

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

- 1 From 28-31 May 1999, an international workshop on *Integrated military doctrine: Towards a global consensus on peace support operations* was presented in Prague by the Institute for International Relations (Czech Republic) and the Institute for Security Studies (South Africa). At this workshop, it was agreed to schedule a first Southern African regional workshop on *Integrated principles for peace support operations* for 24-26 August in Harare, Zimbabwe.

A second international workshop with the theme *Towards a global consensus on peace support operations: The African dimension*, will be held in Pretoria from 21-23 October 1999. This workshop will also be hosted by the ISS in collaboration with the Czech Institute for International Relations. The ISS contribution to this series has been generously funded by the Norwegian government, through the Training for Peace in Southern Africa project.

- 2 As the theme suggests, the events in this series of workshops were motivated by a need for greater conceptual clarity on principles and doctrine for the conduct of increasingly complex peace support operations. From an institutional and legal point of view, this issue is a global one. In practice, however, the problem is more pressing in some regions than in others. Africa and the Balkans, for example, have emerged as the most dangerous and challenging environments for the conduct of contemporary peace operations.
- 3 A number of conflicts in Africa have also recently elicited robust multilateral military interventions, but these have often not been conducted according to any of the emerging principles of peace support operations. The time is ripe, therefore, for a broad and candid international dialogue on the purposes of intervention, the principles that should guide it, and the strengths and weaknesses of existing instruments. While the Prague event focused mainly on the Balkans and on policy level issues, the workshop in Harare focused on the challenges of PSOs in Africa at operational and tactical levels.
- 4 The workshop thus aimed to enhance the mutual understanding of the principles and guidelines for the conduct of PSOs at operational and tactical levels, through the proposal of workable solutions to existing problems and the recommendation of research projects to address those

key problems/issues that could not be adequately considered by the participants.

- 5 The objectives of the regional workshop, expressed as likely deliverables and possible 'unfinished business' for the Pretoria conference and subsequent events, were as follows:
- a first statement on the framework for analysis of past PSOs in Africa;
  - a first statement on the most promising areas for the development of global peace support doctrine;
  - a first statement on the distinctive needs of 'peacekeeping in the African context' (not just doctrine), as a basis for generic contingency planning;<sup>5</sup>
  - some ideas for encouraging debate in official circles and in the public arena;
  - proposals for future research topics; and
  - ideas on the structure of a future doctrine statement informed by the African experience.

It is important to note that this workshop was merely the beginning, and not the entirety, of a process aimed at achieving greater doctrinal clarity and consensus. The questions and issues that were raised, did not attempt to cover every significant area of emerging doctrine, nor did they seek to explore all issues to an equally great depth. Furthermore, the development of 'doctrine' is not a search for a 'template' designed to fit every contingency. Doctrinal clarity merely assists commanders (and all ranks) to arrive quickly at viable solutions to common problems. It also helps them to communicate detailed requirements succinctly.

## PARTICIPATION

- 6 Participation was not based upon any regional grouping or mandate. Rather, the group was constituted through personal networks that enabled the identification of a number of experienced military officers and civilian experts who were willing and able to contribute to a candid debate in pursuit of the aim and objectives of the workshop. The idea was to keep the group small enough to facilitate maximum participation by all members, while also obtaining sufficient geographic and cultural diversity to avoid the 'group think' trap. Issues of broadening participation during future events of this nature are discussed in the final section of this report.
- 7 Suffice it to say that the group that finally assembled in Harare included military officers from Botswana, Britain, Kenya, South Africa and

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5 'Generic contingencies' are non-specific in that they do not identify possible states, or subregions which may require peacekeeping/PSOs in future.

Zimbabwe – as well as a few civilian scholars and experts. (See Appendix A for a list of participants and their contact details.)

## PREPARATION

- 8 The deliberations of the workshop participants were informed by a number of discussion papers. A draft working paper was specifically provided to orient participants and to guide discussions. Background papers on the following topics were also provided:
- *Document de travail – Franco-British doctrinal statement of peace support operations* – British Directorate General Development and Doctrine
  - *Task Eight – Understanding the contribution of aid agencies, and how military doctrine needs to take account of their concerns* – UN OCHA IRIN Southern Africa
  - *A study of the coverage of PSO doctrine questions in African publications in recent years* – South African Army College
  - *Connecting traditional peacekeeping doctrine with African interventions* – Mark Malan, ISS
  - *A study of public opinion in sub-regions of Africa and opinion amongst troop contributors to peace support operations occurring in the DRC, Lesotho and the Caprivi Strip in Namibia* – Martin Rupiya, University of Zimbabwe
  - *Military intervention in Lesotho: Perspectives on Operation Boleas and beyond* – Theo Neethling, Centre for Military Studies, Saldanha
  - *Co-operation between the UN and the OAU in the management of African conflicts* – Margaret Vogt, International Peace Academy
  - *The South African Air Force in ONUMOZ and UNAVEM* – H A P Potgieter, South African Air Force
  - *The ECOMOG experience of peacekeeping in West Africa* – Eboe Hutchful, Wayne State University

These documents were distributed electronically and by hand to some participants several days in advance of the workshop. Due to the late rendition of some papers, and subsequent problems of distribution to those without access to e-mail, not all participants were able to study the background material in advance of the meeting.

## METHODOLOGY

- 9 It was agreed that participants should be content with a slow and methodical way of working towards the objectives outlined above. The idea was to initiate a deliberate process that examines the best evidence of past conflicts, draws on African opinions and African experiences to a

bring together a considered, robust set of statements that will inform the evolution of doctrine for PSOs. These ideas would then be incorporated into a working draft PSO doctrine that will fit foreseeable contingencies and eventually command respect across the national and linguistic divides that characterise the African continent.

- 10 The best ideas generally come from 'inspiration followed by consultation': a process that captures ideas and then tests them under ongoing peer review until they are refined enough to be ready for publication. The peer review should look at the general validity of the ideas and their practicality in the African context. There is no sense in advancing ideas that are only valid in rare circumstances or that are impractical in the African context. There was, furthermore, a degree of exploration of subjects and issues, often without arriving at precise conclusions. This is entirely in keeping with the longer term methodology: to expose problems, issues and possible solutions to an ever-widening group of experts, over time, to develop new and robust doctrinal ideas. Part of the process is the encouragement of discursive discussion, without giving way to impatience when a substantive result develops only slowly. Topics and issues will be revisited at later events: at this stage, no statement should be regarded as a last word on a subject.
- 11 It was also agreed that the workshop should focus on doctrine (i.e. the operational level and tactical levels) rather than political, legal or strategic matters. These higher levels normally get all the attention – and the result is often nebulous discussions without form or conclusion. In the regional workshop, attention was paid to the area where the participants have real expertise. Moreover, as this first regional workshop was only two days long, the whole group was presented with a few big issues to consider collectively, and several smaller issues were identified for consideration in two different syndicates.
- 12 The workshop objectives were worked into a number of 'tasks' for discussion in plenary sessions and in syndicate groups. When each of these 'tasks' were on the table, the chairman of the meeting first asked for comment on the related research paper(s) and/or brief opening statements from the chair. This was followed by discussion of the 'task'. Rapporteurs recorded all contributions – unattributably. Their reports were further refined during the 'second bite' at each task on day two. (See Appendix B for the discussion programme.)
- 13 The method of working was thus a process of assessment and review, not of detailed drafting. The participants brought their collective experience to bear on subjects raised during the Prague workshop and in the background research papers. The activity was therefore expected to

centre around 'expert comment on recent research and commissioning of new research', rather than 'collective authorship'. On any issue under discussion, participants were invited: either to decide to make progress towards defining doctrinal principle (or statement) during the workshop (and provide a more complete item for the rapporteurs to take away at the end), or to refer that issue to further research.

- 14 The workshop was convened in order to give practical assistance to the processes of conflict resolution in the context of Africa. In order to elicit fruitful discussion during this event – where the experts were predominantly military officers – the agenda needed to focus on issues that relate to their expertise: the operational level and tactical level military matters which new doctrine should cover. It was accepted that there would also have to be some discussion – albeit at a lower level of detail – on broader questions of multilateral intervention.