Seven

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

THIS BOOK ASKS three empirical questions: Where do peacekeepers go? Does peacekeeping work? And if so, how does it work? This chapter summarizes the answers to these questions, drawing out implications for our understanding of the problem of recidivism after civil wars, and especially for policymakers trying to reduce it.

The first question is important for evaluating the other two, but it is also interesting in its own right. While existing studies of this question have focused on choices made by the international community, I argue that choices made by the belligerents themselves are as important, at least for the consent-based missions that make up the bulk of peacekeeping. Not surprisingly, peacekeeping is a matter of both supply and demand. That peacekeeping is unlikely in civil wars within or next door to the permanent five members of the Security Council is testament to a supply-side effect. But the fact that peacekeeping is generally more likely when rebels are relatively strong (but not strong enough to win outright) reflects dynamics on the demand side. The case studies illustrate this point well. Whether or not consent-based peacekeeping happened in Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone was the result of choices made by the belligerents, and particularly by the relative bargaining strength of rebels and the government.

For the purposes of the rest of the analysis, the most important answer to the question of where peacekeepers go, is that they are much more likely to deploy when the danger of war recurring is particularly high. That is, peacekeepers select into the hardest cases. This finding flies in the face of policy admonitions that peacekeepers should only go where the chances of "success" are relatively good. A policy of sending peacekeepers only to the easy cases would help international organizations avoid embarrassment, but would ensure that peacekeeping was less useful than it could be. If peacekeepers only went where peace is likely to last in any case, they would render themselves irrelevant. Fortunately, however, this policy advice has apparently been ignored. As both the quantitative and qualitative evidence in chapters 2 and 3 makes clear, the higher the risk of recidivism in a particular case, the more likely peacekeepers are to deploy. In particular, peacekeeping is most likely when neither side has won outright, where mistrust is high, and where refugee flows threaten regional peace. Chapter VI consent-based peacekeeping is more likely where rebel groups are rela-

tively strong and in countries with lower living standards. Chapter VII enforcement missions are more likely in less democratic states and where the war involves multiple fighting factions. In short, peacekeepers are most likely to be sent where they are most needed, where the job of maintaining peace is most difficult.

The answer to the question of whether peacekeeping works is a clear and resounding yes. To see this, it is crucial to control for the fact that peacekeepers select into the difficult cases. But once this selection is accounted for, the statistical evidence is overwhelming. Chapter 5 cuts at the data in many different ways, but the conclusion is always the same; the risk of war resuming is much lower when peacekeepers are present than when belligerents are left to their own devices. Estimates of the size of this effect depend on how conservative one wants to be. If one sets up a particularly difficult test, in which peacekeepers are only given credit for keeping peace while they are actually deployed, not for peace that lasts after they leave, peacekeepers reduce the risk of another war by 55%–60%, all else equal. If peacekeepers are given credit for cases in which peace survives even after they go home (which, after all, is their main goal) estimates of the beneficial effects of peacekeeping are much more dramatic, suggesting that the risk of recidivism falls by at least 75%–85% relative to nonpeacekeeping cases. The evidence from interviews with rebel and government decision makers also supports this general conclusion that peacekeeping works. The belligerents themselves view peacekeeping as an important and effective tool that has helped them maintain peace.

Several other findings emerge from the analysis of peacekeeping's effects. One of the most important for peacekeeping policy is that Chapter VI consent-based missions are empirically just as effective as the militarily more robust Chapter VII enforcement missions. Much of the discussion within policy circles in the last several years has been about the importance of beefing up the mandates of peacekeeping missions. There are certainly cases in which an enforcement mandate may be necessary. More robust military capabilities can help peacekeepers protect themselves and others if peace begins to falter. And if the aim is to deter aggression militarily, then a Chapter VII mandate is needed. But it is not enough. Only enforcement missions that prove their willingness to fight, as missions that intervene to create a cease-fire by force have done, can deter effectively. Otherwise, a Chapter VII mandate does not a credible deterrent make. Thus, UNAMSIL's Chapter VII mandate meant little until British intervention and a robust force posture convinced the RUF that the international community was serious about enforcing peace.

However, the findings of this study show that peacekeeping is worthwhile even under consent-based mandates. Large and relatively well armed troop deployments are not necessarily essential for peacekeeping to work;

even small, unarmed or very lightly armed missions significantly reduce the likelihood that peace will break down. Given that consent-based missions are typically much less expensive, and that it may be easier to find countries willing and able to contribute troops for them, this is an important finding. Robust Chapter VII–mandated peacekeeping may be the safest option, but the international community should not shy away from smaller, less robust Chapter VI peacekeeping if that is all that is possible politically. In other words, we should not conclude that the mission's mandate does not matter, but rather that even peacekeeping missions with limited mandates and constrained military power can be extremely effective. This is because many of the mechanisms through which peacekeepers have an effect are political and economic in nature and do not depend on robust mandates or strong military force (more on this below).

Among consent-based operations, multidimensional missions are most effective. The dearth of cases in each category makes it harder to reach strong conclusions about the relative effects of different types of Chapter VI missions, so this finding should be treated with some caution. But the available evidence suggests that the civilian aspects of peacekeeping that go into multidimensional missions—election monitoring, human rights training, police reform, and so on—do contribute to its general effectiveness. More of the causal mechanisms through which peacekeeping operates, particularly those relating to political exclusion, are at play in these multidimensional missions than in other types of peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping is not a cure-all. Beyond the task of maintaining peace, the international community increasingly aims to foster democracy in the war-torn societies in which it intervenes. While stable peace may be a requisite for the growth of democracy, and as we have seen here, peacekeeping promotes stable peace, outside intervention may in other ways undermine or crowd out democratization. So, while peacekeeping is clearly effective at maintaining peace, it has not necessarily left significantly more democratic societies in its wake.[1] Nonetheless, if the aim is simply to keep the peace, to keep civil war from recurring, then peacekeeping is an extremely effective policy tool.

While the answers to the first two questions addressed in this book can be summarized quickly—peacekeepers go where peace is hardest to keep, and yes, peacekeeping works to keep peace—the answer to the third question, how does peacekeeping work, is a bit more complicated. Peacekeeping works along multiple causal pathways. To understand the causal mechanisms of peacekeeping, we must consider the reasons belligerents who have recently been fighting each other might return to war. This work identified

[1] See Fortna 2008.

four analytically distinct, but in practice overlapping pathways: aggression, fear and mistrust, accident or the actions of rogue groups within either side, and political exclusion. I hypothesized particular ways that the presence of peacekeepers might block these potential causal pathways; that is, ways peacekeepers might (1) change the incentives for aggression relative to maintaining peace, (2) alleviate fear and mistrust so as to reduce security dilemmas, (3) prevent or control accidents or "involuntary defection" by hard-liners, and (4) dissuade either side (and particularly the government) from excluding the other from the political process.

An empirical evaluation of the specific causal mechanisms through which peacekeepers might achieve these results requires paying attention to the perspective of the peacekept. The peacekeeping literature tends to be a bit narcissistic. It pays attention mostly to the peacekeepers, to their functions, the particulars of mandates, troop deployments, command and control, relationships between headquarters and the field, "best practices," and so, while largely ignoring the peacekept. But it is the peacekept who must choose between war and peace. Only if peacekeepers change something for the peacekept can they have a causal impact on this choice. This project has tried to rectify this shortcoming in the literature by examining how the belligerents themselves viewed the situation they faced, and particularly how they thought the presence or absence of peacekeepers mattered in their case.

The evidence from interviews with the peacekept (or not peacekept in the Bangladeshi case) indicates a number of ways in which the presence of peacekeepers can shape belligerents' choices. In large enforcement missions, this shift can entail military deterrence, although, as stressed above, to be effective, a deterrent force must establish the credibility that all deterrence entails. Where peacekeeping will depend on military deterrence, the international community must expect to have to prove its credibility on the ground. Enforcement missions may actually have to fight to convince the peacekept that peacekeepers are willing to use force. Smaller missions and consent-based peacekeeping might serve as a trip wire for more robust intervention, but again, would-be spoilers must believe that the international community really will respond with a large-scale intervention. The conditions under which peacekeeping has a strong military effect are therefore fairly narrow. But many of the ways in which peacekeeping changes belligerents' incentives are nonmilitary in nature.

Peacekeepers can have a causal impact by changing economic incentives. For rank-and-file soldiers, this generally entails the material benefits of going through a demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) process. For leaders, it can entail the general boost to the economy that a peacekeeping mission brings, a boost that political elites are often in a position to capitalize on. Or it may entail more direct forms of co-option.

The Mozambique case provides examples of both. Co-option can happen without peacekeepers, of course. But as the CHT examples shows, if one side buys off the other, as the Bangladeshi government did the PCJSS by granting control of local budgets (and the opportunities for corruption that go with it), this leaves the co-opted open to charges of selling out. Co-option done by a peacekeeping mission, as a more neutral and acceptable body, is less likely to strengthen hard-liners at the expense of moderates than is co-option among the belligerents themselves.

Because altering economic incentives can be crucial to maintaining stable peace, contraband financing for rebels is not only a powerful factor in civil war recidivism, it also reduces peacekeepers' leverage. As shown in chapter 5, peacekeeping still helps when parties have independent and illegal sources of funding, but its effect is diminished. Co-option will be more expensive, perhaps prohibitively so, in these cases. Alternatively, as was the case in Sierra Leone, attempts to alter economic incentives may work in conjunction with military deterrence when contraband financing is an issue.

Beyond economics, peacekeepers can influence the incentives of the peacekept by influencing perceptions of the parties' legitimacy, both internationally and domestically. In many civil wars, recognition as a legitimate political actor is itself a valuable and sought-after good, as well as one that may translate into international economic or other aid. Internally, pronouncements by peacekeepers about who is or is not cooperating with a peace process may affect parties' electoral prospects.

In short, while peacekeeping may deter aggression through military means in some cases, its effects on the incentives facing belligerents are largely economic and political. There are policy implications of this for peacekeepers. Peacekeeping strategy should focus at least as much on identifying the points of economic and political influence in a particular case that will provide the most leverage over belligerents' decision making as on beefing up the mission's military strength. Similarly, the allocation of scarce resources (money, personnel, etc.) should be directed at least as much to making peace profitable and politically viable for the peacekept as to the creation of militarily effective peacekeeping forces. Where possible, an attempt should be made to control or eliminate contraband sources of funding for belligerents.[2]

By alleviating fear and mistrust, peacekeeping also increases the chances that belligerents will maintain peace. It does this, in part, by helping erstwhile deadly enemies to communicate with one another. Thus, as the inevitable problems and glitches in the peace process arise, peacekeeping mis-

[2] The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme to combat the trafficking of "blood diamonds" from conflict zones is an important step in this direction.

sions should emphasize ongoing mediation. They can also support peace by monitoring each side's compliance with a cease-fire. It is here, perhaps, that the military nature of peacekeeping is most important. Peacekeeping missions should include military personnel, not because they can fight (in fact, unarmed military observers may be most effective in some cases), but because they have the expertise to monitor demobilization and disarmament, and because they can garner the respect of the soldiers they monitor and the commanders they work with.

Peacekeepers also alleviate fear and mistrust, to some degree, merely by existing. To the extent that agreeing to peacekeeping allows the parties to signal their intentions to each other, it is less what peacekeepers actually do than whether the parties have asked for them or not that makes a difference. But for this signaling mechanism to work, it has to be credible, and to be credible, it has to be costly. Specifically, it has to be costly for a party that intends to resume fighting. Peacekeeping missions should thus be designed to be as intrusive as possible as a way of testing the credibility of this signal. Peacekeeping, particularly UN peacekeeping, traditionally proceeded on an assumption of good faith on the part of the belligerents. Lessons learned, usually the hard way, during the 1990s have tempered this assumption, with more attention now paid to the possibility of spoilers. But the signaling function of peacekeeping should be used proactively. Peacekeeping strategy should focus on identifying and insisting on things that those intending to go back to war or renege on a political deal would object to, but that those committed to peace would not necessarily mind. And because intentions can shift over time, peacekeepers should be intrusive not just when they first deploy, but over the life of the mission. This is not to say that they should go out of their way to antagonize the parties to the conflict, but rather that missions should be designed so as to maximize the clarity of the signal that consent and ongoing cooperation with peacekeeping provides to the other side.

Peacekeeping can make the resumption of war less likely by preventing hard-liners or rogue factions from inciting violence, and by helping to prevent or control accidents from sparking renewed conflict. Peacekeepers should work with moderates on each side to identify hard-liners within their own group who might pose a threat to peace. Peacekeeping strategy should determine whether these would-be spoiler splinter groups can be deterred militarily (something even relatively weak peacekeeping forces may be capable of), and how they can be weakened politically. By facilitating communication, peacekeeping can nip accidental conflagrations in the bud. This provides another reason peacekeepers should spend time and energy on continuing mediation between the parties, both among leaders and among local commanders, dealing with problems on the spot.

Providing security or basic law and order can help accidents from starting in the first place, so peacekeeping missions should continue to invest in policing, perhaps especially in identity conflicts where the actions of the general population might provide sparks for the fire. Similarly, providing security in particularly tense phases of the peace process (such as disarmament) or in particularly contested territory (diamond-mining areas, for example) can forestall problems that could easily escalate. Finally, peacekeeping missions should establish a formal mechanism for handling disputes over compliance. This gives both sides an alternative to, on the one hand, doing nothing in the face of perceived violations by their antagonists, and on the other, responding in kind and risking escalation. These dispute resolution mechanisms can appear irrelevant. Their formal findings may not tell either side anything it does not already know. But often it is not their role in providing information to the various parties that is important, but rather their existence as a political mechanism that allows the parties to save face by taking nonescalatory action in response to alleged violations.

Last, but certainly not least, peacekeepers can make peace more likely to endure by preventing either side from shutting the other out of a political process in a way that makes the political loser choose war. In most cases this entails pressuring the government, which can use the trappings of state power to influence political outcomes, not to abuse its position. There is a stark contrast in this regard between the Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict, where the absence of peacekeepers has given the Bangladeshi government a relatively free hand to disregard key elements of the peace deal, and Mozambique and Sierra Leone, where considerable pressure was brought to bear on the government to be inclusive. Beyond general political pressure (with international aid and legitimacy providing leverage), peacekeepers can minimize abuse by monitoring security forces and by monitoring or running electoral processes. They can help military groups (especially rebels) transform themselves into viable political parties, sometimes with the expenditure of relatively small amounts of money or other resources. (In some cases, computers and new suits can go a long way.) After some conflicts, peacekeepers may temporarily take over the entire administration of the country to prevent either side from dominating the political process during the most dangerous phases of the transition to peace. Again, peacekeeping strategy should be formed with an eye toward these mechanisms.

In short, peacekeeping intervenes in the most difficult cases, dramatically increases the chances that peace will last, and does so by altering the incentives of the peacekept, by alleviating their fear and mistrust of each other, by preventing and controlling accidents and misbehavior by hard-line factions, and by encouraging political inclusion.

Beyond its answers to these questions about peacekeeping and its effects, this study also makes both theoretical and empirical contributions. It builds

on a theory of international cooperation developed for interstate conflict, extending it to the realm of internal warfare.[3] It provides further support for the notion that while cooperation is often extremely difficult, perhaps nowhere more so than among deadly enemies who have just fought a war, deliberate efforts by the belligerents themselves and by outsiders can often overcome the obstacles to peace.

It also helps us to understand the more general issue of recurrent civil war. Interstate war has, thankfully, become relatively rare since the end of the Cold War. This has left internal conflicts as arguably the greatest security problem facing the world as a whole.[4] Countries that have been torn apart by civil war face a significant recidivism problem—those who have had a civil war are especially likely to have another. The empirical findings of this study help us understand the nature of that problem. They point to particular factors (such as military outcomes, or contraband financing for rebels) that make civil wars particularly likely to recur. But they also show that this "conflict trap" is not inevitable.[5] The conclusions of this project are therefore fundamentally optimistic. The problem of maintaining peace in the aftermath of civil war is a serious one, but it is not a hopeless one. Parties to civil war, together with the international community, can use the tool of peacekeeping to reduce dramatically the risk of another war.

Peacekeeping is not free. It costs money and personnel on the part of the international community and the countries that contribute troops. It also entails political costs for the peacekept, not least of which is the infringement on a country's sovereignty. Policymakers may decide peacekeeping is not worth these costs in a particular instance. But relative to the cost of recurrent warfare, peacekeeping is an extremely good investment. Peacekeeping is not a panacea, nor a silver bullet. It cannot guarantee that peace will last. But contrary to the views of many who think only of well-publicized failures, peacekeeping is an extremely effective tool for maintaining peace—a tool that the findings of this study will, I hope, make even more useful.

[3] Fortna 2003, 2004c.

[4] Other threats, such as terrorism or the proliferation of nuclear weapons, may be of greater concern to particular countries at particular moments. Civil wars may also be on the decline, but continue to pose a significant threat to the lives and livelihoods of millions.

[5] See Collier et al. 2003.