



Situation Report

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Learning to use force on the hoof in peacekeeping: Reflections on the experience of MONUC's Eastern Division

Introduction

Since 1997, the United Nations (UN) has been requested to undertake challenging new tasks. Several of the peacekeeping missions (18 in total), and the *Mission d'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) in particular, had to operate in a very volatile environment with a mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Chapters VI and VII define the use of force in UN peacekeeping. While Chapter VI limits the use of force to self-defence only, a mission under Chapter VII is allowed to use all necessary means, including the pre-emptive use of deadly force, within its capacity and in the areas where its armed units are deployed, to carry out its tasks in accordance with its Rules of Engagement. The Rules of Engagement are an instruction of when and how to use force – the Bible or Qu'ran of the military component, so to speak. In most cases, the UN is called to intervene when all other options have failed to resolve conflict within a country, but also conflicts including neighbouring countries (e.g. United Nations Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL)), which often destabilize regional security and lead to a catastrophic humanitarian situation. In many cases the UN operates in regions where a state has either collapsed or is severely weakened, with no underlying structure or infrastructure for a mission to lean or build on. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of these countries. After 32 years of mismanagement by former President Mobutu Sese Seko and two civil wars involving a number of neighbouring countries, the environment was volatile and the military component of the mission had to take the lead in providing security, in protecting civilians under imminent threat and in countering threats to peace from different groups and armed factions, including a number of women and children.

The aim of this paper is to focus on the role of the UN peacekeepers in robust Chapter VII operations; the appropriate level of military response; challenges commanders face in the field; and the need to improve their performance. The change from traditional peacekeeping under a Chapter VI mandate to a complex, robust peacekeeping operation under a Chapter VII mandate has a number of important implications. MONUC's experience in the DRC is used to provide a number of suggestions on how and when UN peacekeeper's decisions in the field to use force should be made. The security situation in the DRC is outlined and the 2004 Bukavu crises that led to the formation and deployment of the Eastern Division is addressed. It also includes lessons learnt on risk management for the troops, challenges facing UN military commanders in multidimensional peace operations and the adjustments made to make the operations of MONUC's military component more effective. It concludes with some suggestions for the way forward.

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To illustrate the way in which the UN peacekeeping forces operate under Chapter VII, this paper focuses on MONUC – an example of the most complex, the biggest and most expensive UN operation in the history of the UN. A short overview of events is provided on how the mission in the DRC evolved over time from a small observer mission under Chapter VI to a robust peacekeeping operation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

On 10 July 1999, with the Lusaka Agreement, the belligerent forces in the DRC signed a ceasefire. Subsequently, in August 1999, a small UN observer mission was deployed which became MONUC in November 1999 and a fully-fledged peacekeeping mission long after. In 2000, Kisangani was the scene of heavy fighting between Ugandan and Rwandan troops, which had invaded the DRC. A year later, the President of the DRC, Laurent Kabila, was assassinated during the ongoing peace talks and his son, Joseph Kabila, succeeded him in January 2001. As a result of the peace talks held at Sun City, near Johannesburg in the Republic of South Africa (RSA), the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the DRC was signed in Pretoria, RSA, on 17 December 2002. On 30 June 2003, transitional institutions were inaugurated with Joseph Kabila as the President and four former belligerent leaders as Vice Presidents, as well as a transitional government. On 18 February, after almost three years of transition, President Kabila promulgated the new DRC Constitution. During the ensuing elections Joseph Kabila was elected as President of the DRC and sworn in on 6 December 2006.

In May 2003, just before the start of the transition, the withdrawal of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) had created a vacuum in the District of Ituri and in particular in the city of Bunia. Violence between the Hema and Lendu tribes spread quickly in the Ituri District and remained unchecked despite the presence of MONUC. MONUC had very limited forces at its disposal. Given the lack of sufficient troops, the UN Secretary-General asked France for military intervention. A military contingent of the European Union (EU) was deployed rapidly for three months until 1 September 2003. France was the lead nation in this EU operation (Operation ARTEMIS). To restore order in the city of Bunia alone, 1 500 soldiers were needed. Following the mandate and the Rules of Engagement of this operation, MONUC became a mission mandated under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The Bukavu crisis of June 2004 dealt a severe blow to the credibility of the UN, MONUC and the peace process. On 26 May 2004, fighting broke out in Bukavu between elements of the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) and dissident soldiers loyal to the suspended Deputy Commander of the 10th Military Region Command (MRC), Colonel Jules Mutebutsi. Brigadier General Laurent Nkunda started an offensive from his stronghold in the capital of North Kivu, Goma, to support Mutebutsi. MONUC warned Nkunda to stop his advance towards the airport and Bukavu city, or to face the use of force by MONUC forces, including attack helicopters. Threats and ultimatums by MONUC, however, were not followed by actions when Nkunda challenged MONUC. As a result, the city of Bukavu and the airport fell into the hands of Nkunda. Looting, rape and murder by Nkunda's forces occurred on a wide scale. Demonstrations were also held in Lubumbashi, Kalemie, Mbandanka, Kisangani, Beni and Kindu.

Most damaging for the mission was the perception of the international community, as well as of the Congolese, that after the crisis in Kisangani in 2002 and in Bunia in 2003, MONUC had again failed to support and to protect the Congolese people. It was obvious that MONUC's operational capacity to handle crisis situations fell considerably short of what is required: to use force when an opponent is threatening and not to live up to the threat leading to a loss of credibility. To do so, there must be a political will in the leadership of a mission to use force if the situation so requires it. Lastly, protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence as stipulated in MONUC's mandate raises expectations amongst the local population and the international community. Doing less is placing at risk not only the troops, but all the UN staff, including civilians. The Bukavu crisis illustrated the vulnerability of the peace process to derailment by spoilers and the inadequacy of the MONUC military to address such interventions, particularly in the Kivus.

The Security Council's authorization in Security Council Resolution 1565 in 2004 to deploy an additional 5,900 troops to the DRC resulted in a revised concept of operations focusing primarily on the east but with some reinforcement in Kinshasa. A divisional headquarters (HQ) in Kisangani was established and made responsible for the conduct of MONUC military operations in the eastern DRC. This was the first time in the history of peacekeeping that a division level was established leading brigade-sized units under a force HQ. The key elements of this structure were a separation of the operational and tactical level of command, and an increased autonomy for conducting military operations devolved to the most suitable level of command.

The area of responsibility of the division is approximately two-and-half times the size of France. The division comprises 14,500 (out of 17,200) soldiers. Their mandate is to

- protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence in the areas where its infantry battalions are deployed and as it deems it within its capabilities
- ensure freedom of movement
- support the FARDC to disarm foreign armed groups.

In the execution of their mandate, MONUC's forces are sometimes faced with strong opposition from armed groups, local and foreign. With the establishment of the Eastern Division, MONUC had greater capacity to conduct operations than before and MONUC forces have at times been engaged in heavy fighting with militias in the District of Ituri, in Province Oriental, with Forces *démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR)/*Interahamwe*, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU) groups in the North and South Kivu provinces, and also with dissident FARDC units in north Kivu. The division alone lost 34 soldiers since its establishment in February 2005. In particular, in operations in Garamba Park in Province Oriental and in the Ituri District, the Bangladeshi and Guatemalan contingents sustained severe casualties.

Training and equipment

There are a number of factors that can help to reduce risk to acceptable levels. First, it is important that potential troop-contributing countries are well prepared, which preparations should include comprehensive briefings by UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and/or the mission (if it already exists) on what is required when troops operate under a Chapter VII mandate. Troops are sometimes ill-prepared for operations in difficult environments such as the DRC with all the attendant consequences. A number of troop-contributing countries send soldiers who have never served or even travelled outside their own country. Therefore, it is vital to brief them on what to expect whilst serving in a country with a totally different culture, different (religious) habits and in a volatile, sometimes hostile, environment in order to lower the 'cultural' shock when they are deployed. Well-prepared peacekeepers are better protected: soldiers with the right mind set, for example, are alert on duty, especially when out on patrol, which drastically reduces their chances of being surprised by an opponent. A good peacekeeper should be trained for the widest spectrum of violence: fighting in a war. The training should include the restrictive use of force up to deadly force, negotiating techniques and peace-building efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local population. Since the willingness of commanders to use force is vital when met with armed resistance, they must be trained in, and have accepted it, before deployment. Commanders at all levels, but also the politicians responsible for the deployment of the troops, should be fully aware of this requirement. On several occasions, I have faced problems in convincing reluctant unit commanders to use force when it was necessary. Some contingent commanders are even instructed by their national superiors to be very cautious about taking any risks that might affect their forces negatively. However, in our job risks cannot be totally excluded. It is important to reiterate that UN field commanders' decisions to use force are made carefully and as a last resort, only after careful consideration of the various factors. These

decisions should be carried out in a responsible manner that is very conscious of the responsibilities and consequences involved. The troop-contributing countries must ensure that their troops receive the required equipment to enable them to act with an expeditionary approach, that is, to use capabilities ingrained in the infantry battalions to set up their company bases independently and to maintain data transmission capabilities down to company HQs.

Intelligence

Intelligence on the opponent's capabilities and intentions is vital for commanders to take the right decisions and to give proper direction regarding the conduct of operations. MONUC (and not only MONUC, but the UN peacekeeping missions in general) faces a critical shortfall in intelligence-gathering assets to provide the brigade commanders with accurate, timely and comprehensive intelligence before launching operations in their vast areas of responsibility. Historically, *intelligence* was an unwelcome term in the UN. For most member states intelligence stood for less transparency and some were worried that the outcome of intelligence gathering might backfire on them. However, the bombing of the UN building in Baghdad made troop-contributing countries more aware that intelligence on the opponent's intentions, capabilities and actions is required in UN operations, in order to protect UN personnel, both military and civilian.

Problems related to the gathering of human intelligence (HUMINT) are mainly due to a lack of funding needed to employ enough people who are capable of providing sufficient information. However, obtaining accurate, timely and credible information is very difficult by HUMINT means alone. Electronic intelligence (ELINT) in support of HUMINT is required, since the various armed groups are dependent on radio, satellite and cellular communication systems to execute command and control. Most of the information between the middle and top layers of foreign armed groups and spoilers, such as Brigadier General Laurent Nkunda and Colonel Mutebutsi in the Kivus, or notorious armed group commanders, such as Bosco, Kahwa and Karim in Ituri, is communicated by cellular telephone. They also use these telephones to provide early warning regarding MONUC operations. Only the top leaders of the various groups can afford expensive satellite communication equipment to communicate with people outside the DRC. However, despite repeated requests for ELINT assistance from member states, very little assistance – and if it has been given, it has been only temporary – has been offered and received so far.

Although thousands of militias have been disarmed and MONUC forces have been successful in containing foreign armed groups, the situation on the ground remains volatile and unpredictable. In order to stay ahead of all armed groups and other spoilers, and to execute military operations led by reliable intelligence, MONUC needs to have actionable intelligence, and the capacity to evaluate and analyse information. For the time being, MONUC has hardly any assets to monitor arms-trafficking activities in the Kivus or in Ituri that are in violation of the arms embargo, and to enforce the embargo as mandated by the Security Council. MONUC does not have the intelligence to carry out operations to seize arms and it is unlikely to get the forces or the resources to control the long and porous borders, as well as the vast number of small airports in the eastern DRC. There are no assets available for aerial, air space and ground surveillance. Only a small maritime component with Zodiac rubber boats and four fast patrol boats exists to monitor the lakes bordering Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Equipment, including communications intercept for high frequency, satellite telephone and cellular telephones, direction finding and traffic analysis are required if MONUC wants to be aware of what the opponent is planning. Once the information is collected, an adequately staffed Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC), appropriately equipped with secure communication systems and a secure environment to process sensitive intelligence, is required. Finally, all components of the integrated mission, including human rights, police and political affairs must be encouraged to provide the JMAC with information. Unfortunately, there is little sharing of intelligence on

force protection and counterintelligence issues within the military intelligence, police and security communities between the UN agencies.

Special Forces

MONUC's Special Forces units are under the command of the Eastern Division. Their tasks vary from intelligence gathering to extraction operations. Special Forces are trained to the highest standards, are equipped with ultra-modern weapon systems, and use the latest technology, special techniques and procedures to fulfil their tasks. These UN forces normally operate with a higher degree of operational security than normal infantry units. So far, it has proven to be difficult in a UN environment to maintain operational security in an environment where UN personnel know and demand to know what is going on. However, these highly specialized forces are vital in carrying out operations to arrest people who have, for example, been indicted for crimes involving atrocities and who usually enjoy close protection. A few teams of Special Forces from Western countries with their vast experience would make a significant difference in the implementation of those operational plans.

Maps

Access to tactical maps (1:50,000) is required in order (1) to plan and execute operations; (2) to ensure safety standards (navigating and target acquisition using tactical maps are much safer than using maps with a much larger scale); and (3) to use supporting weapons such as mortars and attack helicopters accurately with minimum collateral damage. In the first five years of MONUC, the only maps that were available were those on a scale of 1:250,000, which are useful for aircraft, but are not precise enough for patrols navigating on the ground, since these soldiers need to be aware of every little track and river. After five years, thanks to the Dutch Government, MONUC finally received the first set of maps that were on a scale of 1:50,000. In order to produce maps on a scale of 1:50,000, the Dutch Army made considerable efforts in terms of surveillance to obtain the required data.

Winning the hearts and minds of the local population

The implementation of projects aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the local population can reduce risk. Small-scale projects financed either by the troop-contributing countries or by the UN as so-called quick-impact projects (QIP) – involving the repair of bridges, churches, schools and water wells, as well as the provision of medical care to isolated areas – can also increase the safety of, and mitigate risk to, UN forces (force protection) because of the information and early warning that may be provided by local actors. In this regard, it is vital that a sufficient number of interpreters be available to ensure proper communication between the peacekeepers and the local population. QIPs and 'hearts-and-minds' projects constitute an important tool in the coordinated information operations campaign of the mission. Troop-contributing countries should be encouraged to allocate funds with each of their contingents promoting hearts-and-minds activities. It is difficult and time consuming to win the hearts and minds of the local population. However, it does not take much effort to lose them. When MONUC has to use force to implement its mandate, it should do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties. Retaliation by the local population against MONUC is severe.

UN military commanders on the ground face a number of significant challenges, including interpreting the Rules of Engagement and limitations resulting from the lack of intelligence and UN administrative procedures.

Rules of engagement

The Rules of Engagement provide guidance to operational commanders specifying the parameters within which designated UN personnel may use force. The Rules of Engagement determine policy, principles, responsibilities and definitions of the use of force. In the case of MONUC, the Security Council mandated the mission to

use force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Rules of Engagement do not cover each and every event or incident. In many instances the commander on the scene faces situations in which the guidelines in the Rules of Engagement need to be interpreted and he is obliged to draw his own conclusion and base his decision on his own judgement and risk assessment, with due consideration of the specific environment at that time.

Duty to use minimum and proportional force

According to the guidelines set out in the use of the Rules of Engagement, any use of force must be limited in intensity and duration. In the reality of the DRC, however, opponents often give MONUC forces little warning. Therefore, the urgency of the situation dictates that UN soldiers immediately use deadly force to stop aggression. As regards the limitation of intensity, it is to be noted that on many occasions the only effective way to minimize casualties of both UN and FARDC personnel and of civilians is to raise the level of response. That includes the use of attack helicopters, also in situations in which the opponents 'only' use small arms such as Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles. The use of attack helicopters, however, can increase the risk of collateral damage (incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians or damage to civilian property not part of an authorized target). Therefore, strict instructions are given in the Rules of Engagement to avoid collateral damage as much as possible. Pilots of the mission's extensive military aircraft, when requested by the on-scene commander to engage the opponents with their weapon systems, have to decide, again based on their judgement and risk assessment, whether or not to open fire.

Imminent threat to the local population or to MONUC personnel

The Rules of Engagement authorize the use of force beyond self-defence to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. However, how imminent is imminent? What is the indicator or proof of an imminent threat that will be approved by a board of inquiry if anything does go wrong? On occasion the only way to disarm armed local and foreign armed groups who have conducted barbaric attacks with guns, spears and/or machetes is through the (proactive) use of lethal force. Recent operations to that effect by units from the Pakistani Brigade in South Kivu have been highly successful in restoring security in the area. The same applied to the Indian North Kivu Brigade protecting the civilian population of the cities of Sake and Goma against rebel forces led by Brigadier General Nkunda who tried to take the city of Sake on their march towards Goma. The brigade used attack helicopters and ground forces. By interpreting the Rules of Engagement proactively, the UN can reassure the local population and increase their confidence that the UN exercises its mandate robustly.

Hostile intent

The Rules of Engagement stipulate that where there is a

threat of imminent and direct use of force, which is demonstrated through an action, which appears to be preparatory to a hostile action, only a reasonable belief in the hostile intent is required, before the use of force is authorised. Whether or not hostile intent is demonstrated, must be judged by the on-scene commander, on the basis of one or a combination of the following factors: (a) the capability and preparedness of the threat, (b) the available evidence which indicates an intention to attack and (c) historical precedent within the Mission Area of Responsibility.

The armed groups in Ituri (hard-core militias), for example, refused to hand over their weapons when ordered by MONUC to do so. They continued to fight, which resulted in continuing ambushes and deliberate attacks on civilians and a considerable number of casualties of FARDC and MONUC soldiers, as well as civilians. Every opportunity was taken by those militias to challenge MONUC and the FARDC with armed force. UN helicopters have also been shot at and pilots have been injured. The tactics varied from hit-and-run attacks, deliberate ambushes and large, well-organized offensive operations using AK-47 small arms,

mortars, heavy machine guns and RPG-7 rockets. Sometimes they are even dressed as FARDC using human shields. Through such attacks targeting MONUC forces, FARDC personnel, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and the civilian population, they set a precedent of an imminent threat demonstrating an *ongoing* hostile intent. In situations like these, MONUC must respond immediately, find the militias, and forcefully disarm and arrest them.

Use of force beyond self-defence

MONUC brigade commanders often have information on the locations of concentrations of foreign armed groups. Attack helicopters may observe those concentrations during air patrols and brigade commanders subsequently request the launch of pre-emptive attacks on such locations. According to the Rules of Engagement, however, the use of force beyond self-defence may only be used (1) to ensure the security and freedom of movement of MONUC personnel and other personnel designated by the SRSG and (2) to ensure protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. In other words, in compliance with the Rules of Engagement attacking those positions is not authorized, unless MONUC has a clear indication that (1) those groups intend to commit an imminent hostile act and (2) no civilian bystanders are on the scene. In the DRC reality, however, most of the time militias, including dissident FARDC soldiers or other foreign armed groups are interspersed with civilians (i.e., women and children). Therefore, it is important to have an on-the-scene commander who is able to judge friend from foe, from the ground or from low altitude if positioned in an observation helicopter, and whether to decide to call for air support.

Any offensive action on MONUC's part concurs with, or follows sensitization efforts aimed at persuading the armed groups to give up their acts of violence. This is enhanced by contacts with local chiefs, efforts of relief organizations, and outreach activities to the local population and militias. This kind of sensitization efforts can yield significant results, such as the surrender of 3,000 militias following heavy fighting in the Tchei area in Ituri in June 2006. However, it should be noted that large numbers of militias still chose not to disarm and continue with violent attacks on civilians.

Warning procedures before force is authorized

The use of armed force should be a measure of last resort responding to a hostile act or hostile intent. In the Rules of Engagement, the UN has formulated a procedure determining the application of a graduated response to an armed confrontation between MONUC forces and armed groups. However, the steps (i.e., verbal negotiation followed by unarmed force, charging of weapons, warning shots and issuing a final verbal warning) to be taken before opening fire (graduated response) are not always realistic. The first serious armed confrontations of MONUC forces and militias in Ituri in February 2005, proved to be unworkable. Confrontations in the eastern part of the DRC between MONUC forces, armed groups, foreign armed groups and dissident FARDC soldiers are such that any delay in opening fire from MONUC forces could lead to the death of, or grievous injury to, the civilian population, UN and loyal FARDC soldiers, to whom we give our mandated support in the form of joint operations. For example, according to the graduated response procedures, UN attack helicopter pilots have to fire warning shots before engaging opponents. This frequently leads to situations that make opposing forces dive for cover in the bush, and immediately return and continue to fire at MONUC's positions as soon as the helicopter is out of sight, thereby defeating the purpose of using attack helicopters.

Introduction

The civilian-staffed support component of MONUC, also referred to as the *administration*, provides administrative and logistical support to the military contingents. In the UN system, logistical functions include all combat and combat

service support functions. The Director of Administration (DOA), a senior civilian UN staff member, is responsible for the administrative and financial certification, policy and procedural guidance, as well as the proper implementation of the rules and regulations. The DOA is responsible for all MONUC flights, including chartered civilian aircraft and military contingent aircraft. It should be noted that during the electoral period, MONUC exceeded South African Airways – the biggest air fleet in Africa.

Rules, regulations and procedures of the administration

Unfortunately, the rules and regulations of the UN do not always respond to the demands of contemporary multidimensional, high-tempo Chapter VII operations. No wonder, the rules were designed for less-complicated, classic Chapter VI operations. The limited financial powers of Regional Administrative Officers (RAOs), who are the direct interlocutors for the military commanders in the field, further complicate the already-complex procedures. RAOs have no procurement authority and their authority to purchase directly from the local market is limited. The result is that procurement procedures of some essential items or services, such as aerial surveillance devices, hard wall accommodation for troops and HQs, as well as airfield support services, can take up to a year. This obviously slows down the provision of necessary support to military operations. Night flying for military aircraft, for example, can be hampered by the lack of personnel manning the airfield tower at several airfields in the east of the DRC. Moreover, UN peacekeeping missions normally plan their budgets one year ahead. It is evident that in a rapidly changing operational environment in MONUC, it is almost impossible to plan military operations within the time lines. Finally, UN peacekeeping missions do not have the budget to respond to unplanned operational requirements, and the possibilities of finding funds to finance unforeseen material requirements.

Air operations

Shortly after the Eastern Division launched operations, it became evident that MONUC's military air operations were severely hampered by the rules and regulations as outlined in the *DPKO Aviation Manual*. The manual, and in particular the Air Tasking Procedure, is based on guidelines for the operation with civil aviation assets. Although the manual permits some flexibility regarding the use of military air assets, the outlined procedure often curtailed the responsiveness and the flexibility of the military aviation assets. Furthermore, a number of UN *modi operandi* of the military aircraft were not suited to carry out our main objective: that of ensuring a secure environment for the election process.

Therefore, MONUC had to keep the opponents off balance, which required a high tempo of operations. Following several constructive discussions with the DOA and the Office of Mission Support (OMS) in DPKO, MONUC received a number of waivers enabling the military component to execute operations in a much more professional way. This included the flying of Mi-17 helicopters with open back doors; the abseiling from Mi-17s; deplaning of troops whilst hovering, as well as emplaning and deplaning whilst rotors are turning. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for air operations have been amended taking into account the decentralization and delegation of authority from mission HQ in Kinshasa to sector air operations in the various sectors. This considerably reduced delays in crucial casualty evacuation and fire support missions. MONUC's SOPs could also be used by other missions operating under Chapter VII. However, the issue of the possible revision of the DPKO rules for night flying is still pending. This would be important, since without that the mission will not be able to utilize its night-flying capabilities fully. If DPKO harmonizes its night-flying regulations with the rules used by troop-contributing countries, the problem might be resolved. Another possible solution would be to provide infrastructural support to forecast route weather for night operations and provide the missions with a waiver for Instrument Flight Rules approach procedures. However, the authorization of a more flexible use of the rules and regulations that resulted in an approval of night

flying in November 2006, when MONUC was involved in heavy fighting against dissident FARDC forces, proved to be absolutely instrumental in the success of the operation.

Mobile operating basis

A concept was developed to deploy mobile operating bases from a battalion base for short periods of time in order to ward off the opponents by keeping the tempo of operations high and to cover the area of responsibility of the battalions better. The use of these new mobile operating bases required a maximum effort from the UN Administration to support these temporary short-term deployments. So far, UN forces had only operated from static bases that were well developed over a period of time. The concept has proven to be highly successful. The division conducts mobile operations within its area of responsibility with frequent temporary deployments of at least company groups deployed by air for protracted periods of time. This allows MONUC's military operations to be unpredictable so that potential spoilers of the peace and the election processes do not know with any certainty where MONUC troops will present themselves next. Equally important, these operations need to be robust. Freedom of movement has to be ensured at all levels, on the ground and in the air, in order to guarantee that military operations are carried out and that the local population can be provided with humanitarian assistance. Thanks to this concept of operations resulting in the perception of an enhanced military presence in the eastern part of the country, the local population claimed to feel more protected.

MONUC's Eastern Division has implemented its Chapter VII mandate since the beginning of 2005 and has faced severe challenges. Armed groups, foreign armed groups and bandits have attacked UN personnel, the FARDC and the civilian population. This forced the Eastern Division to use force, up to lethal force, and it regularly inflicted casualties on our opponents, which compelled them to surrender. MONUC conducts more mobile and higher-tempo operations than ever before and continues to do so.

These operations demand day-and-night employment of all assets and the use of Special Forces, which opened a new chapter in peacekeeping operations. It is vital that the decisions made by the UN commanders on the ground to use force are taken after careful and mature consideration of the various factors involved and as a last resort. Collateral damage to the civilian population should be avoided as much as possible, and their hearts and minds should be won as often as possible. Operations have to be carried out in a responsible manner after having assessed potential risks and consequences. A profound knowledge of the Rules of Engagement is crucial. Therefore, commanders and troops should be properly trained and instructed before and during the deployment. The strength of a mandate and the Rules of Engagement mainly depend on the will of a commander to implement them, as well as the resources available in terms of personnel, assets and support. In this regard, commanders need intelligence on the opponent's capabilities and intentions, enabling them to take appropriate decisions and to give clear direction in the course of the conduct of operations. MONUC faces a critical shortfall in intelligence assets, which would provide the brigade commanders with accurate, timely and comprehensive intelligence before launching operations in their vast areas of responsibility. Mobile operating bases, night operations, deployment of Special Forces and air mobile operations are vital in order to maintain a high tempo, which keeps the opponents off-balance and is aimed at forcing them to cease hostilities. Troop-contributing countries and the UN Administration have to adapt to these new types of operations that generate special requirements, such as airfield services, defence stores, ablutions, communications equipment, air surveillance equipment and air transport.

The experience of the Eastern Division has demonstrated that certain UN regulations related to military aircraft operations need to be amended in order to permit the carrying out of those operations. MONUC managed to authorize this

kind of operation by requesting special waivers from UN HQ. In order to protect the civilian population better and to make military operations more effective, the surveillance capacity of MONUC should be enhanced. A comprehensive study of the composition of contingent-owned equipment should be initiated to ensure that the deployed troops are equipped with appropriate equipment.

MONUC has come a long way in developing robust peacekeeping operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The main lesson for MONUC is that the UN is able to carry out robust peace enforcement actions within a limited scope – limited, because the DPKO is not structured to take the lead in fighting wars. The deployed peacekeeping units are not suited to carrying out prolonged offensive operations akin to war. However, a series of adjustments and improvements in the business of peacekeeping considerably increased the efficiency and efficacy of its Chapter VII operations. Some further improvements are still necessary to increase the confidence of troop-contributing countries in the capacity of the UN to carry out such complex operations. The more robust Chapter VII operations will always have a higher degree of risk assumed in decision making at the field level than traditional peacekeeping operations under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Integration, co-operation, and a better understanding from all UN actors, including the military, civilians and other international actors, will be vital to taking forward the UN by improving both its reputation and its peacekeeping capability.

As regards MONUC, a continuation of its presence will be necessary. The FARDC and the police are not yet in a position to take over the task of protecting civilians who continue to be threatened by militias, foreign-armed groups and other spoilers. MONUC can only leave the DRC once its security forces are veritably integrated, trained, equipped, fed and properly led. In the meantime, MONUC will continue to keep the peace and to enforce it if necessary. MONUC has proven that it can do so successfully.

Major-General Patrick C. Cammaert was the General Officer Commanding the Eastern Division (MONUC) from February 2005 to February 2007. Prior to that he was a Military Adviser at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) from October 2000 until November 2002. He was also the Commander of the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) based in Copenhagen, and a Commander of the First Dutch Marine Battalion with the United Nations Transitional Administration in Cambodia.

About the
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