BANGLADESH AND UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS: THE QUEST FOR A NATIONAL POLICY TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract
This paper attempts to discuss a major research question—to what extent and why a national peacekeeping policy is significant for a top peacekeeping contributing nation, such as Bangladesh, to address the global and local challenges of UN peacekeeping missions? In doing so, the paper offers a review of the national policies of different states and its importance in the international peacekeeping discourse. Later, it unfolds the trends of Bangladesh’s contribution to UN peacekeeping missions and analyzes the challenges in the changing patterns of global peacekeeping. In the final section, the paper prescribes the critical aspects that a prospective national policy may need to address in the context of Bangladesh. The paper argues that Bangladesh will eventually need a national policy to effectively utilize its resources, to coordinate the role of different institutions, and to fulfill its normative visions in international peacekeeping endeavours. It suggests that the process of formulating a national policy needs to be inclusive of actors and issues relevant to the changing future patterns of global peacekeeping.

Introduction
Since the early 1990s, there has been a significant increase in the number of peacekeeping missions under the auspices of the United Nations (henceforth known as UN) as well as expansion of their scope. While the origins of UN peacekeeping can be traced to back to late 1940s, the exigencies of Cold War politics kept such missions under a tight lid. From 1948 to 1978, the UN deployed thirteen peacekeeping missions, while over the next ten years not a single mission materialized due to the tension between the superpowers. Following the end of the Cold War, peacekeeping missions dramatically increased, with the UN authorizing more missions between 1991 and 1994 than in the previous forty-five years combined.1 As of 31 March 2017, the United Nations has deployed 82,712 troops, 11,944 police and 1,821 military observers, a total of 96,477 personnel, in 16

missions. Of the 124 contributing countries, Bangladesh with 6,904 uniformed personnel is one of the top suppliers of UN peacekeepers and has been so over the past three decades.

While participation in UN peacekeeping missions has emerged as an important aspect of Bangladesh’s foreign policy in a changing world, it is imperative that Bangladesh approaches the issue in a pragmatic manner and gives it the importance it deserves. It is a matter of concern that Bangladesh, in spite of being involved with peacekeeping since 1988, has not yet formulated a national policy document on how to face the challenges of present and future peacekeeping missions in the 21st century. In the absence of a national peacekeeping policy, the concerned stakeholders often find it difficult to tackle matters related to peacekeeping in a coordinated manner. Some scholars of International Security may assume that national peacekeeping policy is unlike other areas of public policymaking, and that such policy is insulated from societal pressures and parochial interests. Yet much is to be taken into cognizance or ignored during the process of negotiating new deployments in UN peacekeeping missions, in particular because they have a major impact upon the articulation of new threat scenarios, identification of national security and foreign policy objectives as well as the size of defense budget and force planning requirements. Of course, a skeptic may ask how one can plan prudently for peacekeeping missions in future that in a large part one do not understand. It is always wise to be ready, but ready for what? Planning needs a context, because it cannot navigate itself. A national peacekeeping strategy paper may go to some extent in providing guidelines and identify signposts which may give one an understanding of the context. It is true that the fog which obscures the future is not dispersible, though to a helpful degree it may be compensated for by far-sighted planning.

This article focuses on various national peacekeeping policy documents adopted by countries contributing personnel to peacekeeping missions. The discussion highlights that peacekeeping challenges are myriad and Bangladesh needs to formulate a clear

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and far-sighted national peacekeeping strategy paper, which will help guide the
different stakeholders involved in peacekeeping to approach the issue in a planned
manner and allow the country to derive the maximum benefit. For Bangladesh,
peacekeeping has become too important a subject to be approached in an *ad hoc*
manner. This paper has conducted a qualitative survey of both primary and secondary
documents that include national policies of peacekeeping and international policy
documents of the United Nations. Further, it has analyzed the data into a few
categories, which would help to define a set of significant components for a potential
national policy of peacekeeping.

The paper is arranged in four sections. In the first section of the article, a study of
national peacekeeping strategy documents of various countries are made with an
objective of identifying what may or may not be included in such documents. The
second section provides a brief overview of Bangladesh’s participation to understand
the trends and current process of decision-making in UN peacekeeping missions. The
changing characteristics of peacekeeping in the 21st century and what this may entail
for peacekeepers is discussed in the third section. In the concluding part of the paper,
a case is made for Bangladesh having a national peacekeeping policy and discusses
various issues, which may be considered for inclusion in such a document.

I. International Case Studies of National Peacekeeping Policies

This section discusses the national policy instruments of different countries on their
participation in peacekeeping missions. It analyzes the trends of inclusion of standard
international norms and practices in various national peacekeeping policies of the
contributing states. National governments formulate these policy documents to offer
a vision in line with their broader security and foreign policies, and a set of practical
guidelines for their armed forces, police and civilian observers to ensure an effective
participation in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the policy intention is to make
a collaborative national response framework to address issues of conflict prevention
and peacebuilding. Broadly, the national policies cover provisions on (a) institutional
roles; (b) the process of conflict prevention, mediation and mitigation; and (c)
approaches of the post-conflict recovery and stabilization. It is imperative to note,
however, that the narrative of developing a national peacekeeping policy has been
increasingly contested due to the significance of Eurocentric and neo-liberal
understanding of peacekeeping, which is often oblivious to the local contexts of the
The assessment of national policies in this section is relatively representative and is arranged with diversified case studies that are mainly categorized across the regions, such as: Asia (Japan), Europe (Sweden and Serbia), South America (Brazil), and Africa (South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia).

The national policies across the states describe the rationale behind the enactment of such a national instrument to administer their involvement in peacekeeping missions. For example, the 1999 White Paper describes South Africa’s approach to peacekeeping endeavour. It suggests:

It was necessary to invest in peacebuilding processes in addition to short-term interventions such as peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Peacebuilding, as such, would include addressing such issues as respect for human rights and political pluralism, building state capacity and mechanisms of good governance (the latter being particularly important within the context of African interventions), building the capacity of civil society, and ensuring meaningful growth and development.7

The 1999 South African White Paper underlines the importance of securing a clear international mandate for participation in peace missions. It mentions that participation would only occur if such missions would be authorized by the UN. Furthermore, it also emphasizes that participation should be linked to concrete political solutions and should only occur in the event of “a clear threat to and/or breach of international peace and security and/or a disaster of major humanitarian proportions and/or endemic causes of conflict which, unless addressed, may cause long term instability”.8 This particular approach was borrowed, virtually verbatim, from the US policy document on American participation in peace-support operations.9

From South America, Brazil emerges as a major peacekeeping contributor to UN missions in Africa, which remains a significant region in Brazil’s plan of action both in strategic and in normative terms.10 During the tenure of President Lula da Silva

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8 Rocky Williams, *op. cit.*, p.89.
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(2003-2010), Brazil mainstreamed its peacekeeping policies by strengthening a revisionist international agenda to sustain peace and advocating solidarity with the global South. It has proposed a linkage between security and development issues by transforming its own development successes into a more prominent contribution in international security issues. Nevertheless, Brazil’s policy of aversion to the use of force in peace operations has kept it out of the African continent where robust operations are prevalent.11 Thus, Brazil has maintained a separate trend of engagement in peacekeeping in Africa, and compared with other emerging powers such as India and China, Brazil is a newcomer to the strategic scenario in Africa and particularly to peace operations in the region.

In Kenya, National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management12 highlights that the lack of norms, values and principles to guide interventions has in certain situations exacerbated conflicts. The Kenyan policy aims to advocate for a sustainable peace in the African region through a collaborative institutional framework between state and non-state actors and communities. It also aims that the policy document will ensure the peace infrastructure13 for Kenya and elaborates on cooperation between national and international actors in areas of conflict prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response framework. The policy offers a clear institutional framework where the government coordinates and underpins processes, functions, roles and responsibilities of different actors, and institutional components.

Serbia from Europe is a relatively smaller state, but is a significant contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations. In October 2009, the Serbian Assembly voted to adopt the Law on Participation of the Serbian Armed Forces and Other Defense Forces in Multinational Operations Outside the Borders of the Republic of Serbia (hereafter, MNO).14 This Law regulates the area of participation of the armed forces outside the territory of the Republic of Serbia. It sets forth that Serbian defense forces and police may be used in the following missions: (a) Operations of peacekeeping, peace

11 Kenkel, ibid., pp. 273-5.
maintaining, and peacebuilding in the world; (b) Conflict prevention and peace-enforcing operations; (c) Joint defense operations in accordance with the regulations on defense; (d) Operations providing assistance in removing the impact of the international terrorism and large-scale terrorist attacks; and (e) Participation in humanitarian operations in cases of large-scale natural, technical – technological, and ecological accidents and assistance in crisis situations. The Law further provides a clear guideline on the decision-making process and the responsibility of the governmental organs in it. It says:

*The Annual Plan is prepared by the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior and they present it to the Government. The National Assembly reviews and adopts the Annual Plan, and then decides on the Serbian Armed Forces participating in the MNO. As based on this decision, the President decides on dispatching to MNO. On the other hand, the Government decides on participation and dispatching of the members of the police and other defense forces to MNO.*

Sweden, another important contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, formulated a national strategy in 2007 to streamline its participation in peacekeeping endeavors by linking foreign, development, security and defense policies more closely together. It suggests:

*Swedish involvement in international peace-support operations is ultimately intended to contribute to maintaining international peace and security and consequently to facilitate fair and sustainable global development. Swedish participation in peace-support operations is also concerned, in the longer term, with promoting national security and Swedish interests.*

The principal requirement is that Swedish participation in peace-support operations will be based on a mandate from the UN Security Council. This applies in particular to peace-enforcing operations in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In addition, the strategy also mentions that it requires an approval of the UN Security Council to participate in peacekeeping operations in accordance with Chapter VI of the UN Charter. It emphasizes the significance of the acquiring the consent of the host state and other relevant parties as per the regulations of international law.

In Asia, Japan is one of the few peacekeeping contributors that have adopted a national strategy to contextualize its understanding of international peacebuilding.

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During 1990s, Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi administration was particularly interested in developing and promoting the concept of human security as one of the key pillars of Japan’s post–Cold War foreign policy. Later, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s administration also developed the idea of peacebuilding which is reflected in Japan’s national policies. Koizumi defined peacebuilding as activities that were “designed to consolidate peace and build basic foundations in countries suffering from such conflicts”. One of the key factors of Japan’s peacebuilding concept is a long-term commitment to state-building in troubled regions. State-building, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Japan, consists of activities for rebuilding the political, legal, economic and social frameworks in conflict-affected or politically transitional countries. It also suggests that the building of political framework encompasses the development of the governance infrastructure through the improvement of democratic political, electoral, administrative, police and judicial systems. The reconstruction of economic and financial systems as well as the basic economic infrastructure to sustain these systems such as roads, ports, bridges and telecommunication facilities, is also considered vital in state-building.

National peacekeeping policies of many countries have emphasized issues related to the capacity building of individual peacekeepers and peace-providing institutions, which are often identified as important tools for sustainable implementation of the policy. For example, the Kenyan national strategy suggests that the government and concerned institutions will offer regular training to various stakeholders in relevant areas, such as, conflict prevention resource mobilization, peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity and alternative conflict resolution mechanisms. Moreover, Serbian Law on the participation of armed forces and police in the multinational operations (MNOs) delves on the rights of the participants in the missions. These rights as elaborated in the Law states that “requests for exercising the rights and duties of the participants dispatched to MNO without a decision of the competent body until such date this Law has gone in effect, will be resolved in accordance with the regulations according to which they have been acquired, or if more favorable for them, according

19 Ibid., p.117.
20 Ibid., p.117.
21 Ibid., p. 119.
to the provisions of this Law.\textsuperscript{23} The rights of the peacekeepers incorporate the provisions for advanced training and capacity building for the armed forces. In a similar fashion, the Swedish legislation suggests that the armed forces will be made capable to take part in international operations with a broad range of different types of units. It puts an emphasis on the combined operations of various forces and hence advocated for joint exercises and training for the peacekeepers.\textsuperscript{24} It also seeks to enhance the capacity of the peacekeepers as first responders on the scene in the area of operations who are able to carry out critical tasks for the operation.

A United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-led assessment for Ethiopian participation in peacekeeping operations urges for a coherent policy with clear guidelines for capacity development of armed forces and police.\textsuperscript{25} The report suggests that Ethiopia requires a peacebuilding policy to improve coordination and effectiveness of its interventions in promoting peace and human security. It further criticizes the ongoing Ethiopian interventions that have mostly been \textit{ad hoc} to arrest onsets of violence and prevent humanitarian crises. The \textit{ad hoc} policies do not provide clear guidelines on capacity development. Therefore, the UNDP report suggests:

\begin{quote}
A need exists to develop strategies for skills training in conflict peacebuilding. Community readiness to embrace constructive conflict management and peace building would be fostered by requisite skills and knowledge in the field. Such skills include conflict analysis, conflict early warning and response, disaster preparedness, and conflict resolution among others.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

In the case of Ethiopia, the analysis suggests that while some disjointed efforts were made to offer different aspects of capacity building for peace, there are no strategic efforts to offer broad based skills training in peace-building especially targeting people and structures involved in peace-building initiatives. It highlights the importance of a coherent national policy on peacekeeping for contributing states.

A majority of the national peacekeeping policies highlights regional cooperation that aims to elaborate on a regional approach to address conflict management and streamline peacebuilding activities with the involvement of the regional stakeholders.

\textsuperscript{23} Miloseic, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, the UNDP brief suggests in keeping a focus on the local level gatekeepers (elders, religious leaders and traditional chiefs). See UNDP, \textit{ibid.}, p.10.
South Africa clearly sees the involvement of a sub-region as an essential prerequisite to the success of its peace mission strategy. It proposes the involvement of the regional institutions in the contemporary robust peace missions and urges that the national strategy will need to take cognizance of a range of sub-regional sensitivities and realities of conflict and peace. The Kenyan National Policy also endorses the engagement of African regional and sub-regional initiatives in a collaborative effort to mitigate conflict and promote peace. In addition, Kenyan policy urges for a civil society intervention which would include dialogue, negotiations and problem-solving workshops, information, education and communication. Media’s role is also highlighted in the policy. In particular, the Kenyan policy acknowledges that social media has a significant role to play in peacebuilding and conflict management.

Sweden supports regionalism in two perspectives. First, Sweden promotes its peacekeeping endeavor within an effective multilateral system, which, it identifies as a crucial factor to a successful peace-support work. Sweden’s legislation highlights the role of multilateral institutions, such as the UN, the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The legislation also suggests that Sweden aims to be active in developing close cooperation with these multilateral peace-support organizations, and intends to perform in accordance with the principles of international law. Second, Sweden also provides financial and technical support to the construction of a strong and sustainable African Union (AU). The legislation clearly mentions that capacity building of the AU should be a key element in Swedish cooperation with the region. Such capacity building can be conducted with “an intensified dialogue with the AU and additionally contribute financial and technical support to the AU Commission and, where appropriate, other AU bodies”.

Further, Swedish legislation also suggests that it would respect the principle of African ownership in maintaining peace and development in the region.

In South Asia, although it hosts four major troop and police contributors in UN peacekeeping operations, none of the countries possess a national policy on peacekeeping or peacebuilding endeavors. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal conduct their decision-making on training and recruitment of peacekeepers on the
basis of ad hoc decisions and based on the demands placed by the UN through the permanent mission of the respective countries at the UN in New York. These countries have their own training facilities that offer necessary training modules to the troops and police to prepare them for UN missions. For example, Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT) is a state of the art training facility that offers intensive training programs for Bangladeshi peacekeepers and other troops from foreign countries. However, it is yet to be identified that to what extent and how this institution and its activities will shape the national peacekeeping policy of Bangladesh and contribute to the shaping of a Bangladesh’s foreign and security policy.

The lack of a national policy also influences the avenues of cooperation with the regional organizations that are significant actors in the contemporary UN peacekeeping missions. For example, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has not been able to enhance its foreign relations with some African states despite the fact that a majority of its peacekeepers are deployed in the African continent. However, it should be noted that Bangladesh recently has upgraded its diplomatic channels with important regional powers in Africa.32 It is also significant that Bangladesh requires a clear guideline to establish cooperation with the regional contributing bodies, such as the African Union (AU). On the other hand, no South Asian states have adopted a national policy which would advance regional cooperation among themselves. There have been some ad hoc moves by the South Asian states in the UN in calling attention to the issue of pay hike for peacekeepers.33 It is argued that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have raised a collective voice for policy changes at the UN to ensure greater participation in the formulation of mission mandates.34 However, this approach did not yield to a sustainable regional mechanism that would enhance the collective capacity of the South Asian troop and police contributing states. It is important to note that a few civil society initiatives were undertaken to promote a

track-II dialogue between the stakeholders of South Asian nations. These were disjointed efforts that failed to produce any concrete outcomes.

The discussion in this section highlights the significance of national policies on peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the context of various contributing states across the continents. It shows how the peacekeeping policies set vision and strategies for their contribution, recruitment, capacity building and regional cooperation. Furthermore, the discussion on South Asia also suggests that the problem of not having a national policy would impact on the patterns of cooperation among the regional contributors. From this discussion of international case studies, this paper draws a set of significant factors, which may be deemed essential for national policies of peacekeeping and makes an attempt to contextualize these for Bangladesh. In so doing, the next section (II) analyzes the trends contribution of Bangladeshi troops and police in the UN peacekeeping missions. In section III, this paper set forth the challenges of contribution in the context of global changes. These two sections set the context to discuss the proposed national policy for Bangladesh.

II. Bangladesh’s Contribution to UN Missions: Trends and Decision-making Process

Bangladesh is one of the leading contributors in the UN peacekeeping missions. As of 2016, it has participated in 54 missions in over 40 countries. In March 2017, Bangladesh had 5,821 troops, 73 military experts and 1,010 police personnel deployed in various UN peacekeeping operations. The armed forces contributed 85% of this figure and the police 15% (see Table 1). 130 Bangladeshi uniformed peacekeepers have died while serving under the UN flag (see table 1). To fulfill one of its recent commitments, Bangladesh Army provided a battalion of 850 soldiers in response to a UN request to fill the gap in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

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Table: Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operations (54 missions in 40 countries)\(^{38}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Peacekeepers</td>
<td>119,452</td>
<td>3,875</td>
<td>5,218</td>
<td>16,798</td>
<td>145,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(completed missions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased peacekeepers</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 1989 UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia, the Bangladesh Police have contributed in UN peacekeeping operations and it turns into one of the top police-contributing countries. Between 2000 and 2016, there has been a 1500% increase in the number of Bangladeshi police personnel in UN missions, surpassing 2,000 officers in 2011.\(^{41}\) The members of the police force are deployed as individual police experts and Formed Police Units (FPU) in East Timor, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Sudan, South Sudan, and Haiti. As of March 2017, Bangladesh contributed 201 female police officers and is considered to be the top performer in this regard.\(^{42}\) The first Bangladeshi female police contingent and the first of its kind from a Muslim-majority nation was deployed in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in May 2010.\(^{43}\) Prior to that, the only all-female FPU was deployed in Liberia (UNMIL) in January 2007 by India. The goal of sending a female FPU in Haiti was to provide humanitarian services in the post-earthquake areas—ensuring primary education, healthcare, and preventing violence against women. In May 2012, a Bangladeshi FPU made up of 120 police personnel received the United Nations


\(^{41}\) Zaman and Biswas, *Bangladesh Country Profile*, op. cit., p.2.


Medal for significant contribution in MINUSTAH. Bangladesh Navy and Air Force also contributed significantly in UN missions in Africa and Asia.

In Bangladesh, the GoB, Armed Forces Division (AFD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Bangladesh Police play crucial roles in taking the decision of sending troops and police personnel to UN missions on the basis of a generic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in December 2007 as part of the UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS). There is no central authority or a coordination commission/committee in the current framework of decision-making in this regard. However, in observing the general trends of participation, it is significant to note that the Bangladesh Army tends to monopolize tactical decisions about Bangladesh’s participation in UN peace missions and the civilian authority has not challenged this prerogative. The decision-making process begins with the requests for peacekeepers from the UN Secretariat. Bangladesh’s Permanent Mission at the UN receives this request on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and examines the mandate in light of Bangladesh’s broader foreign policy priorities and existing international commitments. The Defense Attaché in the Permanent Mission in New York deals with the bureaucratic procedures and subsequently forwards the requests to the relevant agencies in Bangladesh. Requests relating to troops are directed to the Armed Forces Division, which is the coordinating headquarters of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Overseas Operations Directorate deals with peacekeeping operations in the Army Headquarters in Dhaka. Requests for naval and air force components are transferred to the respective Navy and Air Force Headquarters in Dhaka, which then issue necessary directives for the upcoming operations. For troops, the Overseas Operations Directorate issues the necessary instructions to all other concerned branches of the armed forces for the requisite preparations. This involves the selection of personnel and the provision of equipment and training. The

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48 Ibid., p. 187.
MHA receives requests related to the deployment of the police personnel for the UN missions. After the initial notification, the MHA transfers the order to Police Headquarters in Dhaka to take decisions on the selection of personnel.

The capacity development of the peacekeepers is a significant component in the decision-making process. BIPSOT provides specialized training to potential UN peacekeepers. BIPSOT was established in 1999 as Peacekeeping Operations and Training Centre (PKOTC) to address the skills required for new generation peacekeepers, which would be different than the routine combatant skills of military personnel. In 2002 it was remodeled and renamed with more capacities and resources. BIPSOT conducts regular pre-deployment training for the selected contingent members. Although the Bangladesh Police does not have a separate specialized training center, the Police Staff College at Dhaka and Police Academy at Rajshahi offer specialized and tailor-made training programs to the members of the police force for peacekeeping missions.

The above discussion offers the readers an understanding of the trends of contribution and process of decision-making by the concerned stakeholders in Bangladesh. To suggest which factors Bangladesh need to consider as components of a proposed national policy on peacekeeping and peacebuilding, it is imperative to understand the nature of challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh as a crucial contributor in the multilateral peacekeeping endeavor. The following section elaborates on the nature of global challenges and how these may influence the trends of Bangladesh’s contribution in the UN missions.

III. Challenges for Bangladeshi Peacekeepers in the International Context

Despite the emergence of terrorist threats with global reach in the form of Al Qaeda and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the first decade of the 21st century marked a low in the number and severity of armed conflicts worldwide. This trend was epitomized by the decline in inter-state conflict: once the dominant pattern of war, only three such conflicts occurred during the

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49 For details, see: BIPSOT’s website, www.bipsot.net.
50 Some of the main subjects of Pre-Deployment Training are: an overview of the mission area; handling of situations they are likely to face; the UN mandate for that mission; details regarding Rules of Engagement; personnel safety; health and hygiene; and a language course.
decade.\textsuperscript{51} The traditional means of waging of such warfare appear increasingly alien from modern battlefield realities.

Yet the past six to seven years have raised serious doubts about the durability of apparent gains in peace and security that followed the initial, bloody aftermath of the Cold War when a wave of conflicts spread across the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa. Vicious, intractable, high-casualty conflict has reappeared, most evidently in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Central African Republic, South Sudan and east Ukraine. Furthermore, such wars have occurred in a way that tend to elude mediators and military and peace operations to terminate conflict, bypasses the traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution and results in new patterns of human rights abuses and humanitarian concerns.\textsuperscript{52}

Studies of ‘new wars’ in the wake of the disappearance of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War have highlighted the characteristics of hybrid conflicts, in which ethnic mobilization, various transnational connections (such as to crime) and state failure tend to be constituent elements.\textsuperscript{53} While conflicts today tend to exhibit these features, two interconnected characteristics, which are shared to a greater or lesser degree across today’s warzones, represent something of an emerging pattern. These are a slow but inexorable descent into armed fragmentation and the variegated internationalization of internal conflicts. Conflicts in Syria, Mali, Libya and South Sudan have shown groups are splintered and pursuing varied objectives. Such a situation is compounded by the fact that often such groups are supported by foreign state and non-state actors, which mean conflicts, are confusing and difficult to solve. Indeed, the need for diverse actors to appeal to fragmented ‘strategic audiences’ in multiple domains and countries challenges the notion that military victory followed by peace can now be achieved in a straightforward manner, since not every audience will be satisfied with a domestic political settlement.\textsuperscript{54}

As conflicts tend to become intractable and spiral into a vortex of unending brutality, the idea of peacekeeping itself is expanding and currently it emerges with more robust mandates, such as, use of force under Chapter VII, interventions in more perilous operational environments, and like. Mats Berdal and David H. Ucko point out that the setbacks suffered by UN peacekeepers in Rwanda and Bosnia led to a strong sentiment of ‘never again’ and a commitment to use lessons learned to strengthen UN’s capacity for peacekeeping. One lesson, above all, appeared to enjoy broad support: UN peacekeepers would henceforth need to prepare for, and be ready to engage in, more ‘robust’ or ‘muscular’ peacekeeping.55

As a manifestation of this new resolve, the UN Security Council in March 2013 approved an explicit mandate to favor the robustness of its missions that would allow peacekeepers to use force. The mandate authorized a newly-created ‘Force Intervention Brigade’ for the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo to “carry out targeted offensive operations…in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner…to prevent the expansion of all armed groups, neutralize these groups and to disarm them.”56 Coupled with the increasing emphasis on robustness, a greater proclivity to experiment with the use force has been a growing importance of protection of civilians as a mandated task for UN peacekeepers.57

The scenarios arising out of such policies adopted by the UN have raised questions about the challenges and limitations of the organization’s role as a third-party actor in intractable conflicts. As the UN operation in Democratic Republic of Congo has unfolded, doubts have been expressed as whether the UN, as an intergovernmental, intensely political and bureaucratically fragmented organization, can or will ever be structurally equipped and politically suited to take on a coercive measure in such wars.58 While arguments have been made about the efficacy of such a proactive role by the UN,59 misgivings have been voiced about resource constraints, ethical conundrum and the lack of clarity of the political and strategic purposes under which.

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56 UN Security Council Resolution 2098, 28 March 2013, p. 34.
UN peacekeepers operate in such missions. Such missions would hamper the safety and security of peacekeepers. Moreover, there may appear a commitment gap between the UN and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)/Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) due to their involvement in risky robust missions. Because the developed countries are involved in drafting ambitious mandates for future missions, they are neither involved in taking the risks, nor do they provide sufficient technical and financial support to shoulder the responsibilities. Under such circumstances how Bangladesh will deal with the exigencies of ‘robust missions’ including the ability and will to resort to force in defense of the mandate, namely beyond force protection, remains to be clarified. The debate touches upon Bangladesh’s capacities in key areas of complex operations such as rapid reactions, logistics, communication, intelligence, and also upon its own conception of the use of force.

References:


A key challenge for peacekeeping operations planners is reorienting the focus of such missions to two megatrends that are shaping and defining conflict climate. These are population growth (the continuing rise in the planet’s total population) and urbanization (the tendency for people to live in larger and larger cities). Powerful arguments can be made that the success of future peacekeeping missions may be won or lost in cities. Urban areas, especially in conflict-affected countries, are emerging as epicenters of multi-layered violence and extreme vulnerability. Thus, parts of Bangui (in the Central African Republic), Port-au-Prince (Haiti) and Abidjan (Cote d’Ivoire) have long been under the control of gangs and militias and may hold the key to understanding future peacekeeping missions. In all such situations, UN peacekeepers have had to operate in densely populated urban settings characterized by the presence of non-conventional armed groups and to adapt to the strategic complexity and specificities of urban space. The challenges thrown up by such missions have shown the UN Police (UNPOL), in particular, has had significant gaps in its capacity to respond. At the same time, demands for UNPOL’s services are increasing and its role is expanding across multiple peacekeeping operations. For Bangladesh, future contingents to UNPOL must be prepared and equipped in such a manner that concerns around varying standards and approaches, as well as capacity limitations and gaps in training for operating in such ‘urban guerrilla warfare’ setting are adequately addressed.

While Bangladesh has been a top troop-contributing country, it must be pointed out that recent trend in UN peacekeeping point towards a future where such a position may not be taken for granted. This has become clear following the publication by the United Nations of *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for United Nations Peacekeeping* in 2009 where a call is made for ‘an expanded base of troop- and police-contributing countries…to enhance collective burden-sharing and to meet future requirements.’ The document’s main focus is UN will not be over dependent

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66 Ibid., online.

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on one or two major suppliers of troops and will increase the availability from new sources—states or regional bodies. Already South Asian countries are facing pressure from other countries who wish to make large and meaningful contributions to peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh should also make contingency plans for dealing with possible reduction or drying-up of UN peacekeeping missions as the administration of US President Donald Trump has announced plans to reduce US share of paying for UN peacekeeping missions from 28 percent to 25 percent or about US$2.2 billion annually. The US Ambassador to UN Nikki Haley has also asked for reforms within the UN and a review of each of the UN’s 16 peacekeeping missions. Are such postures a harbinger of a ‘slash and burn’ approach to peacekeeping by Donald Trump? While the answer is yet to be found, Bangladesh needs to adjust to the changing scenario and plan its moves accordingly.

The analysis in this section highlights the changing nature of the peacekeeping operations in recent times. It also highlights the importance of capacity building of the peacekeepers in light of the transformation in peacekeeping endeavors. The major question, after discussing international cases of national peacekeeping policies in section I and challenges in section II, is—what factors does the GoB need to consider in formulating its national peacekeeping policy?

IV. Factors of the National Peacekeeping Policy for Bangladesh

The purpose of this section is to offer a policy guideline for Bangladesh’s participation in the UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. The analysis is developed on the basis of the challenges discussed in the earlier section and opportunities that the GoB may want to exploit in compliance of its foreign policy. It is important to note that the GoB has committed to send large number of troops,


police and civilian experts in UN peacekeeping missions.\textsuperscript{70} In addition to the political support, there are institutional, normative and financial rationales for such intensive participation under the purview of the UN.\textsuperscript{71} Bangladesh does not face major internal or external problems in individual force generation. Therefore, it is crucial for all the stakeholders to explore future opportunities in the UN peacekeeping operations. This paper advocates for a collaborative approach in four fundamental areas of peacekeeping policy (see figure: 1). These are: (a) decision-making and responsibility of the stakeholders, (b) capacity building of the peacekeepers, (c) diplomatic extension and regional cooperation, and (d) peacebuilding activities. The following discussion on the national peacekeeping policy of Bangladesh will elaborate on these areas.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Proposed Model of National Peacekeeping Policy for Bangladesh\textsuperscript{72}}
\end{figure}

\textbf{a. Decision-making and Responsibility of the Stakeholders}

Bangladesh intends to comply with a clear mandate under international law, which is essential for its participation in UN peacekeeping operations. The major provision is that Bangladesh’s participation in peacekeeping operations will be based on clear mandates from the UN Security Council. This applies to both peace-enforcing


\textsuperscript{71} See: Zaman and Biswas, 2016, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{72} Authors prepared the figure. These four factors are significant and derived from the analysis of the international cases of national policies of peacekeeping (see: section I).
operations in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and in peace-keeping operations in accordance with Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Furthermore, Bangladesh also complies with other relevant international legal instruments that facilitate such operations to be carried out with the consent of the recipient state and other relevant parties. Bangladeshi uniformed and civilian personnel in UN peacekeeping operations will comply with international human rights and humanitarian laws, such as the covenants on civil and political rights, the convention on the rights of the child and its optional protocol on children in armed conflicts.

To expedite the decision-making process the GoB can form a National Task Force. This will be a coordinating body that is responsible to implement the national policy and revise it in due course of time on the basis of the needs from internal stakeholders. The Task Force will have the mandate to revise and update the national policy on extended participation in UN peacekeeping operations; oversee the implementation of the policy; examine the trends of the contribution every year; recommend the Government to formulate new laws or policies in the concerned areas; and suggest the Government on training and procurement related issues. In addition to this, the GoB may consider forming an operational level working group which will be responsible to assist the National Task Force from time to time. This group may meet on a quarterly basis to coordinate operational issues related to different stakeholders to share information, optimum utilization of resources, and logistics issues. The prime stakeholders for UN peacekeeping operations are: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Defence, Bangladesh Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Bangladesh Police. The MoFA may form a pool of civilian experts who will contribute in such operations.

The MoFA will be the leading agency to perform diplomatic endeavors in regard to communications with the United Nations. It should keep close contact with the Bangladesh’s Permanent Mission in New York. The Ministry can convey any request of troops and police to the concerned authority in the shortest possible time. The MoFA can also coordinate the activities of other stakeholders in managing the requests sent by the UN. The AFD may want to facilitate the promulgation of policies and GoB’s approval for the deployment of troops from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force in the UN missions. The AFD can also coordinate all the

operational and administrative activities regarding UN related tasks among the three Headquarters.

Bangladesh Police should be able to formulate its respective policy document for force generation, training and deployment. The policies of the AFD and Bangladesh Police will be done in coherence with the National Policy. Their respective policies should contain specific provisions on duties and responsibilities with regard to meeting demands from the UN.

b. Capacity Development of Troops, Police and Civilians for Multidimensional Peacekeeping

The proposed national policy must highlight the significance of capacity development of the peacekeepers according to the changing needs of the UN. The Lakhdar Brahimi Report emphasizes the significance of military readiness and expertise in maintaining peacekeeping mandates. It states that peacekeepers must be trained to use arms and force to defend themselves and civilians in host countries. Similarly, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan welcomed the new approach, stating that peacekeeping operations go beyond the traditional military functions and adopt a more muscular form of peace operations with a ‘robust mandate’ in order to avoid the kind of fiascos that occurred in previous missions. Therefore, the upcoming missions require more commitments for longer stay and steady contributions on the nation/state building processes. Such deployment to hostile environment with forward-leaning postures also make it imperative that authorized troop and police ceilings are balanced by the deployment of suitably trained and capable troops, police and civilian experts capable of implementing the complex mandates issued by the UN Security Council. The use of technology is another


critical component that contributing countries must consider in terms of its preparedness for the mission.

The AFD and Bangladesh Police must be ready to deploy a sizable amount of peacekeepers in the quickest possible time to any mission upon permission received from the top coordinating authorities of the UN and Government. These troops and police will be part of Rapid Deployment Level (RDL) forces, as per MoU of UNSAS. Regular trainings will be provided to the peacekeepers at the training institutes so that there remains a steady flow of trained peacekeepers at the RDL. The RDL outfits will be equipped properly as per need to be deployed effectively in mission areas within the agreed timeframe. The National Task Force can study the requirements of the multidimensional peacekeeping and suggest the Government to take necessary steps in equipping national troops, police and civilians as per the demand of the UN.

The GoB should take initiatives to send potential peacekeepers to avail appropriate training and capacity development activities in home and aboard. The MoFA, AFD and BIPSOT will collect necessary information about relevant international training opportunities, venues, and costs of the training. The AFD and Bangladesh Police will actively assist the Foreign Ministry by continuously developing a database and offering international training opportunities for the potential peacekeepers. The Ministry will request for financial allocation from appropriate authorities, in both home and abroad, to run the international training endeavor.

The GoB may want to initiate the establishment of a training center for the future civilian experts to expedite the potentials of Bangladesh’s participation in future peace-support operations under the purview of the UN. The MoFA, in consultation with the National Task Force, will prepare a national pool of civilian experts. In addition to this, MoFA may also train a civilian reserve corps to serve as a ready external talent pool to assist in the administration management and execution of UN peacekeeping operations. Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA) may prepare a list of GoB officers citing their education qualifications and expertise which should be displayed online and can be used by international organizations as they seek positions to be filled up in peacebuilding missions.

Institutions of Armed Force and the Police may want to hire civilian academic experts and faculty members from public universities to lecture and supervise research in the broader peace and security issues. Civilians may be offered opportunities to acquire education from military and police institutions. Similarly,
troops and police experts will get the opportunity to learn from the relevant
disciplines of public universities. Mention can be made here of the National Defence
College (NDC), the premier military educational institution, where members of
armed forces along with military officers from various countries study alongside
Bangladeshi civil servants and are taught by faculty members drawn from a mixture
of public universities, government and think-tanks. Moreover, the large number of
officers now opting to enroll in degree programs offered by both public and private
educational institutions inevitably interacts with students and faculty who are drawn
from diverse backgrounds. University of Dhaka (DU), Bangladesh Institute of
International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and Bangladesh University of
Professionals (BUP) are the leading academic institutions that may introduce further
research and academic study programs in the relevant areas of peacekeeping, conflict
transformation, security and development. Further, this practice will enable
Bangladesh to understand the future challenges of participation in UN missions and
to better prepare the country in an effective manner.

The GoB must enforce the capacity development of female troops and police
officers. It must comply with all UN effort to address gender through specific UN
Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. These are: UN
1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2122 (2013). The GoB must aim for a gender-
equality perspective to be integrated into all stages of UN peacekeeping operations.
At national level this means, for example, strengthening training efforts for military
police and civil personnel who may be considered for participation in UN peace
operations. Bangladesh will lobby for better representation of women in
peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. Greater representation of
women can change existing gender imbalances and potentially decrease sexual
offences committed by the perpetrators. Achieving gender balance in peacekeeping
operations will promote a wider gender-mainstreaming agenda.

c. Extensive Diplomatic Engagements

The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in New York plays an important role in UN
peacekeeping issues. They have been active in Fourth and Fifth Committee meetings

77 For details, see the website: United Nations, Women, Peace and Security, available at
78 The challenges and opportunities for ensuring more women participation in peace
operations are discussed in Georgina Holmes, “The Commonwealth, Gender and
Peacekeeping”, The Round Table, 2017, pp. 1-18, online version available at DOI:
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to endorse the rights, safety, and security of the peacekeepers. Besides, the triennial review of equipment related issues are discussed through Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) Working Group meetings, where Bangladesh Armed and Police Forces play a lead role to take care of our interest. Bangladesh has served as Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and has led the drafting of two significant documents: the 2010 Review of Peacebuilding Architecture, and the 2010 Review of International Civilian Capacity. In finalizing the documents, Bangladesh successfully convinced other parties to incorporate issues like south–south cooperation and women’s empowerment.

The GoB may want to consider the expansion of its diplomatic relations with countries at their post-conflict and stabilized state. Specially, the Government should seriously consider exploring diplomatic relations by opening up embassies or high commissions in those countries, where Bangladeshi troops and police have had an effective role in maintaining peace and stability. The GoB will support cooperative relations with the African regional endeavors that have been contributing significantly in UN peacekeeping and peace-support operations. Bangladesh will establish an intensified dialogue with the AU and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in order to continue a regular communication framework for more cooperation in peace missions. As one of the leading contributors for the last one decade or more, Bangladesh can also commit to provide technical assistance to these regional organizations, where appropriate. Bangladesh may consider closer military and police cooperation with the AU, including exercises and other forms of build-up of expertise, with the aim of being able to take part in AU-Bangladesh joint operations with units.

Relations with African regional organizations are critical in order to strengthen Bangladesh’s effective contribution in the UN-mandated peacebuilding operations. Bangladesh should also strengthen its cooperation with these regional forums on business and development fields. Various chambers of commerce and other relevant business organizations should work in tandem with the GoB, to avail the business opportunities available in post-conflict African states.

d. Involvement in Peacebuilding Endeavors

Bangladesh aspires to play a crucial role in the sustaining peace through economic development. In doing so, the GoB can invite business communities: Chambers of Commerce and other similar forums to actively participate in business promotion.

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functions. The National Task Force can arrange regular dialogues with the business communities to set a separate policy on trade promotion, especially in African countries. Ministry of Commerce can provide all facilities to promote such activities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The GoB should extend their cooperation to incorporate actors, such as NGOs, human rights organizations and experts, and academia to form national civil society expert groups for increasing peacebuilding efforts of Bangladesh. An expert group of such kind on peacebuilding can be more functional and effective to address the global needs in post-conflict zones anywhere in the world due to the experiences garnered from their long standing contribution in this sector.

The Government has already set up the Bangladesh Peacebuilding Center. The MoFA possesses the mandate to regulate the Center. This Ministry can implement the plan in joint collaboration with an established university, BIPSOT or an academic institution that provides sufficient infrastructural and technical support. The Center can offer ‘state-of-the-art’ services in research, training and policy advocacy in the areas of peacebuilding and various other kinds of peace-support operations. The GoB may consider inviting international development partners to provide financial support to arrange the initial establishment costs. The Center in coordination with AFD and Police can bring international and national experts to produce quality output that will enhance Bangladesh’s future participation in UN peacebuilding operations. Some of the curricula can be coordinated between the Center and BIPSOT to ensure optimum utilization of resources and greater benefit. The major aim of the Center, therefore, is to catalyze civilian participation along with the engagement of troops and police in UN peacekeeping endeavors. This will be the center of excellence to sustain Bangladesh’s effort in maintaining global peace, security and development.

**Concluding Remarks**

The paper argues that it is significant for Bangladesh to formulate a national peacekeeping policy to effective utilize its resources, coordinate the role of different institutions, and fulfill its normative visions in the international platforms. The GoB has already declared that it is in a process to formulate a national peacekeeping policy. This paper offers genuine policy guidance to the concerned officials in

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fulfilling its objective in this regard. The analysis of selected international cases in Section I show that the major factors of a functional peacekeeping policy could be a formulation of: (a) decision-making process among the stakeholders, (b) capacity development of the peacekeepers, (c) extensive diplomatic engagements, and (d) fixing the goals of long-term support, i.e. peacebuilding. It highlights the challenges for a major troop and police contributing country at the global level in section III. It is pertinent to understand such challenges also underscore the need for Bangladesh to take into cognizance the above-mentioned factors in formulating its national policy on peacekeeping. The paper also offers a discussion of factors that are suggested by the authors to be incorporated in the future national peacekeeping policy of Bangladesh. It argues that the potential policy needs to be inclusive of actors and issues relevant to the changing future patterns of global peacekeeping. The 21st century may not be strictly a peaceful century\(^2\) and the most likely shape and structure of the international order yet to come is far from self-evident at present. This very uncertain context applies to international peacekeeping missions and makes a fundamental case for a prudent approach to planning for such missions. This paper makes a clarion call for Bangladesh to be ready to confront and deal threats in accordance with society’s contemporary political support.

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