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Keywords

Drone Surveillance, Ethics of Information, New Peacekeeping, Peace Studies, Peacekeeping Technology, Un Peacekeeping

Disciplines

International Relations | Peace and Conflict Studies | Philosophy

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In June 2014 an Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping was commissioned to examine how technology and innovation could strengthen peacekeeping missions. The panel's report argues for wider deployment of advanced technologies, including greater use of ground and airborne sensors and other technical sources of data, advanced data analytics and information fusion to assist in data integration. This paper explores the emerging intelligence-led, informationist conception of UN peacekeeping against the backdrop of increasingly complex peacekeeping mandates and precarious security conditions. *New peacekeeping* with its heightened commitment to information as a political resource and the endorsement of offensive military action within robust mandates reflects the multiple and conflicting trajectories generated by asymmetric conflicts, the responsibility to protect and a technology-driven information revolution. We argue that the idea of peacekeeping *is being revised* (and *has been revised*) by realities beyond peacekeeping itself that require re-thinking the morality of peacekeeping in light of the emergence of 'digital peacekeeping' and the knowledge revolution engendered by new technologies.

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Introduction

UN Peacekeeping missions operate in 16 countries with nearly 130,000 personnel in rapidly evolving and dangerous environments. Fragile states, a surge in extremist non-state groups and increasingly hostile ground conditions have rendered more complex UN peacekeeping mandates that seek to maintain peace and security and protect civilian lives. Peacekeeping responsibilities now encompass policing, nation-building, mediation, monitoring, investigative work, documenting evidence of massacres or war crimes for use in international tribunals, halting the activities of criminal gangs and drug cartels, thwarting spoilers and protecting civilians.

In the introduction to his book, *Keeping Watch: Monitoring Technology and Innovation in UN Peace Operations* (2011), Walter Dorn explores the role of new technologies in peacekeeping efforts and the ways in which technology has changed not only the ways wars are fought but the ways peace is kept (Dorn 2011: 1). Dorn observes that a revolution in military affairs applicable to peacekeeping efforts has not yet been achieved and current trends toward the increased use of information technology and monitoring systems have yet to approach the degree of standardized, technological sophistication utilized by the world's most advanced militaries. And this is not surprising, considering that the annual UN peacekeeping budget is approximately \$8 billion, a budget that includes funding the operations of 16 peacekeeping operations around the world. Peacekeeping is primarily financed by wealthy nations such as the US, UK, France, and Japan, with poor ones such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, straddled with the burden of providing the largest troop contributions (Charbonneau 2015; Nichols 2014).

In June 2014 an Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping was commissioned to examine how new technologies and increased innovation could strengthen peacekeeping missions by providing technological support comparable to that of the world's

militaries and police forces. The panel's report, published in December 2014, argues among its wider technological recommendations for greater use of surveillance technologies, ground and airborne sensors and other technical sources of data, and advanced data analytics and information fusion to assist in data integration (Expert Panel 2014). Such 'intelligence-led peacekeeping' will depend not only on an array of supportive technologies – sensing devices, satellite imagery, aerostats, radar, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) – but on a new generation of highly trained 'digital peacekeepers' with access to real-time situational information, visualized data, and media streams from surveillance (Expert Panel 2014: 7, 93).

This paper explores this emerging intelligence-led, informationist conception of peacekeeping against the backdrop of increasingly precarious security conditions and the moral and political tension created by proactive offensive military action, endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2098 in its renewed mandate for the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the brutal occupation of Goma in November 2012 (UN Security Resolution 2098; Gowan 2014).¹ *New peacekeeping* with its heightened commitment to information as a political resource and robust mandates that authorize the use of 'all necessary means' in certain volatile situations reflects the multiple and conflicting trajectories generated by asymmetric conflicts, the responsibility to protect civilian populations and a technology-driven 'knowledge revolution' (Kalsrud and Rosen, 2013:3; Cambanis 2014). This shift has taken place even as founding principles of impartiality, consent and minimum use of force are frequently invoked as an essential moral touchstone in guiding missions (Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 2015).

In this paper we first address the complex and unsettled discourse of drones, shaped largely by the use of lethal drones in U.S. counterterrorism policy. Surveillance drones have received

intense attention by military and policy experts, especially in the context of UN peacekeeping, but have received only limited scrutiny as instruments of information that give rise to serious moral and epistemological issues. We seek to identify and address these issues here and argue for a richer discourse with which to explore and respond to them within the context of UN peacekeeping. We examine insights from the fields of surveillance and security studies, as well as from philosophy of technology and information studies, that suggest that the idea of peacekeeping is being revised (and has been revised) by realities beyond peacekeeping itself – increased asymmetric warfare, shifting political relationships among UN Security Council members, new expectations of the role of peacekeepers, and the disruptive power of information technologies. Finally we examine Daniel Levine’s *The Morality of Peacekeeping* (2014) and related arguments that explicitly address the morality of peacekeeping and its distinctive form of military and humanitarian intervention, in light of the knowledge revolution that is reshaping peacekeeping. We argue that Levine’s efforts at constructing an idealized account of the 21st century peacekeeper, with a focus on traditional peacekeeping principles and the call for cultivating specific virtues, cannot account for the complex political and technological realities that are reshaping the morality of peacekeeping.

UN Drone Surveillance: An Unsettled Discourse

Suspicion regarding deployment of surveillance drones in support of UN peacekeeping mandates derives largely from the use of weaponized drones in targeted killings by the U.S. and the civilian casualties they inflict. Legal, moral and political issues related to the use of lethal drones remain unresolved and contentious, as debate intensifies over targeted killings in the wake of a January 2015 drone strike in Pakistan that killed two hostages. China’s increased exports of weaponized drones and the U.S. decision in February 2015 to lift its ban on the export

of drones to allied nations has deepened concern over the proliferation of armed drones (U.S. Department of State 2015; Rosen 2013). Equally serious are questions raised about the ownership of intelligence gathered from surveillance drones and the purposes to which such intelligence will be put (Karlsrud and Rosen 2013). In responding to the UN Security Council decision to authorize the use of unmanned aerial surveillance by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in eastern Congo in 2013, Olivier Nduhungerehe, Rwanda's deputy U.N. ambassador opposed deployment of surveillance drones as premature and remarked that 'Africa shall not become a laboratory for intelligence devices from overseas' (Charbonneau 2013). Earlier concerns over data privacy were expressed by UN Security Council members Russia and China over the UN becoming an active intelligence gatherer (Nichols 2013).

The countervailing discourse on the humanitarian potential of UAVs also has persuasive force, defending surveillance drones as effective in deterring violence against civilian populations, monitoring fragile peace agreements and documenting human rights violations. Advocates emphasize the capacity of drones to provide greater situational awareness for peacekeepers, 'lift the fog of war' and extend the capacity of peacekeepers to monitor vast mandate areas (Sengupta 2014). Such arguments represent the defining discourse that seeks to provide peacekeeping forces with greater aerial surveillance capacity as part of an integrated information system and toolkit for peace (Dorn 2011, 2013). Difficult questions about the dissemination of incidental, private data captured and who should have access to it – as well as the political implications for peacekeeping of sensitive intelligence gathering by surveillance drones -- have been addressed in a policy paper published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2014). Four challenges to effective use of UAVs in humanitarian contexts are noted: legal issues related to the absence of regulatory frameworks in host countries and liability concerns, ethical

procurement and partnerships in a UAV industry dominated by military contractors, privacy issues and transparency in matters of data protection and information storage, and informed consent and community engagement so that some approximation of informed consent might be achieved (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2014:11-12).

The Final Report of the Expert Panel counters at its start skeptical arguments about the role of new technologies in peacekeeping. It addresses what it calls ‘pernicious myths’ regarding technology that have undermined the acquisition of technologies vital to peacekeeping missions and have eroded political and financial commitment by member nations to fund technological advances (Expert Panel 2014:22). Among the ‘myths’ the Report addresses are beliefs that technology will diminish the need for peacekeepers, that drone technology – a non-transparent and intrusive technology – will be used for narrow political purposes, that adopting information technologies violates peacekeeping purposes and violates principles of impartiality and state sovereignty, that technology will increase the vulnerability of peacekeepers in remote conflict regions and that the UN is not well-positioned to adapt and sustain use of modern sophisticated technologies (Expert Panel 2014: 22-24).

In countering each skeptical argument, the Report states what it regards as ‘reality’: that technologies will enhance but not substitute for the need for human presence, that UAVs while intrusive are no more intrusive than the presence of a peacekeeping mission itself, that no partiality is shown to peacekeepers in providing missions with the same access to information that other people can openly access, that new information technologies are already in widespread use and the UN peacekeeping is not alone in ‘chasing technology’s leading edge’ and facing cost issues, that technologies will enhance rather jeopardize the security of UN personnel serving in remote locations and that the UN, while insufficiently innovative in the past, must develop a

supportive approach to technology and a culture of innovation (Expert Panel 2014:24). Above all, the Report emphasizes that UN peacekeeping must not ‘cede the information advantage to those actors in a mission area determined to undermine prospects for peace and who use the advantages of modern technology to aid their violent cause’ (Expert Panel 2014:5).

Such opposing arguments should be seen as revealing the divergent potentialities of drone surveillance, which, once deployed, evolve in volatile peacekeeping contexts. Framing such arguments as ‘myth’ and ‘reality’ suggests that the case is closed on skeptical arguments – that such arguments are obstructionist and without merit – and that the realities of peacekeeping are fixed. Yet ‘reality is not a fixed commodity’ as Sitkowski observed in his call for a new vision of peacekeeping that explores not yet realized possibilities in international security strategies (Sitkowski 2006:7). If surveillance drones represent enhanced ways of seeing and knowing that signal a revolution in knowledge, the dynamic between skeptical and supportive arguments should be seen as providing a richer context for policy decisions that emerge as surveillance technology is normalized. Just as signature strikes by lethal drones – strikes where targets are believed to be militants but their exact identity is unknown – raise inescapable moral and legal issues deriving from imperfect intelligence, imprecision and transgression of borders, so drone surveillance gives rise to a new information environment, new risks, new obligations under International Humanitarian Law for peacekeepers and new informationist conceptions of peace and peacekeeping (Rosen 2013). Such enhanced peacekeeping capacity and a new information environment heighten the need to treat cautionary arguments as harbingers of critical issues that indicate a more complex relationship of technology to world.

This more fundamental, open relationship of technology to world peace is made evident in challenging key binaries that shape the prevailing discourse over surveillance drones and

peacekeeping: the distinction between lethal drones deployed in war-fighting and non-lethal surveillance drones deployed for peace, between drones as adaptive enhancements of existing UN peacekeeping capacities and drones as new ways of seeing and knowing, between drones as morally neutral and drones as destabilizing and imperialistic, between information as benign – as information is to drivers (Charbonneau 2015) –and information as part of a regime of intrusive surveillance in the name of a humanitarian good and the political restructuring of global violence (Crowe 2013; Wadi 2014).

Such binaries reflect the multivalence of surveillance technologies but fall short in capturing their more complex ontology in diverse peacekeeping contexts. Just as cyber weapons that are deployed for surveillance are at once non-violent yet transgress borders and can support war-fighting, so surveillance technologies have an ambiguous and confused ontology (Lyon 2007; Romaya and Portmess 2013). Drones may function as adaptive enhancements of peacekeeping missions yet bring a vastly enhanced way of ‘seeing and knowing’ that alters peacekeeping obligations (Rosen 2013: 2). Drones may appear morally neutral but have political impact as surveillance is normalized and populations are routinely subjected to total surveillance. Finally, surveillance data might aid in protecting civilian populations yet gather incidental yet sensitive intelligence that is inadequately protected. This glimpse of more complex realities that underlie the prevailing discourse of UN drone surveillance reveals the indistinct boundaries and indeterminate ontology of surveillance technologies that function together as a ‘surveillant assemblage’ (Haggerty and Ericson 2007: 104). UN information and telecommunication experts acknowledged such complexity in a 2013 report that noted that ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) are ‘dual-use technologies’ that can have legitimate or malicious purposes and with their expanding use can give rise to new possibilities for disruption or for

post-conflict peace (UN General Assembly A/68/98 2013:6; Apuuli 2014; Johnson 2013). These technologies, chameleon-like, take on the characteristics of the context and aims of their use just as the technologies themselves reconstitute their users. As much work in philosophy of technology argues, instrumental conceptions of technology fall short in capturing the way in which technology creates a different subject (Ihde 2012; Latour 1999).

In *Understanding Peacekeeping* Bellamy et al. (2010) describe distinct differences in types of peacekeeping operations such as preventive deployments, traditional peacekeeping, wider peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace support operations, assisting transitions, transitional administrations and peace support operations. Each type of peacekeeping has its own aims and its own complex realities in which drone surveillance will function. No single conception of drone surveillance can convincingly capture what Ihde describes as the ‘multistable’ possibilities of its use (Ihde 2012), potentialities that are diverse but stable. Drone surveillance in a Force Intervention Brigade, in which surveillance supports offensive military operations, functions differently from drone surveillance in cases where belligerent parties consent to peacekeeping operations in a context of ongoing violence (Bellamy et al. 2010). Most importantly, such enhanced technological capacity, while shaped differently by different peacekeeping contexts, reflects a partially constrained trajectory – variable yet well-oriented - toward ‘digital peacekeepers’ and ‘intelligence-led peacekeeping’ (Expert Panel 2014: 7, 93.) Such ‘intelligence-led peacekeeping’ and the emergence of ‘digital peacekeeping’ reflects a new informationist paradigm at work in reshaping our conception of peacekeeping.

Digital Peacekeepers: New Peacekeeping and the Informationist Paradigm

In *The 4th Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality* (2014), *The Philosophy of Information* (2011), and *Information: A Very Short Introduction* (2010),

philosopher Luciano Floridi makes the case for an information revolution that is altering our perspective on the ultimate nature of reality, from a materialist metaphysics in which objects are substantive, to an informational one in which objects and processes are de-physicalized and informationalized. Floridi's work on the implications of the new information revolution yields insight into the changed technological environment envisioned by 'digital peacekeeping.' Floridi argues that human beings increasingly inhabit the 'hypostatization of the conceptual environment designed and inhabited by mind' and are 'embedded in an informational environment' that constitutes a new human habitation (Floridi 2011: 9). In this infosphere, 'values, ideas, fashions, emotion and that intellectually privileged macro-narrative that is the I' – become 'information entities' that imperceptibly come to have an ontological status comparable to that of ordinary things (Floridi, 2011: 9). Such a transformational metaphysic is manifested in the increasing informatization of the human body, including pacemakers, biometric monitors, cancer-fighting nanobots, and other bio-electromechanical systems (MEMS), but even more importantly by the radical transformation of the environment by digital ICTs. 'The infosphere will not be a virtual environment supported by a genuinely 'material' world behind; rather it will be the world itself that will be increasingly interpreted and understood informationally, as part of the infosphere' (Floridi 2010: 17). Whatever might finally be made of the claim Floridi makes on a changed perspective on the nature of reality, there is little doubt that human beings increasingly inhabit an information environment with its own relentless, escalationist logic.

A close examination of the 'digital peacekeeper' – military, police and civilian – envisioned in the Report of the Expert Panel reveals an informationist vision for *new peacekeeping*. The military 'digital peacekeeper' is graphically depicted as having a 'head-up display monitor' to access to real-time situational information, visual data and media streams from surveillance

systems or body cameras; thermal sensors, night-time capable video cameras, and chemical sensors integrated into personal equipment; advanced technologies such as fuel cells, solar power packs, mini UAVs and robotics to enhance mobility, endurance, performance, range and load carrying capacity; information fusion and enhanced analytic tools, fed by open source information, aerial, geospatial and other remotely acquired data; commercial satellite imagery and comprehensive sensor packages; and access to several layers of map-based visualizations and physiological sensors that provide the chain of command and nearby medics with emergency alert capabilities (Expert Panel 2014: 94).

The police ‘digital peacekeeper’ is graphically depicted as having mobile thermal imaging devices to help detect illicit cross-border movements of people, weapons or goods; surveillance technology to monitor hotspots and other high risk areas for early indicators of hostile action; GPS and tracking technology to inform and enable rapid response; tablets and smartphones to allow access to databases to provide geo-tagged and layered visualization; mobile forensics and crime scene illumination equipment; diagramming systems to illustrate crime scenes and accidents; and integrated biometric databases to enhance law enforcement tasks (Expert Panel 2014: 95).

Finally, the civilian ‘digital peacekeeper’ is envisioned as possessing an integrated and multidimensional common operational picture, with real-time referenced and geo-referenced information for data-driven mission planning and mandate implementation. As part of the operational overview, civilian peacekeepers will rely on management dashboards, risk analytics, data mining applications and fusion capabilities, with radio-frequency identification – enabled tracking technology to streamline supply chain management and logistics. In addition civilian peacekeeping will rely on location-tracing, geolocation, and incident reporting technology,

simulation and scenario-based technology tools for training and planning and enhanced physical and IT security controls, such as biometric identification and access control measure (Expert Panel 2014: 96).

In this depiction, the ‘digital peacekeeper’ is immersed in an information environment, an infosphere, that alters what it means to be an agent and what sort of environment such an agent inhabits (Floridi 2010: 10). Such agency is multilayered and distributed, with sophisticated information systems at work in perception and decision-making, and information fusion systems at work in creating an integrated information environment. ‘In many ways we are not standalone entities but rather interconnected, informational organisms or *inforgs* sharing with biological agents and engineered artifacts a global environment ultimately made of information, the infosphere (Floridi 2010: 9). ICTs, Floridi contends, engineer environments that users inhabit, a radical form of environmental engineering that transforms the reality which the user inhabits, ‘not merely re-engineering but actually re-ontologizing our world’ (Floridi 2010: 11). The ICT-mediated world becomes a different place – one of ‘multi agent systems,’ information-based conflicts, higher levels of control to manage informational threats, out-sourced decisions, task and activities to artificial agents – and most importantly, a re-shaped understanding of ourselves and the world (Floridi 2014: 180). The digital peacekeeper, in short, is a technology-enhanced nexus for information fusion.

Distant as this analysis might at first seem from the political and moral discourse surrounding UN drone surveillance, a striking parallel exists in Karlsrud and Rosen’s argument that surveillance drones – with other information systems like sensors, satellite picture and tactical information from peacekeepers on the ground - may lead to a knowledge revolution in UN peacekeeping (Karlsrud and Rosen 2013). Such information systems are likely, they argue, to

have dramatic impact on peacekeeper obligations under IHL (International Humanitarian Law), by increasing the precautionary obligations of peacekeepers to insure protection of civilians in conflict settings (Karlsrud and Rosen 2013; Rosen 2013). This argument, developed at greater length in Rosen's 'Extremely Stealthy and Incredibly Close: Drones, Control and Legal Responsibility,' makes a convincing case that the new peacekeeper encounters a changed legal environment and changed peacekeeping obligations by the 'impending omnipresence of drones.' (Rosen 2013; Karlsrud and Rosen 2013: 4). Rosen makes no claim of a re-ontologized environment but his argument suggests changed agency on the part of peacekeepers, a changed understanding of the surveilled landscape and changed obligations under International Humanitarian Law. Such is *new peacekeeping* with the imperative it creates to articulate principles adequate to the challenge of new technologies and the informationist paradigm underlying the changed moral landscape of digital peacekeeping (Raab 2012).²

Peacekeepers Have No Enemies

In a timely and important work, *The Morality of Peacekeeping* (2014), Daniel Levine offers a thorough philosophical examination of peacekeeping and the complex role of peacekeepers in contemporary international conflicts. Unlike traditional combatants, non-state actors, paramilitaries, police units or other key players in global conflict zones, peacekeepers occupy a unique position among these types of forces, committed to impartiality and the restoration of a stable political community yet empowered to use violence. Levine describes his book as 'a reflection on the moral nature of peacekeeping, and is intended as part of a conversation on that deeper moral nature...' (Levine 2014: 5). As a whole, the book invites readers to consider the unique role of peacekeeping operators, one problematized by conflicting moral circumstances

that have no easy parallels with the types of moral perplexities encountered by combatants in armed conflict.

As a philosophical topic, peacekeeping has been largely neglected by philosophers throughout the final decades of the 20th century. Levine's recent and much needed contribution invites us to consider peacekeeping as an important topic that warrants genuine philosophical analysis.³

While there is no shortage of literature assessing the morality of humanitarian intervention, peace building or peace enforcement, and other related areas of study, peacekeeping operations and the specific roles played by blue helmets themselves introduce challenges that cannot easily be accommodated by existing moral frameworks, such as the just war tradition. Accordingly, Levine recognizes the peculiar, *sui generis* nature of peacekeeping operations, he writes:

Peacekeeping is a *sui generis* enterprise. It sits uncomfortably between warfighting, policing, and governance, with elements of all of them, but is identical to none of them. Unlike warfighters, peacekeepers have no enemies and must keep their moral horizons open toward eventually re-creating a stable political community that will need to include many members of the armed group they are trying to pacify; this means that they need more detailed principles than the outer limits of violence set by the traditional just war framework (Levine 2014: 13).

Part of the complication stems from Levine's insistence that peacekeepers have no enemies, and this emphasis on non-enmity marks one of the distinguishing features of peacekeeping operators. Unlike combatants in 'just war' contexts, peacekeepers will often be called upon to use force or violence against non-enemies. They are expected to protect civilians, defend themselves, and uphold terms of the UN mandate, as well as foster conditions that support negotiations in a prospective peace agreement.⁴

The insistence on having no enemies may be understood as a prescriptive claim. Levine recognizes that peacekeepers will frequently be antagonized by 'spoilers' and thereby be tempted to harbor enmity against individuals unwilling to cooperate or support the mandate.⁵ As Levine

points out, ‘total spoilers are the most likely candidates for enmity. Because total spoilers hold radical and immutable preferences . . .’ (Levine 2014: 28). In virtue of the challenges spoilers introduce, peacekeepers must not be swayed toward harboring enmity against them, since doing so violates one of the foundational principles of peacekeeping, the condition of impartiality; they may however, pursue their marginalization if necessary. The claim that peacekeepers have no enemies is perhaps better understood as peacekeepers ‘ought or must’ not have enemies; this assertion confers a moral requirement upon agents entrusted with such a delicate and arduous role, and this is an expectation that must be taken seriously, as Levine reiterates, ‘we should take seriously the principle that peacekeepers have no enemies – and many peacekeepers in the field do seem to take that idea seriously’ (Levine 2014: 323).

In the absence of a normative moral framework that might apply to specific roles and situations in which peacekeepers find themselves, Levine introduces what he calls the ‘holy trinity,’ or guiding principles of peacekeeping, which include consent, impartiality, and minimum use of force.⁶ These three principles are derived from the work of Dag Hammarskjöld in the mid-20th century, and continue to circumscribe the core principles of peacekeepers today, though serious challenges exist to their observance (Levine 2014: 34). The first condition entails that host governments must grant the needed consent for peacekeepers to be present on their territory, though it also involves securing acceptance of the peacekeeping mission by the populace. Impartiality involves amalgamating a series of ideas about how to determine and apply the standards of impartiality, as well as the commitment to the peace process, while recognizing divergent views of stakeholders. The emphasis on minimum use of force involves analyzing contexts in which force, coercion, and sometimes very limited use of violence, may be used by peacekeeping armies for the purpose of protecting civilians, defending themselves, or to defend

the mandate. Although these three principles are not intended to provide operational instructions, they are intended to provide ‘moral guidance to peacekeepers’ (Levine 2014: 14).

Apart from the three principles of peacekeeping, Levine’s vision of the ideal peacekeeper involves cultivating the virtues of attentiveness, restraint, and creativity, since according to Levine, these primary virtues function as a collective in support of the peacekeeper’s objective of securing cooperation. The focus on this set of virtues is motivated by Levine’s examination of care ethics (drawing upon the work of Virginia Held, Sara Ruddick, and others). Unlike other approaches, such as William James’ classic examination of martial virtues which Levine thinks make for ‘an awkward fit for a cooperative perspective’ (Levine 2014: 57). Levine maintains that care ethics is better suited to articulate the virtues needed to foster cooperation. Care ethics is concerned with emphasizing interpersonal relationships and acknowledging the intimate, reciprocal role played by care givers (rather than a concern for abstract or universal moral precepts). In this spirit, Levine maintains that peacekeepers ‘should cultivate certain habits, frames of mind, and skills that will let them respond flexibly, but in accord with the concept of cooperation, to situations in which they must exercise judgment’ (Levine 2014: 57).

The emphasis on attentiveness is necessary because peacekeepers must be alert and responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations in abject or hostile conditions, often traumatized by long term conflicts. Attentiveness requires internalizing selflessness and a sense of concern for the well-being of others; moreover, ‘attentiveness is a truth-seeking attitude, and tied up with an empathetic openness to the other’ (Levine 2014: 61). Restraint is important because peacekeepers are often placed in precarious situations and called upon to defend themselves as well as vulnerable populations in their midst. Since the task of distinguishing between unarmed civilians and combatants, that is, real threats posed by those who resort to violence (perhaps

spoilers) is often complex, peacekeepers must cultivate the virtue of restraint to minimize the facile resort to force. Additionally, since peacekeepers possess lethal weapons, it is crucial that they resist the urge to commit acts of violence that may undermine cooperation and risk losing the population's trust, a fragile trust likely propelled by a suspicion of outsiders. Related to the virtue of restraint is creativity. On Levine's account, creativity is needed to advance the objective of agreement-making, and to locate effective alternatives for eradicating or minimizing the resort to violence, he writes:

When our projects push us toward conflict with other people, creativity is needed to develop new reciprocal relationships in which our new, joint practice can be non-destructive and mutually satisfying. This may require rethinking the way we pursue our current practice-embedded values, or even the development or 'discovery' of novel values we had not previously considered (Levine 2014: 64-65).

Levine's emphasis remains on establishing cooperation and this idea reverberates throughout the text. Indeed this is to be expected, since competing accounts of peace converge on their recognition of the fundamental aspect of cooperation or agreement-making, as Levine reiterates, '...the PKO's primary focus should be on fostering cooperation between people rather than on ensuring compliance with abstract norms' (Levine 2014: 54). However, sometimes ensuring compliance with abstract norms becomes morally obligatory in the pursuit of justice. Apart from acknowledging the importance of fostering cooperation, abstract norms still have a crucial role to play, especially in virtue of recent allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeeping forces, actions which reinforce the significance of pursuing the norms of International Humanitarian Law or other means of ensuring accountability (Sengupta 2014).

Although Levine offers an insightful account of both the guiding principles of peacekeeping and the quintessential virtues for peacekeeping operators, it is quite another matter to assess how well and to what extent these virtues are actualized by peacekeepers themselves. We must keep

in mind that the principal decree expected of peacekeepers is that they ought or must not have any enemies. This directive is not necessarily bound up with the tripartite set of virtues Levine prescribes for the ideal peacekeeper, as having no enemies does not entail that a specific set of virtues, such as ones outlined by Levine, necessarily follow. In recognizing that peacekeepers are now placed in more hostile, precarious environments, with onerous conflicting demands routinely placed upon them, it becomes quite a difficult matter to convince the peacekeeper that the virtue of attentiveness is compatible with surveillance, monitoring, and reconnaissance missions. Attentiveness is honored even in cases where peacekeepers are called upon to draw their weapons against spoilers and militias.⁷ Accordingly, the virtues of attentiveness and restraint are violated by rogue peacekeepers implicated in the perpetration of sexual violence in places such as Congo or Haiti.

Apart from its distinctive achievements, including the presence of extensive interviews and incorporation of firsthand accounts from peacekeeping operators, Levine's treatment of the morality of peacekeeping overlooks the important and increasing role of advanced information technologies in contemporary peacekeeping operations. No connection is made to current debates grappling with the moral complexities of new technologies, especially drone use, in peacekeeping missions. Surveillance drones are now commonly deployed in a variety of contexts such as relief efforts, in natural disasters, as well as search and rescue missions (Sandvik and Lohne 2014: 152). They have been used in peacekeeping missions as early as 2006 (such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo) with varying degrees of success. The increased interest in the use of humanitarian drones problematizes some of the key notions in Levine's account, such as the fundamental principles guiding peacekeeping missions and the way these principles have evolved (Sandvik and Lohne 2014: 146). For instance, consent may no longer be sought in cases

where individuals or governments are subjected to surveillance activities, particularly in cases where violation of privacy or territorial integrity has taken place.

Critics of the notion that drones may be used for non-combat purposes often appeal to factors such as the importance of maintaining territorial integrity or personal privacy, as well as other important factors such as drones' humanitarian deficiency and their lack of neutrality. For instance, Sandvik and Lohne argue that the humanitarian drone, in lacking empathy, falls short of being a humanitarian agent:

Nevertheless, regardless of technological improvements and the claims of some proponents, the humanitarian drone will not be a humanitarian worker; in other words, empathy will not be part of the job. . . the humanitarian drone is often viewed as a neutral technology, without sufficient context, and absent discussion of matters such as airspace regulation, data protection and privacy (Sandvik and Lohne 2014: 163).

Yet humanitarian drones, when deployed in UN peacekeeping missions, are subject to conditions and to regulations particular to that context. When UN peacekeeping missions deploy surveillance drones under specific mandates and use intelligence gathered not only for force protection but for civilian populations, their deployment engenders not only morally permissible but obligatory actions to protect, markedly altering the roles of operators and standards of peacekeeping missions (Karlsrud and Rosen 2013: 7). Such enhanced information capacity does not result automatically in the ability to act. Images require sophisticated analysis and image analysts trained to interpret images in a particular terrain. Even the most sophisticated image analysis and information fusion systems may not guarantee the mission's objective of protecting civilians. 'Past failures to protect civilians have not necessarily always come from a lack of timely information or knowledge . . . but the limited mobility and/or reluctance of troops to act on the information (for a number of reasons ranging from imperfect information to national caveats)' (Blyth 2013). Even if the use of surveillance drones will not ensure 'swift or certain

gains' for peacekeeping missions, the moral conditions under which peacekeepers operate – and the relationship of peacekeeping missions to host countries – will be transformed – and are being transformed – by advanced information technologies deployed in high-risk environments with yet to be fully established objectives and an uncertain relationship to 'ground truth' (Blyth 2013).

Conclusion

The vision of digital peacekeepers proposed by the Expert Panel and the rapidly expanding information environment of peacekeeping mandates have transformed peacekeeping practice and the moral obligations of peacekeepers. Not only must we understand contemporary peacekeeping in an age of expanding conceptions of war and its various manifestations, such as proxy wars, total wars, new wars, perpetual wars and asymmetric wars, but seek to understand the implications of advanced information technologies on contemporary peacekeeping and the moral complexities that arise from their use.

Peacekeeping is being re-envisioned under the pressure of previously unimagined constraint. Such constraints alter the roles and expectations of peacekeepers with expanded responsibility to protect civilians and by new informationist realities and the flood of data they unleash. The analysis of new peacekeeping must allow more careful attention to the context-dependent dimension of ethical principles that guide peacekeeping missions: how best to regulate the use of advanced information technologies, the sophisticated image analysis necessary for the interpretation of surveillance data, the uncertainty that attends to even the most sophisticated information fusion, the ethical care needed in partnering with UAV providers to assure security and proper data storage, and the building of cooperative relationships with host countries in regulating the use of population and territory surveillance. Above all new peacekeeping analysis must acknowledge the profound ways in which technology reshapes its users and their moral

obligations as peacekeepers, and be less quick to dismiss cautionary arguments about new technologies as ‘myths.’ Such cautionary arguments are essential to the development of an adequate ethics for drone surveillance and for other advanced information technologies. As digital peacekeeping and a global information environment increasingly become realities we must recognize the possibility of a re-ontologized world.

Endnotes

¹ The mandate was extended in March 2014 for one year under UN Security Resolution 2147.

See: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11340.doc.htm>

² We appreciate the comments of an anonymous reviewers who noted that the informationist challenge to traditional conceptions of peacekeeping should be understood against the backdrop of a long series of transformations in peacekeeping since the deployment in 1989 of the multifunctional UNTAG mission in Namibia which ended traditional peacekeeping and initiated what would become the more complex mandates of the present, variously termed wider peacekeeping, multifunctional peacekeeping, robust peacekeeping, peace support operations and integrated missions.

³ Apart from Levine, only a few other thinkers in the early 21st century have considered the subject and Levine acknowledges their contributions in the introduction to his book. These figures include Tony Pfaff, Paolo Tripodi, Joan Tronto, and J. N. C. Hill.

⁴ In 2000, the Brahimi Report (Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations 2000) articulated the failures of peacekeeping in places such as Somalia, Balkans, and Rwanda. The report clarified the notion that an integral part of peacekeeping missions involves an expectation that civilians are to be protected, though there was no clarification on this matter prior to the

release of this report. See the full report at

http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/brahimi_report.shtml

⁵ Spoilers are individuals or leaders who do not support the peace process or conditions that might emerge as a result of negotiations. They may believe that any future peace that may result from present negotiations will threaten their power or way of life, and they resort to violence as a way to undermine or sabotage that process. Spoilers may be ‘limited’ or ‘total.’ Limited spoilers have specific goals or grievances they wanted addressed. At the other end are total spoilers, whose goals are often radical or uncompromising and expect nothing short of complete control.

⁶ So central are these three principles that Levine devotes Part II (approximately half of the book) to these key principles. Chapter 3 is on consent, Chapter 4 is on impartiality, and Chapters 5 and 6 each deal with a different aspect of the minimum use of force, including peacekeeper violence.

⁷ Although one might retort that in keeping within the spirit of care ethics, it does make sense to claim that virtues may be applied selectively. In other words, attentiveness is warranted in the peacekeeper’s interactions with civilian populations, but there is no duty to exercise attentiveness with those whom we are not involved with in a special, reciprocal, caring relationship. This selective aspect of virtue is a fundamental drawback in Levine’s reliance on care ethics.

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