

MULTILATERAL INTERVENTION FORCES



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What a military commander wants in an intervention is easy to state but sometimes hard to deliver: a clear mandate, political guidance, a clear end-state, means compatible with expectations, joint military-civilian planning, unity of purpose (including with NGOs and UN agencies), robust intelligence and robust rules of engagement. Establishing this framework for engagement sometimes requires improvisation, as in the UN's intervention in Haiti's transition in the mid-1990s.

Que peut espérer le commandant militaire chargé d'une intervention de maintien de la paix ? Des conditions faciles à énoncer, certes, mais parfois difficiles à réunir : mandat clair, orientation politique précise, objectifs bien définis, moyens à la hauteur des attentes, planification à la fois militaire et civile, concertation (y compris avec les ONG et les organismes des Nations Unies), solides services de renseignements, plan d'action rigoureux. Mais l'établissement d'un tel cadre doit parfois laisser place à l'improvisation, comme ce fut le cas pour l'intervention des Nations Unies durant la période de transition en Haïti, au milieu des années 1990.

I want to describe the military needs and perspectives required if successful intervention is to take place by means of multilateral intervention forces. The easy part of this assignment is to define the military needs, something I could do with a short list:

- a clear mandate
- political guidance
- a clear desired end-state
- means compatible with expectations
- joint military-civilian planning
- unity of purpose among NGOs and UN agencies
- robust intelligence
- robust rules of engagement

Such a list would probably need some explanation. The question of military needs is, of course, more complex when situated within the political context in which a military commander has to operate. An example is my experience as the UN Force commander in Haiti in 1997.

The structure of the UN Transition Mission in Haiti included a military component, a civilian police component, and an administrative component in which the support services common to the three components were

grouped. I was leading the military component while the civilian police component was under a French Gendarme. The overall mission head was a career diplomat who acted as the Special Representative to the Secretary General of the UN (hereafter the SRSG).

Within that framework, I was responsible directly to the SRSG. I had no contact with Canada other than the occasional queries from Ottawa seeking my point of view on different issues. I also had a direct link with UN New York, as the military adviser to the Secretary General level, mainly for military matters. In addition, I served as the acting SRSG when he was out of theatre.

The political environment that normally regulates a military mission is shaped by the factors leading to the decision to deploy a military force into a given theatre of operations. Military commanders may find themselves in any number of political environments. At one end of the spectrum, the military intervention can be ordered in direct relation to national interests or in direct relation to domestic political imperatives. The classic scenario is, of course, one in which national interests and perhaps national values

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Brig.-General Gagnon decorates Pakistani troops in Haiti, Nov. 1997

are at risk, a situation where the legitimacy of an intervention is not questioned by the public.

A less classic scenario is one in which domestic political imperatives play a key role at a time when the general public does not perceive any immediate and direct threat. As an example of the latter scenario, the US intervention in Haiti in 1994 was driven by domestic political imperatives serving the interest of the US administration. Indeed, in an article published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine in 1996, Michael Mandelbaum argues that US forces in Haiti were used to bolster President Bill Clinton's political standing. According to this article, there was a need to break away from three foreign policy setbacks that had damaged the administration's reputation after its first nine months in office. These setbacks were the failure to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia's Muslims in May 1993, the deaths of 18 US Army Rangers in Mogadishu in October 1993, and the turning back of a ship carrying military instructors to Port-au-Prince in October 1993.

In both scenarios, the military commander is very likely to receive specific direction from the political authorities, including the "end-state"—the state of affairs to be achieved in order to terminate the conflict under favourable terms. Other specific direction might also be provided to the military commander, including a set of strategic objectives leading to the achievement of the end-state. This sort of political environment is one where, because domestic imperatives are closely linked to the outcome of the military intervention, political control remains tight

throughout the military campaign. The Kosovo campaign is an example of this model: Not only did NATO headquarters in Brussels keep constant and direct control of the military campaign, but most of the contributing nations exercised similar control on their national contingents. From a military perspective the good news is the keen interest in mission success, a situation that often brings a high degree of support and commitment from the coalition, as well as from the national authorities.

At the other end of the spectrum are the interventions resting on such moral values as a genuine desire to alleviate human suffering. Domestic imperatives have less influence in these kinds of scenario, but the legitimacy of intervention remains high since the cause tends to rest on moral high ground. One of the characteristics of this political environment, seen from a military perspective, is the lack of an end-state. In many cases the military force is committed to an end-date instead of an end-state, which means that the military intervention is there to restrain hostilities and to reduce human suffering rather than to force the conditions for a political settlement. From a Canadian perspective, the intervention in East Timor corresponds to that model. The model is also consistent with the traditional preference of Jean Chrétien's government for being "first in and first out." Under that commitment philosophy, the desire to be part of the final political settlement or to influence its outcome through military means is remote.

This kind of political environment is less prone to direct political control and in the extreme it may fall short of providing the military commander with specific guidance. The sad part, from a military perspective, is the risk of becoming a fire-and-forget mission, since its insertion in theatre may be seen as an adequate political reaction in a context where doing something is more important than the end result.

When I served in Haiti as the theatre military commander, I was operating under this second political model. By 1997, the US was no longer part of the UN force operating in Haiti, which by then included only two nations: Canada and Pakistan. From a UN perspective, the transition mission was created to consolidate the relative peace established under previous mandates and to shift the international efforts toward a nation-building phase. That was also the national perspective of both Canada and Pakistan, so domestic political imperatives were never felt in theatre,

if they ever existed. As a result, I received political guidance from neither New York nor the two national capitals. In fact, my only political guidance was the mandate itself and, I am sure most of you will agree, there is no such thing as a clear mandate. In the case of the UNTMIH, our mandate read as follows:

UNSC 1123 (1997): The Security Council decides ... to establish the United Nations Transition Force in Haiti (UNTMIH) ... in order to assist the Government of Haiti by supporting and contributing to the professionalization of the Haitian National Police...

The Security Council decides that the security element of UNTMIH, under the authority of the Force Commander, will ensure the safety and freedom of movement of those United Nations personnel implementing the mandate...

Unlike previous mandates, the obligation toward security and stability was absent in the mandate wording. This was done by design, for two reasons. First, our mission was the last to include a military component. Secondly, there were diplomatic fears that Russia and China could veto the mandate (as described in a March 1996 *Maclean's* article by Luke Fisher).

As I said, our mandate did not include any provision for the maintenance of security and stability. However, from our analysis, it was obvious that the collapse of stability, had it happened, would have had profound consequences. First, the success achieved under previous missions—at an important cost in terms of resources—would have been wasted. Secondly, the collapse of stability would have rendered the UN mandate unachievable, and it could have been viewed as a United Nations failure. Furthermore, such a scenario would have compromised the long-term nation-building effort sponsored by the international community. My analysis of the politico-military environment therefore suggested that we had to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability, even though the mandate made no reference to that obligation.

In order to move ahead and to engage the military force in some proactive activities aimed at sustaining security and stability, I did propose to the head of the mission, the SRSG, a written interpretation of the mandate. It included the explicit and implicit strategic objectives to be achieved, as well as the use-of-force philosophy. The SRSG endorsed it and sent my interpretation to UNNY where it was approved in a matter of days. My proposed interpretation of the mandate

was a wide one, which prompted some resistance from one of the contributing nations. That nation would have preferred a narrow interpretation where the military force had no business in security and stability. At the end of discussions, however, UNNY reconfirmed the theatre mandate interpretation as being the preferred one.

As an illustration of my wide interpretation of our mandate, including involving the force in the security and stability dimensions, here is an extract of my campaign plan describing the use-of-force concept:

Use of Force. Our mandate and supporting ROEs [Rules of Engagement] do not permit the use of force in order to impose stability and security. Despite this limitation, UNTMIH will act in a proactive way in order to preserve the success achieved through previous mandates ... Therefore, we will continue to intervene when witnessing disorder situations. Experience has consistently shown that our mere presence normally suffices to defuse most incidents. If, however, an incident cannot be defused by our presence, the Haitian National Police will be alerted. We may not use force to restore the situation; the use of force will only be considered when our own troops or any other persons are in danger ...

The decision to propose a mandate interpretation filled the void existing at the strategic or political level, and it allowed me to build a robust military campaign plan that would match the situation on the ground. I was also in a position to design the rules of engagement which I needed to accomplish the mission, and to forward them to UNNY for approval. This was also done in a matter of days. The mandate interpretation became the political guidance imposed on me, and it provided me with the required legitimacy that I needed in order to achieve mission success.

The first expectation, from a military perspective, is the requirement for a strategic blueprint or political guidance, if you will, in order to bridge the gap between the mandate and the military execution of a mission. A military force operating in a foreign country is bound to have significant political meaning; therefore it should operate under minimum political guidance, be it loose or tight. As a Force commander in Haiti, I was not expecting to be spoon-fed. In fact, I was jealous of my own freedom of action. However, I felt the need for a strategic blueprint in order to generate commitment and unity of purpose among the various stakeholders, including the contributing nations. I needed clear and evident legitimacy both from within and from outside of

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the mission so as to be able to manoeuvre the force while retaining operational initiative in relation to the opponents. Legitimacy was made possible only because of the political guidance approved by UNNY, which filled the gap and closed the door to a restrictive mandate interpretation. In other words, the existence of a political blueprint compensated for the less-than-perfect mandate, which had been crafted by the Security Council as a compromise in order to avoid a veto.

The strategic blueprint may be sketchy or detailed, but it must include one vital ingredient—the end-state. Only with a clearly identified end-state will the military commander deploy and manoeuvre his force in a way that will satisfy the political expectations. I mentioned earlier the end-date philosophy in lieu of an end-state. I have no difficulty with an end-date, provided it genuinely translates the political intentions behind the decision to commit a military force. On the other end, if an end-date becomes a by-default concept, owing to a lack of a sophistication in strategic planning, then the military force may fall short of fulfilling the political intentions. In my mind, deploying a military force without a well-identified end-state is like sending a ship out onto the ocean with no prescribed destination. The ship's captain may eventually reach the right destination but it will probably be by instinct rather than design.

Another need from a military perspective is compatibility between the political environment shaping the mission and the expectations the international community has of its military force. The political environment should include, not only a realistic mandate for the desired outcome, but also a proper mix of latitude and limitations issued under the framework of political guidance. A lack of compatibility between these two vital ingredients could lead to mission success only by pure coincidence. Whether the military force operates in a loose political framework, as was the case in Haiti, or under tight vertical control, as in the Kosovo campaign, is not the issue. Rather, the issue is compatibility between political and military dimensions. Without it the military force may not be suited for the local environment in which it operates. I would argue that in the case of UNPROFOR (the UN Protection Force in Yugoslavia) the military posture did not match the desired political outcome.

In the case of the transition mission in Haiti, I remain convinced that had we chosen a narrow interpretation of the mandate, the outcome of the mission could have been jeopardized. Compatibility between the expectations and the means might seem trivial, but recent history reminds us that the world community has failed in several instances because it overlooked that principle. If the desired end-state is not consistent with the resources and authorities given to the military force in the mandate wording, as was the case for our mission, it must at the very least be inherent in the political guidance governing the military mission.

This leads me to another expectation from the military concerning the governance of deployed missions. The military expects the civil-military dialogue to be the main foundation on which a mission is designed and executed. In other words, commanders expect joint planning to be an intrinsic part of mission governance, during both the planning and the execution phase. When working under a UN framework, however, the military commander is unlikely to be in a position to influence the crafting of the mandate, except when an existing mandate is being renewed. Indeed, the force generation process normally runs concurrently with the mandate's crafting, which means, more often than not, that the force commander is designated after the mandate is voted.

The role of the military adviser to the Secretary-General is precisely to provide the military dimension to a problem for which the Security Council is seeking a solution. As soon as feasible, however, the military force commander should be involved in the joint or civil-military planning. In fact, I consider the civil-military dialogue to be essential to the management and governance of a mission. It has to occur early on and it must continue throughout the execution phase, both locally and at the strategic level. When I was in Haiti, the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping frequently asked both for political advice from the SRSG and for military advice from the force commander, and he requested them in separate documents. In-theatre, the SRSG and I maintained a very close relationship, which allowed us to develop a common vision of what needed to be achieved in order to complete the mission successfully. Again, this is a trivial concept which, unfortunately, has been violated more than once during the last decade.

As for the multilateral dimension of a mission, although the military phase of a UN intervention should, in theory, precede the nation-building phase, the reality is more an overlapping rather than sequential model. In Haiti, the military force not only performed pure military tasks but it directly supported various institution-building initiatives sponsored by the UN. Such initiatives normally involve many agencies, including UN organizations and NGOs. Understanding the roles of the multitude of agencies and organizations, and trying to get them to contribute to achieving the military end-state were challenges that had to be met.

In the military, we like to have a single, clear and empowered chain of command, which, in our view, favours expediency and unity of purpose. The reality in multilateral operations is quite different. In Haiti, as an example, there were several hundred NGOs, some of which were engaged in activities that were complementary to our own. There were also several UN agencies, such as UNDP (The United Nations Development Programme), and others, which remained parallel to the transition mission since the SRSG was not empowered by the UN to exercise control over them. The challenge, then, becomes one of ensuring unity of purpose in a structure where the quality of human relationships among the heads of all components is key in determining the level of synchronization to be established. Of course, we could not enter into partnership with each of these organizations. We had to be selective and we targeted those that could contribute the most to our operational objectives. I must say that we were quite successful, mainly in the domains of humanitarian activities and institution-building.

The key in establishing fruitful partnerships is, first and foremost, acknowledging common interests. The means to establish these partnerships include working from a transparent agenda and respecting jurisdictions. It may not be as expedient as we like it to be in the military; however, it is a reality that must be accepted and leveraged. Multilateral partnerships can be achieved, even without the SRSG having formal co-ordination authority.

This leads me to yet another military requirement when operating at theatre level. Not only does a commander need the strategic intelligence that will lead to a full understanding of the political landscape, he or she also needs tactical level intelligence for achieving military



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A complex environment: Canadian peacekeeper with Haitian protestors, March, 1997

objectives and for protecting the force. In a framework of loose political control like the one I experienced in Haiti, a commander cannot expect to be spoon-fed a timely and comprehensive description of the environment. That is not a UN way of doing business. A military commander needs to rely on precise situational awareness to ensure that the military response is relevant to the global environment. In other words, the military response has to be tactically sound, it has to be disruptive to the opponent's activities, and it has to contribute to the strategic objectives. Furthermore, the military response cannot be allowed to serve national interests at the expense of the coalition objectives. All this requires not only a precise picture of the military situation, but also a broad understanding of the political landscape.

To meet that requirement as a force commander, I needed two things. First, I needed to own organic intelligence collection and interpretation assets, and secondly I needed to complement and validate the intelligence picture by multilateral networking. Therefore, I met daily with the SRSG, I met regularly with the ambassadors of the friends of Haiti and others, and I met with the Haitian authorities, including a weekly meeting with President René Préval. These contacts allowed me to keep constantly abreast of the political situation, including both the UN position and some national positions that sometimes ran contrary to the UN objectives. The reality in a multilateral environment is that none of this information is offered to you in a spontaneous fashion. I had to devote a lot of my time to active networking, which works best when all parties

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feel they have something to gain. In my case, because I owned a credible security force and robust intelligence assets, I was in a position to be seen as useful.

Intelligence is therefore key. Only with a robust and comprehensive intelligence picture, spanning the full spectrum from tactical to strategic levels, can one respond in an appropriate fashion to, and perhaps pre-empt, undesired outcomes.

Let me now dwell for a moment on the importance of adequate rules of engagements (ROEs). The projection of power in order to deter, and the use of force if deterrence fails, are the essence of armed interventions. Deterrence rests on a philosophy that has stood the test of time. It is the belief that any aggression will be followed by retaliation at a level that will probably offset and exceed any benefit envisaged by the aggressor in the first place. In order to be efficient, the aggressor must perceive the deterrence as credible. Credibility in a peace support operation is a function of firepower and the authorization to use it if need be.

One of the frequent frustrations of military forces is the lack of adequate ROEs for the tasks they are expected to perform and for the context in which they have to operate. It is not uncommon in multinational environments to observe national contingents restricting UN-agreed ROEs. In Haiti, for example, the Pakistani contingent was ready to protect its camp with use of lethal force if need be, whereas the Canadians, because of national restrictions, could not. As a consequence, the Canadians had several significant night intrusions into their camp, while the Pakistanis had none. Deterrence was less credible

from the Canadian side, which opened the door to risky incidents.

Two issues are of concern to the military commander. First, ROEs must match the mandate as well as the conditions in-theatre, and second, national restrictions on ROEs often reduce the flexibility to manoeuvre the military force. Indeed, depending on these limitations, some contingents become unsuitable for tasks whose risks exceed the authority to use force. ROEs are therefore an essential ingredient to mission success. They must be closely synchronized with what is expected from the military force and that synchronization must be orchestrated at the level that orders the mission to deploy.

So, back to my original list: clear mandate, political guidance, clear end-state, means compatible with expectations, joint military-civilian planning, unity of purpose (including with NGOs and UN agencies), robust intelligence and robust rules of engagement. These requirements are the recipe for success. Military commanders do not just sit and wait for these requirements to be provided to us. We like to get involved and to contribute useful input, so that these questions can be answered to the best possible extent and as early as possible, and this can be done only with genuine and trustful civil-military co-operation.

Brigadier-General Robin Gagnon served as the UN Force Commander in Haiti. The views expressed here should not be considered those of the Canadian Forces. They are based on the author's personal observations during his service in Haiti. His intention is to contribute to the IRPP's academic reflection on the challenges to governance of deployed missions.

Second League The UN is usually compared favourably with its predecessor, the League of Nations. But the League also had some successes, and faced bigger problems. Of sixty-six international disputes it had to deal with (four of which had led to open hostilities), it successfully resolved thirty-five and quite reasonably passed twenty to the channels of traditional diplomacy. It failed to resolve just eleven conflicts—unfortunately, the most serious ones. The UN's record is not much better; it only looks better because it has never faced threats to compare with 1930s Germany, Italy and Japan. For most of the Cold War, the UN Security Council was deadlocked, and achieved little more than a series of truce-

maintaining interventions in minor civil wars and border disputes. Only in the exceptional circumstances of 1991, with the Soviet Union in its death throes, was it possible to overturn Saddam Hussein's annexation of Kuwait on the basis of an unequivocal UN mandate.

Between 1992 and 1999 the Security council authorized a series of humanitarian interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, Cambodia, Albania and East Timor. The last of these operations was successful; but the majority of these operations were at best ineffective, and at worst disastrous.

Niall FERGUSON, in *The Cash Nexus*, p. 388