UNIVERSITY OF BABEŞ-BOLYAI
EUROPEAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

PHD THESIS Summary

PEACE OPERATIONS AS A MODERN TOOL OF FOREIGN POLICY

Scientific coordinator

Professor Vasile Puscas

Phd Candidate

Nicolo' Gasparini

Cluj-Napoca

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peace, peacekeeping, peace operations, interests, security, diplomacy, foreign policy, intervention

SUMMARY

In the last three decades international relations have gone through a veritable revolution. The globalization of world politics and economies has transformed foreign policy agendas of all countries, with a broader and multidimensional perception of security. Since 1990 the so-called 'CNN effect' has contributed to reduce the gap of distant conflicts and bring the sufferance of war victims in Western constituencies' eyes.

New security actors – non-state actors and international organizations – and new threats – terrorism, deadly infections disease, piracy, to name few – fostered a broader vision of collective security. Traditional policy instruments and forms of pressures appeared undermined by the changed security landscape, but instead of equipping the international community with new institutions – replacing the world order established after the WW2 –, a new foreign policy tool emerged. Peace operations became a compelling and ever more frequent tool of crisis management.

Peace operations represent one of the most important changes in the contemporary international relations landscape and, while during the Cold War era no more than five UN peacekeeping missions operating at one time were registered, from 2000 to 2010 the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) counted nearly 600 peace operations.

The impressive surge in number of operations explains the interest in addressing this phenomenon demonstrated by both the media and the academia. During the

last twenty-five years peace operations gained importance in the national political debate, becoming sometimes also an hot topic in electoral campaigns; some scholars elaborated on the public diplomacy component of peacekeeping, which connecting with the general public and leaders alike, is potentially transformative for a country's agenda.

Countries recur increasingly to peace operations because particularly suitable to tackle contemporary security challenges; in fact, they are versatile and fit most needs, both on the provider and the recipient side. Peace missions enjoy broad legitimacy, they can fulfil various purposes (eg. peace building, peace enforcement) and are strategic not only for big powers but also small countries that this way can project abroad military assets – and therefore power – also in complex far away conflict theatres.

This academic work focuses on the research question: "Can peace operations be considered as a modern tool of foreign policy?"

The first chapter provides the theoretical framework of a study that is positioned in the international relations theory domain and is heavily contaminated by the realist school. The main schools of thought are scrutinised and an in-depth analysis of both the relevance and implications of peace operations' engagement of contributing countries and related motivations is provided.

In the second chapter an historical overview is provided; the surge in number and importance of peace operations is described in detail and goes back to the very first peace operations in history until the League of Nations era. The

historical progression is coupled with an analysis of peacekeeping doctrine's evolution in recent times, when after the Boutros Ghali Agenda for Peace and the comprehensive Brahimi report new ambitious concepts have been developed (eg. Responsibility to Protect - R2P), building on the three traditional UN peacekeeping rules: consent, impartiality and non use of violence.

Analysing the motivations why countries increasingly engage in peace operations can enhance the understanding of this new tool; the author suggests that a realistic approach on the matter can bring innovative operational conclusions on peace operations' effectiveness. The fourth chapter, which is also the core section of the research, develops the nexus between national interests and peace operations and elaborates on how peace missions can be functional to the achievement of national interests – and thus to the implementation of national foreign policy objectives. A comprehensive set of national interests is identified, described and grouped into five main categories: a. security; b. political influence; c. economic advantage; d. operational enhancement and capabilities development; e. image building and diplomatic leverage.

If on one hand "Security" - the first main category - seems to be the strongest motivation for countries that engage in a peace operation, the second category, "Political influence", is multifaceted and more variegated. Countries can in fact use functionally peace operations to reach a political deal with other partner countries; participation to a peace operation can also allow to increase control over the mission, it enhances the leverage on host authorities and in certain cases

political leaders use instrumentally peace operations to shape the internal political debate in countries engaged in these operations. On a more political level, joining a peace operation can increase the regional leverage of contributing countries and strengthen countries' coalitions or regional organisations.

The category "Economic advantage" reflects a complexity that is directly linked to the increasing strategic relevance of economic interests in a worldwide globalised market; in fact, countries tend increasingly to recur to peace operation to protect national economic interests; also, participation to peace operations can contributes to secure rich procurement contracts and financial incentives under the UN. Finally, joining a multinational peace operation means being able to share the financial burden of deploying troops into a conflict theatre.

The fourth category of national interests refers to "Operational enhancement and capacities development"; this macro category is more related to the actual implementation of peace operations and their added value for participating countries. Deploying its own national armed forces - in the framework of a multinational peace operation - can hold specific, strategic advantages when crisis are particularly sensitive to a country. Joining a mission secures also first-hand strategic intelligence and assures permanent training, improved interoperability and access to new technology for the national forces contributed to the mission. Finally, in certain cases, mainly developing countries can benefit from military assets and equipment donations.

The last category of national interests concerns long term advantages that are not always tangible and clearly ascribable to a specific peace operation. It relates to perception, both within the diplomatic circles and more broadly within the international public opinion : "Image Building and Diplomatic Leverage". States engaging in peace operations increase their international profile and legitimation when setting new international security norms (Norm setter); they contribute to rise their profile of soft and responsible security actor and, under certain conditions, of civilian player. Finally, intervention's legitimacy in a third country is enhanced if done via the participation to a peace operations. The costs and benefits linked to non-intervention are also assessed.

In addition to the in-depth analysis of this set of national interests, the author proposes a model where interests are integrated; this operational matrix can be applied to any country and provides relevant information about its likelihood of joining a specific peace operation.

Finally, the case study focuses on the specific type of peace operations developed by the European Union in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); it proves that such tool emerged as a key element of the EU comprehensive approach policy toolbox available to the EU Member States to manage international crisis. Within the European Union, national interests prove to be the driving forces behind all negotiations between the 28 Member States; similarly, also CSDP missions' conception and implementation are deeply-rooted

in such negotiation architecture that makes EU Member States national interests dominant in every step towards the establishment of a peace operation.

The goal of this research was to prove that peace operations are veritable, modern foreign policy tools; in fact, as foreign policy's essence lays in the pursuit of national interests, all motivations leading to an instrumental use of peace operations have been scrutinized, both under a theoretical and a practical angle.

This research work holds as a background objective to unmask the humanitarian and philanthropic narratives that accompany peace operations' literature, and through the lens of the realist theory prove that national interests are profoundly embedded in all peace operations. Also, this study aims at filling the existent gap in the academic research that has so far neglected a more theoretical but extremely critical analysis of the initial phase of peace missions' establishment and related national interests' shaping. In a quickly evolving world security environment, the current model of peace operations is likely to evolve and most probably it will be soon challenged in its forms and values by the new rising world powers, coherently with their interests concerned.

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