrument. The AU's own experiences in especially Burundi, CAR and Somalia has also taught it the necessity of a politically-led comprehensive approach. In Somalia, for instance, the AU came to understand that it can temporarily stabilize a situation by winning selected battles and by controlling territory, but that it cannot ultimately defeat Al Shabaab militarily. They can only be defeated in the long-term if the Government of Somalia can provide better security, governance and social-economic opportunities than what Al Shabaab can offer.¹² The AU has learned that when AMISOM lacks the political and civilian expertise necessary to ensure that their military operations are directed towards

enabling and supporting political and governance objectives, any gains achieved are likely to be short-lived.

For instance, the AU was able to help Somali national forces to liberate cities and towns from Al Shabaab, but the AU and its partners, including the UN and EU, lacked the ability to follow-up with the civilian expertise necessary to help the federal government and local authorities to re-establish basic governance structures and services.¹³ AMISOM has thus learned that it needs a comprehensive approach to help the mission ensure that its stabilization efforts are directed towards achieving sustainable political and governance objectives.¹⁴ The AU in Somalia thus learned that they cannot rely on partners who have their own administrative, logistical and security constraints, and who as a result, we're not able to provide the political and governance expertise that was needed to consolidate the AU security gains. However, AMISOM has not yet been able to translate this lesson identified into concrete strategies and action plans that have convinced the AUC, or their partners, to strengthen and focus the civilian component of AMISOM into a significant enabler for the mission's stabilisation task. This would require a strengthening of especially the mission's political and civil affairs capacities. The former should see a political affairs capacity at the sector levels that can provide sector commanders with political analysis and advise, and that can help to broaden the missions political situational awareness across the country. The latter should ensure that the mission is able to provide basic local governance support to newly liberated town and regional administrations.

The lack of a clearly articulated role for the civilian dimension has its origins in the limited space afforded the multidimensional nature of AU PSOs, and specifically the civilian dimension in ASF doctrine and related core PSO policy documents. An attempt was made to address this shortcoming by adopting an ASF Civilian Dimension Framework in 2006. However, this 2006 policy document is not widely known beyond those working on the civilian dimension. This challenge will not be overcome until the ASF doctrine and related core policy documents are updated to reflect the role of the civilian-led senior leadership team and the civilian component in AU PSOs, and such new doctrine and related policies have been socialised throughout the AU PSO civilian, police and military communities. The operational realities of the missions in Somalia and CAR helped to highlight the need for a multidimensional PSO doctrine. Unfortunately, the mission in CAR, like the AU mission in Mali, was of such a short duration that there was little time for in-mission adaptation and evolution.

Lastly, an important structural constraint is the fact that the ASF is overseen, at the senior officials and political level, by the Chiefs of Defence and Security and the Ministers of Defence and Security. For the civilian component this means that there is no natural departmental or political constituency that owns the civilian component, and there is thus no bureaucratic and political momentum behind the civilian dimension of PSOs. However, on the basis of the recommendations of the Gambari Report, a meeting was hosted by the Government of Zambia in 2015 that focused on the civilian component, and there it was decided to establish a Civilian Strategic Policy Support Group (CSSG). The CSSG will facilitate Member State and technical support for the development of the civilian dimension of African PSOs and provide technical advisory support on civilian-related issues in AU PSOs.

The comparative size of the civilian component

Another factor is that the civilian component in AU PSOs is small, compared to its military and police counterparts. Although the civilian component performs functions that are critical and important for pursuing mission mandates, its comparative size does have practical implications for its relative impact and importance in the mission. The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) had about 50 civilian staff compared to over 7 000 troops. As of March 2017 AMISOM had approximately 114 civilian staff, of which 50 were national staff, compared to approximately 450 police and approximately 21 000 troops.¹⁵ As of September 2014 MISCA had 5 079 troops and 882 police, totalling 5 961,¹⁶ compared to forty-one civilian staff.¹⁷

A comparison with the numbers of civilians in UN missions highlights how small the civilian components are in AU PSOs. For instance, at the end of 2015 the civilian components of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) had about 1 000 international civilian staff and a total force strength of 10 264 personnel. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) had approximately 4 000 international civilian staff and a total force strength of approximately 20 000. UNMISS has approximately 2 200 international civilian staff and approximately 14 000 military personnel.¹⁸ These numbers point to the level of multidimensionality that has been achieved in UN peace operations and the degree to which civilian expertise is regarded as critical for achieving mission mandates in UN PSOs. While missions differ based on context and mandate, it should be noted that both MINUSMA and MINUSCA, the UN follow-on missions to the AU's African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and MISCA, are stabilisation

missions, as is MONUSCO; so the difference in numbers are not due to these UN missions being post-conflict peace-building missions. The small number of civilians in AU missions, compared to UN missions, is rather due to funding constraints and the policy choices of the AU and its partners.

The point is not that the AU should strive to have civilian components numbering in the thousands like the UN, but rather that the small size of the civilian component in AU missions to date is a factor of the political choices made by the AU's policy organs and the advice provided to them by the AUC. However, as in the UN, the most important factor is not the relative size of the components but the roles they perform in contributing to achieving their given mandates. The civilian components of AU PSOs can make a critical contribution to mission success, despite relative size, depending on how we utilise these capacities.

Substantive functions

The 2006 ASF civilian dimension policy framework envisages that AU PSOs could include the following substantive functions: Political Affairs; Legal Advice; Public Information; Planning & Co-ordination; Human Rights; Humanitarian Liaison; Conduct and Discipline; Child Protection and Gender; Rule of Law; Electoral Affairs; DDR; Civil Affairs and SSR, as well as mission support functions. This list was meant to be somewhat similar to the UN's civilian structure given that AU and UN missions work in close co-operation and anticipating that AU missions will, in many cases, be replaced by UN missions, as was the case thus far with the AU missions in Burundi, CAR, Darfur and Mali.

However, as was also envisaged in the ASF Policy Framework, AU missions, owing to funding constraints, have to do with considerably smaller civilian components than their UN counterparts, and this means that the AU civilian staff have to perform several interrelated functions, and that there is thus less room for specialisation in AU missions. AMISOM consists of units such as Political, Humanitarian Liaison, Gender, Civil Affairs, Public Information, Security and Safety, and Support. The civilian component of MISCA consisted of Political Affairs, Humanitarian Liaison, Human Rights, DDR, SSR and Mission Support.¹⁹ The AU mission in Mali (AFISMA) had a civilian component that was made up of Political Affairs, Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, Gender and Public Information.²⁰ From these experiences we can deduce that the civilian components most commonly found in AU PSOs are Political Affairs, Human Rights, Public Information, Humanitarian Liaison, Gender and Mission Support.

In comparison, UN missions have a much larger and more specialised civilian structure. The UN missions in the DRC, South Sudan, Mali and Liberia have additional civilian specialisations such as Child Protection; HIV/AIDS; Rule of Law; Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual and Gender-based Violence; Electoral Affairs; SSR and DDR; and Conduct and Discipline. This means that in AU missions the civilian component has to combine functions such as sexual exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence and gender in one unit, usually with one single officer. In comparison, the UN civilian structure, for instance the civilian component of MONUSCO, separates these three functions and has one unit each for Gender, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) that is focused on the behaviour of the peacekeepers and another for Sexual and Gender-based Violence that is focused on the behaviour of the belligerent parties. In addition, in the field there are also teams of Women Protection Advisors.

Lastly, as reported earlier, the Political Affairs section of AMISOM is, in addition to political analysis and advice, involved in governance capacity-building. In most UN missions this is the responsibility of Civil Affairs and of UN development agencies. AMISOM's Political Affairs unit also oversees efforts that are aimed at strengthening the Rule of Law in Somalia. In comparison, most UN missions have dedicated Rule of Law units.

The smaller number of civilian staff in AU missions, which is due to policy choices and resource constraints, thus have to combine a comparatively wider number of functions compared to their UN counterparts. This does not necessarily have negative consequences. If the function of the unit is essentially advice and co-ordination, having oversight over a larger set of interrelated issues can enhance co-ordination. It would only be negative if lack of staff, resources and specialised knowledge meant that crucial mandated tasks are not being performed.

Gender

One of the most devastating forms of violence against civilians is conflict-related sexual violence. Poverty, conflict, lack of education and unemployment can all contribute to vulnerability and sexual exploitation. The lack of economic opportunities for displaced populations may result in commercial and exploitative sex as a means to meeting basic needs. The support system for children in the two countries studied has been weakened by conflict, which makes them vulnerable to sexual predation. Some peacekeepers, including civilian peacekeepers, have exploited these situations and have committed sexual exploitation and abuse. Despite the existence of a normative

framework and robust gender policies and strategies, the UN and AU have not been able to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse.

There are also a number of issues related to gender that are relevant to the civilian component in African PSOs. A UN mission such as MONUSCO, which has similar strength to AMISOM, has sixteen gender officers. UNAMID has fifteen gender experts, while UNMISS has ten. Their staffs are not focal points but skilled personnel and field practitioners. This is different in the AU missions, where there is one gender officer per mission, and a few gender focal points, who are often under-resourced.

Recruitment

Military and police peacekeeping personnel are seconded by their countries to AU PSOs. Civilians who serve in AU PSOs can be either seconded by AU Member States or recruited by the AU. To date the majority of civilian personnel in AU missions have been recruited in their professional capacity. The UN also hires the majority of its civilian personnel directly, but some categories of staff, such as corrections officers and judges, are usually hired via secondments in a category referred to as “government provided personnel”. In contrast, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) make use mostly of secondments from member states. One of the challenges with reliance on secondment, especially where the costs are born by the sending state, is that those countries that are wealthier tend to have the most staff. Another is that the pool of available staff is limited and this could lead to a shortage of civilian experts, particularly in specialised fields.²¹

The UN and the AU have faced challenges when it comes to the speed of recruitment.²² The process involved in identifying, selecting, recruiting and deploying civilian personnel can take too long, and this has led to a high vacancy rate of civilians in UN and AU peace operations. UN peacekeeping missions recorded a 33% vacancy rate between 2005 and 2008.²³ However, this is not only due to recruitment shortcomings. Other considerations that can impact the vacancy rate in a PSO include budgetary considerations, security, logistics, etc. Overall, the recruitment process seems to be improving. In 2000 and 2001 the process of recruitment for UN missions took about 275 days, and in 2004 the process was brought down to 174 days, according to a UN report in 2005.²⁴ In all the AU missions to date the AU has recruited individual civilian staff through public advertisements. Civilians respond to the applications, they apply, are shortlisted, interviewed and, if selected, are offered a position. In missions like AFISMA and MISCA that process lasted between six and twelve months, and in AMISOM most recruitments appear to take more than a year. As a result, the

AU civilian recruiting process generates staff that only come on board towards the end of the mission's lifespan. The slow rate of recruitment and hire rate of vacancies, especially in a mission like AMISOM, have had a significant impact on the missions' ability to achieve its mandate effectively and efficiently. This is an area that requires urgent remedial action. The AU would have to significantly improve the processes it follows to recruit civilian personnel for its PSOs, special political missions and other field presences.

Training

Most of the civilian peacekeepers did not undergo some form of pre-deployment training before joining the mission, and only a few underwent induction training. This is the same for senior mission management, where only a few had undergone a one-week induction orientation. Whilst each section had its own training needs, the need for induction on AU functionalities and specialised thematic areas came to the fore. This need included training on the roles and functions of the military and police components as well as on civil–military coordination. As the AU does not have a long PSO tradition, most civilian staff, including senior mission leaders, are deployed with limited prior knowledge of how PSOs function, and the processes and mechanisms available to them to enhance integration, coordination and accountability. In-mission training can thus be an important tool to enhance mission effectiveness.

INTEGRATION AND CO-ORDINATION

Both missions suffered from lack of coordination between the civilian, police and military components. There were insufficient opportunities, processes and mechanisms for sharing information, joint analysis or joint planning. This indicates that there is a lack of guidance from AU HQ on doctrine and Standing Operations Procedures for how the mission leadership should function, and on the mechanisms and processes that should be put in place to generate joint analysis and planning and integrated decision-making. Lack of coordination is also a reflection of inexperience, and of a deficiency in training and preparation for senior staff and mission leadership that would prepare them further for a mission culture that promotes integration and co-ordination. Unless the AU is able to address these integration and co-ordination shortcomings, little that is done on improving the capacity of individual civilian officers, or the functioning of civilian components, will have much effect. There can be no military solution to stability or protection, nor can one find a political solution or achieve effective governance in an unstable and insecure environment. The civilian,

police and military roles and functions can only be meaningfully performed if they complement each other and are part of a larger integrated mission strategy.

A well-developed civilian Concept of Operations (CONOPs), which is integrated with those of the other components and the strategic vision of the mission, is key to ensuring that the role of the civilians in any given AU PSO is clearly articulated. This will enable the mission leadership to explain the contribution of the civilian component to the police, military and mission support components, as well as their hosts and partners. It will also contribute to greater effectiveness because the civilian component will be better understood, and thus be better supported, led and co-ordinated with the other mission components, host authorities and partners.

CONCLUSION

The ASF Civilian Policy Framework of 2006 was based on international best practice because the AU had only limited civilian peace operation experience at the time. However, since then the AU has by now deployed approximately 400 civilians across a range of missions, it can now look to its own empirical experience to inform lessons learned and future policy development.

This study set out to analyse the different civilian roles in the AU missions in CAR and Somalia, with a view to assess the overall contribution the civilian components are making towards the achievement of mission mandates.

The study found that although the AU missions in CAR and Somalia have deployed civilian staff, and although the AU Commission and the missions in question have gained experience over the years with the selection, recruitment, deployment and utilisation of its civilian staff, this experience, and the knowledge generated in the process, have not been systematically captured and fed back into AU policies, doctrine or standard operating procedures. As a result, it is difficult to identify any improvement in the way the civilian component functions.

The study found that there was a low level of awareness and understanding of the role and contribution of the civilian component in PSOs, especially among senior AUC personnel, senior mission leadership, military and police components, and even within the civilian components themselves.

This challenge has come about in part because the AU has not been able to clearly articulate why it needs a multidimensional approach and what the function and contribution of the civilian component is, or how it contributes to achieving the

mandate of a particular mission. We conclude by suggesting a number of ways in which these shortcomings can be addressed.

- ◆ Update and revise the ASF concept and the related doctrine and SOPs to reflect the multidimensional nature of PSOs, and specifically the role and functions of the civilian component.
- ◆ Strengthen the Civilian Strategic Support Group (CSSG), which was recently established to provide strategic advice to the AUC on the role of the civilian component. This could be done through the appointment of a steering committee to provide periodic guidance to ASF continental and regional planning elements.
- ◆ Enhance civil–military coordination and mission integration by incorporating the comprehensive approach into the overall AU PSO concept, doctrine and SOPs.
- ◆ Implement the revised ASF concept, doctrine and SOPs, socialise it through training and reflect it in planning and budgeting, for instance in the HQ and mission structure and staffing tables.
- ◆ Improve the training and quality of the senior mission leadership team and the expectations placed on them to enhance and facilitate mission co-ordination and integration. These expectations need to be reflected in their contracts and compacts and they must have the staff, resources and tools necessary to achieve these functions.
- ◆ Standardise the need to develop a civilian CONOPs for each mission and each planning cycle.
- ◆ Establish a table of equipment for civilian personnel so that mission planners know what equipment needs to be procured for the civilian component.
- ◆ Planning and budgeting of new AU PSOs must reflect the minimum civilian component foreseen in the AU Civilian Policy Framework for the ASF.
- ◆ Strengthen gender dimension in implementing the mission’s mandate through increase in the number of female peacekeepers, increase in resources, both human and financial to address the gender issues in the missions.

ENDNOTES

1. Dr. Cedric de Coning (South Africa) is a Senior Research Fellow with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and a Senior Advisor to ACCORD. Irene Limo (Kenya) coordinates the Peacemaking Unit, and James Machakaire (Zimbabwe) coordinates the Peacekeeping Unit of ACCORD. Dr. Jide Martyns Okeke (Nigeria) is Head of the Policy Development Unit of the Peace Support Operations Division of the Department of Peace and Security in the African Union Commission. The co-authors would like to acknowledge the African Union Peace Support Operations Division (AU PSOD) and the AU missions in Central African Republic and Somalia for the support they provided to the research team. We would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the support, valuable comments and contributions of Walter Lotze, Yvonne Akpasom and Christian Ndubuisi Ani.
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5

A Need for Military Psychology in Africa: The African Standby Force as an Example

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INTRODUCTION

Africa has been characterised by several wars with very destructive effects on infrastructure and the population. In the 1990s there were wars in Angola, Burundi, DR Congo (DRC), Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, among others.² Murithi wrote, “African leaders have to take responsibility for the lack of peace and security on the continent.”³ He mentioned political misrule, economic mismanagement, kleptocracy, theft of state resources, crime, fraud and lack of human rights as some of the conditions that contribute to conflict and war on the continent.

The “Industrial Colonisation” process, where foreign countries such as Great Britain, the USA, France, Germany, Russia and China competed for the soil/land of Africa, has changed – now mineral resources under the soil and fish resources in the oceans of African states are targeted. These international actors are fuelling the conflicts and wars in Africa by seeking to exploit resources such as oil in South Sudan, DRC, Nigeria and Congo-Brazzaville, diamonds in Sierra Leone and Angola, timber in Liberia and Guinea, and copper, chromium and coltan from Central Africa.⁴ The characteristics of the circumstances and the nature of the wars in some countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Mali and DRC are complex, politically loaded and financially complicated.

Nigeria, for example, is the most populous country in Africa, with a population split between Muslims and Christians being a key determinant of civil war susceptibility. A substantial proportion of its export earnings is from crude oil and the inequitable distribution of oil-derived incomes is a further driver of conflict.⁵ Poverty existing

cheek by jowl with wealth from oil exporting is “double trouble” in making the country susceptible to civil war.

The Somali conflict is one of the most terrible civil wars in Africa. From 1991 Somalia has been without a functioning central government for years. Obstacles include competition for resources, repression by the military regime, widespread availability of weapons, large numbers of unemployed youth and warlords showing a lack of interest in peace.⁶

The armed Tuareg rebellion once again triggered Mali’s political and territorial crisis in January 2012 with far-reaching consequences for security in the region. After the fall of Gaddafi in Libya in October 2011, heavily armed, military-trained Tuareg fighters returned to Mali to fight for their independence.⁷ Challenges in the Mali conflict are to find a solution to the Tuareg conflict, improve relations between ethnic groups and combat high levels of organised crime.

Lastly, the recent wars in DRC are a reincarnation of past conflicts based on economic, institutional, regional and global geopolitical factors. These factors are influenced by mismanagement of the public sector, deterioration of social conditions, a resource war fuelled by poor management of the natural resource sector and unequal distribution of benefits arising from the exploitation of natural resources.⁸

In most of these countries rebels are generally not satisfied with how governments rule, which results in potential scenarios for more wars in Africa.

Against this background it is evident that there is a viable need for an African Standby Force (ASF) to respond to conflict, crises and war situations in Africa timeously and efficiently.⁹ The ASF should consist of five brigades, one from each of Africa’s subregions: the Southern, Western, Central, Eastern and Northern brigades. These include brigade formations drawn from:

- ◆ Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)
- ◆ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- ◆ Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- ◆ Two regional mechanisms in East Africa (EASBRIG COM)
- ◆ North Africa Response Capability (NARC).¹⁰

These brigades must be well trained and well equipped – in essence, to be combat ready for complex operations in Africa.¹¹ Combat readiness has become so imperative that De Coning proposed adapting the ASF to a just-in-time readiness force, by putting in

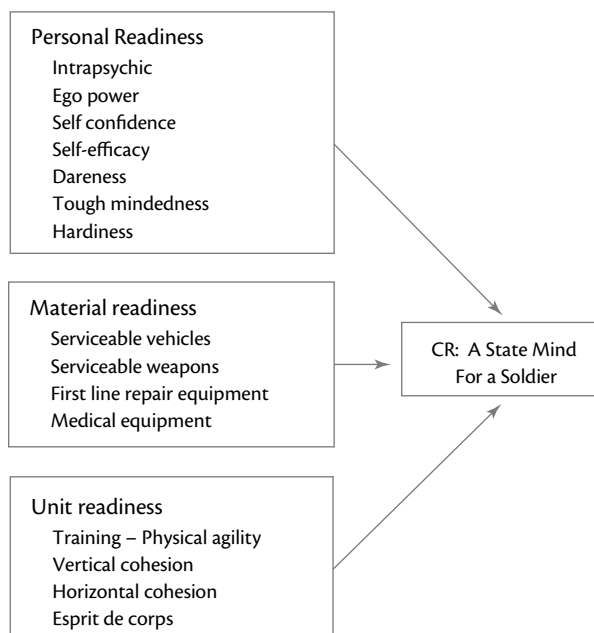


Figure 1 CR: A State of Mind for a Soldier

place the necessary policy frameworks, doctrine, standing operating procedures, and a legal and logistic framework.¹²

The aim and scope of this chapter is to conceptualise and theoretically discuss combat readiness, outline challenges facing the ASF and its combat readiness, and argue the need for military psychology to promote combat readiness of ASF forces through support to soldiers and their families.

WHAT IS COMBAT READINESS?

A number of researchers have explored the concept of combat readiness (CR), focusing on different concepts to develop a definition.¹³ Kruys states that terms such as “readiness”, “combat efficiency”, “combat proficiency” and “combat power” are similar and can be used interchangeably.¹⁴ Van Vuuren is of the opinion that these terms are closely interconnected.¹⁵ Gal focuses on CR as a psychological attribute influencing a soldier’s choices in a specific action in an operation.¹⁶ Kirkland and Katz refer to CR as a soldier’s degree of commitment.¹⁷ Shinga and Van Dyk view CR as a soldier’s level of preparedness psychologically and physically through training and psychological interventions (on morale, leadership, cohesion, hardiness, team functioning, daring) aimed at developing soldiers’ capability to perform a given military task successfully.

ASF soldiers are expected to deal with conflict, disasters and war that collectively or individually represent dangerous and traumatic environments.¹⁸ Shinga and Van Dyk view CR also as a state of mind influenced by personal, material and unit readiness within which soldiers have to operate (see Figure 1).¹⁹

- ◆ Personal readiness requires good intrapsychic ability, with high levels of ego power, self-confidence, self-efficacy (to deal with complex military operations as ASF members), high levels of daring, tough-mindedness and hardiness to fight dangerous and hardened rebels like Al-Shabaab, M23, Boko Haram and, if necessary, the dangerous terrorist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).²⁰
- ◆ Material readiness speaks to the fact that militaries in Africa don't always have the best, latest and serviceable military equipment. The Battle of Bangui in CAR in March 2013 is a good example where South African National Defence Force soldiers did not have enough equipment, vehicles, helicopters and medical support on the ground to fight the Séléka rebels.²¹ Glad is of the opinion that serviceable vehicles, military equipment, medical support care and equipment have a direct influence on the motivation, morale, will to fight and state of mind of the soldiers involved, which is their level of CR.²² Financial and logistic support for the ASF will therefore be crucial to sustain the level of CR of soldiers in battle.
- ◆ Unit readiness is an indication of the collective state of mind of the soldiers. Nkewu found in his research on soldiers in Africa that training, vertical and horizontal cohesion, esprit de corps, high morale and teamwork contribute positively to CR.²³ Horizontal cohesion is the trust shared between soldiers,²⁴ the bonds of confidence between men within a single unit (section, platoon, company, brigade). Vertical cohesion is the trust between soldiers and their leaders on different levels, the degree to which soldiers trust their leaders, believe in them under fire, obey their decisions and commands, and require their willpower to do the task or fight the war. Task cohesion refers to the shared commitment among members to achieve a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group involved. Effective and competent leaders who care about their soldiers will strengthen vertical cohesion to sustain CR in ASF contingents.

Achieving these different levels of cohesion in the ASF to promote high levels of unit readiness and CR will be a challenge for brigades. Soldiers originating from different countries, speaking different languages, having different organisational/unit cultures, doctrines and (possibly) values must be integrated to promote unit cohesion and CR. Interventions by military psychologists to contribute to higher levels of unit

readiness include team-building sessions, psycho-education sessions to establish a new identity and managing cultural diversity.

THE IMPACT OF SOLDIERS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNIT AND THEIR FAMILIES ON CR

Shinga and Van Dyk, in a research project on soldiers in Africa, also found factors which contribute to CR, a soldier's relationship to his/her unit, a soldier's relationship to family/spouse, hardiness and leadership.²⁵ The military unit and the family of the soldier are described as "greedy institutions", both seeking the undivided attention, loyalty, commitment, time and energy of the soldier.²⁶ A well-integrated unit and a stable family life will be a win-win situation for soldiers – and equally so for the ASF – in sustaining their CR. Military leaders also need to be sensitised about the needs of the family and the responsibilities of the soldier to his family before, during and after deployment. Military psychologists can contribute in this situation to develop a well-integrated unit before deployment.

The approach of the unit influences the attitude of the family and vice versa, both with substantial effect on the state of mind of the soldier. A positive, supportive family and spouse will positively contribute to the morale, motivation and CR of each soldier. Military psychologists can present programmes to soldiers and their families to address domestic issues (communication before and during operations, financial arrangements, etc) that may arise during the absence of the soldier on operations. This will enable the family to function independently, giving the soldier the opportunity to focus on the operational task.²⁷ Uncertainty about his family will break down the soldier's focus for the deployment, negatively influence his morale and motivation and make him more vulnerable to accidents and even substance abuse (such as alcohol abuse) to cope with the stress.

HARDINESS

Hardiness is a well-known concept and theoretically grounded in existential psychology.²⁸ Hardiness is a pattern of personality characteristics encompassing three mutually related dispositions, namely commitment, control and challenge.²⁹ Commitment is an attitude to involve oneself in (rather than experience alienation from) whatever one is doing, while control is to feel and act as if one is influential (rather than helpless) in activities such as operations or war, and challenge is the belief that changes in life are opportunities for personal growth.³⁰ The results from the research of Shinga and Van Dyk in Africa on soldiers show a meaningful influence of

hardiness as a mediator in the soldier's relationships to the unit and family to protect their CR while absent from home and during operations.³¹

MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Dunn describes military leadership as the catalyst for the personnel dimension of combat readiness – it is an irreplaceable force multiplier.³² Military leaders (commanders) play a significant role in soldiers' CR and overall state of mind, serving as a buffer between the soldier and unwanted mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).³³ Successful military leaders contribute to feelings of high morale, motivation, self-efficacy and self-confidence in their soldiers, as well as to safeguard them from psychological conditions such as anxiety, adjustment disorders, depression and PTSD.

Combat readiness, as a state of mind, is grounded in a multifactorial theory. Intrapsychic strength, the inner self and ego power of the soldier characterised by high self-confidence, self-efficacy and hardiness, will empower the soldier with the necessary motivation to fight and sacrifice for his country and the continent. To attain this requires unit readiness as well as military leaders that can manage a well-integrated unit and family system, making informed and proper decisions for ASF brigades to become a just-in-time combat ready to fight high risk and complex wars in countries such as Nigeria, Mali, Somalia and DRC in the future.

CHALLENGES TO THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE

Circumstances in some Africa countries include realities such as old outdated military equipment, inadequate medical equipment, support and military hospitals, and the absence in most countries of military psychologists as well. There is no need indicated for military psychology and services in policy documents of the ASF and AU.

ABSENCE OF MILITARY PSYCHOLOGISTS IN THE PLANNING PHASE

Murithi mentioned the importance of operational readiness of the ASF, but the how and what on CR is vague.³⁴ The complexity of future operations requires ASF soldiers with high levels of CR and a focused state of mind. It is now the time to include this dimension in selection and planning, during and after operations, and in doctrine to support the soldiers on a psychological level. This implies that ASF brigades will need well-trained and well-equipped soldiers, but in the available literature the psychological dimension in preparation of brigades is unclear, if not absent. The void became abundantly clear at the African Peace Support Trainers' Association (APSTA)

conference held on 5–7 September 2016 in Cairo, Egypt. From the discussions it was clear that military psychological services, sources and an overall plan are currently not part of ASF doctrine and AU policy for the ASF.

In discussing proper military psychological services in Africa, Kasujja stated that some countries, such as South Africa, Nigeria and Uganda, are possibly in a better position, while several countries have no capability.³⁵ As a consequence, for several ASF brigades military psychologists will possibly be absent during the planning phase of operations and thus no psychological services at the level of operations. Delivering the necessary military psychological services before, during and after operations to those who are under pressure is lacking. This absence could well lead to the failure to protect the mental health of military members of the ASF and their families. Circumstances such as the absence of the necessary psychological services predict conflict in soldiers' family life and psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and PTSD. As a result, drug and alcohol misuse/abuse as surviving and coping measures are bound to increase, with negative consequences for armed services.

MILITARY EQUIPMENT

African military forces are often poorly funded, which implies that they have very old and inferior military equipment, ammunition, communication equipment and medical support equipment such as field hospitals.³⁶ By way of illustration, Heitman attributes some vulnerabilities to the South African National Defence Force during the Battle of Bangui against the Séléka rebels. He points out the absence of light armoured equipment and vehicles, assault helicopters, Cessna Caravan utility aircraft and adequate medical services.³⁷ In Mali and Nigeria soldiers rebelled as a result of having to fight insurgents with inferior or outdated military equipment. It is also the reality that most East and West African countries have armies that are poorly armed. The kinds of firearms they possess are only adequate when dealing with civilians, but inadequate to deal with heavily armed rebel groups operating in East and West Africa.³⁸ For example, this is what was said about the African Union Mission in Sudan:³⁹

“At times the AU’s equipment is woefully inadequate for the task at hand. Soldiers of the AU Darfur Mission (AMIS) are armed with pistols for officers, AK-47s for the majority of the troops, and one rocket-propelled grenade launcher (RPG-7) for every ten soldiers. When opposing unarmed civilians these weapons are quite adequate. However, against the factions armed by the government they are poorly equipped and little more than a ‘nuisance.’”

This is a clear indication, for example, that in order for African Standby Forces to maintain peace and pose a military threat anywhere within the region, they need to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of weapons. In fact, this might imply that by deploying for ASF missions various African governments are putting the lives of their soldiers at risk unnecessarily. Unrealistic mandates, unsustainable numbers of personnel, hostile host governments and mission creep have undermined peace operations.⁴⁰ Such lack of equipment and fire-power in particular put the CR levels of ASF members under pressure.

Some rebel/terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, supported on occasion by ISIS, share in money gained from selling oil from captured oil industries.⁴¹ In Africa, in particular, the money they spend on military equipment might well be turned to fighting ASF brigades in the future. This will have a negative effect on the morale, motivation, CR and state of mind of ASF soldiers. Employing superior fire power was demonstrated during 2013 in the CAR, when the newly equipped Séléka fighters returning from fighting in Lybia marched on Bangui and outfought the forces of the CAR government.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be described as the “sleeping enemy” in the psyches and minds in most of the soldiers of the ASF brigades. Hoge *et al* found in a meta-analysis that the average post-deployment prevalence of PTSD was 13,2% for the personnel involved in the sample, while 21% of soldiers reported receiving mental health services for stress, emotional, alcohol, drugs or family problems. Studies have shown that 13–53% of US and Canadian veterans meet the criteria for a mental health problem.⁴² In the case of ASF soldiers, most of them might have been previously deployed or were even involved in grim war circumstances. It is unknown whether the necessary military support on PTSD screenings, trauma management and other psychological services have been available to these soldiers. Data on PTSD for soldiers in Africa and the ASF brigades is either unknown or absent.

Untreated/undiagnosed PTSD is a safety and operational risk for the ASF and it will influence the general mental health of the force, their level of CR and their state of mind to deal with a competent and violent enemy. Soldiers with high PTSD levels are vulnerable to aggressive outbursts, shooting at colleagues or civilians during peacekeeping operations, depression, bad decision-making, low levels of concentration, and drug and alcohol misuse.⁴³

SELECTION OF SOLDIERS

The “job–demands–resource” (JDR) model of Bakker and Demerouti, where selection will contribute to make a proper job fit between the resources of a soldier and the demands of a job, can be helpful in doing job-fit profiles of soldiers in the ASF.⁴⁴ Van Dyk and Ditsela developed a job-fit model for the military with general profiles for posts such as infantry, logistics and artillery, and more specialised profiles for jobs such as divers, pilots and special forces.⁴⁵

Dimensions noted in the Description column of Figure 2 are proposed for a selection process of soldiers to do a proper job-fit assessment, including soldiers of the ASF, with the possible use of psychometric tests or questionnaires by military psychologists (Figure 2).⁴⁶

| TESTS/QUESTIONNAIRES | DESCRIPTION |
|--|--|
| Potential evaluation (Differential Aptitude Test (DAT)) | To assess vocabulary, verbal reasoning, abstract ability, decision-making. |
| Management profile (Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)) | To assess different dimensions of personality such as people- or task-orientated, emotional or cognitive functioning, and sensing- or judging-orientated. |
| Hardiness (Dolan and Adler Hardiness Test) | To evaluate the soldier's ability to commit, control and deal with change. |
| Absence of psychopathology (Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III (Millon-III)) | To prevent psychopathology such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and personality disorders such as borderline, narcissistic and anti-social behaviour in soldiers. |
| PTSD (PTSD-checklist-clinical version, PCL-C) | To assess PTSD levels of soldiers for screening, prevention or for clinical treatment. |
| Personality (16 personality factor questionnaire) | To assess the personality profile of a soldier to do proper job-fit to the challenges related to a specific job. |

Figure 2 Psychometric tests and questionnaires

The dimensions outlined in Figure 2 together with tests or questionnaires can be useful for a basic evaluation and proper job-fit placement in the general job profiles, while more specialised careers such as pilots, divers, paratroopers and special force operators may require an alternative specialised job-fit process with the use of specialised psychometric evaluations. Normally, military psychologists compile the psychometric battery of tests if the specific group is identified or their job descriptions are available.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Results from research in Africa have shown a strong positive connection between the soldier’s healthy relationship with a spouse or family and level of CR.⁴⁷ Kalamdien and Van Dyk developed a model to support soldiers and their families psychologically during operations.⁴⁸ The model is based on an approach where the Military Psychological Team (MPT) supporting soldiers during operations interacts with the MPT supporting the family at home to develop a co-ordinated approach in dealing with possible challenges during operations.

Soldiers and their families need support during the different phases of a deployment cycle and the support can play out as illustrated below (Figure 3):⁴⁹

| PHASES | DESCRIPTION |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Pre-deployment phase | Starts with the warning order for deployment; soldier’s routine normally starts to change, longer hours busy with preparation for operation, and the family goes through the different emotions around separation. The military psychologist can work with groups of family members and soldiers to facilitate the challenges that are part of this phase. |
| Deployment phase | A phase characterised by adjustments for the soldiers and his family. It is important that the military psychologists get involved to settle all groups involved to protect the CR and state of mind of the soldiers during the operation. |
| Sustainment phase | MPTs needs to give support to soldiers and the families, do assessments during operations on CR, motivation and morale levels of soldiers and families, to advise commanders and make proposals to sustain CR levels. |
| Redeployment phase | Sometimes the last month of deployment is difficult for soldiers, possibly resulting in a decrease in focus and motivation, a higher number of vehicle and shooting accidents, and incidents of misconduct occurring at the front during operations. Soldiers start to focus on family and home, and family members become excited, on the one hand, and also anxious about giving up roles and positions which they had during the operation. In this phase advice and support from the MPTs and commanders are vital to maintain CR levels. |
| Post-deployment and reunion | It is necessary to keep the unit–soldier–family well integrated for proper functioning and future deployment. MPTs need to plan and advise commanders properly for the success of activities during this phase, to protect unit and family cohesion for the sake of a “healthy military family”. |

Figure 3 Phases of deployment

NEED FOR MILITARY PSYCHOLOGY IN AFRICA: ASF AS AN EXAMPLE

This part of the chapter outlines the need for military psychologists and services in Africa to support brigades of the ASF in future by sustaining mental health and CR of members. This need results from a survey done with the attendees from African countries at the African Peace Support Trainers' Association (APSTA) conference 5–7 September 2016 in Cairo, Egypt. The survey followed a presentation to sensitise the audience on the need for military psychological services in Africa. These services include the following:

- ◆ Military psychologists and services. An imperative is to develop pockets of knowledge, skills and expertise with military psychologists, theory on military psychology and skills for relevant services. Pockets exist at, for example, Makerere University, Uganda for East Africa, Annambra University, Nigeria for West Africa, at military academies in Namibia and South Africa, and training institutions for peacekeeping operations in Kenya (International Peace Support Training Centre), Zimbabwe (Southern African Development Community's Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre), Tanzania (Institute of Peace and Conflict studies) and Ghana (Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPKTC)).⁵⁰ These pockets of knowledge can spread to support the different ASF brigades within the respective regions.
- ◆ Mental health management. The use of MPTs is required to keep the force mentally stable, for good motivation, decision-making, team cohesion and high morale.⁵¹ It is important before, during and after an operation to utilise a MPT (registered nurse, doctor, military psychologist, social worker and chaplain, for example); this is already being practised in many units in the South African National Defence Force and can make a meaningful contribution in the different ASF brigades that stand to face the brunt of future armed conflicts.
- ◆ Trauma and PTSD management. Combat trauma influences soldiers on a conscious and subconscious emotional level and on a physical level.⁵² At the conscious level a soldier is informed through his/her senses by what is heard, seen, smelled, felt and experienced at a specific time during a specific incident in war. To sustain CR, Psychological Debriefing (PD) must be done during or after operations to debrief traumatic experiences on a conscious level to prevent such trauma filtering through from the conscious mind and becoming stored at the subconscious level as "unfinished business". Such "unfinished business" can influence the soldier's daily conscious behaviour. Seemingly irrational avoiding

of places or hyper arousal after hearing a noise are symptoms of PTSD and evidence that everyday incidents can trigger unfinished business of previous experiences. Soldiers can overreact with high-risk behaviour during operations such as impulsive shooting, running away from noise, reacting to the smell of diesel, dust or blood. Unmanaged PTSD can influence soldiers' CR and state of mind and require urgent treatment by a military psychologist to control the risks and CR during battle.

The physical dimension refers to the neurological process that occurs in the brain of the soldier when his/her senses observe or experience danger as in war. During this process the brain releases hormones adrenalin, nor-adrenalin and cortisol, and opioids. These substances cause anatomical and muscular changes in the body, the body reacts by preparing for flight (worry, concern, anxiety during war) or fight (frustrations, anger, rage, hate) or to freeze (helplessness, hopelessness, numbness, dissociation). These chemicals remain in the body as muscle contraction and some researchers have found that PTSD symptoms arise when residual energy from a traumatic experience is not discharged from the body. Military psychologists need to be involved during and after operations to keep the soldiers physically fit, free from trauma and PTSD, with a high level of CR.

PD can be helpful in the prevention of psychological conditions like PTSD to keep soldiers mentally fit and combat ready. PD can be used by military psychologists as a first-line treatment to prevent psychopathology and as a psychological triage to screen soldiers to determine who are mentally fit to stay in the operation and who are unfit so that they can be referred to the MPT for clinical treatment. Proper management of PTSD is important for prevention as well as to protect soldiers against its effects when involved in incidents such as vehicle and shooting accidents.

Dhlahdla and Van Dyk proposed the following model to manage PTSD during operations in Africa and it can be suitable for soldiers of the emergent ASF brigades within the respective regions:⁵³

- ◆ Pre-deployment screening, normally by a MPT, and will include PTSD assessment and screening by military psychologists of all the soldiers.
- ◆ Pre-deployment awareness training, where military psychologists educate soldiers on trauma, the effects of trauma, dealing with trauma and symptoms of PTSD in members for early identification.
- ◆ Post-incident counselling, where PD can be a very useful tool during an operation to debrief trauma in time to prevent PTSD.

- ◆ Post-deployment PTSD screening, assessment and PD if necessary, when soldiers are back home to “cleanse” them of symptoms or experiences of traumatic events.
- ◆ Follow-up PD sessions on soldiers who need more than one session.

This model wants to prevent PTSD and sustain CR and a positive state of mind in the soldiers of the ASF brigades by offering the following three advantages and progress in three selected domains:

- ◆ Psychological plan. For ASF operations it can be a tool, a process that the military psychologist can use before, during and after operations to assess factors such as morale, CR and motivation, with feedback as management information to the force commander and planned activities to support or correct it.⁵⁴ Even more relevant is if the psychological plan can become part of the “appreciation and planning cycle” just like the intelligence, operational and logistical plan, to support the commander and the CR level of ASF soldiers.
- ◆ Selection and proper job-fit of soldiers. Psychological assessment (aptitude, personality, levels of hardiness, resilience, grit), training and field exercises are imperative. Delahaij, Kamphuis and Van den Berg⁵⁵ aver that “military organisations are moving from a curative to a preventative approach in supporting mental health, well-being and job performance”. The authors found that threat exposure is both a stressor for soldiers with low self-efficacy and also a crucial part of the deployment experience for soldiers with high self-efficacy, such as paratroopers and special forces operators. The ASF brigades have to optimise selection and job-fit to support CR and prevent psychological burn-out in soldiers.
- ◆ Leadership development. Research shows that leaders can have a strong influence as a buffer to protect soldiers from the effects of trauma. If leaders of the ASF develop the potential of their soldiers to become self-leaders, to develop self-confidence, be more independent, with high levels of competency and self-efficacy, and as a platoon to experience collective efficacy, they will be better protected against PTSD. Leaders who create unit cohesion convey the necessary information, develop a feeling of emotional safety, build their relationships on trust with their soldiers, care for their needs and families, and eventually create an atmosphere that will serve as a safety net for soldiers under fire while protecting CR and preventing PTSD.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

Current developments in Africa bring security challenges to the fore, specific for the type of scenarios the ASF is destined to encounter. Future complex situations will challenge the CR levels and the state of mind of soldiers employed within the ASF brigades. The need in Africa is to develop a sustainable military psychological service to support soldiers of the ASF brigades and their families during these operations. The chapter conceptualises CR, discusses the military psychology challenges for the ASF and proposes realistic needs for future military psychological services for soldiers of the ASF brigades and their families.

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6

The African Standby Force: A Reactive Paper Tiger or a Pre-Emptive Lion?

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INTRODUCTION

As Africa transitions through numerous cold, simmering and hot conflicts and wars, the eruption of violence across the continent shows no sign of abating. Armed violence will continue and will, in all probability, escalate. Many of the simmering conflicts and wars will reignite as populations become more demanding, desperate, impoverished and restive. Not only is the continent faced with non-violent and violent conflicts and limited wars between governments, a disgruntled and agitated populace, armed anti-government forces (AGFs) and proxy forces, it is also increasingly becoming an assembly area for foreign military forces operating under numerous guises. Typical of the latter are “military partnerships”, “Foreign Internal Defence”² (FID), “Global War on Terror”³ (GWOT) as well as “free foreign Private Military Company (PMC) training” and several intelligence agencies masquerading as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Added to this melting pot of potential conflict is the fact that African countries do not, despite claims to the contrary, share common values or a collective vision of a common future whereby all of its people will benefit.

In principle, the African Stand-by Force (ASF) ought to provide African security solutions to African security problems, but its establishment requires a detailed assessment and investigation with numerous searching questions requiring answers. Failure to address and answer the questions honestly and without bias will result in the ASF being out of step with its envisaged role. The continent cannot afford this. Currently, an apparent weakness is the AU’s unwillingness to engage in preventive and coercive diplomacy when a conflict or war is in its embryonic phase. However, even if the political will exists to provide security solutions to a conflict, the AU still seeks funding beyond Africa’s shores.

Driven by political and military will and guided by actionable and predicted intelligence, the ASF could present Africa with an asset that can be deployed to deter, discourage, intervene, contain and/or neutralise the threats that drive the numerous conflicts and wars in Africa. However, to establish the ASF as an effective deterrent force operating in tandem with the AU member states' diplomatic efforts, the ASF *must* be African-owned and never allow itself to be exploited as a proxy force acting to secure the foreign interests of a foreign donor or power.

As the continental fall-out of both FID and GWOT continues, radical religious groups will further pursue their quest to enforce religion-based politics through extreme violence. These groupings have already gained footholds in north, west, east and central Africa and are moving southwards. They show no sign of slowing down. Their loose affiliation to Daesh in primarily West and North Africa – also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL and currently IS) – has bolstered their cause and motivation, and added further momentum to their quest for power through religion-driven violence. A similar linkage has occurred with radical groupings in East Africa (Al-Shabaab) and Al-Qaeda. Currently, the Islamist group in CAR, Séléka, and the Allied Defence Force (ADF) in eastern DRC are being courted by both Daesh and Al-Qaeda. Similarly, ethnic, tribal and/or politically motivated Anti-Government Forces (AGFs) will continue their violent quests to achieve their political aspirations – with or without covert and clandestine foreign economic, moral and military aid and support.

The inability of the continent's intelligence services, law enforcement agencies and national armed forces to fulfil their mandates to identify, prevent and neutralise this wave of destruction has prompted the rise of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises⁴ (ACIRC) alongside, and possibly in co-operation with, the ASF.

ESTABLISHING THE ASF

The establishment of an ASF presents the continent with a potentially powerful asset that can be deployed to deter, discourage, intervene, contain and/or neutralise the threats that drive the numerous conflicts and wars in Africa.

Conceptualised in 2003 and planned to consist of five regional brigades, the 25 000-strong ASF is intended to form the backbone of the continent's peace and security architecture. This asset will – if correctly organised, trained, equipped and led – be able to provide the favoured African security solutions to African security problems. However, the large manpower base for the ASF holds the risk to foster

a cost-intensive, unsustainable, lumbering, unwieldy giant that is unable to rapidly react and deploy.

An ASF much reduced in size will be better able to provide the continent with a measure of added independence and the opportunity to assume responsibility for its own defence and security, without being forced to rely on the two-edged sword of “free” foreign aid. The acceptance of this so-called “free aid” is partly responsible for the continued instability and violence pervading Africa. The misguided acceptance of “free aid”, furthermore, lays the foundation for the economic and political manipulation of governments and nations, in the interests of the donor countries, and usually to the distinct disadvantage of the recipient country. In spite of the latter risk, and to be an effective deterrent to any hostile threat force the ASF must pose a credible and sustainable deterrent force. It must be able to rapidly transition from a mere standby posture to a rapidly deployable, highly mobile and agile intervention force, able and willing to neutralise and/or overcome pending or real armed hostile situations. Overcoming hostile armed situations requires more than creating new terms to discuss old problems in the erroneous belief that new answers and solutions will be forthcoming. It requires the ability to rapidly and relentlessly employ both sustainable horizontal and vertical manoeuvre along with firepower to deadly effect.

But have the common political aspirations driving the establishment of the ASF truly been attained – and does the collective continental will exist to deploy such a force? And has consensus been reached on the strategic and operational deployment policies and principles of the ASF?

THE FACE OF CONFLICT AND WAR

The face of conflict and war in Africa undoubtedly differs from that beyond the continent’s shores. These differences are evident in terrain, technology, infrastructure, climatic variations, insufficient airpower, conflict-drivers and budgetary constraints, social issues, demographics, population manipulation, to name but a few.

Calls for “negotiations” by failing anti-government and proxy forces will – once they face destruction – continue with the aim of gaining time to re-arm and continue the conflict or war. The false negotiations will inevitably be accompanied by a dishonouring of the ceasefires and a return to conflict and war. This cycle of negotiated deception has been successfully applied on several occasions by AGFs and proxy forces faced with defeat and will continue – often with the support of international bodies and governments.

International “diplomacy” and UN intervention, combined with the ever-present threat of the International Criminal Court, are used very effectively in preventing African governments under siege from ever achieving absolute victory in conflicts and wars and destroying the threat(s) to their independence and sovereignty. Africa also remains a perfect example that half-won conflicts and wars are never truly won. Conflict and war in Africa is – and will remain – complex, dynamic, and multidimensional. It will continue to engage the populace at various levels and, as a result, expose them to the mercy of the opposing forces.

Ill-prepared, under-equipped and poorly disciplined government forces will continue to view civilian casualties as mere “collateral damage” and, in some instances, will target the population through frustration. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are bound to escalate and place additional strain on underperforming government agencies and services. In addition domestic and regional tensions, conflict and war will linger and be fuelled and triggered by, *inter alia*:

- ◆ intoxication of power by heads of state
- ◆ ever-demanding and restive populace who demand greater support from government
- ◆ foreign interests of major powers colliding with national and vital interests of African states
- ◆ resource greed and control
- ◆ neighbourly suspicion (historical suspicion) – often encouraged by foreign advisors
- ◆ tribal loyalties and religious differences
- ◆ bad political and military advice at the strategic and operational levels
- ◆ perceived weak or ill-prepared armed forces and their inability to project decisive force rapidly, ruthlessly and efficiently
- ◆ lack of actionable and predictive intelligence, continually rendering the armed forces reactive as opposed to proactive
- ◆ failure to assess the implications of “unintended consequences”
- ◆ regional spill-over of conflicts and wars into neighbouring states
- ◆ government corruption
- ◆ development and encouragement of militant and divisive politics
- ◆ political marginalisation⁵

By identifying and countering potential conflicts and wars, the ASF will signal the desire and willingness of the AU's member states to take responsibility for securing peace on the continent. In so doing, it can play a major role and become an asset that serves all of Africa. To the contrary, if the ASF is to simply become another peacekeeping force – as opposed to a true African deterrent and intervention force acting in the interests of Africa – it will be restricting its options. Such an outcome will simply add to the many costly and failed peacekeeping missions instead of providing viable options for peace in Africa.

To launch and conduct successful containment and intervention operations the ASF will require strong and determined AU guidance along with the requisite political and military deployment and operating parameters. Failure to do so will result in mission creep as well as tarnish the image, effectiveness, and reputation of the fledgling ASF.

THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is the fuel that drives strategy and subsequently the force design. But what has intelligence thus far “told” the strategists and planners in terms of the current and predicted threats and how has this intelligence been used to design the ASF? The ASF's force design and policy framework must be dictated and guided by the current and predicted conflict trends, along with the realities facing Africa. It is, after all, the current and predicted conflicts and wars that will establish and confirm the force design, deployment policy and protocols of the ASF.

Will the ASF for example be required to intervene in state-on-state aggression and, if so, under what circumstances and on which warring side? What if a conflict arises between a government and its populace – what decision will be taken to intervene and how will such intervention manifest itself? What action can be taken if the government facing domestic unrest and uprisings refuses the ASF entry into the country? Will the threat be a hostile neighbour, a proxy force, an armed anti-government force, and what foreign support will the threat have? Or will the threat be a foreign expeditionary force aimed at “regime change” somewhere in Africa? Furthermore, in what shape will the threat appear in – a limited conventional force or an unconventional force? These are potential and real scenarios facing the ASF.

Will the AU have the collective ability to recognise foreign/non-African instigated conflicts, the necessary courage to expose such operations for what they are – and the collective political and military will to stand up to and resist such interference? Will the ASF be focused solely on Military Operations Related to War (MORW) or must it

also engage in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)? Ultimately current and predicted intelligence will determine if the ASF must be an expeditionary force or an intervention force – or both. Intelligence will, additionally, determine the ASF's design, doctrine, equipment requirements and posture.

At present, numerous intelligence gaps exist – gaps that need to be rapidly investigated and rectified. To be of any value, intelligence must be actionable, pre-emptive, predictive, directed and focused and must *never* be shaped to match existing agendas and/or perceptions. Utilising an array of clandestine, covert and overt sources, the necessary intelligence must direct and guide strategists and planners in force design, doctrine, equipment, training, logistics, communications, cyber threats and so forth.

Sound intelligence is furthermore required to enable the development of realistic campaign strategies and operational designs that fall within the means of the ASF. It is through a lack of coherent, credible and confirmed intelligence that the term “unintended consequences” was born, a euphemism for “we forgot to consider the implications of our actions...”.

A lack of sound intelligence will prevent the development of predictive intelligence, thus rendering the ASF a reactive force and largely unable to fulfil its missions. It will, as currently witnessed, prevent government forces from regaining and maintaining operational initiative or result in intervening merely to establish a stalemate. Africa cannot afford one more conflict or war that has reached stalemate and is likely to reignite.

AFRICA'S ARMED FORCES

The majority of, if not all, African government forces are clones of their former colonial rulers and later of their East Bloc and other allies. Such types of force structures along with their accompanying doctrines seldom – if ever – work in Africa. Not only are the current force structures cumbersome and in many instances incorrectly advised – they lack flexibility, adaptability and rely primarily on mass – and recent history in Africa and beyond has shown that large armies fight small conflicts and wars very, very badly. This is not to say that African national armies are unable to fight. They can – but they do so in an uneconomic, unsustainable manner and, in the process, cede initiative and manoeuvre to opposing forces, thus prolonging conflicts and wars.

That being said, a conflict or war must be decisively won by the national armed forces and not by an intervention force. Any military victory by an intervention force will remain a hollow victory and result in a flare-up of hostilities once the intervention

force withdraws. Therefore, national armed forces must overcome hurdles and challenges to increase their deterrence level and combat effectiveness. These challenges relate primarily to force design, manpower, training, doctrine, command and control, equipment and force projection.

History often shows that much of the agenda-based “free” foreign training given to African armed forces sets those forces up for failure to ensure control over their capabilities and effectiveness. On these incorrectly organised and poorly trained forces, obsolete equipment is dumped, further hampering the forces on numerous levels and essentially weakening them to a point where they become easy prey to AGFs and proxy forces. As a rising threat domain, a “silent front” called Directed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks faces most, if not all, African national armed forces and their governments. Not only can these cyber-attacks cripple critical technology-based infrastructure – they can also shut down or intercept communications and cyber-reliant technology within the armed forces. This critical aspect of cyber warfare appears to have been neglected by most African armed forces.

National armed forces are constituted to protect and defend the constitution, the state, its people, and its territorial integrity from hostile domestic and foreign armed threats and incursions. To fulfil this role, armed forces must synchronise their sources of power to ensure unity of effort and strategic, operational and tactical focus.

The sources of power include *inter alia*:

- ◆ intelligence
- ◆ organisational structure
- ◆ strategic vision and intent
- ◆ leadership and doctrine
- ◆ equipment and training
- ◆ human resources

The perceived disconnect and distrust between the political level and the military level has, in many instances, prevented the strengthening of the sources of power. The result has been national armies that are better prepared to conduct Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) than Military Operations Related to War (MORW). This unhealthy approach to national defence has given encouragement and impetus to hostile forces aimed at disrupting and/or dislodging governments.

National armies are often used to bridge the gap created by law enforcement agencies that are lacking in training and means, making them quasi-policemen as opposed to

soldiers. In turn, this has resulted in a mismatch between training and deployments in the law enforcement environment. It has also created a degree of antagonism and distrust between the armed forces and the law enforcement agencies. The populace have, as a result, lost much faith in the law enforcement agencies and developed a fear of their own armed forces. These incompatibilities and their unwanted consequences are carried over to any ASF structure they have to serve.

Regardless of the ultimate mission definition(s) of the ASF, it will draw its manpower and equipment from the national armies of its member states. The composition of many African armed forces precludes the advancement of manpower from different ethnic, religious and/or tribal groups. This divide within the armed forces generates its own dissatisfaction within the populace, creating a perception that only members of a certain ethnic, religious or tribal group are destined for command positions. Such divides ultimately find their way into ASF contingents and adds a further red flag to what the ASF must contend with.

FORCE DESIGN AND PREPARATION

Currently, many African armed forces follow an Order of Battle (ORBAT) based on that of their former colonial rulers and later East Bloc allies. This has resulted in adaptations and changes to force a composition that, in many instances, make little to no sense. These ORBATs are rigid force structures that hamper the decentralisation of command and control, utilise outdated doctrines, are inflexible, expensive to maintain and unwieldy to deploy, and logistically and economically taxing to sustain.

Not only are these inherited structures and doctrines cumbersome but they are also in many instances bloated, inefficient, ill-trained, badly advised and poorly equipped. This hampers the much-talked about African requirement for rapid deployment and combat effectiveness. Africa therefore needs to reassess its current armed forces' structures. For the ASF to be a truly adaptable, agile, flexible, sustainable and credible deterrent force, the ASF must be planned and structured following a "bottom-up" approach instead of "top-down". This will enable the brigades and/or elements thereof to be correctly structured, trained and equipped for immediate and rapid deployment. It will furthermore be more cost effective and enhance decentralised command and control.

Force design must, however, be dictated by the current and predicted threats the ASF will be required to deal with. To simply assume that the current threats will remain unchanged or that the pending threats will manifest themselves as similar to the

current dangers will be a folly. Intelligence must, therefore, play a fundamental role in the design of the ASF and its elements.

Threats in Africa have demonstrated an ability to adapt to combat operations intent on destroying them. To prevent the adaptation of threats, national armed forces will need to be flexible in their application of doctrine and force preparation. The doctrines followed by most African armies are unworkable as they are outdated, lack agility and flexibility, and fail to recognise the complexity of missions. Many African military doctrines consist of a mishmash of different doctrines cobbled together and hold little if any relevance to the prevailing situations. Deployment drills and operational sustainment are attributed the importance they deserve. Command and control is centralised, thus negating initiative on the battlefield. To achieve mission success, the current amalgamation of doctrines requires rectification. Incorrectly organised and poorly prepared government forces, utilising unworkable doctrines, cannot achieve the operational successes they need to accomplish. In turn, this weakens them in the eyes of the populace and adds impetus to anti-government forces and other hostile armed forces.

It will do the planners engaged in the force architecture well to dissect the past and analyse the present in order to predict the future. This requires historical, current and predicted intelligence.

STRATEGIC VISION OR STRATEGIC DREAM?

Strategy, expressed as “Ends, Ways and Means”, provides numerous questions that require answering. Currently, there appears to be a disconnect between the Ends, Ways and Means at both the political and military levels within – and between – numerous African governments. This is, despite statements to the contrary, partly due to the lack of a common, shared future vision for Africa and how Africa wishes to present and position itself on the international political, security and economic stages.

This apparent disconnect provides opportunities for opposing forces to act against governments. But to what extent is this apparent disconnect carried over into the AU and how does this impact on the ASF’s force design and its intended deployment, missions and operations?

The Ends, Ways and Means at the strategic levels need to be aligned to ensure joint co-operation, along with a synchronised and unified effort. To achieve this, consensus surrounding the strategic intent of the ASF must be determined and whether its

role is to be peacekeeping or peace enforcement through determined intervention. Typical guiding concepts and questions are as follows.

- ◆ What means are available to equip the brigades?
- ◆ Where will the brigades be based?
- ◆ What strategic, operational and tactical airlift assets are available to enable a rapid deployment and sustainment of forces?
- ◆ What deployment protocols and policies are in place?
- ◆ What common doctrine will be agreed on?
- ◆ What training will be given to the brigades and by whom?
- ◆ What if member states disagree on the desired Ends?
- ◆ What if member states disagree on an intended deployment?
- ◆ What if a member state refuses an ASF deployment in its territory?
- ◆ Will the ASF be a well-balanced, self-sustaining expeditionary force or will it be a force that will merely be used to act as a buffer between conflicting parties?

If the ASF is required to choose a side, it must be remembered that half-won wars are never won and any ASF intervention to end a conflict or war must achieve a decisive result. However, any decisive result achieved by the ASF will be a hollow victory as it will signal the inability of the host government's armed forces to fulfil their mandate. This brings into play a longer-term view and settings to counterbalance the weakness of the host government. Military operations are by their very nature characterised by extreme violence. The mechanisms required when the violence ceases and the threat has been neutralised need to be timeously identified and deployed to ensure that all successes are exploited. Handing back control to an AU peacekeeping force, the law enforcement agencies and/or other government agencies and departments to institute governance to the advantage of the populace needs to be carefully considered once the ASF has achieved mission success.

WHO WILL OWN THE ASF?

Conflict and war in Africa remain ever present and are, in many instances, unavoidable. As many African national armies are unable to rapidly transition from a peacetime posture to a fully offensive posture, the door has been opened to foreign forces offering "help" that in many instances simply aggravates and prolongs a conflict situation and increases domestic and regional tensions. This has created the perception that African armies are unable or unwilling to fulfil their mandates – a

perception that holds some validity. It has, however, allowed foreign forces to capture numerous African armed forces as in Uganda, South Sudan, Nigeria and Mali, to name but a few, to act on their behalf, and thus making these African armed forces nothing less than proxy forces of foreign powers.

As recent history has shown, when the foreign interests of a major power collide with the national and vital interests of an African state, conflict and war become unavoidable – usually in the form of foreign-supported proxy forces or covertly foreign-sponsored and -supported “popular uprisings” masquerading as “fighting for democracy”. In the most extreme case it may involve a foreign-planned and -supported military action to achieve a so-called “regime change” with the intent of installing a puppet government. Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Ivory Coast and Mali serve as such examples.

The ability of the ASF to act in the interests of Africa will be determined by its ownership. Ownership will become a crucial point of contention that in itself will present numerous challenges. The ASF will require strong, robust political and military will of its principles if it is to effectively intervene in African conflicts and wars. Funding will become a prime driving force for the successful establishment, equipping and training of the ASF. Unless the ASF is wholly funded by African states, it will be unable to fully act in the interests of Africa. An independent sustainable funding model to finance ASF operations, even when these operations become unpalatable to some AU member states, will be essential to its success.

Unless it is financed by Africa, the ASF will not be owned by Africa and will therefore risk being viewed as a foreign-owned, African-staffed intervention force, acting on behalf of its donors to achieve donor ends. Unfortunately, present strategic thinking holds that “the force will depend almost totally on ‘development partners’ for funding for logistical support, equipment, rations and other essentials for its upkeep while on deployment as African countries are unable to fund the force”.⁶ This strategic view has already consigned the ASF to becoming a powerful, foreign-owned armed instrument to enforce the will of the “development partners” on African nations. Such economic hijacking of a strategic African security initiative will haunt Africa for decades to come.

History has also shown that foreign funding comes with its own challenges and demands as the donor dictates the agenda. This fact alone positions the AU where it cannot negotiate from a position of strength but instead has to negotiate from a position of weakness and use its forces to also attain goals other than its own. Unless

Africa pays for the establishment, training and equipping of the ASF, it will never truly be an African force but in part a proxy instrument acting on behalf of foreign donors as well. This will erode the credibility of the ASF and subsequently the AU.

A CENTRE OF GRAVITY OR A TRINITY OF GRAVITY?

The Clausewitzian view of a single centre of gravity (CoG) does not retain the same relevance it did at the time of its writing as Africa will seldom, if ever, see two massed national armies facing one another on a field of battle. Instead, the current and pending conflicts and wars Africa faces – and is likely to face – involve more than just massed armies. The threats facing Africa are – and will be – diverse, complex and multidimensional, and characterised by AGFs and proxy forces with regional and/or foreign government support. The battlefields will be complicated by the presence of the populace, who will find themselves having to choose sides. Their decision will primarily be based on self-preservation.

The current and pending conflicts have transitioned from a single CoG to a trinity of gravity⁷ (ToG) that involves not only the threat forces, but also the populace, foreign and other support. This fact complicates the counter-actions of a government under attack and requires an all-inclusive, unified governmental effort along with a multi-dimensional approach to counter and neutralise the threat or enemy. Similarly, the AU and its ASF will need to follow a multi-dimensional approach to achieve mission success that focuses on:

- ◆ support-centric operations
- ◆ population-centric operations
- ◆ enemy-centric operations

Support-centric operations

Identifying the financial and other support given to threat forces is a function that ought to engage the law enforcement and intelligence agencies of the under-threat government and the AU. The channelling of donor funds through banking and other financial institutions and systems and the movement of weapons and ammunition ought to be priority target areas for the AU or any government facing an armed threat. Disrupting the financial and other support structures will result in the enemy being financially and materially bankrupted on the battlefield.

Population-centric operations

Commonly referred to as “Winning the hearts and minds (WHAM)”, these operations must counter the impact of conflict or war on the populace. It is a government or AU function that is achieved through the application of good governance, positive perception creation and the provision of basic essential services. Poverty, a perceived belief that government or AU doesn’t care about the citizenry, a lack of income, a lack of opportunity and so forth are all aspects the enemy can exploit to their own ends. Developing an anti-government sentiment that promises the populace a better life if the ruling government is removed will result in the populace supporting the enemy – if not with manpower and logistics, then at least with tacit support and intelligence. AU intelligence operations must seek to identify and respond to such perceptions in a timeous manner.

Enemy-centric operations

The ASF must be able to strike and annihilate the enemy and exploit any and all battlefield successes. Utilising horizontal and vertical manoeuvre along with focused firepower, the ASF must conduct relentless offensive operations. But to do so it must address and rectify the numerous deficiencies many Africa armed forces that face and ultimately bring into the ASF.

By neutralising the enemy or threat’s ToG, offers a better platform for the AU to commence with negotiations to resolve situations of which military success or progress by the ASF is but one building block.

CURRENT DEFICIENCIES AND PROBLEMS

Most, if not all, African armies are plagued by numerous deficiencies and problems. These military short-comings disrupt, hamper and restrict the development of campaign strategies, thereby impacting on sound operational designs and the deployment of forces, combat effectiveness – including sustainability – and combat readiness. Grouping together elements from different African armed forces that in themselves harbour some, if not major deficiencies, to staff the ASF circulate existing deficiencies and problems and hinder any idea of a combat ready ASF.

Some current deficiencies and problems facing African armed forces include, *inter alia*:

- ◆ budgetary constraints
- ◆ lack of actionable and predictive intelligence

- ◆ weak command, control, communications, cyber and intelligence (C4I) structures
- ◆ lack of airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) assets and capabilities
- ◆ inflexible and cumbersome organisational structures
- ◆ lack of coherent strategic vision and intent
- ◆ unworkable or incoherent doctrines that are antiquated, complex and inconsistent
- ◆ shortage of true command leadership as opposed to management techniques
- ◆ no selection or vetting process for troops followed by substandard training programmes
- ◆ lack of mission-specific equipment; instead, many African armed forces have become the recipients of dumped, obsolete equipment
- ◆ lack of tactical air support assets such as attack and utility helicopters, operational and strategic airlift, and strike aircraft.
- ◆ weak logistical systems that impact negatively on operational sustainability
- ◆ inability to project credible and sustainable force
- ◆ Inadequate and poor tactics, techniques and procedures

The ASF will need to address the above, along with the other current deficiencies and problems that are inherent to numerous African armed forces to ensure that it becomes a more credible, threat-deterrent force.

ALIGNING AND SYNCHRONISING COMBAT POWER

Aligning and synchronising the ASF's combat power will be determined by the type(s) of mission(s) it will be expected to engage in, as well as the available means at its disposal. If the ASF's regional brigades are mobilised for deployment within a regional conflict zone, their combat power must be aligned and synchronised with that of the local military forces, especially if they are to operate alongside local armed forces – or if they are to be integrated into local military contingents. This may create numerous challenges to the AFS brigade commanders, especially if there is a doctrinal mismatch or if the local military forces suffer operational deficiencies. Doctrinal mismatches can have disastrous effects and become multiplied alongside operational deficiencies.

Sustaining such operations will also present difficulties to the ASF, especially if the resident military forces are poorly organised, trained and sustained. It may be necessary to withdraw the local military forces and deploy the ASF brigades as stand-

alone forces, conducting independent operations within a certain area of operations. This too may present challenges as the under-threat or host government may then purposely neglect its own armed forces as it will expect the ASF to come to its aid in a conflict or war.

If the ASF's brigades are to be mobilised for deployment as "peacekeeping" forces – in effect to conduct MOOTW – the ASF's combat power will be of little importance or relevance. Such deployments will, additionally, merely weigh down the ASF with the baggage of ongoing peacekeeping operations and complicate the conflict area. As the driving political logic behind an ASF is the desire to play a more prominent and deterrent role in securing peace in Africa, it must be more than just another foreign-owned peacekeeping force. By creating a new force to merely act as another peacekeeping force defeats the Ends of any strategy aimed at securing a lasting and permanent peace on the continent.

FINALLY, WHO WILL PULL THE TRIGGER?

Who will "pull the trigger" to deploy the ASF – and at what stage of a conflict or war? The decision to deploy ASF brigades is a one that must be taken by Africa and not by a donor country or a foreign power. To act in the interests of Africa, the ASF's deployment protocols and policies must be guided and directed by the AU itself and supported with strong political will.

Assuming the AU fully owns the ASF and is able to master its economic and logistic sustainability, it must remain a coercive political instrument of the AU. This will, however, require consensus of the member states on its strategic and operational deployment along with its strategic and operational objectives. This in itself creates several concerns if the prescribed consensus patterns amongst member states remain absent.

"Pulling the trigger" will also have repercussions if the conflict or war is between member states of the AU. On which side will the ASF intervene or will it only be used to identify, locate and destroy armed anti-government forces (AGFs) that threaten the government of a member state? If the ASF is intended for use against an AGF, who will decide on the palatability of the government that is faced with an armed anti-government movement – especially if the AGF has mass popular support? Although a recognised government may accept or reject the intervention, certain rules and guidelines may override such government objections. If within a regional conflict area, which state will be prioritised for ASF intervention should there be a shortfall

in capacity to attend to multiple conflict zones? Who will make this decision if each state has contributed financially to the creation and support of the ASF? Answers to these difficult questions are not clear as the probably stem from wicked problems that often defy easy or even any answer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic implications of the proposed ASF, given the aim of a 25 000-man strong force with its requisite equipment, is not sustainable. Although Africa *can* afford to establish and sustain an ASF, the current vision of five brigades is excessive and overly costly, positioning the ASF as a cost-excessive force unable to act with speed and agility.

The following recommendations are put forward:

- ◆ To be a true African Standby Force, Africa must own the ASF and resist temptation to seek funding beyond Africa.
- ◆ Intelligence must be given the prominence it deserves and all available overt, clandestine and covert collection assets must be exploited to provide actionable and predictive intelligence. This is a general obstacle in multinational missions and one exacerbated when such missions comprise of multiple African contingents. To be the fuel that powers the strategy and determines the force design of the ASF it must be driven with a common African goal, energy, focus and determination. Breaking down the barriers of distrust will enhance intelligence liaison between member-state governments, allowing the AU to play a crucial role in developing current and predictive threat trends.
- ◆ The ASF's force design must be guided and developed by current and predicted intelligence and must follow a bottom-up approach. The design must make provision for agility, flexibility, rapid deployment, horizontal and vertical manoeuvre, fire support, and so forth. It must be staffed by volunteers from member states' armed forces that have undergone a rigorous selection prior to being accepted into the ASF brigades. The ASF cannot become the dumping ground for non-essential personnel that a government no longer has a need for, or wishes to pay for. The current envisaged force level of five brigades (25 000 men) should be reduced to three composite battle groups, correctly staffed, led, trained, equipped and postured.
- ◆ ASF strategies must be aligned with the AU's continental security strategy as well as that of the under-siege government. Mismatched strategies will scupper

any operational deployment of the ASF and result in counter-productive operational plans and actions. ASF campaign strategies must be pre-emptive, realistic and sustainable, and be aligned with the available means at the disposal of the ASF brigades. Deployment protocols and policies must match reality and consider the available means the ASF will have at its disposal. The member states must agree to – and conclude – regional trans-border military deployment and operational parameters, allowing for rapid deployments without waiting for time-consuming negotiations before being able to commit their forces to the field. Deployment scenarios must be regularly conducted and make allowances for shortcomings in the means.

- ◆ The ASF's proposed doctrine requires urgent investigation and adjustment. The proposed regional units must share a common doctrine to enable them to conduct independent and/or combined and joint operations. The doctrine must be matched with African conditions and combat operations, and allow for rapid deployment of manpower and equipment into various scenarios relating to MORW and MOOTW.
- ◆ Training and equipping the proposed regional units will require urgent and priority attention. The founding of a single, centrally located, AU-endorsed ASF training institution must be established. All volunteer officers, NCOs and other ranks must receive joint training in a common ASF doctrine in order to establish a universal standard throughout the ASF. This will assist in the development of a common ASF identity and esprit de corps, enabling joint ASF operations with commonality in doctrine, training and equipment. Equipment requirements and upgrades must be matched with the terrain, the threat and the deployment constraints of the AU.
- ◆ Force projection must be a guiding principle in the ASF. Coercive diplomacy and the threat of armed force may achieve only a limited goal. When diplomacy and the threat of force fail, the ASF will require the ability to project force rapidly and sustain it over a long distance for an indefinite period. Strategic airlift capabilities along with operational and tactical airlift and support – controlled by the AU and ASF respectively – will be critical to any ASF deployments. Currently, such assets are lacking in most African armed forces.
- ◆ Command and control mechanisms must be agreed upon at the highest level and allow decentralised command and control within the requisite guidelines and Rules of Engagement (RoE). Very clear policy guidelines must be agreed to and established within the AU to ensure the ASF command mandate is clear,

unambiguous and unbiased. Unity of command and a politically agreed mission intent will be crucial.

- ◆ Sustainability of operations requires deeper investigation. Distant ASF operations will require a large strategic airlift capability, be more costly and require a lengthy logistical tailback. Troop rotations, casualty and medical evacuations, and resupply of essential combat equipment, including ammunition and rations, will require a strong and robust logistical system(s).
- ◆ A cyber operations unit must be established to give the ASF access to cyber intelligence as well as conduct cyber counter-actions. Cyber threats facing the continent are ever-increasing and as national armed forces and the AU itself become more technology dependent, the greater the cyber threat will become.

CONCLUSION

To successfully develop and deploy an ASF, the Africa Union and its member states need to find common ground on a common future along with shared values that benefit all of its people. Despite this view being propagated, its fragile declaratory foundations become clear when member states disagree on whether or how to respond to a crisis. The greater African interest has not yet replaced the narrow personal and national interest of many African governments. The lack of a common interest will render African unity an illusion and African security an unobtainable goal.

With the establishment of the ASF, the continent's desire to implement African security solutions to address African security problems has taken an important leap forward. As Africa's turmoil continues and increases, the ASF can become an asset that serves Africa to ensure peace and stability.

Ownership of the ASF by Africa will determine what this envisaged force can and cannot do. To ensure mission success, the ASF must have the political and military will to rapidly, forcefully and decisively respond to conflict-driven crises on the continent. If the ASF is unable to do this, it will flounder and lose the confidence of the people it must serve whilst threats and enemies alike will view it as a weak force incapable of executing its role.

ENDNOTES

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7

From Idea to Practice to Failure? Evaluating Rapid Response Mechanisms for African Crises

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INTRODUCTION

Since African nations became independent sovereignty and non-interference achieved a status as near sacrosanct concepts and this despite mass atrocities, war crimes and even genocides occurring. However in the post-Cold War era especially after the debacle in Rwanda and Srebrenica the need to make states more accountable for internal matters became compelling. One instrument of stopping gross human rights abuse like war crimes or genocide has been to set up rapid intervention tools within international organisations. Indeed traditional peacekeeping has often been slow and insufficient in halting these crimes as deployment times are long (around six months for the UN). A number of efforts to institutionalise rapid intervention have been put in place like the EU battlegroups, the UN Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), the AU's African Standby Force (ASF) and most recently African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC). All of these instruments have been problematic to some extent. A range of issues like internal discord, operational and mandate problems, and self-interests of state actors have blighted these efforts and most initiatives have had a stillbirth.^{2, 3} This article reviews some of the challenges rapid response is encountering with a special but not exclusive emphasis on the ACIRC.

WHY RAPID INTERVENTION?

Hause Charles argues that military intervention and conflict resolution in the 1990s could not be uttered in the same breath.⁴ Yet in this current era we find military

force being used for humanitarian purposes especially in intractable conflicts also termed “complex emergencies”. Rapid intervention in conflicts around the world has been slow in taking root yet it has been accepted as forming an important structural element can ameliorate the suffering of millions threatened by violent conflict. All major international organisations involved in deploying peacekeeping missions have also been involved in efforts to shorten their response times in the belief that timely reaction to immediate crisis and severe threats to human life begins with a timely and robust response. Stopping mass atrocities at an early stage is seen as vital in order to prevent a widening of conflicts and escalation of violence. For Langille the reasoning behind improving rapid deployment capabilities are straightforward because “delays, vast human suffering and death, diminished credibility, opportunities lost, escalating costs” were some of the tragic consequences of slow and inappropriate responses.⁵ On the African continent the most drastic example of a preventable genocide remains Rwanda, where close to 1 million Tutsis were killed while the international community proved to be incapable of intervening on time and with adequate force. In sum, the basic rationale for rapid response is widely shared and seen as unproblematic in principle but much more challenging in practice.

On the normative side, the emergence of the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P), which enjoys increasing levels of institutionalisation within major international organisations (UN, AU), has further contributed to the debate on rapid response. It should be noted that, while the concept has been institutionalised in the Constitutive Act of the AU, its use as an instrument for regime change has been criticised by many African states and BRICS countries in the aftermath of its application in Libya.⁶ Nevertheless in cases of severe human rights violations there is now an accepted responsibility to react. This can be seen for instance in the debate around protection of civilians and the principle of non-indifference that the AU is endorsing.⁷ What exactly this reaction has to look like is contested, but rapid reaction – including military means – does play a role. In the end, the existing demand for prompt reaction has highlighted the insufficiencies of prevailing measures in place and demonstrated that we are still some way off responding quickly and with adequate instruments.

It is not only institutional shortcomings at international level that complicate the aspiration for rapid responses. The character of post-Cold War conflicts is challenging and requires substantial changes in the field of peacekeeping.⁸ These wars, according to Melander, Öberg & Hall, are characterised by “a blur in the distinction between internal and external, public and private, political and economic, civilian and military and even war and peace itself... [O]ccurring in failing or failed states,

these are understood to be essentially non-political, identity-based, organisationally deconstructed wars of aggrandisement waged among a myriad of actors unified only in their disregard for legitimacy, ideological goals and military restraint.⁹ Any debate about the effects of rapid response has to take into account these complex conditions. The solution to conflicts can certainly not be reduced to the question of timely reaction – it has to be set in context with conflict dynamics on the ground and needs to be thoroughly embedded in follow-up responses such as peacekeeping and peace-building measures. Rapid intervention should be considered as only one instrument in a larger toolbox. Much of the long-term success of intervention is likely to depend on its thorough co-ordination with other instruments across different institutions involving a variety of actors.

RAPID INTERVENTIONS INITIATIVES

As mentioned in the introduction, rapid response structures have been developed by a number of IOs. Here to mention are the UN, AU, EU and NATO. We focus only on the first three as they have been the most active deployers on the African continent. While all of these organisations have made serious efforts to set up reliable rapid reaction mechanisms, they have all been unassuming in practice. There is certainly a significant rift between institutional design driven by secretariats and experts and member states' willingness to actually use these instruments. After all, decision-making within these organisations remains inter-governmental and thus secretariats have limited independence. However, this cannot be surprising because questions of military intervention are usually associated with infringements on sovereignty. In the following sections we will explore the rapid response efforts undertaken by the UN, AU and EU.

The United Nations

The reality of complex conflicts with a fragmented scene of warring parties such as government forces, rebel groups, insurgents or Islamist terrorists that pose an existential threat to the civilian population has brought enormous challenges for UN peacekeeping. In many situations the UN has been accused of reacting too slowly and not decisively enough. Although the UN was aware of the intractable nature of these post-Cold War conflicts, it was not ready to overstep the issue of sovereignty when it came to gross human rights abuses, for example in Rwanda but also the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other countries. Yet the UN still seems involved in a prolonged transformation process away from traditional peacekeeping, when it

was initially tasked with separation of combatants after a conflict ceased and using force only in self-defence.¹⁰ Hardly any conflicts today fit into this pattern of classical inter-state border dispute. Over the four generations of peacekeeping the roles have changed to robust peacekeeping and the protection of civilians have become standardised in mandates. Still a robust and pro-active intervention remains difficult for the UN. It is better perceived as a fairly heavy bureaucratic machinery engaging in comprehensive peacekeeping, then deploying rapidly and proactively engaging peace spoilers. The problem is that many of today's conflicts, such as those in Mali, CAR, Somalia or South Sudan, require engaging in a mix of counter-insurgency operations, robust defence of civilians and rapid response. In all these cases the UN has struggled to come up with an adequate response.

The issue of rapid response is not confined to newly emerging conflicts, but might be most pressing in these situations. There are ample examples that response times within already deployed missions are insufficient. One of the most criticised missions is the one in the DRC. Here for example Uruguayan peacekeepers in Ituri in 2003 were overwhelmed by the violence between the Hema and Lendu and could only guard their compound and the people who managed to seek refuge there. Most of these troops had been accustomed to guarding UN buildings and were brought in for protection duties; they were not physically equipped or psychologically prepared for combat.¹¹ Accusations of no or slow reaction to severe threats to the population continue until today. However, in 2013 a robust force, the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), has been set up as part of the UN's mission and is operational in eastern DRC. It proved to be an important tool to defeat the M23 rebels. Although the FIB is, strictly speaking, not a UN rapid response tool, it is important for rapid reaction because its design as a military and primarily African intervention tool engaging in peace enforcement alongside an existing UN peacekeeping mission was seen as a test case.¹² Furthermore rapid response is in principle not limited to the deployment of new missions but can also be used to complement existing ones.

Yet the need for rapid response has been recognised for some time and thus there is no shortage on initiatives to boost the UN's capacity to react swiftly and decisively. The most prominent example was the establishment of the Stand-by High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). In 1994, Denmark spearheaded the initiative which formed part of the framework of the United Nations Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS). Countries like Canada, Austria, Poland, Norway and the Netherlands, among others, committed to supporting the initiative. Until 1999 it was in an institutional building-

up phase gathering operational capability. In January 2000 it reached operational capability for deployment.¹³

The conceptual framework for SHIRBRIG stipulated that the UN Security Council was to sanction the deployment under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and member states' decision to participate in missions was to be made independently on a case-by-case basis. At the request of the UN, SHIRBRIG missions could be deployed between fifteen and thirty days and would last six months in the field of operation. The availability of forces was dependent on a brigade pool of resources that included capabilities to carry out a peace support operation.¹⁴

SHIRBRIG registered successes in Ethiopia and Eritrea, where it deployed along the UN mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, concluding the mission in May 2001 after six months. Later in 2003 SHIRBRIG assisted the UN and ECOWAS in planning of the peace mission in Ivory Coast and supplied twenty personnel to form the core of the UN mission in Liberia.¹⁵ However, in the end there was not enough support from a large enough number of UN member states to keep SHIRBRIG afloat and permanently institutionalise it as a rapid response instrument. It died a silent death. Although perhaps the leading example of a rapid intervention framework and force of its kind, it faded away not because it was inappropriate, but merely as a result of waning collective commitment and support. So it was not due to SHIRBRIG being ineffective, but rather to a shift in priorities of leading states, which in turn left SHIRBRIG as a practical blueprint, but one without capacity, and it was closed down by 2009.

In 2000 the Brahimi Report¹⁶ noted the need to enhance rapid and effective deployment capacities of the UN so that it could from an operational perspective deploy within thirty days after the passing of a UN Security Council resolution. This could extend to ninety days in complex peacekeeping operations.¹⁷ However, in the report rapid deployment was envisioned deployment in terms of post-conflict rebuilding. For instance, it was noted that a six- to twelve-week window existed for mission deployment following a ceasefire or peace accord. Thus in order not to lose this momentum the report called for rapid deployment.¹⁸ Today the UN often deploys in situations of continued violence and unclear prospects for peace.

Although the UN's mission to the DRC received much criticism, especially regarding inadequate and delayed responses, it also is an example for institutional innovation. For instance, as shown earlier the UN has embraced robust response to crisis authorising of the launch of the FIB in March 2013. FIB was integrated within the

existing mission MONUSCO and following multilateral co-ordination between the AU, SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). It is mandated to neutralise all rebel groups and proved to be an effective tool against the M23 rebels.¹⁹ However, other rebel groups remain active in the DRC and the government continues to struggle controlling its territory. Most troops under the FIB are provided by South Africa, which later spearheaded the initiative for the establishment of the ACIRC. Although it is not the first authorisation of lethal force by the UN Security Council, the FIB represents a shift from peacekeeping to peace enforcement in the Great Lakes Region. Nevertheless, the deployment of FIB integrated within an existing UN mission was seen by the UN as an exceptional measure that will not become standardised practice or replicated for other missions.²⁰ More acceptable for the UN is a model that completely outsources peace enforcement and counter-terrorism, as can be seen by the French operations in the Sahel region (Serval and Barkhane). In the case of Mali the UN Secretary-General made it clear that peace enforcement or counter-insurgency “falls well outside the scope of the United Nations peacekeeping doctrine.”²¹

The UN sticks to the principles of impartiality, limited use of force and avoidance of counter-insurgency measures.²² The deployment of FIB is therefore challenging for the UN. It makes the UN a party to the conflict, which has a dual impact. First, the UN’s neutrality is feared to have been compromised and may have negative consequences for future peacekeeping operations worldwide. Secondly, there are risks to the UN civilian personnel and unarmed humanitarian workers, who might become targets for reprisal attacks from rebels.²³

The UN has found itself caught between a rock and hard place. The increasing human rights abuses, especially by M23 rebels, have prompted the UN to act especially in light of the R2P doctrine. The DRC is not the only country in which swift and robust action is required to protect civilians. More recently UN missions in Mali, CAR or South Sudan are facing the same problems. Rebel violence, terrorist activities and incomplete peace agreements keep these countries unstable. We can observe both a continuance of and a relapse into conflict. While conflict resolution is a complex task providing basic security by neutralising peace spoilers, using military means if necessary is an important contribution to preparing the ground for more comprehensive peace-building later on. The use of rapid response instruments ideally shortens the time until comprehensive peacekeeping missions can be deployed and take effect, which they cannot do while conflict continues.

In 2014 and 2015 the UN underwent a major review of its peacekeeping missions. Under the guidance of the UN's José Ramos-Horta, the so far most comprehensive and reflective document on modern UN peacekeeping was published in June 2015. While it touches upon many of the current challenges, it also explicitly addresses the issue of rapid deployment, recognising that, "Slow deployment is one of the greatest impediments to more effective peace operations."²⁴ The document does not recommend revolutionary changes to the system but makes convincing arguments for smaller steps accelerating the heavy and slow UN machinery. Among the recommendations are: the establishment of "(i) a small UN rapid reinforcement/rapid deployment capability; (ii) arrangements for the transfer of personnel and assets in a crisis; (iii) a rapidly deployable integrated UN headquarters; and (iv) national and regional standby arrangements."²⁵

Instead of aiming to set up a large new mechanism akin to the SHIRBRIG the Horta report opted for the establishment of a vanguard force that is rather small in size. It aims at either propping up existing missions by adding a rapid reaction tool or functioning as spearhead to accelerate the deployment of a new mission. Additionally, a more effective use of resources and thus a more rapid response is envisioned by making capabilities available through inter-mission exchange of staff and troops. While the full deployment of a comprehensive mission still takes up to six months, the report suggests that a much quicker deployment can be achieved with sending out an integrated civilian–military and police headquarters within eight to twelve weeks. Lastly, the report is realistic about the UN's slow reaction times and recognises the important role regional organisations can play. Accordingly, regional organisations such as the AU should be encouraged to function as first deployers, preparing the ground for a later UN take-over. In principle these suggestions have also been endorsed by the UN Secretary-General.²⁶ However, it remains to be seen how much of the 111 pages of the Horta report will actually be implemented. Experiences of the past have been rather disappointing. In any case the recommendations made do not call for a major overhaul of the system, but more realistically follow the idea of gradually customising peacekeeping missions to real-life needs.

The European Union

Although the EU does not belong to the group of classical peacekeepers, it has been involved in dozens of missions in Africa since 2003. Most of them are small in scale and ambition and are filling in functional gaps the UN is not covering.²⁷ The small size of its contribution makes it potentially more suitable for rapid response.

However, in practice the EU has struggled to deploy its missions quickly.²⁸ Lack of political momentum and bureaucratic layers have slowed down rapid deployment. Still, with the EU transforming from a purely economic community to a political union, its foreign policy aspirations have grown and the EU has invested visibly in peacekeeping operations. Indeed, the Lisbon Treaty directly refers to peacekeeping in Article 42 paragraph one.

In the early 2000s the EU instituted the European rapid reaction force with a number of aims, such as availing assistance to civilians threatened by a crisis outside the EU, responding to UN calls for peacekeeping forces and intervening to separate warring factions. In all three scenarios the EU would deploy its forces only if NATO decides not to get involved.²⁹ This was in line with the Petersberg tasks in the Western European Union declaration of 1992³⁰ and the Helsinki Headline goals.³¹

The idea was further that rapid reaction forces could be deployed to fill a gap before a UN peacekeeping mission is deployed. A case in point was Operation Artemis in the Bunia region of eastern DRC.³² However, this did not materialise, as there were many operational problems. Major and Mölling identified “significant qualitative shortfalls in key capabilities such as transport, force protection, or operational mobility”.³³ They further noted that although member states were willing to contribute troops, questions lingered as to whether the deployed troops would receive proper equipment and logistical supplies as intended.³⁴

With the failure of the European rapid reaction force, member states at the behest of France and United Kingdom set up the concept of EU battlegroups³⁵ with the aim of dealing with a range of peace support operations and humanitarian tasks providing the EU with a rapid intervention tool.

This involved a creation of 1 500-troop-strong battlegroups formed either by a single nation or up to four states. These would be highly flexible forces to be utilised in support of the UN with capability to be deployed within fifteen days and sustainable up to ninety days.³⁶

However, although the battlegroups have been operational for some years, they have never been deployed in the field. The EU has been hesitant to respond to UN requests for deployment. There is thus little interest and political support for either getting consumed by the UN, simply becoming a sub-contractor of the UN or engaging in risky missions involving peace enforcement measures.

In the end, the EU selects which missions it aims at supporting. Thus rapid response is a reaction of choice and not necessarily a response of necessity.³⁷ Consequently, these

operations are normally “short-lived (following the quick in, quick out principle) and/or relatively light in nature and scope”.³⁸ This contradicts the very essence of EU battlegroups, which, according to Ortega, were designed essentially to respond to UN requests.³⁹

Another factor affecting EU decisions on intervention is rooted in public opinion. While the EU public is usually supportive of humanitarian-motivated operations, in fact it tends to be much more in doubt when such operations become high-end, risky and costly. The “body bag test remains a difficult one for many EU governments and publics, *let alone* the soaring financial costs of protracted military missions in countries far and away from the European continent”.⁴⁰ Therefore, EU decision-making has to accommodate risk assessment and this limits high-risk operations and the use of existing rapid response instruments.

Koops finds that the EU battlegroups, although set up to bolster the UN system by providing a rapid response tool that is missing at the UN, were in essence weakening it. For instance, by retaining the right to decide when and where to avail troops the EU was creating a high level of uncertainty as to when it could be relied on by the UN, the same dilemma the latter was facing with other organisations such as NATO.⁴¹

Furthermore, it is difficult to see how a niche approach of deploying small operations is actually contributing to more rapid and effective deployments. The impact of EU missions remains low and rapid response a more distant target than actual achievement. Most EU missions come with only minimal operational engagement on the ground, but are on average more oriented towards training local security forces. Response times of the EU varied between missions, while the first mission to Africa – Operation Artemis to the DRC – was also one of the fastest deployments of the EU, the joint action adopted by the Council on 5 June 2003 and within seven days, on 12 June 2003, the Council had decided to launch the operation. The operation was deployed on the ground within three weeks.⁴² However, this speed was not replicated in other missions. On average, EU deployment times for all its missions between 1991 and 2009 have been 6,2 months.⁴³ Part of the problem is not missing policy instruments but political disagreement over the use of those instruments that have been developed.⁴⁴ The moribund battlegroup concept is one striking example.

The African Union

As the leading theatre of operations for peacekeeping missions⁴⁵ and the highest number of conflicts, Africa as a continent has aspired to have a more relevant role

in resolving its conflicts. Although under the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) African states tended to guard their sovereignty⁴⁶ and champion non-interference, the successor organisation, the African Union (AU), has departed from that notion especially in face of the new wars and humanitarian crises that have developed since the end of the Cold War.⁴⁷ Its principle of non-indifference⁴⁸ transformed the organisation into an active intervener ranging from the application of sanctions on member states with unconstitutional changes in government⁴⁹ to sponsoring peace talks, sending election observers and deploying peacekeeping operations.⁵⁰

So far the AU has deployed peacekeeping missions to half a dozen countries, including Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Mali, Somalia and Sudan. In the majority of cases the AU functioned as first deployer and later handed over its mission to the UN. In other cases it deployed alone. A division of labour between the AU and UN is developing in which the AU takes the role of a first responder preparing the ground for a UN mission to be deployed later.⁵¹ Such operations have been called “bridging operations” or “sequential deployment”. The AU became a first responder for a number of reasons. First, its response time is indeed much faster than that of the UN.⁵² Secondly, it does not deploy troops with a comprehensive mandate, unlike the UN, and can thus gather resources more quickly. Thirdly, violent conflict on the continent creates a much stronger political momentum for action in Africa than in faraway New York.

With the building of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)⁵³ the AU received an elaborate security structure, including a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)⁵⁴ and the African Standby Force (ASF), which includes a Rapid Deployment Capability.⁵⁵ The operationalisation of the ASF, which is based on sub-regional contributions by five Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs and RMs), proved to be troublesome and stretching over more than a decade. Although significant progress has been made, operational capabilities remain unevenly developed across the continent and not all the envisaged standby brigades of the ASF are operational. However, in principle the early warning mechanism and the RDC, when fully operation and synchronised adequately, provide the AU with a robust institutional framework developed for rapid response.

The ASF was based on the notion that the AU would have at its disposal “multidimensional capabilities, including military, police and civilian, on standby in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment”.⁵⁶ It was envisioned that the ASF would enable the AU to respond quickly with little or no impediments of a political or instrumental nature.⁵⁷ In the six deployment scenarios the AU adopted,

the ASF officially operates with very short deployment targets, which vary between fourteen and thirty days.⁵⁸ However, it must be asked whether these ambitious targets are realistic. De facto the ASF has not directly been deployed. While AU peacekeeping missions surely profited from increasing inter-operability resulting from the establishment of the ASF, rapid response as originally planned remains difficult. Plans for a Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) within the structure of the ASF emerged only years after the ASF concept was adopted and thus its operationalisation is lagging behind an already delayed implementation of the ASF concept. Deadlines for achieving full operational capability have been moved from 2010 to 2015. It foresaw that every regional standby force would provide 2 500 troops for rapid response within fourteen days. However, these plans never materialised to the full. While, for example, the Eastern African Standby Force (EASF) has operationalised an extended battalion-sized force, other regional standby forces are still lagging behind. The northern African component especially is inactive. The RDC was planned to be a catalyst instrument that would be deployed in advance of a larger ASF or UN operation.⁵⁹

The crisis in Mali in 2012–13 exposed the structural weaknesses of the ASF set-up. While the Malian government was threatened severely by a Tuareg and Islamist insurgency, neither the AU nor ECOWAS had the financial structures in place to deploy troops quickly enough to prevent a total military defeat.⁶⁰ In the end, France intervened at the last minute, which was followed by a peacekeeping operation.⁶¹ ECOWAS was politically incapacitated due to internal divisions⁶² and the AU simply does not have its own continental standby arrangement. The ASF is in the end a mostly subregional building to which the RDC is attached and cannot be separated from. De facto there is no AU-only rapid deployment instrument available.

The initiative for the formation of a continental rapid response instrument known as the African Capacity for Immediate Crisis Response (ACIRC) came from South Africa.⁶³ A series of South African foreign policy events can be linked to the initiative. Here can be mentioned the deployment of the FIB with a large South African component in the DRC under the umbrella of the UN mission and the unilateral military support for President Bozizé in CAR outside the framework of a regional peacekeeping force deployed by ECCAS. The South African engagement in the CAR ended abruptly in March 2013 when South African forces suffered heavy casualties by the Séléka rebel group.⁶⁴ Establishing an AU intervention force would multilateralise and integrate South African foreign policy interventions into African structures and counter arguments of unilateralism. While ACIRC is initially linked to South African

foreign policy interests, it also addresses institutional shortfalls at the level of the AU. First, the inability of the RDC to fully operationalise and deploy in the case of need, such as in Mali in 2012/13, has given space for the ACIRC at least as an interim stop-gap instrument until the ASF and RDC are fully operational. Secondly, the RDC is linked to RECs, but is mission a cross-REC dimension. This is an inhibiting factor in all those cases in which conflict is inter-regional or regional actors are incapable to act because of political divisions or otherwise. In the end, the emergence of the ACIRC is equally linked to South African foreign policy experience and is a consequence of the incomplete institutional security architecture in Africa.

The ACIRC was formally established by the AU Assembly in May 2012.⁶⁵ The ACIRC is built on cross-continental voluntary contributions of individual AU member states. It was envisioned “to provide the AU with a flexible and robust force, made up of military/police capabilities”.⁶⁶ Although it is designed to work within AU structures, ACIRC is self-funded and deployment comes at the behest of a lead nation.⁶⁷ Thus it is structurally and institutionally rather different from the peacekeeping approach the APSA has developed, which rests exclusively on the support of regional standby brigades provided by REC/RMs. In contrast to the ASF, the ACIRC was supposed to be a purely military capacity with high reactivity to respond swiftly to emergency situation” within a maximum of ten days after a mandate has been issued.⁶⁸ A forty-eight-hour timeline applies to missions deployed under article 4h of the AU’s Constitutive Act which refers to the right to intervention in cases “of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity”.⁶⁹ As such the ACIRC was only a stop-gap instrument until the ASF and its RDC becomes fully operational. So far thirteen countries, which include Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda,⁷⁰ have pledged troops under this framework.

At a preparatory meeting for African Chiefs of Staff April 2013 the doctrinal concept was elaborated.⁷¹ Accordingly, the ACIRC had the following aims:

“... establish an efficient, robust and credible force, which can be deployed very rapidly, able to conduct operations of limited duration and objectives or contribute to creating enabling conditions for the deployment of larger AU and/or UN peace operations.”⁷²

The role of the ACIRC was defined as follows:

- (i) stabilisation, peace enforcement and intervention missions;
- (ii) neutralisation of terrorist groups, other cross-border criminal entities, armed

rebellions; and

(iii) emergency assistance to Member States within the framework of the principle of non-indifference for protection of civilians.⁷³

The ACIRC was planned to consist of around 5 000 troops subdivided into battlegroups of 1 500 soldiers.⁷⁴ Each battlegroup can either be pledged by a single lead nation or a group of countries. The activation of the ACIRC was proposed to fall within the competence of the Commission Chair as well as the establishment of a field headquarters. Plans have also been made for a sea and air component at a lower level (battalion).

Although it has been declared operational, ACIRC has faced opposition from key peacekeeping countries among which are Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya. Concerns have been raised over the ACIRC as it is seen by some as a rival in competition with the ASF.⁷⁵ Consequently, the further operationalisation of the ACIRC was mostly delegated to lower level such as the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS). Within the Peace Support Operations Division of the AU a planning element (PLANELM) was established and individual Member State pledges were verified. In November 2014 a Command Post Exercise was conducted in Tanzania in which nine countries contributed.⁷⁶ In 2015 the STCDSS made clear that the ACIRC should be terminated by the end of the year. The expectation was that ACIRC is fully integrated into the ASF/RDC at the moment the ASF is declared operational following a major military exercise under the AMANI framework.⁷⁷ The lack of pan-African political support for the project became even more apparent during the AU summit taking place in South Africa, which took place in Johannesburg in June 2015.⁷⁸ Reference to ACIRC in AU Assembly declarations practically disappeared after 2014. Many unaddressed questions remained at the conceptual and practical level.⁷⁹ For example, the specific mandate, the organisation of supply across the continent, funding, logistics and decision-making procedures all remain largely unclear. The future of the ACIRC is uncertain. At the same time it is unlikely that the RDC within the ASF will be developed into a viable rapid intervention tool any time soon.

In late 2015 South Africa hosted the EU sponsored AMANI II military exercise, testing the readiness of the ASF, RDC and ACIRC. Some 2 116 staff were participating from ACIRC contributing countries.⁸⁰ Despite this, the initiative was phased out soon thereafter. Following the exercise, the STCDSS met in early 2016 and declared full operational capability for four out of five RECs/RMs. De facto this means the ACIRC

became obsolete as an interim instrument. Consequently the STCDSS recommended that the ACIRC be dissolved.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

On several occasions the international community has made efforts to institutionalise rapid response instruments. The best-known examples can be found within the UN (SHIRBRIG), the EU (battlegroups) and AU (ASF-RDC, ACIRC). While there is general agreement that rapid response constitutes an important instrument to stop conflicts from escalation at the earliest possible moment and prepare the ground for more comprehensive peacekeeping and peace-building, all three examples of institutional building for rapid response turned out to be problematic, if not failures.

The rather poor performance of rapid response instruments does not result from the impossibility of the task as such. Although building multilateral structures for quick response is ambitious, demanding and resource intensive, it can be done if the political environment is conducive. For states, providing military resources beyond the narrow scope of their national interests remains problematic. In the vast majority of cases peacekeeping deployments are politically built on coalitions of willing and interested countries. These coalitions are flexible but non-permanent institutions. They offer a flexibility that permanent structures cannot provide. Necessarily setting up multilateral institutions and grouping countries together will increase mutual dependencies. The problem is that there is little predictability how, where and when rapid response instruments will be used. As questions of military intervention usually remain highly politicised, if not contested, states are reluctant to sign up to institutional structures with unclear strategic value. Consequently, SHIRBRIG, EU battlegroups or the ASF and ACIRC are far better developed on paper than used in practice.

ENDNOTES

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8

A Toothless Lion? The Role of the Southern African Development Community in Conflict Management

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INTRODUCTION

Historically Africa has suffered and continues to suffer egregious violence. Africa has been the site of one-third of all the armed inter- and intra-state conflicts that have taken place since 1946.² Since 1989, Africa has experienced 75% of the world's conflicts between non-state groups.³ Analysts have identified four regional complex emergencies or 'conflict zones': the Mano River region, the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel/Maghreb region.⁴ Violent conflicts are driven by greed, grievance and exploitation, and exacerbated by weak states, poor or corrupt governance and unwelcome outside interference. It is often unclear to what extent the United States, French, British and now Chinese military presence in Africa are primarily in the continent's peace and security interest.

Given this state of affairs, coupled to the complexities of international (in) security, few outsiders – except for the United Nations – feel compelled to offer comprehensive assistance. Consequently, the making and keeping of the peace – and rebuilding broken states and communities – is a task for Africa in the first place. Crisis management approaches, structures, procedures and behaviour has received attention from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU). Whereas the OAU was seen as largely ineffectual in crisis prevention, management and recovery, the AU introduced a new approach and energy to challenge its predecessor's lethargy. It established the African Standby Force (ASF) as part of a comprehensive approach entitled the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Following the principle of subsidiarity, Africa's various regions

and regional bodies (known as Regional Economic Communities or RECs) were given complementary tasks in conflict management. In the case of Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2008 established a SADC Standby Force (SADC SF or SSF).⁵ Leaving aside the question of the effectiveness and efficiency of the APSA and ASF, this chapter will examine the state of readiness of SADC to address conflict, in the context of the broader regional challenges of poverty alleviation and development.

At first blush SADC appears to make steady progress with establishing the approaches and instruments needed to tackle its peace and security, and development challenges. In preparation for the Summit meeting of the leaders of SADC in August 2015, its senior officials adopted a set of progress reports and policy documents that suggests a deepening of regional integration and, in particular, development and security co-operation. Among these were the revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) for 2015–2020 and an accompanying industrialisation strategy.⁶

Africans also witnessed the launch of an ambitious Free Trade Area (FTA) involving SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC), entitled the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite FTA.

Regarding peace and security, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation (OPDSC) reported that it remained engaged with stabilisation and democratisation processes in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho and Madagascar. A SADC Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy was also adopted. The regional block's five-year old peace and security strategy – the revised Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation or SIPO II – was renewed for another year, given that SADC was not ready to assess its implementation in time for the development of a replacement. The official explanation was that:

The future arrangement is that the RISDP and the SIPO will culminate into one strategy, which will provide a holistic approach to issues of sustainable economic development and peace and security in the SADC region.⁷

These dynamics – including the selection of King Mswati III of Swaziland as the incoming Chair of SADC in 2016 – raise a number of questions regarding the nature of the integration project. This chapter will attempt to address these, including:

- ◆ Do SADC member states share norms and values (a shared strategic culture) to the extent that ceding of sovereignty becomes possible – or even desirable?

- ◆ Can the SADC Secretariat be regarded as a decision-maker and rule enforcer – now or in the future?
- ◆ Which form of integration is most compatible with the emerging African Governance Architecture (AGA) and evolving African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) – two prime policy frameworks of the African Union (AU)?
- ◆ And, ultimately, is SADC well placed to act as a reliable and capable peacemaking and peacekeeping partner for the AU? In practical terms, what is the state of readiness of the SSF and its associated instruments, such as an early warning system or mediation capacity?

In this regard, note the research findings of Ndlovu, who wrote that although the protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU spells out how it is meant to interact with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), there is no reciprocity in the REC peace and security protocols, at least not on the part of SADC.⁸ He asks whether the PSC or the AU as a whole would be prepared to observe the principles of subsidiarity and variable geometry, and give REC policy organs a formal role in peace and security issues as well as other developmental activities. He concludes:

Given the asymmetries and complex sets of interests at play on the continent, member states are more comfortable with integration spillover at the subregional level than at the continental level.⁹

This statement will be examined as well as the general approach of SADC towards peace and security in the sections that follow.

The statement also needs to be examined against another set of research findings on the question of the future of African peace operations.¹⁰ According to the authors of this report there is a gap between the AU's African Standby Force (ASF) model (inclusive of the six deployment scenarios) and realities on the ground. In particular, they point out that the AU simultaneously pursues stabilisation missions and mediation; UN/EU/AU missions overlap; African peace operations depend on foreign funding; and select African countries dominate peace enforcement operations, with implications for host populations. Key issues to be resolved include: how to adjust the ASF to remain relevant; how to harmonise the Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) of the AU and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC); and what mission scenarios are most likely and how to prepare for them.

Many analysts mention, in addition, the question of subsidiarity; the role of strategic partners; and the roles of civilians in African peace operations.

SADC'S PURPOSE

SADC is an expression by fifteen nations of the Southern African region to collaborate in the interests of peace, security, democracy and development. SADC is first and foremost an arrangement facilitating economic integration in order to “improve the quality of life of the peoples of the region”. SADC’s genesis reflects this priority. When the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) was formed in 1980 it adopted the slogan “Southern Africa – towards economic liberation”.

The SADC vision is one of

a common future, a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice, and peace and security for the peoples of Southern Africa.¹¹

In 2015, this formulation was refined as follows: “The SADC vision is to build a region in which there will be a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation, to enable the pooling of resources to achieve collective self-reliance [my emphasis] in order to improve the living standards of the people of the region”.¹²

According to SADC, the main objectives of economic development and peace and security are to be achieved through increased regional integration, built on democratic principles, and equitable and sustainable development.¹³

INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION¹⁴

Regional co-operation in the 1980s, even if informal and limited, succeeded in realising a number of regional development projects, mainly in the infrastructure and food security sectors. The activities of the Frontline States (FLS) alliance, in its quest to eradicate colonial rule and apartheid in Southern Africa, additionally brought about a sense of regional identity and briefly promoted a shared political vision. The FLS established SADCC in 1980 and it was transformed into SADC in 1992, reflecting the changing regional – and external – environments. Most importantly, South Africa joined SADC in 1994, as did the DRC in 1997. However, a year later a major regional war erupted, involving the DRC and a number of other SADC (and non-SADC) states. At the same time an attempted coup destabilised the small country of Lesotho. SADC’s unresolved security structures played a role in the attempt to resolve these crises.¹⁵

In following the logic of 'no development without stability', broad institutional refinement was therefore called for.

In 2001 an extraordinary SADC Summit approved the proposed recommendations for far-reaching changes in SADC's institutional framework and the structure for executing its 1992 mandate. These included changes in SADC's governing structures at the regional and national level, but most importantly a plan for the centralisation of the twenty-one sector co-ordinating units and commissions located in twelve of its member countries. These units were brought together in four clusters in a strengthened SADC Secretariat in Gaborone.

At the Council of Ministers Meeting and Summit in Blantyre in August 2001 these changes in SADC structures were further consolidated. The SADC Treaty was amended to take into account these institutional changes. In addition the Summit signed a Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation that provided for an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation under the SADC Summit. The Organ has its own set of regional structures and mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation.

The Organ is supported by a Directorate for Politics, Defence and Security Affairs based at the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone. It functions under the overall supervision of the SADC Executive Secretary and is headed by a Director for Politics, Defence and Security Affairs. The Directorate's tasks relate to politics, defence and security issues as defined in the Treaty, Protocol and SIPO (focusing primarily on strategic planning and policy analysis and development); the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Organ decisions; and the provision of administrative backup to the Organ. It also supervises the activities of the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) based in Harare.

The SADC Organ and its Directorate have overseen the creation and implementation of two successive peace and security strategic plans: SIPO (established 2004) and a revised version, also known as SIPO II, established in 2010. SADC has been criticised for its unwillingness or inability to fully implement these plans. It remains unclear to what extent the plans themselves were designed to be implementable. Factors impacting on such plans include not only poor programme design and management but also institutional politics and political control, donor policies and politics, and contextual factors especially fragile or conflict-prone environments. A limited review process led to the establishment of SIPO II in 2010 (and a delayed launch in 2012) and a comprehensive review of SIPO II was undertaken in 2016 to assess these issues.

Based on the review and faced with the difficulties of conceptualising the integration of the revised SIPO with the revised RISDP, the SADC Summit has decided to extend the life of SIPO until 2020.¹⁶

It is clear that any attempt to design a future peace and security strategic plan must include the ‘lessons learnt’ of SIPO’s successes, achievements, failures and challenges. It must also spell out the rapidly evolving strategic context and institutional setting as these are factors that will impact directly on the architecture and content of a new peace and security plan for Southern Africa.

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY ACTORS: SADC AND ITS MEMBER STATES

To what extent then can we view SADC (and in particular its OPDSC or ‘Organ’) as an influential peace and security actor? Is it a decision-maker in its own right or merely an administrative instrument in the hands of the region’s ruling elites – does it make and implement rules, or follow rules? If it is a follower, who instructs?

We suggest that amongst the fifteen SADC members a hierarchy of power and influence exists: on most issues South Africa (with its advanced economy) dominates, with Zimbabwe in ideological opposition. Tanzania is an independent, influential actor with East African interests. Oil-dependent Angola was until recently an influential actor with Central African interests. Mozambique used to play the role of trusted intermediary, but this will decline as it obsesses over its new-found oil and gas riches. The DRC is influential in a negative sense – many of its ruling elites draw on (and some would say, drain) the region’s creative energies with its relentless demands for victim compensation. Other member states behave as dependencies – satellites circling these influential actors.

Figure 1 below suggests that the SADC Secretariat’s ability to exercise power and influence (its ‘actor-ness’) is shaped by the reality of power relations amongst the members of the organization. Three SADC members compete as agenda-setters (South Africa, Angola and Tanzania) whilst the rest display short-term ad hoc ‘follow the leader’ alliance politics.

In previous research, an analysis of SADC political co-operation suggested a developmental path from informal, ad hoc to formal, rules-based governance.¹⁸

This is in line with Oosthuizen, who noted that SADC provided an “evolving, institutionalised, rules-based forum within which the members meet regularly to discuss and argue about political and security issues”.¹⁹ It appears that this level of

institutional evolution is necessary before common foreign policy approaches or positions can be formulated and implemented.

It was concluded then, as it can be now, that the SADC leadership was rhetorically committed to full integration in both the socio-economic and security arenas (and to the eventual merging of the two into one, human security, agenda). The practice reveals the maintenance of a stable (but not always efficient) institution, used by members to behave in a disaggregated manner, driven by the overriding demands of national interest and sovereignty.

This seems to resonate with a recent interesting contribution, by Malte Brosig and colleagues, to theory development relating to regime complexes.²⁰ They explored the notion of convergence in the context of African security actors and processes. The aim was to explore different convergence types and their depth as well as their consequences for regime efficacy. They found that on average convergence was more

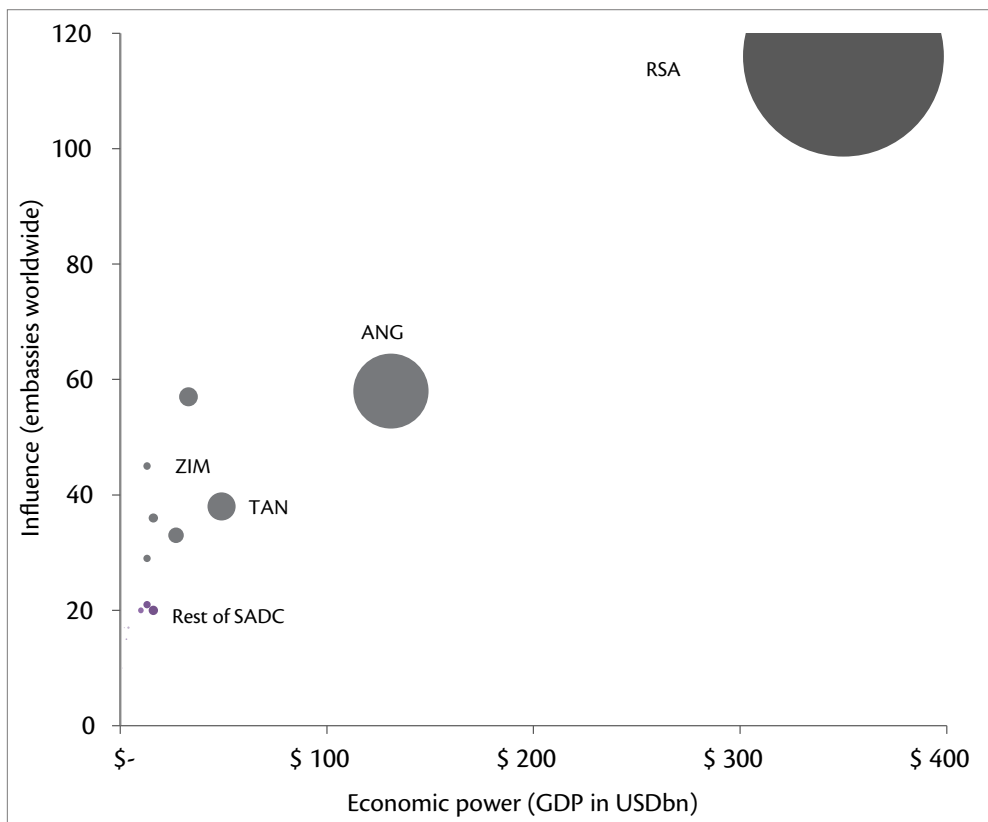


Figure 1 The SADC hierarchy of power and influence¹⁷

often conceptual, technical, and formal than political or behavioural. It is also more often cosmetic or partial rather than extensive or full, and in most cases impacts on efficacy only moderately. These mediocre results might best be explained by a combination of rational and social purpose prediction. While actors are aiming to extend their co-operation among one another, they at the same time aim retaining their institutional autonomy, leading to processes of mediocre convergence.

Another theoretical approach might be able to cast light on the nature of SADC as a peace and security actor. I recently explored and applied the notion of “strategic culture” to a regional setting.²¹ By strategic culture I refer to Snyder’s 1977 argument that elites articulate a unique strategic culture related to security–military affairs that is a wider manifestation of public opinion socialised into a distinctive mode of thinking. As a result of this socialisation process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour patterns with regard to strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of ‘cultural’ rather than mere policy. The applied research offers the following insights.

First, a range of factors severely constrains the freedom of choice of Southern Africa decision-makers; these include the urge to consolidate power and meet socio-economic demands at home and the reality of being confronted with the influence of external actors. These factors continue to shape African foreign and security policy behaviour. Put differently: the requirements of state survival force elites to use foreign policy to extract political and economic resources from the external environment. Closely related to this point is the fact that the role of personality is key. African foreign and security policy decision-making has always been the province of leading personalities. Contemporary African elites remain preoccupied with political stability, legitimacy and economic security, issues whose importance seems to increase rather than diminish.

Secondly, new decision-making institutions (an evolving APSA and the fledgling AGA) combined with the so-called “flattening” of decision-making relating to foreign and security policy (meaning incorporating the influences of new actors such as parliament, media, civil society and interest groups) is testing traditional decision-makers’ roles and ability to control the agenda and implementation of decisions regarding peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building. Interestingly, SADC’s revised SIPO, a forward-looking policy template that promotes the democratic management and enhanced efficiency of the region’s security sectors, was launched at a high-level event in Arusha in 2012, accompanied by a wide stakeholder engagement regarding the question of its implementation across the fifteen member states.²²

However, despite the acknowledgement of the role of non-state actors in shaping peace and security agendas, this chapter's institutional analysis of SADC suggests that it is a stable but not always efficient institution, used by members to behave in a disaggregated manner, driven by the overriding demands of national interest and sovereignty. The SADC leadership is rhetorically committed to full integration in both the socio-economic and security arenas, but still fails to integrate SADC's own business plans in these two areas into one coherent SADC agenda. This is demonstrated by its inability to finalise and implement its peace and security agenda, as represented by the five-year SIPO. As noted, a revised version of this policy framework was completed in 2010, formally launched by SADC in 2012, but yet to be fully disseminated or implemented.²³ This suggests SADC security actors behave in a manner described by Brosig as "mediocre convergence".²⁴

Thirdly, a fast-evolving international context is challenging the perceptual and analytical lenses of decision-makers as never before. Key trends include the prolonged economic downturn in the West, a rising and assertive East, ongoing Western concern over terror, and a renewed global interest in Africa's mineral riches. In South Africa, for example, policy elites have uneven understandings of key global trends. The National Planning Commission's ambitious development plan neglects to take account of these global trends (or more accurately has adopted a narrow economic understanding of South Africa's foreign policy) – to the extent that senior decision-makers requested a re-think.²⁵

Furthermore, limited resources restrict African foreign and security policy largely to regional and at most continental contexts, and as argued by Khadiagala, when elites articulate national interests beyond the continent they do so to win prestige, establish a presence in the proliferating international organisations, and forge strategic alliances with other global underdogs in an effort to extract resources from dominant power blocks.²⁶ Again, this resonates with the concept of mediocre convergence whereby security actors co-govern a policy area or conflict without entering into open competition, but leave room for dissonance.

The fourth insight is the character of African countries' national interest. Research on the state of national security policies and practices in Southern Africa suggests that security thinking was, and in many cases continues to be, shaped by the experience of liberation movements of the decolonisation project.²⁷ Despite limited progress, acceptance of a contemporary template for security sector governance across the SADC region remains a challenge. The extent to which the revised SIPO

policy framework will receive domestic acceptance in the fifteen member states will demonstrate the status of SADC's strategic culture.

Against this background, this chapter suggests there are dissonant strategic cultures at play. On the one hand, scholars question the SADC commitment to a strategic culture of peace. Consider, for example, the content of the SIPO: it is a policy approach that tries hard to combine diplomatic and military approaches to peacemaking. The awkward SADC response to the crisis in Madagascar (when its senior decision-makers at one point called for a military intervention, only to discover UN and AU mediators already at work in Antananarivo) as well as the more recent decision by the Summit to deploy a SADC-based military intervention force to deal with the crisis in the Eastern DRC (overtaken by a decision of the UN Security Council to deploy a UN force) are examples of the uncomfortable fit. Nathan has consistently argued that SADC does not have a shared political value system to enable it to act coherently, and Cawthra believes that while there has been considerable convergence around certain principles within SADC, they remain rather shallow. From this perspective SADC will remain an intergovernmental (with a weak peace and security secretariat) rather than a supranational organisation.²⁸

On the other hand, there is a school of thought that views SADC as an emerging security community, whereby it moved from a "regional security complex" characterised by conflict to a display of commitments for peaceful change. In addition, Khadiagala concludes that SADC has benefited from valuable lessons in policy co-ordination relating to the crises in Lesotho, DRC, Zimbabwe and Madagascar.²⁹ He underlines the ability of SADC, through trial and error, to promote mediation and democracy. I have argued elsewhere that SADC Summits consistently pursue three aspects of the organisation's contemporary foreign relations: conflict mediation and resolution, election management, and economic and trade integration. But to what effect? Consider the trade integration objective: recent negotiations between SADC member states and the EU on establishing EPAs have revealed a number of problems with collective decision-making: the weak foundations of the region's integration agenda, the widely disparate nature of the region's economies, and long-simmering regional tensions and mistrust, partly related to perceptions of South Africa's regional hegemony. To what extent these experiences will prepare officials to manage the decision by the political elite to merge SADC with the EAC and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa remains to be seen.

THE SADC STANDBY FORCE (SSF): STATE OF READINESS

According to SADC, the SSF supports regional peace operations under the African Standby Force Policy Framework.³⁰ The SSF (called a ‘Brigade’ on its website), launched in August 2008, is made up of military, police and civilian members from SADC Member States.

The function of the SSF is to participate in missions as envisaged in Article 13 of the “mandate” of the Peace and Security Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSCAU), which includes:

- ◆ observation and monitoring missions;
- ◆ peace support missions;
- ◆ interventions for peace and security restoration at the request of a Member State; and
- ◆ actions to prevent the spread of conflict to neighbouring states, or the resurgence of violence after agreements have been reached.

According to SADC, the SSF “serves in peace-building efforts including post-conflict disarmament and demobilisation and humanitarian assistance in conflict areas and areas impacted by major natural disasters”.³¹ The SSF operates as a tool of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and receives its guidance from the SADC Committee of Chiefs of Defence staff and the Committee of SADC Police Chiefs.

According to SADC, training of the SSF at all levels is a key priority. The Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre located in Zimbabwe and other national peace support training institutions play a pivotal role in training military commanders, police officers and civilian officials at various levels. SSF achievements, according to the SADC officials and planners, include the development of common policy documents for its operationalisation; the conduct of regional training programmes and participation in continental exercises; maintenance of a register of capabilities pledged by member states; and the development of a Civilian Component Policy Framework.³²

SADC recently demonstrated its will by deploying 500 individual police officers for seven months as part of the SADC Observer Mission in Lesotho (SOMILES). However, it begs the broader question of SADC’s effective peace-making role in Lesotho.³³ Arguably, the SSF should have deployed to stabilise the eastern DRC – instead, the UN established and deployed the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to great effect.³⁴

By some accounts FIB was the inspiration for the establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) – an idea discussed further below. Admittedly, the troop contributions were made by three SADC member states, but command and control remain with the UN.

So despite ambitious and optimistic statements and claims, it remains unclear to what extent the SSF is ready to be deployed at short notice to address and resolve a crisis (either in preventive mode or responsive mode). Regarding this question, a small literature exists, mostly coming to similar conclusions relating to SADC's capacity challenges to implement ambitious structures or plans.³⁵

SADC officials themselves are reluctant to overstate the ability of the organisation to deploy at short notice to address violent conflict. Several issues continue to bedevil the full operationalisation of the SSF, including appropriate staffing of planners at headquarters, the absence of a regional logistics depot, and the ability of SADC to move beyond endless training exercises to action in the field. In addition, and seldom voiced, is the question of the integrated nature of conflict management policies, procedures and culture of behaviour. To what extent are the component parts of the SSF (military, police, civilians) harmonised? How do the early warning system, panel of elders, mediation support structures, disaster risk reduction approaches, and relations with the non-state sector contribute to “unity of purpose” in addressing conflict or crisis? It appears more work needs to be done to enable SADC to benefit from the existence of a multitude of design features relating to its peace and security architecture.

There is a further relationship in need of careful management: the simultaneous existence of the ASF, SSF and the recently created (and seemingly short-lived) ACIRC. The latter, struggling with capacity and doctrinal issues, is viewed by some as an “elite club within the AU”.³⁶ At the time of writing it appeared the status of ACIRC (which was called fully operational by the AU in 2016, but has yet to deploy to intervene in a crisis) remains in doubt, although there seems to be widespread agreement amongst security sector actors that this rapid response instrument will have to be (re)integrated into the overall ASF architecture.

In particular, South Africa, as a leading founding member of this voluntary association, needs to balance its regional and continental commitments and leadership roles lest it suffers from the “big hat, no cattle” syndrome. Not only does it have to harmonise and capacitate its foreign, security and defence policies (and postures) – it needs

to overcome some of its internal contradictions before it can (re)claim African leadership with confidence.

And, to be more precise, there is a contradiction at play with the thinking around South Africa's "deployable assets". When the South African National Defence Force was required to respond to the (political) call for the establishment of ACIRC, it did so in good time and designed the South African role in this instrument in great detail.³⁷ Yet the country's recently adopted defence policy (Defence Review) has not been supported financially by government and so South Africa has a limited ability to rise to the challenge of deploying as part of a rapid response tool of diplomacy.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The chapter suggests that the strategic culture of the region's decision-makers – the set of values and norms that shape their understanding of the world and determine their menu of choices – is not unified but fractured. On the one hand, ruling elites in several of the region's weak states are unable to utilise the tools of statecraft to effectively manage critical issues, from regional integration to democracy promotion to conflict resolution. On the other hand, the region displays signs of "partial convergence" relating to core values and interests.

Encouragingly, a generation of younger, well-educated decision-makers (politicians and officials) as well as public intellectuals increasingly understand the nature of the development and security challenges at hand. Left to them, the regional organisation and its culture of behaviour will hopefully undergo a process of modernisation – resulting in more credible institutional behaviour – in addressing the region's prospects for the future.

In the absence of such a generational change, SADC's long-term survival is not a given and its ability to act as a unified, reliable partner for AU-driven peace support operations will remain in doubt. This is assuming the AU itself is able to act as a unified, reliable partner! Adding to SADC's fragility is the inability of South Africa's current political leadership to come to terms with the kind of investment it has to make if South Africa is to maintain its lead in anticipating and responding to crises in Southern and Central Africa. Even though South Africa appears dominant relative to its fellow SADC members states, in terms of power and influence, time will tell whether its ruling African National Congress will be able to arrest its electoral decline and rediscover its moral compass – necessary ingredients for the country to

play a progressive role, at least in the short to medium term, on the continent and further afield.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Prof Anthoni van Nieuwkerk heads the Centre for Defence and Security Management (CDSM) at the Wits School of Governance. An earlier version of this chapter, “Revisiting the regional building blocks of the African Standby Force”, was presented at the Conference on Strategic Theory, Stellenbosch, 17 September 2015.
- 2 Brosche, J. & Hoglund, K. “The diversity of peace and war in Africa”. In: *SIPRI Yearbook 2015: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
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- 5 Curiously, the SADC website (www.sadc.int) refers to a SADC Brigade, whilst most other policy documents speak of a SADC Standby Force (including SADC’s revised Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, or SIPO). In this chapter I have adopted the “SADC Standby Force” (SSF) nomenclature.
- 6 The revised RISDP was endorsed by SADC at an Extraordinary Summit meeting held in Harare in April 2015. The plan rests on four pillars (“priorities”): industrialisation and market integration, infrastructure support (such as energy, transport), peace and security co-operation “as a pre-requisite for achieving the regional integration agenda”, and special programmes (such as education, health, food security). According to the SADC Executive Secretary Dr Tax, “The purpose of the Revised RISDP is to deepen regional integration in SADC and it provides SADC Member States with a consistent and comprehensive programme of medium-term economic and social policies.” http://www.sadc.int/files/3114/4042/5971/35th_SADC_Summit_final_brochure.pdf
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- 8 Ndlovu, J. “The AU–SADC interface on peace and security: challenges and opportunities”. In Van Nieuwkerk, A & Hofmann, K (eds), *Southern African Security Review 2013*. Maputo: Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Johannesburg: Centre for Defence and Security Management. 2013.
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- 10 De Coning, C, Gelot, L & Karlsrud, J. “Strategic Options for the Future of African Peace Operations 2015–2025”. NUPI Report no 1. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2015.
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- 17 This two-dimensional representation of relative power and influence is based on national income and number of embassies. Literature (and methodology) on this theme seems to be growing. See for example <https://www.issafrica.org/publications/papers/power-and-influence-in-africa-algeria-egypt-ethiopia-nigeria-and-south-africa>.
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- 23 Despite best intentions by the SADC Secretariat, a professionally designed assessment of the implementation of the revised SIPO morphed into a stocktaking exercise amongst state actors. Author’s personal observation, 2016.
- 24 Brosig *op cit*.
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9

Evolving Security Threats in West Africa: Interrogating ECOWAS' Response Mechanism

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INTRODUCTION

Consisting of fifteen Member States, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is one of the five Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that contribute to the promotion of continental peace and security. Its Peace and Security Architecture, established under the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of December 1999 (hereafter “Mechanism”), is probably one of the most developed and robust of the five regional African security architectures.² A critical component of this Mechanism is the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) – the West African regional brigade of the African Standby Force (ASF) crafted under the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) to respond to crises.

Although the ESF is comparatively well developed, with the possible exception of its civilian component, a matter discussed elsewhere in this publication, it is yet to be described as fully operationalised. Similar to the other four regional brigades or standby forces,³ the ESF lacks the necessary financial wherewithal, well-trained personnel to respond to emerging threats and the logistical equipment needed to deploy.⁴ In some instances, some Member States have demonstrated a lack of readiness and willingness to contribute troops when there is imminent danger that can potentially threaten regional stability. More often than not, the process of seeking authorisation for the release of troops in Member States is at best bureaucratic and at worst often tainted with domestic politics. For instance, in 2011 Ghana's late President John Evans Atta-Mills argued that the country's military was overstretched and thus

would not be in a position to contribute troops should the ECOWAS Commission decide to intervene in Côte d'Ivoire to oust former President Laurent Gbagbo.⁵ In addition to the lack of political will and commitment of some Member States, coordination between the AU and ECOWAS constitutes a significant challenge to the deployment of the ESF.

This chapter focuses on the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) and discusses how adaptable it is to the double evolving threats of violent extremism and terrorism in mission environments in the region. The chapter posits that while these regional security challenges are potential catalysts underlining the need for the ESF, they currently pose a veritable “set of litmus tests” to ECOWAS security architecture, slows the operationalisation process of the ESF and particularly weakens its capacity to respond to crises urgently. This has implications for the full operationalisation of the ASF and can potentially weaken the AU and ECOWAS peace and security architectures. As a result of the potential wider ramifications of these evolving threats, especially within peace operation theatres, it is significant to adopt a more nuanced approaches to discussing the ESF and how it contributes to the effectiveness of the ASF.

This chapter comprises four sections. The first section discusses the context of developing the ESF by highlighting the antecedents from the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) operation in Liberia. Such historical contextualisation is significant as it lays the initial foundation that led to the adaption of the 1999 Mechanism. Consequently, the second section examines the status and operational readiness of the ESF against the background of its 2012 intervention in Mali and how the lessons learned there can enhance better restructuring towards the full operationalisation of the ASF beyond 2015. An important aspect of this latter section will be the strategic and operational challenges that impeded the early intervention by ECOWAS in Mali and what new strategies ought to be designed for future operations. Having presented the ESF structure, the chapter specifically discusses the double threats of violent extremism and terrorism as potential major impediments to ESF in the third section. Although ECOWAS has developed institutional frameworks and complex mechanisms over the years, it is argued that the constantly evolving nature of the threats pose particular types of operational challenges and extensive response difficulties that can potentially hinder the effectiveness of the ESF without alterations.⁶ The final section discusses how existing approaches can be improved upon by ECOWAS in collaboration with the AU towards addressing what has been characterised as an African security predicament.⁷

FROM ECOMOG TO ESF

Following the outbreak of the Liberian civil war in 1989, ECOWAS established the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) aimed at finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, after weeks of unsuccessful efforts at brokering peace between the various rebel factions, the SMC decided to establish – and subsequently deployed – the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) amidst bitter opposition from the rebel leader Charles Taylor and some West African leaders.⁸ Other regional interventions by ECOMOG have been in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire as an *ad hoc* subregional peacekeeping force.⁹ ECOMOG engaged in diverse activities, including: disarming rebel factions, protection of humanitarian aid, mediation and peace enforcement.¹⁰ However, partly because disciplinary and complaint mechanisms were weak or almost non-existent, and training and understanding of the mission was lacking, ECOMOG was accused of committing human rights violations in contravention of IHL and HL.¹¹

Resulting from ECOWAS experiences in Liberia, the need to develop better conflict prevention and peacekeeping structures became imperative. Stemming from Article 58 of the 1993 ECOWAS Revised Treaty, the 1999 Mechanism was established. The Mechanism created the structures for conflict resolution and mediation in the subregion, thus representing the first documented attempt at restructuring the ECOWAS conflict prevention and management scheme. Prior to the ASF's adoption in 2003, ECOWAS had an already established security mechanism. But as one of the regional building blocks of the ASF, ECOWAS Defence and Security Commission had to conform by renaming ECOMOG the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) in June 2004.

Under the operational structure the force will be made up of 6 500 highly trained soldiers to be drawn from national units. It will include a rapid reaction task force of 1 500 troops that will have the capability to be deployed within fourteen days (instead of the thirty days previously planned in line with AU Standard), whilst the entire brigade could be deployed within ninety days. The ESF will form one of the components of the ASF and will be under the operational control of the AU to respond to crises situations on the continent.¹² It is made up of military, police and civilian components consistent with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which makes provision for regional arrangements.

In the West African context the ESF is covered by Article 21 of the ECOWAS Mechanism.¹³ In furtherance to that, Article 22 of the Mechanism expands the the ESF's mandate to include: observation and monitoring; peacekeeping and peace

restoration; humanitarian intervention; enforcement of sanctions; preventive deployment; peace-building, disarmament and demobilisation; control of organised crime; policing activities.¹⁴

To achieve these expanded goals of the ESF at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, ECOWAS, in a memorandum of understanding in 2007, designated Centres of Excellence, namely: National Defence College (NDC) in Abuja, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre based at KAIPKTC in Accra, Ghana, and the *Ecole de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin Beye* (EMPABB) in Mali to deliver multi-dimensional training and exercises for the military, police and civilian components of the ESF.¹⁵ Significant strides have been made since then in the conducting of exercises, including: the Command Post Exercise in Dakar and Accra in June 2006 and December 2007 respectively; the West Battalion Exercise in Thies, Senegal, December 2007; the Command Post Exercise in Bamako, Mali, June 2008; “Operation Cohesion” in Benin in April 2010; the Command Post Exercise (EXERCISE JIGUI 3) in Accra, Ghana.¹⁶

These exercises were aimed at testing the operational readiness of the ESF for effective peace support operations and to evaluate the ESF Main Force (MF), which is an important milestone in the operationalisation of the ESF. Similar efforts have been made to address the recurrent logistical challenges. ECOWAS has designated two logistics depots – a coastal base just outside Freetown, Sierra Leone, and an inland base in Mali. In July 2010 the Government of Sierra Leone donated eighteen acres of land to ECOWAS for the building of the logistics base and ECOWAS has already disbursed \$10 million for the first phase of the project.¹⁷ These demonstrate the effort of ECOWAS in the operationalisation process. Being the country where ECOWAS demonstrated political willingness and flexed its muscles, Mali provides the classical basis to ascertain the ESF’s future operational readiness and its contribution to the attainment of ASF’s full operational capability beyond 2015.

ECOWAS INTERVENTION IN MALI: ASSESSING THE FUTURE OPERATIONAL READINESS OF ESF

The ECOWAS intervention in Mali occurred in a context of great uncertainty and deterioration of governance structures. By the end of 2011 Tuareg rebels had attacked the Malian army in several locations and cities in the north (Tinzawaten, Tessalit).¹⁸ Worse still, some Malian soldiers were kidnapped or killed in Aguel’hoc, prompting their mothers and wives to stage a protest march to the presidential palace on 2 February 2012.¹⁹ The objective of the march was to demand additional resources

and support from the Government of Amadou Toumani Touré to strengthen the capacity of the military. Before the Ministry of Defence could make progress to address the concerns of the military, Amadou Toumani Toure was removed from power in April 2012. Subsequent to that, Mali was taken over by a military junta and became a theatre of instability characterised by growing extremism and terrorism. Particularly the northernmost administrative zones – Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, home to about 1,3 million people – became notorious nodal towns for the Islamist insurgency.²⁰ Initially confined in the northern part of the country, the insurgency began to assume serious dimensions, spreading to the southern part of the country. With imminent subregional ramifications, neighbouring countries began to galvanise support in the form of diplomatic interventions by ECOWAS and subsequently the AU, pushing for a UN-authorized military intervention.²¹

Although ECOWAS took a lead role, focusing on political negotiations to remove the military junta, the organisation was criticised for not being effective and subsequently came under mounting pressure as extremists in northern Mali took advantage of the seeming lack of political leadership in Bamako to extend their control. Consequently, ECOWAS demonstrated political willingness to establish an ECOWAS Mission in Mali (MICEMA), a military approach that could dismantle the rebels insurgency. However, there were a number of challenges. First, while the ECOWAS military chiefs proposed a total of 5 500 troops to be deployed, 3 200 would come from the ESF and the rest from other regions. Secondly, ECOWAS lacked the needed political clout and financial resources to pursue the military intervention agenda and, lastly, donors who could assist were also not willing to back the ECOWAS proposal, ostensibly because of lack of capacity to deal with the difficult threat of terrorists and their affiliate transnational networks in northern Mali.²²

MICEMA was subsequently transformed into the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), thereby making it an African, rather than a West African, initiative.²³ However, before AFISMA could be deployed a significant force, numbering 1 200 extremist militants primarily from Ansar Dine and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), launched an attack towards the south and threatened an advance on the capital, prompting Dioncounda Traoré,²⁴ the interim president, to call on France to intervene to save civilians and Mali's territorial integrity. Oluwale, however, argues that, even before the militants' push into Bamako, French special forces reportedly had been fighting alongside the Malian army.²⁵ Thus, the call of Traore became the basis for France to co-ordinate the launch of Operation Serval, with the aim of ousting the Islamic militants from the northern region. While

some criticised France that its early intervention was purely interest-driven, it must be credited for reclaiming major northern towns like Gao, Konna, and Timbuktu by the end of January 2013, as the militants withdrew farther north into the desert and the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains.²⁶

Subsequently, the long-delayed AFISMA was deployed into Mali by February 2013. However, this was dependent upon assurances of the logistical and financial support that had previously been withheld. By March 2013, a 6 288-member strong AFISMA force – smaller than anticipated – began to expand its presence in parts of north and central Mali under the leadership of Nigeria’s General Shehu Abdul Kadir. Other ECOWAS troop-contributing countries included Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Unsurprisingly, the troops faced logistical challenges including the securing of food, fuel and water, requiring bilateral donor support to overcome these deficiencies.²⁷ In response a hastily created UN Trust Fund provided AFISMA with \$26,7 million by March 2013.²⁸ This was subsequently followed by the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (*Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation au Mali*), MINUSMA.

What has become clear from the above is that there was a quick transition from AFISMA to MINUSMA. While this is commendable, as UN has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, it also further demonstrated the enormous financial and logistical challenges that ECOWAS and, by extension, the AU continually faces. Their personnel could not easily adapt to the evolving threats as noted by French President Francois Hollande in January 2013 that “Mali would have been entirely conquered and the terrorists would be in a position to force ... the Malian population to [surrender to] a regime it did not want but [also] to put on pressure on all countries of West Africa”.²⁹ Surprisingly though, similar sentiments were expressed by Africans. For instance, Nigeria’s Foreign Minister Olugbenga Ashiru noted in April 2013 that, “If the French had not intervened at the time they did, the situation in Mali would have been different today.” Jacob Zuma of South Africa also supported French intervention in Mali, although he had previously opposed interventions in Libya and Côte d’Ivoire in 2011.³⁰ Consequently, South Africa, Nigeria and indeed all members of the AU and ECOWAS expressed gratitude for French intervention.³¹

Indeed, the delayed intervention by AFISMA and the acknowledgement of the challenges it faced indicates that the ESF – and, by extension, the ASF – is not fully developed to intervene independent of the external support. This, according to

Oluwale, exposed the weakness of ECOWAS and the AU in bridging the gaps between early warning and early response. Early response implies being able to deploy within stipulated times according to the ESF's mandate. This, coupled with the sluggish political decision-making and deployment capacity, leaves many to wonder if the ESF and the ASF will ever be ready for deployment. While this question remains nagging, it is fair to argue that, compared to other regional brigades, ESF has made purposeful strides, making it unquestionably one of the most prepared to respond to crises owing to the support of Nigeria as a regional hegemon, but more importantly because of better developed structures.³² However, with regard to its mandate as defined under Article 22 of the Mechanism vis-à-vis the evolving nature of security threats, it can be argued that ECOWAS will continue to grapple with some challenges in its operationalisation efforts. The following section discusses the evolving threats of violent extremism and terrorism that present response difficulties to the military component of the ESF.

EVOLVING THREATS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA

Increasing radicalisation in West Africa, especially in the Sahel countries, including Nigeria and Mali, has resulted in the emergence of violent extremist and terrorist groups. Notable among them include 'Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Li dda'Awatiwal Jihad' also known popularly as 'Boko Haram', the Movement for Unity/Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO); Ansar Dine, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL), Al Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Ansaru.

These groups pose particular response difficulties to the military component of the ESF as they defy and resist conventional unilateral approaches, counter-measures and classical tactics of warfare. In other words, the military is not traditionally trained to respond to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. For instance, since the establishment of Boko Haram it has transmuted from opposing Western education into a violent extremist organisation, with expansionist bases in Nigeria and neighbouring states such as Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. There is no doubt that, over the years, its operational focus has changed from attacks on churches and mosques to detonating bombs indiscriminately, kidnapping civilians for ransom, with improved usage of improvised explosive devices. At the same time, it has metamorphosed both into Islamic State in the Levant's franchised representative currently known as Islamic State in West Africa and also into a regional terrorist group.

Consequently, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups such as Ansar Dine and MUJAO continue to operate both independently and as a network, posing enormous challenges to regional peace and security architecture. For example, despite the restoration of relative peace in Mali following the 2013 general elections, lack of resilience in state institutions has created conditions in which militant and terrorist groups continue to perpetrate crime and undermine state security.³³ Indeed, since the establishment of MINUSMA, terrorist attacks have remained a daunting challenge to the UN as well as the peacekeepers. In June 2016 two separate terrorist attacks occurred in Gao in northern part of Mali. A preliminary report indicated that, in the first incident, one peacekeeper from China was killed and a dozen UN personnel were injured when a vehicle with an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated at the MINUSMA camp. In the second episode one civilian contractor from France and two security guards from Mali were killed by unknown assailants. Reacting to the June incidents, Ban Ki-Moon, then Secretary-General of the UN, recalled the past attacks to MINUSMA “that have killed twelve peacekeepers and injured many more in May [2016] alone”.³⁴

The difficulties of the ESF and the ASF in responding to the threat of terrorism stem from the fact that their modus operandi keeps changing. Undoubtedly, terrorism and terrorist networks have transformed, with multiple and diverse manifestations, including suicide bombing, car bombing, kidnapping of humanitarian aid and foreign workers and school children, and attacks on mosques, churches, transport terminals and shopping malls. While in the past terrorists would engage in bombing and kidnapping for ransom, increasingly today captives are being maltreated, severely beaten and forcibly made to have sex. Terrorist networks also engage in the recruitment of innocent young men into their fold.³⁵

These dynamics present a particular type of response difficulties not only to ECOWAS Member States but also to ECOWAS as an organisation and the AU largely because its multi-dimensional response structures are not designed to adapt and respond effectively to the constantly evolving threats. However, unlike the ECOWAS and the AU, the French led Operation Serval made significant progress in combating the threat of terrorists due to the combined effect of land and air forces, with military logistic support from other EU Member States (including Belgium, Denmark and the UK).³⁶

RESPONDING TO THE GROWING THREATS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA

The changing dynamics of security challenges in West Africa mean that innovative and multi-dimensional approaches need to be developed in order to adapt to the evolving nature of the threats. But as ECOWAS remains a regional building block of the AU, there is also the need for coherence and synergy between the two organisations.

Co-ordination of efforts beteewn ECOWAS and AU

The growing threat of violent extremism and terrorism means the AU and ECOWAS need to constantly co-ordinate in the spirit of complimentarily and subsidiarity. Co-ordination of efforts, especially in the area of intelligence-gathering and information-sharing is critical between the AU and ECOWAS. In October 2015 the AU and Lake Chad Basin Commission (this Commission is comprised of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon) signed a Memoradium of Understanding (MoU) on the operationalisation and sustenance of the Multi-National Joint Taskforce (MNJTF) to counter the Boko Haram Terrorist Group.³⁷ This taskforce opens up the troop-contributing countries to share intelligence and other information to curtail the threat of the terrorist groups. Among others, the operations of the MNJTF have contributed to blocking most of the escape routes and depriving the Boko Haram group of their safe havens as well as preventing them from establishing new bases in the Lake Chad region.³⁸

However, sustenance of the joint efforts will depend on the effectiveness of the AU's Conflict Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and the West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) of ECOWAS. It must be stressed that the two organisations have had difficulties preventing crises. The inability of the AU and ECOWAS to prevent crises was evident in Mali and Guinea Bissau in 2012. According to the International Peace Institute (IPI), while the ouster of President Amadou Toumani Touré of Mali occurred only two days after a ministerial meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council was held in the capital Bamako, the crisis in Guinea-Bissau erupted when an ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council ministerial meeting was taking place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in April 2012.³⁹ In Mali the growing Tuareg rebellion was an early signal of potential conflcit, while long-term drug trafficking and the chronic tension between the military and political leaders could have been understood as clear signs of possible instability.⁴⁰

Moreover, capacity to respond is most often lacking, both at the AU and ECOWAS levels despite clear warning signals. It is in this regard that the AU has established

the emergent African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC). For this mechanism to be effective, however, the AU should improve its co-ordination with the RECs in terms of early warning signals. Such co-ordination of effort is even more important because of the continued mutation of terrorist groups in the region. Currently, there are multiple strategies being adopted by states and regional organisations to respond to evolving violent extremism and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel. This needs to be enhanced in a much more nuanced and robust manner.

Independent source of funding

The capacity of ECOWAS to respond to emerging threats must be dependent largely on independent sources of funding. Although the establishment of ECOWAS Levy is significant, both ECOWAS and the AU depend hugely on external funds for responding to threats. In most cases, when the interest of external funders diverges from that of the AU and ECOWAS, the release of funds is likely to be delayed unduly and consequently hamper the effectiveness of the response mechanisms in Africa. This approach needs to change by creating an independent source of funds that can be readily accessed and utilised during emergencies. It is in this regard that the discussion by the AU to raise funding by way of levies on imports should be welcome news. But the realisation of such funds will be contingent on significant growth in African economies and commitment of Member States and, more importantly, for the funds to serve the intended purpose, mechanisms should be put in place to reduce mismanagement of funds.

Increased training and capacity-building

In many instances the quality of AU and ECOWAS militaries has been questioned, especially when compared to those deployed by the United Nations (UN) to respond to crises situations.⁴¹ Perhaps the experience of UN forces stems from long years of engagement in peacekeeping operations. With the establishment of various training centres in Africa over the last decade or more, African armed forces are increasingly undergoing various forms of training at the strategic, operational and tactical levels to improve efficiency. However, ECOWAS and the AU should invest and focus attention on training that reflects the changing tactics of terrorists. At the same time, efforts should be made at training the youth about the misconceptions and misinterpretations of the concept of “jihad”, which has become a springboard for engaging in radicalisation, militancy and terrorism in West Africa. However, for such training to be effective there is the need to ensure that state institutions are

effective in addressing governance challenges such as corruption, inequality and youth unemployment.⁴² Failure to address these challenges will defeat the purpose of training programmes and create conditions for the youth to be lured by violent extremism and terrorism.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has illustrated that ECOWAS has so far made strides in establishing its peace and security architecture. Progress has been made with the operationalisation of the ESF, tracing its antecedents from the ECOMOG days in the early 1990s, when it established the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of December 1999. It has also made substantial progress since the ECOMOG was renamed ESF and became part of the ASF in June 2004. However, challenges relating to strategic decisions, especially between the AU and ECOWAS, financial and logistical challenges, and issues of personnel and their deployment still exist, impeding the early response of the ESF as a building block of the ASF. These are compounded by disruptive unpredictability in threats such as violent extremism and terrorism, especially in the Sahel regions of West Africa. The changing dynamics of these threats and the associated complexities weaken the effectiveness of regional security mechanisms and, by extension, the AU as a continental body. What is imperative after ASF's 2015 deadline of achieving full operational capability is the need to interrogate and explore new ways of improving the existing response mechanisms and to develop a forward-looking and adaptable mechanism, taking into account the nature of emerging threats in the region.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Mustapha Abdallah is a Senior Research Associate, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Accra, Ghana. Dr. Kwesi Aning is a Professor of Peacekeeping and Director, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research, KAIPTC. Joana Osei-Tutu is Assistant Programme Head, Peace and Security Studies and a Senior Research Associate, KAIPTC.
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10

East Africa Standby Force: Diffused Asymmetries and the Challenges of Constructing a Security Architecture

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INTRODUCTION

An estimated three divisions from the East Africa Standby Force (EASF) milieu are engaged in peace-keeping and enforcement operations under both multilateral² and state-centric initiatives.³ The fact that none of these is deployed under the auspices of the subsystems' security architecture highlights challenges and potential for operationalising a durable Full Operational Capability (FOC) attained by EASF in December 2014. Underlying this is the EASF geography characterised by multiple widespread economic and military asymmetries and immature anarchy. This chapter recapitulates on the process while contextualising its current geopolitical, economic, and strategic and security dilemmas. Contingent appreciations are anchored on the impact of the apparent military overstretch of EASF core states when it comes to the variables of force generation, readiness and financial sustenance in relation to FOC.

We seek to test the assertion that while the existence of deconcentrated economic and military asymmetries provides a challenge for a security architecture, if innovatively exploited the asymmetries can equally serve as an inverse platform for constructing a viable regional security architecture. This is to the extent that the process is followed by efforts at state consolidation and a mutual defence pact that seeks to resolve immature anarchies.

EASF – A HISTORICAL RECAPITULATION

As part of the African states' response mechanism to conflicts, EASF⁴ emerged consequent to the AU summit of 6–8 July 2014 and the Council of Ministers of 30

March 2007 that argued for its transformation from a brigade into a force. It also called for the establishment of a co-ordination mechanism. The standby force was deemed critical in providing the AU with capabilities to respond to conflict through preventive deployment, peacekeeping and peace-building for conflict disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and humanitarian assistance.⁵ In so doing, the force was set to affirm the continent's transition from a non-interference to non-indifference principle. At full operational capacity the force was to consist of standby multi-dimensional contingents of civil and military components located in the states of origin ready for deployment anywhere in Africa at appropriate notice. It was to pack effective Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (CIS³) with appropriate continental integrated inter-operational infrastructure that would link deployed units with mission headquarters as well as AU and regional planning elements.

As part of AU Road Map 1 2003 to 2006, EASF was expected to set up legal frameworks, standard operating procedures, approved doctrines and logistics, and establish structures such as a planning element and actual brigade, logistical base and EASF-COM secretariat. The adaptation of AU Road Map 2 of 2006 and 2010 outlined a set of objectives that included capacity development and incorporation for integration of multi-national civilian and police components. Other critical components included harmonisation of doctrines and standard operating procedures to enhance inter-operability. Command Post Exercise (CPX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX), with an end state of attaining an Initial Operational Capability (IOC) by 2010, were carried out in Kenya in 2008 and Djibouti in 2009 respectively. The AU Road Map 2 outlined ten objectives to be met between 2010 and 2015. These were to lead to the operationalisation of FOC by 2015. Core objectives were:

- ◆ the decision-making structures, including the process of authorisation mandate and mandating process to oversee the deployment and employment of EASF;
- ◆ the development of information management and the Communication Information Systems (CIS) support structure for preparing, planning and commanding of forces deployed by 2015;
- ◆ FOC of land force structure, brigade headquarters and standby force maintained in states to required standards;
- ◆ trained police elements by 2015;
- ◆ trained civilian component with an established data base (roster);
- ◆ logistical system supporting deployment and sustaining regional capabilities;

- ◆ integrated regional training system; and
- ◆ efficient financial administrative process and structures, including resource capitals.

Road Map 2 also set out projections for the establishment of a regional maritime component for maritime peace operations, safety and security tasks and attainment of FOC by 2015. FOC would manifest itself through the presence of capacity to execute six mission scenarios along their associated deployment timelines and force generation⁶ imperatives.

The fact that both AU and EASF had not conceptualised FOC's operational requirement guides implied that relations with both the Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) and African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) components would remain unclear. This underpinned the subsequent paralysis EASF experienced prior to FOC status declaration. Over time, this was compounded by differentiated covert interests and misperceptions states held over these two structures. This became apparent in its After Action Review (AAR) of FTX Mashariki Salam held in Jinja, Uganda in 2013. For instance, given the multinational and standby character of the ASE, it was challenging to have units preassembled in the staging area earlier. It was also apparent that forces based on a single nation or largely drawn from a state's armed forces were much easier to maintain at high readiness. This was more obvious especially with respect to Scenario Six deployment of the military component within fourteen days. It became apparent that such a deployment was better performed by forces readily assembled, fully equipped and exercised, with the available transport on immediate call in addition to available logistics supplies prepacked and ready for delivery by air. Differentiated levels of readiness among various units also surfaced.

Other challenges included the absence of valuation and validation systems affirming and confirming, first, a triage of operational readiness: the state of readiness in the entire force, the validation of the training instructions and organisation with a focus on the headquarters, regional brigade and unit levels; secondly, the co-ordination between the various components and humanitarian organisations and agencies; and thirdly, infusion of lessons learnt during operations and training at all levels. Both AAR and the AU's Panel of Experts reports increasingly affirmed the constraints towards realisation of FOC. This mediated a Strategic Review Scan and an experts working group meeting in Naivasha, Kenya between 22 and 27 March 2014 that sought to grapple with five issue areas. These included the how process of and implications towards FOC. Second was the need to reconcile and undertake a conceptual convergence of the RDC and ACIRC within the context of EASF. Third,

contextualisation of EASF's administrative and operational structural frameworks such as the secretariat, the planning element, brigade headquarters and the log BASE in the broad attainment of FOC. Fourth, financial and logistical sustainability issues, and fifth, legal questions revolving around mandating and authorising processes.

FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY: A CONCEPTUAL NOTE

While broadly used in reference to a system, FOC can be argued to refer to the attainment of that ability to be fully employed and maintained to the extent of meeting desired operational ends. FOC can equally be stretched to apply to structures. Tyson is apt on this when he notes that FOC, that desired end state of ongoing efforts, is conceived to entail the attainment of a joint, combined, integrated and comprehensive headquarters manned, trained and equipped to an operational standard to cope with requirements of AU Scenarios 1–6, with adequate contingency plans in place.⁷ This conceptual appreciation of FOC sets out and allows for the appreciation of the expected tasks while outlining both parameters for measuring the end state (FOC) and the cost appreciation in terms of effort. While this is critical, this conception is silent on other variables fundamental to attaining capability to operationalise intent and that are underpinned by force component sustenance, political will and supporting legal frameworks.

Notably, FOC⁸ is conceived to imply the attainment of the capability by the EASF to:

- ◆ launch itself into an operation as authorised by the mandating authority within the stipulated mandated timelines using the optimum complement of its multidimensional and multinational kinetic and non-kinetic components in accord with the stipulated six scenarios;
- ◆ sustain itself logistically for the duration prior to mission takeover by the AU; and
- ◆ recover as per the dictates of the mission deployment criteria.⁹

The foregoing conception is underpinned by three components: the first is made up of kinetic elements such as the RDC within the TCC, the Planning Element (PLANELM) and the Brigade Headquarters.

COMPONENT ONE: RAPID DEPLOYMENT CAPABILITY (RDC)

FOC was contingent on the existence of a RDC trained, kitted and armed, among troop-contributing states. The challenge for EASF states was the fact that some of the equipment and units projected in the RDC force structure, such as an aviation component and field engineer squadron, remained problematic in sourcing. FOC

for the RDC also presupposed the existence of standardised operating procedures among these units, the development of a common doctrine and training manuals, and agreed upon certification standards including operational readiness standards. Yet EASF was marked not only by the apparent absence of a consensus on the RDC concept, but also the dilemma about which option between RDC and ACIRC it needed to adopt within its framework. While Ethiopia and Sudan were opposed to a RDC concept, the former was amenable to ACIRC.¹⁰ Uganda, on the other hand, accepted both RDC and ACIRC concepts. Like Kenya and Rwanda, Uganda had established a RDC component within its own force structures.

By 2014, however, the linkage between EASF and existing RDCs remained weak. If the framework was to be maintained, EASF Coordinating Mechanism (EASFCOM) needed to enter into legal arrangements with states on the issue of force generation and deployment, and standardisation of training, verification and certification. If the option of a single nation force were adopted, given the inherent value of cohesive, common equipment, language, tactics, procedures and logistics, EASF would have had to accept the reality of a single nation force RDC, in effect negating the principle of multinationality. The converse implied heavy investments in training both at individual level and collective level of the RDCs established by the region to an acceptable standard followed by stringent monitoring and evaluation.

Without reconciling this, EASF risked paralysis underpinned by risks of overstretch and lack of commitment and political will. It was notable that while RDC and ACIRC were AU-approved concepts in accordance with ASF Scenario 6, they had not been discussed and adopted at the regional level. Beyond apparent state-centric suspicions, the two were not mutually exclusive as long as neither was being imposed on the security arrangement. In any case the broad deployment of troops from EASF states across the geographical expanse of Eastern and Central Africa pointed to the existing reserve potential to respond to security situations under the EASF concept.¹¹ Notably a shift from emphasising a standalone RDC component within existing force structures would allow nations to retain the potential of the ACIRC notion essentially as a coalition of the willing concept at the AU level.¹² This would allow some of the EASF members to participate on voluntary basis without affecting the residual existence of RDC. The foregoing perspective recommended by the Naivasha experts group meeting to EASF policy organs in effect sub-sumed the RDC and ACIRC within an enhanced EASF structure.¹³

THE PLANNING ELEMENT (PLANELM)

Under article 11 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU),¹⁴ the PLANELM was set to act as a multinational full-time planning headquarters for EASF within the framework of the ASF and the UN Standby arrangement system. It was to submit frequent reports, at least quarterly and as necessary, in detail through the committee of the East African Chiefs of Defense Staff (EACDS) to the Council of Eastern African Ministers of Defense and Security (CEAMDS) and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSCAU). The MoU called for a composition of “Military, Police and Civilian components to reflect multinational and multidimensional dynamic”. The latter was lacking, as was the need to align the policy framework and the MoU to accord the two with the Ministerial decision of 2008, 3rd Extraordinary Council meeting held, in Kampala, Uganda that argued for the harmonisation of reporting lines. It also needed to grapple with challenges of motivation and morale of the staff affected by recruitment mechanisms of seconded officers. This tended to bring to the PLANELM differentiated capacities that distorted rather than facilitated structural cohesion. Additionally, the duration for seconding officers was short (two years), in effect limiting the ability of officers to engender any meaningful impact. Internally, there was an apparent lack of direction and tasking critical to facilitating not only rationalisation but also utilisation of some of the capacity available in this component. Attainment of FOC was going to be contingent on the extent to which policy-making extended functions for the planning element to serve as a multinational multidimensional full-time structure tasked to conduct strategic appreciation of all possible missions and operating conditions of the force, taking into account geography and requisite capabilities to facilitate accurate determination of force material and equipment requirements.¹⁵

One imperative was that PLANELM supports EASF by reviewing existing peace support operations, while generating operations, logistics and planning concepts and standardised training requirements. Together with an established early warning system, PLANELM was to monitor and analyse regional, continental and global trends in a bid to keep the EASFCOM director fully briefed on impending crisis. Such a planning element needed to be in a position to plan upcoming missions, and record and evaluate lessons learnt while retaining its core role of maintaining documentation on EASF planning processes, procedures and estimates. The planning element also had to keep, maintain and monitor a register of pledged resources and capabilities of Member States. It was to constantly check on and evaluate readiness of available resources and capabilities with states; evaluate and check on the critical aspects of

equipment compatibility and inter-operational profile with EASF; plan and negotiate with Member States for rotation of forces in the course of long-term rotation of EASF forces in conjunction with a mandating authority; and advise the Force Commander/Commissioner of Police/Head of Civilian peace keeping complement. A further imperative stemmed from setting out to produce initial mission documentation such as Concept of Operations and rules of engagement, besides maintaining and operationalising rosters especially for police and civilian components.

BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS

The Headquarters (HQ) component was the weakest link towards the operationalisation of FOC. By 2014 EASF had no specific headquarter structure that anybody could flesh out to the extent of saying, “this is how the said Brigade HQ is and will operate”. Underpinning this were several factors. First, the issue of dual location of the Brigade HQ in Ethiopia and the PLANELM in Kenya was a factor that impacted on staffing. Secondly, the dynamics requisite to operationalising a functional mission HQ were not clear. Critical operational questions to be answered in any evaluation of FOC included the form and nature of the structure to be manned at HQ level. The desired end state had to be influenced by the mission, in turn informed by the broad conception of scenarios. This would in turn determine the size and sustainment capability to be designed and the equipment to go with it. The introduction of the air and maritime components negated the initially proposed size and composition of the units that fell under the brigade as per the initial policy frame.¹⁶ This was imperative now that the new dynamics called for military, civilian and police components for it to be complete to the extent of coping with tasks stipulated under Scenarios 1–6 in a joint, combined and integrated logic.

A critical challenge was in the selection criteria of officers. It was imperative to assure competence if expected roles and assignments were to be executed. This called for collective training. While mission HQ training had been conducted with respect to CPX and FTX, “little if any enduring, residual effect has been captured”.¹⁷ Not only had there been no procedures developed, but also process was constantly undermined by changed appointments of trained staff or return to mother units after training. There were no mechanisms in place to ensure refinement of procedures and adjustment of structures.

The design and the equipment of the HQ and JOC were also critical as was the need for writing up, planning and developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), setting up of a built staff table, established air staff, integrated maritime and air components,

and integrated police and civilian components. This had to be followed by a status of trained and rehearsed uniformed HQ, an integrated civilian component, and the transition to integrated planning and operations. These needed to be rehearsed and tested before December 2015. Progressive programmes for collective training that include FTX and CPX had to be undertaken as a build-up towards combined and integrated capabilities. The operationalisation of a HQ then presupposed the normalisation of planning procedures to cover Scenarios 1–6. Equally critical was the need to procure equipment and infrastructure for the HQ, identify sustainability requirements, and establish command, control communication, technological and information systems. To support these functions, required the establishment of a best practices unit, which through experience and research would set up guidelines, ethics and best practices that could be applied to achieve desired results. This process was captured in a conceptual sequence of three steps, as follows.

Staffing

The operational question here revolved around the determination of the extent to which the staffing structure was sufficiently integrated and balanced in relation to the functions required to fulfil the given mission. It became apparent that the time available between January 2014 and December 2015 would not be adequate to establish the air cell, develop air operations concepts and pledging of capabilities critical to a full air operational capability unless Member States redoubled their commitment. The fact that some of the staff in the PLANELM were either inadequately qualified or insufficiently experienced to fulfil their roles called for a holistic and detailed review of staffing.¹⁸

Training

EASF needed to liaise, advise, form and validate pledged TCCs capital contributions to the force. It was advisable that individual training and preparation of force elements was left largely to states. This would enable EASF to direct attention and resources to critical areas of need, such as collective training. Core here was the need for a progressive programme with in-built integrated procedures of mission HQ gradually binding together with parallel training LOE in a bid to achieve FOC.¹⁹

Equipment

EASF staff needed to be equipped at both conceptual and physical levels. Under the former were doctrinal procedures and mechanisms that define the operation of

the HQ together with adaptable, agile contingency plans critical in enabling a rapid transition to operations. The physical component involved infrastructure, fitting, furniture, Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Systems (C⁴IS) and expendable stock, packaging, storage and transport facilities.²⁰ “Each of the major training events was conceived as essential (mission critical) in that progression. They called for planning, funding and support²¹ with a focus on clearly identified product deliverables at the end of each event. Effective, intuitive evaluation and lessons needed to support the process from the onset.”²²

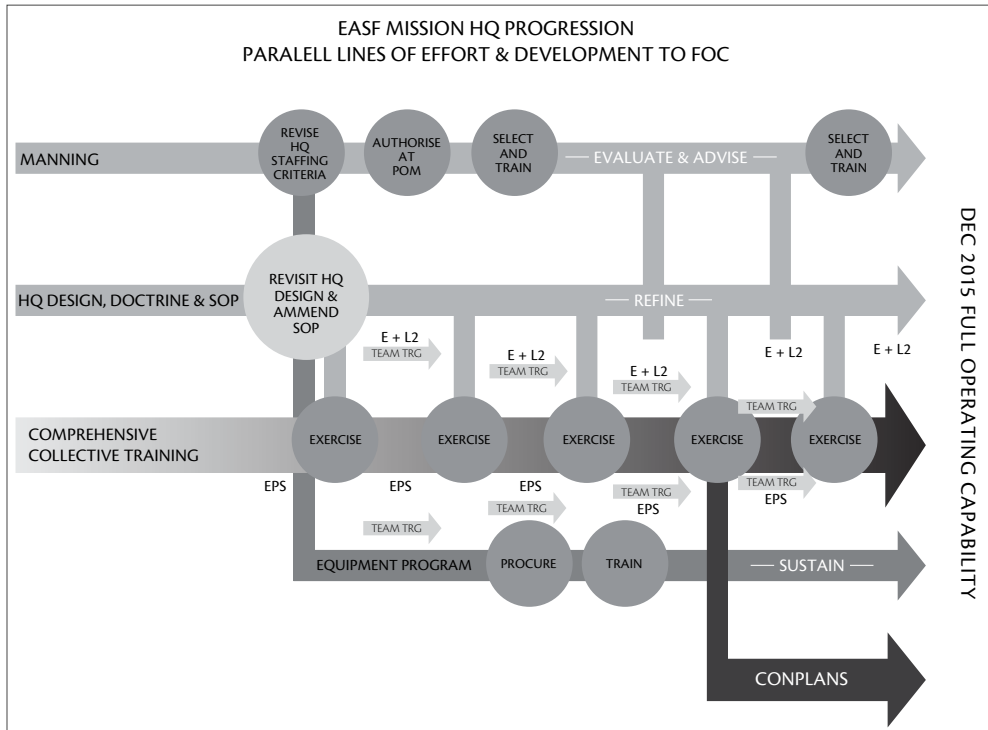


Figure 1 EASF Mission HQ Progression

In Figure 1 the lines of effort in the journey to FOC are shown conceptually. These are focused around an integrated collective training programme. For Tyson, the process commences with the development of an effective set of SOPs, which are subsequently rehearsed and refined. Cell, branch and subordinate HQ training (team) is conducted in parallel and gradually bound closer together. The staffing, doctrine and equipment programmes run simultaneously. They inform each other through an intuitive rather than an imposed continuous evaluation and lessons (E+L2) process. It is imperative that Exercise Planning Staff (EPS) design and adjust each step of collective training in order to validate and prove adjustments or identify weaknesses.²³

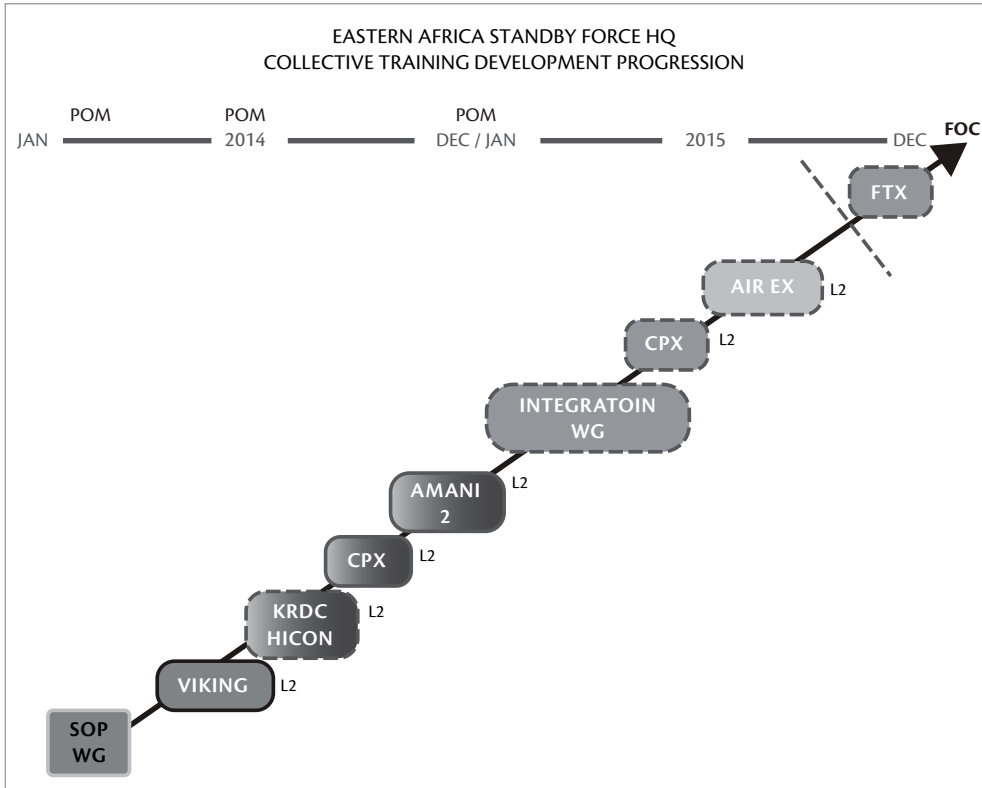


Figure 2 EASF HQ Collective Training Development Progression

Figure 2 of the Tyson model depicts the steps in the collective training plan to FOC. While the only events in the figure currently in the activity schedule are those with a solid outline, events with a dotted outline are a combination of opportunity training events and proposed training events. These are conceived as the minimum requirement to achieve a credible FOC in 2015. L2 represents a continuous lessons process. Although this figure shows integration of the civilian component commencing in early 2015, there was a need to underline the fact that this indicated weight of effort only. The integrated and comprehensive nature of EASF Mission HQ needs to be stressed from the outset with a gradually increased integration of the Force taking place throughout 2014.²⁴

The salience of and challenge of setting up the Mission HQ implied that serious investment of political capital was solicited to stimulate resources and will.²⁵ Hence the need for directives from the decision-making organs as eventually recommended

by the Naivasha team and approved by the Malabo Summit of EASF heads of State and Government in 2014.²⁶

COMPONENT TWO: A REVIEW OF PROGRAMME STRATEGY

In the second component one finds the sustaining elements underpinned by logistics. There was necessity for procuring requirements of the structure including infrastructure for the HQ equipment identification, Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Systems [C⁴IS]. Equally imperative was the need to package sustainment requirements and their storage. Challenges revolved around the issue of whether this ought to be a Member State contribution, pooling of resources on standby, or identifying and earmarking how to procure them when required. There was also the questions of what equipment programme needed to be placed at levels 1 and 2, and whether the equipment programme provided for compatibility and inter-operability especially where Member States contributed. Where levels 1 and 2 were in place, preparation for core planning was done in a bid to design the force on the basis of missions, size sustainment, capability and the requisite gear. The fact of the matter was and is that equipment remains a critical challenge with most African militaries, constrained by old, obsolete systems. Worse still is the fact that they are challenged by lack of standardisation, given the fact that they are subject to dumping. There have to be continuous progressive programmes under collective training that must include lessons from the inception of the organisation to confirm efficiency.

Equally important was that fundamental questions of sea- and airlift and sustenance were grappled with. These did, and continue to, constrain operations of African Forces in Mission. Units from EASF States in Mission are constrained by lack of air support with respect to attack and utility helicopters, and tactical strike and airlift assets.²⁷ As part of its strategic programmes for enhancing state commitment, EASF needed to consider options such as mandating designated nation(s) in developing these roles with support of others, or the setting up of a pooling process for the same if necessary. While the former is currently plausible, its durability is a function of the extent of a state's commitment elsewhere. The latter could engender self-sustainment in the region to the extent that it is structured around collective security.

Attainment and sustainment of FOC and survival of the organisational mechanism beyond 2015 are equally dependent on the extent of Member States' commitment to their financial obligations. EASF is challenged as manifested by pending arrears afflicting its operations prior to 2015. Arrears had risen from US\$0,8m in 2009 to

US\$6,6m by December 2013. Yet contributions as a sign of commitment by a Member State to any given mechanism are largely a function of the conception of value derived. What is apparent with respect to EASF is the fact that its actual potential is yet to be maximised. The challenge here lies in the design, which in turn impacts on functions. While the AU anticipated a broad task of providing security for the individual, the state, the region and the international system, emphasis in design has been the anticipation of collapse in smaller states. This orientation engenders costliness in terms of financial capital, military and eventually political will from the onset. It essentially ignores security-enhancing prevention and state-building programmes geared towards containing asymmetrical threats through distance decay reduction,²⁸ maritime security, containment of organised crime and trafficking. Anticipating the collapse of small states fortunately retains the potential for attracting external support as a result of converging interests. Such external participation in capacity-building within a collectivised regional framework could stimulate how resource reallocations and savings are initiated.²⁹ The contention here is that a demonstration of relevance as value exchange is directly related to financial sustainability. Support for decisions about structural changes at the level of legal and mandating processes, internal management and an accelerated process of attaining FOC needed to be undertaken. Worse still were the issues of the presence of other competing organisations to which states seemed to have more geo-political commitment and internal institutional weaknesses. The converse had to be understood in the context of the costs inherent in multiple memberships in regional organisations that eventually allow states to make rational decisions about which organisations should receive commitment in term of resource allocations. The basic argument here is that multiple membership, while constraining shared values of trust, governance and positive institutionalism, also reinforces state weakness.

COMPONENT THREE: TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE SUPPORT VARIABLES

The tangible and intangible support variables inherent in the legal, institutional, political and organisational frameworks were also core to launching, sustaining and recovery of the force. By early 2014 EASF's desire to achieve FOC was challenged by the twin issue of the mandates and role of the force. Article 13 of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU ("the Protocol") situated the mandates of its missions within the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSCAU). Article 6(1) of the MoU on the establishment of EASF states that the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments shall be the supreme

authority of EASF. Under article 6.3(b), the Heads of States and Governments authorise the deployment of EASF in accordance with the Constitutive Act of the AU and the Protocol. Read together, the Heads of States and Governments exercise their authority derived from the mandate of the AU Peace and Security Council.³⁰

Article 13(1) of the Protocol does not expressly pronounce itself on how a regional mechanism can quickly intervene to contain mutating security situations in its region. Article 13(2) presupposes a regional intervention if the wording “or intervention authorised by the Assembly” is interpreted in broad terms. The challenge for regional mechanisms such as EASF arises in meeting the response times required by Scenario 6. Under regional economic groups, existing legal frameworks that anchor collective security and defence, which affect a legal mandate, mitigate this challenge. EASF was challenged by its relatively weak legal basis. This could be traced to the 2005 MoU and the Policy Framework³¹ for the establishment of the EASF. The need for legally binding documents between EASF and Member States was critical³² to mediate force generation and deployment. Efforts towards this are apparent in the updated MoU and Policy Framework.³³ While this was now made clear, including the conceptualisation of a Crisis Response Mechanism (CRM) leading to the process of authorisation, it did not seem to respond to the apparent fact that EASF as constituted remains entirely an AU instrument. The region by inference has no organisational framework through which it can collectively secure itself except through a time-consuming continent-level process. Five steps were outlined under CRM to include: crisis assessment analysis by the EASF secretariat, meeting of the crisis response group, extraordinary meeting of policy organs, communicating decisions to the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), and mission mandating by AUPSC.³⁴

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

FOC attainment equally remained constrained by existing frailties within its administrative structures. It was imperative that a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation was put into place. This was critical to facilitating the review of activities and indeed the performance of individuals holding positions. For purposes of operationalising functions, it was vital that the process of recruitment/selection and deployment was re-evaluated. While a state-centric rotational logic was important for purposes of inclusion, it was necessary that professionalism, capability and performance were emphasised. The process of rationalisation of staff-based needs assessment and capacity needed to be undertaken quickly to ensure that competent persons held requisite positions. The foregoing were subsumed in the

recommendations of the expert committee, which called for restructuring to make it administratively and operationally more capable of executing mandates and attaining FOC by 2014.

FROM NAIVASHA TO MALABO AND THE DECLARATION OF FOC

The working group outlined a tracking framework towards the establishment of full operational capabilities by 2014 that set out eight decisive points:

- ◆ approval of the EASF Assembly of the reviewed EASF policy framework by June 2014
- ◆ approval by the EASF Assembly of the agreement establishing EASF by June 2014
- ◆ ratification of the agreement establishing EASF by Member States by November 2014
- ◆ approval of EASF Crisis Response Mechanism by the EASF Assembly by June 2014
- ◆ review of the Table of Organisation and Equipment (TOE) by EASF secretariat for approval by June 2014
- ◆ force pledging by Member States by June 2014
- ◆ approval of draft MoUs on commitment of pledged forces by June 2014
- ◆ establishment of EASF Peace Fund by April 2014 as stipulated in article 13(5) MoU establishing EASF.

They also outlined modalities for supporting the fund to include a number of measures: 12% of EASF's annual budget inclusive of partner support and arrears owed to EASF by Member States as at December 2012 were to be constituted as a start-up fund. Other sources included any surplus from internally generated funds, voluntary contributions from Member States, and external sources such as support from the African Peace Facility and possibilities of levying common commodities traded within Member States of EASF.³⁵

These steps were quickly followed up by ministerial decisions in Kigali in April 2014 that approved the recommendations by the Committee and following the meetings in Malabo on 26 June 2014. Agreements establishing the EASF and MoU were upgraded to an agreement with a clear mandating process for deployment. Equally approved was a policy framework establishing the EASF, the Peace Fund and the Commitment to FOC by 2014. A follow-up meeting in Kigali on 22 August 2014 adopted the table of organisation and equipment, organisation of a donor conference and an MoU on

pledged forces, and in addition affirmed the CPX Masharik Salam at the end of 2014 in Adam (Ethiopia), eventually also led to the validation of the FOC.³⁶

Other critical elements attained include: operationalisation of financial sustainability; development of SOPs (military, civilian and police); early warning system and the development of a wide range of conceptual documents on financial sustainability, variegated SOPs (military, civilian, police), Early Warning System, Conceptual Documents, EASF Integrated Mission Support Concept, EASF Operational Concept, Force Generation Concept, EASF Training and Evaluation Concept, Command, Control, Communication, Computers and Information Systems (C⁴IS) concept, EASF Rapid Deployment Concept, EASF Medical Support Concept and Maritime Concept of Operations.³⁷

GEO- POLITICAL VARIABLES: IMPLICATIONS FOR FOC

A third variable fundamental to FOC is the support component. This can be divided into political, legal and organisational frameworks.³⁸ These are critical in the launching, sustaining and extrication of force components for mission areas. The political component has the element of political will, critical in mobilisation, coalescing and sustaining tangible and intangible centres of gravity. This has to be derived and built around a region-centric interest if it has to underpin a mandating and sustaining processes in addition to force regeneration. The challenge lies in weaving a region-centric interest from states with differentiated and sometimes contending state-centric values and interests. The multiple security and economic security driven architectures within EASF's geography reflect not only this but also the underlying covert hegemonic imaginations that states harbour. In the economic realm, there are economic integration, organisations and institutions such as EAC, to which Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi belong, and COMESA. There is also IGAD, which, despite its original human security roots, is inclining itself towards joint infrastructure projects. Only Kenya and Uganda among the EAC states are members. In the security sector it is EAC with its defence and security co-operation pact that brings together Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda under the Coalition of the Willing to the exclusion of Tanzania and Burundi.³⁹ This multiplicity of institutional arrangements and mechanisms leads to competition not only among organisations but also Member States, engendering duplication and high costs in capital, time and resources, besides waste. Consequently, the resultant mechanism's utility potential remains unexploited, given the tendency of states to bypass it in favour of other institutional arrangements they consider better at serving their interests.

The region is currently challenged not only by the phenomenon of disputed elections, most of which foster violence, but also fundamental questions and consequences of disrespect for term limits. The fact that there are no common values, the basis upon which critical decisions can be predicated, implies that states in the EASF region remain constrained at the level of political will necessary in framing the decision to intervene or not to intervene in cases such as that of Burundi. Subsequently tensions and polarities prevail that paralyse institutions such as EAC and the EASF. The Burundi turmoil is the very reason for the existence of EASF. That the same structure cannot be used reinforces the logic of non-interference while challenging the rationality of EASF's FOC as a peace enforcement instrument.⁴⁰ The decision-making process will remain constrained because of multiple regional security and economic architectures that prevail in this geography, given lack of clarity as to which organisation among IGAD, EAC and EASF should take the lead in matters of security. Unlike other regions, EASF stands out distinct without a regional economic domicile. Unlike other standby forces that are mediated by common norms and values rooted in a single regional body, the same cannot be said of the EASF region. The durability of immature security anarchy⁴¹ will continue to impact on the operability of FOC.

State forming logic and its twin pastoralist identity, the differentiated economic dependencies, and the instability enhancing governance dilemmas will continue shaping state interactions and durability of any FOC. Informing the first question are the geopolitical imperatives and imaginations of colonial actors that continue to mediate frontier relations among states and cross-border communities. Of interest for us are the JIE and Somali–Oromo clusters. The JIE communities cut across a geographical expanse encompassing North Western Kenya, North Eastern Uganda, South Western Sudan and North Western Ethiopia, a home to Turkana, Pokot, Ndongilos, Karamajong, Tuposa, and Desanech population groupings respectively. This quadrifurcation and subsequent post-colonial state policies constricting community cross-border movement and political and economic marginalisation not only distorted age-old cosmology that mediated access to pasture and water, but also activated militarisation that continues to underpin the demand and supply of guns at one level and conflict at another. Three modes are discernible. The first revolves around intra- and intercommunity conflicts within states. The second takes place among communities across state frontiers. The third pits communities against state security formations within and across frontiers.

It is, however, the different strategies adopted by states to respond to these that could impact negatively on force generation and the eventual stability variable critical to

FOC durability. FOC is an outcome of prevailing mature anarchies in a subsystem. Where the converse is the case, its durability will be challenged by destabilising factors with a potential of locking down military assets of lead states⁴² either within domestic constabulary roles or interstate tensions. For instance, Kenya and Uganda have differentiated strategies that anchor their responses to the militarisation of the pastoralist communities rooted in their ruling elite's conception of state-building projects.⁴³ While the former pursued politics of benign negligence that outsourced security provisioning to community militias, referred to as police reservists, the latter's NRM engendered inclusion through forced disarmament and deployment of a division of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) in the Karamajong country.⁴⁴ While the Ugandan option has increasingly subdued the Karamajong, especially their forays against their neighbours in Kenya, it has essentially implied an apparent process of statisation anchored by the provision of security and other social development activities. The failure of the Kenyan option is apparent in intensities of conflicts that have prompted mass dislocations of communities and social services, constant attempts at halfhearted disarmaments, and the current mutations that have seen well-organised attacks against other communities and state paramilitary forces. In one incident in 2015, sustained attacks occasioned the killing of over 100 civilians⁴⁵ and displacement of over 40 000.⁴⁶ A company minus of paramilitary forces sent in to contain the situation were also ambushed, causing the death of twenty men. This led to the subsequent deployment of Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) and 2 000 paramilitary officers.⁴⁷

The UPDF's presence in Karamajong is largely hinged upon the extent of stability of state relations within the region. Where regional obligations entail increase and shift of sizable units, the net result may include a situation in which Karamajong fall victim to Pokot and Turkana aggression. Kenya has had to constantly redeploy elements of an already overstretched KDF in efforts to supplement paramilitary units increasingly overwhelmed by heavily armed pastoralists. This dynamic is bound to increase given the intensity of energy exploration and construction of strategic infrastructure across the geography that now constitutes a huge geo-economic space referred to as the Lamu Port, South Sudan, and Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor.⁴⁸ Notably Kenya's commitment to EASF will be underpinned by a *fait accompli* need to expand its military from its current size if it has to meet the growing challenges of force-to-space ratios at internal level, pledges to EASF and commitments to AU and the UN. For both Kenya and Uganda the creation of a force surplus is incumbent on either a

costly expansion with its inherent challenges of security dilemmas or the evolution of security, defence and non-aggression pacts among states in the region.

The Somali–Oromo Cluster has over time been animated by irredentism and nationalism underpinned by the failures in the process of inclusion in both Kenya and Ethiopia with respect to Somalia and Oromo nationalities in both states. The broad colonial geopolitical imaginations saw the trifurcation of the Somali nation in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti while retaining a vast majority in the Somali state. In the process it created the phenomenon of part nation state and the contemporary challenge of irredentism that both Ethiopia and Kenya have had to contend with. The former is currently battling the same on two fronts in its Ogaden province against the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) at one level and Oromo Liberation Front at the other. Both movements will continue to impact on stability in the Eastern African Region and, by inference, reactions and tensions among states.

Unlike other regional subsystems with a lead state endowed with both military and economic muscle in comparison to others, EASF states are characterised by diffused multiple asymmetries. Several states with comparatively strong military capacities are outrightly challenged at economic level. The converse is also true and to this should be added the differentiated capacities of managing diversity. The net effect is the prevalence of insecurity engendering mutual dependencies. It is this that anchors diffused asymmetries. Despite the apparent durability of the foregoing dynamics, there exist potential economic growth factors in some of the states that could over time in space translate to the emergence of a convergence of political, military and economic power. While these could in the initial stages create tension-animating symmetries, they could also produce new balances of power to underpin new mature anarchy platforms. For instance, both Ethiopia and Kenya continue to show signs of infrastructural development, with Ethiopia evolving potential economic growth that could anchor its current huge military force. This runs inverse to Kenya's attempt at regional economic dominance that is constantly undermined by internal political instability, a leadership gap deficit, corruption and a small military complement.

The problem for FOC lies in the fact that states tend to blame each other for the governance crisis, in the process allowing such tensions to constrain security co-operation. The phenomenon of weakness as an internal dynamic of the state eventually spills over to the regional realm. Internal anarchy evolves into regional anarchy that is mediated by kin country logic.⁴⁹ Regional dynamics are animated by the states whose design cuts across ethnic groups. In effect, failure to manage diversity may lead to a wide range of effects, from internal displacements of persons

who consider themselves targets, to the logic of armed refugees, militarised local spaces⁵⁰ or ungoverned spaces. The latter is even more challenging given the emerging ability of non-state globalised terror networks with ambitions for reconfiguring global state geographies. The challenge for EASF states is their apparent growth in operational capabilities and the impact this is likely to have on FOC. The ability of global networks to recruit deep within the region, maximising obstacles and sanctuaries and to transform its geography into a global theatre for wars against other global interests introduces the dynamic of a security overlay.⁵¹ Together with other internal and regional security threats and the pursuit of conflicting and sometimes converging interests, states are wont to produce security complexes.⁵² In the case of Eastern Africa there exists apparent high- and low-security complexes. The former are informed by asymmetrical and conventional global actors' interactions with non-state and state actors within the EASF geography. The latter, on the other hand, is about local states with differentiated political and economic power structured in a manner such that they are limited in projecting their power. To the extent to which these may call for military engagement without requisite security agreements, a durable EASF FOC will run into rough winds.

The foregoing may, however, be tempered by the ability of states like Rwanda, Uganda and Ethiopia to continue internal security consolidation as state-building projects. This is likely to see them project military power in pursuit of both their state-centric interests and for broader continental and global security interests. While this points to demonstrable political will and an apparent affirmation to raise a rapid deployment capability such as the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC)⁵³ it also holds risk. Over-commitment and the inclination towards state-centric measures with external support through regional organisations can well operate to the detriment of commitment to the EASF. The latter interrogates the whole concept of troop pledges and the necessity to evolve mechanisms for continuous reaffirmation of availability. An option here would be for EASF states to evolve bilateral and multilateral defense pacts that provide the additional and much-needed flexibility as the pacts lower state-centric threats.

The willingness manifested in troop contributions within the EASF and beyond its geography points to two dynamics. The first is the apparent interlocking nature of subsystems such that the security interests of EASF states overflow across other subsystems, a factor that reinforces the rationale for stabilisation engagements. The second highlights the apparent volatility and blurred boundaries of the regions as defined by state weakness and kin country dynamics. There is also the variable of

permeability of borders, which ensures that threats to the states or a region cascade to others.

MULTIPLE ASYMMETRIES AS A PLATFORM FOR A VIABLE REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Given the foregoing, operationalisation and durability of EASF's FOC will remain challenged at the level of launching, sustaining and extrication. EASF states are not destined to durable insecurity and security complexes. To the extent that past social relations and the resultant structures are rooted in shared knowledge, material resources and practices, attempts at redesigning or re-engineering alternatives imply existence of ideas rooted in the conception of common threats and interests. This is likely to be the case if rethinking of regionalism seeks to generate new knowledge for appreciating and evolving policy frameworks for the containment of common threats over time and space. The same goes for strategies on state consolidation through the transformation of insecurity-enhancing multiple asymmetries into platforms for security-enhancing interdependence and inclusive state-building efforts. This process of appreciating and conceiving alternative notions of collective threats and containment not only animates the emergence of alternative structures but also a regional security community.⁵⁴ This is likely to be characterised by the renunciation of the use of military force to alter what states disagree with. In addition, there will tend to be a broadening of the conception of national interest to recognise that of others, while replacing fear with relations of trust, shared knowledge, material resources and practices.⁵⁵

The resultant mature architecture, based on shared knowledge, prompts the pursuit of absolute gain, trust, collective interest and peaceful resolution of disputes. Such architecture will tend to enhance political will by way of capital and human sacrifice. Such sacrifice underpins FOC durability as conceived here, speed and sustainability while retaining capacity to extricate in response to threats. Conversely put, FOC sustainability is challenged by state actors with limited outputs through collective effort while sustaining an environment under which the potential for inter-state wars remain a constant possibility. Underlying this is a destabilising structure based on unregulated power competition in an anarchic setting, internal instability and lack of shared values in economic, political and security realms. Alexander Wendt's observation that anarchy is what states make of it and wars are the result of self-fulfilling prophecies⁵⁶ is apt in the EASF geography.

An analysis of the interest matrix in the EASF geography holds the possibility of collective security based on construction of shared interests. Interest aggregation of states can be organised around four clusters: Survival, Vital, Major and Peripheral.⁵⁷ The intensity to protect these interests depends on their point of location across the four clusters. This apparent salience, determines options and efforts and in response, states mobilise either individually or in alliance with others. This process runs through logic of interest appreciation in space over time and in effect explains intensity. The higher the threat, the higher the intensity of activities geared towards securitisation to protect the object threatened and, by inference, the interest being pursued. The objects can be clustered around defence of the homeland, economic well-being, favourable region/world order, and promotion of values.

| | | INTENSITY OF INTEREST | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|------------|
| | | SURVIVAL | VITAL | MAJOR | PERIPHERAL |
| BASIC INTEREST AT STATE | Defence of Homeland | | | | |
| | Economic Well-being | | | | |
| | Favourable World Order | | | | |
| | Promotion of Values | | | | |

Figure 3 National Interest Matrix (adapted from Neuchterlein, D. “National interests and national strategy”. In: Heyn, T.L. (ed). *Understanding US Strategy: A Reader* Washington, DC: National Defense University. 1983. p 38).

Survival interest exists when the physical existence of the entity is threatened by destruction. In EASF geography there are potential environmental threats anchored in state-collapsing disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, methane gas emissions and pandemics. To this should be included asymmetrical threats that seek to collapse states through organised genocides or exclusivist ideologies by groups such as Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, FDLR, ADF-NALU and the Lord’s Resistance Army. These threats notwithstanding, the current security architecture provides a collectivised responses to state collapse or when possibilities of prevention are already constrained. Not only do such interventions become costly but they also open up the architecture to the possibility of being overstretched and overwhelmed by demand given the persistence of weak and collapsing states in the region.

Under the vital interest cluster are situations where serious harm to both individual states and the region may result if no measures are effected, including the use of force.⁵⁸ These include sustaining strategic interests such as region-centric infrastructure and

assets (port facilities, pipelines, rails, dam and road infrastructures) designed by states for purposes of extracting and exporting strategic resources. Any destabilisation here would have a broad regionally destabilising effect. Equally any push for insecurity-enhancing self-help inclinations would result in attempts at similar insecurity-enhancing options for strategic flexibility. Both forms of destabilisation provide a potential platform for collective securitisation. Three measures are apt. They include, first, the creation of a broader role function to EASF that would include region-centric land and maritime infrastructure protection to complement state-centric measures. Secondly, is the evolution and signing policies and legal frameworks that can underpin mutual defense and security management and co-operation. Third, is the development and sharing of requisite assets. It is at this third level that alternative options are on offer for joint support in a given asset area by way of comparative advantage in maritime and air assets in particular.

In the third cluster are major interests. The assumption here is that political, economic and social well-being may be affected if nothing is done. Here options may not include the use of military force. Expanding economic interactions, currently the centrepiece of regional economic organisations, crime, economic interactions, efforts aimed at combating drug activities and laundering fall in this category. The ongoing efforts geared toward rationalising regional organisations point to the acknowledged necessity of integration and need for investment in stability and security as a collective interest. EASF states are negatively affected by multiplicity of memberships in multiple organisations. Core here are costs in time and materials. Worse still are covert inclinations that eventually militate against political will and resource commitment. Operationalisation and sustainability of FOC status will demand the redesign of economic and security architectures to engender convergence rather than the current diffusion. This has to be geared towards evolving common norms and value systems in the region that can contain state instability and unviability cycles.

The fourth cluster anchors interests that are deemed to be general and more to do with continental and global common interests such as global peace and stability. Given the four clusters, the fact that the challenges of threats continue to mutate, calls for the broadening of the functions of the restructuring of EASF. Indeed, it should be seen in the unexploited potential currently limited by the idea behind the design that also underpins the legal frameworks. Convergence of interest, especially survival and vital in kind, allows some of the conceptions below.

FUSING EASF AND IGAD

Given the foregoing broad convergence of survival and critical national interests, merging EASF with IGAD becomes an option that may be considered. The emerging state-centric infrastructure such as LAPSET and the new Ethiopia rail networks, the interconnecting pipelines and rail systems linking Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi at one level, Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia to Kenya and Djibouti waterfronts provide a future security threat anticipation to fuse EASF into an enlarged IGAD. The only non-IGAD members in EASF are Rwanda, Burundi, Comoros and Seychelles, yet in the definition of environmental security threats and the need to contain them regionally, all these states share close interests with their IGAD partners. One of IGAD's core functions is mitigation of environmental threats. Rwanda and Burundi also converge with Kenya and Uganda (who are also core members of IGAD) on environmental security and management of the Nile under the Nile Basin Authority and in the East African Community (EAC). In any case, assuming that the political integration project in EA continues to advance as fast as it is doing, these two states will by implication become members of IGAD. Both Comoros and Seychelles share not only the Indian Ocean maritime space but also economic, security and environmental interests with states in IGAD.

Mutation of economic activities, especially the need to access new resource discoveries in the EASF states at one level and threats from piracy, chemical dumping, and others at another, demands that they increase co-operation. This will become more critical as geo-economic resource access and denial transforms the Indian Ocean into a critical geostrategic space. This has to be grasped within the logic of geopolitical imagination, where the Indian Ocean soon becomes a lake mediating intense economic, environmental, societal, political and security interests. Anticipation of this should raise the possibilities and need for joint or shared maritime assets for common security. This factor should provide the rationale for the two island states to join IGAD.

Where this is the case, the convergence of IGAD and the EASF mechanism would provide the critical political decision-making anchorage, and reduce competition and duplication of effort. It would also engender rationalisation of structures while increasing regional synergy and evolution of mature anarchy to stabilise institutionalism. It would engender a collective effort at resolving insecurities while attracting meaningful friendly support. For states being challenged by asymmetrical

threats, mechanisms for combating this will be facilitated easily by such regional convergence and not constrained by the need to seek a mandate from the AU.

TOWARDS A SYNOPSIS: EASF AS A REGIONAL SECURITY PACT

A regional security pact presupposes a limited restructuring of the mechanism to bring in the regional security component. In addition to the AU-driven EASF function, there would be a security-driven component under the Summit allowing its use at the regional level. EASF could transform into a Mechanism for Peace and Security in Eastern Africa (MEPSEA) or the Eastern Africa Security Coordinating Mechanism (EASCOM). This would call for a security pact with functions that seek to enhance the capacity of states to mutually confront threats. It would seek to develop capacity and frameworks for kinetic region-centric interventions for security sustenance. Under this model the mechanism would envisage the introduction of a troika made up of a chairperson of EASF Summit of the Heads of States and Governments, the Chairperson of the EAC members and the chairperson of IGAD. Fed with situation analysis of the security status in the region, the Organ would co-ordinate early response efforts among the states and across the multiple institutions. This would avoid duplication and allocate lead roles based on the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and competence. The troika would have authority to commit EASF assets for conflict prevention, management and resolution on behalf of the summit where the need arises. It will also necessitate the introduction of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or a committee that brings in their representation and a similar one for the chiefs of police in the region.

Internal structural changes would presuppose the setting up of a strong secretariat headed by an executive director mandated, among other functions:

- ◆ to harmonise and co-ordinate co-operation with a regional mechanisms and organisations;
- ◆ to receive and share information on potential violent conflicts/outbreaks, pastoralist conflicts, illegal trade, smuggling, refugee inflows and outflows;
- ◆ to initiate fact-finding missions, facilitate, negotiate and undertake roles of reconciliation actions as part of conflict resolution and management in the region.

The secretariat could be organised around two mutually reinforcing departments or directorates. The first would be that of EASF that would anchor the core kinetic components of military, police and civilian aspects that seek preparation and

generation of EASF for conflict management and resolution. Components such as brigade headquarters, log base and rapid deployment would belong to this cluster.

The second directorate could be EASFCOM in charge of the broad strategic direction and co-ordination. It could be in charge of critical sustaining components such as administration and finance, planning, political affairs (politics and diplomacy (mediation), peace building, early warning and situation room (a component that would serve as information and analysis cell to feed both EASF and EASFCOMs), disaster and risk reduction, and regional peacekeeping and training. In this department/directorate, there can be cells for defence and correctional services/immigration. It should be stated clearly that the legitimate mandating authority could be the summit of EASFCOM; however, a force may be deployed on the UN or AU mandates.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Dr Musambayi Katumanga is a Political Scientist in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Nairobi.
- 2 Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Djibouti units are in Somalia under AMISOM. Rwanda, Ethiopia and Kenya are in South Sudan; Rwandan units are also in Darfur.
- 3 Ugandan Troops were in South Sudan to support the regime and in CAR to fight the Lord's Resistance Army.
- 4 As East African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG).
- 5 See AU Constitutive Act.
- 6 See Policy Framework for Establishment of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) EASF Secretariat. Westwood Park Nairobi Kenya. 26 June 2014. p 4.
- 7 See Katumanga, M., Sirera, F. & Owambo, L. *EASF: Prospects for Full Operational Capability and Sustainability Post 2015: A Strategic Review Scan Commissioned by the EASF Coordinating Mechanism*. Nairobi. January 2014. p 10.
- 8 *Ibid* p 11.
- 9 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 10.
- 10 Some states felt that RDCs had been built and supported by external forces to engender interventions. A controversy over misquoted statements made by the first EASF Executive Director seemed to reinforce this misperception.
- 11 Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 33.
- 12 Incisive appreciations on reconciliation of the ACIRC and DRC derived from discussions with Gen Robert Kibochi KDE, Cape Town September 2015.
- 13 See EASF: Report of Experts Working Group Meeting. 17–22 March 2014. Naivasha, Kenya.
- 14 Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of Eastern Africa Standby Force (as amended) 7.

- 15 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 12.
- 16 Policy Framework *op cit* p 3.
- 17 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 14.
- 18 Notes from Interview with Tyson, UK military advisor, EASFCOM, Karen, Nairobi. Also see Tyson, *The Journey to FOC*, for EASF Mission HQ, Nairobi, 2014. Also see EASF Strategic Review Team, Karen, Nairobi, 22 January 2014. p 2.
- 19 EASF Strategic Review Team *op cit* p 2.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Tyson interview *op cit*.
- 22 Tyson *The Journey to FOC op cit*.
- 23 Adopted from Tyson *The Journey to FOC op cit*.
- 24 Tyson *The Journey to FOC op cit*.
- 25 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 14.
- 26 See Special Report on The Development of EASF and Its Achievement of Full Operational Capability. Annex H to Council Report Dated 24 April 2015. Nairobi, Kenya. 2015.
- 27 The challenges remain apparent in the AMISOM operations in Somalia.
- 28 Derived from the first principle of geography: it is essentially constructed around the notion of two points in space such that, to the extent to which we are further apart from each other, they are conceived to experience distance decay. In adopting and operationalising this concept for our discussions we talk distance decay at economic, political, social and security levels as a manifestation of the distance between the individual, as an object of security, and state institutions, as providers of security. The higher the felt sense of distance decay, the higher the alienation of the individual. The task of the state is distance decay reduction, which engenders securitisation.
- 29 The best example of this is the Cutlass Express organised by the US military, the objective of which is to boost maritime inter-operability in a bid to combat piracy, illegal fishing and other transnational challenges carried out since 2011 but extended to bring together along the Indian Ocean: Djibouti, Mozambique, Tanzania, Mauritius, Comoros, Yemen, Kenya, Uganda, Denmark, US and representatives from EASF, NATO and the EU Naval Force. See Donna Mills, 'American Forces Service'. Washington, November 2013.
- 30 See Article 13; p 356. The Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU.
- 31 Policy Framework for the Establishment of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 29 January 2011.
- 32 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 14.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 See Katumanga, M., Sirera, F. & Owambo, L. *EASF: Report of Experts Working Group Meeting*. 17–22 March 2014. Naivasha, Kenya.
- 35 Interviews with Peter Kalimba (Head of Admin). EASF. Nairobi September 2015. Also see Special Report *op cit*. Annex H to Council Report Dated 24 April 2015. Nairobi, Kenya. 2015.
- 36 *Ibid.* p 208

- 37 Kalimba interview *op cit* p 5. Also see Special Report *op cit*.
- 38 See Katumanga, Sirera & Owambo *op cit* p 14.
- 39 See Njogopa, G. “Integration: We Will Not Be Bulldozed, says Sitta”. *The Citizen*, Thursday, 19 September 2013. pp 1–2. Also see Katumanga, M. “Militaries and Security Provisioning in Africa: An appreciation of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda”. *Observatoire Des Garnds Lacs en Afrique*. Fondation Pour la Recherche Strategique. 2013. p 6.
- 40 Duration of the conflicts was blamed on intervention by some of the EASF Member States in favor of some of the belligerents.
- 41 This is the converse of Barry Buzan’s mature anarchy in which states recognise the intense dangers of continuing to compete aggressively in a nuclear world. It points to recognition of interdependence and an argument for institution co-operation. See Buzan B, 1983. *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. University of North Carolina Press.
- 42 Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan (before partition) and Rwanda could be conceived as lead states in EASF if the variables of capital and troop contributions are emphasised.
- 43 See Katumanga *op cit* n 6.
- 44 As conceived in Katumanga, M. “Joint Security Management of Common Borders”. Paper presented at and later adopted as basis for International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Framework for Security. Nairobi, 14–15 December 2006; and also Katumanga M and Kindiki, K. “IGAD Peace and Security Strategy Plan”. IGAD, Djibouti 2008.
- 45 See *Business Daily* “Close to 100 feared Dead in Turkana–Baringo Fighting”. 5 May 2015. Also see Mathews, N. & Mwere, D. “Kenya: 92 Feared Dead in Turkana–Pokot fighting in Baringo”. *The Star*. 6 May 2015. p 1.
- 46 See Katumanga, M. “Insecurity and election outcomes: The case of Kenya in 2013 General Elections”. In: Njogu, K. *et al. Kenya’s 2013 General Election: Stakes, Practices and Outcomes*. Twaweza publications. 2015. p 97.
- 47 Sunday Nation Team: 20 Policemen Feared Dead in Bandit Attack. Sunday 2 November 2014. p 1. Also see Wabala, D. & Kangogo, J. “Kenya: KDF deploy Drones to Hunt Killers in Turkana”. *The Star*, 5 November 2014. p 1.
- 48 See “Raila Leads Rush for Southern Sudan Oil”. *The Standard* 19 October 2009. p 1.
- 49 This concept is derived from Samuel Huntington, who argues that design of state in disregard of ethnic configuration engenders a situation where identities find themselves under oppression and are forced to cross frontiers in search for protection from their identity compatriots, politicisation, and militarisation from one end spreads across frontiers ensuring that conflicts bubbles from below upwards. Conflict-generating refugees soon become refugee-generating conflicts.
- 50 Spaces between two state borders where state presence and control is absent, but which are straddled by people with common identities.
- 51 This is conceived by Barry Buzan to reflect the military presence of other global actors in a bid to secure their interests.
- 52 See Buzan *op cit* p 209.
- 53 The EASFCOM states deployment within and out of the region is estimated to be over 20 000 troops.

- 54 See Kupchan, Charles. A. & Kupchan, Clifford. A. "The Promise of Collective Security". *International Security*, 20(1): 52–61. 1995.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2539215>
- 55 Wendt Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 1999. 80.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 See Neuchterlein, D. In Terry L Heyns (ed). *National Interest and National Strategy: A Reader*. Washington, DC: National Defense University. 1983. p 38.
- 58 *Ibid* p 34.

11

The North African Regional Capability in a Changing North Africa

*Mohamed Hatem Elatawy*¹

INTRODUCTION

At the crossroad between Africa and the Middle East, North Africa remains an important region for the world's peace and security. Indeed, in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" in North Africa in 2010, and with the proliferation of security challenges, an operational regional mechanism in North Africa would have been the logical vehicle for regional action. However, instead of playing this role, the regional setup specifically designed as the North African Regional Capability (NARC) of the African Standby Force (ASF), and part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), suffered a setback. Indeed, the absence of the NARC in events unfolding in North Africa can be traced to the circumstances surrounding its establishment and its development ever since.

This chapter reviews how the NARC was established as the regional mechanism (RM) for North Africa within the APSA and the reason the other previously established regional arrangement, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), was not integrated in the APSA. It discusses the initial expectations from the NARC proportionate to the military, political and economic capabilities of some of its Member States. The initial steps taken to operationalise the NARC are reviewed, as well as the challenges that followed its establishment, especially after the upheavals in North Africa in 2010/2011. Current attempts to revitalise the NARC and a future outlook conclude this chapter.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASF: SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

To address the conflicts that plagued the continent, African countries decided to establish an overarching system to deal with challenges of peace and security as they

were moving from the original Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the more ambitious African Union (AU) in 2001. Later known as the APSA, it developed components to deal with the different stages of the conflict cycle, including *inter alia* the establishment of the ASF. In establishing the ASF the AU decided against an all-encompassing pan-African unified force. Rather, it decided to rely on Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and RMs of the five African regions (East, Central, West, South and North Africa).

The decision to rely on the RECs and RMs as building blocks for the continental structure was not without precedent. Indeed, the earlier and equally ambitious plan for the establishment of a pan-African economic community, the so-called Abuja Treaty (1991), also relied on existing RECs and their establishment where they do not already exist.² Moreover, regional interventions to address threats to peace and security were already experienced, not least of which through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) interventions in conflicts in West Africa (starting with the civil war in Liberia and the ECOMOG deployment 1990–1997).³ In this context and under the AU, the regional capabilities of the five regions were established wherever there were none. So in addition to the Western region, which has its origins in the ECOWAS Protocol of 1999, the Eastern region force originated in 2004, which developed into the East Africa Standby Force (EASF); the Central region established its force in 2006, which became known as the Economic Community of Central African States Standby Force (FOMAC in French), while both the Southern region force (SADC Standby Force or SSF) and the Northern region NARC were established in 2007.⁴

A CHALLENGING START IN THE NORTH

The North African region lacked a viable REC that could be used in the context of the ASF. While at first glance the AMU may have seemed to be the logical option to anchor the North African brigade, it proved too problematic as well as ineffectual.

The AMU was originally established by the Marrakesh Agreement in 1989 consisting of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.⁵ Pre-eminently it was supposed to serve as an economic negotiating vehicle for the Arab Maghreb countries (mainly Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) *vis-à-vis* the northern Mediterranean countries as the European Union (EU) was going into closer integration and harmonisation. However, this grouping proved ultimately ineffectual as constant political tensions among members hindered any potential co-ordination. This was more evident in failure of the grouping in its *raison d'être*: to co-ordinate the negotiations with

the EU as was the case in negotiations of North African countries with the EU on the Partnership Agreements. Instead, North African countries pursued their own individual negotiation tracks with varying speeds and results, and with Libya being completely sidelined. Moreover, the group failed to present a unified political block within international and regional fora, thus leading the Libyan leader at the time Muammar Gaddafi, to declare the group as a “lie” in 2008.⁶

Despite such perception of ineffectiveness of the AMU, there was still interest in using it as the North African capability of the ASF when the latter was being established, as it was the only grouping existing exclusively in North Africa and could be considered a REC in that region. However, the membership of the grouping proved difficult to surmount in two ways. First, the AMU included Morocco, with the headquarters itself being in Rabat, Morocco. But Morocco had previously withdrawn from the OAU since 1984 owing to the admission of the so-called “Sahrawy Arab Democratic Republic” (SADR) to the OAU. Absent from the AU at its establishment, Morocco was also not a party to the AU peace and security set-up. Secondly, the AMU did not include Egypt in its membership, which could have proved limiting to the regional capability, given Egypt’s major political and military weight in Africa. As a top military contributing country in the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, Egypt’s role in any potential African Union Standby Force was simply too important to ignore.

In the absence of a facilitating REC, the best available option for the North Africa region was to establish a RM specifically for the purpose of the ASF, thus the emergence of NARC.

THE NARC: INITIAL GREAT EXPECTATIONS

In 2007, with much fanfare, the NARC was established. Algeria, Libya and SADR quickly signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the NARC in 2007, while Egypt and Tunisia signed a year later. With the backing of one of the strongest proponents of African integration and common action, the Libyan leader at the time, Muammar Qaddafi, and with the membership of two North African powerhouses (Egypt and Algeria), the NARC was expected to rise to a great potential.

Before the Arab Spring the North African region was considered one of the richest regions of Africa. With only 17% of the continent’s population in 2009, it contributed almost one-third of its GDP for that year.⁷ At the time of establishing the NARC three members of the NARC were responsible for 45% of the AU’s General Budget.⁸ Moreover, the generous backing of Libya to pan-African causes in general, and the

NARC specifically, had a potentially positive impact on the future role of the NARC within the ASF and the APSA at large.

On the military front, two countries within the NARC stood out in their capabilities, with the potential to support the ASF in general. Egypt continues to be the most able military force in Africa.⁹ Not only does it have the largest standing army (and total army size counting the reserves), but it also has the most sophisticated inventory of equipment and efficient command structures. Moreover, within the context of the ASF Egypt had a long history of peacekeeping that dates back to the 1960 UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo (ONUC). By the time of the establishment of NARC, Egypt was one of the top TCC in UN peacekeeping operations. Moreover, it played an influential role in the United Nations within the Non-Aligned Movement on policies and consideration of the UN peacekeeping missions.

Algeria also possesses a significant standing army and a wide range of hardware and equipment¹⁰ that could potentially be instrumental not only to the NARC but to the ASF in general, especially in strategic airlift, which continues to be one of the top needs of the AU in deploying missions. Despite not engaging in external military operations, nor participating in peacekeeping missions owing to an interpretation of the Algerian constitution prohibiting the deployment of Algerian troops outside its borders, the Algerian armed forces was indeed battle-hardened in its operations against terrorist organisations through the nineties.

Combining economic and military powers, the North African region had yet another significant power: political and diplomatic clout. Egypt had traditionally been one of the “big powers” of the African Union dating back to the institution’s predecessor, the OAU, and the role Egypt played in its establishment in 1963. It continued to hold this clout, including leading the African voice on a multitude of issues. As for Algeria, it has been a major player in the AU, especially in the peace and security fields. Indeed, during the lifetime of the African Union Commission (AUC), only Algerians have held the position of Peace and Security Commissioner. And as mentioned before, by the time the NARC was established Libya was already playing a very important role in the African continent. Indeed, the strongest proponent of a closer integration within the AU was none other than the Libyan leader at the time Muammar Qaddafi.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NARC

While originally planned to include six members, by the time an independent secretariat was formed for the NARC in 2009, only Egypt, Libya, Algeria and the

so-called SADR had become full members. While Tunisia signed the establishing MoU establishing the NARC in 2008, it has yet to ratify it. Its participation in the NARC activities continued to be limited and usually restricted to formal diplomatic meetings¹¹ at different levels.¹² As for Mauritania, to date it has not signed the MoU establishing the NARC. While some argue that the absence of Mauritania from the NARC can be traced to the suspension of membership in the AU because of the military coup that took place in August 2008,¹³ it is worth pointing out that all the other members of the NARC signed the MoU well before that time.

In trying to emulate the APSA structures, the MoU establishing the NARC was quite ambitious. It stipulated the establishment of certain major components (executive secretariat, military brigade, planning element, and two logistical bases). It also envisaged the establishment of military (Table 1 outlines indicative structure of the military component), police and civilian components. While presenting the general structure, it left the details to be determined through meetings and workshops of the Member States.¹⁴

Table 1 Indicative elements of the NARC military component¹⁵

| |
|--|
| Brigade Headquarters |
| Mission Support Unit for Brigade Headquarters |
| Light Infantry Battalions |
| Engineers Unit |
| Light Signals Unit |
| Reconnaissance Group (Company Level) |
| Helicopter Unit |
| Military Police Unit |
| Multifunction Administrative Unit |
| Medical Unit (Second Level) |
| Military Observers Unit |
| Civilian Support Unit (including administrative, financial and supply) |

With the full political weight of the Libyan leadership, NARC structures began to take shape. The executive secretariat was established and hosted in Libya in 2009, with the headquarters being inaugurated in Meetiga Airbase in Tripoli on the sidelines of the Fourth Meeting of the NARC Chiefs of Staff in April 2009. The Fourth Meeting of the NARC Chiefs of Staff held in Algiers also adopted the initial budget for the NARC.¹⁶

In assigning the different locations and positions in the NARC, planners were careful to address the interests of major players in the NARC in a balanced way, especially those contributing to the establishing budget. So, while the Executive Secretariat and the Planning Element were established in Libya, 2010 witnessed the establishment of an administrative/logistical base in each of Algeria and Egypt, and the Brigade Headquarters in Egypt. In addition, requests for contribution of units (military and police) as well as personnel for the positions needed to be filled in the different permanent structures were agreed amicably among the stakeholders. Heeding the call of the MoU establishing the NARC in designating or establishing a training center(s) for the NARC, Egypt designated the Cairo Regional Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) in Egypt, Algeria designated the Rwayba Center and a third in Libya was envisaged. Overall, the outlook was positive regarding the NARC and for a while the arrangements seemed to foster co-operation among the different members, who engaged positively with the NARC.

SURVIVING THE ARAB SPRING: STORMS IN THE NORTH

In late 2010 tectonic shifts overtook North Africa. What started initially as a protest over economic conditions in one small town in Tunisia soon escalated into a region-wide phenomenon, taking in its path some of the well-established political systems in the region. Ironically, yet accurately, this was called the Arab Spring.¹⁷

For the NARC the upheaval resulted in the downfall of the Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, who was its biggest champion. The most serious challenge facing the NARC was the fact that the secretariat and the headquarters of the NARC were located in Tripoli. Moreover, developments in the area forced members in the NARC to be more inward looking and concentrate on more immediate challenges to national security. Regional interests and capabilities thus suffered and the NARC in particular had its main proponents silenced.

The effect of the Arab Spring was most severe in Libya. Unlike in Tunisia and Egypt, where changes in the political system resulted in a political process that maintained control of the central government over the territories, the situation in Libya proved to be more chaotic. Initial demonstrations against the Libyan leader, emulating the Tunisian and Egyptian model, soon developed into a civil war. Worse, with the fall of Qaddafi the whole Libyan state disintegrated and few governments since were able to demonstrate total control over the territories of Libya, especially in the presence of numerous militias and/or terrorist organisations exercising control on the ground. In the resulting chaos the security situation in Tripoli continued to deteriorate, forcing

Egypt to evacuate its diplomatic missions.¹⁸ Moreover, in August 2014 the officially recognised government was itself also forced to relocate to Tobruk. This chaotic situation had detrimental effects on the NARC as Egypt was forced to relocate its personnel attached to the NARC secretariat back home, albeit it continued to work from its Egyptian home base. Furthermore, the expiration of the initial budget of the NARC and the inability to agree on a new one (owing to the non-convening of the meeting of the Chiefs of Staff and/or Ministers of Defence) forced the NARC to repatriate, and eventually temporarily freeze, some of the positions previously hired.

Unrelated to the Arab Spring, but still having an impact on the operability of the NARC, two important matters arose during the lifetime of the NARC. The first is the previously mentioned Algerian position on deployment of forces outside its borders. Simply put, the orthodoxy in the decision-making circles in Algeria is that Article 26 of the 1989 constitution prohibits the deployment of Algerian troops outside its borders, even in peacekeeping operations. Although the article simply refers to the non-resort to undermine the sovereignty and freedom of others, the strict interpretation of this article has caused Algeria to refrain from participating with troops in any peacekeeping operation.¹⁹

The other aspect that generated many discussions, especially within the assessment study commissioned by the AU of the APSA, is the membership of the so-called SADR. In its 2010 version the report indicates that the “fact that four of the six members of the NARC²⁰ do not recognise the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic (ADR(sic)²¹) complicate how these states relate to it in the context of the NARC and beyond. This was identified as a crucial challenge that continues to impact on the operationalisation of NARC.”²²

FLICKERING OF HOPE: KEEPING THE FLAME GOING

Despite the many setbacks, interest in the NARC continued. Thus, even when the budget for the establishment year expired in 2012 without the adoption of a new one, mainly owing to the developing situation and the inability of the Ministers of Defence to meet to approve a new budget, some of the Member States chose to maintain the infrastructure dedicated for the NARC whether in terms of personnel or bases. For example, during the period 2010–2016, Egypt maintained the headquarters of the NARC’s brigade as well as the one logistics/administrative base it was hosting.

Moreover, a leaner form of a combined NARC’s executive secretariat/planning element continued to exist and function, thanks mainly to funds from the EU channeled

through the AU. Expert level meetings among the Member States and the secretariat/planning element continued, often either in Cairo or Addis Ababa. Moreover, the NARC continued to be represented in some of the ASF meetings and workshops,²³ thus gaining experience for the different aspects of the regional capabilities of the ASF. In addition, through the EU support to African training institutions (channeled through the AU), training activities were conducted during the period 2013–2015 for the civilian, police and military components of the NARC, with nineteen training courses organised in Cairo by CCCPA with a total of 244 trainees.²⁴

Thus, despite not having declared operability by the time the pan-African exercise of the ASF took place in South Africa (19 October – 8 November 2015), the so-called AMANI Africa II, NARC elements were still able to be present as one of the African regional capabilities. Indeed, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security noted that “over 6 000 military and civilian officers from across all five standby brigades participated in the exercise”,²⁵ which reflected the participation of officers from Egypt, Algeria and the NARC Executive Secretariat,²⁶ in addition to the valuable contribution of Algeria in strategic lift (by bringing troops from the Niger to South Africa²⁷).

A NEW DAWN: RENEWED INTEREST

In November 2015 the Fourth Ministers of Defence Meeting of the NARC was held in Addis Ababa, after a five-year delay.²⁸ This allowed the long-overdue transfer of the presidency of the NARC from Algeria to Egypt and the approval of a new interim budget that would allow for the resumption of financing of some positions and undertaking select activities of the NARC.

Housing the new President of the NARC, Egypt has already shown great interest in revitalising and restoring the NARC and ushering steps to undertake that. Following the directive of the Fourth Meeting of the Ministers of Defence of the NARC, Cairo is pursuing diplomatic contacts with Tunisia and Mauritania to encourage them to pursue the legal steps for joining the NARC (to ratify the MoU in the case of Tunisia and to sign and ratify in the case of Mauritania),²⁹ thus giving new impetus to the NARC and contributing to achieving universality of membership within the North African region.

However, the most important decision coming out of the meeting is a series of envisaged workshops proposed by the new President (Egypt). As expressed by the Egyptian delegation in the meeting, the workshops are seen as platforms to discuss

the current status of the different components of the NARC (military, police, civilian) as well as its methods of work with the view to completing the operationalisation of the capability, within the context of the development of the ASF in general.³⁰

TIME TO CATCH UP

Under this ambitious plan the first workshop was held in Addis Ababa on “Developing the NARC” on 25– 27 July 2016. During the workshop, representatives of Member States agreed on the objective of facilitating the quick development of the NARC in time to assume the role of the Framework Region of the ASF (scheduled for July 2018).³¹ Towards this end, the Executive Secretariat/Planning Element of the NARC was requested to prepare a proposal for the phased resumption of the operationalisation of the capability. This proposal is expected to include the list of essential positions that need to be filled and a training plan for the different components, as well as the required budget. This plan will also be discussed and – hopefully – approved during the coming high-level meetings (expected by the end of 2016).³²

In addition, Egypt has presented a proposal for the establishment of the civilian capacity for the NARC, including the structures needed, the required training and the functions envisaged for the civilian capability. This proposal was presented officially through the Executive Secretariat for the Member States to consider and discuss during the coming meeting/workshop on the civilian capability, and recommend a course of action to the next Meeting of Chiefs of Staff and/or Meeting of the Ministers of Defence. Another proposal on the establishment of a mediation structure for the NARC, to emulate and mirror similar structures in other RECs/RMs as well as the AU, is also being developed by Egypt to be presented to other members of the NARC in due course. This proposal stems from an idea that Egypt shared at the workshop.³³

CONCLUSION: LOOKING AHEAD FOR A NEW HORIZON

The NARC is growing its potential as one of the regional components of the ASF. Although hampered by developments in North Africa since early 2011, countries of the region remain some of the most influential military, political and economic powers in Africa. The last five years have shown that some level of co-operation and co-ordination is possible and can allow the NARC to function progressively until such time that the full operationalisation of the capability can be achieved.

The challenge, however, remains in the ability of the members to transcend political disagreements and channel a course for co-operation that would address the

sensitivities and sensibilities of all parties towards areas where some of the members have comparative advantage, as shown by AMANI Africa II. Other political issues, however, will need to be equally, and similarly, addressed. Early signs of interest and dynamism among the Member States are cause for cautious optimism that the NARC can indeed catch up with the other components of the ASF and meet its great potential within the APSA.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Director of the Project “Consolidating Peace, Security and Stability in Africa” implemented by the Cairo Center for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) in co-operation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and funded by the Government of Japan (GoJ). The content of the chapter reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not represent the position of any entity including, but not limited to, CCCPA, UNDP, or GoJ.
- 2 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community 1991. http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/other_treaties/text.jsp?file_id=173333
- 3 There is a disagreement on the legal grounds for the initial deployment of the ECOMOG in Liberia as some argued that the ECOWAS had no legal basis for intervention. See Sampson, Isaac Terwase. “The responsibility to protect and ECOWAS mechanisms on peace and security: Assessing their convergence and divergence on intervention” *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 16 (3): 507–540. 2011
- 4 See Fisher, L.M. *et al. African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA): 2010 Assessment Study*. The African Union, 2010.
- 5 For the text of the Marrakesh Declaration in Arabic please see <http://www.maghrebarabe.org/ar/marrakech.cfm>.
- 6 See ElNasser, M. “AlQazafyYassefItihadAlMaghribAl Araby Bal-Akzoba (Qaddafi describes the AMU as a Lie)” Saout Al-Ahrar, 18 June 2008. <http://www.djazairss.com/alahrar/1764> [Accessed 6 August 2016].
- 7 Damidez, N & Sörenson, K. “To have and have not: A study on the North African regional capability”. Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI). October 2009. p 16.
- 8 *Ibid.* Those contributions has since been decreased to 27,3%. See “Decisions, Declarations and Resolutions of the African Union’s Assembly of the Union Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session”. Addis Ababa, 30–31 January 2016. 40–41. http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/decisions/29514-assembly_au_dec_588_-_604_xxvi_e.pdf
- 9 Currently Egypt ranks twelfth globally in military strength, being the top African country, as indicated by *Global Firepower*. <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp> [Accessed 20 July 2016].
- 10 Currently Algeria ranks twenty-sixth globally in military strength, second only to Egypt in Africa, as indicated by *Global Firepower*. <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp> [Accessed 20 July 2016].
- 11 Tunisia has participated in the meetings of the Ministers of Defence of the NARC, including the latest Fourth Meeting held in Addis Ababa in November 2015.

- 12 A Tunisian diplomat participated in three NARC training course for the civilian component that were held in Cairo by the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa during the period 15 November–3 December 2015, which was the first Tunisian participation in training activities. Source: CCCPA.
- 13 Damidez & Sörenson *op cit* 19.
- 14 The Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the North African Regional Capability of the African Standby Force. NARC Executive Secretariat, Tripoli/Libya 2008.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 During the initial phase only Algeria, Egypt and Libya contributed to the budget of the establishment year of the NARC.
- 17 Unlike other regions in the world, where spring is associated with blossom and moderate weather, spring in North Africa is characterised by sandstorms, rough weather conditions and weather instability.
- 18 Egypt withdrew its diplomatic mission from Libya after Egyptian diplomats were kidnapped and later released in January 2014. See Al Arabiya English, “Egypt evacuates embassy, consulate staff in Libya” 26 January 2014. <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/01/26/Egypt-evacuates-embassy-consulate-staff-in-Libya.html> [Accessed 9 June 2016].
- 19 Article 89 of the 1989 Algerian constitution stipulates that “Algeria does not resort to war in order to undermine the legitimate sovereignty and the freedom of other peoples. It puts forth its efforts to settle international disputes through peaceful means” (quoted in Porter, Geoff D. “Questioning Algeria’s Non-Interventionism”. *Politique étrangère*, 80(3): 1. 2015. For a full discussion on the issue of Algerian non-interventionism, see Porter *op cit* pp 1–12. https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/porter_en.pdf
- 20 While there are nominally six members of the NARC, only four are full members having signed and ratified and the MoU. Tunisia has still to ratify the MoU, while Mauritania has neither signed nor ratified it.
- 21 Although the AU report uses the abbreviation ADR, the more accurate abbreviation is SADR.
- 22 Fisher, L.M. *et al.* “Chapter 4: The African Standby Force (ASF)”. In: African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Assessment Study. 2010. p 47.
- 23 The African Union Senior Missions Leaders Training (held in Cairo in October 2014) and the African Union’s Seventh Annual Training Implementation Workshop (held in Cairo in May 2015) were among the events attended by the NARC Secretariat. Source: CCCPA.
- 24 Trainees were mainly drawn from Egypt, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia. The training courses organised by CCCPA for the NARC were conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and CCCPA and were considered to be valid until the reactivation of the NARC. Source: CCCPA.
- 25 See African Union Press Release “Landmark AMANI Africa II Field Training Exercise Concludes in South Africa” 9 November 2015. <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/landmark-amani-africa-ii-field-training-exercise-concludes-in-south-africa.pdf> [Accessed 6 August 2016].

- 26 While major troop contributors were Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, officers from Egypt and Algeria as well as the NARC Executive Secretariat participated in AMANI Africa II. See ISS “Understanding the African Standby Force, rapid deployment and Amani Africa II” ISS Media Toolkit. 4 November 2015. <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/4-11-2016-ASF-Amani-Media-Toolkit1.pdf> [Accessed 6 September 2016].
- 27 See Rees, Jonathon. “What next for the African Standby Force?” *ISS Today*, 2 December 2015. <https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/what-next-for-the-african-standby-force> [Accessed 6 August 2016].
- 28 This meeting was attended by representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, the “Sahrawy”, Tunisia and the Executive Secretariat of the NARC – see NARC “al taqreer al khitamyliligtimaa al rabaalawazaradifaaaliqlim (The Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Minister’s of Defense of the Capability)”, Addis Ababa 29 November 2015.
- 29 Interview with Mr Amr Aljowaily, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt on 28 July 2016, who serves as the national co-ordinator of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the NARC.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 In accordance to the Declaration of the 9th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS), which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4 June 2016, RECs/RMs will be rostered on six-monthly rotational bases starting from 1 January 2017. According to this, NARC will assume the function of Framework Region between 1 July and 31 December 2018.
- 32 Interview with Mr Amr Aljowaily, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt on 28 July 2016, who serves as the national co-ordinator of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the NARC.
- 33 *Ibid.*

12

The Future of African Standby and Rapid Deployment Capabilities: Theoretical Dreams or Practical Constraints

Abel Esterhuyse¹

The concluding chapter reflects on the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in view of what was said in the various contributions to this volume. As was pointed out in the introduction, in spite of being heavily criticised, the AU has become the single most important actor in the field of peace and security on the African continent. And there is reason to believe that the need will persist for mechanisms to address peace and security on the Africa continent. Firstly, many African states remain fragile and weak. This relates amongst others to the origin of African states; the failure to consolidate democratic rule and, as a result, the often corrupt and authoritarian nature of many governments; and the failure to legitimise state institutions through the delivery of appropriate services at grassroots level. Secondly, political instability continues to characterise the African political landscape. Even countries with established constitutional democracies are prone to election and other forms of cyclical violence. Inequalities, ethnic differences, rivalries and violence continue to cloud the domestic political landscape of many African countries. Thirdly, economic instabilities, persistent high levels of poverty and ongoing struggles over scarce resources remain a feature of many countries and regions in Africa. These threats are often linked to climate change and conditions such as floods, droughts and other manmade disasters.

Given that conflict and violence – often war – will continue to characterise many African countries and even regions, it is imperative to consider the nature thereof. It is a truism to say that most of African conflicts are and will continue to be of an irregular and intrastate nature. However, the broad spectrum of activities that make

up irregular interstate conflict simply imply that this phenomenon is diverse in nature. Most irregular African conflicts, as is the case in the rest of the world, are rooted in complexity, involve a multiplicity of actors, and are drawn-out and persistent in occurrence. Add to these realities the widespread availability of Cold War weapon arsenals in Africa, particularly small arms, and often loosely organised, ill-disciplined rebel groups that are inexperienced, or simply not interested, in negotiations. Irregular African conflict as a prominent threat to Africa's people is known for its disregard for human rights and accountability, a preference for unconventional methods of combat – including rape, mutilation and the use of child soldiers – and the pursuance of non-political objectives. From a geographical perspective many African conflicts emerge in ungoverned spaces on the continent or lead themselves to the collapse of state institutions and law and order. Moreover, the nature of state boundaries in Africa means that, though the conflicts are irregular and predominantly intrastate, neighbouring countries are either adversely affected or so often directly involved, giving many of these conflicts a regional profile.

What kind of peace and security architecture is needed to deal with the aforementioned realities? The answer is not up-front and the APSA had to, and will in future need to, overcome substantial challenges in operationalising their peace efforts. To be blunt, the APSA is faced with challenges that originate from its own dynamics, as well as the complexity of threats and vulnerabilities populating the African conflict landscape. Deliberations on the future of the APSA tend to centre on three key concerns. First, a normative debate rooted in questions about how best to respond to armed conflict and instability in Africa – in the words of Paul Williams, “what constitute proper and legitimate conduct by African states and institutions in the field of conflict management and when faced with mass atrocities in particular”.² Secondly, though APSA and its institutions represent a huge improvement in the conflict management activities of the OAU as predecessor of the AU, APSA institutions continue to be work in progress. The pathway towards operational readiness and maturity is cluttered with political, financial, institutional and other complexities. Thirdly, debates continue about the large regional differences in relation to rates of development and levels of success that continue to characterise APSA activities. These differences and variations between the continental level and regions are exacerbated by tensions caused by different expectations, distributions of power and roles between the regional and continental level. These tensions are not only prevalent at the nexus between the continental and regional levels; they extend to the nexus between the UN and the AU and, more important, the said tensions also play out between key role-players

within the various regions. The drive for international and continental legitimacy through UN mandates vis-à-vis the operational scenarios confronting African forces in undertaking dangerous missions more often than not creates a conundrum of uncertainties and tension.

Thus, it seems as if the future of the APSA revolves around the extent to which it would be able to manage, and in some instances resolve, a number of key tensions that at present tend to dominate, obstruct or hinder the effective functioning of APSA structures. One of the key tensions is the interplay between the idea of African solutions for African problems and the continued reliance on international actors and donors to finance and facilitate African solutions. This particularly relates to the dependence on external support and funding for the ambition to create a strong indigenous military capability and the deployment of peacekeepers and more interventionist-oriented forces for operations in Africa. It may be true that Africa has progressed beyond the notion that those who are footing the bill are also setting the agenda. Yet donors will always have some say and Africa should rather work with donors in more constructive ways to promote peace and stability. Financing for APSA-related activities continues to inform decisions by African governments about participation, with some seeing operations of this nature as a way of extracting money and supplementing the shortfalls in their own defence budgets.³ The funding question also raises the issue of commitment. Reliance on external funding will always bring about questions about ownership of APSA by African states; the fact that the APSA and its operations continue to rely on external financial support highlights the need of political buy-in and financial commitment from many African states in order to operationalise the call for African solutions.

The tension between financial independence and political will has a direct impact on the interoperability of African armed forces and the sustainability of APSA activities. African militaries continue to rely on external military assistance in the deployment of forces and sustainment of operations. External funding has a direct bearing on the problem in African armed forces, described by Howe as the lack of urgency – a reliance on external military support often reducing the need for capable militaries.⁴ In a paradoxical way, APSA is receiving financial support from external actors, yet the participation of African armed forces in APSA-related activities keeps them externally oriented and helps simultaneously in their quest for professionalisation.

There is a clear tension between the OAU-established tradition of non-interference and self-determination and the drive towards operationalising the notion of non-indifference that gained much popularity since the establishment of the AU. It is a

tension between the sovereignty of the Westphalian logic and tradition of Western states, on the one hand, and, on the other, questions about what is needed in and for a secure and prosperous Africa whose borders are the result not of a long process of state formation, but a Western decision-making process upheld by African rulers. The normative debate and values driving the notion of non-interference find expression in the dualism between questions about the legitimacy of humanitarian and other interventions in complex emergencies and questions about the legitimacy of undemocratic changes in and actions by African governments. Both are subjected to the legal argument of state sovereignty and non-interference as a right, not a responsibility. Non-indifference constitutes a key element of African collective security and commitment to the “Pax Africana”.⁵

There is also a tension in the drive towards a common vision of “a united and strong Africa”⁶ between those favouring a more traditional state-centric approach to security as a prerequisite for societal development and economic growth and those who stress human security, with its emphasis on growth and development as the pathway that non-traditional approaches offer, in creating a more secure Africa.⁷ What are the ideas and norms that drive security as an *input*; what are the ideas and norms that underpin social development and economic growth rooted in a respect for human rights, sanctity of human life and democratic principles, and good governance with security as an *output*? Of course, the strain also highlights the dualism between the declared norm of “a united and strong Africa” and the *de facto* reality of internal power struggles and competition between people, rulers and countries in Africa.

Another tension seems to exist between those favouring strong military-oriented peace missions and the preference, drive and need to civilianise peace processes and operations. The idea of an Africa Standby Force was specifically developed and designed to include non-military personnel, police and civilian contingents. The shift in emphasis towards the availability of an immediate crisis response capability was seen by many as a militarisation of the envisaged rapid deployment.⁸ The redesign, expansion and militarisation of the rapid response capability as proposed through the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) was triggered by the uncertainty, if not non-functionality of the regional brigades and the ASF, South African experiences in the Central African Republic (CAR) in March 2013, and the successful French military intervention in Mali in January 2013. ACIRC, based on a “coalition-of-the-willing” continent-wide model, was seen as a stopgap measure for rapid deployment while individual regions are standing up the ASF.⁹

The design of the rapid deployment capability through the ASF and ACIRC seems to raise the deep-seated question of control over forces making up the envisaged rapid reaction capability. Countries prefer to maintain control over their own forces – the ASF is a regionally based instrument, whilst ACIRC represents a continental rapid deployment capability. The APSA at present depicts the interplay between the possession of national rapid deployment capabilities and the control of the standby and rapid reaction forces at regional and continental level. The uncertainty, danger, intensity and institutional nature of standby and rapid reaction operations and types of forces point towards more national control over these forces. The tension seems to centre on the question of reaction time and, more specifically, questions about the pro- or reactive nature of conflict resolution by the APSA. It is a fact that the early warning mechanisms and systems of the APSA remain work in progress and that intelligence co-operation between states and within the APSA seems to alternate between non-existence and poor. Paul Williams argues quite convincingly that the creation of ACIRC as an alternative or extension of the Africa standby capability addresses three critical shortcomings in the rapid reaction time inherent to such forces: first, the cumbersome and problematic nature of the decision-making processes of the APSA institutions; secondly, the changeover of the logistical responsibility of quick reaction forces from national to regional and AU level; and, thirdly, the continental scope of ACIRC in contrast with the ASF.¹⁰

There is no doubt, though, that tension exists between the idea and efforts to operationalise the ASF through its regional brigade structures and the proposal, plans and efforts to create a more continentally oriented ACIRC. Indeed, some analysts argue that ACIRC is a reflection of the failed attempt to operationalise a regionally based pan-African standby capability.¹¹ Others are seeing this as a trade-off type of either/or situation that is unfolding, with funding and support earmarked for the ASF now flowing towards the ACRIC and, on a more conceptual level, ACIRC drawing attention away from and undermining the effort that went into readying the regional standby brigades.¹²

The increasing presence of private security and private military companies in the African security environment adds another layer of complexity and tension in the management of already compounded security challenges. Yet the role of private military and security companies is not only increasing; it is also becoming progressive tactical and operational examples in the laboratory of history that African armed forces can draw from in the development and design of their own military doctrines. The private military model is designed and often demonstrates the effectiveness of small,

highly competent, early entry, surgical, quick reaction forces – the almost textbook example of a rapid reaction capability devoid of political trappings. Of course, they are not operating under the political and bureaucratic constraints of statutory armed forces, which allows them much more operational and tactical flexibility. The point, though, is that these forces are not only becoming an enduring feature of the African security domain; nor are they making a case for the success of rapid and quick reaction forces. They are indeed also highlighting the critical vulnerabilities of many armed forces in Africa. The most worrying negative lesson to take from the presence and role of private military companies in Africa is the lack of appropriate and/or absence of professional statutory armed forces in Africa. More specifically, Africa is under-militarised and needs more well-equipped professional armed forces to build successful rapid deployment capabilities for AU interventions.

The role of private military companies and their success rate in often complex combat scenarios in Africa bring the nature of rapid reaction forces, the Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) in the case of the APSA, into focus and, in particular, how and why these kinds of forces differ from the more standard type military forces. The idea of rapid reaction forces centres on the availability of well-equipped forces with a high level of readiness and the ability to act decisively at short notice in desperate situations of crises. Reliability is a key determinant of rapid reaction.¹³ African politicians, like their counterparts in the rest of the world, are risk-averse; rapid reaction forces are programmed to take risk head-on. Because of the fluidity of many of the security situations that require rapid reaction force interventions, these forces ought to be highly pliable; they need to have the inherent capacity to learn more rapidly to cope with the instability, complexity and rapid change of specific high-risk desperate scenarios of conflict. In a collective and co-operative security and defence environment the success of rapid reaction forces, according to Langille, is rooted in a combined operational and tactical capacity to plan, command, deploy and support combined forces at short notice; to generate collective political will, to ensure adequate financing and broad participation through sufficient multidimensional and multifunctional participation, to harness the overall competence of potential partners and to instil unity of purpose and effort among the various participating elements. High standards of cohesiveness and inter-operability will always be a major challenge in combined operations, especially in Africa.¹⁴ The point is that, as a military capability, rapid reaction has many components that require not only participation in depth but also preparation in depth.

The preparedness of the ASF is thus not a matter of declaration. The availability of a rapid reaction capability, from a generic perspective, relies on a comprehensive approach. Operational readiness is a continuous iterative process that cannot be asserted through a once-a-year training cycle and combined exercise. Both deployability and interoperability are dependent on high levels of continuous training, flexibility in organisation and equipment, professional leadership and a cohesive doctrine. Derso is correct in arguing that the ASF faces a major challenge because different member states have different, but entrenched, standards for operational procedures, approaches, equipment, traditions and training backgrounds.¹⁵ The operational readiness of the regional brigades is not only dependent on training for skills development but also hinges on a whole range of tangible and intangible capacities that must be continuously exercised, tested, evaluated and adjusted. Here the military psychological preparedness of rapid reaction forces is, for example, hardly touched upon by APSA whilst recognised as an international best practice in combat readiness of such reaction forces.

It is thus not too difficult to explain differences in the military preparedness of the various regional brigades of the ASF. Two factors are of particular importance in this regard – political will and military capability. The first concerns the level of commitment of the various troop-contributing countries in the respective regions. This commitment plays out over a broad spectrum, but specifically relates to the political will of the various countries in regions. A second consideration is the physical ability of the various countries to contribute militarily to the designated regional brigade of the ASF and the quality of that contribution. This relates, in essence, to the inherent capacity of the various militaries within the respective regions and, more specifically, their force projection capacity. Political will and military capability are shaped by two critical considerations. The first is the political situation and domestic political stability within the respective countries. The more countries are forced to focus on their domestic security situations, the more cautious they are to contribute to the development of a regional military capacity – for various obvious reasons. This is, for example, one of the key factors explaining the differences in the progress made in the development of SADC BRIG vis-à-vis ECCAS. The physical infrastructure within the region is a second critical consideration. Physical infrastructure facilitates combined training, exercises and operations. Deployment and sustainment of forces, whether for training, exercises or operations, are dependent on physical infrastructure – from the air, rail and road network to the availability of training facilities. Lastly, it helps to have a hegemonic type of country in a region that can take the lead in the creation,

development and sustainment of a rapid reaction capability. How these various factors are going to influence the future of the ASF and, for that matter, the future stability and security of Africa, remains an open question. There is after all nothing foreseeable in the foreseeable future.

ENDNOTES

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- 10 Williams *op cit* p 155.
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