

Committee: DISEC 2

Question of: UN Standing Army

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Introduction:

The UN has no standing army or police force on its own. Armed forces and police officers from UN Member States who serve as peacekeepers in missions around the world are initially recruited and trained to the UN after completing their own national service. They wear the uniform of their respective nations, and a UN blue helmet or beret designates them as peacekeepers. Blue Helmets, as they are called, are protecting populations against threats, and contributing to a secure environment. All these military personnel are first and foremost members of their own national armies and then seconded to work under the command and control of the UN for periods up to one year in the field, or two or three years at UN headquarters.

The UN has been deploying military personnel for service in peace operations since the Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and Arab neighbours in 1948.

For service in peace missions around the world as individual Staff Personnel, Military Observers, or as a part of a formed unit from a single Troop-Contributing Country, the United Nations Office of Military Affairs needs highly qualified military officers from UN Member States. At the UN headquarters, where they support every aspect of the deployment of troops on the ground, staff officers are highly respected. The UN has more than 97,000 uniformed personnel coming from over 120 countries and currently, the majority of troops come from African and Asian countries, but the contribution of western countries is increasing.

The issue

UN peacekeepers are not supposed to engage in offensive operations, but instead to ensure, or nudge, disputing parties, in the general direction of peace.

Time

Only when a UN Security Council resolution gives them permission may the UN send out military personnel. The UN Headquarters will coordinate with the Member States to identify personnel and coordinate their deployment after the Security Council specifies the number of military forces needed. Getting boots and equipment on the ground might take time; frequently, it takes more than six months from the date of the resolution.

As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, the UN is “the only fire brigade in the world that has to wait for the fire to break out before it can acquire a fire engine.” A standing reserve sounds logical, but it would be immensely costly to have a force of several thousand people on permanent standby. Although it takes time, it is much more practical to generate the military personnel once the go-ahead has been given. This also ensures we recruit personnel with the appropriate background, training and language skills relevant to the place they are being deployed to.”

Resources/cost

The UN's standing army would have to be the largest in the world since it would have to be prepared to repel any army including China with 2.1 million active troops. The question here is how many troops the SA of the UN would need. In addition to this, there is also the cost of weapons, training... Even if the necessary troops are raised the UN would still require additional soldiers, equipment, heavy weapons, and air and sea support. It is not clear from where the UN would get the necessary funding from.

Alliances

Permanent members can veto any substantive resolution and alliances and interests of each country can get in the way of working together in a standing army. The world is divided into competing alliances; it's not clear that there would ever be enough support for meaningful action. China and/or Russia would veto almost any conflict the SA might get involved in. The US and Western allies would probably veto any conflicts Russia and China would want to get involved in.

Key events

Event/date	Explanation
1 January 2019	The United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) is a Strategic Force Generation tool used to manage commitments by Member States to provide military, police and enabling capabilities to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The PCRS exists to establish a predictable and dynamic process of interaction between the Secretariat and Member States for ensuring readiness and timely deployment of quality peacekeeping capabilities. It allows Member States to make and manage pledges of any military, police or civil defence capabilities, and the Secretariat to use these pledges in its Force and Police generation planning process and in the selection process for the deployment of military and police units.

Since the United Nations has not met very often to discuss this topic, there are very few resolutions that delegates can use for references

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Previous attempts to solve the issue and possible solutions

The UN started working on the UNPC in 2015 and established it in 2019 as an attempt to shorten the timeframe for actual peacekeeper deployments. PCRS provides a viable Status Quo for negatives to defend, which is unusual for modern policy topics. The Status Quo has implemented a reform which, while not a standing army, is supposed to make organizing peacekeeping efforts more efficient. Affirmatives can easily claim that this program does not go far enough, while negatives can defend the new UN structure while criticizing the idea of a standing army as expensive and dangerous because it would enable the UN to violate the sovereignty of independent nations or risk entangling UN peacekeepers in conflicts that are outside of their purview.

For finding a solution, countries need to gather together, share their points of view and try to get to an agreement in which everyone benefits.

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