

COMPETENCY OF BANGLADESH ARMY IN CHANGING SCENARIO OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATION (PKO): REQUIREMENT IN TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

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Introduction

Contemporary United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) have evolved formally from only monitoring cease-fires between the conflicting parties to a great range of tasks, such as enforcing peace and helping rebuild states. Current security environment in PKO is full of potential threats, adversaries, and actors with divergent motivations who pose the asymmetric threat on the UN peacekeeping efforts and peacekeepers, as well. This requires an even more robust UN peacekeeping capability in the 21st century. It is evident that in many peacekeeping operations, the UN emblem has become a target, not a shield. Peacekeepers increasingly face direct threats from the armed groups and targeted by asymmetric attacks. The recent incidents in Mali, South Sudan, Central African Republic and DR Congo are some of the examples. As there is no chance to seek consent of the TAGs nor possible to remain impartial between legitimate governments and terrorists, the existing modus operandi is demanding worthy reforms.

Bangladesh Army is one of the largest troops contributing countries in the world to UN UNPSO. At this moment, a total of 7079 personnel are deployed in 09 UN missions around the world. Achievements of Bangladesh Army in UNPSO have been possible due to the professionalism, sincerity and sacrifices of Bangladeshi peacekeepers since 1988, when the Bangladeshi peacekeepers joined UN missions in Iraq and Namibia. Although Bangladesh (BD) Peacekeepers' performance in PKO under recent changes had been

appreciated so far, but the same at operational and tactical level had drawn criticism. The incidents of Guiglo (Cote d'Ivoire), Congo and recently in Mali raised questions and criticism about the competency of BD forces in PKO. These criticisms will certainly blur the achievements and successes that were specially achieved in Sierra Leone, where Bangla is acknowledged as the second official language in the recognition of Bangladeshi peacekeepers' contribution to bring back peace to the country. Factors such as inadequate leadership qualities in crisis situation, generalized skill at weapon handling, over stretched and ambitious deployment plan in some cases, limited exposure to robust training, combat experience, inadequate training against IED, and lack of proper equipment identified as the contributing factor for the criticism. Thus, an exclusive remodeling of peacekeeping training and induction of proper equipment inventory would probably be inevitable in order to maintain a respectable status and standard on the face of present peacekeeping challenges.

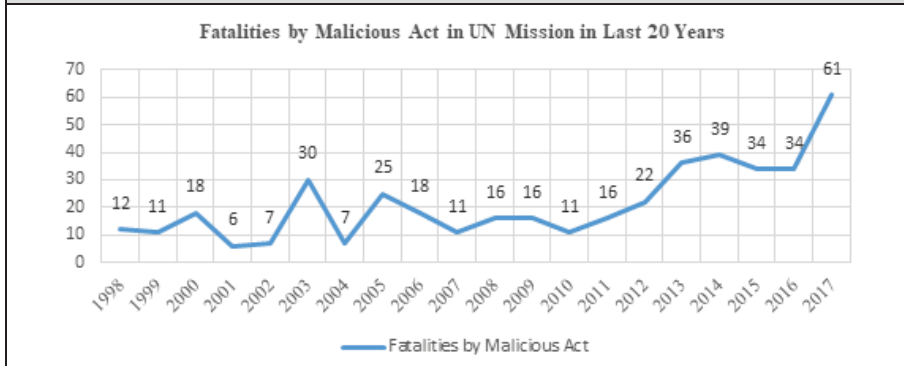
This paper will take an endeavor to recommend measures to make the BD peacekeepers more robust, by which BD Army can be adequately prepared to undertake the challenges of present PKO environment.

Changing Scenario of Peacekeeping Missions and Performance of BD Peacekeepers in the New Scenario

Peacekeeping missions today need to be prepared to address a range of increasingly complex and diverse threats. This is essential to ensuring the safety and security of mission personnel and effective implementation of the mission mandates. Peacekeepers are being deployed into hostile environments where there is no peace to keep and peacekeepers are the direct target of armed groups, spoilers and terrorists. They are not about reporting lines between two warring states. They are about dealing with the whole state, maneuvering mentally with the state as well as maneuvering physically throughout the whole area of the state.

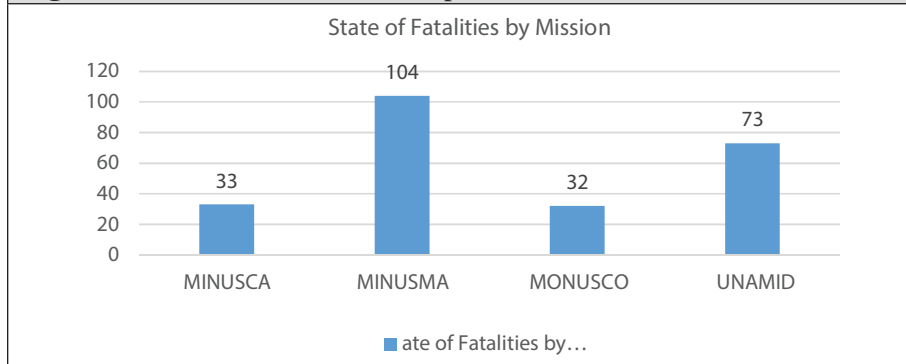
At least 51 UN and associated personnel were killed in the line of duty during the course of 2015, according to the UN Staff Union’s Standing Committee for the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service. The report further said, among those killed were 27 peacekeepers ... in deliberate attacks using improvised explosive devices, rocket and artillery fire, mortar rounds, landmines, grenades, suicide attacks, targeted assassinations and armed ambushes. According to same report, in 2014, at least 61 UN personnel were killed, in 2013, at least 58 were killed in deliberate attacks and in 2012, and at least 37 UN personnel were killed. For the second year in a row, the greatest loss of life in 2015 was recorded in Mali, where at least 25 personnel, including 11 peacekeepers and 14 civilians and associated personnel, were killed in ambushes, improvised explosive device detonations or when their vehicles hit landmines. The fatalities that took place in UN mission is shown from different perspective in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Figure 1: Number of Fatalities by Malicious Action in UN Mission in Last 20 Years



Source: Prepared by Researcher based on information collected from UN sites

Figure 2: State of Fatalities of Top Four Mission in Recent Years



Source: Prepared by Researcher based on information collected from UN sites

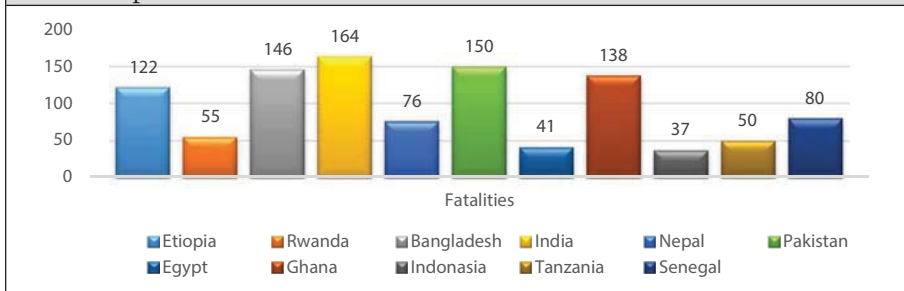
According to Schetter and Galtieri, Peacekeeping missions have changed dramatically in terms of goals, budgets and numbers throughout the last decades. Peacekeeping shifted from ‘securing states’ to ‘securing people’ carried out by a multidimensional approach. Today’s peacekeeping missions are characterized by ‘Robust Peacekeeping’, ‘Traditional to Multi-dimensional’, ‘Asymmetric Threat’, ‘Complex Attack’, ‘High rate of Fatalities’, ‘Transnational Organized Crime’, ‘Influenced by International Terrorism’, ‘Targeting Blue Helmet’, ‘Lack of confidence and trust amongst Signatories’, ‘Confusion Regarding Parallel Forces’, ‘Remote and Austere Environment’ etc. Robust peacekeeping comprises the tactical show or use of force to change behavior, and create conditions for a political process. Most of the current UN missions are under Chapter VII which is basically peace in enforcement and UN peacekeepers are authorized to use appropriate force. Once the peacekeepers utilize these tools for implementation of mission mandate, the affected party automatically goes against UN and targets the peacekeepers. Today’s peacekeepers also undertake a wide variety of complex tasks, from helping to build sustainable institutions of governance, to human rights monitoring, to security sector reform, to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. The armed groups pursue their criminal objectives via asymmetrical and terrorist operations. They regularly target United Nations

personnel and civilians. Transnational organized crime and international terrorism added new dimension to the conflict environment where these groups fight aggressively and employ guerilla and terrorist tactics, including rockets, IED suicide bombs. Several current peacekeeping operations are mandated to advance national reconciliation and dialogue in the absence of a peace agreement or even clear identification of the parties to the conflict for which the impartiality of the peacekeepers are subject to question. Extreme weather and wide dispersed deployment pose threat to sustainability for the contingents.

UN in their report “Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business” identified that United Nations and T/PCCs fail to change in the following areas: Leadership, operational behavior, Use of Force, Defensive Posture, Principles of peacekeeping, Selection of TCCs/PCCs, PDT, Equipment, Intelligence, Technology, Medical, Bases, Mission footprints, Administration, Impunity etcetera.

In the above mentioned changing scenario it is time to evaluate the performance of BD peacekeepers. As globally appreciated, BD peacekeepers performance so far in the UN missions is full of successes. However, handling the critical situations that arise on few occasions raise the question of its capability to handle these changing scenario. If we compare the number of fatalities of BD peacekeepers with other top TCCs we find that, BD has one of the highest fatalities among top TCCs.

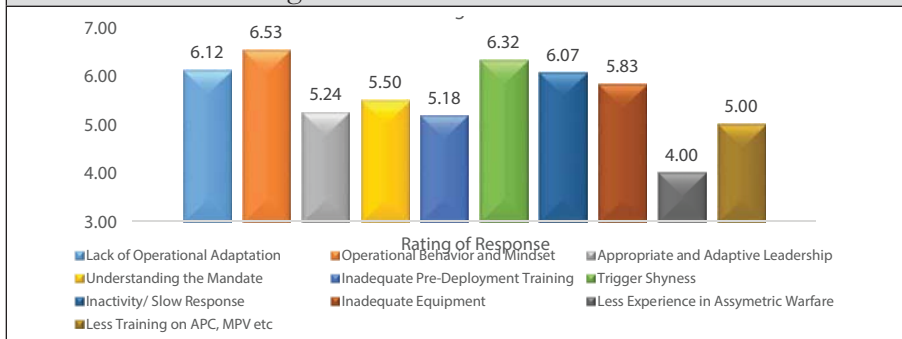
Figure 3: Comparative State of Fatalities of Bangladesh in PKO with Other Top TCCs



Source: Prepared by the author from UN Fatalities Fact Sheet

In a research (carried out by the author), the respondents have identified numbers of weaknesses of BD peacekeepers and rated them according to grave in nature. It was found that ‘Operational behavior and Mindset’ is the major drawbacks whereas ‘Trigger Shyness’, Operational Adaptation’, ‘Inactivity/ Slow Response’ and ‘Inadequate Equipment’ are other major weaknesses of BD peacekeepers. However, ‘Understanding the Mandate’, ‘Appropriate and Adaptive Leadership’ and ‘Inadequate Pre-deployment Training’ are also major grey areas. They also identified ‘Less training on APC, MPV etcetera’ and ‘Inexperience in Asymmetric Warfare’ are also in the list.

Figure 4: Weaknesses of the Present BD Peacekeepers/Contingents to Meet the new Challenges of PKO



Source: Prepared by Researcher based on information collected from Survey

Future Requirement for Peacekeepers in the Changing Scenario

The High-level Panel rightly recognized in its report that, “where asymmetric threats are present in the operating environment, United Nations missions must be provided with the necessary capabilities and training. In addition, an appropriate concept of operations and rules of engagement are required to protect themselves and deliver their mandates, including through preventive and pre-emptive postures and willingness to use force tactically to protect civilians and United Nations personnel”.

The complexities of today's operations require coordinated and cross-cutting action to enhance the equipping and training of peacekeepers, including UN police. Notwithstanding that troop and police contributing countries remain responsible for the delivery of training, member states, regional organizations, and the UN secretariat bring a collective wealth of knowledge and experience that is unparalleled to that of any single effort. The UN recognizes the value of training and support for mission leadership, in-mission scenario-based training and leadership partnering initiatives. It also acknowledges that a number of large-scale UN peacekeeping operations are taking place in franco phone environments.

Given the dynamic nature of peacekeeping and the unique challenges that peacekeeping personnel face on an everyday basis, DPKO emphasizes that there is a need to ensure that they are adequately equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform their duties. In General Assembly resolution A/RES/49/37 (1995), Member States recognized their responsibility for the training of uniformed personnel for UN peacekeeping operations and requested the Secretary-General to develop training materials and establish a range of measures to assist Member States in this regard. With the restructuring of DPKO and establishment of DFS in 2007, the Integrated Training Service (ITS) in DPET was created as the responsibility center for peacekeeping training.

ITS has set priorities for the training of peacekeepers in their Global Peacekeeping Training Needs Assessment, Final Report 2012-2013. They have categorized the requirement as common for all peacekeepers and individual requirements for civilian, military, senior manager and other activists. The priorities relevant to all peacekeeping personnel are given atFigure5:

Figure 5: Training Priorities Relevant to all Peacekeepers

- UNDERSTANDING OF:**
- The UN and peacekeeping history, basic principles, types of mandates, decision-making bodies (Security Council, General Assembly, C-34, 4th and 5th Committees), decision-making processes and Member State dynamics
 - DPKO/DFS objectives/mission mandate and the linkages with one's own function
 - Contribution of individual components to the overall mandate and inter-dependence between components operating in multi-dimensional peacekeeping contexts
 - Local context (history, customs and culture) to better interact with local constituents
 - Mandated tasks (such as protection of civilians, child protection, promotion of human rights) and cross-cutting issues such as gender and how to integrate them in one's work
 - Rules of engagement
- APPLICATION OF:**
- UN peacekeeping fundamental principles (consent, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate)
 - Highest standards of behaviour and integrity
 - Human rights and international humanitarian law and related UN policies
 - Zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
 - UN core values and competencies ⁷

Source: GPTNA, Final Report - 2012-2013

The performance and skill gaps identified through interviews and surveys and the recommendations of Commanders, Officers and Member States, ITS recommends to focus on the priorities for military personnel given at Figure 6:

Figure 6: Training Priorities Relevant to Uniformed Peacekeepers

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| <p>KNOWLEDGE TO DEVELOP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of the UN and its entities ▪ Peacekeeping and political affairs, to understand how the military supports the political mandate ▪ Application of protection of civilians, child protection and other aspects of human rights mandate implementation ▪ Cultural awareness within the host country and interaction with communities ▪ The roles of police and civilian components and how they relate to military work ▪ Rules of engagement ▪ Code of conduct, including prevention of SEA and consequences for misconduct | <p>SKILLS TO ENHANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication skills to build rapport and trust with internal and external counterparts ▪ Presentation skills to deliver quality briefings ▪ Conflict management ▪ Coordination with UN Police (through joint training exercises) ▪ English for all peacekeepers and French where it is a requirement ▪ Weapons firing ▪ Driving in difficult conditions (e.g. in sand) |
|--|---|

Source: GPTNA, Final Report 2012-2013

UN has also mission specific additional measures and, in consultation with troop contributing countries, to identify options, including seeking the support of Member States, to enhance the safety and security especially for mission under chapter VII to execute effectively its mandate in a complex security environment that includes asymmetric threats. The areas that UN presently emphasizing on are: ‘Knowledge on the ‘Use of Force’’, ‘Improve Intelligence Capability’, ‘Counter IED Training’, ‘Secured MSR’, ‘Effective CASEVAC and MEDEVAC System’, ‘Safety and Security of UN Personnel’, and ‘Riot Control Capability’. UN also has a comprehensive list of equipment that it prefers the contingents to possess. According to the ‘UN Peacekeeping Uniformed Capability Requirements Paper’ published on 23 July 2015, UN DPKO has proposed for some equipment for the member states to enhance the effectiveness and respond to the changing scenario. The proposed equipment are as follows:

- GPS tracking system and tactical UAV.
- Individual suits of advanced operational, communications and personal protective equipment and night-operation enablers, including night-vision devices (goggles, scopes, cameras and sensors).
- Comprehensive sensor suites (radars, cameras, infrared and other sensors) with command post fusion centers for UN camps and installations, including radar alert systems against mortar and rocket threats.
- Mobile Thermal Imaging Systems (MTIS). Modern Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) suites and units. Enablers like the drones, unattended ground sensors, night vision devices and the other state of the art surveillance equipment are Force Multipliers.
- Emergency alert systems linked to rapid and expert medical response. Advanced life support capability within the mission area and via medical evacuation (MEDEVAC).
- Mine protected vehicles. Advanced IED detection systems, including ground-penetrating radar; hand-held explosive composition detection devices.

- Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms (mobile, fixed, tethered, aircraft and UAVs) for route surveillance; electronic countermeasures and other alert systems linked to dedicated intelligence resources during convoy movement (as required by the actual threat).

Analysis of Present State of BD Army in the Context of Training and Authorization of Equipment

Bangladesh Army puts special emphasis in preparing its peacekeepers for future deployment in UN mission areas. Changes have been brought to PDT to meet the future challenges. Contingents mainly undergo institutional mission-specific training at Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations and Training (BIPSOT) and also unit level training in respective concentration area.

It is felt by the contingents that the PDT is not adequate for the contingents due to only 4 weeks training for trainer, inadequate training for special task and equipment by enabler units i.e. Networking, Communication Equipment, fork lifter, freezer etcetera and inadequate practical training on ROE. Moreover, late joining of contingent members gravely affects PDT both in BIPSOT and in unit. The contingents face difficulties in selecting suitable candidates for the training in BIPSOT. Contingent commanders felt that, more supervision by BIPSOT on unit level PDT can achieve the objective of training. Language course run by BIPSOT is not fully mission oriented. The block and detail syllabus of the contingents show that there is no training on Counter IED/ IED survival skill in PDT. There is no topic related to STM in PDT syllabus. Therefore, the specialized units i.e. Signal unit, Special Force Unit, Supply and Transport Unit etcetera are not trained along the UN requirement.

Bangladesh army do not have most of the equipment that UN suggested. Bangladesh Army is yet to have advanced GPS tracking system and tactical UAV in order to have upper hand on information-led operations. Individual suites of advanced operational, communications and personal protective

equipment are not also available with the peacekeepers. The urgent need of Mine-protected vehicles and advanced IED detection systems are also not available. However, BD contingents are already in a process to be equipped with latest force protection gadgets like Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles to withstand bomb and terrorist attacks during peacekeeping.

Proposed Training and Authorization of Equipment to Meet the Challenges

The training for peacekeeping operations need to be put into prescribed framework and should have a continuous process. The framework should include comprehensive syllabus for PDT, in-mission and unit training, and post-mission training evaluation. The member state must be of the same mind-set to support such activities.

The PDT needs to include STM to prepare the special units. The training on knowledge about use of force can be imparted by training on scenario based exercise. Some specialized training are also required for peacekeepers. Those are: Language Proficiency training, Emergency Response Training, Counter Terrorism and Counter IED Training, Command and Leadership training etcetera. Some of these training can be included in unit training.

Intelligence capability can be built through Mission Intelligence Cell which will have a common database shared with unit and BIPSOT. Mission specific training can impart more knowledge on mission mandate. Fire and move to be practiced regularly to avoid trigger shyness and have proper training on ROE and Robust peacekeeping.

Recommendations

- BIPSOT should include Specialized Training Manual for the enablers /specialized unit during their pre-deployment training so that the specialized units are trained and prepared according to their role to perform during the mission at mission area.

- BD army should take endeavor to make the BD contingents modern by authorizing additional technical equipment for their survival as well as to increase their operational performances. A board of officers can be formed to assess the new equipment and modern vehicle required for different types of units, thereafter, take an endeavor to purchase those.

Conclusion

The peacekeepers are not only deployed in hostile environment but they are also the target of armed groups. They are operating in more complex environment that feature asymmetric and unconventional threats. Peacekeepers undertake variety of tasks from rebuilding the government to DDR. The organized transnational criminals are present in the scenario and involved in drug and human trafficking, kidnapping etcetera. Mistrust amongst the signatories makes the task of peacekeepers more difficult. The present of parallel force and their action against rebel remaining within UN premises makes the blue helmet target of rebels.

Bangladesh peacekeepers have long history of success in peacekeeping. However, setback in Rwanda, abandoning Guiglo camp, ambush in DR Congo prove that BD peacekeepers lack operational adaptation, lack of appropriate leadership and support of neighboring units, deficient operational readiness due to inadequate Pre-deployment Training (PDT), trigger shyness, lack of concept of robust peacekeeping, lack of knowledge on ROE are the main reasons.

The HIPPO recognizes the need for specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and special military preparation to face new challenges. DPKO emphasizes that there is a need to ensure that the UN personnel are adequately equipped with knowledge, skill and attitude to perform their duties. The UN in their different reports emphasized that the peacekeepers should have the knowledge on 'Use of Force', improved intelligence capability, counter IED training, effective CASEVAC and MEDEVAC system, riot control capability etcetera. The UN also has a

long list of required equipment i.e. UAV, night vision devices, personal protective equipment, alert system, modern ISR, IED detection system etcetera. UN urges for more enabler units in the mission area.

Although BD Army put lot of emphasis on the training of peacekeepers but still there are scopes to improve. There are few shortcomings in the conduct of training for the peacekeepers. The new areas that UN is emphasizing are not included in the PDT. For example: Counter Terrorism, Counter IED, Robust Peacekeeping training and STM. Due to the late join of the contingent members in the unit, all the members do not have comprehensive PDT. The list of lack of equipment is also long. BD Army do not have advanced personnel protection equipment, mine protected vehicles, IED detection system, UAV for intelligence and perimeter surveillance for security.

The training for peacekeeping operations need to be put into prescribed framework and should have a continuous process. The PDT needs to include STM to prepare the special units. The training on knowledge about use of force can be imparted by training on scenario based exercise. Some specialized training are also required for peacekeepers. Those are: Language Proficiency Training, Emergency Response Training, Counter Terrorism and Counter IED Training, Command and Leadership Training etcetera. Some of these training can be included in unit training.

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Lieutenant Colonel Shahzad Pervez Mohiuddin, psc Signals was born on December 04, 1976 at Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was commissioned from Bangladesh Military Academy on December 13, 1996 in the Corps of Signals. His duties and appointments include staffs and company commander at Signal Battalions. He served as instructor in Signal Training Center & School. He was Inspector at Inspectorate of Electronics and Instrument. He also served as Director, Inclusion and Support Services at Proyash, Dhaka. Under blue helmet, he served twice at United Mission in Ivory Coast (UNOCI) both as contingent member and Force Headquarter staff respectively. He is graduate from Defence Services Command & Staff College. He is also a graduate from Department of Electrical Electronics and Communication Engineering at Military Institute of Science and Technology. He is also pursuing his MSc at Bangladesh University of Science and Technology.