Security Force Assistance and Stability Integration Directorate

Semi-Annual Lesson Report:

See, Sense, Understand, and Direct

March 2025

Following a reorganization and mission expansion, the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute merged with the Security Force Assistance Force Modernization Proponent Office and is now the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center's Security Force Assistance and Stability Integration Directorate (SFASID): an expanded mission and name that reflects the organization's roles and responsibilities.

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Introduction

This is the first installment of the Fiscal Year (FY) 25 Semi Annual Lessons Learned Report, and the inaugural one, for the *U.S. Army Combined Arms Center's Security Force Assistance & Stability Integration Directorate*, or SFASID, formerly known as the *U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute*, or PKSOI. The Lessons contained herein reflect one of the US Army's Collection Topics for its FY25 Army Lessons Learned Plan (ALLP): *See, Sense, Understand, and Direct*.

"See, sense, understand, and direct" broadly describes the progression of human cognitive abilities, from basic awareness ("to see") and the related gathering of information and interpretation of such through one's perception ("to sense"); through deeper comprehension ("to understand"); and ultimately to decision-making ("to direct"). General James McConville in 2021 may be the source of the phrase's earliest use in US Army vernacular. Then serving as the Chief of Staff of the US Army, he describes the *decision dominance* concept in his Chief of Staff Paper #1 as "a desired state in which commanders sense, understand, decide, act and assess faster and more effectively than their adversaries."[1]

The US Army subtopics for its FY25 collection in the *See, Sense, Understand, and Direct* arena appear to highlight predominantly technical concerns: *Electronic Warfare (EW)* and *Electromagnetic Interference (EMI); Information Advantage; Intelligence Warfighting Function; Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS); Tech-Craft*[2]*;* and *Decision-Driven Data*. However, the human element cannot be marginalized by the technology. Human *sense* is required in the front end—the input—of most innovations and it is necessary through the *understand* and the *direct* phases as well—perhaps with training and education; perhaps with insight not found in an algorithm. Furthermore, not all *see* and *sense* interference is technical. Sometimes practitioners have unconscious bias or inherent relationship and communication restrictions that hinder the most efficient and effective route to *understand* and *direct.*

Therefore, this Lesson collection explores *See, Sense, Understand, and Direct* as the means and manners to get to decision—or those items that may interfere with the decision process—in the security assistance, peace operations or stability activities realm. Perhaps incongruously, the *interoperability* framework outlined in the *Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Publication 20-12, Commander and Staff Guide to Multinational Interoperability,* provides the structure for this report—*procedural, human,* and *technical*—with the addition of *policy* to the frame.[3] Yet, *interoperability* may not be a far-fetched framework for this collection at all, as none of the aspects can work effectively without the other.

SFASID's Lessons Learned Analyst, Colonel Lorelei Coplen (US Army, Retired), authored the lessons here between October 2024 and March 2025. Each of these Lessons are also found in the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) database, identified by the JLLIS number adjacent to each Lesson title. JLLIS access is at https://www.jllis.mil and requires a Department of Defense Common Access Card (CAC) for registration.

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[1] James McConville, "Army Multi-Domain Transformation Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict," Chief of Staff Paper #1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2021), 8.

[2] For this Lesson collection, "Techcraft includes the skills, techniques, and knowledge Soldiers require to effectively integrate, use, understand, and maintain modern technological equipment and systems in a military context." Jeff Baker and Katie Smith, "Embracing Techcraft: Optimal Elements of Army Techcraft Culture," *Center for Army Lessons Learned*, November 20, 2024.

[3] Combined Arms Center. *Commander and Staff Guide to Multinational Interoperability*, Publication 20-12 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, March 25, 2020), 17. The guide suggests a "framework" for multinational interoperability that includes "…procedural (e.g., doctrine and procedures), human (e.g., language and training, Mission Partner Coordination Center [MPCC]), and technical (e.g., hardware and systems)."

Procedural

Understanding the Data Myth (OBS-N250131-19935)

Observation. In 2024, researchers for the *Data & Policy* journal tackled what they called the "data myth," or "the belief that *faster*, *more*, and *impartial* data will lead to better peacebuilding outcomes."[1] [Emphasis added.] Their main concerns, as they outline in their abstract and in the introduction, is the apparent "lack of curiosity about the provenance of data and the infrastructure that produces it and asserts its legitimacy."[2] In other words, where is "the evidence base for evidence-based peacebuilding"? They suggest, in the end, there are

> political economies and driving forces behind the data myth, some of which are specific to the peacebuilding and conflict response sectors and some of which are linked with the wider business culture and technological developments that have been adopted by the sectors.[3]

They conclude that data and data-gathering, is, indeed, important to peacebuilding programming, but only when it is "contextualized and conflict-sensitive."[4] Data should not be framed as a technical issue that will resolve conflict if only it is *faster*, *more*, or *impartial*.

Discussion. The researchers naturally begin their assessment with definitions. They describe *data* **"**to be observations that are collected in a systematic manner using scientific methods and that are widely accepted as fact; datafication is built upon the systematic collection, storage, and analysis of that data" and suggest "such definitions are in keeping with the United Nations Peace and Security Data Hub, a product of the Secretary General's data strategy."[5] After a brief overview of the *peacebuilding* concept, they address the factors they suggest led the "trend toward scientific data," summarized here:[6]

- The "*neoliberal funding models* whereby donors seek value-for-money and verifiable audit trails."
- The "*political economy* that…necessitates data to demonstrate efficiency and economy but also narratives of success."
- The "*corporatization* of the peacebuilding sector…from 'well-meaning amateurs'" to professional organizations with hierarchies and bureaucracies.
- The "*scale* of peacebuilding operations and organizations," grown from a simple ceasefire observation to a "holistic endeavor with multiple thematic interests."
- The "*digital revolution* has provided greater opportunities for the collection, analysis, and comparison of data… driven by the supply side or the availability of technology rather than a firm demand for it by potential beneficiaries." [Emphasis added][7]

Not only are these factors (drivers) that move peacebuilding programs towards data reliance of concern, but the researchers also suggest "something of an epistemological loop…data helps define the problem, recommend a solution, and thereby reinforce the usefulness of the organization that holds or deploys the data."[8] They share other research that describes this situation as *techno-moral power* where

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[1] Roger MacGinty and Pamina Firchow, "The Data Myth: Interrogating the Evidence Base for Evidence-Based Peacebuilding." *Data & Policy* 6 (2024): e80 (accessed September 20, 2024). https://doi.org/10.1017/dap.2024.80.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

> some actors have the power to construct narratives as important or legitimate and others do not…Data-powerful organizations are able to set the terms of the debate and establish themselves as gatekeepers over what constitutes the problem, what knowledge is relevant to the problem, and how the problem might be addressed.[9]

In the peacebuilding arena, the *techno-moral power*—too often in the hands of the global north—duplicates *colonial power* of an earlier era. Consequently, the data may be de-legitimized by local actors or misinterpreted by global north actors from bias.[10] As the researchers summarize in their abstract, policy makers must recognize "issues of power, inclusion, and exclusion, and particularly how knowledge hierarchies attend to the collection and use of data in relation to conflict-affected contexts."[11]

The researchers note three reasons that may keep policy makers from using evidence-based data as they describe in the peacebuilding/operations arenas, summarized here:

- **"**First, policymakers must be convinced that science is able to improve policy. Achieving this requires education and transparency about the methods and goals behind measurement and evidence." They point out transparency also includes revealing limitations of the data or the data collection, especially in complex human and political situation. As importantly, it requires *data literacy* on behalf of the policy makers.
- "Second, policymakers must have access to data sources they perceive as legitimate and trustworthy. … a significant increase in public knowledge production and data analysis needs to be relocated to conflict-affected contexts." They highlight the "global north" ("rich, powerful, and mostly peaceful countries") produces most data sets, which many conflict-prone countries perceive as illegitimate. Instead, "data-gathering organizations [must] demonstrate on-the-ground benefits of their data-related activities."
- "Finally, policymakers must have the resources and time to understand the nuances of data in order to adapt it to their specific contexts. This requires highly trained local researchers with in-depth contextual knowledge." As the researchers highlight, "While the capacity to collect data, with big data efforts in particular, has increased in the last few decades, the capacity to analyze all of that data has not kept up." Further, the machine learning forms (Artificial Intelligence, e.g.), which may help process large data masses, may also have inherent bias. Local knowledge is necessary.[12]

As the researchers maintain their "aim is not to stymie the use of data and related technologies," but

> Instead, it is to add to calls for governance and responsible use. It is also an exercise in expectation management to acculturate stakeholders to what we can and cannot expect from data. Crucially, knowledge hierarchies, methods regimes, and the power of some data providers mean that there is a danger of inflating the authority of certain types of data, or data methods, and thus regarding it as evidence on which policy is to be based. What is required is a recognition that an evidence base for policy is best served by a scrutiny of data, its sources, and processes. Also important is a recognition of the value of a mixed economy of data whereby multiple types

[9] MacGinty and Firchow, "The Data Myth: Interrogating the Evidence Base for Evidence-Based Peacebuilding."
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

of data (not just top-down scientific data) are taken seriously and is able to inform policy, learning, and accountability, as well as transparently set agendas for peace.[13]

Recommendation(s). After investigating the *more*, *faster*, and *impartial* claims for data in peacebuilding, the researchers outlined five tenets of good practice in relation to data and the peacebuilding sector, summarized here:

- Disrupt the *automatic pilot* of data collection. Have a reason or purpose for the data collected. Be intentional about "how data informs programming and policy…reflect seriously about whether or not data collection efforts are actually necessary." Consider costs, time, impact, and ethics.[14]
- Use data for *people power*. Do not limit data use as an accountability tool or for research. Use it as an empowerment tool for a community "to create consensus, galvanize around an issue, advocate for their rights or needs, amplify their voices, and hold institutions accountable." This approach allows data to be useful to local populations, which creates trust, and then assists in refining and validating findings. "Otherwise, data collection is just another extractive exercise imposed on communities."[15]
- Take *positionality* seriously. "Organizations are often particularly poor at understanding their own positionality and see themselves as neutral." Instead, be transparent in the data presentation regarding researcher identification as well as the usual factors such as location, timing, and budget.[16]
- *Maximize* data use. It is ironic to suggest, on the one hand, that *more* data is not needed and then, on the other hand, to *maximize its use*. However, what the researchers promote is to look beyond the immediate need of a particular data set and consider its useability for another purpose. As they state

  > How is data usually used in conflict response? Typically, it is used to inform a conflict analysis or assessment, or to monitor the progress of a project or to inform a report in a final evaluation. Once these tasks are finished, the data usually lose its shelf life and are filed away. However, there are many other ways that data can be reused. With sufficient time spent, data can be transformed into tools that other actors can use for advocacy, dialog, policy, consensus, and so forth.[17]

- Do No harm and manage conflict sensitivity for data collection and interpretation.
  In the context of data collection, "do no harm" underscores the need to ensure that data collection activities do not put individuals or communities at risk, compromise their safety, or exacerbate conflict dynamics.[18]

In summary, "the key policy takeaway is [to focus on] data usability," not the data itself.[19] Data should not be framed as a technical issue that will resolve conflict if only it is *faster*, *more*, or *impartial*.

[13] MacGinty and Firchow, "The Data Myth: Interrogating the Evidence Base for Evidence-Based Peacebuilding."
[14] Ibid. The researchers provide a full list of fifteen considerations: Relevance; Purpose; Accuracy; Cost–Benefit Analysis; Time; Availability; Privacy and Ethics; Alternative Sources; Long-Term Value; Data Use and Sharing; Data Management; Stakeholder Input; Unintended Consequences; Innovation and Learning; and Community Engagement.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

Information Sharing Effectiveness, Case Study: MINUSMA (OBS-N241130-18419)

Observation. Dr. Christopher Sims, writing for *Military Review* in September-October 2024, reminds the reader of the necessity of information to shape all levels of operational planning and execution while personal bias can both influence understanding and subsequent action on the same information. Therefore, he asserts, "Factors that enable or impair this process…exercise significant influence over the management of violence and the success or failure of security activity."[1]

Using the United Nations (UN) Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as a case study, Sims explores information sharing challenges as one reason "why the outcome for a well-resourced mission was so poor," while noting "There are limits to the [positive] effects that information sharing can achieve in a complex operational environment."[2] As he outlines

> [One] does not suppose that alleviating sharing constraints would automatically translate into common understanding and unity of purpose between a constellation of actors whose resourcing, scope, and ambitions in Mali were diverse and, at times, conflicting. One can question the validity of peacekeeping operations in an environment where there was arguably little peace to keep. Yet, the overlapping issues of strategic incoherence, logistical challenges, conflicting cultures, and national sensitivities all created information-sharing hurdles. These issues must nevertheless be framed by the magnitude of the challenges confronting international security assistance forces in Mali.[3]

Or, as he asserts, to address policy implications for future stabilization operations.

Discussion. Sims provides a brief overview of international community intervention history in Mali, beginning in 2012 and continuing in various forms and levels until 2023—just over a decade—when the Malian authorities requested the withdrawal of the MINUSMA forces.

Sims attributes MINUSMA's *Information Maze* as the first category of information sharing challenges. He suggests it existed from its beginning for at least two reasons found in its design: 1. "Crosscutting mandate priorities…with the constant challenge to balance force and diplomacy," and 2. The use of *stabilization*, as "an umbrella term for a raft of efforts plagued by strategic incoherence."[4] He summarizes the impact of the second issue simply

> When the language that frames the operational environment is equivocal, as was the case in Mali, it complicates information sharing because there is no common understanding, no unified goal to harmonize collaboration and coordination. This lack of consensus fostered mistrust across MINUSMA both internal to the organization and with international stabilization partners.[5]

For the first issue—the shifting balance between "force and diplomacy" (or, civilian and military/police)—the impact was both more complicated and more pronounced. Some of the incoherence was structural—every agency followed its own bureaucratic processes. Some of the disconnect was due to organizational cultural—the differences between a civilian-led agency and a security-focused one. Regardless of reasons, the mission and force elements developed an "us-versus-them mentality" between each other,

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[1] Christopher Sims, "Information Sharing and the Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations in Mali," *Military Review*, September-October 2024 (accessed November 20, 2024).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

irrespective of the distrust between MINUSMA and local nationals or host government leaders.[6] Without processes that engendered trust between all parts of the mission, "Information sharing and communication were constrained by these separations."[7]

The second category of information sharing challenges Sims considers is the *Square Pegs for Round Holes* of both geography of Mali, the multicultural environment in general, and individual personalities.[8] In the first issue of geography, he emphasizes that Mali is more than twice the size of France with rough and undeveloped terrain and logistics and sustainment issues in security assistance. It is comprised of a "tapestry of nuanced security dynamics where localized insurgency was interwoven with transnational extremist organizations and economic and social drivers of violence overlapped" and "the spectrum of the intelligence process afforded widespread opportunity for misinterpretation between and inside organizations."[9] It was so complex, the 2019 UN peacekeeping intelligence policy codified an intelligence framework to be distinct from other types of reporting and analysis to better understand the relationships seen there.

Obviously, the MINUSMA was multinational in character, which Sims suggests was another issue for information sharing. Not simply due to language, as one may anticipate, but for interoperability between technical systems in use by different components of the force or the mission. He shares the example of the 'created for MINUSMA' intelligence unit, the All-Source Intelligence Fusion Unit (ASIFU), that employed a Dutch system. However, the system did not interact with the UN's Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise database. Further, when the Dutch contingent departed from the mission, replacement personnel were not trained to use it. In addition, there was no clear demarcation between the work of the ASIFU and the Joint Mission Analysis Centre placed at the headquarters which resulted in "competition rather than collaboration and synthesis…overlap and territorial encroachment between intelligence units."[10]

Sims also stresses that "Personalities also mattered"--

> Communication style, receptivity, rapport, and perspective all influenced communication dynamics. It came down to human relationships over and again. Those relationships ebbed and flowed. There was difficulty in building institutional memory with multiple nationalities present, as the often-contrasting personalities and the transient, fragile nature of the knowledge generated in the mission was like building sandcastles; it was time-consuming, unstable, and needed to be constructed anew after each incoming tide of personnel.[11]

Sim's third category of information sharing challenge is *National Sensitivities*. This category includes the ubiquitous "national caveats"--

> National caveats are controls enacted by a participating nation on the activities of its military personnel deployed in a multinational operation. This often manifests as information-sharing restrictions with particular operational partners that inevitably limits flexibility, common understanding, and coordination in the field. Therefore, different nations' abilities and appetite to do different things was a complicating element of the mission. Each force had its own lines that it was not willing to cross, or its national government would not want it to cross. But no nation spoke

[6] Sims, "Information Sharing and the Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations in Mali."
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

> about what those lines were, which was an enormous information-sharing obstacle for a force commander.[12]

Related, but separate from the caveat issues, was the too-common "parallel structure" of two chain-of-commands from force units to headquarters or commanders in parent countries as well as the commanders within the mission (sometimes even three-lines of command).[13] Unsurprisingly, multiple stands of command complicate information sharing efforts.

Finally, "national sensitivities created security prohibitions around technology" and some types or sources of information, such as sharing between Chinese and European contingents.[14] Even when security concerns were not present, "Language hurdles exacerbated interoperability constraints."[15] Consequently, the information is not well-understood and therefore, may not be helpful for the success of a specific operation and the safety of the force members.[16]

The fourth category of information sharing challenges Sims considers for this case study is *The Fragile Ecosystem of International Organizations*. He reminds the reader that the humanitarian community and local actors had information that was vital to "effective collaboration, effective adaptation to changing priorities and contexts, and efficient resource allocation…[to]…enriches awareness of the operational environment."[17] Still, he notes

> Yet in Mali, there was consistent friction between organizations because of perceived or actual misalignment of objectives and which continually impeded information sharing. While MINUSMA priorities included protection of civilians and the creation of an enabling environment for humanitarian assistance, there was resistance on the part of the humanitarian community who wanted nothing to do with the mission because it was perceived as an active party to the conflict by many stakeholders, including other parties to the conflict.[18]

He believes that

> Discomfort in the humanitarian community ranged from the pragmatic to the principled. A pragmatic example was its engagement with members of the population whose most recent traumas were often caused by uniformed men with guns. A principled example was that it was hard to be independent, neutral, and impartial while also supporting some of the mission mandates such as the return of the state and the use of all necessary means to achieve objectives.[19]

He acknowledges that the discomfort went in both directions. The humanitarian international organizations did not trust the MINUSMA personnel or mission; the same was true of the MINUSMA to the humanitarian organizations. Further, the collaboration and cooperation between the French forces operating in the region and MINUSMA was suspect by the other agencies, while at the same time,

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[12] Sims, "Information Sharing and the Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations in Mali."
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid. Sims quotes Peter Albrecht, "Intra-mission inequality encumbers collaboration and coordination between African and non-African units in MINUSMA. Most of the time, the units operate more or less separately, to the extent that MINUSMA risks becoming a two-tier mission." See: Peter Albrecht, Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, and Rikke Haugegaard, *African Peacekeepers in Mali* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017), 9, https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/762381/DIIS_RP_2017_2_WEB.pdf.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

MINUSMA personnel worked carefully to ensure "at the operational level, communications were primarily centered upon deconfliction rather than coordination, and information sharing was only functional in character."[20]

Sims concludes that many things contributed to MINUSMA's decade of incumbered operations. However, he asserts that "beneath the shadow of strategic inconsistencies, the ripple effects of [information sharing] challenges were felt throughout the deployment of the UN mission."[21]

Recommendation(s). There are several policy implications to consider, according to Sims--

> Firstly, civil-military conversations should be given high priority and primary relationships between stakeholders should be built quickly.
>
> Secondly, to retain and develop institutional knowledge in the face of persistent rotations, lengthened deployments should be implemented high up in military hierarchies, with sector commanders, staff officers, and battalion commanders staying in post for more than twelve months.
>
> Thirdly, information-sharing channels between national actors should be coordinated through doctrine to circumvent national sensitivities. In addition, systematic embedding of officers between partners, particularly in intelligence sections, can mitigate many interoperability issues where heterogenous systems have been barriers and consequently improve information flows.
>
> Finally, understanding, acknowledging, and accounting for different perceptions of the security problems in an operational environment can assist in navigating between personalities across the civil-military divide.

International Law Implications for Peace in Outer Space (OBS-N250101-19193)

Observation. In early December 2024, the United Nation's (UN) General Assembly adopted 72 texts requiring nearly 200 separate recorded votes.[1] Key among them was a resolution on *Weapons of Mass Destruction in Outer Space*, intended to keep 'Space' de-militarized and at peace. It was approved by a vote of 167 countries in favor.[2] The resolution

> affirms the obligation of all Outer Space Treaty States parties not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of mass destruction weapons, install such weapons on celestial bodies or station them in outer space in any other manner. It emphasizes the need to advance measures with effective verification as early as possible to prevent an outer space arms race.[3]

In the same month, the *U.S.' National Aeronautics and Space Administration* (NASA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN's *Office for Outer Space Affairs* (UNOOSA) "pledging

[20] Sims, "Information Sharing and the Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Operations in Mali."
[21] Ibid.

[1] United Nations, "Threat of Mass-Destruction Weapons in Space, New Technology in Military Domain Inform General Assembly's Adoption of 72 First Committee Texts," Press Release, December 2, 2024 (accessed December 12, 2024).
[2] Ibid. This refers to documents A/79/406 and A/C.1/79/L.7/Rev.1. Four countries voted against the resolution (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Russian Federation, Syria) and six countries abstained from voting (Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Lebanon, Nicaragua).
[3] Ibid.

cooperation in areas of science and technology to support the peaceful use of outer space."[4] The intent, according to the press releases, "brings together NASA's wealth of publicly available Earth observation data and dynamic exploration opportunities with UNOOSA's unique position as the only U.N. entity dedicated to outer space affairs" in all potential efforts, but specifically "to leverage NASA's Artemis program as part of UNOOSA's Access to Space for All Initiative."[5] As one press release quotes Jim Bridenstine, the NASA Administrator, "In cooperation with UNOOSA, NASA's Earth observation data and capabilities can greatly improve life here on Earth, informing efforts to fight famine, support disaster relief efforts, and even improve water management and sustainable urban development."[6]

Clearly the United Nations and its representatives acknowledge both the opportunities and the challenges of this frontier of Space.[7] Yet in many ways, international law and norms has not 'caught up' to reality of ongoing state engagement in the space of Space—perhaps not always hostile, but not always friendly, either. As in other areas of rapidly evolving technology, the US and the international community must begin work to get the appropriate laws in place. The recent resolution in only one step.

As Chris Johnson, *Director of Legal Affairs and Space Law for Secure World Foundation* and an adjunct professor of law at *Georgetown University* stated recently in a podcast: "Every country in the world shares a border with space." Implied in that observation is that every country in the world has an interest in what space can do for it.[8]

Discussion. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) is an office within the UN that promotes "international cooperation in the peaceful use and exploration of space, and in the utilisation [sic] of space science and technology for sustainable economic and social development."[9] More, it "assists any United Nations Member States to establish legal and regulatory frameworks to govern space activities and strengthens the capacity of developing countries to use space science technology and applications for development by helping to integrate space capabilities into national development programmes [sic]."[10] The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is the forum for the development of international space law. There are currently five international treaties that

> deal with issues such as the non-appropriation of outer space by any one country, arms control, the freedom of exploration, liability for damage caused by space objects, the safety and rescue of spacecraft and astronauts, the prevention of harmful interference with space activities and the environment, the notification and registration of space activities, scientific investigation and the exploitation of natural resources in outer space and the settlement of disputes. Each of the treaties stresses the notion that outer space, the activities carried out in outer space and whatever benefits might be accrued from outer space should be devoted to enhancing the well-being of all countries and humankind, with an emphasis on promoting international cooperation.[11]

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[4] National Aeronautics and Space Administration, "NASA, UN Sign Memorandum of Understanding on Peaceful Uses of Space," Press Release, December 17, 2024 (accessed December 30, 2024).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] For this Lesson, the author uses *Space* to define outer space beyond the Earth's atmosphere and *space* to define an area around an object or idea.
[8] Kevin Frazier, Chris Johnson, and Jen Patja, "Lawfare Daily: on Space Law (or Lack Thereof)," *Lawfare*, November 20, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024).
[9] "About Us," The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (accessed December 20, 2024). Also see: "Space For Our Everyday Lives: The Role of the United Nations in Space," UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, November 20, 2024.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

In addition, there are **"**five sets of principles on space-related activities": The "Declaration of Legal Principles" (1963); The "Broadcasting Principles" (1982); The "Remote Sensing Principles" (1986); The "Nuclear Power Sources" Principles (1992); and The "Benefits Declaration" (1996).[12] However, the rapidly evolving field of Space technology coupled with Space exploration has highlighted some 'holes' in international Space law and norms. The *Artemis Accords of 2020*—the policy piece to complement the Artemis program to return to the Moon—are an example of an attempt to address the missing elements in existing Space law. As Chris Johnson points out in the *Lawfare* podcast, while the Artemis Accords "substantially repeat what is already…in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty," it "makes some particular advancements in…transparency, interoperability, cultural heritage, and space resources."[13] Why? "Because it is not 1967."[14]

Johnson points out that, in essence, the Artemis Accords and other similar policies must try to address those elements that were not or could not be considered in earlier treaties and other documents because in many cases, the concepts they represent did not yet exist or could not yet be imagined. Johnson describes Space sustainability (or Space environmentalism/conservatism), which he further describes as

> Space sustainability is merely the practices of allowing you to do what you want to do now and into the long term. It is just long-term rationality. It is not reaping all the gains in the short term. to the detriment of long-term gains and long-term benefits.[15]

On the other hand, and more troubling, is the "specter of unsustainable space and proliferating space debris, including even intentionally creating space debris" and other "unfriendly, not clearly illegal activities in space."[16] Even when there is no intention of malicious intent, the sheer amount of Space debris as of 2024 (currently 46,600 objects tracked in orbit) "underscores the urgent need for effective space traffic management (STM) of all global assets orbiting the Earth."[17] As authors from *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (*CSIS*) note:

> These incidents have become far more frequent. Five years ago, the number of space assets orbiting the Earth was less than a third of what they are today. With the steady increase in satellite launches and large commercial communications and imagery constellations projected to at least double within the decade ahead, space is clearly becoming more crowded. The good news is that it's easier to launch and less expensive to operate satellites in space today. But as odd as it may sound, "space" is not unlimited. It's difficult to put an estimate on the increased number of satellites in orbit that would exceed the capacity of space to accommodate safe operations. However, it is a fair assumption that the risk of safely operating more satellites has exponentially increased. And with that, the increased risk is a looming liability that is unquantifiable.[18]

Ethan Hutchings, writing for *Space News* with a focus on Space mining, echoes Johnson. He points out that while the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) "achieved its objective of avoiding violence in outer space, its drafters could not foresee every development that would take place."[19] Therefore, the global community needs to begin the work to update international Space law.

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[12] "About Us," The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.
[13] Frazier, et al, "Lawfare Daily: Chris Johnson on Space Law (or Lack Thereof)."
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Sean O'Keefe and Makena Young, **"**Is Space the New Wild West: The Need for Strengthened Space Traffic Management," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, October 31, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ethan Hutchings, "Navigating the legal landscape of space mining: interpreting international space law," *Space News*, December 18, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024).

Recommendation(s). However, as the *CSIS* authors also note, there are no international rules for STM. They suggest considering the established norms in the maritime and aviation domains, such as the UN Law of the Sea Convention and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

> One of its primary achievements is the establishment of a shared airspace management system, which includes air traffic control, flight planning, and data exchange protocols. An analogous framework for space could foster collaborative coordination in space, drawing lessons from the collaboration and standardization for satellite operations, collision avoidance protocols, and data-sharing mechanisms. By promoting international cooperation, the United States could help mitigate the risks associated with space debris and potentially overcrowded orbits.[20]

Ethan Hutchings of *Space News* in December 2024 focuses on Space mining. He suggests

> Perhaps we can look towards the Antarctic Treaty and the Prior-appropriation Water Rights Doctrine for an insight into how the issue of mining on the moon will be tackled, as both conceptualize land ownership in a way that is analogous to outer space, and they tackle the issue of resource extraction.[21]

He makes an analogy to fishing in international waters:

> No one can make a claim to own international waters, but if you sail out to sea, cast a net and catch some fish, you own those fish — as long as you haven't done so in a way that violates any governing treaty, like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Seabed Act. So, looking back to space, if you are on the moon and you extract some water, in theory, you own that water — as long as your activities have not violated any treaties governing space.[22]

Early in December 2024, another couple of authors offered other factors to consider in designing the next round of international Space law:

> • Outer Space activities affect Earth System Boundaries
> • Outer Space sustainability needs to take place in conjunction with sustainability of the Earth
> • Lawmaking needs to adapt to complexities of outer Space and Earth's environments
> • Earth's climate system could be impacted by Space activities
> • Environmentally sound outer Space technology design
> • Law is a complex adaptive system that can adapt to change over time
> • Interpreting international law of outer Space through regime integration approach support the interpretation of existing relevant law as supportive of outer Space environmental protection and sustainability[23]

The *CSIS* authors suggest "A starting point for space may be the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space, established by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs and supported by a coalition of nations."[24] In the end, however, Johnson reminds us that "no state owns outer space. We merely have the right to go there."[25]

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[20] Hutchings, "Navigating the legal landscape of space mining: interpreting international space law."
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] O'Keefe and Young, **"**Is Space the New Wild West: The Need for Strengthened Space Traffic Management."
[25] Frazier, et al, "Lawfare Daily: Chris Johnson on Space Law (or Lack Thereof)."

Human

Human Emotions and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Security Decisions (OBS-N250227-20497)

Observation. Joana Wilson, writing for *Humanitarian Law & Policy,* of the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC), acknowledges the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in military and security decision-making scenarios. She notes AI allows for more information access, which, in turn, may provide more perspectives and options for decision-makers. Yet she cautions against assumptions that AI can—or should—remove the human actor from the decisions. Instead, she observes, "War is not, and should never be, easy. Military decision-making is, and ought to be, difficult. To this end, the *enduring presence of human emotions is vital*."[1] [Emphasis added.] Further:

> *human emotions are not a source of weakness, but one of strength*. They promote instinctive responses such as empathy and caution, crucial for effective judgement, evaluation, and the perception of nuance in challenging situations: an important check on violence (and its humanitarian consequences) in complex contemporary battlefield situations, where, for example, the traditional understanding of the principles of distinction and proportionality may be exceedingly difficult to discern and apply.[2] [Emphasis added.]

Wilson asserts "human actors remain the primary (indeed the only) accountable agents in international humanitarian law (IHL)," despite the use of AI and its potential for autonomous weapons.[3] While she writes of military actors, the same principle applies to those operating in the peace and stability arena as well.

Discussion. Some may consider *emotion* as an element that could obscure or confuse otherwise clear guidance, reasoning, or judgement in military action. Wilson notes

> Many of the arguments in support of the increased use of AI in war cite the disadvantages of the human condition and the danger of *emotions on the battlefield*. Emotions can indeed result in aggravated situations, revenge killings or the failure to adhere to legitimate orders, together with the potential for calculated cruelty, leading to the presumption that "*overly emotional humans make poor ethical actors*."[4] [Original emphasis.]

Consequently, AI may appear to provide *reason* in an often-unreasonable situation, thereby "making the battlefield *more humane* by removing human passions and their excessive consequences."[5] [Original emphasis.] Yet, through a brief literature review, Wilson demonstrates the value of *emotion* as "a key part of the human psyche, indispensable for effective and flexible moral evaluation, reasoning, intuition, empathy, self-regulation, and the ability to navigate multiple reasoning systems at once."[6] After all, as one of Wilson sources indicates, "the linear, mathematical nature of computer processes may never be able to replicate the nonlinear and often unquantifiable logic of war."[7]

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[1] Joanna L. D. Wilson, "AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making," *Humanitarian Law & Policy, International Committee of the Red Cross*, February 20, 2025 (accessed February 23, 2025).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. She indicates: "As stated by the *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)* and the *Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)…"*
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

Recommendation(s). Wilson repeats the ICRC's caution about autonomous weapons systems: "*the focus must remain on obligations and responsibilities of humans*," that "*human control must be maintained*", and limits on autonomy urgently established, "to ensure compliance with international law and to satisfy ethical concerns."[8] [Original emphasis.] She describes *meaningful human control* over military AI as

> a sufficiently direct and close connection to be maintained between the human intent of the user" and the "eventual consequences" of the operation… From this would emanate a degree of knowledge and understanding of the outcome of the operation, and, thus, genuine, human practical and moral responsibility for that outcome.[9]

Related is the address of accountability and responsibility, not just the deciding of the decision process itself. Wilson notes that legally, "accountability is achieved through the *existing military command structures and systems of shared responsibility* for violations of IHL, allowing responsibility for AI to be attributed, for example, to *designers and programmers* or the commanding officer ordering the technology's use."[10] [Original emphasis.] Yet, again referring to human emotion, she suggests "it is a minimal expression of respect for humanity that someone should accept responsibility, or be capable of being held responsible, for the decision to take a life, and also, of knowing and expressing what their reasons were."[11] In her telling, the ICRC calls this *moral responsibility*.

In the end, "the concept of meaningful human control and the importance of human emotions go hand-in-hand in reinforcing the imperative that human beings remain the moral, as well as rational, agents in military decision-making."[12]

Human Intelligence in the Digital Age for Peace and Stability (OBS-N250227-20496)

Observation. Many observers and practitioners recognize

> AI [artificial intelligence] presents both a strategic advantage and a formidable challenge in shaping the next generation of military leaders…AI can enhance decision-making, optimize operations, and expand battlefield awareness, yet it must remain a force multiplier—*not a replacement for human intellect*.[1] [Emphasis added]

In December 2024, authors for RAND note the appreciative interest in digital technologies and their capabilities may underestimate those uniquely human capabilities—"such as emotional intelligence, imagination, and the synthesis of complex ideas—and which remain difficult for AI to replicate."[2] Therefore, as *Modern War Institute* author Amanda Collazzo argues

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[8] Wilson, "AI, war and (in)humanity: the role of human emotions in military decision-making."
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid. She points out: *Human Rights Watch (HRW)* has noted that, while "machines have long served as instruments of war… historically humans have always dictated how they are used." Human involvement must therefore always be present, and the importance of human judgement upheld, in the development and deployment of AI in war.

[1] Amanda Collazzo**, "**Critical Thinking for the Military Leaders of Tomorrow," *Modern War Institute at West Point*, February 21, 2025 (accessed February 22, 2025).
[2] Monika Cooper and Millard McElwee, "Embracing Human Intelligence in the Digital Age," *RAND*, December 20, 2024 (accessed February 20, 2025).

> The true test of future leadership lies in striking the right balance: leveraging AI's capabilities while preserving the independent thought, adaptability, and critical reasoning essential for command in today's volatile geopolitical environment. In an era where peer adversaries are racing to develop their own AI-driven strategies, our leaders must be prepared to outthink, not just out-tech, the competition. AI should sharpen human cognition, not dull it—because the future of warfare will be won by those who can command both machine intelligence and the power of the human mind.[3]

While she writes of military leaders, the same is certainly true of those persons operating in the peace and stability space. As the *RAND* authors assert, "Acknowledging the essential role of human capabilities calls on organizations to prioritize preserving and understanding the full range of human cognitive capacities."[4]

Discussion. Collazzo reminds the reader that AI does have its uses

> AI can amplify human capabilities by rapidly collecting, analyzing, and disseminating vast amounts of data, significantly accelerating situational awareness and decision-making processes. With access to extensive information and human input, AI can support decision-making through predictive modeling and simulations—tasks that take humans significantly longer to complete.[5]

Yet the very speed in which they can accelerate decisions can be dangerous without human engagement in that decision cycle—AI should not "replace, but to complement human intelligence."[6]

The *RAND* authors note it is **"**best to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) in ways that enhance efficiency without diminishing the uniquely human attributes…[in] a deliberate approach that harmonizes its computational strengths with fundamental human capabilities."[7] They offer *organizational memory through human experience*, found with "long-tenured employees…as custodians of this memory…informed by lessons learned," contributes "stability and depth, which in turn complements the innovation and fresh perspectives brought by newer team members."[8]

Recommendation(s). As indicated earlier, the *RAND* authors emphasize *intentional integration*, "where AI tools are deployed with a deliberate focus on harmonizing technological strengths with human capabilities…[and] mandates balanced engagement across creative, strategic, and analytical tasks, specifically tailored to elevate the diverse cognitive styles within teams."[9] They suggest a framework for this approach of five components:

- A human-centric focus that develops tools that support and augment human attributes like judgment and creativity, rather than replacing it.
- Ethical standards that uphold stringent ethical requirements in technology deployment incorporating issues of fairness, transparency, accountability, while actively addressing biases in data algorithms and safeguarding personal data.

[3] Collazzo**, "**Critical Thinking for the Military Leaders of Tomorrow."
[4] Cooper and McElwee, "Embracing Human Intelligence in the Digital Age."
[5] Collazzo**, "**Critical Thinking for the Military Leaders of Tomorrow."
[6] Ibid.
[7] Cooper and McElwee, "Embracing Human Intelligence in the Digital Age."
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

- Complementary learning to establish an environment that develops human skills alongside advancements in technological platforms, preparing employees to effectively collaborate with new technologies.
- Environmental and social responsibility, which are important for emphasizing sustainable practices to increase operational efficiency and minimize environmental impact.
- Collaborative innovation that encourages consultative multidisciplinary teams the instill diverse human perspectives in developing AI solutions.[10]

Collazzo reminds the reader that *education* and *training* must still focus on human traits, such as independent thinking, "rather than blindly accepting computer-generated recommendations."[11] She echoes the *RAND* authors by asserting that *experience*—among other human capabilities—is necessary to decision-making in addition to the perspectives AI may make of the volumes of information it can collate. As she states

> To maintain a strategic edge and operational superiority, military leaders must cultivate a disciplined decision-making process that integrates AI as a tool while ensuring that human intuition, adaptability, and ethical reasoning remain at the forefront of command decisions.[12]

While all the authors write of military leaders, the same is certainly true of those persons operating in the peace and stability space.

Gender Bias and its Impact on Security—Case Study, IDF Observers in Gaza (OBS-N241021-17297)

Observation. At the one-year anniversary, many observers and authors asked about intelligence failures prior to the horrific incursions of Hamas in Gaza the year prior. While authors suggest many possible causal factors, *gender bias* is not among those listed. Yet, it is apparent that it also contributed as well. As Isabel Kershner reported for *The New York Times* on January 19, 2024:

> When female military lookouts sounded the alarm before Oct. 7 that they had spotted unusual activity along the Gaza border, which they assessed to be consistent with planning for a major terrorist attack, they say they were dismissed by their male senior officers, who suggested they were the eyes, not the brains, of the military.[1]

Gender bias—the assumption of certain beliefs or characteristics of an individual due to their gender[2]—can impact security and stability.

Discussion. On the *War on the Rocks* website, a group of authors posited several answers to the question: "Who bears responsibility for the failure to anticipate the Oct. 7 Hamas assault that led also to

[10] Cooper and McElwee, "Embracing Human Intelligence in the Digital Age."
[11] Collazzo**, "**Critical Thinking for the Military Leaders of Tomorrow."
[12] Ibid.

[1] Isabel Kershner, "Israeli Women Fight on Front Line in Gaza, a First," *The New York Times*, January 19, 2024 (accessed October 14, 2024).
[2] "gender bias," American Psychological Association (accessed October 20, 2024).

the war in Lebanon and on other fronts?"[3] This author team quickly note the "blame game" shifts between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his intelligence chiefs, "with each side offering conflicting accounts of whether warnings were issued and, if so, why they were not acted upon."[4] They suggest as conclusion that responsibility lies with both parties, but acknowledge that is an incomplete answer. Further, they suggest the simple answer—one that attributes blame to both parties—ignores the "dangers in the politicization of intelligence."[5]

The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the potential points of either intelligence failures and/or failures to act on given warnings within the context of tactical, operational, and strategic level prompts. They suggest at least two points of bias that may have influenced strategic intelligence assessment; that is, the failure to act on specific intelligence that indicated definite shifts in Hamas behavior in the months and weeks before October 7, 2023. One may have been due to the Prime Minister's and his close political allies' "cognitive closure"—or the inability to think flexibly about "long-held belief and strategy" for their expectations for Hamas and Palestinian actions.[6] The other bias that may have influenced the assessment of intelligence at the strategic level may have "been shaped by [Netanyahu's] political instincts" as many of the military and the intelligence community leadership were critical of Netanyahu's policy agenda before the October 2023 attack.[7]

Bias, however, was not limited to the strategic, civil-military leadership. It was certainly at the tactical level as well. The *War on the Rocks* authors indicate "There was a failure to provide a tactical warning — that is, an immediate, concrete, and focused warning — in the days before the attack and more specifically on the night of Oct. 6-7, just hours before the attack."[8] Yet that was not true. As *The Washington Post* reports, among many other sources, "In the weeks after the attack…it became clear that the observers in Nahal Oz had been warning of something unprecedented — and were disregarded."[9] The field observers of Nahal Oz are a women-only Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) unit; most soldiers are between 18 and 20 years old. They were—and are—tasked with observation and reporting for specific areas in Gaza. As the *Post* shares

> For months they had logged reports about Hamas ramping up its military activities: training several times a week, then several times a day; hoisting Palestinian and Hamas flags as they drove in convoys up and down the length of the Gaza Strip. These were not routine drills, the observers told a civilian commission of inquiry in August, but complex military exercises that would soon be put in motion to devastate more than 20 Israeli communities. … The field observers said they were confident that something big was about to happen because they understood their enemies. They knew their names and faces, as well as the intimate rhythm and routine of their days. But when the women tried to send alerts up the almost exclusively male chain of command, they said, they were told they didn't have access to the full picture. Superiors said that the observers' posts offered limited visibility and that there was no way they could connect the dots.[10]

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[3] Ehud Eiran, Ofer Guterman, and David Simantov, "Israel's Oct. 7 Early Warning Failure: Who Is to Blame?" *War on the Rocks*, October 4, 2024 (accessed October 7, 2024).
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Shira Rubin, "The female soldiers who predicted Oct. 7 say they are still being silenced," *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2024 (accessed October 10, 2024).
[10] Rubin, "The female soldiers who predicted Oct. 7." The *Post* also reports: "Of the about 1,200 people killed that day, 15 were field observers from Nahal Oz. Seven other observers were taken hostage. One was later rescued by Israeli forces; another was killed by her captors in November, the IDF said. Five remain in captivity."

According to the *Post*, "The IDF declined to comment on why the field observers' warnings went unheeded and on claims that gender bias played a role."[11] However, perhaps those warnings were the tactical intelligence indicators the *War on the Rocks* authors suggest "should have prompted immediate preventive measures" but were, apparently, "misinterpreted."[12]

Meanwhile, the situation remains unchanged for the all-women field observers along the Lebanese border, even after the Gaza experience. According to the *Post*, an observer said that her superiors "only want to shut us up, to not come to them with complaints, so they're ignoring us even more."[13] As a former field observer reported, "It is a male army, where the 'girls' are seen as hysterical, where the commanders say, regularly, 'If you continue to send these alarms, you will be put in jail.'"[14]

Recommendation(s). As seen in many situations, *intelligence* is the summary of information from many sources. Poor assumptions about source credibility due to gender or youth, which may also have been a factor in this case study, may limit the information needed to make the best decisions for the stability and security of the task or mission. It appears the Israeli intelligence failures of October 7, 2023, were much larger than the dismissal of the reports of their own field observers. However, if those reports were ignored—and current reports are ignored now—due to *gender bias*, then this remains a security risk to resolve through leadership, education, and self-awareness.

The 'Doom Loop' of Climate Chaos (OBS-N241231-19191)

Observation. In early December 2024, authors writing for the website, *The Conversation*, assessed the international impact of the November 2024's United Nations' Conference of Parties (COP) 29 on climate. They noted that the conference appeared to be "business as usual" in the fact that geopolitics was "in the way of climate action" during the proceedings—or in the lack of proceedings and decisions.[1] However, they also noted the emergence of "a vicious cycle."[2]:

> Climate change is making geopolitics less stable, which harms climate action. This will worsen climate change, meaning more geopolitical instability, and so on. The risk is that this "doom loop" runs faster and faster and ultimately derails our ability to phase out fossil fuels fast enough to avoid the worst climate consequences.[3]

The 'doom loop' as described creates more than climate consequences. Local, regional, and international peace and security is also at risk. In August 2024, Sarah Kaiser, writing for the *War Room* at the U.S. Army War College, quotes Sherri Goodman, Secretary General of the *International Military Council for Climate and Security*, who

> argues that "Climate change is a threat multiplier" because human insecurity has far-reaching implications for societies and their ability to deal with crises. Regional tensions are amplified when

[11] Rubin, "The female soldiers who predicted Oct. 7."
[12] Eiran, et al, "Israel's Oct. 7 Early Warning Failure."
[13] Rubin, "The female soldiers who predicted Oct. 7."
[14] Ibid.

[1] Laurie Laybourn and James Dyke, **"**A 'doom loop' of climate change and geopolitical instability is beginning," *The Conversation*, December 9, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

> there is competition over shared water and other resources. Economic insecurity brings political risk as state leaders work to stay in power.[4]

Therefore, Kaiser notes, "Addressing shared challenges and *mitigating climate-related risks* are crucial to executing an integrated deterrence strategy involving regional allies and partners."[5] [Emphasis added.] Further, she asserts "As climate changes amplify global disasters, the United States must also explore *all options* to support its national security interests—including those threatened by nontraditional security threats" such as climate change impacts.[6] [Emphasis added.]

In other words, it may be time to consider novel interagency partnerships tactics, techniques and processes to inform and improve decision-making and overcome shortfalls in policies, doctrine, and training that addresses climate change and its security consequences.

Discussion. There are many measurable impacts of climate change to security. For example, *The Conversation* authors describe the impact of climate change to inflation—especially food prices—given poor conditions for crops and labor productivity. Dissatisfaction over the economy becomes but one point of dissatisfaction over government and the political systems. Coining the term, *climate-flation*, they share:

> In all, extreme weather in 2022 alone is estimated to have added nearly 1% to food inflation in Europe, while as much as a third of recent UK food inflation is estimated to come from climate impacts. In turn, higher food prices directly contribute to headline inflation rates. The global interconnection of food systems means that no country is fully insulated from these effects.
> Meanwhile, climate change can drive inflation in other ways, like how hotter weather is reducing labour [sic] productivity and drought is drying riverbeds and waterways, affecting waterborne freight and disrupting globalised [sic] supply chains.[7]

Another example includes human migration or displacement. While the *International Organization for Migration* (IMO) indicates "There are no reliable estimates of climate change induced migration," it acknowledges "it is evident that gradual and sudden environmental changes are already resulting in substantial population movements."[8] The organization summarizes:

> The number of storms, droughts and floods has increased threefold over the last 30 years with devastating effects on vulnerable communities, particularly in the developing world. In 2008, 20 million persons have been displaced by extreme weather events, compared to 4.6 million internally displaced by conflict and violence over the same period. Gradual changes in the environment tend to have an even greater impact on the movement of people than extreme events. For instance, over the last thirty years, twice as many people have been affected by droughts as by storms (1.6 billion compared with approx. 718m). Future forecasts vary from 25 million to 1 billion environmental migrants by 2050, moving either within their countries or across borders, on a permanent or temporary basis, with 200 million being the most widely cited estimate. This figure equals the current estimate of international migrants worldwide.[9]

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[4] Sarah Kaiser, "Climate Chaos: The Uncharted Territory for U.S. National Security," *War Room*, The U.S. Army War College, August 22, 2024 (accessed September 15, 2024).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid. The author offers as an example the Peace Corps. She states, "Using just one percent of the defense budget to support Peace Corps operations could bolster climate resilience and extend U.S. global influence at a cheaper cost than the DoD."
[7] Laybourn and Dyke, **"**A 'doom loop' of climate change and geopolitical instability is beginning."
[8] *International Organization for Migration*, "What are the Estimates?"(accessed December 20, 2024).
[9] Ibid.

Alice Baillat of the *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre* (IDMC) furthers the linkage between climate change and security as she notes "In 2023, 82 per cent of conflict displacement occurred in countries with high climate vulnerability."[10]

In mid-December 2024, the *United Nations Foundation* suggested that *Climate Action* (The Road to COP 30 and IMO—or *International Maritime Organization*—Negotiations) was the third of "5 Global Issues to Watch in 2025."[11] The reasons for its inclusion on this short list are simple—and extremely complex. There are a number of upcoming goals and targets for 2030 which may or may not be met such as the "1.5°C target" which refers "to the 2030 goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels" while, simultaneously, observing continual threats of Paris climate agreement withdrawals by signatory parties, to include the United States.[12] In the case of the upcoming IMO negotiations, one must note "if the shipping industry were a country, it would be *the sixth largest emitter in the world* — and its emissions are growing steadily."[13] [Emphasis added.] Consequently, these meetings and the measures that may—or may not—be determined from it will be important to climate concerns and, relatedly, peace and security concerns.

Kaiser, of the August 2024 *War Room* article, also emphasizes the "climate-conflict connection" as obvious.[14] She highlights that the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS) "stresses the imperative to collaborate with allies and partners to mitigate transboundary challenges like climate change…"[15] However, she acknowledges that "U.S. participation in climate-related crisis response exercises risks overcommitting the military, potentially weakening readiness for traditional security threats."[16] Yet, she asserts, "Strategists can no longer neatly divide the two. Bolstering resilience to climate-related natural disasters mitigates regional instability by addressing a root cause of human insecurity. *Traditional security challenges often stem from nontraditional security threats.*"[17] [Emphasis added.]

Recommendation(s). Kaiser asserts that "In today's interdependent context, the United States must embrace and develop the softer side of strategy concerning nontraditional security threats."[18] This includes employing the resources and skills of its military to address the nontraditional security threats brought on by climate change impacts. Alice Baillet of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre agrees, noting "Addressing the nexus between climate change, conflict and displacement urgently requires increased (global) investment and coordination."[19]

Even Laybourn and Dyke, for *The Conversation*, look beyond the 'doom loop' negativity to suggest "history shows that periods of instability and crisis can provide fertile ground for rapid, positive change…. The conditions for doom loops also provide opportunities to accelerate virtuous circles."[20] However, they caution, those opportunities need attention. The inherent inequities of the climate change crisis—that

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[10] Alice Baillat, "COP29: Key outcomes on displacement and implications for climate policy," *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)*, Norwegian Refugee Council, December 18, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024).
[11] Megan Rabbitt and M.J. Altman, "5 Global Issues to Watch in 2025," *United Nations Foundation*, December 17, 2024 (accessed December 20, 2024). The other issues listed are: 1. Peace and Security: Resolving Catastrophic Conflict; 2. Financing for Development: Investing in a Sustainable Future; 4. Gender Equality: Reflecting on Progress Amid Rollbacks; and 5. The UN at 80: Reforming an Institution Born Amid World War II.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Kaiser, "Climate Chaos: The Uncharted Territory for U.S. National Security."
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Alice Baillat, "COP29: Key outcomes on displacement and implications for climate policy."
[20] Laybourn and Dyke, **"**A 'doom loop' of climate change and geopolitical instability is beginning." Using the post-World War II period as example, they note "out of the crises of the interwar period and the devastation of the second world war came legal protections for human rights, universal welfare systems and decolonization."

"Those that did little to cause the problem disproportionately suffer the consequences"—often send the vulnerable towards "nativist parties and other political forces that often seek to block climate action" for their own advantages.[21] Instead, they argue, communities and countries must be 1) better protected from climate impacts and 2) feel the benefits of climate actions in order to avoid the 'doom loop' and the related spiraling geopolitical conflict.

Chief Executive Officers and Peace Economy (OBS-N250318-21118)

Observation. A recent article directed to Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of multinational corporations reminds them that "a peaceful world fosters stability, unlocks human potential and drives sustainable growth."[1] As Adil Dalal writes for Forbes, "War diverts resources from healthcare, education and innovation while severely harming the environment. Ending this cycle of destruction is not just a moral imperative—it's an economic necessity."[2] However, as he continues

> Peace is no longer just the absence of war—it is a strategic advantage that fosters economic strength, technological advancement and sustainable progress. Innovation, conscious leadership and a commitment to justice and equity build modern peace. To achieve lasting global stability, we must rethink how we design, reward and sustain peace through business, governance and technology.[3]

CEOs and other C-suite leaders of multinational enterprises can be uniquely situated to foster "dialogue, negotiation, and collaboration between nations, diplomacy helps address global challenges, protect human rights, prevent conflicts, and build a more just and sustainable world."[4]

Discussion. The staff authors of *CEO Weekly* highlight nine areas in which diplomacy and international relations may set the conditions for C-suite leaders to influence in their own sphere, summarized here:

> 1. Promoting Peace and Stability. The authors suggest that "to promote peace and stability among nations" is "one of the primary objectives of international relations and diplomacy."
>
> 2. Facilitating Economic Growth and Development. These efforts in diplomatic arenas "play a vital role in facilitating economic growth and development by promoting trade, investment, and economic cooperation between countries" and "can contribute to poverty reduction and prosperity for all."
>
> 3. Addressing Global Challenges. According to the authors, "many of the most pressing challenges we face are global in nature and require coordinated international responses" and "transcend national borders and cannot be effectively addressed by any single country alone."
>
> 4. Protecting Human Rights and Dignity. The authors remind C-suite leaders that "Diplomatic efforts such as international treaties, conventions, and resolutions help establish norms and standards for human rights protection and hold governments accountable for their actions."

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[21] Laybourn and Dyke, **"**A 'doom loop' of climate change and geopolitical instability is beginning."

[1] Adil Dalal, "Make Peace A Global Priority: A Strategic Blueprint For Universal Prosperity," *Forbes*, March 13, 2025.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] CEO Weekly Staff, "The Importance of International Relations and Diplomacy in Today's World," *CEO Weekly*, March 14, 2025.

5. Preventing Armed Conflicts. The authors call this point "one of the most important functions of international relations and diplomacy." They note that "through diplomacy, countries can work together to resolve disputes peacefully and prevent the outbreak of war."

6. Building Alliances and Partnerships. The authors assert, "By forging strong relationships with other nations, countries can amplify their influence, leverage resources, and achieve common objectives more effectively."

7. Enhancing Cultural Exchange and Understanding. "Cultural diplomacy helps build trust and empathy between peoples and promotes a sense of global citizenship and solidarity," according to the authors.

8. Shaping Global Governance. They highlight: "International relations and diplomacy shape the framework of global governance and help establish rules, norms, and institutions to govern international relations."

9. Navigating Emerging Technologies. Finally, the authors note, "In an era of rapid technological advancement, international relations and diplomacy are increasingly important for navigating the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies."[5]

However, none of these nine areas address any specific mechanism or means in which C-suite leaders may engage in the peace and stability space. Dalal, writing for *Forbes*, offered three 'essential shifts' to consider, summarized here:

1. Cultivating Resilient, Purpose-Driven Leadership. "Leaders must move beyond short-term gains and ego-driven decision-making. Ethical leadership prioritizes long-term stability, sustainability and global well-being." The author uses the former CEO of Unilever, Paul Polman, as an example. His prioritization of sustainability and social responsibility earned a 300% shareholder return over a decade long period at the helm of the organization.

2. Harnessing Technology For Equity And Collaboration. "Business innovation should focus on inclusive solutions—bridging gaps in healthcare, education and digital access. Companies investing in fair technology will drive greater market expansion and long-term profitability." Kenya's mobile money platform M-Pesa provided financial access to underserved communities which resulted in a 2% lift of the population from poverty.

3. Shifting From Conflict Economics To Peace Economics. "The global war economy generates trillions annually," yet a redirect of "even a fraction of these resources" towards "peace-focused investments yield higher returns through market stability, reduced geopolitical risk and workforce productivity." As the author points out, "Countries with lower violence levels see an average of 1.5% higher GDP growth per year."[6]

"Peace isn't just ethical—it's an economic accelerator," according to Dalal. It stimulates:

- Market Growth: Stability attracts investments, fosters innovation and expands consumer markets.

[5] CEO Weekly Staff, "The Importance of International Relations and Diplomacy in Today's World."
[6] Adil Dalal, "Make Peace A Global Priority: A Strategic Blueprint For Universal Prosperity."

• Operational Efficiency: Conflict disrupts supply chains; peace ensures consistency and risk mitigation.

• Talent Retention And Productivity: Employees thrive in secure environments, driving business performance.

• Sustainable Profitability: Long-term value creation is more resilient than war-driven gains.[7]

Recommendation(s). Dalal also provides **'**Actionable Strategies For Business Leaders' for building a peace economy, suggesting "Strategic leadership goes beyond profit—it drives innovation, fosters inclusivity and creates lasting value for businesses and society alike."[8] He offers

1. Invest in peace-driven innovation. Fund technologies that bridge divides—AI for conflict resolution, clean energy for economic stability and FinTech for financial inclusion.

2. Adopt stakeholder capitalism. Shift from profit-centric to purpose-driven models that ensure shared value for employees, customers and communities.

3. Redefine corporate social responsibility. Move beyond traditional philanthropy to embedded peace-building initiatives in business operations.

4. Leverage policy and partnerships. Advocate for global trade agreements, economic incentives and government policies that favor stability and ethical growth.[9]

Technical

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) in Peace Operations—Lessons for Stability Policing (OBS-N241031-17684)

Observation. In September 2024, Colonel Allan Rodrigues of the Brazilian Army, assigned to the then known as the *Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute* (PKSOI) (now the *Security Force Assistance Stability Integration Directorate*, or SFASID) provided a presentation designed as an overview of UAS use—commonly referred to as *drones*—in United Nations (UN) mission operations. He notes that several UN peacekeeping missions currently utilize UAS mostly "for surveillance and intelligence gathering to monitor situations and protect peacekeeping personnel in high-risk areas" but that use "can vary depending on local conditions and host-state approval."[1] As example, missions can also use UAS for other functions beyond situational awareness and surveillance, such as "search and rescue, medicine and vaccine delivery, damage assessment," and communication.[2] Importantly, UAS use is a cost-saver in both its initial investment and its long-term maintenance when compared to helicopters and other aircraft.

The UN is not alone in this determination. Charles Werner, writing for *Police Chief Online*, notes

[7] Adil Dalal, "Make Peace A Global Priority: A Strategic Blueprint For Universal Prosperity."
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

[1] Allan Rodrigues, "Overview of the Use Of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) UNITIS UN Peacekeeping Operations," presentation, *US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute*, 30 September – 10 October 2024.
[2] Ibid.

> While drones do not replace helicopters, they do offer an affordable way for most public safety agencies to achieve real-time aerial situational awareness that enhances safety for all involved and improves operational effectiveness by having more information to act upon.[3]

A review of emerging UAS techniques in policing provides lessons for stability policing use of UAS in future missions.

Discussion. While the UN has over a decade of UAS experience, it is still relatively new to UAS utilization. It categorizes its UAS in three categories:

- Class I. Considered small/mini/or micro with a limited altitude of not more than 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL), normally with a weight of between 1 and 25 kilograms, and with a maximum range of up to 50 kilometers.

- Class II. Normally operated up to 18,000 feet AGL, with a weight of between 150 – 600 kilograms, and a maximum range of 200 kilometers.

- Class III. Normally operated up to 65,000ft AGL, weighing more than 600 kilograms, with an unlimited range.

Werner shares several policing scenarios in which UAS assets enhance the situational awareness and safety of all that could apply to stability policing missions as well (paraphrased here):

- Standoffs, Civil Unrest, Protests, and Large Events. UAS can provide overwatch and quickly identify and record outbreaks of violence or people with weapons and help to avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.

- Room Clearing and Bomb Threats. Using UAS rather than a person to clear a room or check out suspicious package is a safer option.

- Traffic Areas Watch and Accident/Disaster Reconstruction. UAS can actively monitor known traffic concerns and can also provide measurements to develop a 3D model to reconstruction.

- People Movement. UAS can cover large areas and find those who cannot be seen from the ground... Streaming video can also aid sharing this information to multiple locations simultaneously.[4]

Another use of the UAS, according to Werner, is the concept of *Drone as First Responder* (DFR). Originating in Chula Vista, California, the DFR is a drone launched off the police station rooftop at the immediate time of a 911 call to provide "real-time streaming video back to dispatch and to all officers in the field."[5] As Werner summarizes:

> DFR has become the biggest de-escalation tool in their toolbox and serves as a force multiplier… Without any doubt, using drones has saved lives, de-escalated situations, returned units to service, and made it safer for the responders and the community.[6]

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[3] Charles Werner, "Drones in Tactical Crisis Response," *Police Chief Online*, June 5, 2024, (accessed October 30, 2024).
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

He concludes: "…drones can provide an affordable way for most departments to have aerial reconnaissance that has proven to save lives, enhance safety, improve operational effectiveness, serve as a force multiplier, de-escalate tense situations, and provide real-time situational awareness."[7] The same is true of UN missions and other stability policing operations.

Recommendation(s). Werner makes a point about "any drone program" that also applies to the UN's UAS utilization as well: community outreach. He suggests community outreach is necessary

> to share how the drone will be used, how it will NOT be used, and the specific safeguards to prevent random surveillance—clarify that when the drone is flying, it is on an emergency response. Share the policies, procedures, and drone technology with the community.[8]

The same approach may be helpful for the UN. As Colonel Rodrigues points out, many countries still see a *drone* "as a military asset…violating sovereignty, privacy, and prepared to strike."[9] Another concern among many host countries is the UAS data ownership and access "and its implications for international humanitarian law."[10] Therefore, increased use of UAS in UN mission operations must have a corresponding information campaign—that is, a community outreach program.

Artificial Intelligence in Intelligence Analysis, is it a Panacea or Peril? (OBS-N241126-18386)

Observation. Noah B. Cooper, a career U.S. Army military intelligence officer with nearly 20 years of experience, wrote for *War on the Rocks* in October 2024 about the predictive effect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on intelligence analysis. He began with a simple observation: "Intelligence issues are typically not the result of *insufficient information collection* but rather *analysis*."[1] [Emphasis added.] In fact, he argues, intelligence analysts have overwhelming "data streams…while also exacerbating the impact of cognitive biases."[2]

He asserts that "AI can augment human capabilities and enhance the analysis process by tackling specific challenges [but] its value lies in serving as a complementary capability to the expertise and judgment of human intelligence analysts."[3] In other words, "Intelligence professionals should not view AI as a panacea or a peril, but rather as a tool that will no doubt improve over time."[4]

Whether it is intelligence analysis for a military operation or information management and dissemination for a peace operation/stability activity, the AI utility discussion—the pros and the cons—remain the same.

Discussion. Cooper emphasizes three specific problems analysts or any data users face: "coping with large volumes of data; the acquisition of data from non-traditional sources; and…the impacts of cognitive biases that impact the objectivity of intelligence assessments."[5] Using the analogy of 'separating the wheat from the chaff,' Cooper notes the sheer mass of data collected makes it nearly impossible to

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[7] Werner, "Drones in Tactical Crisis Response."
[8] Ibid.
[9] Rodrigues, "Overview of the Use Of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) UNITIS UN Peacekeeping Operations."
[10] Ibid.

[1] Noah B. Cooper, "AI and Intelligence Analysis: Panacea or Peril?" *War on the Rocks*, October 10, 2024 (October 30, 2024).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

conduct adequate analysis. Consequently, information "falls on the floor" that may have been needed to make an important decision.[6]

Generative AI technologies, based upon large language models, can add efficiencies to the analysis process, according to Cooper: "For example, generative AI could summarize lengthy texts (e.g., foreign grey literature), translate foreign languages, conduct open-source sentiment analysis, and perform various other functions…aiding in identifying analytical flaws or inconsistencies."[7] However, "the perennial problem of analytical bias" still exists as those large language models and data sets "are inherently unstructured and potentially flawed."[8] Hence, the occasional "hallucinations" an AI program may make when it "encounters an unfamiliar word, phrase, or topic — or if the data is insufficient."[9] In addition, non-governmental organizations—be they commercial or simply privately held—are "important data brokers" now yet access to their data may be difficult for military or security organizations to obtain.[10]

Another aspect of AI processing that can assist in intelligence analysis is to offer alternative perspectives beyond the 'mental model' of an analyst's experience or knowledge on a topic. While experience and education in a topic are helpful for analysis, it may bias the analyst. However, as Cooper points out, "Specifically, AI can process large amounts of structured and unstructured data from multiple, disparate sources and determine linkages within the data that are not readily apparent to a human analyst."[11] Those linkages may, indeed, be ones that are new or unusual that analysts are not prone to notice due to their inherent bias.

Finally, for this discussion, AI

> could fuse information from multiple intelligence disciplines (e.g., signals, human, geospatial intelligence, etc.), presenting a clearer depiction of the issue at a faster rate. The value of actionable intelligence, particularly in time-sensitive scenarios, is high, and thus, the vastly faster processing speeds of AI to identify patterns and correlations are quite valuable to the analyst. As an ancillary benefit, the greater timeliness associated with delivering actionable intelligence acts as a relationship-strengthening measure between an intelligence organization and its customers.[12]

Recommendation(s). The author notes that "The capability to rapidly identify relationships within large data sets will certainly increase the efficiency of intelligence analysis and lead to the construction of more precise assessments" and, in this case, "AI can definitely help."[13] However, he cautions that AI cannot solve its own modelling and data set concerns without intelligence organizations applying care to both acquire legitimate data and to "scrub the data…to ensure that it is representative of thoughtful and validated analytical methodologies that seek to avoid bias."[14] Consequently, the author recognizes the human analysts must still dedicate time to validate AI's contribution to overall analysis, which may lead some to question its utility. Yet, he asserts:

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[6] Cooper, "AI and Intelligence Analysis: Panacea or Peril?"
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid. The author notes that "human knowledge, experience, expertise, and intuition will continue to remain the vital components of intelligence tradecraft until this technology matures."
[10] Ibid. The author suggests at a later point in the article that "the issues of trust, proprietary data, and compatibility will no doubt aggravate the acquisition of such information."
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

> the time investments now will certainly yield dividends in the long term as intelligence organizations test and experiment with various models. Adoption and experimentation of this technology will facilitate its maturation, and training data can improve, fostering greater integration of generative AI into intelligence tradecraft.[15]

He highlights, however, that "Perhaps the most pivotal facet undergirding the success of generative AI into the field of intelligence is acceptance by the analytical community."[16] Further:

> AI technologies are not replacements for humans; rather, they are enabling systems that still require a human "in the loop" to operate and to improve functionality….Automation and speed do not absolve intelligence analysts of their primary duty to ask and consider the right questions at the right time to deliver timely and accurate intelligence.[17]

Policy

Transactional, or Strategic, Peacemaking? (OBS-N250318-21127)

Observation. In early March 2025, authors for *Foreign Policy* suggest "The rise of *multipolarity*—once championed by figures like Russian President Vladimir Putin, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and Chinese President Xi Jinping—has now become a broader geopolitical reality."[1] [Emphasis added] They further suggest that the multipolar geopolitical competition affects more than "military posturing and economic influence" but it also alters "the way in which peace is pursued."[2] They assert

> Where peace efforts once sought long-term, comprehensive conflict resolution through traditional diplomacy, they have become *transactional*, short term, politically expedient, and driven by strategic calculations. Peacemaking diplomacy has been repurposed into a tool for short-term gains and geopolitical advantage rather than genuine peace, giving rise to what we call "strategic peacemaking."[3] [Emphasis added]

Other researchers studied the *transactional* aspects of this 'new' peacemaking process in more detail. Hellmüller and Salaymeh, writing in *Contemporary Security Policy* in the winter 2025, also "argue that recent changes in world order have led to *transactionalism* becoming more pronounced in peace processes."[4] [Emphasis added] They offer, however, a different, but perhaps related, perspective for the cause to this change, suggesting

> This is because increased geopolitical competition often leads to a conflation of warmakers and peacemakers: States that provide military support to belligerents also engage in peacemaking.

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[15] Cooper, "AI and Intelligence Analysis: Panacea or Peril?"
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

[1] Ben Acheson and Marika Theros, "What's Wrong With Strategic Peacemaking," *Foreign Policy*, March 4, 2025 (accessed March 13, 2025).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] S. Hellmüller and B. Salaymeh, "Transactional peacemaking_ Warmakers as peacemakers in the political marketplace of peace processes," *Contemporary Security Policy* (2025) 1–31 (2025) (accessed March 13, 2025). https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2024.2448908.

> This renders peace processes political marketplaces with transactionalism as main modus operandi.[5]

It appears clear—at least from a US perspective in this moment—that transactionalism is the international diplomatic philosophy model in use. Certainly, any burgeoning peace processes could expect similar approaches. However, is transactionalism peacemaking also strategic? Unfortunately, as is the case for many long-term plans, only time will reveal the answer.

Discussion. Hellmüller and Salaymeh identify three characteristics in contemporary peacemaking processes in the global competition environment: warmaking and peacemaking conflation, a peace political marketplace, and transactional peacemaking. They further identify three features for *transactional peacemaking*:

- It prioritizes bilateral over multilateral approaches;
- is interest-based and exclusive rather than value-based and inclusive; and
- focuses on short-term deals instead of long-term outcomes.[6]

While these three features seem self-explanatory, the researchers do spend space to describe and define them in the context of transactional peacemaking. Of interest, they argue the "transactionalism constitutes thus *more a tactic than a strategy*" because "without a focus on sustainable solutions, peace agreements become temporary arrangements aimed at de-escalation without addressing the underlying grievances."[7] [Emphasis added]

Acheson and Theros, the *Foreign Policy* authors, echo Hellmüller and Salaymeh's findings regarding the durability of contemporary peace processes. They state

> today's peace processes are increasingly designed not to resolve conflicts but to secure strategic interests, preserve influence, or manage optics. This trend risks long-term stability, and if no meaningful dividend follows for communities enduring the consequences of conflict, it even risks the erosion of the term "peace" itself.[8]

However, it is in the acknowledgment of bilateral strategic interests that they derive the term *strategic peacemaking*. They outline the ongoing processes for both "cease-fire efforts in the Middle East, and even tentative discussions around Ukraine" as actions that are "more about geopolitical maneuvering, tactical gains, and strategic posturing…as tools to manage optics rather than end wars."[9]

How did the US get to this transactional peacemaking approach? Or the global community writ large? Interestingly, both the *Foreign Policy* authors and the researchers writing in *Contemporary Security Policy* suggest the retreat from the post-Cold War, "liberal peace" model is at least a decade in the making.[10] Hellmüller and Salaymeh use three early 2010s conflict-resolution approaches (Libya, Syria, and Yemen) as case studies of their observed three characteristics in contemporary peacemaking processes in the global competition environment: warmaking and peacemaking conflation, a peace political marketplace, and transactional peacemaking. In doing so, they conclude

[5] Hellmüller and Salaymeh, "Transactional peacemaking."
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Acheson and Theros, "What's Wrong With Strategic Peacemaking."
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

> The cases of Libya, Syria, and Yemen illustrate transactional peacemaking by actors who are warmakers and peacemakers at the same time, creating political marketplaces of international peace processes. In these contexts, the space for multilateral, inclusive and value-based, as well as long-term approaches diminishes as the interactions among the domestic conflict parties and the external intervening actors feed into patronage relations and politics of loyalty.[11]

Acheson and Theros also look to a more recent international agreement to explain the US—and other nations—turn to *transactionalism*: The 2020 US-Taliban 'Doha deal.' They suggest

> It was the 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement, the so-called Doha deal, that helped usher in this new era of dealmaking masquerading as peacemaking. Although framed as a historic step toward peace, it was, in reality, a withdrawal pact cloaked in peacemaking language. The paradox was that "inclusion" became buzzword attached to all Afghan peace efforts, but the eventual deal was a bilateral agreement excluding a primary party: the Afghan government. The agreement legitimized the Taliban without real commitments, while external actors—Pakistan, Russia, China—leveraged the process to advance their geostrategic influence. Rather than laying the groundwork for a peace process, the agreement for "bringing peace to Afghanistan" accelerated the collapse of the Afghan state while enabling U.S. withdrawal. This approach has since become a blueprint for a new kind of diplomacy—one that prioritizes security bargains and seeks short-term strategic gains over long-term stability.[12]

Acheson and Theros further note that, despite international "rhetorical commitment" to the 'liberal peace' model principles of "genuine resolution," "the trajectory of strategic peacemaking is unlikely to be reversed."[13]

Recommendation(s). Acheson and Theros do not argue against multilateral mechanisms for peace. They, instead, note multilateral mechanisms "remain the most effective means for managing conflict and progressing peace."[14] What they do argue for is a strengthening of multilateralism, suggesting such effort "is essential to contain the worst excesses of geopolitical self-interest and prevent unchecked violence in this new era."[15] Hellmüller and Salaymeh also do not recommend a full retreat from multilaterism into transactionalism, especially from the United Nations. Instead, they acknowledge the dilemma the UN has in today's geopolitical competition environment. "The UN is the powerhouse of multilateral mediation committed to value-based and inclusive approaches and outcomes related to long-term institution-building," they assert.[16] Yet,

> If it adopts transactional approaches itself, it risks invertedly feeding the dynamics of the political marketplace characterized by weak institutionalism and flourishing of ad-hoc arrangements and hence furthers its own marginalization. If, however, it continues to insist on more comprehensive approaches, it risks being even more sidelined as conflict parties turn to those with more political capital in the political marketplace to respond to their key interests.[17]

[11] Hellmüller and Salaymeh, "Transactional peacemaking."
[12] Acheson and Theros, "What's Wrong With Strategic Peacemaking."
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Hellmüller and Salaymeh, "Transactional peacemaking."
[17] Ibid.

Overall, the general "decline in multilateralism and international norms, has contributed to deadlier, more protracted conflicts that are increasingly entangled with broader geopolitical struggles."[18]

How to Have Multinational Peacekeeping Matter in the Future (OBS-N250131-19936)

Observation. Colonel Allan Rodrigues, writing for then the *Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute* (PKSOI) (now the *Security Force Assistance and Stability Integration Directorate*, or SFASID) in December 2024, asserts "United Nations peacekeeping is arguably the Organization's most important invention….based on a widely shared set of international norms, rules, principles, and decision-making procedures that have evolved since the late 1940s."[1] Yet, in early January 2025, authors for *The Economist* suggest "peacekeeping is becoming yet another casualty of today's messy, multipolar world" and offers several reasons for the situation, to include accusations of "propping up weak and illegitimate regimes"; failure "to stop atrocities, or to enforce the agreements they were deployed to monitor"; and reports "of corruption and sexual abuse."[2]

A couple of days later, authors for *The International Crisis Group*, suggest, in contrast, that "discussions of the future of peace operations are not quite as fatalistic" as it may seem.[3] While the United Nations (UN) member countries acknowledge the weaknesses of peacekeeping operations, they also recognize their unique strengths. Consequently, the authors assert, "Diplomats from many countries have expressed unease about writing off the UN's peacemaking and peacekeeping roles."[4]

If what was in place for peacekeeping operations may no longer suffice, then what should be in place instead? The *United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025*, planned for May 13-14, 2025, in Berlin, Germany, will begin to address that question.[5] Essentially, "Peacekeeping, historically one of the UN's most significant and visible conflict management tools, stands at a crossroads."[6] It is time to reconsider the tactics, techniques and processes to inform and improve decision-making and overcome shortfalls in policies, doctrine, and training that addresses conflict prevention and peacekeeping opportunities.

Discussion. The United Nations (UN) Department of Peace Operations at the request of Germany and the other co-chairs commissioned an independent study to inform the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin (May 2025), whose overarching theme is "The Future of Peacekeeping."[7] An overview of the report notes

> The study finds that UN peacekeeping remains an effective multilateral tool for preventing and limiting armed conflict, sustaining peace, as well as responding to a broader range of threats to international peace and security. It also reviews security threats and challenges that future

[18] Acheson and Theros, "What's Wrong With Strategic Peacemaking."

[1] Allan Rodrigues, "OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS," Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), presentation to PKSOI members, December 6, 2024.
[2] *The Economist*, "The era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close," January 2, 2025 (accessed January 15, 2025).
[3] Daniel Forti and Richard Gowan, "Fresh Thinking about Peace Operations at the UN," *The International Crisis Group*, January 7, 2025 (accessed January 16, 2025).
[4] Ibid.
[5] United Nations, United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 (accessed January 15, 2025).
[6] Peter Albrecht and Corine van Emmerik, "DIIS Policy Brief: Future-proofing peacekeeping," *Danish Institute for International Studies*, January 10, 2025 (accessed January 15, 2025).
[7] Department of Peace Operations, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities," *United Nations*, November 1, 2024 (accessed January 15, 2025).

peacekeeping missions must address. Among the most important are armed conflict, the weaponization of new and emerging technologies, transnational organized crime, the climate crisis, and public health emergencies, which are combining in complex ways that ignore international political borders.[8]

Allan Rodrigues, of PKSOI then (now SFASID) reminds observers of UN peacekeeping operations that they are

- A cost-effective way of increasing global security.
- Strongly associated with post-war periods of peace.
- Can prevent the spread of violence within a country during civil war.
- Are successful approximately 60% of the time in terms of reducing violence, displacement and the spread of violence.
- Improves the prospects for protecting civilians.
- Facilitates the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Can partner effectively with non-UN organizations to successfully curb violence.
- Improves women's political participation and empowerment in host states.[9]

Despite these positive outcomes and factors, the challenges of UN peacekeeping operations are myriad, and Rodrigues provides a list of several to consider.[10] However, *The Economist* authors focus on money—or the lack of it—as a primary reason for peacekeeping challenges. The decreasing budget for peacekeeping missions, "even as peacekeepers had to handle increasingly complex threats.… undermines the legitimacy of troops whose job, after all, is to keep the peace."[11] Further, while the tasks have grown from mere monitoring of ceasefires to atrocity prevention, the UN's limits on lethal actions "often make [peacekeepers] look feeble."[12]

The authors also note, "Until recently, peacekeeping had at least stayed fairly free of geopolitical rancour [sic]," and quote one UN Security Council observer who states, "peacekeeping was one of the last things which was consensus-based."[13] Yet, despite ongoing conflict across the globe, the UN has not authorized a new peace operations mission since 2014. Instead, since 2018, both Russia and China routinely abstain on UN resolutions concerning peace operations and, in Russia's case, has created hostile conditions for peacekeepers in ongoing missions or moved to close missions.[14] Rodrigues also highlights a decreasing "level of trust and power…between the UNSC's permanent members" and "polarization, other regional commitments (NATO, EU, AU, etc), and mistrust in the UN system" as influencing factors on UN-led peace operations.[15] Consequently, he suggests the future of peacekeeping operations may be, instead, more "bilateral and regional initiatives to address regional threats."[16]

Yet Richard Gowan, writing for *The International Crisis Group* in January 2025, asserts, "Despite the geopolitical headwinds facing the U.N., member states have pushed for further debate about how it can

[8] Department of Peace Operations, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities."
[9] Rodrigues, "OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS."
[10] Ibid.
[11] *The Economist*, "The era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close." Allan Rodrigues also indicates decreasing budgets as an area of concern for peace operations at the UN and other observers suggest that situation will be worse before it improves with the new Trump Administration in place.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Rodrigues, "OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS."
[16] Ibid.

do more to promote peace and security."[17] He offers several reasons for this effort, not the least of which is that the UN has the mechanisms in place—while imperfect—to make an operation happen. He also notes that "there is a growing focus on what the U.N. General Assembly, which has a long history of peace initiatives, can do in cases where the [Security] council is gridlocked," which, as noted earlier, in a routine occurrence in today's geopolitical climate.[18]

As the November 2024 independent study reflects

> Looking to the future, fresh thinking is needed about what roles peacekeeping can and should play. The study's vision for UN peacekeeping is a politically focused, people-centered, modular tool that can unite the Security Council around effective multilateral responses to a broad range of threats and challenges.[19]

Recommendation(s). With the approaching *United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025*, planned for May 13-14, 2025, many observers and practitioners in the peacekeeping community space are considering the reform that will keep multinational peace operations relevant for the next several decades. In that mindset, writers for the *Danish Institute for International Studies* (DIIS)[20] assert that "While peacekeeping's core principles of impartiality, consent, and limited use of force remain essential for fostering trust and legitimacy, rethinking is also needed to address unresolved challenges like asymmetric warfare, regionalized conflicts, and external geopolitical influences."[21] They emphasize eight recommendations to include in reshaped peacekeeping; some of which exist already:

1. Support regional partnerships
2. Transition out of multidimensional peacekeeping
3. Advance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
4. Integrate climate security and peacekeeping
5. Address capability-expectations gaps
6. Promote conflict prevention
7. Connect peacekeeping to political processes
8. Manage mission expectations[22]

In another paper, the same authors further their recommendations for "future-proofing peacekeeping," by recommending larger concerns:

- Champion principled peacekeeping reform by initiating high-level discussions to revisit and refine foundational peacekeeping principles.
- Establish structured knowledge-sharing mechanisms to leverage the institutional knowledge and expertise of veteran staff from the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Promote innovation in peacekeeping by advocating for dedicated funding and supporting small-scale, incremental projects to explore new approaches.[23]

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[17] Richard Gowan, "The U.N. May Regret Getting Out of the Peacekeeping Business," *The International Crisis Group*, January 16, 2025 (accessed January 30, 2025).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Department of Peace Operations, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities."
[20] Peter Albrecht and Corine van Emmerik, "DIIS Policy Brief: 8 old and new challenges for UN peacekeeping," *Danish Institute for International Studies*, January 10, 2025 (accessed January 15, 2025). The authors note "Denmark's seat on the United Nations Security Council for 2025–2026 presents a crucial opportunity to shape the future of peacekeeping, particularly as adapting conflict responses aligns closely with Denmark's key thematic priorities for its tenure."
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Albrecht and van Emmerik, "DIIS Policy Brief: Future-proofing peacekeeping."

Allan Rodrigues, reviewing the independent study commissioned for the May 2025 Ministerial, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities,"[24] summarizes another set of recommendations for future peacekeeping operations, suggesting:

- The UN Secretariat should be more proactively involved in the planning of mission mandates before authorization.
- The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when recommending force and other resource levels for a new mission.
- UN field missions should be part of a comprehensive framework that seeks to address the roots of the problem.
- The UN should invest more in military and police units with deterrent effect, logistic units, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)/sensing technologies, Situational Awareness structures, aviation and naval units, unmanned aviation systems, early warning and data analytics.
- The UN should have relevant expertise in protection of civilians, child protection, Conflict-related Sexual Violence, gender, community engagement, mediation, political and civil affairs, and human rights.
- The UN needs Quick Reaction Forces, with specific tasks and training units (including mobile training teams) as well as military or police Special Units: EOD/IEDD units, sappers, canine units, mine-clearing sifters, robotic systems.[25]

As *The International Crisis Group* authors point out

> there are at least two immediate reasons for UN member states to consider updating rather than discarding peace operations as a tool. The first is that while UN missions may be flawed, they can still help tamp down instability in countries that would otherwise face increased violence…. A second reason not to give up on UN missions is the difficulty of sustaining credible alternatives.[26]

They further note that "non-UN-led peace operations elsewhere has proven similarly divisive."[27] *The Economist* authors echoed the lack of credible alternatives to UN-led or multinational peacekeeping operations. They point out that many African Union nations "have become stridently nationalistic in voicing their disdain for multilateralism" and rely instead on private military companies (PMCs) or hired mercenaries (i.e., *foreign legions*) from other countries to secure their own stability.[28] However, "For all their faults, most peacekeeping missions at least had a mandate to protect civilians and pay attention to human rights. Private firms or national armies taking their place rarely have such qualms."[29]

[24] Department of Peace Operations, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities."
[25] Allan Rodrigues, "OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS."
[26] Forti and Gowan, "Fresh Thinking about Peace Operations at the UN."
[27] Ibid.
[28] *The Economist*, "The era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close."
[29] Ibid.

SFASID's former PKSOI Lesson Reports and SOLLIMS Samplers (2010-2024)

(links may be inactive temporarily)

2024

- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Defense Support to Stabilization (October 2024) (not yet online)
- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Allies and Partners (April 2024)

2023

- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Information Advantage in Peace and Stability (October 2023)
- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Protection of Civilians (POC) and Civilian Harm Mitigation & Response (CHMR), Volumes I and II (March 2023)

2022

- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Defense Support to Stabilization, Volume I and II (June 2022)

2021

- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Multinational Interoperability Command and Control and Transitions (November 2021)
- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Setting the Stage (May 2021)

2020

- PKSOI Semi-Annual Lesson Report: Multinational Interoperability (November 2020)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Consolidating Gains (March 2020)

2019

- PKSOI Lesson Report Partnering (December 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Strategic Planning (September 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Conflict Prevention (June 2019)
- PKSOI Lesson Report SSR and DDR (January 2019)

2018

- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 10 Issue 1 Transitional Public Security (December 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 4 Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (September 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 3 PKSO Complexities and Challenges (July 2018)
- PKSOI Lesson Report Right-Sizing and Stage-Setting (July 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 2 Inclusive Peacebuilding (May 2018)
- SOLLIMS Sampler Vol 9 Issue 1 Monitoring and Evaluation (January 2018)

2010-17

Lessons and Publications from this period are found at: Publications | PKSOI (armywarcollege.edu)

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