

**Critical Assessment of Geostrategic Infiltration in UN Peacekeeping Operations Deployed in Intra-State Armed Conflicts in Africa: The Case of ONUC in DRC in 1960**

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**Abstract**

*This study focuses on the deployments of UN peacekeeping operations within intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. The statement of the problem and objective of the study is to demonstrate amidst the significant roles that UN peacekeeping operations deployed within intra-state armed conflicts in Africa have played and are still playing, nonetheless growing geostrategic infiltration from hegemonic states as well as other member states from where troops are drawn from to constitute different operations to mitigate the armed conflicts. This is very important for the successful consolidation of the mandates of different UN peacekeeping operations deployed within intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. The study incorporated both primary and secondary sources of data. The qualitative descriptive analysis and its instruments are the research method that fits the study. The results of the findings were parallel to the problem statement and objective, which proved that geostrategic infiltration aimed at guaranteeing the interests of hegemonic and other member states of the UN that are proved apparent. The study's conclusion and recommendations were proffered to mitigating geostrategic infiltration in UN peacekeeping deployments faced with intra-state armed conflicts in Africa after an in-depth analysis of the case study under review in this study. That is, the United Nations Operations in the Congo deployed in view of the intra-state armed conflict that hit Congo in 1960, where the end of that mission was a debacle. A debacle explained largely by geostrategic infiltration. The Security Council is making every effort to mitigate the numerous challenges that have been and are still impeding the UN peacekeeping operations from successfully consolidating their mandates in different intra-state armed conflicts in Africa where they have been deployed. This study seeks to draw the attention of the international community to a veritable challenge that has become a pertinent stake (geostrategic infiltration), impeding the successful consolidation of the different UN peacekeeping mandates deployed within intra-state armed conflicts in Africa.*

**Keywords:** *Geostrategic, Infiltration, Peacekeeping Operations, Stakes, Mandate*

**Introduction**

Conflict among organized human groups is as old as human society itself. UN peacekeeping missions enjoy growing popularity as the international community's tool of choice for conflict containment in different parts of the world (Utley, 2006). Distinctive organs embody the UN, and the organ that champions the putting in place of the peacekeeping mission is the Security

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Council (SC). The Security Council is involved primarily with political issues among states and, to be more concise, conflict-related issues, which could either be inter-state and/or intra-state armed conflicts. The Security Council is comprised of five permanent member countries that enjoy veto rights. The Security Council also has ten non-permanent member countries without veto rights over procedural and substantive decisions. The five permanent members thought it wise to install peacekeeping operations that could be deployed in the eventuality of armed conflicts among and within states. The idea of vesting veto powers to five members in 1945 still continues in 2023, though many efforts are put into reforming and democratizing it. The UN does not have a standby army of its own that could be deployed immediately in the event of an armed conflict. Most importantly, the failure of the concept of collective security made the creation of peacekeeping inevitable. Consequently, these two major setbacks accelerated the birth of peacekeeping operations (Abi-Saab, 1995).

Since the inception of the UN peacekeeping operations, there has been a series of the evolution of peacekeeping from the first generation peacekeeping, second generation peacekeeping, and the third generation peacekeeping that took effect in 1993. Some scholars are even switching to fourth-generation peacekeeping. The first and second peacekeeping generations were attached to Chapter VI of the UN Charter, based on three doctrinal principles. They include inter alia: the consent of the parties in conflict, impartiality, and the non-recourse to force, except in the case of legitimate self-defense to defend their mandates. However, with the advent of the 1990s that came with the collapse of the adversarial decades of the Cold War, there was a conspicuous mutation of armed conflicts that came with a tremendous decline of inter-state armed conflicts to the unprecedented upsurge in intra-state armed conflicts (Malan, 1998). Apart from the first, second, and third peacekeeping generations highlighted above, a fourth-generation peacekeeping emerged distinct from the first, second, and third-generation peacekeeping. This was articulated under the framework of chapter VII of the UN Charter, coined "peace enforcement." This fourth-generation peacekeeping is based on the use of force violating the consent of the protagonists and/or parties in conflict for humanitarian reasons, which must be backed up with authorization from the Security Council. Although enforcement is inscribed in the Charter, it is costly in terms of money and lives. While the members of UN peacekeeping operations have exploded in recent years, many countries are unwilling to pay the bill or send troops to a conflict zone (Collins,

C.J, 1993). The setting up of the UN peacekeeping mission decades ago as the international community's tool for maintaining international peace and security in conflict-ridden spots across the globe was a lauded initiative. It should be underscored that the continent of Africa is experiencing an exponential rate of failure of the UN peacekeeping operations in consolidating their mandates faced with the upsurge of intra-state armed conflicts where they are deployed. This again makes thinking inevitable in the direction of whether the theoretically developed peacekeeping mandates are followed by the same spirit by the peacekeepers faced with implementing the mandates on the field. In other words, the question that arises goes thus; are the field operations not a mere façade as geostrategic infiltration from hegemonic powers and other member states appears to have overtaken the rules of engagement to all the troops, which is holistically directed towards the consolidation of the different mandates? In other words, making all efforts towards combatting challenges under normal circumstances like; inadequate finances, inadequate troops, inchoate mandate, belated intervention, and inadequate logistics, which equally act as stakes impeding the successful consolidation of the disparate mandates of UN peacekeeping operations that deployed in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. Nonetheless, geostrategic infiltration of hegemonic and other member states appears preponderant.

### **Background of the Study**

In view of the exponential increase in intra-state conflicts in Africa, especially during the post-Cold War decade, alongside the inability of host governments and non-state armed groups to arrive at a pacific consensus towards bringing these heinous conflicts to a peaceful end, made these conflicts to constitute threats to international peace and security. This has given way for the deployments of the UN peacekeeping missions to find veritable solutions towards charting the path to peace and serenity among the belligerents in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. The United Nations, an international world body with over 193 member states, has a universal mission: to maintain international peace and security among and within member states. The peacekeeping mission was established to be deployed in conflict-ridden spots across the globe to achieve this fundamental objective. The role of the UN peacekeepers

is supposed to be proportionately equitable, universal, and altruistic in saving the lives of vulnerable populations in conflict-stricken zones.

Moreover, the role should also be able to explore all possible means of reconciling the protagonists for the reconstitution of peace and stability in all continents. However, when we critically look at the UN peacekeeping deployments in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa from the earliest deployment in 1960 to several others during the post-Cold War decade, and consequently those of the 21st Century, we find every reason to ask. Furthermore, that pertinent question to ask is if the UN peacekeeping deployments in Africa match with the altruistically constructed mandates faced with intra-state armed conflicts, or are the deployments of the UN peacekeepers faced with intra-state armed conflicts in Africa not heavily influenced by geostrategic infiltration? That is, are UN peacekeeping deployments in Africa, not a vehicle behind which the five permanent members (P-5) in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as well as other member states, passed through to entrench their geostrategic agendas through taking advantage of intra-state armed conflicts in Africa? It is rational to think this way, given that almost all the UN peacekeeping deployments in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa are characterized by failure, with their mandates hardly being consolidated successfully.

In other words, African countries' geography and natural and mineral resources endowments have become a principal bone of contention to hegemonic states and other member states from where troops are drawn and deployed to intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. This is a vehicle via UN peacekeeping operations far more than under bilateral and multilateral foreign policy relations among states. Moreover, though the theoretical mandates drafted by the Security Council reflect every genuineness of the UN peacekeeping missions, nonetheless, among several challenges confronted by the UN peacekeeping operations to successfully consolidate their mandates in zones of intra-state armed conflicts in Africa, geostrategic infiltration has been incorporated resulting to the gross failure of UN peacekeeping operations following their deployments in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa.

There is no universally binding consensus as regards the definition of the peacekeeping mission. Thus, this makes the concept a nebulous one. However, various definitions propounded by different organizations and scientific authors as to the concept could be held

on. According to the UN Document (1992), an Agenda for Peace: Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, 17 June 1992. This document defines the UN peacekeeping operation as "The deployment of the United Nations presence on the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peacekeeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both preventing conflict and making peace" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Para, 20). FT Lui defines UN peacekeeping as essentially a practical mechanism used by the UN to contain international conflicts and facilitate their settlements by peaceful means (Levine, D.H, 2001).

According to the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Security Council is invested with the principal responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. In exercising this responsibility, this organ decided to implement peacekeeping operations. Each peacekeeping operation of the UN is created and deployed on the basis of specific mandates defined by the Security Council. A mandate is an official authorization that allows for the deployment of the UN peacekeeping operation, carrying the details of the precise tasks that the peacekeepers have to fulfill in the deployed zones of armed conflicts. The mandates vary depending on the situation, the nature of the conflict, and the particular challenges presented. Furthermore, the mandates are influenced vis-à-vis the nature, and the content of the accord concluded between the protagonists in conflict.

Grosso modo, according to their mandates, the peacekeepers are called for the following purposes:

- To prevent the start of a conflict or stop a conflict from escalating beyond the frontiers;
- Stabilize the situation of conflict after a cease-fire and at the end, create a suitable environment for the disputants to reach an accord of durable peace;
- Assist in putting to work the global accords of peace;
- Accompany the states or the territories during the transition towards a stable government based on democratic principles inter alia; good governance, respect for the rule of law, respect of human rights, and economic development;

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- Ensure Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of ancien combatants (DDR);
- Strengthen the Security Sector Reform (SSR) and other activities aimed at restoring the state of the law;
- Protect and promote human rights;
- Surveillance in elections.

The mandate that the Security Council confers to peacekeeping will reflect one of the aforementioned points outlined. Furthermore, in as much as the Security Council has to create and deploy the peacekeeping mission in the maintenance of international peace and security in war-torn countries, the creation of the peacekeeping missions has to respect the following criteria fixed by the UNSC:

- The existence of the situation must be one that poses a danger or, rather, constitutes a threat to international peace and security;
- If the sub-regional and regional arrangements exist and are ready to aid the regulation of the situation as well as the measures to be taken;
- If a cease-fire is in full force and if the parties are committed to the peace process;
- If the political objective is clearly defined and if it finds its expression in the mandate;
- If a precise mandate may be formulated for the operation of the UN;
- If the security of the UN personnel may be assured and the factions have guaranteed the security of the UN personnel (Théophile Owona).

From the above analysis of the purposes for which the peacekeeping operations are created and deployed and the criteria under which they are deployed, it becomes apparent that the Security Council has to, aside from ensuring that the elements that constitute the mandate and the criteria are intact, it also needs to give consideration on the geostrategic context of Africa. This is because the geostrategic context of Africa has influenced hegemonic states and other member states away from the rules of engagement and the altruistic character of the operations to consolidate the mandates and to ensure peace and stability in conflict zones in Africa. Instead, we see the preponderance of the realist traits among the peacekeeping contingents as well as the hegemonic powers overshadowing the veritable intent of the

deployments of UN peacekeeping operations. This has further compounded the conflict hot spots in Africa through the loss of lives, increased humanitarian crises resulting in unprecedented internally displaced persons, and refugees seeking haven in neighboring countries. In the subsequent sub-themes below, we will be zooming through an intra-state armed conflict of the 20th century to demonstrate how geostrategic infiltration appeared to be a major impediment to the successful consolidation of the UN peacekeeping operation deployed in that 20th century intra-state armed conflict in Africa. That was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) following the outbreak of the Congolese civil war in 1960, where the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) was deployed.

The body of this study is organized chronologically as materials and methods, results and discussion, conclusion and recommendation, and references.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The intent for which the UN was set up with an obligatory responsibility to maintain international peace and security among member states is, to a greater extent, being usurped. This is spearheaded particularly by the US and her Western allies for their distinctive geostrategic interests through creating and deploying peacekeeping. These peacekeepers are deployed with uncommitted roles influenced by rather geostrategic considerations at the expense of human lives, particularly in Africa. The UN gives the world community the impression that it is a genuine world body aimed at arresting intra-state armed conflicts that could threaten international peace and security by ensuring the human security of the population in war-torn zones.

On the contrary, the veritable role of maintaining international peace and security through creating and deploying peacekeeping missions is a facade, as the five permanent members of the Security Council are not influenced by the moral compulsion to do good. However, they are likely being influenced by geostrategic considerations that point largely to their individual geostrategic and economic interests to grasp in war-torn settings instead of focusing on consolidating their mandates for preserving human lives. This has been exaggerated following

the UN peacekeeping deployments in Africa (Diamond, 2005). Some authors even wonder if really the P-5 in the UNSC valued African lives.

It is against this backdrop that this title was selected to critically assess how geostrategic infiltration is considered a serious stake in the successful consolidation of the mandates of the UN peacekeeping operations deployed in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa, with the specific case study under review being the intra-state armed conflict that hits the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1960. The African, Asian, and Pacific continents, all in the southern hemisphere, top the chart with an increasing rate of intra-state armed conflicts. The height of the upsurge in intra-state armed conflicts became exponential during the post-Cold War decade, with an unprecedented increase in countries in the global south, especially countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific (De Waal, A, 2005).

### **Research Objectives**

The objective of this study is to critically assess the penetration of geostrategic infiltration in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa deployed in intra-state armed conflicts with particular attention on a 20th century UN peacekeeping operation United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC) deployed in the intra-state armed conflict that hits the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1960. With the increasing occurrence of intra-state armed conflicts in the early nineties, the continents of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific are topping the chart. Therefore, in a nutshell, the main objective of this study is to investigate analytically the penetration of geostrategic considerations in UN peacekeeping deployments in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa with precision on the UN peacekeeping operation ONUC deployed in DRC in 1960. The second objective is to demonstrate how geostrategic infiltration constitutes a grave stake in the successful consolidation of the UN peacekeeping mandate of ONUC in DRC in 1960 and subsequent UN peacekeeping deployments of the 20th century and even those of the 21st century.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Geostrategic Infiltration into the UN Peacekeeping Operations Deployed in Africa**

The geostrategic position of African countries and the natural and mineral resources endowed therein are veritable undercurrents that have influenced hegemonic states and the different



member states from where troops are drawn to constitute the UN peacekeeping operations. This influence has in no small way contributed adversely towards the successful consolidation of the UN peacekeeping mandates in the deployed zones of intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. While UN peacekeeping operations have scored a certain proportion of success in other continents, UN peacekeeping deployments in Africa have been characterized as a debacle. Though it is unarguable that there are challenges that have been accounted for the failure of the UN peacekeeping operations to successfully consolidate their mandates like; inadequate funding, inadequate and lack of trained troops, inadequate logistics, belated intervention, inchoate mandates and to mentioned only but these few, nonetheless the above-mentioned challenges could be ranked secondary, as the geostrategic and economic interests of hegemonic and other member states appear preponderant. The geostrategic and economic entrenchment of hegemonic powers and other member states instigated due to the rich sub-soil of the African countries as well as the most strategic position seems to constitute a veritable stake behind the unsuccessful consolidation of UN peacekeeping operations deployed in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa.

The preponderant influence of the geostrategic positioning of Africa and its overwhelming influence towards the unsuccessful consolidation of the UN peacekeeping operations deployed in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa cannot be underestimated. One of the intra-state armed conflicts drawn from the 20th was reviewed analytically to demonstrate how geostrategic stake contributed extensively towards the unsuccessful consolidation of the peacekeepers' mandate in that country. That is the United Nations Operation in the Congo in 1960.

In light of the topic under review in this study, the theory of organized hypocrisy could be considered. The theory of organized hypocrisy is not very common among many scholars; hence, the political and diplomatic dynamics associated with this concept are little known to students and practitioners of global politics and diplomacy. These dynamics have direct implications for the conduct of UN peacekeeping missions and global governance. According to Lipson (2007), organized hypocrisy is a phenomenon espoused by organizational behavioral theorists to explain how organizations respond to conflicting and challenging

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pressures emanating from external environments by adopting contradictory actions and statements to mislead the public deliberately. In the same trajectory, organized hypocrisy is manifested by inconsistencies and contradictions between publicly pronounced organizational expressions and aspirations to respect norms such as state sovereignty. Yet, in real practice, these norms are violated. Krasner (1999) argued that organized hypocrisy explains the enduring and routine violation of veritable roles of the UN peacekeepers faced with the consolidation of their mandates in situations of intra-state conflicts in Africa.

Brunsson (1989), one of the leading theorists on organized hypocrisy, argued that organized hypocrisy refers to organizational responses to "conflicting logics of consequences and appropriateness." It also refers to parallel structures that organizations set as what happened during UN peacekeeping operations in Congo during the early 1960s. This occurred when Secretary General Hammarskjold established a secretive cabinet of American special advisers and himself known as the "Congo Club" to run the affairs of the UN peacekeeping mission, whose aim was to entrench US hegemony in Africa after dislodging Belgian post-colonial influence in that country. Brunsson concluded that "organized hypocrisy is a fundamental type of behavior" in most political organizations, such as the UN.

**Geostrategic Infiltration Stake in the Consolidation of ONUC's Mandate in DRC**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, placed within a geostrategic positioning, makes it very constructive to examine the stakes in the consolidation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in the Congo, explained largely beyond endogenous limitations but largely due to the infiltration of geostrategic exogenous consideration. In its early years of independence (1960-1964), Congo failed to offer its citizens peace and security despite the deployment of UN peacekeepers in the country. This was fostered through the manipulation of the internal political power dynamics in Congo by some senior UN officials in violation of Congo's autonomy. This automatically resulted in the mission's failure to accomplish the desired objectives of bringing about durable peace and security in the Congo. The UN peacekeeping mission in Congo ONUC served as a proxy force to legitimize a regime change agenda that culminated in the installation of a pro-Western government that did not serve the interests of the Congolese population (Al-Qaq, 2009). The United Nations Operation in the Congo ONUC was originally deployed to preserve the autonomy of the country following

Belgian military intervention. It succeeded in securing the withdrawal of the invading Belgian forces, and it also succeeded in reversing the disintegration of Congo into fiefdoms. However, it dismally failed to restore the nascent democracy in Congo and equally failed to bring about long-term self-determination political and economic stability in the host country (Collins, 1993).

Firstly, according to Al Qaq (2009), ONUC was by far the largest peacekeeping mission to be deployed during the Cold War period, and it was the first mission to have non-military members tasked with the responsibility of re-building and administering key aspects of a host country's public institutions inclusive of security sector reform, activities that interfered with the autonomy of Congo. Moreover, it was the first UN peacekeeping mission to be authorized to use force to facilitate the execution of its mandate (Al-Qaq). Secondly, the mission was the most advanced and sophisticated experiment in international cooperation ever attempted by the world. Thirdly, ONUC was the most complex and most controversial mission because it violated all the rules and principles of peacekeeping, especially the "holy trinity" of UN peacekeeping, namely: consent of the host nation, impartiality and non-use of force except in legitimate self-defense that applied to previous peacekeeping missions. Fourthly, ONUC served as a "watershed" peacekeeping operation in UN interference in the internal affairs of an autonomous member state in violation of the UN Charter (Abi-Saab). ONUC overwhelmingly demonstrated the extent to which the UN, through its Secretary General and his advisers, could determine the course of political events in the host country without paying due attention to the wishes, interests, and aspirations of citizens of the host nation. Considering its size, cost, and controversy in mandate interpretation, ONUC was a precursor to the peacekeeping missions that were to be undertaken by the world body in the post-Cold War era; hence it was "a watershed in the development of international peacekeeping" (James, 1996).

On 12 July 1960, President Kasa Vubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba jointly appealed to the UN Secretary-General, urgently requesting military assistance to deal with the invading Belgian forces. The Congolese appeal was succinct and unambiguous as it stated, "The purpose of the requested military aid was to protect the national territory of the Congo against

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the present external aggression which was a threat to international peace" (UN, 1960). President Kasa Vubu and Prime Minister Lumumba jointly dispatched another cable to the Secretary-General, correcting the erroneous message sent earlier by their three ministers while they were out of the capital, Leopoldville. According to the UN (1960), the central government's follow-up message to the UN was meant to clarify further and elaborate the exact nature of the urgent request to remove any ambiguities. Essential aspects of the message were as follows:

i) The purpose of the aid requested is not to restore the internal situation in Congo but rather to protect the national territory against acts of aggression posed by Belgian metropolitan troops. ii) The request for assistance relates only to a UN force consisting of military personnel of neutral countries and not of the US, as reported by certain radio stations. iii) If the requested assistance is not received without delay, the Republic of the Congo will be obliged to appeal to the Bandung Treaty Powers. iv) The Republic of the Congo has requested aid in the exercise of its sovereign rights and is not in agreement with Belgium as reported.

Clearly, the Congolese central government wanted military assistance to effectively engage the invading Belgian troops and ensure their withdrawal from Congo as a precondition for restoring the status quo ante. Considering that the US had declined a request for military assistance from the same Congolese government, the legitimate government of Congo sought to cast its net wider by approaching the Soviet Union for military assistance in the event that there was no speedy response from the UN to their request for military assistance. From this point of view, it can be ascertained that ONUC's deployment in DRC could not have been instigated by veritable roles aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict by treating the unambiguous message sent by the legitimate government of the Congo but rather a geostrategic entrenchment of economic interests far from primarily addressing the root causes of the conflict-but much more to install the cynical interests of the western powers and the US against a legitimate autonomous government. As stated in the speech of the Congolese President and Prime Minister, recognized legitimate authorities in the Congo seeking assistance from an international body having as overall objective to maintain international peace and security, the UN was supposed to have respected the exact context under which the Congolese government was requesting for its intervention. However, other geo-strategic and

economic interests of the US and her Western allies over the DRC alternated all of that. Thus, this accounted for the unsuccessful consolidation of its mandate.

Similarly, Hoskyns (1961) observed that the two Congolese leaders concurrently dispatched a cable to the Soviet leader requesting him to be on standby while closely monitoring the developments in the Congo. The request for Soviet assistance was sent on 14 July, the day the Security Council authorized the deployment of ONUC through Security Council Resolution 145 dated 14 June 1960 (Higgins, 1980). Abi-Saab (1978) believes the request to the Soviet Union was probably an initiative "Conceived as a lever inciting the UN and the Western powers to exert pressure on Belgium to withdraw." This view cannot be substantiated. However, it is important to note that it was well within the powers of the Congolese leadership to invite international assistance to bolster the country's self-defense when faced with foreign military aggression. Equally, it cannot be ruled out that the invitation extended to the Soviet Union was a desperate attempt at influencing the Western powers to speedily influence their NATO counterpart (Belgium) to withdraw from Congo. ONUC officials sadly interpreted the initiative differently as they believed this was enough proof that Lumumba was pro-Soviet and that he wanted to set the two superpowers against each other, a development they resolved to thwart at all costs. The viewing of Lumumba as a pro-Soviet revolutionary significantly influenced the decision-making process of the Secretary-General and his close advisers, who were predominantly American citizens (O'Brien, 1962).

Grovogui (2002) argues that the US, Belgium, and their Western allies wanted to preserve their access to Congo's strategic and rare minerals and other natural resources to offset Soviet advantages in access to raw materials. Thus, the need to explicitly reverse the unilateral intervention by Belgian troops, the fear of Soviet involvement in Congo, and the determination to deny the Soviets access to strategic minerals and deprive them of any pretext for unilateral or covert involvement in the Congo influenced the deployment of ONUC. Thus, the purpose of deploying UN peacekeepers was not necessarily based on veritably consolidating the mandate to assist the Congolese in re-asserting their independence and autonomy as requested by the central government following external aggression by Belgian troops and foreign mercenaries. Similarly, it was rather geostrategic considerations to

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facilitate the smooth withdrawal of Belgian metropolitan troops that were to be replaced by peacekeepers that had come to guarantee the safety of the Congolese white population and other foreigners (Collins, 1992).

The full strategic implications of deploying peacekeepers in Congo were not apparent to the Soviet Union, which voted to favor the deployment in Congo while Britain and France abstained. Moreover, James (1996) believes that the idea of deploying UN peacekeepers in Congo was widely embraced "although its implications were less than fully understood" by most nations that believed such missions were meant to address international crises in an impartial manner. Taking advantage of the wisdom of hindsight, it is now apparent that the Secretary-General and his American-dominated advisory team had sinister and malicious strategic designs to ensure that Western interests were preserved and promoted at the expense of the well-being of the Congolese population and government as long as Western interests, particularly American interests were safeguarded. The Congolese initial request for "technical assistance" from the UN was with a view "To reorganizing and retraining the Congolese National Army" as a component of security sector reform that was meant to be part of the larger scheme of peace-building measures advocated by the Secretary-General (Urquhart, 1987).

Important to note is that the Congolese Government's appeal for UN assistance came after the US had declined a similar request from three Cabinet Ministers, namely: Gizenga, Bamboko, and Nyembo (1961), at a time when the President and the Prime Minister were away touring the country. The US advised the Congolese authorities to approach the UN for assistance as they publicly declared that it was "undesirable" for any country to unilaterally come to the aid of Congo (Higgins, R 1980).

Ball (1961) argues that on receipt of the Congolese request for military assistance, the US considered three options for their response: to do nothing; it could agree to the Congolese request for American troops, or it could encourage the Congolese to approach the UN. As a result, the US authorities feared that the Soviets would influence the Congolese leadership towards adopting communism as a "Form of chaos to communism syndrome." As such, the US opted to use the UN peacekeepers as an "umbrella" for its anti-communist policy in Congo that would achieve desired results at a far lower cost compared to direct military

involvement. The American strategic interests in Africa were driven by a desire to secure valuable natural resources and political influence that would guarantee the longevity of America's capitalist system, Military Industrial Complex (MIC), and global economic superiority while denying the same to the Soviet Union (Housen, R.T, 2002).

It is, therefore, apparent that the Americans suggested channeling the Congolese Government's request to the UN for two reasons. Firstly, they wanted to keep the Soviets out of the Central African region; hence, they ensured that the Soviets would not have any plausible pretext for unilateral intervention in Congo once international peacekeepers were in the country performing their tasks. Secondly, the US knew fully well that the American-dominated UN peacekeeping political structure would safeguard American national strategic interests without its direct involvement. This view is supported by the composition of the UN Security Council in 1960 when Taiwan held the Chinese seat in the Security Council, and the domination of the General Assembly by the pro-Western Latin American countries.

Weissman (1974) observed that during the early 1960s, the UN acted as a satisfactory vehicle for the promotion of American policy through its domination of key and strategic organs of the world body. In the Security Council, the West had four out of five permanent seats with the power of veto (Taiwan represented China) and three out of six elected seats. In the General Assembly, the Western and Latin American states only needed 12 Afro-Asian votes to secure the two-thirds majority. A high percentage of staff that manned the Secretariat was basically Western in orientation and outlook, where Americans, British, and French staff members held 49 of the 102 senior appointments (*ibid*). Weissman highlights the fact that the closest advisors to Secretary-General Hammarskjold were all Americans, namely: Ralph Bunche, under Secretary for Special Political Affairs; Andrew, the Executive Assistant; and Heinz Wieschoff Bunche's Deputy and the Secretariat's African expert (Bellamy et al., S). This point is important because critical strategic decisions made regarding ONUC were handled by the Secretary-General and his close American advisers.

During the early 1960s, before most colonies attained independence, the UN membership had a predominantly pro-Western bias. Added to this scenario was the fact that the Secretary-General had an American-dominated advisory team for peacekeeping in Congo. It is,

therefore, prudent to conclude that the drafting of the mandate and controversial interpretation of Security Council resolutions on the Congo crisis was influenced by the geostrategic pro-Western bias of critical institutions of the UN to the detriment of the Congolese people and Government, thereby rendering the Congolese Government ineffective and incapable of serving the interests of its citizens.

### **Geostrategic Influence at the Core of the Deployment of Pro-Western Troops and US Civilians in Congo**

In the words of Brigadier General Pumzile James Mackakaire of Zimbabwean nationality, “You do find veritable conduct by deployed contingents and individual peacekeepers. The respondent further continued to say, however, that in the geopolitical environment, a veritable role is far fetch as there are strategic national interests that each state strives to protect. He went further to say that power dynamics also influence the outcomes. He said the one who has the power or money calls the shot. He compared this with the law by saying that the law is put in place to protect the powerful where the less powerful suffers despite the fact that the issue at stake that triggers legal intervention speaks in favor of the less powerful. However, because the other party is powerful, that party ends up the winner because the party has financial and political powers, which distorts the character of the law. The respondent affirmed that the mandates of the UN peacekeeping missions are altruistic. However, once the different countries from which troops are drawn to deploy in the conflict-ridden countries, they step in with their individual national interests in the war-torn country. This drives the undercurrent of the geostrategic infiltrating role.

The respondent even went as far as saying, “During one of his missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo being our case study in this study, especially the part that is close to Rwanda, it was reported that some of the UN peacekeeping contingents especially those from India demonstrated some misconduct. As such, once the information was reported to the Headquarters, little or nothing was done. What exacerbated the situation, which the Brigadier General recounted, was that some DRC soldiers were complicit. Instead of pre-empting any form of geostrategic behavior from the mixed UN peacekeepers on their territory, they helped the UN peacekeepers by granting them access to exploit the natural resources of their country illicitly and received compensation in return. Therefore, he said, while visualizing the

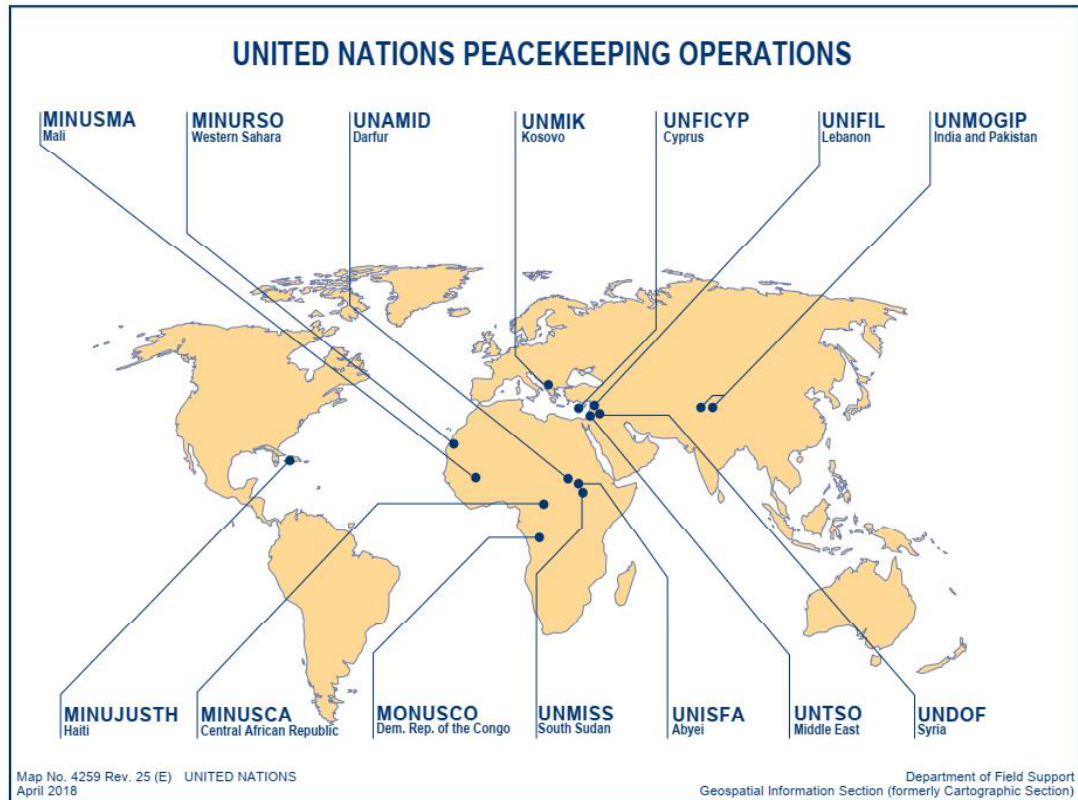


geostrategic role solely through the prism of the peacekeepers, it should be made emphatically clear that the Africans are complicit in helping the UN peacekeepers in carrying out geostrategically related activities."

He went further to say, "Still in the DRC, there are many international non-governmental organizations present and are classified as humanitarian agencies. This multiplicity of international NGOs from different countries is involved in activities that are far from the humanitarian reasons of improving the standards of living and alleviating the plights of internally displaced persons and other persons of concern. This is because there are benefits that they are deriving from the DRC. By and large, they do not do these things on their own. They use the nationals to gain access to those resources. For instance, cobalt, a mineral resource used in cell phone fabrication, is enormous in the DRC. As such, which international NGOs would not want to get into DRC under the banner of humanitarianism but act illegally to extract such rich product, and has it smuggled out of the country? The respondent said all these international multinational corporations and/or non-state actors that produce cellphones get the product cobalt hugely from DRC.

Moreover, how did you think this product reached them if the geostrategic behaviors of the UN peacekeepers were not used and without the help of international NGOs that penetrated there under the guise of humanitarian assistance and claimed that they were there for humanitarian action, which is a façade? A façade in the sense that they are there to extract cobalt and other rich mineral deposits illegally, the DRC is endowed with using even the Congolese nationals to smuggle the natural resources out of the country. Each of the UN peacekeeping contingents has its agenda given to them by their member state to drive their national interests. That is, if everybody is doing it, why can't we do it too? Unfortunately, these are not things you can openly say this country is doing this, that country is doing that, except they are legally apprehended and exposed. Regrettably, money comes into play here as people always buy out their illegalities. So, in a nutshell, to a very large extent, Africans themselves are complicit to the geostrategic infiltration of the UN peacekeepers on the field, as opined by Brigadier General Pumzile James Mackakaire, one time President of the African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA)."

The figure below depicts examples of some deployed UN peacekeeping operations:



UN Peacekeeping Map from the UN Cartographic Section, April 2018: <[www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/dpko/P\\_K\\_O.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/dpko/P_K_O.pdf)>.

## Results and Discussion

The results and discussion revealed that ONUC's failure to tackle the crisis triggered challenges that the Congolese Government had requested the UN military force to deal with. During the first year of its deployment in Congo, ONUC did not engage itself in any robust diplomatic and military offensive operations to evict the foreign invading forces. Instead, the leadership of ONUC became embroiled in the power politics of Congo, which resulted in the assassination of Lumumba with ONUC's connivance. Ultimately, ONUC became the legitimizing force of an unelected and undemocratic dictatorial regime installed to serve Western interests and not the self-determination and aspirations of the Congolese people (Saksena, 1974).

During the first few weeks of deployment, ONUC failed to immediately engage the invading Belgian troops and secessionist Katangese troops, as requested by the Congolese authorities.

As a result of this failure, the UN force was harassed and rebuked rather than being assisted by the Congolese Government, as tribal and ideological considerations fuelled by outside forces were tearing the Congolese government apart (*ibid*). The role of the outside military and political forces in transforming ONUC into a US proxy force is fully explained by the selection and appointment of key decision-makers in the affairs of ONUC. Additionally, most pundits have articulated that it should not be surprising as UN peacekeeping missions were designed as political games played at the grand strategic level among the competing world powers with little consideration for the ultimate effects on the local population (Tsagourias, 2006).

The first UN guiding principle in the selection of troop-contributing countries for ONUC was that no military unit or staff officer from any of the permanent members of the Security Council was to participate “given the potential...to escalate rather than reduce cold War rivalries” (Annan, K. A, 2012). The second principle was that the concept of regionalism in resolving international conflicts was to be upheld, hence the appeal to African leaders to provide the bulk of the peacekeeping troops (Simmonds, 1968). These principles were both violated at the onset of the operation. The appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Congo, Ralph Bunche, a seasoned American diplomat who was also the overall commander of ONUC in the field during the early days of its deployment, was in violation of the first principle that prohibited staff officers and troops. This is rational, especially for staff of permanent Security Council members participating in UN peacekeeping operations. It also contributed to the violation of the peacekeeping principle of "impartiality." The principle of impartiality in this study is defined as follows: "Peacekeepers will be expected to serve universalistic interest and must not serve the parochial interests of specific foreign powers, which seek to project their influence into the conflict in question” (Gibbs, 2000, p. 360). The critical importance of impartiality has been emphasized by several scholars. James (1996) emphasizes that "it is impartiality which gives peacekeepers its distinctiveness as it is the lifeblood of peacekeeping."

To sum up, this article has spotted imperative areas following the UN peacekeeping deployment in DRC following the outbreak of an intra-state armed conflict in 1960. That is

the United Nations' Operations in the Congo. The researcher envisaged how geostrategic infiltration and other challenges contributed enormously to curtailing the consolidation of ONUC's mandate in the DRC in 1960. This is explained by the overwhelming concealed geostrategic interests incorporated behind UN peacekeeping operations deployed in conflict-ridden spots in Africa with the case study of DRC. Summarily, the study's results corroborate with the study's objectives as well as the statement of the problem established apriori in the introduction and body of the study.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Here, the conclusion and recommendations of the study have been brought out succinctly, as well as other suggested areas for more research in this domain of UN peacekeeping operations and their deployments in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa.

#### **Conclusion**

The fundamental objective of this study was to critically assess how geostrategic infiltration constitutes a great stake in the successful consolidation of the UN peacekeeping operations deployed in intra-state armed conflicts in Africa, with the case of UN peacekeeping operation ONUC deployed in the DRC in 1960. To attain this objective, salient facts were brought out and argued logically. The study results show that geostrategic infiltration of Congo's internal politics by some high-ranking ONUC officials significantly contributed to the host government's failure to exercise its autonomy towards advancing the aspirations of its people as UN officials promoted American and Allied Powers' interests. Moreover, as argued above, this was done at the Congolese people's expense. The Congo crisis (1960-64) marked a significant watershed in the evolution of peacekeeping. For the first time, the UN got embroiled in the domestic affairs of the host country, thus setting a major precedent for future UN interventions in the domestic affairs of host countries. The geostrategic challenge in UN interventions in civil conflicts is that the world body risks becoming embroiled in internal conflicts, compromising its "Ostensible role as a non-partisan mediator." The result also revealed that the UN intervention in Congo served as a "midwife to the arrival of the Cold War in Africa, and it inadvertently aborted...Congo's transition from colonial to democratic rule" (Collins, 1993). This abortion was a deliberate and successful attempt to promote American interests during the Cold War at the expense of Congolese wishes and aspirations

for political and economic self-determination that were thwarted in favor of promoting Western neo-liberal political and economic interests.

Furthermore, the result further demonstrated that it is false to argue that peacekeeping operations are primarily designed to bring peace and tranquility to the host nation-state. The UN mission in Congo was meant to facilitate the introduction and entrenchment of American hegemony in Central and Southern Africa in replacement of the departing colonial powers during decolonization. This view is confirmed by Wedgwood (1995), who noted that the US likes peacekeeping operations because they are "The denouement, the winding down of old battles for influence in the Third World between strategic opponents" in which the American hegemony replaces departed colonial powers. This is what transpired in Congo, where the peacekeeping mission was used to effect a well-calculated and executed regime change agenda. Lastly, the result further revealed that UN peacekeepers deployed in the Congo during the early 1960s did not serve the interests of the Congolese people they purported to have gone to serve and protect. The peacekeepers were used as a proxy force to advance the geostrategic interests of the US and its Western allies.

### **Recommendations**

From this study on the "Critical Assessment of Geostrategic Infiltration in UN Peacekeeping Operations Deployed in Intra-State Armed Conflicts in Africa: The Case of ONUC in DRC in 1960," the following actionable recommendations could be proffered:

- Reforms aimed at reinstating the veritable role of UN peacekeeping operations in Africa faced with intra-state armed conflicts are paramount. While this study took into account the fact that altruism is at the inception of the creation of the UN peacekeeping operations as revealed in this work, coupled with the non-coherent role on the part of the peacekeepers in the deployed countries hit by intra-state armed conflicts, geostrategic infiltration has a preponderance effect on the successful consolidation of the mandates of the UN peacekeepers.
- Also, it is recommended that the UN should rather reinforce regional economic communities and the African Union with logistic support and allow them, uninfluenced,

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to orchestrate charting the path to peace and stability in the consolidation of the mandate of restituting peace and stability in the countries hit by intra-state armed conflicts in Africa. For instance, should the UN had rather reinforced the culpability of the Congolese troops requested and/or sub-regional bodies and regional bodies like the then Organization of African Unity today known as the African Union with logistic support due to the incapacitation of these African-owned bodies and allowed them broker peace in DRC, it could have delivered better results over the UN peacekeepers ONUC. This position could not have been taken because it would have pre-empted geostrategic infiltration of the US and its allies in operation. Therefore, the UN should engage in a reform of reinforcing African Regional Economic Communities and the African Union, otherwise referred to as south-south reinforcement; it would not only have rekindled its veritable role but, most significantly, go a long way to accelerate the quelling of not only the protracted intra-state armed conflict in the DRC in 1960 but also several other intra-state armed conflicts during the post-Cold War decade and those in the last two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century threatening peace, security, and development in the African continent. Additionally, it will serve as a spearheader of international peace and security.

- Third and lastly, it is also recommended that the hybrid nature of the intervention, that is, UN-AU intervention as happened in Darfur Sudan (double command otherwise taking the name fourth generation peacekeeping), should be given an ardent place. This hybrid intervention will enable the detection of any non-altruistic tendency in the UN peacekeeping missions by AU presence compared to third-generation peacekeeping that is exclusively UN without AU involvement.

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