

# Scenarios for the future of peace operations

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When thinking about the future, it lies in human nature to extrapolate developments and trends from the past. However, as social-ecological systems are inherently complex, and thus uncertain and unpredictable, it is not possible to precisely predict the future by extrapolating from the past, or in fact by any other method. Therefore, when looking into the future of peace operations, as undertaken in the current exercise by the UN Department of Peace Operations, it may be helpful to map out alternative future pathways: that is, scenarios. Not only do such scenarios stimulate discussion, but they may also serve as an instrument for policy planning, as they explore plausible futures that require forward thinking.

The scenarios presented in this paper are thus not predictions.<sup>2</sup> Their purpose is to depict what may happen in the coming 5 to 10 years by providing a 360-degree view of foreseen alternative futures. For this reason, they cover the widest possible variety of potential outcomes and developments to maximize the potential for discussion, helping policymakers embrace uncertainty and prepare for what may come. As the future unfolds, it will not look exactly like any of the scenarios described below, but it is likely to include some features from some or all of them.

## I. The future of international security in four scenarios

How the future of peace operations will develop ties in closely with how the world will develop in the next two decades. This in turn depends on the degree of cooperation within the world system (i.e., will the world system develop in the direction of increased cooperation and integration or of declining cooperation and fragmentation?) and on the type of actors playing a role in security in the world system (i.e., is our security determined mainly by states or by non-state actors?). This paper applies a scenarios grid, consisting of two axes based on these two key uncertainties, which was developed in 2010 for the Future Policy Survey for the Netherlands armed forces. The result was four scenarios: Multilateral, Multipolar, Fragmentation and Network. Two scenarios are state-centric: Multilateral and Multipolar. In the first there is more effective cooperation between states, while in the second there is mainly rivalry and non-cooperation between states and poles (superpowers and power blocs) in the international system. The two non-state-centric scenarios – Fragmentation and Network – are based on the rise of non-state actors. States are still present in the

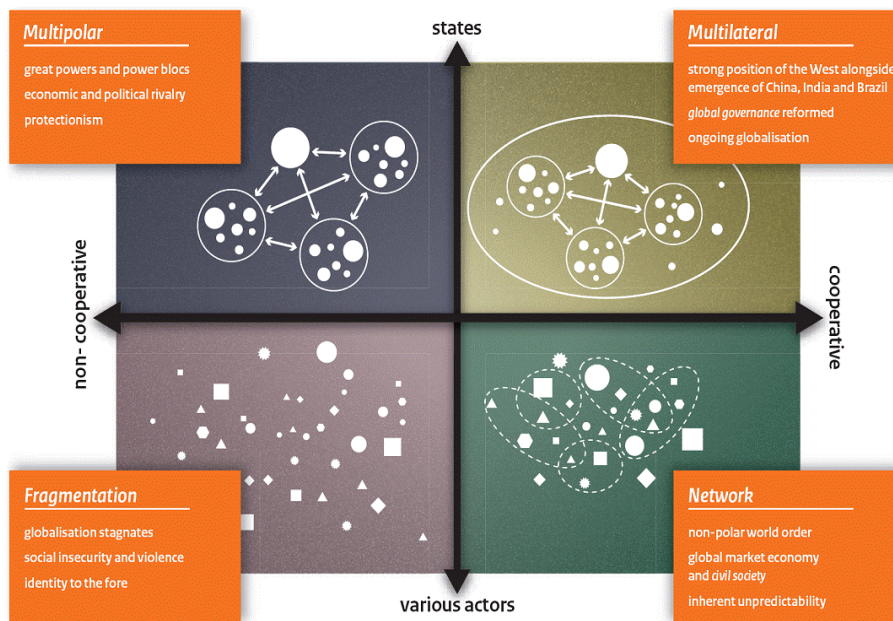
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<sup>2</sup> This paper is based on: Jaïr van der Lijn, *The future of peace operations, Clingendael Futures, Scenario Paper*, Clingendael Institute: The Hague 2013, <<https://bit.ly/2Lraw52>>.

## 2 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

world system, but non-state actors have gained so much influence that states can no longer be considered the main actors that matter. While in the Fragmentation scenario it is mostly ‘every (wo)man for him/herself’, in the Network scenario there is cooperation on a global scale between various types of actors that are closely connected and mutually interdependent. These scenarios are summarised in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1:** The scenario grid



Source: Netherlands Ministry of Defence, Future Policy Survey, 2010.

## II. The future of operations in these scenarios

To assess how peace operations may develop in the future, the following seven questions are asked for each of the quadrants:

- |               |                                                   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. What?      | What kind of peace operations prevail?            |
| 2. Who?       | Who carries out peace operations?                 |
| 3. Where?     | Where are peace operations likely to be deployed? |
| 4. How long?  | What is likely to be the duration of missions?    |
| 5. How?       | Which type of instrument is leading?              |
| 6. Why?       | For which reasons are peace operations deployed?  |
| 7. How many?  | How frequently are peace operations deployed?     |
| 8. What role? | What role does the UN play in peace operations?   |

Figure 2 gives a concise overview of answers to these questions and the future of peace operations in each quadrant. The description of operations in each quadrant is further elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

**Figure 2:** The future of peace operations in the scenario grid

<p><b>Multipolar</b></p> <p>Two sorts of operations prevail in this quadrant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a) Traditional peacekeeping b) (Military intervention followed by) Stabilization operation</li> <li>2. a) UN (potentially OSCE) b) Regional organizations</li> <li>3. a) At the fringes of or between the poles b) Inside poles and in their ‘backyards’</li> <li>4. Long term</li> <li>5. Military lead</li> <li>6. Pole or alliance security, maintenance of status quo</li> <li>7. Medium frequent</li> <li>8. Implementation and support</li> </ol> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) UN in UNTSO, UNDOF and UNMOGIP</li> <li>b) NATO in Libya and Balkans, ECOWAS/CIS and other regional organizations’ missions</li> </ol>	<p><b>Multilateral</b></p> <p>Two sorts of operations prevail in this quadrant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a) (Military intervention followed by) Humanitarian operation b) (Military intervention followed by) Nation-building operation</li> <li>2. UN and other organizations</li> <li>3. Fragile states</li> <li>4. Long term</li> <li>5. a) Civilian humanitarian lead b) Civilian development lead</li> <li>6. Positive peace: human security, democracy and human rights</li> <li>7. Frequent</li> <li>8. Implementation, support and norm setting</li> </ol> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) UN in UNOSOM, MINURCAT and UNAMID</li> <li>b) UN in UNTAC and ONUMOZ, and UN and regional organizations in Kosovo and Timor-Leste</li> </ol>
<p><b>Fragmentation</b></p> <p>One sort of operation prevails in this quadrant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Military interventions</li> <li>2. Unilateral and ad hoc coalitions</li> <li>3. Close to the interveners</li> <li>4. Short term</li> <li>5. Military lead</li> <li>6. National or state security interests</li> <li>7. Infrequent</li> <li>8. Monitoring, at best</li> </ol> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <p>Ethiopia/Kenya in Somalia</p>	<p><b>Network</b></p> <p>Three sorts of operations prevail in this quadrant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a) (Military intervention followed by) Stabilization operations b) (Military intervention followed by) Humanitarian operations c) Police missions</li> <li>2. Hybrid operations of UN, regional organizations and states, in cooperation with corporations, PMCs, PSCs and NGOs</li> <li>3. Unconnected and resource-rich areas</li> <li>4. Long-term networked (different organizations)</li> <li>5. Networked lead</li> <li>6. a) Positive peace: human security, democracy and human rights b) Economic security interests</li> <li>7. Frequent</li> <li>8. Coordination and support</li> </ol> <p><i>Examples:</i></p>

#### 4 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) NGO operations, such as Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka and Georgia</li><li>b) Anti-piracy off the coast of Somalia</li><li>c) A potential police mission in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico</li></ul>
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##### **Peace operations in a multipolar scenario**

In this quadrant, different poles take care of their own security. Regional organizations have developed capabilities to deploy their own crisis management operations. Interests rather than values, such as protection of civilians, count. As a result of a lack of cooperation between Security Council members, in the Multipolar quadrant the great powers tacitly agree to deploy peace operations less frequently. Consequently, the number of ongoing missions has decreased. Those operations the Security Council manages to agree on are traditional peacekeeping operations. Military interventions and more robust operations still sometimes take place, but without a Security Council mandate. NATO or other out-of-area operations – such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan – have become a relic of the past, as poles do not allow competing poles to operate in either their own spheres of influence or in contested areas. There are mainly two types of peace operations in this quadrant: 1) traditional peacekeeping operations at the fringes of or between the poles; 2) more robust stabilization operations, sometimes after military interventions in unstable zones inside poles or in the ‘backyards’ of poles.

The UN is generally the only organization with sufficient legitimacy to deploy missions at the fringes of or between poles. Such missions have limited observer mandates and are directed at maintaining the status quo, preventing clashes, and maintaining stability between the poles. They generally have a first generation peacekeeping character, such as the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East, or the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). These operations are military only and consist of light infantry units with a monitoring or observer mandate. The main powers that lie at the heart of the poles do not contribute to these operations as this might set off fears among their competitors. Smaller or neutral countries are the main contributors to these operations. Moreover, due to the frequent use of vetoes the number of these types of operations has decreased compared to current numbers. Potential operation areas are where the Indian and Chinese or the US and Chinese poles clash. In Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) may also be a potential organization for deployment in the Western Balkans, and apart from Russia, in the former Soviet area.

With regard to missions deployed in cases of instability within poles or in the ‘backyards’ of poles, the core – generally in the context of a regional organization-led operation – intervenes militarily and deploys a stabilization mission. These operations are aimed at strengthening alliance or pole security,

and are likely to operate at the higher end of the spectrum of violence. In each pole other values will be used to justify and legitimize these military interventions or stabilization operations. Europe may still legitimize its missions with concepts such as democracy and human rights, but China may frame its military interventions through a sovereignty or stability discourse. If the core of the pole does not support a mission, little will happen. Generally, such stabilization operations do not have a Security Council mandate. Further, they are likely to reflect current and past operations such as Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) operations in West Africa, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) operations in the former Soviet Union or NATO-led operations in Libya and the Balkans. Potential future deployment areas in the case of the European pole are regions such as North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans.

Both sorts of operation have a relatively long duration because, in general, political processes needed for peace do not get off the ground as conflicting parties are often able to get military support from other poles.

### **Peace operations in a multilateral scenario**

In the Multilateral quadrant relationships in the Security Council are largely cooperative. Conflicts are generally solved at the negotiation table. In fragile states the ‘international community’ cooperates to overcome threats, mainly to human security, democratization, strengthening human rights and for the purpose of protection of civilians. The fragile states are particularly located in a ‘belt of instability’ that runs from Central America, from West to East Africa, and into the Middle East and South Asia.

Next to protection of civilians, R2P has gained general acceptance, and if governments do not live up to their responsibilities, they face diplomatic pressure and ultimately Security Council mandated (humanitarian) military intervention to enforce cooperation and human security, such as in Libya. Subsequently, if sufficient political will is lacking or there is no capacity to deal with the underlying causes and issues, humanitarian operations are deployed to deal with the consequences of fragility and conflict, to protect civilians, and to ensure human security. These operations consist of a military component which – in order to ensure neutrality – is often separate from, but provides support to, humanitarian assistance. They tend to last for a long time, as a political process to solve the underlying problems and causes has not gained momentum. Such operations resemble the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), and the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Particularly after peace agreements, but also in some cases after (humanitarian) military interventions, broadly-mandated multidimensional robust nation-building operations are deployed. Such nation-building operations consist of large civilian components, as well as police, to address the

## 6 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

underlying problems and causes of fragility in the host states. Attention is given to, among other issues, the rule of law; human rights; democratization; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); and security sector reform (SSR). These missions are generally deployed for a longer period and have a civilian development assistance lead. The military aspects of operations are embedded in a wider integrated approach, and in an increasing number of cases they can be called civilian missions only. These nation-building operations are similar to the UN operations deployed after comprehensive peace agreements in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and Cambodia (UNTAC), or after the humanitarian emergencies or interventions in Timor-Leste and Kosovo.

The UN is the key actor in missions in this quadrant, not only because all missions are UN mandated, but also because it is heavily involved in most missions. Nonetheless, particularly when the UN is overburdened or does not have the operational capacity, regional organizations – such as NATO, the EU, the Organization of American States (OAS) or the AU – may step in. Those organizations may take care of whole missions, or provide bridging operations or over-the-horizon forces. Such a division of labour is possible because there is a high level of trust and understanding between countries and organizations. The permanent members of the Security Council are relatively forthcoming in contributing civilian and military personnel to both high- and low-end operations, while the BRICS countries get an increased influence in the peacekeeping agenda.

### **Peace operations in a network scenario**

In the Network quadrant the international system is more complex than it has ever been. States and intergovernmental organizations are no longer dominant, but cooperate on an equal footing with non-state actors such as corporations, private military companies (PMCs), private security companies (PSCs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and so on. The world has become non-polar, and the global market economy and global civil society determine the direction of developments in the international system. The Security Council is no longer the arena where decisions are made; networked alliances and informal groupings of various actors ensure global governance. Often solutions are found in international regimes, codes of conduct, and international law in which non-state actors are also integrated. Those connected to the network grid of the international system are doing well, but regions, groups and individuals that are not lag behind.

The challenges in this quadrant are also networked. Criminals, terrorists and pirates cooperate closely in their struggle over market share of the unconnected people and areas that have been called the ‘gap’. This ‘gap’ is mainly located in the ‘belt of instability’ which runs from Central America, through West to East Africa and into the Middle East and South Asia. However, there are also smaller areas and groups that have not been able to keep up with the network and which have lost their connection in regions that are largely connected, such as Europe and North America.

The UN, as an intergovernmental organization, has become just one of the players in peace operations because different actors – often non-state organizations, companies and ad hoc coalitions of the willing – work together in hybrid missions. While the UN still plays a role in the implementation of or support to parts of such missions, as well as in coordination, large parts of missions are outsourced, meaning that military or police components are at times implemented by PMCs or PSCs, and humanitarian and development components by NGOs. In fact, some peace operations have been completely outsourced. For example, NGO monitoring missions have become common practice. Success of these missions is largely determined by the extent to which all these different actors are able to work together in an integrated approach in dealing with the problems at hand. In addition, cooperation between missions has increased: regionally – different operations deployed simultaneously, such as currently in CAR, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa; and chronologically – different operations deployed during different stages of a peace process, for example between initial-entry operations and follow-up missions.

Non-state actors have a large influence over where missions are deployed. Often the interests of companies lead. Although economic security is key, humanitarian norms are still advocated by NGOs. In the case of grave human rights violations, public opinion continues to cry out for action. R2P, however, has become a difficult concept as non-state actors have also become security providers and are held responsible to protect. Consequently, peace operations are particularly deployed to places where there are resources and transportation lanes, where criminality affects economic interests, or where the gravest human rights violations take place. These areas are primarily located in the ‘gap’, but also in unconnected areas outside the gap. The latter operations are small as they only have to focus on smaller regions, cities or even parts of cities, and are generally police mission in character. These stabilization, humanitarian and police operations are deployed for longer periods dealing with the economic or human security effects of ‘unconnectedness’. Often, however, the underlying causes are left unaddressed as this would require a complete overhaul of the global economic system.

### **Peace operations in a fragmentation scenario**

In the Fragmentation quadrant the international system is crippled and remilitarized, as distrust rules. Non-state actors – such as Islamic State and the Lord’s Resistance Army – have taken over, or at least create significant levels of violence, in large parts of the world and provide some governance in those regions they control.

Although the need for peace operations to deal with the violence and mistrust is enormous, the ability to actually deploy them is limited. Agreement on the deployment of missions is rare, and neither the UN nor regional organizations embody the trust needed for their deployment. Although the market for NGOs

## 8 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

is endless, they have only very limited possibilities to actually do anything. The best the UN can do is monitor interventions and report on violations of human rights, international and humanitarian law.

It is debatable whether interventions in this quadrant can actually be called peace operations because most international (military) interventions are actually unilateral or ad hoc coalitions' military invasions and occupations. Nonetheless, the countries undertaking them portray their actions as peace operations to increase their legitimacy. These military interventions are short, take place in the immediate neighbourhood of the intervening countries, and the military is clearly in the lead. Operations are mainly high end, initial entry and short lasting. Neither international nor human security is a leading motive for them. The concept of R2P is alien to this world, while efforts to realize PoC or human rights are rhetorical at best. National or state security determines where interventions take place because the (national) security interests of individual states or governance units rule in this scenario. Recent examples of such operations are the military interventions of Ethiopia and Kenya in Somalia.

### Conclusions and recommendations

Reflecting on insights from the current debate on peace operations based on probable future developments in the international system and scenarios, it appears that what the literature regards as probable is often actually uncertain. The importance of civilians in operations, the role of PMCs and PSCs, the regionalization of peace operations, and the involvement of Western as well as BRICS countries are not developments that take place in all scenarios. They depend on the quadrant in which international security finds itself in the future. Similarly, uncertainty with regard to the future of protection of civilians, R2P, human rights and democratization is quadrant-specific.

### **Towards the future: a guestimate on the basis of the trend**

Over the past few years, the international system has increasingly become less state-centric. Progressively, PMCs, PSCs and the private sector in general – but also some international NGOs, Foundations, Funds and other non-state institutions – have become players to reckon with. At the same time, cooperation in the international system is decreasing. Particularly, the economic, migration and health crises have contributed to states focusing more and more on their national rather than international and human security. Rising powers are claiming their share of influence in the global arena, and gradually relations are perceived more and more in competitive terms. Scarce resources, energy and arable land are becoming particularly subject to rivalry. While Western norms and values have dominated international discussions with concepts such as democracy, good governance and R2P, these are progressively contested. As a consequence, the global security architecture is under stress. While there is still agreement on many aspects, cooperation in the Security



Council even over such issues as non-proliferation, conflict management and environmental issues has faced ever more obstacles, particularly when there is high-politics at stake. Consequently, although currently we are still in the Multilateral quadrant, the trend is that international security is moving into the Multipolar quadrant and in the direction of the Fragmentation quadrant. In the process it is also heading closer to the zero point in the middle of the scenario grid, which not only means that the world becomes increasingly diffuse and resembles all four quadrants, but also that uncertainty is increasing.

If this expectation becomes reality, it would mean that peace operations are likely to increasingly resemble the description given for missions in the Multipolar quadrant. This would mean that for the purpose of pole (and in the end their member states) interests and security, operations will still be demanded. Should military interventions and stabilization operations within poles or in their 'backyards' occur, they will increasingly use regional institutional or ad hoc frameworks rather than those of the UN. However, demand for UN operations at the fringes of a pole and between different poles may still lie ahead. A continuation of the trend towards the Multipolar quadrant would also mean that:

- a) the trend of increased importance of civilians in operations may reverse;
- b) the trend of an increasing role for PMCs and PSCs may reverse;
- c) the regionalization of peace operations is likely to intensify;
- d) the global involvement of Western as well as BRICS countries is likely to decrease further as they will increasingly focus on state security in their own regions or poles and on their direct neighbours; and
- e) although R2P, democratization and human rights will probably still be used as legitimization for military interventions, particularly by western countries and organizations, and PoC for the use of violence during operations, these concepts will probably not become a core motive for deploying forces abroad. In fact, these concepts may lose their importance as the normative framework for UN operations, which might evolve further into value-less technocratic operations.

### **A scenario planning**

It would, however, not be prudent to build strategy solely on expectations or forecasts. For this reason, scenario planning as described at the beginning of this paper is useful. By looking at what is expected and required in each scenario and by comparing this with the results for other scenarios, overall conclusions can be drawn. If something appears to be the case (or not) in all four scenarios, it is a robust finding on the future. If something happens (or does not happen) in all but one scenario, it is good to have thought about what to do in case the future reality is that single scenario as well as preparing for the other likely scenarios. The impetus for scenario-planning below, more detailed in the annex, looks for peace operations in each scenario at the following issues:

## 10 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

- *Quantitative ambition level*: the size and number of peace operations deployed. This can range from low to high.
- *Mission duration*: may vary from a short to long presence.
- *Force projection*: the expected distance between the TCC/PCCs and areas of operation.
- *Mission area*: the expected mission area(s).
- *Level of international cooperation*: the intensity and depth of international cooperation.
- *UN partners*: the partners of the UN with whom this cooperation takes place.
- *Level of civil/military cooperation*: the intensity and depth of cooperation between the military component and partners.
- *Partners*: which partners these are.
- *Particularly required military capabilities for the UN*: the military capabilities particularly needed in UN peace operations.

There is no certainty about the future of peace operations. There are no developments that are sure to happen. This means that also in the scenario planning there are few robust policy options that work in all scenarios and are therefore guaranteed to be successful. Looking ahead, much depends on the level of cooperation in the international system. One of the most robust findings is that peace operations are likely to remain long-term affairs. They are still likely to be deployed frequently, but not as frequently as today. The locations where they are deployed are still likely to be unstable or fragile areas – such as Central America; west, central and east Africa; and South Asia – although probably closer to the fringes or in the ‘backyards’ of poles. Military interventions probably continue to take place, most often as an introduction to follow-up operations. The military component is probably still requested to perform a wide variety of tasks in peace operations. The required force projection of TCCs/PCCs is likely to remain global to regional. In addition, the UN probably needs to continue to cooperate with international partners, particularly regional organizations such as the AU, the EU and NATO.

Less robust are findings about the likely types of peace operation. They are still likely to include stabilization or humanitarian operations, as traditional peacekeeping, nation-building or police (anti-crime) operations are more scenario-specific. Ways to ensure flexibility may be considered so that, if a particular scenario becomes reality, such operations can still be implemented, but restructuring the UN for particular sorts of operation would be suboptimal. Human security may still play a role, but the more international security moves away from the Multilateral quadrant, the less idealistic the motives for deployment become and the more ideals are used for legitimization only. Similarly, the more the international system moves away from the Multilateral and Networked quadrants, the more operations once again become military led and the less civilian capacities are needed. Furthermore, the more the international system loses its state-dominated character, the more the UN – but also regional organizations such as the EU and NATO – lose their position in

peace operations. The more networked the future becomes, the more NGOs, PMCs, PSCs and other non-state actors will also play a role. Such a Network scenario would also require particular attention for the increased civil-military cooperation, while in all other scenarios the level of such cooperation probably remains at the current or lower levels.

## 12 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS

### Annex: Issues for future peace operations in each scenario

	Multipolar	Multilateral	Network	Fragmentation
Quantitative ambition level	Medium	High	High	Low
Mission duration	Long/medium	Long	Long	Short
Force projection	Regional	Global	Global	Sub-regional
Mission area	Middle East and northern Africa; Caucasus; Caspian area; Balkans; Southern and central Europe	Belt of instability (Central America; west, central and east Africa; Middle East and South Asia)	Belt of instability (Central America; west, central and east Africa; Middle East and South Asia) and other unconnected areas that may also be found in otherwise stable 'core' countries.	Near TCC/PCC
Level of international cooperation	High/medium	High	High	Low
UN partners	Different regional organizations for efforts inside poles. The UN itself conducts traditional peacekeeping operations	International and regional organizations such as: NATO; EU; AU	Networked (inter)state and non-state organizations, such as international PMCs, PSCs, NGOs and corporations	Operationally and logistically independent and mostly self-reliant countries undertake operations; cooperation is only on an ad hoc basis and mainly monitoring these efforts
Level civil military cooperation	Low	Medium	High	Low
Partners	Diplomacy; gendarmerie	Diplomacy; development; humanitarian; gendarmerie and civilian police	Diplomacy; development; humanitarian; civilian police; non-state organizations, such as	-

SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF PEACE OPERATIONS 13

		international PMCs, PSCs, NGOs and corporations		
Particularly required military capabilities for the UN	Light infantry; gendarmerie; air transport; and (maritime) surveillance	Special Forces; expeditionary light infantry; high end land intervention capabilities; gendarmerie; SSR; rule of law; intelligence; air transport; air-to-ground; close air support; and (maritime) surveillance	Special Forces; expeditionary light infantry; high end land intervention capabilities; gendarmerie; SSR; rule of law; intelligence; air transport; air-to-ground; close air support; and (maritime) surveillance All these capabilities may, however, also be outsourced)	(Maritime) surveillance