

# TASK 2

## TOWARDS A SINGLE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF RECENT PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

### Rationale

- 43 One distinct requirement in the formulation of doctrine is the clarification of a 'framework for analysis', a means of organising the evidence of recent African conflicts (and the efforts made, or not made, to resolve them). This was the second theoretical subject tabled for discussion in the workshop. Although many military officers may be sceptical of this 'academic' point of departure, it is a necessity for the building of valid doctrinal principles. This is not the same as devoting resources to the study of military history for its own sake – it should be an entirely practical and purposeful endeavour that contributes directly to future doctrinal development.
- 44 It was suggested that a framework for analysis should be constructed by adopting a process that allows examination of past conflicts, and the interventions that sought to resolve them, in a matrix which includes measurements of a number of factors at the pre-conflict, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding stages. This could include factors such as the point at which the international community decided to get involved – and the international organisation that took the decisive steps (and those that did not). Although some of these factors reside on the boundary between policy and doctrine, this approach recognises the importance of timely action.
- 45 A better defined and more structured framework for analysis will allow the identification of fairly universal lessons that may be learned from past PSOs (and current unresolved conflicts).

### Task

- 46 Participants were challenged with the task of contributing towards an integrated framework for analysing past PSOs, as framed by the following questions:
  - *How do we develop useful ways of organising the lessons learned in past PSOs and ongoing conflicts in Africa?*
  - *How do we develop a politically neutral process of evaluation which does not 'point the finger' but emphasises successful and unsuccessful strategies/processes in conflict resolution?*

## Summary of points made in discussion

- 47 It was suggested that the elements that may constitute a framework for looking at successful and failed initiatives in past conflicts should include aspects such as the following:
- *Pre-conflict dynamics (conduct of faction leaders, ethnic rivalry, refugee flows, proximity of borders, degree of leading state involvement in political development, etc.)*
  - *Diplomatic/political approaches applied to the conflict: Was a cease-fire first brokered or were the roots-of-conflict first addressed? Was there a single mediator or 'contact group'? What roles were played by regional powers or organisations?*
  - *Were there any obvious 'missed opportunities' for conflict prevention – e.g. by preventive deployment of standby peacekeepers?*
  - *Timing of diplomatic intervention – had the fires burned out?*
  - *Was a combination of carrots and sticks used on belligerent parties?*
  - *Pre-agreement dynamics: Were the parties pressured from outside to sign an agreement to which they were not committed?*
  - *Agreement modalities – narrow (cease-fire) or broad (comprehensive) peace process?*
  - *Post-agreement peace support operations – mandate formulation and implementation.*
  - *Dealing with justice issues after agreement (truth commissions, war crimes tribunals, etc.)*
  - *Win-win approaches – the key or just one of the keys?*

These aspects could be grouped into three broad areas for analysis and comparison, with a chronological flavour, as follows:

- **separation of belligerent factions** – *requiring diplomatic (and possibly forceful) intervention to separate factions and end the fighting;*
  - **building a lasting peace** – *action taken to consolidate the cease-fire, begin establishing motivation for all sides to contribute to the process in a negotiated settlement; and*
  - **nationbuilding** – *construction of a win-win solution that brings all factions to a mutually acceptable longer term solution (but probably one where no one faction gets its way entirely) – plus a monitoring and ongoing conciliation process, backed by a longer-term economic aid plan.*
- 48 The comment was made that any 'lessons learned' framework should not be restricted to operational details of current and past PSOs. While the areas outlined above do focus heavily on the peacebuilding end of the conflict resolution spectrum, more emphasis should be placed on preventive actions. Where the latter have been successful, this would obviously extend the field of study to PSOs that never were.

- 49 Several additions were made to the list of aspects to be included in a future analytical framework. For example, it was felt that there is a need to include a psychological study of the dynamics of conflict. The level of strategic guidance that is provided, should also be included in the framework for analysis. For purposes of comparison, the definition of mission success must also be all-embracing. In this regard, it was noted that the local population's opinion of the outcome was the most important measure – not that of the troop contributors' sense of achievement. Moreover, while the general aim was to arrive at common principles of understanding, it was felt that participants should try to focus on African experiences, so that they could make an African contribution to the debate. Three broad questions were posed in this regard:
- *Is there an African way of understanding or analysing PSOs?*
  - *What are the special or unique conditions on the African continent?*
  - *What special contribution can Africans make to conflict resolution on their own continent?*
- 50 The great interest in African peace missions derives from the fact that, for many years, African nations have been dealing with problems that are now arising elsewhere in the world. It is thus very important to feed lessons learned from the African experience into the development of doctrine. For example, one really needs to study and understand the motives and actions of various factions in African conflicts (conflict mapping), before developing modalities for conflict resolution interventions.
- 51 This should include a thorough and detailed demographic study, including a study of local customs and taboos. It is particularly important to respect the status of local leaders. For the practitioner, there is a danger of creating a mental bias if one gets involved in the moral questions around the conflict and the objectives of the factions. The practitioner should generally restrict judgements to the terms of the mandate.
- 52 Participants with experience in operations in Somalia felt that PSOs in Africa will be more successful with African troops, because there is a greater chance of forming bonds of trust based on perceived common ethnic and cultural identities. 'Africanism' should enhance co-operation with the host population at operational and tactical levels. However, the impartiality of African contingents may be questioned for similar reasons (for instance, if some of the local people speak a related language to that of the peacekeepers). On the other hand, the ability to communicate effectively is crucial. More often than not the local population will have absolutely no idea who the peacekeepers are or what they are doing there.
- 53 There is also a need for a specific African analysis of military interaction with the humanitarian sector and the aid agencies. According to one

participant, his experience with aid agencies in Somalia was 'a nightmare'. Not only have unrealistic demands for protection been made upon military contingents, but in certain cases, local people suspected NGO workers of spying. It was also recognised that aid can sometimes reinforce the ethnic divisions that have led to conflicts in the first place. Paradoxically, it was noted that white aid workers are more likely to be trusted in Africa, because it is unlikely that they would be affiliated with a local belligerent faction.

- 54 Obviously, many more generic and Africa-specific factors can be added to the list of elements to be considered in the 'lessons learned' process, but it is important that any framework for analysis should provide for relevant points of comparison across different conflicts and conflict resolution initiatives. It was suggested that the military Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) may provide a more structured framework for lessons learned than those that had hitherto been used and that the IPB could be adapted to accommodate the type of input made by workshop participants. As briefly explained in the endnote, IPB has a strong emphasis on 'enemy' factors and would therefore need considerable adaptation to PSOs.
- 55 The resultant framework would have to be sufficiently flexible to cope with the fact that all operations are unique, and sufficient emphasis should be placed on African issues. Whatever the resultant framework, it was felt that lessons learned must be published and shared among all interested actors. It is not only the quality and relevance of the analysis that is important, but also what is done with it. With due deference to the work of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' (DPKO) Lessons Learned Unit, the idea of an African or a regional 'Lessons Learned Centre' was mooted. However, no matter how 'objective' the assessment criteria or framework, the articulation of lessons learned will always have controversial political consequences which will need careful management.

## The way ahead

- 56 Whereas there was consensus that lessons learned (in some form) would inform doctrinal development, the problems of political sensitivity and objectivity were daunting. In the absence of a generally accepted framework for analysis, roundtable sharing of experiences may prove more viable and educational in the short term.
- 57 Some participants favoured a traditional case study approach to the study of past PSOs. As a variant, it was suggested that case studies constructed from 'outcome' back through 'events' would allow attention to be given to positive and negative events in the process of conflict resolution, allowing

conclusions to be drawn on productive methods and approaches. If applied within a suitable forum, this could avoid the blandness of too rigorous research and overly political responses to analysis.

- 58 Colonel Wilkinson offered to make recent British work on lessons learned methodology available. This had been developed from the established IPB process associated with mission planning.

## **Unfinished business/Recommendations for further research**

- 59 A question that remained unanswered during the discussion was at what stage of the mission the lessons learned process should be started and when should it end. Can one begin with a lessons learned process and then revisit it a few months/years down the line? Perhaps the answers will inevitably vary from mission to mission, but some clarity would enhance comparative studies across different missions. This aspect may be included in a broader academic endeavour that picks up where the workshop left off – an attempt at adopting the IPB framework for the analysis of PSOs. If this could be accomplished, this framework may be applied to several recent African PSOs to see whether it holds good as a tool for analysis and lessons learned.
- 60 It was agreed that a paper on the IPB lesson learned methodology should be circulated as a research paper at a future workshop.