

The Economist

Problems with PEC?

Michael Boag, Feb 14 2000

In 1996, Jean-Francois Desgroseilliers, then Secretary General of the Organization of Cyberian Nations (OCN), announced the creation of a joint peacekeeping force: the Peacekeepers of Equatorial Cyberspace (PEC). Tremendous enthusiasm surrounded the Desgroseilliers announcement; Prime Minister Doe of Concordia asserted that the PEC demonstrated "the willingness and desire for peace in Equatorial Cyberspace". Indeed, the prospects of a peaceful future of co-operation in the troubled region appeared to be very promising. Four years later, however, the general air of optimism which surrounded the creation of PEC has dissipated, only to be replaced by sentiments of intense frustration.

The primary motivation behind the OCN's decision to create the PEC was what appears to have been a genuine desire on the part of the countries of Equatorial Cyberspace to play a larger part in peacebuilding efforts in the region. Civil war had been ravaging the state of Brynania since 1984 and it was hoped that the creation of a multinational peacekeeping force could help bring about an end to the destructive conflict. All member-states of the OCN agreed to contribute financially to the PEC with Concordia, Udem and Uqamistan all committed to supplying troops for the force. It was not long, however, before significant problems became apparent.



The first major impasse which the PEC was forced to confront was the issue of who would command the force. Udem objected to placing its troops under the indoctrinated leadership of the Uqamistan Armed Forces, while Concordia insisted on exclusive command of any of its forces serving in the PEC. After lengthy negotiations it was agreed that the leadership of the force would fall under a triumvirate featuring one member from each of the contributing states with

The Economist

unanimity required for any action or movement of the PEC. In essence, the command structure of the force was not be integrated with Concordia, Udem and Uqamistan all commanding their respective forces from their capital city.

A second serious shortcoming of the OCN's new peacekeeping force has been with regard to its equipment. Questions of standard uniforms and ammunition have been raised, however, the most glaring problem facing the organization has been a lack of adequate transportation to move the PEC into a theatre of operations. The road infrastructure of Equatorial Cyberspace is relatively underdeveloped, and movement of a military force between anywhere but major cities without the proper transportation is problematic. Few countries in the region have armed forces equipped with relatively modern transportation equipment and those who do have been unwilling to contribute it to the PEC. Lorenzo Lamas, Uqamistan's Minister of Defence went on record as saying: "We're supplying the men; Icasia, Ruritania they have helicopters and trucks, let them move the PEC".

Notwithstanding the problems of integration and equipment the largest obstacles the PEC has been forced to overcome are political. While the PEC was created with a mandate to help bring the Civil War in Brynanian to a conclusion, ideological and political differences between member states has thus far prevented its deployment. Concordia not only wishes to use the PEC as means of halting the Civil War in Brynanian but also hopes to use it in order to allow for the initiation of political reforms with the ultimate goal of establishing a representative political system. Udem, however, insists that the sole objective of the PEC should be to halt the conflict, and firmly opposes any modification of the Brynanian political structure. In addition Uqamistan's revolutionary government are known to be sympathetic to the plight of the PFLZ, the major insurgent group in Brynanian, which does not play out well in Helena. Regional power broker, and Hamra supporter, Ruritania have insisted that no peacekeeping force deployed in Brynanian can be, as a foreign ministry spokesman affirms: "supporters of the destructive PFLZ". Ruriania has, therefore, vowed to block any deployment of the PEC to Brynanian that consists of any members of the Uqami military.

The establishment of the PEC appeared to be a significant step in the direction of peace in Equatorial Cyberspace, however, the OCN's peacekeeping force has been plagued with difficulties since its inception. Currently, the PEC is a poorly integrated and equipped force incapable of transporting itself. Even if deployment was possible, the political intransigence of OCN members has prevented PEC's

The Economist

engagement in the region's most serious conflagration. The potential for effective OCN intervention in Brynania in the immediate future appears remote at best.

Disclaimer: This is not the real Economist. Brynania is not a real country and exists as part of a fictional conflict simulation.
