

PHILIPPINE PARTICIPATION IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS

by Raphael S.C. Hermoso and Louie A. Belleza

It was during the 1950 Korean War (1950-1953) that the Philippines first sent its troops and humanitarian personnel as part of the UN Command (UNC) in Korea. The Philippines sent an expeditionary force of around 7,500 combat troops, known as the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea (PEFTOK). The PEFTOK was comprised of members of the Philippine Army, which was directed as the source of manpower and logistic contribution to the UNC cause. The Philippines sent five (5) compact, highly mobile and self-sustaining battalion combat teams (BCTs) which were thought to best adapt to the front-line conditions in overseas conflict theatre. These were the following:

- 10th BCT nicknamed "Motorized" (1950–1951);
- 20th BCT nicknamed "Leaders" (1951–1952)
- 19th BCT nicknamed "Bloodhounds" (1952–1953);
- 14th BCT nicknamed "Avengers" (1953–1954); and
- 2nd BCT nicknamed "Black Lions" (1954–1955).

It was the fourth largest force under the UN Command sent to defend South Korea from communist invasion by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) which was then supported by China and the Soviet Union. Of the total PEFTOK strength, 112 troops were killed in action or died of non-hostile causes in Korea. There were 57 who went missing in action and 40 taken in as prisoners of the brutal war.

This was the first time that the Philippine Government sent soldiers to serve as members of expeditionary forces in support of the UN. However, this was not a peacekeeping mission. The Philippines' experience in UN peacekeeping operations started in the Congo in 1963.

Although sanctioned under UN Security Council (SC) resolution 84, the UN Command was not a peacekeeping mission nor did it belong under any UN subsidiary organ. UNSC Resolution 84 recommended that all UN Member States provide military forces and other assistance available to a unified command under the US. The dissolution of the UNC was "a matter within the competence of the Government of the United States."

UN Operations in the Congo

The involvement of the Philippines in United Nations peacekeeping operations began in December 1962, when then UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold called on the Philippines to join other Member-States in supporting the ongoing UN Operations in the Congo (ONUC).

Heeding the call of the UN Secretary General, then President Diosdado Macapagal immediately committed the 9th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) on 15 December 1962. He instructed the AFP to organize

the PAF Contingent, manpower and air tactical squadron assets all together. Aviators drawn from the 9th Tactical Fighter Squadron, were branded as PAFCON's "Limbas Squadron", to work with ground security troops, health practitioners and maintenance crew.

In February 1963, the Philippines launched its maiden flight to a foreign air support operation. Col. Horacio N. Farolan, military mission chief and liaison officer, provided overall supervision of the Filipino troops; Lt. Col. Jose L. Rancudo took the squadron under his wing.

The Limbas Squadron was made up of six Canadian-made F86-E Sabre jets and 40 men. They conducted reconnaissance and persuasion flights. On land, PAFCON members initiated medical and dental missions, where they cared for the villagers bereft of attention on health and fitness.

After a well-managed four-month stint, the Philippines' only air-combat unit in a UN effort flew home with the rest of PAFCON in June 1963 at ONUC's successful conclusion. ONUC was the Philippine Government's first francophone and first UN peacekeeping mission.

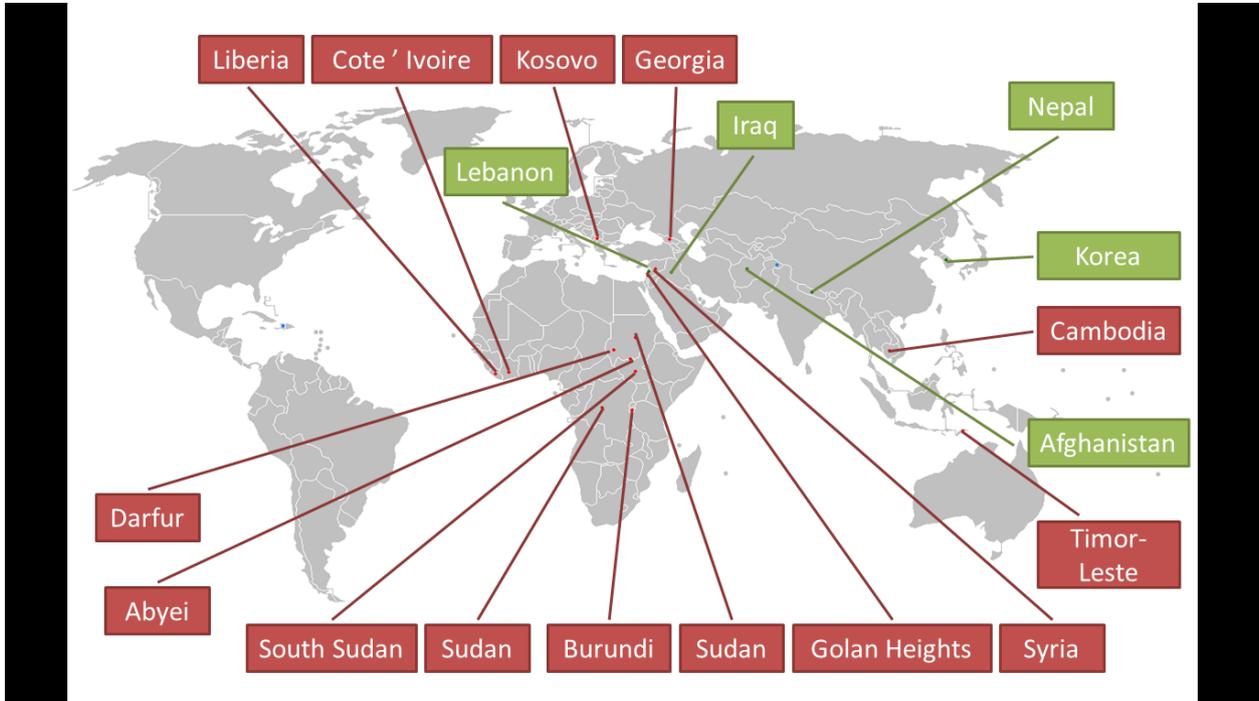
Previous and Current Deployment

The Philippines has gone a long way since then, contributing hundreds of so-called Blue Helmets to help in the collective quest for global peace and security. Table 1 lists Philippine participation in UN Peacekeeping Missions from 1963 to present.

Table 1

Area	UN-led Mission	Years	UN-authorized Mission	Years
Haiti	UNMIH, MINUSTAH	1994-1995, 2004-Present		
Kashmir	UNMOGIP	2009-Present		
Abyei	UNISFA	2012-2014		
Burundi	ONUB	2004-2006		
Cambodia	UNTAC	1992-1993		
Congo	UNOC	1963		
Cote d'Ivoire	UNOCI	2004-2014		
Darfur	UNAMID	2008-2013		
Georgia	UNOMIG	2007-2008		
Golan Heights	UNDOF	2009-2014		
Kosovo	UNMIK	2000-2009		
Liberia	UNMIL	2003-2014		
South Sudan	UNMISS	2011-2013		
Sudan	UNMIS	2005-2011		
Syria	UNSMIS	2012		
Timor-Leste	UNMISET, UNTAET, UNMIT	1999-2002, 2002-2005, 2006-2012	UNAMET, INTERFET, UNTIL	1999, 1999-2000, 2005-2006
Afghanistan			UNAMA	2004-2014
Iraq			UNGCI	1991-1992, 1995-2003
Korea			UNC	1950-1955
Lebanon			UNIIC	2009
Nepal			UNMIN	2007-2008

After the initial stint in the Congo in 1963, Filipino peacekeepers proudly served alongside their counterparts from other troop- and police-contributing countries in UN peacekeeping missions (with limited use of force) in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Syria, Golan Heights, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Abyei, Darfur, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kosovo and Georgia (red boxes); and other UN-authorized missions to reverse or repel aggression by one state against another as in Korea, Iraq, Nepal, Lebanon and Afghanistan (green boxes).



At present, the Philippines has 178 peacekeepers in Haiti and Kashmir (blue boxes).



Table 2 shows the breakdown of Filipino peacekeepers assigned abroad:

Mission Area	Individual Police			Military Contingent			Military Observers			TO-TAL
	Male	Female	Sub-Total	Male	Female	Sub-Total	Male	Female	Sub-Total	
UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	14	1	15	150	9	159	0	0	0	174
UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	4
<u>GRAND TOTAL</u>										178

The National Council for Philippine Participation in United Nations Peace Operations

Prompted by the need to have framework to guide Philippine participation in international peacekeeping and peace building operations under the auspices of the UN, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 97 which approved and adopted the Policy Framework and Guidelines (PFG) for Philippine Participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations on 23 April 2002.

According to the E.O., the PFG shall govern all decisions regarding Philippine participation in UN peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace-building operations. The E.O. also allowed for the updating of the PFG in view of the constantly evolving nature of UN peacekeeping operations. The PFG was updated in 2008 and in 2010.

As the country's chief architect of foreign policy, the President of the Republic of the Philippines has the sole prerogative to decide on Philippine participation in any UN operation. The President is assisted by the National Council for United Nations Peace Operations (NCUNPO) composed of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA) as Chair, and the Secretaries of National Defense (SND) and Interior and Local Government (SILG) as its Members. The Council provides policy direction and oversees Philippine participation in UN peace operations. It is mandated to periodically review the PFG on Philippine participation in United Nations peace operations and update it, if necessary.

The Council ensures that the Philippines shall make full use of UN reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment and payments for troop deployment to improve the capability of the AFP and the PNP in peace operations. The Council also ensures that UN reimbursements and payments for Philippine participation are effectively managed and utilized to achieve this end.

NCUNPO Executive Committee

The Council is assisted by the Execom. The Execom studies and recommends measures relative to the formulation, review and implementation of substantive and administrative policies dealing with UN peace operations. The Execom consists of the following:

- Assistant Secretary of the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations of the DFA;
- Assistant Secretary for Strategic Assessment of the DND;

- Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), represented by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans (J5); and
Chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), represented by the Director for Plans (TDPL).

NCUNPO Secretariat

Both the Council and Execom are supported by a Secretariat based in the DFA, specifically the Office of United Nations and International Organizations (UNIO). The Secretariat oversees all actions related to Philippine participation in UN peace operations in coordination with the DFA, DND, DILG, AFP, PNP and other relevant agencies of the government. It is headed by a Secretary-General in the person of the Assistant Secretary for United Nations and Other International Organizations (UNIO).

The Secretary General is assisted by a career officer from the DFA who serves as Executive Director of the Secretariat.

The Commanding Officer of the Peacekeeping Operations Center of the AFP and the Division Chief of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Center of the PNP both serve as Deputy Secretaries-General of the Secretariat.

Rationale for Philippine Participation

Peacekeeping is one among a range of activities undertaken by the UN to maintain international peace and security throughout the world. Philippine participation in UN peacekeeping operations demonstrates the enduring commitment of the country to work with key actors to ensure peace and stability in the international community. Such stability is crucial in supporting the three pillars of Philippine foreign policy on preserving and enhancing national security, promoting and attaining economic security and protecting the rights, and promoting the welfare and interest of Filipinos overseas.

Maintaining Philippine participation in UN peacekeeping operations provides greater opportunities for a deeper engagement with the organization. The training and experience gained from participation in peacekeeping translates into readiness for deployment as well as preference by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations for future deployments. Furthermore, deployed peacekeepers comprise less than 1 percent of the total strength of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMPP). As such, it does not, in any way, jeopardize the internal security of the country.

Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations is likewise seen as beneficial to the national interest, particularly with regard to improving capacities and capabilities of the Philippine military and police. Deployed peacekeepers from the Philippines not only share best practices with other troops, units or experts, they also learn valuable skill sets and policy frameworks which can be used to further strengthen the institutions of the armed forces and police in the Philippines. The emphasis on respecting UN mandates, the rule of law, human rights international humanitarian law as well as good governance and anti-corruption practices are key in the success of peacekeeping missions and likewise feed into current efforts of the Philippine Government under President Benigno S. Aquino III which would further strengthen the AFP, the PNP and the BJMP based on respect for and adherence to democratic ideals and values.

Philippine participation in peacekeeping operations can contribute to efforts of the AFP to modernize its equipment. With careful strategic and operational planning, the AFP can use reimbursements from Contingent Owned

Equipment to support the upgrading of medical, transportation and other types of equipment. The funds that can be generated could be a good source of upgrading of military equipment, if not termed as modernization." In the light of the pressing need for the Philippines to modernize its Armed Forces to create a credible defense posture and the continuing need for the AFP to respond to humanitarian situations in the event of calamities in the country, any opportunity to modernize its equipment must be pursued.

As a responsible member of the UN, the Philippines is committed to meeting its financial obligations including financial contributions to the work of UN peacekeeping missions. Upon receipt of financial assessments from the UN Secretariat, the Philippine Government, particularly the International Commitments Fund (ICF) Panel, chaired by the DFA and co-chaired by the DBM, facilitates the payment to the UN.

For 2014, the Philippines allocated PhP 75,138,000.00 to UN peacekeeping missions around the world, including the four (4) mission areas where there are were Filipino peacekeepers. The Philippines has allocated PhP 138,947.00 to UN peacekeeping missions for 2015. The UN, in return, reimbursed the Philippine Government PhP 15M for contingent-owned equipment, for 2013, and PhP 106M for the allowances of the troops in Haiti, Liberia and the Golan Heights, from January to April 2014, excluding other mission areas where peacekeepers get their allowances directly. By continuing our participation in UN mission areas, the Philippine Government is maximizing its financial contributions to the UN.

By participating in UN peacekeeping operations, the Philippines is able to contribute to actual, on-the-ground efforts to maintain international peace, security and stability. Such participation does not go unrecognized and plays an important factor in raising the level of awareness and advancing key issues at the UN related to peacekeeping. In as much as peacekeeping operations derive their mandate from the UNSC and their finances from the UNGA, actual involvement in peacekeeping operations provides greater opportunities for the Philippines to be involved in and articulate policy concerns on peacekeeping.

This active participation can be translated into greater cooperation, collaboration and influence within the UN system and with other Member States and political groups such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 on a variety of issues including peace-building, protection of human rights, transitional economies, civilian capacities and women empowerment. Additionally, such interaction can provide more opportunities to further strengthen bilateral relations with Member States where UN peacekeepers operate.

The Philippines' role as previous Co-Chair of the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Experts Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) accentuated the additional value of a deep engagement with UN peacekeeping operations. Speaking before delegates of the meeting of the Experts Working Group in June 2012, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin emphasized the need to take stock of the current PKO capabilities of ADMM-Plus States to enable them to address capability gaps and identify opportunities for collaboration that would enhance capacity to effectively contribute to UN-mandated peacekeeping operations. He likewise expressed optimism that the meeting would enable the participating States to pursue greater cooperation with regard to peacekeeping operations. As a member of this working group, the Department of National Defense successfully hosted the Table Top Exercise on UN Peacekeeping Mission from 11 to 15 February 2014 in Manila. It was attended by peacekeeping experts from member countries of the working group.

The Philippines has a vital stake in the peace, security and stability in the areas where peacekeepers are deployed considering the volatility of these key areas and the impact on Filipinos living in these regions. UNDOF, in particular, was seen as an important mission for maintaining the tenuous peace in the Middle East and served as

a vital listening post which can serve as a feedback mechanism of the DFA Foreign Service Posts that report on the situation in Syria, in particular, and in the Middle East, in general. The same could be said regarding the role of Filipino peacekeepers in Liberia at the height of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa.

Informally, peacekeepers on the ground can also be vital sources of first hand information for Foreign Service Posts, which can translate to opportunities in fields such as trade, diplomacy, and people to people exchanges.

Philippine participation also builds a lasting legacy with the countries that were assisted via peacekeeping missions. Examples are the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea formed in the early 1950s and the Philippine contingent to the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor in the late 1990s all raised the country's international stature as a dependable international partner with top tier military forces. It is important to assist other countries and their people during difficult times because the goodwill generated with host governments and fellow troop-contributing countries by PH participation in peacekeeping missions has always been substantial and enduring.

Considerations for Philippine Participation

Philippine participation in UN peace operations should take into consideration the following factors: national defense and security capabilities; the domestic peace and order situation; and ultimately, national interests and national goals.

While decisions will be on a case-by-case basis, deciding on the merits of participation in each operation will have to be based on the application of the same general principles and parameters.

Conditions and Requirements for Philippine Participation

The safety, immunity and security of Philippine personnel assigned to UN peace operations are of paramount importance. Philippine participation in UN peace operations shall be subject to the following conditions and requirements:

- Authority from the UN Security Council;
- A clear and achievable mandate;
- A determinable, if not, definite time frame and exit strategy; and
- Consent of the Receiving State to the UN operation.

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