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Редакционная статья / Editorial article

In This Issue

Alex J. Bellamy

Asia-Pacific Responsibility Center, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
International Peace Institute, New York, USA

В этом номере

Алекс Дж. Беллами

Азиатско-Тихоокеанский центр ответственности по защите, Университет Квинсленда, Брисбен, Австралия
Международный институт мира, Нью-Йорк, США

Despite the optimism caused by the end of the Cold War, the international agenda is still visibly dominated by the problems of armed conflicts, both internal and regional. In response to the new character of armed conflicts new practices arose for their prevention, management, and mitigation.

The proposed issue of *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* is fully devoted to peacekeeping issues with special focus on possibilities and mechanisms necessary to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations of regional organizations. The present issue covers the overarching issues of peacekeeping, among which — peacekeeping efforts in Africa, challenges, participants and mechanisms; and peacekeeping activities of states.

A narrow understanding of international peacekeeping mainly focuses on UN peacekeeping, implemented on the basis of the UN Charter principles. Yet in a broad sense, international peacekeeping includes all forms of international intervention into armed conflicts (from states, coalitions of states, international universal and regional organizations) in order to prevent, settle and resolve them.

Currently, academic discourse on peacekeeping focuses either on the problem of resolving conflicts and overcoming new challenges during the implementation of missions, or on the evolution of peacekeeping concept since the 1990s. This issue is special as it critically analyzes regional peacekeeping operations, using practical cases, identifies the key problems of peacekeeping, assesses the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, and provides recommendations for improving their impact, taking into account cross-border challenges and threats.

In the paper on International Peacekeeping in the 21st Century K.P. Apuuli (Makerere University, Uganda) emphasizes that the scope of the peacekeeping activities of organizations is constantly expanding. Peacekeeping operations are supplemented to a greater extent by humanitarian missions (protection of the population and objects, demining, escorting convoys, delivery of water, essential items, food, provision of the medical assistance, etc.). At the same time, peacekeeping is witnessing a significant number of constraints. This is in particular the case of the African Union, which has gradually shifted to a hybrid type of response

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within the framework of the United Nations — African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Conflicts and terrorism are deeply rooted in the global agenda and treated as new global challenges. An increasing number of modern conflicts demonstrate the trend of intervention into the internal affairs of states. This is the core of analysis in the paper on Islamist groups on the Sinai Peninsula by of A.V. Krylov (MGIMO University, Russia). A.A. Khaydarov (Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan) reveals the role of Islam in conflict resolution in Afghanistan, while S.A. Pritchkin (IMEMO RAS, Russia) evaluates cooperation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

In the paper on African Peacekeeping and African Integration K. Gottschalk (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) links African integration with the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The author argues that efforts to maintain peace and develop economic interaction between countries are the most important aspects of African integration, stressing the ineffectiveness of the mechanism of the North African Regional Force and the North African Reserve Brigade.

Peacekeeping as a special area of international interaction has taken a firm place in the global security agenda. At the same time, it faces a wide range of challenges. The effectiveness of the peacekeeping system highly depends on the role of international organizations and potential of multilateral diplomacy. A.V. Kornilenko from Russian Ministry of Defence in his paper assesses the CSTO peacekeeping activities, identifies its strengths and weaknesses, and summaries possible ways to increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping under its auspices.

The effectiveness of peacekeeping also depends on the political will of the states who frequently follow different approaches to the

nature and legitimacy of intervention in conflicts and whose goals are seem to be contradictory. The formation and evolution of the Japanese approach to peacekeeping under the auspices of the UN is presented in the article of O.A. Dobrinskaya (Diplomatic Academy, MFA of Russia). Germany's participation in the peacekeeping operations in Africa is analyzed by N.V. Ivkina (RUDN University, Russia).

The paradigm of international peacekeeping proceeds from the common approach to the intervention practice. Any interference into internal affairs of the states should be regarded as an extreme and truly necessary measure of the international community. In this regard, E.A. Oghuvbu (Covenant University, Nigeria) and O.B. Oghuvbu (Delta State University, Nigeria) argues that in Nigerian conflicts between farmers and herders form the strongest ground for disagreement having a devastating effect on the national security.

The interview with Professor N.A. Nikitin from MGIMO University (Russia) has a broad generalizing character in its description of the previous experience, but it mostly opens up new horizons for the future discourse and practice. He speaks about new models of international intervention in the conflicts which coexist and replace the peacekeeping practice of UN under the mandate of the Security Council. He expresses the hope that peacekeeping activities will remain a key instrument of resolving conflicts, since there is no real alternative to just and peaceful prevention and resolution of crises.

A variety of the newly published books on peacekeeping is reviewed. Among other — *The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa*, monographs on Chinese security cooperation with African countries, as well as *Non-Western Responses to Terrorism* — edited volume issued by Manchester University. The two newest Russian books on conflicts and peace-keeping are also reviewed.

About the author: *Bellamy Alex J.* — Director, the Asia-Pacific Responsibility Center, Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland (Australia), Senior Non-Resident Advisor, International Peace Institute, New York, USA (e-mail: a.bellamy@uq.edu.au).

Сведения об авторе: *Беллами Алекс Дж.* — директор Азиатско-Тихоокеанского центра ответственности по защите, профессор по изучению проблем мира и конфликтов Университета Квинсленда (Австралия), старший советник-нерезидент Международного института мира, г. Нью-Йорк, США (e-mail: a.bellamy@uq.edu.au).