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## Why the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for UN Peace Operations in Jeju

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## ABSTRACT

Considering change in the international environment to signify cooperative security measures and peace operations under the name of humanitarian intervention, this study aims to address the rationale for the Asia-Pacific regional center for UN Peace Operation (UNPOC) on Jeju. In the study, which emphasizes the necessity of a UNPOC led by South Korea, it explains why South Korea, as a significant UN member state, needs to increase its role in peace operations. Pointing out the problems of peace operations mainly led by the military, it proposes that future peace operations call for more active participation by non-military sectors. In this regard, the paper proposes that the center would be a hub for inducing regional states to participate in peace operations more efficiently as well as nourishing their active contribution. The center would also be intended for building mutual trust and for strengthening cooperation among states in the region through the construction of a solid international network. The paper concludes that the establishment of the UNPOC on Jeju would symbolize the wish of the Korean people and government to expedite cooperative peace operations in Northeast Asia.

## I. Introduction

As the post Cold War era begins, the international community recognizes the importance of cooperative security measures against unconventional common threats. International organizations have come to regard preventive measures and peacekeeping operations as primary alternatives in settling interstate dispute. Therefore, at a nation-state level, the majority of the international community tends to utilize a ‘Peace Keeping Operations Center’ or ‘Peace Operations Center (POC)’ in order to participate in conflict resolution activities through either the United Nations or other multinational security alliances.

There are several reasonable explanations for why the foundation of a POC attracts the public interest. Due to change in the international environment, cooperative security and peace operations under the name of humanitarian intervention have become complementary measures for pursuing international peace. Furthermore, as a respected member of the international community, South Korea is expected to increase its role and responsibility in peace operations. Besides these reasons, while previous peace operations were mainly led by the military, the future of peace operations calls for an expanded scope to include civilians, civil servants and the military working in close cooperation to combine diverse efforts for peacebuilding.

Since the South Korean government declared Jeju-do as ‘Island of World Peace’ for its long-range goals, establishing the POC in Jeju would symbolize the wish of the Korean people to expedite the peace and prosperity of Northeast Asia.

Furthermore, South Korea has always been grateful for the generous assistance of the international community with preserving democracy and freedom during the Korean War and supporting economic development thereafter. The national sentiment has been very positive about rewarding the international community in return for that help.

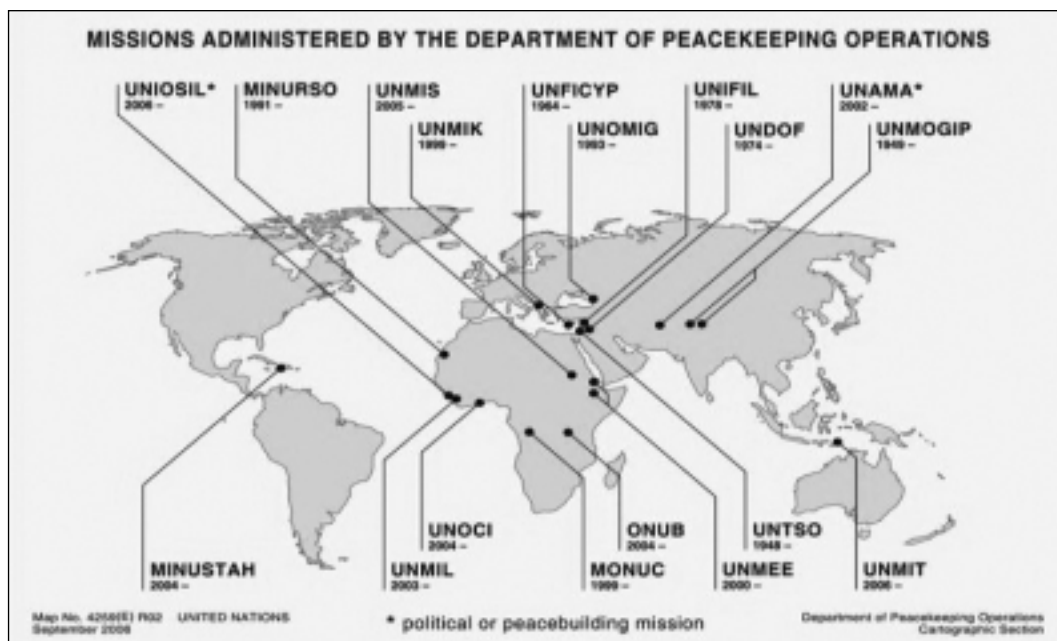
## II. What are the Characteristics of Peace Operations after the Cold War?

During the Cold War, the traditional definition of peace operations meant, in general, a

peacekeeping operation, which involves a military operation that tries to prevent the outbreak of conflict or the spill-over of conflict across borders as a temporary measure in the process of settling down an ongoing militarized dispute. Peacekeeping operations in general consist of several components, including a military and civilian component (Diehl 1988; Paris 2000).

Since the primary goal of peacekeeping operations is to halt militarized conflicts and/or prevent their recurrence, a military component has been a major part of peacekeeping operations. At the same time, peacekeeping operations have to create a stable environment for peaceful measures to settle the militarized disputes. Various civilian components are also a necessary part for the effective achievement of these multiple goals.

Picture 1> UN Peacekeeping Operations



Source: The United Nations. 2006. *Background Note*. September 2006.

The peace operations after the Cold War have expanded in scope from peacekeeping to peacebuilding issues, which intend to promote and institutionalize peace in conflict areas. It means that

the peace operations have shown distinctive features in terms of the diversity of participants and the scope of operations and offer real opportunities to help people and countries recover from conflict, rebuild their societies, and enjoy the benefits of peace. Peacebuilding emphasizes not only conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping, but also respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development.

The extended scope of peace operations is supported by the definitions of peace. Despite major debate on the definition of peace, the academic community of peace studies agrees that the concept of peace has to consider and ultimately encompass both the absence of militarized dispute (Boulding, 1977) and the presence of socio-economic justice (Galtung 1975). This type of conceptual disparity is also reflected in the activities of peace operations.<sup>1</sup> They are as follows;

First, the preventive deployment task of PKF has recently drawn attention along with traditional peace operations with the creation of buffer zones within conflicting areas, the monitoring of cease-fires and the withdrawal of foreign troops. The dismantlement of the military and paramilitary forces and the control of illegal arms are other main missions of PKF.

Second, the most important part is the support of elections and humanitarian assistance such as refugee relief, the safe delivery of relief aid, and disaster relief. In particular, the contribution to refugee relief is the critical factor increasing civilian participation in UN peace operations these days.

In other words, a peace operation has to integrate these seemingly two different parts for an efficient and stable peace in a conflicting area. As an effort for conflict resolution, hostile activities must be eliminated to create a peaceful environment. Once the hostility is repressed by collaborated efforts, the peace needs to be consolidated through the peacebuilding process. Since peace cannot be kept only by military force, adequate socio-economic development is a prerequisite of a stable peace. Due to the characteristics of conflict resolution, the UN has recently emphasized peacebuilding activities and its support. There are 12 ongoing peacebuilding missions around the world: Afghanistan, Angola, Bougainville, Burundi, the Central African

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1. Stephenson, Carolyn M. 1989. "Perspectives on the Curricular Agenda." Thomas, Daniel C., and Michael T. Klare ed. *Peace and World Order Studies*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 18.: The disagreement in the discipline consists of healthy inquiry for understanding the issue.

Picture 2> UN Political and Peacebuilding Missions



Source: The United Nations. 2006. *Background Note*. September 2006.

Republic, the Great Lakes Region, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, the Middle East, Somalia, and Tajikistan. It is noteworthy that most of the peacebuilding activities have been started since 1993 right after the end of the Cold War.

### III. Why does the World Put an Emphasis on Peace Operations Centers at the National Level?

The problems of inter- and intra-militarized conflicts have plagued the international community for centuries. The increased interdependence requires the international community to respond to violent conflicts in a collective and efficient manner for the public good of the international community as well as the national interest for each state. Under these circum-



stances, individual states have expressed their political concern about peace operations in the 1990s, when the United Nations launched new peacekeeping missions in the aftermath of the Cold War.

There are two conflicting perspectives on the utility of participation in peace operations (Neack 1995: 183-184). The one argues that participation in peace operations results from a participant state's idealistic and moral commitment to the international community and peace. The other contends that peace operations are related to the national interest of individual participant countries. Unlike the theoretical contrast, these two different policy motivations are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing for achieving policy goals. Participants of peace operations should be able to achieve both of them simultaneously under the limitation of time and resources. Therefore, each country emphasizes the active role of peace operations at the national level. These are summarized as follows;

First, every country intends to participate in peace operations in a more efficient way. As the post Cold War era begins and the protection of human rights draws the attention of the international community, increasingly overshadowing ideology, both the developing countries and the industrialized countries have started to set up - POC's - mostly the PKO centers- in order to take part in the conflict management and peacebuilding of the UN in an effective and active fashion.

Second, as the characteristics of the conflicts become more diversified and the tasks of the peace operations become more complicated, peace operations have to be professionalized. For instance, the UN carries out multidimensional and complicated missions such as security maintenance, humanitarian aid, the protection of human rights, the support of election procedures, surveillance, and peace rebuilding that has all evolved from the simple monitoring duties of the past. Also the PKO participant's training course requires following the Standard Generic Training Module (SGTM) provided by the UN.

Third, there is recognition of the necessity to utilize limited resources effectively at the individual country level. Thus, it would be necessary to develop an integrated national training program involving various participants like citizens, civil servants, and soldiers to conserve resources. The integrated training programs enable the host country to receive the delegates

from neighboring countries which are interested in the peace operation. This coordination process leads participating countries to utilize limited resources at the international level and ultimately promotes cooperative relations in a regional community.

#### **IV. Why the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for UN Peace Operations in Jeju?**

Jeju province enacted “Special Law for Jeju Free International City” in 2002, which embodies the Free International City, Island of World Peace, and status of Special Self-governing Province for Jeju (Chung 2006: 225-229). On the occasion of declaring Jeju as an Island of World Peace, the South Korean government reaffirms its resolve toward the international community that South Korea in general and Jeju in specific will take the more active role in the promotion of peace throughout the world. As a part of this grand plan for the island of world peace, the UN Peace Operations Center will allow the Jeju Province government to symbolize the image of the island of world peace and to embody a road map for the future development of Jeju Island.

First, the regional POC led by South Korea would be a hub for inducing the regional states to participate more efficiently as well as for nourishing their capacities. In the long run, it would also be intended for building confidence and promoting cooperation among the regional states. Therefore, the center should move towards an international organization that facilitates cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Geographically, Jeju is located in the middle of Northeast Asia so that it allows easy access to any major cities in the region. Since Jeju is designated as the Island of World Peace, the POC in Jeju can attract international participation from a wide variety of educators, experts, researchers, and working level government officers as well as policy decision-makers. In this respect, the Jeju Peace Institute has recently undertaken a project developing the UNPOC program.

Second, the current level of South Korea’s international peace operation activities doesn’t meet the expectations of the international community. As of the end of January 2007, South

Korea ranked far below the expectations in terms of the scale of UN Peacekeeping Operations. Here are the cases of completed major peace operations by South Korea. The Korean government dispatched military engineers to Somalia in 1993, to Angola in 1995, and to East-Timor in 1999 and sent military medical troops to the West Sahara in 1994.

As the table below shows, the South Korean government is currently deploying 34 military personnel and police officers in 7 different dispute areas around the world. Since 1994 about 10 military observers have been working in India-Pakistan and Georgia, respectively. Seven military observers have been working since 2005 in Sudan. Two military observers have been stationed in Liberia from 2003 and another two in Burundi from 2004. Since 2003 a liaison officer has been stationed in Afghanistan. An officer has been working at the UN DPKO since 2000. (JPI 2007, 55-59). This level of participation is not appropriate for a country that is one of the top ten contributors to the UN and even the homeland of the new UN Secretary-General.

Table 1> Current Level of Contributions for UN Peace Operations

Country	Total	Civil Police	Military Observers	Troops	Rank
Pakistan	9,989	663	127	9,199	1
Bangladesh	9,656	768	102	8,786	2
India	9,612	491	84	9,037	8
France	2,029	148	33	1,868	10
China	1,861	174	66	1,621	12
The U. S.	316	290	17	9	48
Canada	141	85	41	15	59
Korea	34	5	26	3	80
Cote d'Ivoire	1	1	0	0	114
Total 112 Countries	81,992	9,208	2,532	70,252	

Source: JPI. 2007. *Research Report: Research on the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for UN Peace Operations.*

Third, it is necessary to conduct a training program for civilians, civil servants and the military in a coordinated manner. As discussed above, an efficient peace operation requires civilian oriented peacebuilding activities as well as military oriented peacekeeping activities. The main

participating countries dispatch personnel to the same area after synthesized (or coordinated) training at their own home-based Peace Operation Center, which is not the case for South Korea. The Korean government has trained mainly troops to be dispatched in a camp because Korea has participated in peace operations primarily by dispatching soldiers. Although a few election supervising personnel, police, and NGO personnel have been dispatched, they did not usually go through synthesized training or education. Since the international community has emphasized peacebuilding activities since the Cold War, the Korean government needs to develop peace operation programs which integrate and coordinate military and civilian activities for an efficient peace operation in a given area.

Fourth, it is necessary to manage all the available resources effectively after mobilizing them on a nationwide scale. Until now, the pattern of South Korea's participation in areas of dispute has been a problem. There are various institutions and groups for peace operations: Ministry of National Defense (MND), National Police Agency, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) under Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT), and other administrative branches and NGO groups. These participating institutions have had their own plans and have decided to dispatch personnel to areas of dispute or disaster in an often independent and uncoordinated manner so that some are overlapped and others do not have equivalent activities. For this reason, South Korea needs to establish a POC at the national level in order to combine the mobilized limited resources and make the most of them in an efficient manner.

Fifth, since South Korea became a member of the UN in 1991, it has participated in five different areas as a part of UN peacekeeping operations. Despite the experiences, South Korea has not established a research and education institution which specialized in peace operation. A center for peace operations at the national level is necessary for conducting research and collecting information regarding the concerned areas, as well as for managing and distributing the information. In reality, an efficient peace operation is possible only after sufficient research and information gathering before the intervention stage.

## V. What are the Main Functions of the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for UN Peace Operations in Jeju?

Regarding the functions and missions of the UNPOC in Jeju, two different aspects have to be explicitly discussed: the internal/domestic aspect and the external/international aspect. While the internal aspect deals with the institutional framework, the external aspect is related to international coordination and collaboration among the participant countries, which can be extended to the creation of a regional cooperation regime or community in Northeast Asia. In the long run, the UNPOC in Jeju is expected to take a leading role promoting the peace and mutual prosperity of the countries in this region through confidence-building efforts.

First of all, the function of the POC is to conduct research on areas of dispute and the management (or de-escalation) of dispute in a given dispute area. No matter who the participants are, for a peace operation task to be conducted smoothly, studies on the concerned areas should precede intervention. Intensive studies on the currently disputed areas as well as possible areas for future disputes should be conducted. Also for peace operation decision-making, it is an important matter to decide when, in which area, in what form and on what scale the peace operation-related activities should be conducted in order to raise the national profile as well as to realize national interests.

The second function is to gather information on the areas of dispute and to construct a data base. It is necessary to conduct research on the environment of the areas, as well as to collect information constantly and systematically.

The third is to conduct training programs for civilians, government officials, and troops. The function of the PKO Center at the Korea National Defense University at the present time is mainly limited to the training and education of military observers and staff to be dispatched abroad. The program includes training them to write country reports after returning to their home country after the peace operation task is over. However, participants in the peace operations include not only the troops but also the police officers, election supervisors, fire fighters, civilians, and other NGO members. Therefore, if all the various participants to be dispatched to the same area gather together at a center and receive coordinated training, the quality and effi-

ciency of mission-implementation would be much improved.

The fourth is to conduct common educational programs and seminars intended for training the participants at home and from abroad. If the UNPOC in Jeju is established, its function should not be limited to domestic affairs, but should be expanded to include international matters. The internationalized training programs will broaden the scope of Korean participants and the participants around the world will bring multi-cultural perspectives to Korean society. These are the major contributions of the UNPOC in Jeju. Since Jeju is the Island of World Peace and Free International City, it will satisfy the conditions for the success of the UNPOC.

Finally, the external part of the UNPOC provides the opportunity to create a stable international environment. It is the most important objective of the UNPOC activities to reinforce cooperation with the other UN/regional organizations and individual states' peace operation centers. The POC should cooperate with the UN Security Council and UN Secretariat's Department of PKO (DPKO) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA) by mutual exchange of information; it should reinforce cooperative relations with other regional organizations, as well as with other peace operation centers in each country. As the level of cooperation increases, there may be an exchange of instructors and experts in charge of training programs.

The exchange of human resources enables the participating countries to build a mutual trust and ultimately to discuss creation of economic community in the region. Specialists have determined that a cooperative regime in Northeast Asia is least likely to be created due to the historical animosity among Korea, China, and Japan. A Northeast Asian cooperative regime is a necessary element for a stable peace and prosperity in the region. Unlike China and Japan, Korea has never been aggressive towards its neighbor countries in Asia. Because of this national reputation as a peaceful country, the UNPOC in Jeju would be a central institution to build a mutual trust and ultimately to lead to a regional cooperation regime.

## **VI. Conclusion and Vision**

In some sense, the international status of a given country as a member of the UN depends

on its financial contributions and accomplishments in peace operations. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the foundation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for UN Peace Operations in Jeju would improve the international contribution of Korea. National support to establish the regional center would help to eliminate the stigma of South Korea being an inactive country in its contribution and would promote its international confidence. The foundation of the regional center would produce additional effects such as enhancing the national prestige through projecting the soft-power of a peace operation and enabling efficient financial coordination.

In conclusion, the Asia-Pacific Regional Center for the UN Peace Operation in Jeju would represent the willingness of the Korean people and government to promote the ideal of peace and prosperity shared by the international community. To best utilize human resources in Korea, the peace operation, initially led by the military, would have to include public officials, police officers, and civilian organizations. In terms of the domestic politics of South Korea, this type of international cooperative effort would create harmonious circumstances to promote diverse peace activities and to prevent possible disruption in public opinion. In South Korea, dispatching troops to a foreign country is also a delicate political matter. However, peace operations with peaceful means can garner public support unlike a military intervention in a peace-keeping operation. For these purposes, it is necessary to publicize the long-term and ultimate goals of the center at home and abroad. And it is also essential to try to transform the center into an advanced international organization, which would be a nonprofit independent organization led by cooperative efforts of civilians, civil servants and the military in the Asia-Pacific region.

To obtain these general policy goals, JPI will suggest a substantive plan for the UNPOC in Jeju. With utmost priority, the UNPOC plan needs to get the legislative approval and budgetary support from the central government, local government, and major corporations home and abroad. The whole process can be conducted in the three stages.

In the first stage from 2008 to 2010, the UNPOC in Jeju would be founded as an auxiliary institution to the International Peace Foundation and would utilize the knowledge and experience of the Jeju Peace Institute. During this initiation stage, international networking would be a major mission of the center. Once the UNPOC in Jeju overcomes the critical challenges of its initiation, it would move toward the second stage from 2011 to 2012. During the second stage,

the center would concentrate on reinforcing the educational function and achieving operational effectiveness. The UNPOC in Jeju during this period would expand its scope to include development of training and education for PO agents from other countries. From 2013 to 2014, the goal of the final stage is the independence of the UNPOC in terms of its function, legal status, and organization type. It would find a new corporation independent of the International Peace Foundation and would administer international networking, research, education, and training programs.

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