Peacekeeping

by David Capie

New Zealand has been involved in peacekeeping since the 1950s. The country has sent soldiers and police overseas to keep the peace through patrolling troubled areas, clearing mines, building houses, destroying weapons, protecting civilians and training other troops, among other things.

New Zealand's involvement in peacekeeping

New Zealand has a long history of involvement in peacemaking and peacekeeping activities. As a small state, it has a strong interest in a rules-based international order and in the peaceful resolution of disputes. It was a founding member of the United Nations (UN) and supported the organisation's efforts to promote peacekeeping and peace making.

New Zealand has been continuously involved in UN peacekeeping activities since the 1950s. In 2011 458 New Zealand Defence Force troops and more than 75 police officers were serving in 19 UN-led or UN-endorsed peacekeeping missions. In addition to providing personnel, New Zealand also helped pay for these operations, contributing $22.2 million to the UN peacekeeping budget in the 2010/11 year.

Development of peacekeeping

In 1945 the UN was created and given the mandate 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.[1] In the UN context peacekeeping has involved the deployment of forces, sometimes unarmed, in order to prevent and contain hostilities and to keep adversaries apart. It is based on principles of consent, impartiality and of not using force except in self-defence. It is different from peace enforcement, which involves the use of coercive measures including military force to bring an end to hostilities, and peace making, which describes diplomatic actions designed to bring conflict to a negotiated end.

Peacekeeping missions are often led by the UN, but they have also taken place under the banner of regional organisations such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) or the African Union.

The New Zealand government often uses the broader term 'peace-support operations', which includes not only UN peacekeeping missions, but also peace enforcement and some other military deployments based on alliance and other ties.

Afghanistan

The largest deployment of New Zealand forces in the 2000s was in Afghanistan, as part of the international response to the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US. Although the mission was not a UN peacekeeping operation, foreign forces operated in Afghanistan on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions. In 2011 New Zealand had members of its SAS (Special Air Services) and a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Afghanistan.

The 140-strong PRT was based in Bamyan province, north-west of Kabul. Its mission was to patrol and provide security, train the Afghan army and police and provide assistance to the UN in

Afghanistan. By August 2012, 10 New Zealand soldiers had died while stationed in Afghanistan: eight in combat and two in non-combat situations.

From the New Zealand government's perspective, engagement in Afghanistan served three purposes. It supported the UN, offered an opportunity to work more closely with NATO, and was an important part of restoring the bilateral security relationship with the US, which had been strained after New Zealand adopted nuclear-free policies in the 1980s.

Police peacekeeping

While peacekeeping is often seen as a military activity, civilian police are increasingly involved in post-conflict situations. New Zealand police personnel have been posted to Cyprus (1964–67), Namibia (1989–90), East Timor (since 1999), Bougainville (2000), Solomon Islands (2003), Afghanistan (2005) and Tonga (following riots in 2006).

Borrowing people

When police were dispatched on peace-support operations, officers were 'borrowed' from district commanders around the country. Operations overseas became increasingly common in the 2000s, and it sometimes took as long as nine months before a replacement was found.

The kind of work carried out during these missions has changed. Until the end of the 1990s policing in international peace operations typically revolved around the SMART model (support, monitoring, advising, reporting and training). In the 2000s key tasks for New Zealand police overseas typically involved the 'Three R's'– reforming, restructuring and rebuilding the local police force.

In 2012 police remained on deployment in Afghanistan, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Tonga. The danger faced by police deployed in areas of war, danger or emergency was recognised in 2012 when they became eligible for burial in New Zealand services cemeteries.

Criteria for peace support operations

The deployment of troops and police to the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Afghanistan in the 2000s put considerable strain on New Zealand's limited resources. The government developed four criteria to determine whether or not to contribute to a particular peace support operation:

- the strategic implications of the operation, including its effect on security, the humanitarian situation and New Zealand's relationships with other countries
- the nature of the mission – the legality of the proposed mission and mandate under international law
- repercussions for New Zealand agencies involved in the proposed operation
- whether New Zealand can assist the fragile or post-conflict state in other ways.

Footnotes

1. 'Charter of the United Nations:preamble.' United Nations, (last accessed 18 January 2012). Back

Peacekeeping during the Cold War, 1950s to 1980s

Within the United Nations (UN), the Security Council has responsibility for maintaining

international peace and security. But the advent of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union undermined the Security Council's ability to use its powers. The US, the Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation), China, France and the UK, which have permanent seats on the Security Council, would veto resolutions that challenged them or one of their allies. Although 'peacekeeping' was not mentioned anywhere in the United Nations charter, it was devised as a pragmatic way to get around the veto so the UN could help maintain peace.

> ## Taking sides
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> New Zealand's offer of troops in 1956 for the earliest armed UN peacekeeping mission was turned down. The mission was in Egypt following the 1956 Suez Crisis, a war between Egypt on one side, and Britain, France and Israel on the other. New Zealand's strong support for Britain meant it was not seen as impartial.

First UN missions

For most of the UN's first 50 years, peacekeeping was primarily about keeping warring states apart. New Zealand first proposed taking part in a peacekeeping mission in 1951. Together with Australia, it offered troops as part of a Commonwealth force to help resolve conflict between newly independent India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region. Although the offer was not taken up, unarmed New Zealand officers were stationed as part of the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). New Zealand also contributed unarmed observers to the UN Truce Supervision Operation (UNTSO) created to monitor the fragile ceasefire in and around the new state of Israel.

> ## Hot and heavy driving
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> New Zealand's Sinai contingent included heavy-lift vehicle drivers, operating in a unique and challenging environment. On average they travelled over 356,630 kilometres a year through desert, in temperatures as high as 38 degrees.

Sinai, 1981

In October 1981 New Zealand agreed to send forces to Sinai to take part in a Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) group. It was organised by the US to monitor the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. In 2012 the MFO was still active, and remained an independent peacekeeping mission not under UN control. Rather than acting as a buffer between two adversaries, the MFO force worked closely with the two governments in order to support the peace agreement.

As well as encouraging peace in the Middle East, New Zealand's involvement in the MFO served other national interests. The Rome-based director-general of the MFO has always a US citizen. During the breakdown of the ANZUS alliance in the 1980s, the New Zealand government valued the Sinai deployment as a way of maintaining a working defence relationship with the US.

In 2012 there were around 26 New Zealand Defence Force personnel in Sinai, including the force commander. The New Zealand contingent ran the transport section, including driver-training programmes, and filled a number of operational and liaison positions.

Peacekeeping in the 1990s

Peacekeeping after the Cold War

The end of the Cold War enabled the United Nations (UN) to make use of its collective security provisions. As a result, the number of peacekeeping missions and similar interventions dramatically increased in the 1990s. Between 1989 and 1992 alone, New Zealand personnel took part in more than 20 peace support operations.

New Zealand Defence Force contributions included an army engineer who worked as part of the UN Mine Clearance Team in Afghanistan, an observer in the UN group overseeing the end to the Iran–Iraq War, and a small detachment of army engineers who served as part of an Australian contingent in the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.

After the Cold War armed conflicts were increasingly within rather than between states. This required a change in the nature of UN peacekeeping. A 2000 UN report noted that peacekeeping evolved rapidly 'from a traditional, primarily military model of observing ceasefires and force separations after inter-State wars, to a complex model of many elements, military and civilian, working together to build peace in the dangerous aftermath of civil wars.'[1]

Cambodia

In 1992 New Zealand made its largest peacekeeping contribution yet, when 97 troops were sent to take part in the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). As well as helping secure a fragile peace and overseeing democratic elections, New Zealand strengthened its key bilateral defence relationship with Australia.

Recognised service

A medal awarded to New Zealand troops who served under NATO in the former Yugoslavia between 1996 and 2002. It was one of a number of medals recognising service in peacekeeping missions, which from the 1990s became the standard type of overseas posting for New Zealand Defence Force personnel.

Former Yugoslavia

In 1992 the UN asked the New Zealand government to contribute troops to a peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia. The UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was attempting to support the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians. New Zealand sent nine military observers in response to the UN's initial request.

As the military and humanitarian situation on the ground worsened during 1993, the UN Security Council decided to send a larger force with more robust rules of engagement. New Zealand contributed a 250-strong infantry company (known as Kiwi Company) to Vitez, north-west of Sarajevo. The deployment was New Zealand's largest overseas mission since the end of the Vietnam War.

The majority of the troops returned to New Zealand by 1996 following the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. A small number of observers and other personnel remained attached to EU and NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia for more than a decade.

Footnotes

1. 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,' United Nations, http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/part2.htm (last accessed 16 January 2012). Back

Bougainville and East Timor

Bougainville

Peacekeeping operations came close to home when New Zealand Defence Force troops were sent to the island of Bougainville in 1997. Between 1989 and 1997 conflict between secessionist groups and the Papua New Guinea government left thousands dead and tens of thousands of people homeless on Bougainville.

> ### Peacekeeping the Pacific way
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> New Zealand's peacekeeping in the Pacific was marked by its mix of Māori and Pākehā customs. Māori protocol was used in negotiations, Māori and Pacific Island troops played an important role in the missions, and the haka (traditional dance) proved to be an important tool for peacekeepers in Bougainville.

New Zealand engaged in numerous peacemaking attempts. After a number of failures, the Burnham Truce agreement was signed. It called for the deployment of a Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) and, from December 1997 until April 1998, a 250-person New Zealand-led group was deployed to Bougainville. The TMG was made up of New Zealand soldiers, as well as Australian, Fijian and ni-Vanuatu civilian and military personnel. The force was unarmed and its task was to patrol, monitor the truce and build confidence in the peace process.

In 1998 the TMG was replaced by the Australian-led Peace Monitoring Group, which oversaw the collection and containment of weapons used in the fighting and a referendum on the future of the island.

East Timor

In September 1999 violence erupted in East Timor after an overwhelming majority of its people voted in favour of independence from Indonesia in a United Nations (UN) referendum. Pro-Indonesian militias wreaked havoc when the result became known, and more than a thousand people were killed.

The violence prompted an international outcry and the UN called for a multinational force to restore order and provide humanitarian assistance until a UN peacekeeping force could be organised. The resulting International Force East Timor (INTERFET) was led by Australia, with more than 5,000 Australian defence personnel involved. New Zealand was the second largest contributor, dispatching a battalion of light infantry troops, transport aircraft, helicopters and three navy ships. By October 1999 more than 1,100 New Zealanders were in East Timor, making it the country's largest military deployment since the Korean War.

Killed in action

After initially deploying troops to Dili, New Zealand forces were based at Suai and took responsibility for patrolling the dangerous southern part of the border with Indonesia. Patrols came into contact with pro-Indonesian militias a number of times and during one incident, in July 2000, a New Zealand soldier was shot and killed – New Zealand's first combat fatality since the Vietnam War. In total, five New Zealand peacekeepers died in East Timor.

The final New Zealand Defence Force battalion was withdrawn in November 2002, although the situation in the country remained unstable. In 2006 Prime Minister Helen Clark sent troops and military aircraft back to East Timor after riots erupted in Dili. In 2011 the New Zealand Defence

Force still had 79 troops in East Timor.

Solomon Islands

Between 1998 and 2003, the Solomon Islands was wracked by violence between different communities. More than 100 people were killed and around 40,000 were driven from their homes.

IPMT

In October 2000 the Townsville Peace Agreement was signed, promising to bring an end to the conflict. It called for the deployment of an unarmed 47-person International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) to observe the peace, monitor surrendered weapons that had been locked in shipping containers and to work with the newly formed Peace Monitoring Council. The mission was Australian-led, with New Zealand providing the deputy commander and a number of defence and civilian personnel.

In June 2002 the IPMT was withdrawn from the Solomon Islands. Violence had declined but few weapons had been surrendered and the underlying causes of the conflict had not been resolved.

RAMSI

The situation worsened again in 2003. The Solomon Islands government faced collapse and asked for help. In July, following discussions among Pacific leaders, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was sent to restore order.

Like the East Timor intervention, RAMSI was conducted with the consent of the host government. This mission did not have UN approval, but instead was nominally conducted under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Immediate and long-term effects

The initial RAMSI force was made up of some 2,200 military and police officers, primarily from Australia and New Zealand, but with representation from several Pacific Island states. RAMSI had an immediate impact on the security situation. Law and order was restored, many violent offenders were arrested and by the end of 2003, more than 3,700 illegal weapons had been collected and destroyed.

The long-term goal of building a sustainable peace in the Solomon Islands was more challenging. In 2011, eight years after the initial RAMSI deployment, New Zealand maintained an infantry platoon and police officers in the Solomons.

External links and sources

More suggestions and sources

Adams, Rebecca. *Peace on Bougainville: Truce Monitoring Group*. Wellington: Victoria University Press in association with the Centre for Strategic Studies, 2001.

Crawford, John, and Glyn Harper. *Operation East Timor: the New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor, 1999–2001*. Auckland: Reed, 2001.

More links and websites

International Service Group

https://www.police.govt.nz/service/overseas

This New Zealand Police website provides an overview of police involvement in peacekeeping.

New Zealand contingent – Multinational Force & Observers

http://www.mfo.org/contingents-New%20Zealand.php

This page on the website of the organisation that has responsibility for peacekeeping in Sinai provides information on New Zealand's involvement.

New Zealand Defence Force overseas operations

http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/operations/default.htm

This section of the Defence Force website provides information about the work that New Zealand troops do overseas.

United Nations peacekeeping

http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/

Information about the peacekeeping operations the United Nations is involved in around the world.