

## Critical Review:

A look Into Several U.N. Peacekeeping Articles

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## ***Introduction***

The United Nation's Peacekeepers have been the subject of many papers, reports, and articles. The purpose of this paper is to analyze several of these articles and write a critical review based on them. The articles this paper will discuss will be as follows: "U.N. Peacekeeping Really Can Be Effective: Here's How We Tabulated This" written by Hegre, Håvard; Hultman, Lisa and Håvard Møkleiv Nygård; "Who Keeps the Peace? Understanding State Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations" written by Kathman, Jacob D. and Melin, Molly M; "Estonia and UNIFIL: The Benefits to a Small State of U.N. Peacekeeping" written by Lawrence, Tony; and lastly "More Unified, Early Action Key for Preventing Conflict, Reducing Human Suffering, Speakers Tells Security Council, Pointing to High Cost of Managing Crises" written by the United Nations. A brief summary of the articles will be provided followed by a critique of the work.

### ***U.N. Peacekeeping Really Can Be Effective***

#### **Summary**

The article "U.N. Peacekeeping Really Can Be Effective. Here's How We Tabulated This" was originally published in the Washington Post in 2018. It discusses the effectiveness of the United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping missions. The authors argue that, despite common misconceptions, several assumed failed missions, and some bad reputations, U.N. peacekeeping missions can be effective. They also provide evidence to support their claim.

The authors begin by acknowledging the criticisms often levied against U.N. peacekeeping missions, such as their perceived lack of effectiveness and high cost. They note that these criticisms are not unfounded, as some missions have failed to achieve their intended

goals. However, they argue that this does not mean that all U.N. peacekeeping missions are ineffective, and that it is important to evaluate each mission on its own merits.

To assess the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping missions, the authors developed a methodology of all U.N. peacekeeping missions from 1960 to 2013, which they used to evaluate them based on their four pathways of peace which are as follows: “reduces the amount of violence during conflict, reduces the duration of conflict, increases the duration of peace following conflict, and limits the risk that conflict in one country spreads to neighboring countries” (Hegre, Hultman and Nygard 2018). Based on these criteria, they judged each mission separately to determine if it was a success or failure. Then they ran several simulations to assess the impact of U.N. peacekeeping missions from 2001-2013. The authors then analyzed the data to identify factors that contribute to mission success.

The authors found that, on average, U.N. peacekeeping missions have been successful. They note that peacekeeping missions have contributed to a significant reduction in violence, particularly in civil wars, and have helped to protect civilians. Additionally, they found that U.N. peacekeeping missions are more likely to be successful when they have a clear mandate, a robust troop presence, and the support of the host government. Based on their simulations, they determined that without the U.N. Peacekeeper’s intervention, several more wars would have broken out or escalated beyond what happened.

The authors also note that U.N. peacekeeping missions caused a dramatic reduction in violence. That major wars or conflicts were downgraded to minor conflicts or stopped all together. That on average, that major conflicts can cost an average of 2,500 direct battle related deaths. Therefore, according to their simulations, the U.N. missions have saved approximately

150,000 between the years of 2001-2013 in addition to the massive amounts of indirect deaths that were avoided.

The authors argue that, despite misconceptions and labels of failed missions, U.N. peacekeeping missions can be effective, and that the U.N. should continue to invest in them. In fact, they note that peacekeeping missions are often less costly than all-out war, both economically and number of deaths. That peacekeeping missions should get more funding and resources. They recommended a total of 17 billion being spent on peacekeeping missions, which is double what is currently spent. They argue that these U.N. peacekeeping missions, despite the increased cost, can reduce the cost of global conflict and cited the “Africa’s Missing Billions” as an example to support their claims.

## **Analysis**

One of the strengths of the evidence used in the article is the authors' rigorous and comprehensive methodology. They collected data on all UN peacekeeping missions during the period under study and used statistical techniques to analyze the effectiveness of these missions. This approach allows the authors to draw broad conclusions about the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions and to support these conclusions with strong evidence.

Another strength of the article is the authors' clear and accessible writing style. They explain their methodology and findings in a way that is easy to understand, even for readers without a background in quantitative research methods. This approach makes their research accessible to a wide audience and helps to promote a better understanding of the role of UN peacekeeping in promoting peace and security.

However, there are also some weaknesses in the evidence used in the article. One limitation is the reliance on quantitative data to measure the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions. While this approach is useful for providing a broad overview of the impact of peacekeeping missions, it may not capture the full complexity of the situations in which these missions operate. For example, qualitative data on the experiences and perceptions of local populations could provide a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping.

Another weakness of the evidence used in the article is the lack of consideration of the political and economic factors that can influence the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. The authors focus primarily on the role of UN peacekeeping in reducing violence and improving security but do not analyze the wider political and economic context in which these missions operate. This could limit the generalizability of their findings and make it difficult to apply them to other contexts.

In addition to these weaknesses, the authors fail to give adequate examples from their research to back their claims. It is well written, but written as a new report instead of a research paper. This does allow for a broader audience and greater understanding of their subject, but it does not provide details of their research to adequately back up their claims. They advise of their methodology and talk about their results without providing any actual details. This unfortunately, lowers the lack of credibility to scientific and educational minds.

Overall, the evidence presented in the article suggests that UN peacekeeping missions can be effective in reducing violence and improving security in conflict-affected areas. However, it is important to recognize the limitations of this evidence and to consider the wider political and economic context in which peacekeeping missions operate.

## ***Who Keeps the Peace? Understanding State Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations***

### **Summary**

The article "Who Keeps the Peace? Understanding State Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations" by exploring why certain states contribute more peacekeeping troops to United Nations (UN) missions than others. The authors argue that previous research has focused too much on economic factors and not enough on domestic politics and institutional constraints, which are equally important in explaining peacekeeping contributions.

The authors develop a theoretical framework that includes four main factors that influence state contributions to UN peacekeeping: institutional constraints, domestic politics, economic considerations, and strategic interests. They test their framework using a statistical analysis of data from 1992 to 2010 on the contributions of the different U.N. countries to their peacekeeping missions.

Their results indicate that institutional constraints and domestic politics are the most important factors in explaining state contributions to UN peacekeeping and thereby tend to choose to contribute based on them satisfying their “own more narrowly defined security interests” (Kathman and Melin 2017). Specifically, democracies and states with strong bureaucracies are less likely to contribute troops, while weaker more fragile states will contribute troops. This trend tends to show that they have more to gain or lose by not participating and thus they join in. Meaning, states with high levels of corruption and those with a recent history of civil war were found to contribute more troops while wealthy, highly trained, and stable states send few or no troops at all.

The authors also find that economic considerations and strategic interests also play a major role. Wealthy states are more likely to contribute funds, but only up to a certain point will

they contribute troops. The authors' hypothesis that this is most likely due to the poor reimbursement rate for the peacekeeping troops. The nations who are wealthy are not enticed to send troops when they are not reimbursed enough for their efforts. On the other hand, the poorer and less trained states who need the funds will accept the less than generous reimbursement rates. This has, as the authors explain, led to the deployment of low-quality troops.

Overall, the authors' findings suggest that domestic politics and institutional constraints are crucial in explaining state contributions to UN peacekeeping. Democracies and states with strong bureaucracies are better able to mobilize support for peacekeeping, while states with weak institutions and high levels of corruption are less able to do so. Yet, despite this fact, it is the weak states with financial needs and limited resources and training that are supplying the majority of the troops for the missions. The authors argue that their findings have important policy implications for UN peacekeeping, as they suggest that efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and reduce corruption may not be their most driving motive. If it was, they would strive to send more high quality and well-trained troops and provide a more enticing reimbursement rate to motivate the stronger states to step in.

Overall, "Who Keeps the Peace? Understanding State Contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations" provides a valuable contribution to the literature on UN peacekeeping by highlighting the importance of domestic politics and institutional constraints in explaining state contributions. The authors' findings suggest that efforts to strengthen democracy and reduce corruption may lead to increased contributions to UN peacekeeping, and that economic factors and strategic interests play a secondary role in explaining state contributions.

## Analysis

The article's main argument is that states contribute to peacekeeping missions based on their national interests, such as gaining international prestige, enhancing their military capabilities, or securing economic benefits. The authors argue that these interests vary depending on a country's level of economic development, military capacity, and regional security concerns. The article also considers the impact of domestic politics on peacekeeping contributions, suggesting that democratic countries may be more likely to contribute to peacekeeping operations than autocratic ones and that wealthy and stable states are less likely to send troops but will fund the missions.

One strength of the article is its use of a comprehensive data set that covers nearly two decades of peacekeeping operations. This allows the authors to make broad claims about the factors that influence peacekeeping contributions over time. The interviews conducted by the authors also provide valuable insights into the decision-making processes of contributing countries.

However, one weakness of the article is its heavy reliance on quantitative analysis, which can obscure important nuances and context-specific factors. For example, the authors argue that economically developed countries are more likely to contribute monetarily to peacekeeping missions because they have more resources to spare, but have not tended to contribute troops since the end of the Cold War. As an example, some developed countries, such as the United States, Great Britain, and Germany contribute very few troops to UN peacekeeping missions, despite having the largest military and economic resources in the world, but will fund the missions and donate weapons and resources.



Overall, Kathman and Melin's article provides valuable insights into the factors that influence state contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. However, the article could benefit from a more nuanced analysis that considers the complex and context-specific factors that shape countries' decision-making processes.

### ***Estonia and UNIFIL: The Benefits to a Small State of UN Peacekeeping***

#### **Summary**

Tony Lawrence's article "Estonia and UNIFIL: The Benefits to a Small State of UN Peacekeeping" explores the benefits of participating in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions for smaller states. The focus of the article is on Estonia's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from December of 1996 to June of 1997 and the benefits that it gained from this participation.

Lawrence argues that participating in UN peacekeeping missions provides smaller states with a number of benefits, including an opportunity to contribute to global security, enhance their international reputation, and gain valuable experience in international affairs. Specifically, Lawrence highlights Estonia's participation in UNIFIL as an example of how a small state can benefit from UN peacekeeping missions.

Lawrence notes that Estonia's participation in UNIFIL was relatively small, with only 38 soldiers being deployed under the Norwegian battalion. However, he argues that this participation was still significant for Estonia as it allowed the country to demonstrate its commitment to international peace and security. Additionally, Lawrence notes that Estonia's participation in UNIFIL allowed the country to enhance its reputation as a responsible and reliable member of the international community and increase its relationship with their key strategic ally, Finland.

Moreover, Lawrence argues that participating in UN peacekeeping missions can also provide smaller states with valuable experience in international affairs. He notes that Estonia's participation in UNIFIL allowed the country to gain experience in areas such as logistics, intelligence gathering, and peacekeeping operations. This experience, Lawrence suggests, was particularly valuable for Estonia as it prepared to join NATO in 2004.

Lawrence also discusses the challenges that smaller states may face when participating in UN peacekeeping missions. One of the main challenges that he identifies is the financial cost of participation. Smaller states may struggle to meet the financial costs associated with peacekeeping missions, like deploying troops, despite the reimbursement rate per soldier given by the U.N.

Despite these challenges, Lawrence argues that the benefits of participating in UN peacekeeping missions outweigh the costs for smaller states. He suggests that by participating in UN peacekeeping missions, smaller states can enhance their

“development of the national armed forces, ensuring that soldiers gain experience with matériel, tactics and procedures, as well as building career motivation. Beyond this national context, officials welcome the opportunity to deepen cooperation with the armed forces of other nations, to exchange knowledge and understanding, and to enhance interoperability” (Lawrence 2017).

In conclusion, Tony Lawrence's article "Estonia and UNIFIL: The Benefits to a Small State of UN Peacekeeping" highlights the benefits of participating in UN peacekeeping missions for smaller states. He argues that participating in such missions allows smaller states to contribute to global security, enhance their international reputation, and gain valuable experience in international affairs. The article also acknowledges the challenges that smaller states may face when participating in peacekeeping missions, such as financial costs and the risk to military personnel, but ultimately suggests that the benefits of participation outweigh the costs.

## **Analysis**

Tony Lawrence's article, "Estonia and UNIFIL: The Benefits to a Small State of UN Peacekeeping," examines Estonia's involvement in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and argues that small states like Estonia can benefit greatly from participating in UN peacekeeping operations. The article is based on a case study of Estonia's experience in UNIFIL and is largely descriptive, with little empirical evidence to support its claims.

One strength of the article is that it provides a detailed account of Estonia's involvement in UNIFIL and the benefits the country derived from it. The author argues that Estonia's participation in UNIFIL helped to enhance the country's international reputation and contributed to its national security. The article also provides a nuanced analysis of the challenges that Estonia faced in UNIFIL and the strategies it used to overcome them.

However, a weakness of the article is its lack of empirical evidence to support its claims. The author does not provide any statistical or empirical data to demonstrate that participation in UN peacekeeping operations leads to the benefits claimed. The article also does not address potential negative consequences of participation, such as the risk of casualties and only briefly discusses the financial costs of participation.

Another weakness of the article is its narrow focus on Estonia. While the case study of Estonia's experience in UNIFIL is informative, the article does not provide a broader analysis of the benefits or drawbacks of UN peacekeeping operations for small states more generally. This limits the article's applicability to other small states that may be considering participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

Overall, the article provides an interesting case study of Estonia's experience in UNIFIL and suggests that small states can benefit from participating in UN peacekeeping operations.

However, the article's lack of empirical evidence and narrow focus on Estonia limit its generalizability and raise questions about the validity of its claims.

***“More Unified, Early Action Key for Preventing Conflict, Reducing Human Suffering,  
Speakers Tells Security Council, Pointing to High Cost of Managing Crises***

**Summary**

The United Nations Security Council convened a meeting to discuss the need for early and unified action to prevent conflict and reduce human suffering. The meeting highlighted the fact that the cost of managing crises is very high, both in terms of human suffering and financial resources. Speakers emphasized the importance of taking early action to prevent conflicts from escalating into full-blown crises.

The first speaker, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, pointed out that prevention is key to saving lives and reducing the human and financial costs of conflicts. He highlighted the need for the UN to be more proactive and to work more closely with other international and regional organizations to prevent conflict. He also emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts, including poverty, inequality, and human rights abuses.

The second speaker, Mary Robinson the former President of Ireland and Chair of The Elders, pointed out that early action is critical to prevent conflicts from escalating. She highlighted the failure of the council to live up to the responsibility as designated in the charter. She also emphasized the importance of empowering women and promoting their participation in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

The third speaker, Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, and Council President for June emphasized the importance of a unified approach to conflict prevention and resolution. He pointed out that the UN and other international

organizations need to work together to address the root causes of conflicts and to promote sustainable development. He also emphasized the importance of supporting mediation and dialogue as a means of resolving conflicts as a preventative method based on Chapter VI. Mainly because conflicts are complex and intertwined and peacekeeping efforts cost billions of dollars that could be saved through mediation.

The fourth speaker was the representative for the United States. They supported the view of mediation and described it as an “underappreciated tool” that had the ability to save billions of dollars and countless lives. He also emphasized the importance of women being involved in the peacekeeping efforts. He explained the peace agreements are 35% more likely to last 15 years or more when women are involved in the process.

Overall, the speakers emphasized the need for early and unified action to prevent conflict and reduce human suffering. They highlighted the high cost of managing crises and the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts. They also emphasized the importance of working together to promote sustainable development and to empower women in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

## **Analysis**

The United Nations (UN) Security Council Meeting Report highlights the need for more unified and early action in preventing conflicts and reducing human suffering. The article presents the opinions of various speakers on the challenges and the high cost of managing crises. The speakers argue that a proactive approach is crucial to prevent conflicts, especially since the number of conflicts is increasing globally.

One strength of the article is its presentation of a diverse range of opinions from different speakers. The article provides quotes from speakers who hold various positions, including

representatives from governments, NGOs, and the UN. This diversity of perspectives adds credibility to the article and provides a more comprehensive view of the issue.

One of the weaknesses of the article is the emphasis on the high cost of managing crises could be considered a weakness. The article discusses the costs of responding to conflicts, but it does not explore the potential long-term benefits of early intervention. Preventing conflicts before they escalate could potentially save resources and reduce human suffering in the long run but does not give detailed information or statistics to show this fact. The article could have been more convincing if it had included an analysis of the cost-benefit trade-offs of early intervention at least by one speaker. Arguments are much more persuasive when they provide data that backs up their point.

In conclusion, the United Nations Security Council Meeting Report provides a valuable insight into the importance of early intervention and unified action in preventing conflicts and reducing human suffering. The article's strength lies in its diverse range of opinions from different speakers. However, the lack of empirical evidence weakens the article's arguments, and the emphasis on the high cost of managing crises could have been balanced by discussing the potential benefits of early intervention.

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, the articles presented did a great job showcasing the benefits of the U.N. peacekeeping missions. They pointed out the benefits of supporting these missions and how they are mostly successful despite the negative outlook of some of the missions. They give different perspectives as well by stating preventative methods like mediation before a full-blown conflict erupts would be more cost effective in both economic factors and the loss of human life. Overall,

they showcase peacekeeping as a valiant effort that deserves more attention and more effort by the global powers.

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