

Intelligence, Peace and Conflict Management

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Abstract

Intelligence, an integral part of the state system, means the processed information primarily collected covertly by state agents and analyzed mainly through human endeavors for the purpose of security and national interests of states. Intelligence is more than simple information that empowers policy-makers to undertake policies for the states; intelligence connotes secrecy, and states do not want to share certain matters with the public. Therefore, people often think about how intelligence interacts with peace, which this exploratory article attempts to answer. It argues that their relationship is less straightforward but complex when considered from a broader perspective of peace. As intelligence is for the state, adequately analysed intelligence could ensure the superiority of the state actors in handling conflicting issues and give confidence to them to act and negotiate any issue with advanced information that helps manage conflicts when required, even without resorting to violence. Nevertheless, intelligence failure could be a great source of disappointment for the state as it would bring misery to people. Faulty, biased or inappropriate intelligence is more dangerous than no intelligence and causes severe harm to humanity. However, states are responsible for ensuring their citizens' human security and well-being and maintaining a standard of human rights. Under some conditions, ill-fitted intel reports could lead to peacelessness—as secrecy and operations could undermine individual freedom. In a cautious approach, the UN has recently considered collecting and analyzing tactical intelligence from different fragile contexts where peacekeepers are posted to protect civilians, prevent conflict and maintain and build peace, meaning intelligence is valuable for peace workers too.

Introduction

When intelligence is a topic of discussion, people often connect it mainly with the secret services directed to empower decision-makers to implement policies undertaken by policy-makers for the sake of the security and stability of the states. Intelligence is the processed information collected by special agencies and their personnel and served to policy-makers for using that information to protect the state's national interests (Taylor, 2010). It means the understanding of 'intelligence' to a considerable extent is connected with the nation-state system, its security, stability and instability, including war. There is not much literature that connects intelligence with peace and conflict management. Yet, intelligence is equally vital for war fighting as well as determining the approaches to dealing with internal and external conflicts, as well as transnational concerns and threats to the state and its people. On the other hand, while considering the state of world peace, many keep confidence in the roles and responsibilities played by the United Nations (UN). Since

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its inception, the UN has devoted enormous resources to maintaining peace, especially through deploying peacekeepers in different complex, volatile conflict theatres to keep and build peace. On many occasions, if not all, UN peacekeepers from its member states experienced unfavourable conditions that brought unforeseen consequences and casualties to many peacekeepers.

The UN was reluctant to embrace the word ‘intelligence’ for a long time due to different caveats, including institutional limitations and secretiveness associated with this terminology. The 1960 UN Operation in Congo (ONUC) first employed this term and created a military information branch for generating information through different means like intercepting messages, aerial surveillance and detainee interrogation (Martin-Brûlé, 2020). However, despite severe insecurity and consequences peacekeepers faced throughout their journey of peacekeeping, the issue of intelligence did not get much heed in the UN System until 2015. Given the various connotations attached to the word ‘intelligence’, the changing global politico-strategic scenario and the shifting nature of armed conflicts and associated threats and vulnerabilities, one could ask whether intelligence is connected to peace and conflict management. With its limited focus, this exploratory paper, written from the state’s perspective and using examples from various crisis and conflict contexts, aims to address this vacuum and contribute to the literature on security, intelligence and peace. The next section briefly defines intelligence and explains its scope, whether it only focuses on protecting the state or pays attention to the states and their people. The third section attempts to connect peace with intelligence from three perspectives: definitional, human security and human rights. The fourth section tries to find a connection between intelligence and crisis and conflict management. The final section explains how the UN has considered collecting information and intelligence for better peacekeeping, intending to protect the personnel, civilians and mission mandates.

Intelligence: Pro-state or pro-people?

States of any kind and state policy-makers heavily rely on intelligence services to maintain the security of the states (Taylor, 2010). Intelligence services are helpful for international relationships and maintaining domestic affairs, as threats and risks could emerge from any dimension. Long ago, the Chinese General Sun Tzu in his book, *The Art of War*, talked about intelligence, processed and unprocessed information about military capabilities and adversaries' plans for allowing the decision-makers to use ‘foreknowledge’, collected and generated by intelligent agents and spies. Tzu stated, “‘If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear a hundred battles. If you know yourself and not the enemy, for every victory, you will suffer a defeat. If you know neither yourself nor the enemy, you are a fool and will meet defeat in every battle” (Translated by Lionel Giles, Chapter 13, ‘On Spies’).

The above quotation from Tzu indicates the importance of having foreknowledge of the enemy, helpful in winning wars—in other words, solidifying states' power and stability. In this age of information, intelligence does not only mean to collect information in clandestine manners but also attests to the ‘collection, analysis, production, and utilization of information about potentially hostile states, groups, individuals’ for ‘decision-makers’ (Taylor, 2010: 300). Intelligence is more than mere information. The former means processed and analyzed information prepared by

specially trained persons or groups for the usefulness of the ‘customer’ or decision-makers and policy-makers, while the latter could indicate any information which may not mean anything solid to the policy-makers and could be unusable (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013). Whatever information the intelligence community gathers through human intelligence and technical intelligence must be processed to give an advantage to the processing states over the adversary state(s) or on a global phenomenon like terrorism and extremism that can affect national security and bilateral and multilateral relations of the states.

Besides producing crafted intelligence reports useful for the states, state and intelligence communities want to ‘keep information secret from others’ (Taylor, 2010: 300). People, on the other hand, often ‘abhor government secrecy’; the state often cannot convince free people about ‘secrecy’ as it is considered in line to the national interests that are vital to states (Dulles, 2007: 235). Therefore, states want to keep ‘certain matters confidential’ as openness in national security matters could endanger ‘national defense measures and delicate diplomatic negotiations’ (Dulles, 2007: 235). However, ordinary people have a sense of reservation about the intelligence community, including a wide range of formal and informal bodies, structures and agencies working for intelligence collection and processing. States, nevertheless, could be the offenders, too (Dulles, 2007: 235). Although intelligence is often considered to be gathering information through covert exercises and processing it for decision-making and operational purposes, in the twenty-first century, a wide range of open sources could be taken into account to gather and understand the conditions of collecting intelligence. Whatever the means the state and intelligence community employ in collecting data and information, the result is to produce knowledgeable information for operational purposes and act based on intelligence. Warner (2002), therefore, argued in favour of knowing the unknown in advance for undertaking a course of action by the state or concerned authority.

The broader definition that Lowenthal (2008: 8) used for intelligence encompasses a wide array of aspects, such as collecting specific types of information required and requested for national security, analysis of data and submission of reports to policy-makers, protecting both the information collection and output processes through counterintelligence, when needed, and undertaking operations as requested by lawful authorities. The primary purpose of collection and analysis of intelligence is to give ‘decision advantage’ to the authority that allows the decision-makers to know about the opponent, adversary, enemy and threats better than others (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013: 2). It helps them to act with advanced information and with confidence.

One can ask whether intelligence agencies and intelligence make a war winnable. Winning a war is not a key task of intelligence. The primary responsibilities of the intelligence community are to collect information, conduct conscience, clear and accurate analysis as possible and provide to the policy-makers to undertake appropriate, informed decisions in favor of their countries to protect any national security issues and interests. The effective work of the intelligence community depends on various interconnected, indispensable factors. Taylor (2010: 317) in this regard stated: ‘When the intelligence process works well—when decision-makers ask penetrating questions, when collectors are creative and successful, when analysts paint accurate pictures, and when

political pressures on intelligence agencies are at a minimum—when these conditions exist, intelligence can and has made valuable contributions to national security in every state. When the process does not work well, national security may be diminished, and the foreign reactions intelligence activities generate may complicate diplomacy and increase international tensions.’ These sentences are equally important in domestic affairs to ensure the nation-state's security and overcome any caveats that challenge the state’s sovereignty, stability and safety of its population.

Nevertheless, it is crucial for the intelligence community to conduct an ‘objective’ analysis, keeping any of their biases aside. The relationship between the intelligence community (producer of intelligence) and consumer (decision/policy-makers who use intelligence) is tricky. Some policy-makers rely more on intelligence than others. President Bush, a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, understood and appreciated intelligence used consistently. In contrast, President Clinton used intelligence sporadically due to his lack of familiarity and comfort (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013: 11). For fighting domestic forces that challenge state’s integrity and undermine its security and well-being of people, the state applies its legitimate institutions to collect and process information to undertake protective and preventive measures. Nevertheless, while fighting the transnational nature of threats like terrorism and extremism, states cooperate through bilateral, regional and multilateral intelligence sharing to protect their interests, thwart threats, and prevent their people from joining such groups (Ashraf, 2022a).

The above discussion indicates that intelligence is nothing but ‘advance information’ that gives an upper hand to the party that has access to such information (Dulles, 2007: 1). Such advance information is necessary for conflict and peace as both are instinctually connected to the security and survival of human being, groups and state parties. An intelligence community operated within the jurisdiction of the state collects and processes information and prepares analyzed reports for the policy-makers who make decisions on the crucial matters of states, including engaging in war and thwarting any domestic, inter-state or transnational threats based on those reports. When a state engages in a battle with another state or any groups that challenge its integrity, it heavily relies on intelligence; yet, only intelligence cannot make a war winnable. The state and its regime use intelligence for their interests, but they also use processed information to undertake domestic policies that benefit their people. Notwithstanding, intelligence is mainly understood with its connotation of secrecy and confidential services primarily serving the state, its security and the regime in power. Therefore, people have a reserved perspective, while the state and authority are traditionally reluctant to share some critical issues with the public, which could undermine the state’s security and safety measures and diplomatic engagements and moves with other states.

Peace and Intelligence

The seminal definition of peace, given by Galtung (1969), indicates the ‘absence of violence’, both direct and structural. When it means an absence of direct violence that is related to the absence of war of any kind, fighting and atrocities—meaning when a country undertakes initiatives of avoiding war and fighting that ensures peace, indicating no harm to its population or less damage to them, infrastructures, properties etc. One can argue that war is an extension of the politics of parties involved in a conflict, and parties resort to violence as the last means to achieve their

interest-based objectives and goals, without which they may face difficulties and may get into unfavourable conditions in inter-state relationships or domestic affairs. Although intelligence cannot win a war, which is a calculative engagement of parties to fight, parties rely heavily on intelligence services and information to engage in a war. Without adequate information, no party can win wars and battles. When parties engage or disengage in war, their dependence on intelligence information makes the difference in war outcome. Even when parties in a war consider a compromised outcome over a win-lose outcome, they also cautiously use intelligence reports to understand the intent of their counterpart in a war.

Nevertheless, intelligence failure could be one of the main reasons for the severe loss in war and for not detecting enemies that could be fatal to the interests of any country. For instance, many have cited the intelligence failure of the United States to detect the Pearl Harbor attack and 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon (Wohlstetter, 1962; Porch and Wirtz, 2002). Although one could argue Pearl Harbor was a ‘strategic surprise’ and 9/11 was another kind of surprise— a ‘tactical surprise’ (Lowenthal, 2006), both events brought profound loss and cost for the United States due to the inability of the intelligence community to undertake any ‘actionable intelligence to thwart’ attacks (Ashraf, 2016). Whether intelligence failure or inadequacy of the state institutions to understand the nature of the problem and its consequential development, both the Pearl Harbor and 9/11 events caused severe casualties and peaceless situations, not only for the American people but also for the other states, like Japan experienced two consecutive atomic bombs and Afghanistan experienced armed intervention to change the regime that sheltered al-Qaida and its associates involved in hijacking passenger planes to attack on American soils. These consequences had connections to the lives of ordinary people who either killed or were sacrificed in those wars.

Other than the state of war and its consequences, the security and well-being of citizens living in a country are vital aspects to which states must pay attention. Positive peace is attached to a wide range of issues; once accomplished, it empowers individuals who can use their full potential with skills, capacity, security and well-being. While traditional security is attached to the security of the state and its engagement in war and fights, when necessary, for the protection of the territorial integrity of the country, non-traditional security pays attention to securing the life and livelihood of human beings through different means. The wide-encompassing definition of human security—which focuses on ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’, entails the roles and responsibilities of the state to ensure human security. The comprehensive definition of human security that UNDP (1994) popularised with seven dimensions (e.g., economic, food, health, personal, community, political and environmental), as well as the narrow understanding of human security that the Human Security Center (2005) used, put individuals at the centre point of security. Therefore, any measures states undertake in the name of security cannot rule out the security of human beings—whether citizens of a country or not. Individuals, hence, have to be protected not only from traditional threats like war, sectarian conflicts, riots, and genocidal violence but also from any insecurity and vulnerabilities that undermine individuals' security, to which the state and its institutions have more attention in the twenty-first century than before. This connects to the ‘state of harmony’, another dimension of peace that profoundly emphasizes ‘social justice’—

meaning in the absence of justice, peace is neither fully understood nor endures for the people of any country (Wibeng, 1988: 106).

The intelligence community cannot overlook these collective issues while collecting and processing information to be used by the policy-makers to protect the state, its security and national interests, and its citizens. Scott and Jackson (2004: 14) stated, ‘contemporary intelligence agendas range from economic security to environment to health to organized crime, as well as to more traditional areas of arms transfers, proliferation of WMD and UN peacekeeping and peace enforcing’. When people across the world suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not only a health issue but also a global security matter as it undermined both human and state security. Therefore, any kind of threat that threatens the state’s security risks human life and security. Hence, the state must use appropriate intelligence and information to detect problems and address them so that they do not undermine people’s lives, nor do the security and integrity of the states to ensure peace for all.

Nevertheless, the tasks of states are more observed than before by different actors in line with the principles of human rights and international humanitarian laws. States have to maintain human rights standards and ensure people's participation in decision-making as much as possible. Human rights are one of the key elements and values of peace. Without human rights, no one can achieve comprehensive peace, internationally or internally (Ife, 2007). Therefore, people would question the rights of surveillance as it could violate the right to freedom; the intelligence community may face criticism for their strategies, acts, and actions. How intelligence agencies work and collect data could raise questions about people's civil and political rights.

Legislative oversight is an approach to monitoring the activities of the executive branch in democratic countries, like the USA, Australia, Canada, and Australia, which started this process in the 1970s. On the other hand, European countries began when they changed ‘interpretations of certain provisions of the European Declaration of Human Rights’. However, the degree of oversight could be different due to the approaches and mechanisms states apply for information collection (Taylor, 2010). Once the U.S. intelligence community were empowered further by the Patriot Act of 2001 and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which allowed them to carry out surveillance both at home and abroad raised questions amongst many quarters (Masters, 2013).

Despite their success in foiling ‘several terrorist attacks’, those laws were treated as they reduced the civil liberties of people, especially from the Muslim and Arab-speaking communities, as they were the ‘targets of suspicion’ that not only created a sense of fear amongst those communities but also undermined the spirit of diversity that the USA has been upholding for long (Ashraf, 2016). Nevertheless, when states fail to meet the standard of human rights, they may face international condemnation and sanctions (Evans, 2006). In the twenty-first century, when media of all nature—print, electronic and social, enjoy a considerable amount of freedom, they could be vocal under any circumstances when the rights of individuals are not well protected and even when any state commits excesses in its lands or the territory of another state. If intermingled with the geo-political interests of any state, humanitarian interventions could face severe questions by international human rights groups and the press when actual human rights are in question in the context.

Therefore, the state of human rights and monitoring the standard of human rights are vital for agencies to look into while working for the state; without these, the stability of the state could be ensured by its institutions and agencies, but one may not be convinced with the peace it established for many if not all.

Intelligence in Crisis and Conflict Management

When a crisis or conflict evolves, inadequate information or improper intelligence analysis can worsen things. Faulty intelligence leads a crisis into a full-blown battle. In contrast, appropriate intelligence collection and analysis can thwart any unwanted situation and better manage a crisis than those dealt with inadequate or without information. Nevertheless, managing armed conflicts of domestic, inter-state or international nature also depends on appropriate information and their analysis. Conflict management indicates the ways and approaches parties apply, and third parties employ to stop the violence or reduce the level of violence and thus reduce the extent of consequences to people living in countries/societies that experience violent conflict. Preventive diplomacy is one of the early stages of conflict management, and when this fails for different reasons, it could lead to more complexities and violence.

There has been a claim that the attack on Iraq in 2003, carried out by the Western powerful states without the approval of the United Nations (UN), was based on faulty intelligence. Some countries believed that Iraq was not only sympathetic and supporting the growing religio-centric Islamist terrorism aligned with al-Qaeda but also developing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by violating the UN sanctions (Taylor, 2010: 313). This argument firmly developed amongst the Western policy-makers, especially after 1998 when Iraq did not cooperate with the UN inspectors nor uphold the spirit of Kofi Annan's visit to Iraq. Western intelligence observed the situation in Iraq since the Kuwait War in 1990; they profoundly increased their monitoring mechanism after 9/11, in line with the development of WMD and long-range missiles, with immediate effects (Taylor, 2010: 313). The 'politicization of intelligence' that culminated in the UK and USA-led invasion of Iraq ended quickly but toppled Saddam Hussein (Ashraf, 2022b: 273). Iraq entered a new phase of post-war crises, with more unknown problems that it had not experienced for a long time.

Nevertheless, some argue that no conclusive evidence was found in favor of the invasion of Iraq, and many termed it 'one of the worst intelligence failures' in history (Taylor, 2010: 313). This example depicts how faulty or inadequate intelligence collection and reports could aggravate a crisis, leading to war and post-war crises. Politicized intelligence that bypasses the standard of intelligence collection and analysis is more problematic than no intelligence in crisis creation and management. Some post-Iraq war inquiry bodies and commissions studied the Iraq case. They made recommendations for intelligence reform, including improving their procedures and communication and coordination among intelligence agencies, internationally and domestically.

Not paying adequate attention to localized intelligence and threats could be another source of enlarging the crisis instead of managing any problem in due process. Adequate information and analysis help develop a crisis management strategy for any actors to thwart any surprise at an early

stage or during the crisis's evolving phase. There has been an argument that there were indicators of a growing crisis coming from the 'disgruntled soldiers, not from the border forces of neighbouring states' before the 2009 Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) mutiny that killed 74 people, including senior ranked army officers (Ashraf and Sarker, 2016: 244). The Rifles Security Unit (RSU), the internal intelligence unit of BDR, was supposed to collect and share intelligence with other intelligence agencies but did not perform its duty professionally. Instead, it worked as a 'counterintelligence failure' that made the mutiny inevitable, and other state agencies could not develop a strategy to detect and prevent an evolving crisis (Ashraf and Sarker, 2016: 246).

When collecting information and analyzing data before the Prime Minister's inaugural visit to the BDR Week, other dominant intelligence agencies of the state emphasized her and others' physical protection, considering the potential threat perspective emanating from terrorism and extremism rather than other grounded threats (Ashraf and Sarker, 2016). Hence, they lacked the very contextual realities. Therefore, the crisis management strategy that the state applied to the BDR mutiny was neither adequately effective nor able to take control of the situation for a long time. The Anis Committee, formed to investigate the 2009 mutiny, stated, 'the higher authority could not collect any prior detective information regarding the revolt;' therefore, 'neither a political solution nor a military operation was successful even after 29 hours of the revolt,' which not only allowed the mutineers to 'hide the dead bodies, torturing people and plundering the place' but also to 'run away, after executing a massacre' (Khan, 2009: 16, 18, quoted in Ashraf and Sarker, 2016). Given the nature of the locality where BDR was headquartered, the state could not apply a military operation to the crisis that could have enlarged the radius of the crisis area, leading to more consequences and leaving the lives of hostages at further risk.

Where there is a conflict, there is a scope for conflict management; of course, conflict management, as a comprehensive term, is a continuous process to handle the conflict constructively that not only aims to reduce the scale of violence but also helps to meet the needs of the parties (Laue, 1999). When one applies any conflict management strategies for peace, one has to bank on an appropriate understanding of the context of the conflict, as well as the right intelligence. The context of conflict is full of unknown aspects, including threats, insecurities, and actors, which can change the dynamics of any conflict at any time. Managing conflict does not mean parties will avoid the conflict; the priority is to avert large-scale violence (Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2016). There could be different institutional, regulatory, and law-and-order-maintaining strategies to avoid violence, wherein the roles of law enforcement agencies and other forms of enforcement cannot be overlooked (Diehl, 2008; Richmond, 2007). Relevant actors involved in the conflict management process and applying either persuasive or coercive approaches need solid intelligence and information to deal with ever-evolving complex and unknown realities.

Under such mysterious contexts, 'having the right intelligence at the right time is essential to protecting national security' (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013: 13) and dealing with adversaries and conflicts. They could apply a 'carrots or sticks' policy to manage conflict for the betterment of the country and its population. It is a process of managing conflict professionally to handle immediate crises and prevent them from breaking into large-scale armed violence. Those who apply negotiation and mediation strategies for convincing parties to end their hostility and

signing peace settlement frameworks also have to depend on appropriate background and contextual knowledge, without which they may not be effective in resolving conflicts by changing the behavior and attitudes of the parties (Bercovitch, 2011). Contextual understanding and information are at the heart of effective peace negotiation and conflict resolution.

The political negotiation process that the state began after the 2009 BDR mutiny managed peacefully to rescue and save around 150 hostages (Ashraf and Sarker, 2016). Without resorting to a coercive approach, the authority applied a negotiation process to enter Peelkhana and rescue the hostages. However, a justice process began afterwards to prosecute the responsible for the mutiny. Nevertheless, mediators could commit different mistakes in the negotiation process due to a lack of knowledge, inadequate contextual information and understanding, lack of neutrality, inflexibility, false promises, etc. (Brahimi and Ahmed, 2008). When peacemakers commit such mistakes in conflict management and negotiation approaches, it could produce counter-intuitive outcomes (Brahimi and Ahmed, 2008). Bangladesh had to depend on various official and unofficial information channels when it approached the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) conflict from a non-persuasive approach. The negotiation process culminating in the 1997 CHT accord also had to rely on channels of information at different stages, without which neither of the parties to the conflict engaged and moved forward to the settlement process.

UN peace operations and using tactical intelligence

No doubt, intelligence is vital for soldiers, officers and civilians who work on different battlefields. When they take part in United Nations (UN) peace missions—to keep and build peace in different fragile, conflicting contexts, then the discussion is different, but not irrelevant as most, if not all, of the peace missions or operations are located in contexts or countries that are mostly unknown to them. The UN maintains three key principles—consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except self-defence and protection of the mission mandate; peacekeepers, who join from different member states, have relatively less contextual knowledge, and operate in hostile conflict or post-conflict theatres. Therefore, knowing the unknown context is vital for them. Every moment, a situation can change. To perform their fundamental responsibilities, including ensuring the security of the mission’s mandate and protecting the civilian population, including women and children, advanced information on the context can greatly help peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

There had been reservations at an early stage to use intelligence for the UN, an inter-governmental body that does not have intelligence. Moreover, many did not like the word ‘intelligence’ due to its connections to secrecy, connotations to subterfuge and the UN not wants to create an enemy image with any state party (Smith, 1994). Nevertheless, regardless of the terminological sensitivities, no one can rule out the necessity of required information and data that can save peacekeepers' lives and smoothen their activities, meant to keep and build peace in war-ravaged societies and countries. When the patterns of conflict changed from an inter-state nature to an intra-state dimension in the post-Cold War era, and when more complicated domestic and transnational issues became parts of contemporary complex disputes, the UN had to consider collecting and assessing ‘information’ for better decision-making and better and responsible performance in the UN peace missions.

One must not forget that intelligence may not give the right answer to every question, but ‘good intelligence reduces uncertainty’ (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013: 11). Good intelligence also empowers decision-makers to undertake better decisions, ‘indeed, it provides them with decision advantage’ (Jensen III, McElreath and Graves, 2013: 13), which can enhance soldiers performance, reduce risks and accomplish mission objectives of maintaining and building peace in locations where they are located. Therefore, the need to know the unknown context with ground information or local information collection and processing has become accepted in the UN system and culminated in developing the 2017 UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy. There were recommendations from the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations that asked for ‘more effective information management and significantly enhanced analytical capacities’ (UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, 2015: para 221). The 2000 Brahimi Report also suggested comprehensive information-gathering and analysis processes to improve situational awareness and undertake policies related to peacekeeping and maintaining peace.

The UN Secretary-General (2015) acknowledged that the UN lacks ‘an effective system for the acquisition, analysis and operationalization of information for peace operations in complex environments’. This has relevance as many peacekeepers in the twenty-first century experienced attacks from local armed groups and suffered in different mission contexts, such as Congo, Mali, Central African Republic, etc., that forced the UN Secretary-General to understand the safety and security of peacekeepers and asked to commission a report that urged for the use of intelligence in order to reduce unwanted, unexpected consequences. The report (UN, 2017) stated: ‘To prevent casualties, peacekeeping missions need tactical intelligence. Missions must be able to transform intelligence into simple tasks and actions that boost security, but they often fail to do this. Missions do not lack high-tech resources to collect intelligence. They lack the basics, especially human intelligence, networks of informants, situational awareness, and capacity to communicate with population. Military units should also have more structures for tactical intelligence. And when information is available, troops sometimes do not take the appropriate action. The end state of intelligence should be action and results that increase security, not a written report’.

The analysis of the above statements primarily indicates that the existing military structure was not adequately functional for tactical intelligence collection and process; therefore, troops also developed a sense of not undertaking appropriate steps, resulting in unforeseen consequences, both for the peacekeepers and people on the ground. Without actions with whatever information and intelligence they may have, the level of risks increases for them. Intelligence gathering and undertaking actions are more vital than only writing a report and ticking boxes—to comply with the structured UN reporting system. The Action for Peacekeeping Report 2018 also stressed the importance of intelligence analysis and enhancing the safety and security of people and troops. To perform these tasks, peacekeepers need sophisticated equipment and promptness in undertaking proactive actions.

The 2017 Peacekeeping Intelligence Policy defined ‘peacekeeping-intelligence’ in a way that generated debate among different UN agencies and member states. The definition included ‘the non-clandestine acquisition and processing of information by a mission within a directed mission intelligence cycle to meet requirements for decision-making and to inform operations related to

the safe and effective implementation of the Security Council mandate’ (UNDPKO and DFS, 2017). Though the definition looks comprehensive, due to various limitations, concerns and protests of some UN member states, it went through revision discussion as it became an ‘epicenter of ongoing geopolitical completion over peacekeeping policy’ that initially emphasized more civilian protection than other issues (Martin-Brûlé, 2020: 4).

The UN could not come to a conclusive definition that convinces all stakeholders. Therefore, it kept the term undefined but included seven principles in the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy adopted in 2019. Peacekeeping-intelligence principles are rules-based, non-clandestine, conducted within designated application areas, respectful of state sovereignty, independent, executed by accountable and capable authorities, and secure confidentiality (UNDPO, 2019). Interestingly, the Policy used a hyphen between peacekeeping and intelligence that not only distinguished peacekeeping-intelligence from national intelligence but also introduced a unique, principle-oriented intelligence collection and processing for UN peacekeeping purposes (Martin-Brûlé, 2020).

In the sense of intelligence, the 2019 Policy was a distinct one that allowed the UN to seek and acquire information for better peacekeeping but not in a clandestine pattern that sovereign states often apply to protect their national security and interests. Martin-Brûlé (2020: 2) argued in favour of the 2019 Policy and argued that UN peacekeeping attends ‘a dire and long-overlooked need to link enhanced situational awareness to time decisions and actions to ensure the safety and security of personnel and the protection of civilians’. No doubt, this Policy set the principles of collecting and analyzing information as a part of intelligence; people would expect its appropriate application that would not violate state sovereignty but would be used solely to protect peacekeeping personnel, civilians and the mandate of the missions. By using processed information and early warnings, peacekeepers could thwart any threats early, take as appropriate measures as possible to protect civilian population and other peacekeepers and contribute significantly to a sustainable peacebuilding process.

Conclusion

Intelligence, a crucial aspect of state-level decision-making and policy implementation, is derived from unprocessed information through proper fact-checking and appropriate analysis to be used by the designated and appropriate authority. There may be various ambiguities, uncertainties, and often secrecy connected to intelligence; nowadays, open sources also could be sources of intelligence—but what is crucial is that data and information are processed by trained analysts and used by decision-makers for the protection and preservation of national interests of the states. Without proper processing and analysis, one cannot produce authentic intelligence products, nor can they be used to serve the state’s purposes. They may use disinformation to disguise their true intention and actions. However, policy-makers have to wait for the processed output rather than looking into only raw data or flawed reports, which could cause more damage than having no intelligence.

Intelligence is more than simple information that empowers policy-makers to undertake policies for the states; intelligence connotes secrecy and confidentiality, meaning there are certain matters that the states do not want to make public. Therefore, people often think about how intelligence interacts with peace. Intelligence has roles both in conflict and peace. Yet, the relationship between intelligence and peace is less straightforward, but their interactions are complex when considered from a broader perspective of peace. As intelligence is for the state and operated and conducted by the state through its agencies, properly analysed intelligence documents could ensure the superiority of the state actors in handling conflicting issues that develop with other states or actors that challenge domestic affairs.

Intelligence may not ensure a total win in a battlefield; but, it gives confidence to the authority to act and negotiate any issue with advanced information that helps manage conflicts when required, with or without resorting to violence. Intelligence failure could be a great source of disappointment for the state as it would bring misery to people in different forms. Faulty, biased or inappropriate intelligence is more dangerous than no intelligence that could direct policy-makers in a direction that may cause more harm to humanity. However, states have responsibilities to ensure their citizens' security and well-being and maintain a standard of human rights. Under some conditions, ill-fitted and less precisely analysed intelligence reports could be a source of peacelessness situation—as the issue of individual freedom could be questioned by secrecy, security, and operations. Nevertheless, tactical intelligence has been useful for the UN peacekeepers' better operations and services. In a cautious approach, the UN has recently considered collecting and analyzing tactical intelligence from different fragile contexts required for peacekeepers' self-protection, protection of civilians and maintaining and building peace.

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