

## Why did war recur (or not).

To what extent is the self-interest of permanent members of the UN hampering the UN peacekeeping mission's effectiveness in preventing violence in the DRC?

### 1. Introduction:

This essay aims to advance knowledge on the subject of why wars continue to break out (recur). It thus offers an explanation of how the self-interest of permanent members of the UN in a country afflicted by a conflict, reduces the efficiency of UNPKO, which ultimately became one of the elements contributing to the recurrence of war. The most effective and efficient way to address the issue of civil war recurrence is through peacekeeping operations (PKOs), according to recent academic research and practitioner evaluations. Yet, fewer than 40% of civil wars receive peacekeeping assistance at the conclusion of the conflict. (Szymon M. Stojek, Jaroslav Tir, 2011). Several academics held the opinion that the Security Council's permanent members' conflicting interests, potential financial burdens, and hard-learned lessons about the difficulties of maintaining peace had significant repercussions and intensified the situation in countries afflicted by conflict. The role of the permanent members on UN peacekeeping is examined by Michael Lipson (2011), who focuses on their impact on decision-making, resource allocation, and mandate creation. The success or failure of peacekeeping missions, according to the author, can be influenced by the interests and preferences of the permanent members. Since their actions may put their own strategic or economic interests ahead of the goal of achieving lasting peace and stability in the target region, this study will allow me to evaluate in detail how the self-interest of permanent members of the UN Security Council can undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions using causal mechanisms and through process tracing. The proposed hypothesis is : *"The self-interest of powerful member states within the United Nations Security Council negatively impacts the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions in conflict zones, leading to an increased risk of recurrent conflict."*

The study will initially prove the existing literature done so far and accordingly outline specific theory and carry out a proposed methodology to test the empirical implications of the hypothesis and review its limitations. Finally, this paper will offer policy suggestions to deal with the problem of UN peacekeeping operations' ineffectiveness and risk for war recurrence.

## **2. Outline of the Conflict:**

Patrice Lumumba, who assumed office on June 30, 1960, served as the DRC's first president upon its independence. His presidency, however, was short-lived due to resistance from a variety of sources, including political rivals, Belgian colonial authorities, and Western countries like the United States and Belgium, who were worried about the possible expansion of communism in the area. In a military coup masterminded by Colonel Joseph Mobutu and supported by the United States and Belgium in November 1960, Lumumba was ousted from power. In the years that followed, a string of political crises, coups, and hostilities began. During the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, a large number of people fled to the eastern Congo, where they were protected by militias. Several armed factions used this location as a base of operations as they fought for control of the area's riches, which included minerals like gold, diamonds, and coltan.

Another civil war broke out in the nation as a result of a catastrophic uprising led by Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). Mobutu was overthrown by the uprising in May 1997, led by Kabila and with assistance from Uganda, Rwanda, and Angola. Kabila, however, quickly grew estranged from his former friends, and thus in 1998, Rwanda and Uganda launched a second invasion to overthrow his government. The DRC has continued to face frequent bloodshed and warfare throughout the years, despite a number of peace agreements. Armed organisations still conduct operations in the eastern regions, sometimes with the assistance of neighbouring nations.

## **3. Literature Review :**

Maintaining global peace and security is primarily the responsibility of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Thus, UNSC has the authority to send peacekeeping operations into conflict areas in order to safeguard people, uphold cease-fires, and aid in the peacemaking process. Although, there is debate among academics over the efficacy of UN peacekeeping deployments in war zones.

By addressing the core causes of the war and fostering political stability and economic growth, some studies claim that UN peacekeeping deployments can help lessen the probability of conflict recurrence (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). According to certain research, UN peacekeeping deployments can help lower the probability of recurrence by fostering trust between opposing factions, ensuring the safety of civilians, and assisting former fighters in disarming and reintegrating (Lieberman & Singh, 2012). The veto power can also

be used to stop actions that are unproductive or destructive, which can ultimately lead to lasting peace (Borgwardt, 2016).

Others, however, argue that UN peacekeeping operations frequently lack the funding, political will, and strategic clarity needed to accomplish their goals (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Some contend, however, that UN peacekeeping operations may unintentionally foster circumstances that raise the likelihood of a recurrence, such as by extending the status quo or legitimising authoritarian governments (Paris, 2004). Some academics contend that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5), which are the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom, have excessive influence and the ability to veto resolutions that conflict with their interests (Bellamy, 2011). This power imbalance may cause a lack of coordination and consensus among UNSC members, which may jeopardise the credibility and efficiency of UN peacekeeping efforts (Karns & Mingst, 2010). According to some academics, the UNSC's more potent members may put their own national interests ahead of the objectives of UN peacekeeping missions. For instance, Dobbins et al. (2015) assert that the United States frequently attempts to restrict the scope and duration of peacekeeping missions in order to avoid depleting its military capabilities. Similar to this, Lanteigne (2016) contends that China defends its economic and geopolitical interests in areas afflicted by armed conflict by exercising its veto power in the UNSC.

Many examples in the literature suggest that certain acts taken by permanent members may have a substantial impact on the mission of the UN peacekeeping force deployed overseas in the conflict-affected region. As a result, it appears that there is a sizeable gap in the body of literature that establishes a causal link between the self-serving actions of permanent members of the UN and the worsening of the UN peacekeeping force's mission, which might lead to the recurrence of violence.

#### **4. Theory.**

When attempts to end civil wars gained momentum, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) became the most often requested mechanism to stop civil war recurrence (Fortna 2004; 2008, Diehl 1994; 2008, Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The success of upcoming UN operations will continue to be significantly dependent on the ability of the Security Council's strong states to gather the political will and provide the necessary military and financial resources, notwithstanding some significant recent thinking on UN peacekeeping changes. Focusing on the UN and its PKOs, noted that a relatively small group of states, 5 permanent members, decides about funding that a PKO will be allocated with possible deployments. However, the economic ties between the five permanent

members of the Security Council (P5) and civil war state significantly influence the decision to authorise UNPKOs. Hence, decisions regarding the deployment of peacekeeping forces are based on economic self-interest (Szymon M. Stojek, Jaroslav Tir ,2011). According to Diehl (2008:106), "The overall framework in which the UN and regional organisations function are ones in which the organisations are subordinate to the interests of their members, most notably the strong states within their membership". In a sense, the decision to approve a UNPKO implies that at least some of the major powers have an interest to push forward with a peacekeeping mission and are willing to bear a substantial portion of the cost of such action (Durch 1993, Mingst 2003, Diehl 2008). A popular, if cynical, explanation suggests that countries rich in extractable resources such as oil are more attractive targets for intervention (Fortna 2004, Doyle and Sambanis 2002). Such country which are resource rich are in fact more prone to become a resource curse. The Resource Curse Theory suggests that countries with an abundance of natural resources, such as oil, gas, and minerals, are more likely to experience economic and political challenges than those without rich-resources.

The argument asserts that the presence of resources encourages powerful nations to intervene in the political and economic affairs of resource-rich nations in order to obtain access to and control over those resources. Natural resource richness may cause economic distortion, which can then result in political unrest, bloodshed, and war as various groups compete for control of the resource's wealth. The resource curse can be made worse by the self-interest of powerful UNSC members who use their influence to further their own interests in the conflict-affected area. This is feasible through permanent members veto actions that would jeopardise their economic or strategic interests, or if they favour one group over another to gain access to resources. Powerful countries may exploit this situation by providing financial and military support to certain groups in exchange for access to the resources. This can exacerbate conflicts and undermine peacekeeping efforts.

While UN peacekeeping operations can play an important role in preventing conflict recurrence, sustainable peace ultimately depends on the efforts of local actors as well. The effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping force can be negatively impacted by nearly four different sorts of self-interested action, which the powerful members of the UN might do which can intensify the situation in conflict -afflicted areas. (referring to table 1).

	<b>Actions that Permanent members of UNSC can undertake.</b>	<b>Cause of those actions.</b>	<b>Empirical evidence</b>
<b>1</b>	Blocking the authorisation of peacekeeping mission	Using the veto power to thwart any resolution which comprise of goals that are in opposition to their own interests.	While it was more focused on the Iraq war, the United States used its veto power to oppose the UN Security Council resolution establishing a peacekeeping deployment in Liberia (Iowe & Roberts, 2016)
<b>2</b>	Ignoring or undermining or incompatible mandate of peacekeeping mission	This occurs when a member believes that the mission's mandate is not in its greatest advantage.	After NATO's operation in Kosovo in 1999, Russia disregarded the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force and established its own military presence in the territory (Cornell, 2011)
<b>3</b>	Withdrawing the troops or Underfunding	Reduced funding or withdrawal of soldiers if the mission is no longer in their best interests.	The United States underfunded its peacekeeping contributions, resulting in a \$600 million budget gap for UN peacekeeping missions (Stearns, 2017).
<b>4</b>	Offering military or financial assistance to one side of a conflict.	This can jeopardise the peacekeeping mission's neutrality and impartiality. In such instances, they will support one side out of self-interest.	During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union supplied military and financial support to opposing parties in various African wars, undermining the UN peacekeeping presence in those areas (Barnett, 1998).

Table-1

## 5. Research Design

In order to test the hypothesis of this research design, this paper proposed a qualitative case study analysis. The self-interest of permanent member nations within the UN Security Council is the independent variable that influences the dependent variable, which is the

efficiency of UN peacekeeping missions in preventing war recurrence. As a result, a single case study technique is applicable in instances when the case is vital and of unique value, and where it contributes significantly to comprehending the phenomena under research. Secondary data sources will give vital contextual information and historical background for the case study investigation. Academic literature, reports from UN agencies and other international organisations, media stories, and other relevant papers will be included. Nonetheless, a single case study method will allow me to investigate this multifaceted event in depth, allowing for a more complete understanding of the mechanisms and processes involved. The DRC war is regarded as one of Africa's most complicated and persistent conflicts, and UN peacekeeping efforts in the DRC have been among the world's largest and most expensive peacekeeping missions. Consequently, researching this case contributes to a better understanding of the link between powerful UN Security Council members and the efficacy of UN peacekeeping deployments in war zones. The following approach provides high internal validity in this specific case study; nonetheless, its external validity will still hold some implications for generalisability of the theory that can be considered.

## **6. Empirical Evidence:**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is an African nation that is largely covered with enormous mineral and/or natural resources. The three main sedimentary basins are:-

1. The Central Basin
2. The Coastal Basin
3. The Grabens Albertine and Tanganyika.

Along with this, the country also has three important petroleum deposits (Nichols, Citation, 2018). The DRC is the world's largest producer of cobalt ore. Also, it is reported to have an estimated \$24 trillion tonnes of undeveloped mineral resources (Nichols, 2018). Besides this fact, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a sobering illustration of the 'resource curse'. Firstly, due to political instability caused civil wars to break out, which often happen when rebel groups can afford to finance their actions against the government because they were dissatisfied. The DRC's rebel groups have traditionally been driven by a trifecta of factors that includes illicit dependency on resource exports, slow economic growth, and inadequate pay (Collier, 2007). Given that the African nation's army is severely underfunded and understaffed to maintain order in the region, these natural resources are also at the forefront of the colossal presence of several rebel factions in the Eastern portion of the country. Decades of bad governance eventually resulted in state collapse and civil war.

According to numerous academics, a number of important players have contributed to and are still involved in the exploitation of the DRC's abundant natural resources. State, rebel organisations, the government, neighbouring nations, and a significant amount of foreign critical actors are among them.

However, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), also known '*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo*' for the Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in resolutions 1279 (1999) and 1291 (2000), to monitor the peace process of the Second Congo War, though much of its focus later shifted to the Ituri conflict, the Kivu conflict, and the Dongo conflict.

#### a. Chinese self-interested actions

With Sky News, Alex Griffith has exposed the some awful practises of the Chinese in the DRC (2017). In his special study, it was described how cobalt is illegally mined in the DRC using difficult tools in tough environments that might be dangerous, and how it is then sold to Chinese MNCs and dealers for very little compensation. Big Chinese MNCs are willing to do whatever to increase China's already unstable political climate in the resource-rich African nation of DRC (Burns,2016). Chinese demand for cobalt and other minerals has fuelled illicit and uncontrolled mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, leading to the exploitation of local resources and triggering animosity in the country.

'The Arms Flyers by Amnesty International: Commercial Aviation, Human Rights, and the Commerce of War and Weapons' research report, provides evidence of Chinese aircraft and aviation firms' involvement in the delivery of guns and other military hardware to conflict areas in Africa, particularly the DRC.

#### b. United States's actions-

Just \$718 million of the \$928 million in foreign aid that the US government promised to give to the DRC in 2020 has been paid out. Even though the UN's record-breaking \$1.6 billion international humanitarian fundraising request for the DRC is the largest in the world, it has only received less than half of its money as of late. Furthermore, the issue is exacerbating. There is a substantial risk that peacekeeping operations will fail as a consequence of inadequate financing for the required protection, training, and equipment. The efficiency of UN peacekeeping missions may be hampered by this lack of finance, which may also endanger personnel.

## U.N. Spending on Peacekeeping Operations, 1948–Current

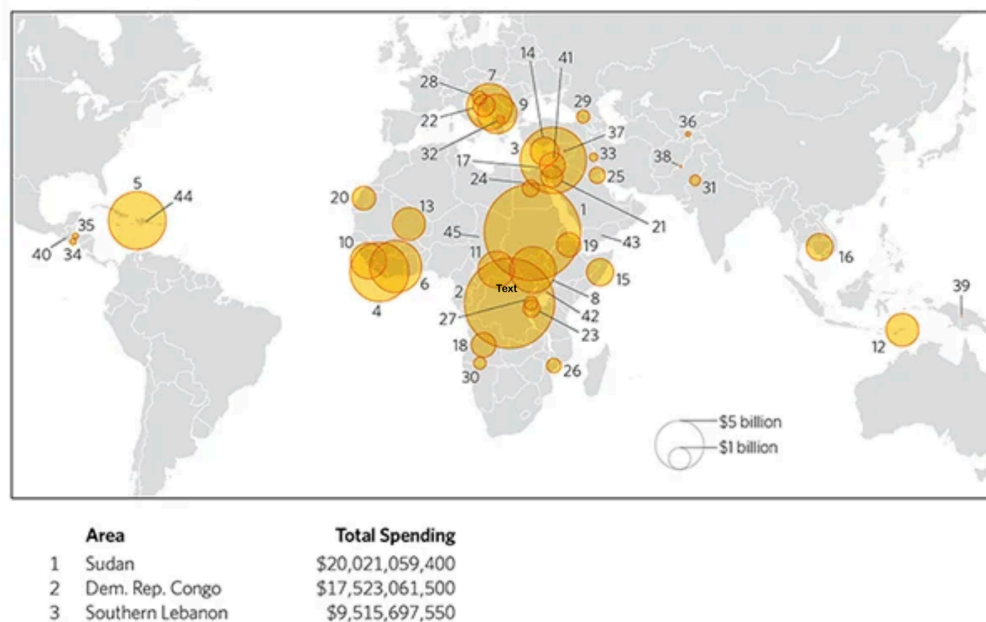


Fig-1

The Congo has held one of the largest United Nations peacekeeping forces over the past three decades of conflict and has received tens of billions of dollars in humanitarian assistance. Ironically, the mission was founded in 1999, and the protection of people was added to its mandate in 2010. This illustrates the insufficiency or incompatibility of the mission's mandate to protect the human rights of Congolese. On that note, even the report released by High commissioner of human rights (OHCHR), 2020, believes that the mission's mandate for DRC needs to be strengthened and re-evaluated for optimistic results. Although intervening in the country for more than 20 years, the UN mission has long been held responsible for its failure to stabilise the nation. Hence, it is more challenging for the UN to fulfil its purpose of sustaining international peace and security as the self-interest of powerful member nations as seen in (section a & b above) can fuel conflict and instability in conflict-affected countries.

Reportedly, the Congolese perspective appears to be of hostile towards UN. The documentary film "Congo- My Precious" by Anneliese Roos (2017) mentions a number of facts from the Congolese people regarding the UN and the western world that are highly questionable .The documentary's host revealed that when he began working for MONUSCO following the genocide in Rwanda, there was a civil war raging and people were being killed all over the place, but MONUSCO was powerless to intervene because their mandate suggested to simply observe and refrain from getting involved in the Congolese issue. He continued by saying that even if there had been a tiny amount of combat near their UN army base, they would not have left their base to help. This implies how the UN peacekeeping force's mandate was incompatible. Some of the citizens have also expressed how helpless they feel as a result of their opinion that "it's white people (powerful nations)



that pick their president and put them in power, afterwards, that government determines the fate and way of life of Congolese people.” These interviews serve as a convincing demonstration of how the west is affecting and determining the future of the DRC.

## **7. Conclusion:**

This essay contends that the objectives of peacekeeping operations can be affected by the preferences and interests of permanent members, who may place their own strategic or financial interests above the aim of establishing lasting peace and stability in the target region. The article presents a particular theory and suggests a way to evaluate the practical consequences of the hypothesis, using the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a case study.

However, one potential limitation of this paper can be not being able to address the potential counterarguments or alternative explanations. As there is a possibility of other factors, other than the self interest of powerful members states that contribute to the recurrence of war. Nevertheless, this paper explains one of the factors which is leading to recurrence of war.

To address this issue, some policy recommendations are suggested which could be implemented. Firstly, establishing precise standards for mission deployment, including regional organisations, and encouraging openness in the decision-making processes. Efforts should also be made to address the underlying causes of conflict. The independence and sovereignty of the DRC should be emphasised to neighbouring states that serve as entry points for illicit mining operations carried out within the nation, and tight border surveillance should be implemented. Each international mining deal with a foreign nation should include financial resources and specific goals that ensure the local upskilling and training of personnel.

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