... the images of war handed to us, even when they are graphic, leave out the one essential element of war — fear.¹

Introduction

Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) are authorized to use force and violence to consolidate peace. One reaction to this is to dismiss it as an oxymoron. A different approach, more common among analysts and defenders of peacekeeping, is to see peacekeeping as a limited form of war, distinguished from other forms of warfare by its object rather than by its nature.

In this chapter, I hope to show that both viewpoints are problematic, but a careful conceptualization of violence in peacekeeping missions is possible, and should impact on the way peacekeepers conduct themselves.

My argument has two parts. First, I will discuss the ways in which violence impacts not only the armed groups against which peacekeepers may wield it, but the broader population. Then I will argue that peacekeepers cannot eliminate the trauma that their use of violence, however controlled it may be, tends to inflict, but must recognize its effects in order to maintain a morally acceptable and practically effective relationship with the people among whom they operate.

Peacekeepers must worry about sowing fear, chaos, and non-political violence in a way that few warfighters must, because of the nature of their task. The goal of peacekeepers is not, or should not be, to simply “pacify” an area. Rather, given their goal of long-term stability and respect for human rights, they should aim at “participatory peace,” characterized not only by a lack of violence, but at least “a minimal degree of political assent and participation”.² Such peace involves the creation of social bonds and relationships that bind former enemies into a unified polity. As a result, peacekeepers who use violence should engage in relationship-restoring practices of communication and mourning aimed especially at the groups and individuals they target.

What is Peacekeeping?

I use the United Nations’ (UN) “capstone doctrine” definition of peacekeeping.³ “Peacekeeping is a technique designed to preserve the peace, however
fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers... [it incorporates] a complex model of many elements — military, police and civilian — working together to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace". Peacekeeping is distinct from peacemaking (primarily diplomatic efforts to resolve a conflict) and post-conflict peacebuilding (long-term enhancement of state capacities to prevent future violence).

PKOs are complex operations, comprising everything from diplomatic, humanitarian, and legal personnel to military and police. In this chapter, since I am interested in the use of violence, I will focus on peacekeeping troops, armed soldiers deployed with PKOs (some of my remarks may also be relevant to police with an executive mandate, especially para-military “formed police units”).

In practice, and for purposes of this discussion, the most important and trickiest distinction is between peacekeeping and peace enforcement, which is the use of military force to compel an end to a conflict. Peacekeepers are often authorized to “to ‘use all necessary means’ [the standard UN jargon for the authorization to use force] to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack, and/or assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order.” PKOs are still distinguished from peace enforcement, in principle at least, by the fact that peacekeepers are authorized to use force only at the “tactical” and not the “strategic” level. The doctrine does not precisely define the distinction, but explicates it by saying that “[t]he ultimate aim of the use of force is to influence and deter spoilers working against the peace process or seeking to harm civilians; and not to seek their military defeat”. In Sir Brian Urquhart’s words, “peacekeeping forces [have] no ‘enemies,’ just a series of difficult and sometimes homicidal clients”.

The ultimate goal of a PKO is not to bring about any particular resolution to the conflict, but to work with locals to create a new political situation in which differences are resolved otherwise than through the use of force. This is as much a moral recognition of the right of self-determination as a practical consideration.

A cooperative perspective does not require peacekeepers to be neutral, in the sense of not criticizing or acting against any party, but it does require a degree of impartiality. The UN doctrine defines “impartiality” as an even-handed adherence to the mandate, and a willingness to take action to stop threats to the peace process. The centrality of the peace process, however fragmentary or fragile, to the concept of impartiality drives home that, even when action may be taken against a party, it is in the context of an aspiration to cooperation with them. The parties, at least tentatively and conditionally, have taken their own steps toward peace that peacekeepers support by serving as impartial guarantors. Because this aim extends to including the “homicidal clients” in the new order, it means that peacekeepers do not simply use force for different or more limited goals than warfighters do. They use force in the context of a radically different relationship to the targets of that force, and one that gives them different collateral obligations to the use of violence than warfighters have. Violent-incident-by-incident, peacekeeping may look much
like war; the difference should be in what surrounds those incidents.

**Violence in Peacekeeping**

While no just war theorist could be accused of ignoring the badness of killing or death, it easily fades into the background in favor of discussions of liability, military advantage, and the like. When Walzer writes that “[w]ar kills; that is all it does,” it is to quickly move on to a discussion of how we cannot dwell on the fact that war kills but must ask whether the good it achieves outweighs the death.\(^{10}\) When Coady updates Walzer’s quip to, “[w]ar kills, sure enough; but it also maims, distorts, and injures in many complex, enduring ways,” he too “intends to show the horror of war,” but does so in the context of explaining why, despite this, there would be a demand for just war theory — a demand the remainder of his book aims to satisfy.\(^{11}\) Both Walzer’s and Coady’s books are exemplary pieces of just war theory, but tend to de-center and abstract from the actual violence of warfare.

Peacekeepers, unlike warfighters, commonly undertake tasks in which violence very much is beside the point, tasks that are crucial to the mission but are only violent if they are opposed by a spoiler group.

Peacekeepers may help deliver food, reconstruct roadways, and the like. Though these are non-military tasks, military peacekeepers may have an advantage at them. The fact that peacekeepers are able to use violence to defend themselves may make them able to conduct such activities in areas where violence is still endemic. We should also remember that military units may be conceptually characterized by their access to the tools of violence, but in reality they often have logistical capacities available to few other actors — military peacekeepers may be the best people to deliver food because they have the best access to heavy cargo vehicles.

There are literal, physical ways to enforce outcomes that inherently involve confrontation as well. Peacekeepers may be able to halt or mitigate attacks on civilians by building a literal wall around them, or creating checkpoints where weapons can be physically removed with (if all goes well) minimal violence. Armed opposition forces can be disarmed. Peacekeepers can create alternate patterns of movement for civilians, using either their military intelligence or practical know-how, to keep them out of the line of fire. For instance, a Rwandan officer told me with pride how, as a member of AMIS, he taught IDP women how to build more fuel-efficient Rwandan-style ovens so that they would have to make fewer vulnerable trips for firewood.\(^{12}\)

It is important to distinguish these operations that may involve coercion and force from the use of violence because violence is specially problematic for peacekeepers.

As Scarry emphasizes, physical violence is central to military operations — at their heart is “the body maimed, the body in pain, the body dead and hard to dispose of... the sheer material weight of multitudes of damaged and opened human bodies”.\(^{13}\) If we pretend that it is not, we will miss important aspects of
the moral analysis. We should not pretend that military confrontation usually proceeds by threatening one side until it complies, with actual violent clashes only a marginal issue, and so think only in terms of the balance of incentives and how spoilers can be induced to stop their activities. In fact, analysts often criticize peacekeepers for focusing on “deterrence through presence” (i.e., the idea that merely having peacekeepers present will cause spoilers to stand down, even if the PKO may not be prepared to win a fight), remarking that the needed credibility for such a strategy is often only established through the actual use of violence.\textsuperscript{14}

For PKOs, the basic issue is that violence is \textit{traumatizing} — it inflicts psychological damage on both its direct targets and the broader political communities in which it operates that disrupts their social bonds. This is not a marginal effect that can be, at least in principle, entirely eliminated. It is precisely the damage to social bonds both within the combatant groups directly targeted and the political communities that support them that erodes their cohesion and ability to fight, giving violence its particular power.\textsuperscript{15} But this psychological impact undermines the peacekeeper’s goal of helping to build a new, cohesive political community capable of operating peacefully.

\section*{War as Mass Trauma}

In order to understand the traumatic impact of violence, it helps to start with the most “desirable” site of that trauma (for those dishing it out, at least), the disruption of combatant groups.

Soldiers do not give up a fight because they have changed their beliefs — their beliefs may be inchoate while they fight, and they may bitterly resent defeat. Soldiers are instead overcome by fear of death, fear of “letting others down” (and the related fear of or actual collapse of the military social group), loss of hope and frustration at the perceived futility of their mission, sheer physical exhaustion, and the psychologically draining effects of guilt, horror, and hatred.\textsuperscript{16,17} Much of this has little to do with belief (e.g., soldiers experience guilt and horror even when they believe their cause is just) and is instead a matter of creating psychological barriers to further action, that function on a level below conscious will.

\section*{Political Trauma}

Ultimately, war is not about the soldiers, but about the political entity that stands behind them. Disrupting the morale of soldiers, making them into “psychiatric casualties,” can win \textit{battles}, but the \textit{war} is not ended until the polity supporting the military ends it. In principle, new soldiers can always be thrown into the breach, whether the old are killed or incapacitated. Of course, this rapidly becomes inefficient, and it is easier and easier to slaughter enemy combatants as the social and material base behind them degrades, and each wave is more poorly trained and more poorly equipped — but we never get to the
point of literal inability to fight until the polity is completely annihilated (or, perhaps, reduced to young children and the elderly).

Using violence to change the behavior of organized groups is not an exact science, however.

At least since the Greeks portrayed Ares as accompanied by Eris, it has been a commonplace that violence is chaotic. Clausewitz claimed that “[n]o other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance”. And Arendt: “nowhere does Fortuna, good or ill luck, play a more fateful role in human affairs that on the battlefield, and this intrusion of the utterly unexpected does not disappear when people call it a ‘random event’ ... nor can it be eliminated by simulations, scenarios, game theories, and the like”. I see no reason to doubt these claims.

The chaos of violence has two aspects. First, the effect even on its intended targets is not simple. Trauma disrupts social connections (more on this below) but can also create new, unpredictable ones. Fear can cause people to cling to primary identities in a way that they did not when other connections were intact. Anger can be a source of shared purpose, that may cause new violent groups to form, or previously non-violent groups to turn on peacekeepers or others in society. Even if the power and coherence of a group is shattered, some other group can take advantage, or a crowd or mob with limited cohesion and unpredictable and often violent character can form.

These side effects may be irrelevant to the goal of defeating an organized enemy, and may be morally beside the point for a warfighter — if banditry and revenge killings become widespread after a war, a military intent on repulsing interstate aggression may not care. But peacekeepers are as concerned with the post-conflict order that emerges as with breaking down hostile/obstructionist centers of order in the conflict.

Second, even with the most circumspect weaponry, the psychological impacts will reverberate down social connections. Deterrence through changing incentives can be relatively narrowly focused on particular acts. And this part of what violence does. But an important part of what distinguishes violence from other sorts of violence is that its traumatizing psychological impact undermines social cohesion more generally.

As Arendt puts it:

... the danger of violence... will always be that the means overwhelm the end. If goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic. Action is irreversible, and a return to the status quo in case of defeat is always unlikely. The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.

These are not just philosophers’ laments. Doyle and Sambanis’ statistical analysis of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in civil conflicts found that the numbers of people killed and displaced in a war had a negative, statistically
significant effect on the likelihood that the area would be at peace two years after the peacekeeping intervention ended. Homicide rates in post-conflict nations rise. Civilians affected by war have significantly elevated levels of Acute Stress Disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

These psychological impacts have physical and social repercussions. Fear and reflexive responses — hair loss, ulcers, and the like — to it were so embedded in the body politic of London during World War II that advertisers used it to sell products. “(1) Do you jump when a bus backfires? (2) Does worry bring sleepless nights? (3) Are you spotty? (4) Are the whites of your eyes muddy? (5) Are you puffed out after running upstairs?” asked a 1940 laxative advertisement.

The fear in London also exacerbated racial and class tensions, with contemporary accounts often expressing anxiety that Jews or working-class Londoners would sow seeds of panic. Trauma seems to exploit social ties at the same time that it undermines them. Kosovar civilians who lost family members during the 1990s wars showed statistically significantly higher rates of psychological damage, including PTSD, than “non-bereaved” individuals, even when controlling for number and severity of direct wartime trauma.

These wounds make it difficult to maintain communal action. Characteristic symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are emotional numbness, hopelessness, and difficulty maintaining relationships. Experiences of pain, fear, and violence, seem to shape the way individuals interact with other human beings. The subject of violence will shrink reflexively from those she perceives as able to use further violence. But she is also likely to model violent domination of those weaker than she is, having had more pro-social patterns of behavior partly or completely beaten out of her, thus “infecting” others with social models ripe for numbed obedience but damaging to collective action and identity. In discussing the use of corporal punishment on children, Ruddick argues that “the social construction of a child’s body as a vulnerable locus of pain seems a preparation for later public domination and submission”.

She echoes this comment later in discussing the body in war: “[t]he salient feature of war’s body is its susceptibility to pain and damage that lead to surrender.”

**Violence and Embodiment**

One of the reasons that the effects of violence are so difficult to precisely contain, and so dangerous for peacekeepers, is that “psychological” trauma operates on an emotional and even physiological level not fully subject to conscious control. Just as soldiers can experience trauma from killing even if they believe fully in the righteousness of their cause, part of what makes violence specially effective and specially problematic is that its traumatic effects operate on a sub-rational and non-rational level. Conceived in terms of pure utility calculations, a person can probably do as much damage (if not more) to me by, say, firing me from my job as by shooting me in the arm. But pulling a gun will secure most people’s immediate compliance, before they even calculate the odds — the exceptions
being individuals like soldiers who are trained to have different automatic responses to violence and the threat of violence.  

Violence’s involvement of the body should make its non-rational impacts unsurprising. Understanding the interplay of the psychological, social, and bodily in violence (the theme of this section) will set us up to say something useful about how peacekeepers can address the trauma of their violence (the theme of the next).

A field anecdote drives home the fact that violence is effective on a deep, non-rational level that crosses the “mind” and the “body.” A Ghanaian member of the UN staff told me about his encounter with an elderly Darfuri woman during his service in the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS):

And, I remember we brought an aircraft, I think AN-12 [an Antonov cargo plane, similar to those used by the Sudanese government to bomb civilian areas] or something, and the lady, one old lady who lived in the IDP camp was weeping, she wanted to come and touch it... She touched it and she started crying... She only knew what Antonov had done to her. So when we brought this in, because this flies over the village, the sound was very familiar. Then she was going to hide when her niece told her, no no no no no, this is for the African Union. It’s here for peace. She says she doesn’t believe it. So they brought her, and she said she wanted to know what type of thing they were using to, you know, kill their people. And I was thinking, that’s the first time she was able to touch that.

Violence functions as an element of “political physiology,” to use Protevi’s term. Political physiology is the “direct interaction of the social and the somatic, skipping the subjective level.” Political physiology in play when, for instance, we are exhausted from witnessing another’s grief. It’s sub-rational effects are clearest in cases where our emotional response is at odds with our conscious attitudes, such as when we react to facial cues from other human beings as if the human possessed full personhood even if we know intellectually that their brains have been severely damaged and the facial cues are simply involuntary tics.

Embodied Social Ties

Violence against bodies damages social connections in part because they are built in an embodied way.

We only think of political communities as voluntary and conscious contracts if we forget we were born. “[B]irthing,” Ruddick writes, “is indelibly a social relation, a fact that only a radical distinction between mind and body can disguise.” The process by which human relationships are created is one in which total bodily union eventually gives way to individuation, but an individuation that is never totally independent. The ideal of a body fully under control of a will is at best only imperfectly realized by human beings who depend on support networks, who get sick, who act on emotions spurred by biological systems,
and who die.\textsuperscript{36} And the ability to build and maintain those support networks and connections has its substrate in the combined physical and social relationships exemplified by birthing, mothering, and sexuality, as well as less charged physical rituals, like sharing meals.

In a traumatized polity, the experience of violence, transmitted through proximity and social relations, disrupts processes that allow corporate action on a physical-psychological level. Individuals who may once have been willing to risk death or sacrifice to feed their polity’s war machine find their reserves of adrenaline hammered through the stress of warfare and exposure to violence — and may even find them depleted by proxy reactions to seeing injured comrades, losing family members to violence, etc. — a physical limit they experience as fear, exhaustion, or war-weariness.

**Peacekeepers and Traumatic Violence**

**Humanizing Violence**

As noted above, one of Ruddick’s insights is that the construction of the body as a site of pain, either in child abuse or war, is preparation for relationships of domination and submission. This is the ramification of violence down embodied social connections. Traumatized bodies, and bodies adapted to situations of domination and violence have had undermined their ability to engage in the “active connectedness” that Ruddick (persuasively) identifies with peace, people “resist[ing] others’ violence and their own temptations to abandon or assault, persisting in relationships that include anger, disappointment, difference, conflict, and nonviolent battle”.\textsuperscript{37} That active connectedness is undermined by fear that the physical proximity involved in social connection will lead to vulnerability to violence, and habituation to the non-rational immediate obedience that violence can obtain. It is also a good description of what peackeepers aim at.

Part of the insight of this description of peace is that it centrally recognizes that peace is not a matter of harmonious fellow-feeling, but precisely of finding ways to build relationships in the face of power-undermining emotions and reflexes. Though she presents mothering as a paradigm of peaceful practice, Ruddick \textit{opens} her substantive account of mothering with violence — telling an anecdote of a mother so overwhelmed by frustration, sleep-deprivation, isolation, and the demands of her infant that she bundles the child up and takes it on the bus in the middle of the night, because she will not be able to give in to her temptation to violence in public.\textsuperscript{38} The human condition of relationships is that we recognize and deal with our temptations to hurt and dominate others, not that we become saints incapable of violence — and that we realize that others who do give in to these temptations are humans and not monsters.

Peacekeepers may come to relate to armed individuals primarily as sources of unreasoning violence, such as in Gen. Cammaert’s “armed groups who have conducted barbaric attacks with guns, spears and/or machetes”.\textsuperscript{39} It is difficult to read graphic accounts of rapes, mutilations, and other atrocities in Bosnia,
Sierra Leone, Liberia, or the DRC, and then imagine the perpetrators (mostly, but not exclusively men) as young boys, nursing from their mothers or giggling with other children. Yet they were, and even after becoming combatants, they are not murderous all day, every day — they may fall in love, they may eat with friends, they may laugh and play with their own children. If peacekeepers do not recognize this, a relationship with such individuals may become near-literally “unthinkable,” because of the way that the emotions that structure our thinking interfere. Yet, an undistorted picture of peace may need to involve building relationships that include such abusers and certainly needs to understand the relationships that they have with other people in the society.

What peacekeepers need is some way of re-humanizing the enemy in the context of violence — in their own minds, and the society — even when they must kill.

As mortal beings, we have many social resources for humanizing the injured and dead, as long as we know where to look. There is a tendency to think of death as a transcendent, totally individuating moment, but this is at least partly another fantasy of disembodiment. Of course, there is something unsharable in the very moment of death (as there is in the very moment of giving birth or being born). But real human deaths are extended, messy, and tightly interwoven into social practices. As Ruddick puts it:

A full appreciation of the capacity rooted in birth includes an understanding that death must be tended and cared for. A death that is cared for is actively non-violent. Those who mitigate pain and assuage fear are engaged in a discipline of intellect and action contradictory to the planned cruelty of a claymore mine or a napalm bomb. Tended deaths, like war deaths, are neither romantic nor heroic. Dying bodies stumble, smell, forget, leak, fester, shake, and gasp... whereas military strategies note the body’s vulnerabilities merely to exploit them... caretakers perceive pain and decay accurately to comfort an embodied being.

In the peacekeeping context, a big part of humanizing the targets of violence recognizing that even the “barbaric” enemies peacekeepers face leave behind friends, kin, acquaintances, co-religionists, enemies, etc. who will be bereaved, sickened, angered, elated, or frustrated at their passing — and that they themselves die in ways that reflect the physical vulnerability we share. Violence works precisely by exploiting this physical vulnerability that embeds us in social ties. Our embodiment, of course, gives a vector for physical violence and makes us vulnerable. Our embodied connections to others also transmit the fear and anger that make violence unpredictable and effective. The effect of these deaths, especially if “un-tended” cannot be completely silenced by the peacekeepers’ abstract moral justification.

These ties also give a vector for responding to violence. The trick is to make the deaths of those peacekeepers must kill “grievable.” Butler focuses on the obituary as a piece of public mourning that, crucially, particularizes
the dead. “[T]o be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition”. Peacekeepers may not use the Western-culture bound obituary, but it is an example of a broader family of practices of recognizing the particular humanity of the dead and the tragedy of their passing.

The Tactics of Mourning

The core way that peacekeepers can and should respond to their own use of violence is to engage in rituals of recognition that the violence is tragic. In the abstract, it is hard to say more — the appropriate rituals may well be very context- and culture-specific (like obituaries). Learning how they can express mourning in their particular context should be considered an obligation of peacekeepers that use or may use violence. But there are likely to be certain common elements, such as refraining from triumphalism about those peacekeepers kill (straightforwardly identifying a willingness to kill members of spoiler groups with “protecting civilians” is problematic) and publicly extending the possibility to renew relationships to individuals and groups that have been the subject of peacekeeper violence. In general, peacekeepers should remember the insights of Ruddick and the woman who needed to touch the Antonov — beliefs and attitudes are not enough, but rituals must be observed and concrete action taken. Even the obituary is not just an abstract “narrative,” the fact that it is a widely-reproduced cultural item is important. Butler does not linger on it, but the obituary is also tied up with other acts of mourning and grief. It is a thing that the bereaved can read to reaffirm the feeling that the dead mattered, and it is an artifact they can show to others as an act of communicating their grief. In the culture I share with Butler, it is a form of communal recognition, of a piece with the creation of spaces where it is socially acceptable for people to cry and otherwise give voice to the pain of their loss. Peacekeepers may need to cry with people (see below), or share food with their kin, or let them touch the machines whose violent power is now being put aside.

Two more specific examples, of general applicability, are the use of graduated force and the creation of communicative spaces.

Graduated Force

Recognizing the importance of violence’s tragic nature provides a non-instrumental reason to use graduated force. Graduated force is the use of carefully escalated force in response to a threat — typically beginning with shouted warnings, escalating through displays of weaponry and warning shots, and reserving lethal fire not only for a last resort, but a last resort after all other levels have actually been used. It is itself a kind of ritual. While graduated force may operate at least in part through fear, it provides a way to both rein in the effects of fear and creates a communicative context between the peacekeepers and their opponents. Using graduated force sends a message that peacekeepers are committed
to not killing if they can avoid it — we should not simply assume that all spoiler
groups trust that this is peacekeepers’ stance without it being communicated.

Active Communication

But peacekeepers can and should also surround their use of violence with active
communication aimed at reconciliation with the targeted groups, and drawing
them into a new power structure rather than just trusting in the effects of fear
and trauma. This communication should be active in distinction to public infor-
mation efforts, like the creation of mission radio stations — public information
efforts are valuable and critical, but recognition of humanity in one’s oppo-
nents requires a two-way communication. Communication that the violence is
regrettable and regretted is itself a form of mourning.44

Consider the case of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF).45 While Somalia is
often cited as a classic case of a peacekeeping failure, it was mostly in the follow-
on mission, UNOSOM II, that things went infamously wrong.46 The story of
the US/UN operation in Somalia often focuses on the confrontation that built
between the US and UN forces there and the Somali National Army (SNA) of
Mohammed Farah Aideed, culminating in the withdrawal of the US forces and
then of the UN mission.47

But an earlier confrontation between Aideed and the US went very differ-
ently. Early on, UNITAF, under the US Special Envoy Robert Oakley, estab-
lished the US Liaison Office (USLO), which facilitated regular “joint security
committee” (a faction initiative) meetings with representatives of the Aideed
and Ali Madhi factions (the other main contender in Mogadishu) throughout
the UNITAF deployment.48 These meetings, as well as general coordination
between UNITAF and the factions, via the USLO, significantly smoothed and
pacified interactions between the US/UN forces and the local militants.

The USLO and the joint security committee paid off when UNITAF ended
up in conflict over a SNA weapons site. Members of the militia had fired on
UNITAF troops, despite warnings, and Anthony Zinni, UNITAF’s Director for
Operations, informed the security committee that the site would be destroyed in
six hours. UNITAF surrounded the site, and responded to resistance with lethal
force, killing seven.49 UNITAF called in the security committee immediately
after the attack.

“It was a really solemn meeting,” Zinni recalls. “I said, ‘General
Aideed], here is the point. We are either at war or we put this
behind us.’ They got together and talked amongst themselves and
they came back and said, ‘We want to put this behind us.’” Zinni
adds: “There was a forum to deconflict.”50

Incidents continued, but similar procedures were followed, and the overall
level of violence and confrontation was kept from escalating too much. As
UNOSOM I and UNITAF were replaced with UNOSOM II, the meetings did
not continue, and “tension mounted”.51 Both the fact of the space for continued
conversation and the very solemnity of UNITAF’s response to the deaths of Aideed’s combatants were important.

Unfortunately, while some of these approaches were promising, and their successes support the idea that communication, empathy, and relationship-building are important, the approach did not pervade the mission, and was even less present in UNOSOM II. While members of UNITAF and the USLO met with various local leaders, there still seems to have been a focus on the elites (perhaps out of necessity), exemplified in UNOSOM II by the fact that only faction leaders signed the first major peace agreement in March 1993. Admiral Howe, the retired US military officer appointed as Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG, the head of the mission) for UNOSOM II took an “arms-length” approach to the faction leaders from the start, in line with the hard-line approach to Aideed that the new head of the USLO took at the close of UNOSOM I. Howe did not seem to appreciate the way in which his sincere commitment to peace in Somalia might not be enough to render the issues of violence moot; he recalled telling the press that it “would be crazy for anyone to test us. The UN is here solely to support the peace and recovery of the Somali people”. At the moment of transition, political contact with the main faction leaders was interrupted, as Aideed and Ali Madhi, were out of the country from March—May, and then the deputy Howe assigned to be “czar” of the political effort went on leave for six weeks on their return.

The shift in attitude in UNOSOM II towards the faction leaders, particularly Aideed, was cemented in June 1993, when Pakistani peacekeepers were ambushed after inspecting another SNA cache, near the militia’s radio station. Some UNITAF officials argued that a lack of communication may have led the SNA to believe the UN was about to shut down its radio station, or that its heavy-handed approach may have provoked resistance. The SNA was condemned by name for the attacks, and UNOSOM II was authorized to take “all necessary measures” against them. Maj. Gen. Montgomery, the deputy force commander declared that after an attack such as this “there can be no doubt in your mind that you’ve got an enemy out there”. The enmity with Aideed would ultimately lead to the aforementioned confrontation and withdrawal of US/UN forces. A quieter development, ominous from the point of view of an approach concerned with mourning, was that the UN declined to even count Somali casualties.

I mean only to point out the positive contribution of relationship-building activities in the face of violence; UNOSOM II may have had such serious obstacles that it could not have succeeded even with the best approach possible. And there were criticisms of the elements of UNOSOM I’s approach that I praise, because it was seen as “legitimizing” the warlords.

If it seems morally right that peacekeepers not grieve those that they have killed in justified acts of violence, I think this is an effect of forcing members of spoiler groups into an abstract role as beasts or evildoers. Even the worst perpetrators of atrocities are human beings. One member of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) civilian staff I interviewed, who had worked with members of the DRC military involved in systematic rape as part of the DRC conflict, told me
that she found herself in the course of her work comforting men who would break down in tears thinking about their actions in the war. And there are many relationships that one can have with human beings — not all of them need be unequivocally positive. For instance, consider the relationship that one might have with an ex-spouse with whom one must raise children. Building and maintaining relationships with people, and recognizing them as human beings whose lives have meaning to themselves and others, and who are vulnerable to bodily pain and emotion, does not mean that we cannot morally criticize them. In fact, one virtue of Oakley’s intimate involvement with the Somali warlords was that he “could scold them and chew them out and they would sit like little school boys and accept it”.

Conclusion

The moral paradox of peacekeeping is not that they must use violence to promote peace. Rather, it is that they must build relationships at the same time they are destroying them. I have argued that this is possible, if peacekeepers understand the emotional, embodied impact of violence and take the practical steps necessary to mourn that violence and rebuild relationships damaged by it.

Perhaps surprisingly, as far as my argument goes, peacekeepers are not essentially bound to limit their use of force. Often, limiting the use of violence will, naturally, be the best way of reining in its bad side effects. But not always — especially if some other group is looking to damage the ability of people to come together powerfully through using its own violence and trauma. More important than the amount of violence is the attitude peacekeepers take to it, and what they do besides use violence. Even if peacekeepers wield the sword with one hand, they should always — in real, practical terms, like UNITAF’s consultations and engagement in public mourning — extend the other cooperatively.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1Hedges, War is a Force, p. 83.
2This definition is from Doyle and Sambanis, Making War & Building Peace, p. 18.
3The UN is not the only organization that deploys PKOs, but UN PKOs have been at the center of analysis and development of peacekeeping, and the concepts developed to understand
and structure them have cast a long shadow on non-UN peacekeeping. So my discussion will tend to focus in general on UN operations, while hopefully remaining relevant to non-UN ones.


5 To avoid repetition of a qualifier, I will simply use the term “peacekeepers” here to refer specifically to the military elements. To designate armed personnel not engaged in peacekeeping, I will use “warfighters.”

6 Ibid., 34—5, emphasis mine.


8 UN DPKO (*United Nations Peacekeeping*, pp. 33—4.) This distinguishes peacekeepers from counterinsurgents, who are arguably trying to build a new peaceful political order, but who are definitely on the side of the government against insurgents, rather than trying to bring things to an even-handed resolution.

9 I discuss the concepts of neutrality and impartiality at length — and propose an understanding at odds with at least some mainstream ones — in Levine (“Peacekeeper Impartiality”).


12 Confidential interview, Washington, DC, October 2009


15 I develop this argument more fully in Levine (*Morality for Peacekeepers*). Note also that “support” here means acquiescence and cooperation — which are often given to armed groups out of fear, coercion, and other motivations than “support” in the sense of agreement with goals.


17 Frustration at futility is perhaps especially relevant to peacekeepers, and an example I owe to Dwight Raymond.


20 On crowds in the wake of military breakdowns, see Watson (*When Soldiers Quit*, pp. 164—170). This effect is echoed by the “splintering” of irregular armed groups that tends to follow both military confrontations and peace negotiations.


26 Ibid., p. 156.

27 Morina, Reschke, and Hofmann, “Long-Term Outcomes of War-Related Death”.

28 Mayo Clinic Staff, *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*.


30 Ibid., p. 200.

31 On immediate compliance, see Arendt, “On Violence”, p. 140.


33 Protevi (*Political Affect*, loc. 707). Note that Protevi uses “political” in a broad sense of having to do with human collectives — political physiology need not be about “politics” in the sense of contests for control of state institutions, etc.

34 Protevi (ibid., ch. 5) explores this case in an extended discussion of the case of Terri Schiavo.


36 Ibid., pp. 206—17.

37 Ibid., pp. 183—184.

38 Ibid., pp. 66—77.
40 Even an “instantaneous” death involves a quick cessation of life processes in the individual body but an extended series of practices of mourning and grief in people connected to the person who has died.
42 Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 27.
43 Ibid., p. 34.
44 Though I do not have the space to develop the thought here, of course peacekeepers should not allow public performance of mourning at the fate of violent individuals they may target eclipse a clear message that the deaths those groups themselves cause are cause for mourning.
45 UNITAF was the UN designation for the US military mission co-deployed with the first United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM I). The US designation for the same mission was Operation Restore Hope.
46 For some overviews, see Durch, “Introduction to Anarchy”; Rosegrant and Watkins, *A “Seamless” Transition (A)*; A “Seamless” Transition (B); Hirsch and Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*.
49 Fritz, “U.S. Forces Kill Seven Somalis”.
60 Confidential interview, Stuttgart Germany, July 2010.
61 I am indebted to Nancy Gallagher for this example.
62 Ibid., 34, quoting Anthony Zinni.

References


Fritz, Mark. “U.S. Forces Kill Seven Somalis in Attack on Two Clan Camps”. In: *The Associated Press* (Jan. 8, 1993).


