

A Perspective on Improvement of Accountability in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Fumiyuki Kobashi

Notice: this article reflects the writer's own opinion, and should not be construed as the official position of the Japan Peacekeeping Training and Research Center or the Japan Ministry of Defense.

Preface

In this paper, I explain how the traditional United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO, hereafter PKO), activities based on so-called “Chapter Six and a Half” of the UN Charter, changed from the first generation to the fourth generation (at the end of the Cold War), and what kind of problems occurred as a result. I also reference the corruption cases inside the UN; examine the New Public Management theory, which was introduced to improve accountability; and finally explain the accountability improvement implications when the New Public Management theory is applied to PKO. The focus of this paper is on the administrative concept of accountability¹ rather than on the political concept. Additionally, I explain the Result-Based Management (RBM) from the viewpoint of legitimacy and appropriateness of procedure of the United Nations.

1. Change and trend of PKO after the Cold War

The origin of PKO can be found in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) established in 1948 after the first Arab–Israeli War. Since then, 13 PKO missions were conducted during the Cold War era between 1948 and 1988 under the controversy on PKO inside the UN. However, with the end of the Cold War and the forecast that future conflicts would decrease, the expectation for increased PKO rose in the international community, including in the United States. Although PKO

¹ From the viewpoint of a British jurist, see White, Fidelma and Kathryn Hollingsworth, *Audit, Accountability and Government*, Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.1-13. For financial and political concepts of accountability, see Day, Patricia and Rudolf Klein, *Accountabilities: Five Public Services*, London and New York : Tavistock Publications 1987, pp.4-31. For the viewpoint that the administrative concept of accountability originated from the financial concept is related to management, see Stewart J.D., “Chapter 2: The Role of Information in Public Accountability” in Anthony Hopwood and Cyril Tomkins (eds), *Issues in Public Sector Accounting*, Oxford: Philip Allan Publishers, 1984, pp.13-34.

missions have sometimes failed, such as in Bosnia,² Somalia³ and Rwanda,⁴ the number of PKO missions increased by more than 50 after the Cold War era, between 1991 and 2012⁵. The range of mission objectives has also increased, from military activities like a traditional ceasefire observation⁶, to complex and multi-dimensional activities such as election support, reconstruction of administrative and judiciary systems, security sector reform (SSR) and improvement of social and economic conditions. The increase in breadth of activity has raised the tendency to integrate the activities of organizations both inside and outside the UN. Moreover, many political preventive diplomacy missions, which were run by the civilians in the Department of Political Affairs of the Security Council and required no Security Council Resolution, have changed to PKO. Many PKO missions began, which received aid from countries within the UN. After formal PKO has finished, additional follow-on integrated and complex missions such as peace-building and coordinating support has increased. Thus PKO activity has expanded in quantity and quality since the end of the Cold War.

Reflecting the increased operations, the UN PKO annual budget rose ten-fold from 1991 to 2005⁷. By 2011, the budget had reached 7.9 billion dollars⁸ and the budget for humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and other costs related to economic recovery also significantly increased. These costs were not paid equally by the UN member states, but rather paid mostly by advanced democratic countries such as Japan, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and France⁹. Similarly to how citizen taxpayers have an interest in the accountability of the financial expenditures of a sovereign state, the countries contributing to the UN PKO budget should be imminently interested in whether the PKO-related budget is being managed appropriately.

² On 11 July 1995, Serbian forces in Bosnia made a sudden attack in a UN-designated safety zone where Muslims were protected. The UN protection unit of about 300 troops could not fully counter the attack, and about 8,000 Muslims, including boys, were killed. This “Srebrenica massacre” was the worst one in Europe since the end of World War II.

³ Following the serious humanitarian crisis in Somalia due to many displaced people and a heavy drought, the UN started the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) for humanitarian assistance. Then UNOSOM 2, which had the authority to forcibly disarm, was started, but it was drawn into conflict with the local armed forces and was forced to leave in April 1995.

⁴ In Rwanda, the displaced Hutu were conducting guerrilla warfare in 1995 through 1996 against the background of the international humanitarian assistance. The UN headquarters did not cope with it appropriately, even when the UN observer mission got the information on the massacre and asked the UN headquarters for reinforcements. Finally, the UN Security Council withdrew 2,000 peacekeeping troops from Rwanda. After the withdrawal, 2,000 French troops were stationed in Rwanda.

⁵ See Tadokoro, Masayuki and Shiroyama, Hideaki, *International Organizations and Japan – Activity Analysis and Evaluation*, Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha 2004, p.29. See also the official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/pko/katudo.html>> (Accessed on 12 April 2013).

⁶ See the official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan for the definition of traditional PKO. <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/pko/katudo.html>> (Accessed on 12 April 2013).

⁷ Jan-Marc Coicaud, *The Limits of the UN/ The Future of the UN*, Fujiwara Shoten, 2007, p.27 (Japanese version)

⁸ <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/pko/katudo.html>> (Accessed on 12 April 2013).

⁹ See the official website of the UN. <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/factsheet.pdf>> (Accessed on 25 April 2013).

The catalyst for increased oversight of the management of the UN, especially the inspection system, was the United Nations Oil for Food Program (hereafter OFF), which was an unprecedented, huge corruption case. Because accountability improvement in PKO is also related to OFF, I first explain the OFF corruption case using mainly the internal report of the UN¹⁰.

2. Corruption in the UN observed during OFF, and improvement of the inspection system

Since the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in 1991, Iraq had been under economic sanctions because it did not abandon its weapons of mass destruction program, which was demanded by the UN resolution. The main part of the sanctions was an embargo of the oil of Iraq's, whose oil deposits were second largest in the world. As a result, Iraq lost its foreign currency revenue and its economy worsened, leading to starvation and disease among the citizens. Therefore, the UN, to cope with the human suffering, started the OFF program in 1996, which allowed the Hussein regime to sell oil for food and medicine.

Of the total of about 64 billion dollars gained by selling oil, 26 billion dollars were paid in compensation for victims of the Kuwait invasion and 24.5 billion dollars were spent on humanitarian aid including food. The remaining 14 billion dollars were unaccounted for. The OFF program directors selected Banque Nationale de Paris of France as the managing bank, and Saybolt Eastern Hemisphere BV of the Netherlands as the monitoring company of Iraqi oil exports. But the UN report also pointed out that certain members of the UN Security Council, such as Russia, France, and China, also had strong ties to the specific companies chosen by the OFF program.

The UN Headquarters report pointed out the followings as problems¹¹:

- Resource for inspection of OFF was insufficient.
- Limited funds and personnel of the Internal Audit Division (IAD) prevents proper inspection of OFF.
- Check of OFF by IAD was not thorough.
- Reporting to the General Assembly by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was insufficient.
- Means to solve the discussions on OIOS activity were insufficient.

¹⁰ UN document, JIU/REP/2006/1, *Evaluation of Result-Based Budgeting in Peacekeeping Operations*, JIU, Geneva, 2006. Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, *The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, Volume 1, The Report of the Committee*, September 7, 2005.

¹¹ Independent Inquiry Committee, *The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program*, September 7, 2005.

- Cases of deviation from the Professional Practices Framework (PPF), which was drafted by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), were observed¹².

Given these problems, the Independent Inquiry Committee on OFF made the following recommendations¹³.

First, give OIOS/IAD a direct reporting system outside the normal chain-of-command and establish an independent committee¹⁴. This is to establish a new independent committee outside the command system because the Secretary-General's responsibility on budget and management overlaps in the inspection report.

Second, establish the financial independency of OIOS/IAD. The IAD's budget and number of personnel should be approved by the independent committee mentioned above, and submitted to the General Assembly based on a comprehensive risk assessment. Additionally, budget for staff should be based on a neutral standard.

Third, using increased authority, have OIOS/IAD settle any disputes. Therefore, the General Assembly needs to delegate wider authority to IAD. It is also necessary that the important supervision authority of IAD not be violated by the General Assembly or member states of other UN organizations such as the 661 committee, which manages sanctions based on Security Council resolution 661. Also, the issues which prevent accomplishing IAD's duties should be reported to the appropriate supervision organization immediately.

Fourth, strengthen supervision over all projects and associated funding. Therefore, OIOS should be designated as the leading auditor.

Fifth, review the IAD activity periodically through an independent outside auditor. This specialized check from outside should cover IAD's policies, procedures, resources and results and occur at least every five years.

Six, develop an audit plan for a new project right from the beginning. IAD needs to make a comprehensive audit plan to determine project shortages or problems, and revise the project accordingly. IAD also needs to monitor a new project from the initial stages and to supervise it.

Seventh, an audit of all aspects of OFF is necessary. Therefore, an audit plan covering all aspects of a project: initial, build-up, continuing, winding down and closing, is needed.

¹² The followings are pointed out in the report: (1) Inability to report directly to an inspection committee or other independent council, (2) Inability to complete the risk assessment on the scale of the project and (3) Lack of independency of budget.

¹³ Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, *First Interim Report*, 3 February, 2005, pp.29-36.

¹⁴ Tasks of the independent committee are (1) to improve independency and quality of the internal audit system, (2) to make a plan contributing to alleviate the concern about sufficient resource distribution and to improve the budget process and (3) to promote coordination between IAD and outside supervision organizations. IIC, *Ibid*.

Eighth, release the audit report within three months. It is especially important to place the audit concerns on paper.

Ninth, strictly confirm the implementation of the recommendations within a fixed time. IAD should specifically report the fulfillment of the recommendations by a clearly set date, and a follow-up audit should be conducted for any serious issues.

The report presented the ways to improve accountability by reinforcing the UN audit system through OFF.

3. Introduction of the New Public Management theory contributing to improvement of accountability

Improvement of financial accountability became a prominent issue in the UN following the lessons and recommendations for OFF, and financial accountability in PKO also became important. In the UN financial system, the object of expenditure method was traditionally used. But, based on the recommendations in a 1960s study by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the program budget method was introduced in 1974. Mission objectives and expected accomplishments gained increased emphasis. In 1990, under UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Volcker/Ogata committee was established to discuss international financial reform. From this, PKO-related budget reform got started. After Secretary-General Kofi Annan was inaugurated in 1997, the UN began administrative reform using Results-Based Management.

RBM is composed of a Result-Based Budget (hereafter RBB), Human Resources Management (HRM) and the Management Information System (MIS). RBB is a management method focused on substantial efficiency increases based on a result-oriented approach, while traditionally the UN administration had focused on management of inputs and primary outputs.

In July 1997, Secretary-General Annan submitted the Secretary-General report "Renewing the United Nations: A Program for Reform" (A/51/950) and proposed RBM (A/51/950). In this proposal, transition from the input-oriented concept to the result-oriented one, and from micro management to macro accountability was stressed, and the importance of performance measurement was emphasized. On the other hand, the UN General Assembly submitted a report (A/53/500) insisting on ensuring accountability, the necessity for financial flexibility and the importance of indicators for performance measurement. Discussion about RBM has steadily developed inside the UN since 2000, and the General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/55/231) recommended introduction of RBB on the condition that its introduction was agreed upon by the

General Assembly. In the 2002-2003 program budget, RBB was practiced for the first time.

4. Necessity of application of RBM to PKO

The PKO budget is basically organized specific to each PKO mission. Therefore, the financial affairs of each PKO tend to be quite different depending on region. For example, in the cases of activities in the former Yugoslavia such as Bosnia and Kosovo, European countries were heavily involved and budgeted significant amounts, while the PKO missions in Africa tended to be budgeted insufficiently. As a result, some PKO missions have a budget surplus and lend money to other PKO missions with an insufficient budget.

However, this is questionable from the viewpoint of accountability. The General Assembly Resolution 57/290B issued on 18 June 2003 demanded the Joint Inspection Unit submit a report on the situation of RBB in PKO, and during the 16th session the report titled “Evaluation of Result-Based Budgeting in Peacekeeping Operations” was issued¹⁵. This report says that in PKO, where unexpected situations arise, strategic management, reinforcement of the administrative system, efficient project plans, and accountability of the planning supervisor are essential for RBB, under the concept that even if only RBB is applied, RBM may not be applied. It also states that RBM needs to cover RBB completely. In addition to RBB, the result-based approach for personnel management is also mentioned in the report. That is, accountability, authority delegation, flexible management and performance management are important. Particularly, the report states that authority delegation and flexible management are dependent on accountability.

Moreover, it proposes nine evaluation standards and offers sixteen recommendations. The evaluation standards are (1) A clear framework for RBM, (2) Defined responsibilities for members of the organization, (3) A defined, long-term objective of the organization, (4) Programs based on the long-term objective, (5) Resources based on the long-term objective, (6) An efficient system for performance oversight, (7) Efficient incorporation of lessons learned, (8) Necessary training for thorough RBM implementation, and (9) Importance of management ability.

Among the sixteen recommendations, I specifically explain the following important points:

¹⁵ UN document, JIU/REP/2006/1, *Evaluation of Result-Based Budgeting in Peacekeeping Operations*, JIU, Geneva, 2006.

First, the General Assembly reemphasizes the recommendations in the 2000 Brahimi Report (A/55/305-S/2000/809) because the Brahimi Report recommended the Secretary General establish a joint organization called Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat under the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS). The report also suggested that the Secretary General, as the United Nations System Chief Executive of the Board for Coordination (CEB), submit the roadmap on the joint peace activity, the rules of engagement, guidance on engagement of the UN systems, and operational doctrine for approval and evaluation by the organizations in the UN, and take the initiative to prepare the institutional framework in the Board for Coordination.

Second, from the viewpoint of an accountability system, the Security Council and the General Assembly are recommended to utilize the following procedures when approving future PKO. Once the financial commitment by the General Assembly is initially approved, the Security Council approves establishment of the initial PKO based on the advance evaluation by the Secretary-General. When the initial deployment gets started, the Secretary-General Special Representative prepares a more accurate and detailed integrated mission implementation plan (IMIP) for Secretary-General, Security Council and General Assembly check and approval

Third, the Secretary-General should integrate and reinforce the current RBB, the political commitment of those who are concerned in the conflict, and IMIP into a single plan, a single project, a single budget, a single audit, a single evaluation and a single report. The Secretary-General is also recommended to advocate to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) the change from RBB to RBM procedures.

Fourth, the Secretary-General should direct DPKO and the Office of Program Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) to ensure budgeting for a project and to try to quicken the budgeting process. The project budgeting should be compatible with the existing information management system to promote RBM.

Fifth, to improve efficiency by RBB, the Secretary-General should let both the Security Council and the General Assembly submit a single report on RBB-related performance based on the current progress of the PKO.

Sixth, the Secretary-General should also officially institute the self-evaluation of the project plan in the PKO supervision system, and give sufficient evaluation ability to the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section to publish accountability lessons learned from each from each PKO.

Seventh, priority should be put on resources for management by senior officials and on RBM to train all staff of a PKO. Also, the training system of RBM should be reinforced based on the BRM evaluation standard of JIU and on the module developed

by the UN Staff College and other UN system related organizations. This system should be available online and used systematically during the basic training for all staff who engage in PKO. This system also should be used by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Audit Committee, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), JIU, the Security Council, and members of other PKO-related organizations for self-training. The Secretary-General should organize briefing and training sessions for the staff and members of these organizations within the UN.

Eighth, the Secretary-General should justify the necessity of a PKO with policies, regulations, procedures and practices within the framework of RBM, and should revise the personnel management system in all aspects of PKO.

Ninth, the audit and control organizations including ACABQ, the Audit Committee, OIOS, and JIU should avoid interfering with the management of a PKO, but rather concentrate on advising the General Assembly and the Secretary-General. They should also coordinate the audit and control activities to avoid contradictory or overlapping guidance in a PKO.

So this report promotes various policy suggestions to introduce RBB during PKO which can greatly improve accountability.

Conclusion – Implication of applying RBM to PKO

In conclusion, based on the views and analysis mentioned above, I explain some important points in applying RBM to PKO, in order to accomplish various missions in the field.

First, since future PKO will most likely occur in Africa, the International Staff and military from African countries are expected to be the main participants of UNPKO. However, especially in Africa, resources to settle PKO issues are limited. Recently, because the United States and other major European countries have kept away from the participation in UNPKO due to several reasons including the previously mentioned PKO failures, most participants of the current PKO are from developing countries¹⁶. The improvement of accountability by introducing RBM to PKO will prove very important to encouraging the United States and other major European countries back into PKO, after the failures in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda.

On the other hand, for implementation of RBM, it is required to carefully consider

¹⁶ See the official website of the UN. <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/factsheet.pdf>> (Accessed on 25 April 2013)

how to maintain regional equality and balance, and the UN accountability check-and-balance system, as well as gain the commitment of the UN Security Council.

Secondly, although RBM should be introduced in PKO as soon as possible to improve accountability, institutional adoption is required so that RBM is used effectively when an unexpected event happens in PKO. In other words, it is required to develop and carry out a policy where implementation of RBM and operational flexibility go together. Like the case in Rwanda, it is obvious that the mission on the field would be in hardship if the UN strictly enforces RBM, and spends time on wasteful discussions during unexpected situations. Sticking to RBM too rigidly can spoil the operational discretion of the PKO units or members on the field, and the excessive control also can block them in concentrating on their original tasks. It is required to apply the details of RBM while carefully considering the needs on the field and the tasks of PKO. Therefore, the UN administrative side would need profound knowledge on military affairs more and more.

References

Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, *The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, Volume 1, The Report of the Committee*, Sep. 7, 2005.

Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Program, *First Interim Report*, 3 February, 2005.

UN document, JIU/REP/2004/7, *Delegation of Authority and Accountability*, JIU, Geneva, 2004.

UN document, JIU/REP/99/3, *Result-Based Budgeting: The Experience of United Nations System Organization*, JIU, Geneva, 1999.

UN document, JIU/REP/2006/1, *Evaluation of Result-Based Budgeting in Peacekeeping Operations*, JIU, Geneva, 2006.

UN document, JIU/REP/2004/3, *Administration Result-Based Budgeting: The Experience of United Nations System Organization*, JIU, Geneva, 1999.

UN document, JIU/REP/2006/6, *Result-Based Management in the United Nations in the Context of the Reform Process*, JIU, Geneva, 2006.

Lewis Mackenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo*, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver/Toronto, 1993.

Roger A. Coate, *U.S. Policy and the Future of the United Nations*, The Twentieth Century Fund Press/ New York, 1994.

David S. Alberts, Ph.D. and Richard E. Hayes, Ph.D., *Command Arrangements for Peace Operations*, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, May 1995.

Adam Roberts & Benedict Kingsbury, *Presiding Over Divided World: Changing UN Roles, 1945-1993*,

International Peace Academy, Lynne Rienner Publisher, Boulder London, 1994.

Shinyo, Takahiro, *Introduction to International Peace Cooperation*, Yuhikaku, 1995.

Japan Association for United Nations Studies, *United Nations Secretariat as Global Actor – United Nation Studies Vol. 3*, Kokusai Shoin, 2002.

Jan-Marc Coicaud, *The Limits of the UN/ The Future of the UN*, Fujiwara Shoten, 2007 (Japanese version)