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<Book Review>

Failure or Simply Inaction?

Tatsuo YAMANE*

Dennis C. Jett, *Why Peacekeeping Fails*
New York, Palgrave, 2001, 236pp, $18.95, ISBN 0-312-23942-4

Dennis C. Jett's near 30-year career in the Foreign Service—including as U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique from 1993-1996—is fully put to use in *Why Peacekeeping Fails.* (His final assignment with the State Department was as Diplomat in Residence and senior advisor on Africa at The Carter Center in Atlanta, a policy oriented institution founded almost 20 years ago to reduce conflict and alleviate suffering in the world.) Not only is this book a sort of memoir written by a diplomat involved in the events discussed, but it also makes an important academic contribution in that it originally was written as a doctoral dissertation in international relations from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Why Peacekeeping Fails examines why some peacekeeping operations of the United Nations fail by comparing the unsuccessful attempt at peacekeeping in Angola from 1989 with the successful effort in Mozambique from 1992 to 1994. While the author explains that the multidimensional peacekeeping operations, by which the UN and international community have to deal almost exclusively with intrastate conflicts with failed governments, would have difficulties in avoiding failures in the implementation, in the conclusion, he suggests that peacekeeping in the future will be underutilized because of its failure to meet all the expectations placed on it in the past.

This work consists of nine chapters, as well as a foreword in which recent developments, such as the Millennium Summit, the opening session of the 55th UN General Assembly in 2000, and the Brahimi Report issued in August 2000, are discussed with Jett

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stressing the necessity of organizational reform in order for the UN to do a better job at peacekeeping.

Following the Introduction, which forms Chapter One, Chapter Two briefly reviews the history of peacekeeping operations, describing the evolution in the number, size, scope, and cost of such operations, and examinies how these characteristics have evolved as a result of the end of the Cold War and changes in the world's conflicts to those of an intrastate nature.

Chapter Three looks at how, when, and where the UN decides to intervene with peacekeeping forces, and argues that these factors can influence the operation's chances of success even when peacekeepers have already been committed and are on the ground. Jett observes how elements such as Security Council politics, the PKO's mandate, the role of the Secretary General and the Special Representative, as well as pressure exerted by the media and public opinion, can affect the operation's eventual outcome.

The predeployment factors specific to the cases of Angola and Mozambique are taken up in Chapter Four. These include the history of each conflict and the way in which parties to the conflicts negotiated their respective peace agreements. Even though both countries obtained their independence from Portugal in similar ways, the difference in local actors, internal resources, and external forces all contributed to making the peace agreements ending their civil wars very different and, in the case of Angola, far more difficult to implement. In particular, unlike Angola, the operation in Mozambique had a large staff, ample resources, and a clear mandate giving it overall responsibility for the peace process.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven cover the period when the peacekeepers have deployed. Separately, Chapter Five considers the factors that the UN can control, such as who is chosen to lead the operation, who is to participate in it, what the mandate is, how they can interpret it, and how well they accomplish it. Chapter Six looks at external factors beyond its control (but not beyond its influence) such as the commitment of the parties to the peace process. Chapter Seven discusses the general case of humanitarian action and how it can help or hinder the effectiveness of the peacekeepers.

Chapter Eight deals with the phase that begins following the operation. The post-deployment period after a PKO mission is not usually considered the responsibility of peacekeepers. Jett questions this by asking "But can a PKO be considered a success if it simply avoids obvious failure for as long as the peacekeepers are on the ground? If,

after they depart, the peace proves unsustainable, the international community will have little to show for its investment."

Consequently, as an "inconclusion," the final chapter attempts to draw some conclusions while at the same time considering whether the contrast between the two outcomes in Mozambique and Angola is as stark as conventional wisdom suggests. This last chapter tries to analyze the difficulty involved in improving the chances for success and the inability of the UN to adopt necessary changes for avoiding the failure of peacekeeping missions. Jett argues that "implementation is a problem that frequently is not fully overcome, and until it is better understood, peacekeeping will continue to be less of an instrument of the international community than it otherwise could be."

It is important to note that this work is primarily concerned with examining two peacekeeping missions in Africa, which were deployed at a time when foreign interest in African affairs was in general decline due to the end of the Cold War. Jett's analysis of peacekeeping accurately illuminates both the achievements and shortcomings of the two missions before, during, and after each deployment. This is a very important work for examining conflict resolution, since many studies address the causes of the ineffectiveness of peacekeeping missions during their deployment. His point that, even under a feasible mandate, a peacekeeping operation is likely to fail without adequate disarmament and the demobilization of parties to the conflict, like in Angola is well made.

The UN Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II), from 1991 to 1995, was charged with verifying that three objectives were being accomplished: military demobilization, police neutrality, and the holding of fair elections. When the parties to the war in Angola failed to achieve the first two objectives, the UN attempted to hold elections but the rebel National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rejected the "unfair" result of the election and resumed using military force. This implies that it is necessary to examine the situation prior to deployment—why a "Verification Mission" with a weak mandate was deployed to Angola—and the situation after withdrawal. Problems that were not solved during the mission will likely remain unresolved afterwards too.

However, when we consider the future of peacekeeping operations with mandates involving multi-functional objectives, their use in situations with little or no peace to keep before, during, and after deployment must also be looked at. Jett mentions that "if the conditions for lasting peace have not been created, the work of the operation can be

undone rapidly following its conclusion." Does this mean that the option of inaction should be chosen if there remain factors that may contribute to the possible failure of a peacekeeping operation? The author, in concentrating on how peacekeeping fails, does not always describe tangibly how it succeeds. Furthermore, the author does not adequately discuss the broadening of the role of peacekeeping and only marginally recognizes the possible utility of the concepts of peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, protective engagement, and peacebuilding. In this connection, one might consult *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution* edited by Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham, which analyses a conceptual reconsideration of widespread peacekeeping operations.

Finally, if we address questions of conflict resolution in the international community, it is necessary to consider not only peacekeeping, but also other stages of conflict resolution, such as prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The UN did not completely abandon Angola. After the withdrawal of the peacekeeping operation, the UN Office in Angola (UNOA) was created to liaise with the political, military, police, and other civilian authorities in that country. In December 2001, Ibrahim Gambari, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Adviser for Africa, visited Angola, and held extensive discussions with representatives of the Angolan government and others. Gambari stated in the Security Council after his visit that "although the humanitarian situation in Angola has deteriorated, there is currently a window of opportunity for relaunching the peace process," pointing out that sanctions against UNITA have been an important tool for attempting to secure the return of UNITA to the political process. Moreover, he noted that the Angolan government would not object to a church role in facilitating contacts with UNITA through the UN. Even if peace operations end in "failure," it is important to explore how a proactive role by the UN can help to rekindle the peace process in the absence of stronger measures.