

Week Topic : Peacekeeping and the U.S.-Japan Alliance

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Evolution and Aspects of UN Peace Operations

The development of UN Peace Operations (POs) was born out of necessity in 1948 when the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East. It was an ad hoc response to international crises of that time, where it was believed that the interposition of a military force could create a buffer between warring parties and lessen the military insecurities of both sides. Since then, 67 peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the UN, 54 of them since 1988. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of military personnel, as well as tens of thousands of UN police and other civilians from more than 120 countries have participated in UN peacekeeping operations.

Generally, UN POs developed within two stages, one before the year 1989, the other after. Before 1989 the development consisted of a gradual evolution of peacekeeping concepts, demands and techniques. This time was also marked by a continuity of participating countries that trained their troops in the tasks of peacekeeping. After 1989, more concrete developments could be observed. Several UN sub-organizations got established, such as the UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group) or the ONUCA (UN Observer Group in Central America), which were meant to interject peacekeeping troops into civil conflicts, demobilization of soldiers, voter registration and education, election assistance and monitoring, supervise external supply of weapons to internal factions etc.

The aspects of post-1989 missions are divided into nonmilitary and military features. The nonmilitary ones consist of the implementation of detailed peace agreements which require functions such as: verification, supervision and conduct of elections; supervision of civil administration; promotion and protection of human rights; supervision of law and order/police activities; economic rehabilitation; repatriation of refugees; humanitarian relief; de-mining assistance; public information activities, as well as training and advice to governmental officials. The military aspects, like assisting parties to demobilize and disarm, enforce sanctions and no-fly zones,

protect safe areas, and deliver humanitarian aid, call for different expertise. Therefore multiplying fore requirements and placing greater demands on command, control, coordination and communications are needed.

U.S. and Japanese Positions towards Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)

One of the major drawbacks of UN PKOs has been the mission in Somalia in the 1990s, where the UN intervened without the consent of the warring parties and therefore found itself under attack from the armed forces. This was the first time in the history of UN PKOs that a peace operation in a civil conflict failed, and that members realized for the first time that they overestimated the abilities of the UN. This insight was with major consequences for future engagements of member countries in PKOs. In the following the focus will be on a comparison between the United States' and Japan's positions towards PKOs.

Historically seen, the US is deeply ambivalent toward international organizations and their activities. After the failure of UN interventions in Somalia, which happened during Clinton's administration, the president had to face harsh congressional opposition towards future engagements in peacekeeping missions and the following years, the States participated only very restrictively in UN affairs. Also his successor, president Bush, was deeply critical and unsupportive before the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. After the attacks and the defeat of the Taliban, Bush changed the United States' strategy towards UN missions, emphasized their necessity and requested allied participation to defeat the axis of the evil.

Japan, on the other hand, has to face historically fixed constitutional limitations on the deployment of troops or weapons abroad. This is due to the Article 9 in its constitution, which was included after the outcome of WWII. Because of these limitations, Japan's participation in PKOs basically gets narrowed down to nonmilitary functions, although the issue of peacekeeping stands for the country's desired identity as an internationally perceived Great Power. After the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001, Japan provided financial support and humanitarian assistance, but no military support in form of self-defense forces (SDF).

Japan's Constraints towards PKO

The underlying tension between Japan's general support for the UN, and its deep-seated reluctance to use military force after WWII is based on two major

causes. The first one is the country's historical legacy; neighboring countries' have concerns about Japan's initiatives in the field of security and the accompanying increase use and education of military forces. The second one is its pacifist orientation, which consists of the strong public support for the aforementioned Article 9 of Japan's constitution (also known as the Peace Article). Hence, there is a continuously ongoing domestic debate on whether Japan should send its forces to UNPKO or not.

Japan, aware of its domestic limitations towards UNPKO, tried to solve the problem already when applying for UN membership in 1952. It was explained to the UN, that due to the constraints of Article 9, Japan would not be able to participate in the collective security mechanisms provided for in the UN Charter. The UN considered Japan's domestic limitations and so it was not obliged to do what was behind its constitutional means. Therefore, Japan's participation in PKO has been limited to the following functions: financial and equipment support, election monitoring, medical activities, communication and transportation activities, civilian police and patrol activities, and logistical support. Although Japan contributed as much as it was possible in respect of its constitution, it often had to face criticism of being a free-rider of UNPKO from other participating states. On the one hand, this criticism is understandable, as the other countries also had to provide military assistance during UN operations, but one also has to consider Japan's difficult situation. Its desire to play a significant role not only in global economic affairs but also in international politics probably was diametrically opposed to the uprising criticism. The major differences between the five general principles of UN PKO and Japan's five principles can be seen in the following table:

UN's PKO principles	Japan's PKO principles
Existence of cease-fire agreement	Cease-fire must be in place between the warring parties
Impartiality and non-intervention	Parties to the conflict and host country must have given their consent to the operation, and Japan's participation in it
Non-coercion	Operation must be conducted in a strictly impartial manner
Use of weapons only in cases of self-defense	Japan's participation may be suspended and personnel/troops withdrawn, if any of the mentioned conditions cease to be met
Maintenance of the international	Use of weapons shall be limited to the

character of the operation	minimum necessary to protect the lives of the personnel
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Japan, somehow trying to avoid its constitutional restrictions towards military participation in PKO, passed the International Peace Cooperation Law in 1992. This law provided a legal framework that enabled Japanese personnel, including SDF units, to participate in PKO. But still, the so-called de-freezing of PKO core activities occurred without constitutional revision of the limiting paragraphs. In the end, the deployment of SDF units stayed restricted to areas where the probability of hostility was low. The five PKO principles listed above, still ensured that Japanese personnel would not be identified with the use of force. The need to consider the International Peace Cooperation Law maintained, so that consent for Japan's participation in a PKO will be the same as the consent the UN obtains for conducting operations.

Demand for Peace Operations in Asia and a possible U.S.-Japan Cooperation within the Alliance

During the 1990s, Asia suffered from more violent conflicts than any other continent. Even today, peacekeeping in the region may become important in the area of antiterrorist missions, e.g. in the southern part of the Philippines where radical muslim groups try to separate from the government. But even though there were this many violent incidents in Asia, there were comparatively few UN interventions in the region. This is because the conceptions of sovereignty of Asian countries. These countries believe that UN mediation or intervention in their own country would undermine their sovereignty. This means, before UN missions can applied successfully in the Asian region, a fundamental rethinking of sovereignty needs to take place, and this rethinking should be embedded within a regional framework in the best case outcome.

Before we can talk about a well-functioning U.S.-Japan (peace operations) cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, new forms of cooperation for the 21st century need to be explored first. To start off with bilateral joint activities in the fields of peace building and conflict prevention seem to be good choices. The two allies could, for example, establish a joint training of peacekeepers, or make plans for civilian police activities in post-conflict areas to maintain community security and safety within the region. After a successful implementation of these processes and joint activities, the operations can be expanded into other regions or gradually include other (Asian) countries. This might lead to the development of a multilateral

humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping mechanism in the Asia-Pacific. This regional mechanism can be useful for legitimizing intervention in an intra-state conflict when the UN cannot adopt a resolution, due to the countries' perception of state sovereignty.