

## When Peacekeeping Missions Collide

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In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world grapples with persistent conflicts. UN peacekeeping missions have become vital for mitigating conflicts and promoting peace, with a notable shift from democracy promotion to including election supervision, leading to a 130% increase in mission numbers. 'When Peacekeeping Missions Collide' by Diehl, Druckman, and Mueller scrutinizes the intricate web of mandates, actors, and missions, arguing that the proliferation of missions often results in unintended negative consequences or 'collisions,' hindering progress. The authors, recognized experts in conflict resolution, emphasize the need for improved coordination among missions for cohesive efforts.

The book's central argument highlights the challenges posed by the proliferation of UN missions with overarching mandates in 21<sup>st</sup> century Peace Operations, leading to 'collisions' among missions that hinder the peace process. The authors recognize traditional peacekeeping roles centered on ceasefires. However, peacekeepers are tasked with broader responsibilities in the post-Cold War era, including rule of law, infrastructure development, and humanitarian assistance. They argue that multiple missions in the same conflict zones can have unintended repercussions for the peace operation.

The authors have introduced a comprehensive framework for assessing UN peace operations, emphasizing a holistic mission evaluation. The framework categorizes missions into domains such as Traditional Peacekeeping, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), Humanitarian Assistance, Election Supervision/Promotion of Democracy, Human Rights, Security Sector Reform (SSR), Rule of Law, Local Governance, and Reconciliation. Additionally, the framework covers peacebuilding missions like Reconciliation and Local Governance, providing confidence ratings for each mission category. Out of these eleven missions, traditional peacekeeping remains dominant in recent operations, constituting nearly 80% of missions, while Preventive Deployment and Pacification missions are rare.

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The book extensively examines various cases, emphasizing the pivotal role of UN missions in diverse peace operations. Cases like ONUC in the Congo and the Security Sector Reform mission highlight mixed success, effectively restoring law and order but encountering challenges in disarmament. Conversely, UNPROFOR's mission in Bosnia faced ineffectiveness in traditional peacekeeping and DDR, revealing compatibility issues between missions, particularly in the complex conflict terrain. Additional case studies, such as UNTAET in East Timor, MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, showcase the effectiveness of basic security tasks and shorter-term missions but reveal challenges in longer-term missions like SSR and reconciliation. This nuanced analysis underscores the intricate dynamics of post-conflict peace operations, supporting the authors' argument for meticulous mission sequencing to enhance overall effectiveness. The central argument is further supported by the strategic timing of the book as well as the eminent writers.

The subject book critically evaluates the UN peacekeeping approach, emphasizing the need for improved coordination among missions to ensure cohesive efforts rather than contradictory actions. The book is structured into three essential parts: an overview of modern peacekeeping, featuring the proliferation of missions and coordination challenges; in-depth case studies of Bosnia, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone, dissecting mission collisions; and a proposal for a conceptual framework emphasizing 'compatibility' in mission functioning.

The authors acknowledge the dearth of research in this realm and introduce a framework based on mission ordering and compatibility, advocating the 'Security First' proposition and asserting that success in essential security missions is fundamental for overall mission success. The book stands out for its meticulous research, distinguishing terms such as peace operations, missions, and mandates and constructing a persuasive narrative grounded in fieldwork, interviews, and archival data. The theoretical framework, informed by conflict resolution expertise, is supported by five diverse case studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of mission interactions. The authors contribute to scholarly discourse and offer practical recommendations for enhancing mission coordination, communication, and transparency.

However, there are certain limitations. While the case studies provide rich insights, the focus on five missions raises questions about the generalizability of the findings. The authors acknowledge these limitations and call for further research, but the scope of the book leaves some questions. Secondly, the book effectively highlights the potential pitfalls of mission collisions; it could benefit from a more nuanced dialogue on the synergies between missions. Lastly, the proposed policy recommendations are well-intentioned, but the book could investigate the implementation challenges more deeply. For instance, navigating the complex political landscapes within the UN and member states can be a significant obstacle in achieving greater mission coordination.

The authors, long aware of the limitations of traditional peacekeeping, probe into the increasingly elaborate world of today's operations. The book covers various aspects of peacekeeping operations, including preparation, training, and challenges between mission types and the long-term impact of these operations. The discussion encompasses adaptation, contextual factors, and the dynamics of peacekeeping processes. Through five meticulously researched case studies—Bosnia, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone—the book dissects the

anatomy of the 'collisions'—unintended negative consequences arising from mission interactions.

The argument highlights the impact of competing mandates, resource constraints, and political agendas in undermining trust. These intertwined threads of scholarship and global conflict dynamics inform the contemporary urgency of "When Peacekeeping Missions Collide." However, the book is not simply a tale of the missteps in peacekeeping but rather an effort to craft a practical, theoretical framework for "compatibility" between missions. Based on wide-ranging concepts like mandate synergy and competition, this framework offers a valuable tool for foreseeing and alleviating negative interactions. This book emphasizes the need to move beyond simplistic binary narratives of success and failure in missions and engage with the complex on-ground realities. By acknowledging the potential pitfalls of collisions and actively seeking solutions, this book offers a future where peacekeeping operations can be more sustainable.

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