

THE 'LOCAL' RESPONSES TO THE MANAGEMENT
OF POST-COLONIAL CONFLICTS BY UNITED
NATIONS EARLY COLD WAR PEACEKEEPING

LINKING COLONIAL/IMPERIAL/INTERNATIONAL
AND GLOBAL HISTORY

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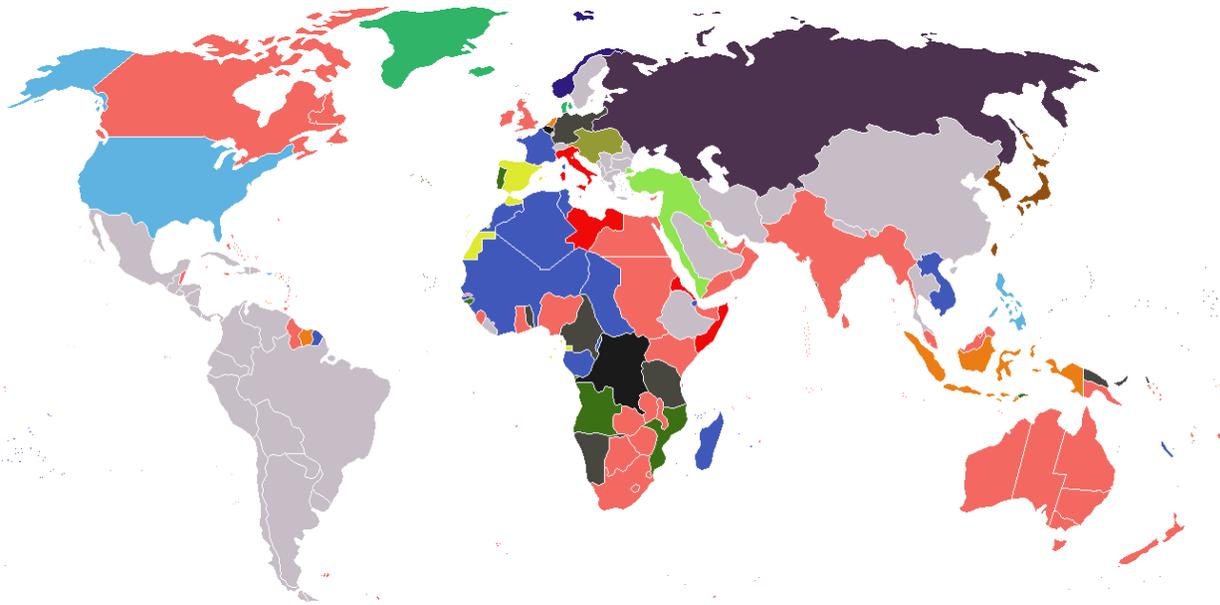
The narrative of the United Nations and most troop-contributing states in one quote

- *“A peacekeeping force is like a family friend who has moved into the household stricken by disaster. It must conciliate, console, and discreetly run the household without ever appearing to dominate or usurp the natural rights of those it is helping”.*

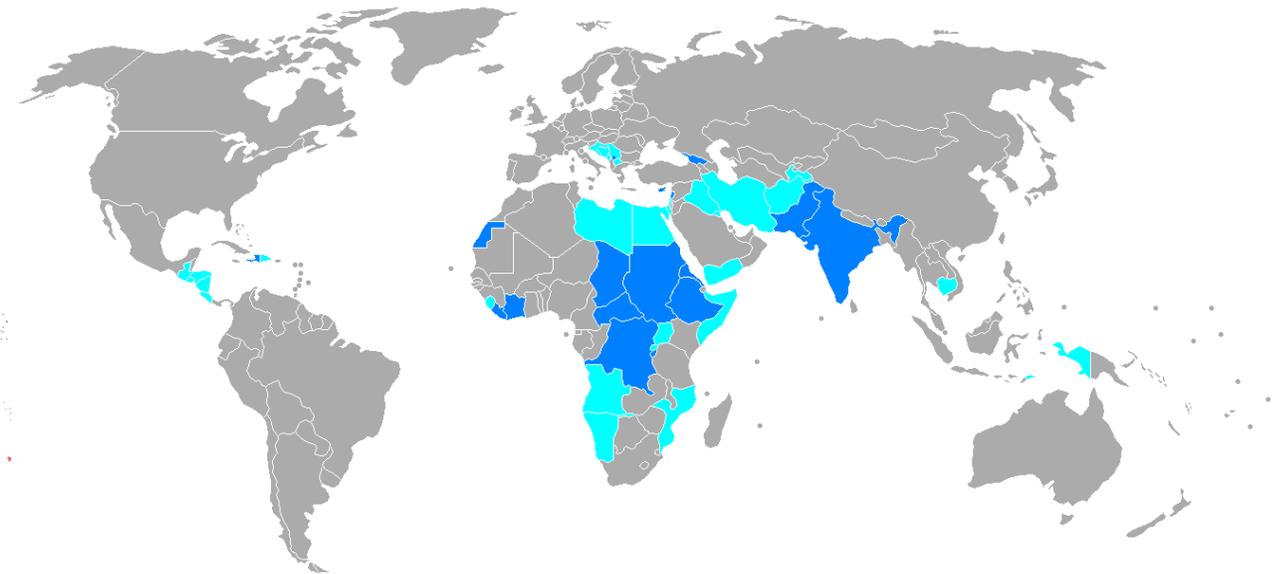
Brian Urquhart, former British military officer, UN Under-Secretary-General and involved in several interventions

(B. Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War*, New York, 1987, p. 248)

A quick overview of UN peacekeeping



Colonies in the imperial world, 1914



Peacekeeping Mission areas of the UN, 2016

Inspiration – I: Contemporary Social Science Research

What does 'peacekeeping' (& statebuilding) do?

- Decision-making from afar (*Al-Qaq 2011, Cunliffe 2013, Zanotti 2011 etc.*)
- Externalisation of government bodies (*Chandler 2006, Zanotti 2011 etc.*)
- Few 'local' means of influence (*Chandler 2006, Zanotti 2011 etc.*)
- Little or no accountability to population (*Chandler 2006, Zanotti 2011 etc.*)
- Insecurity for 'local' populations (*Auteserre 2010, Higate and Henry 2009, Paris, 2000, Pouligny 2007 etc.*)
- Aid-Dependency (*Ear 2009*)

What do scholars call it?

- Empire Lite (*Ignatieff 2003*)
- New imperialism (*Razack 2004, Charbonneau 2008*)
- Imperialism (*Darby 2006*)
- Empire in denial (*Chandler 2006*)
- Imperial policing (*Rubinstein 2010*)
- **Imperial multilateralism** (*Cunliffe 2013*)

Inspiration – II: Colonial & Imperial Historiography

- Focus on states/empires, institutions, bodies, places, spaces, interactions
- Colonial – Imperial = simultaneous
- Colonial and imperial structures = accumulating processes themselves the outcomes of
 - human action
 - the logics, technologies and practices of governance of existing institutions
- Colonial interactions = classed, racialised and gendered
- Sensitivity to agency + different segments in 'local' population: Some 'locals' benefit, most didn't

Today: Focus on the reactions of 'locals' towards 3 interventions

1

- Egypt & Gaza Strip
- 1956-1967
- 3.500-6.000 UN soldiers

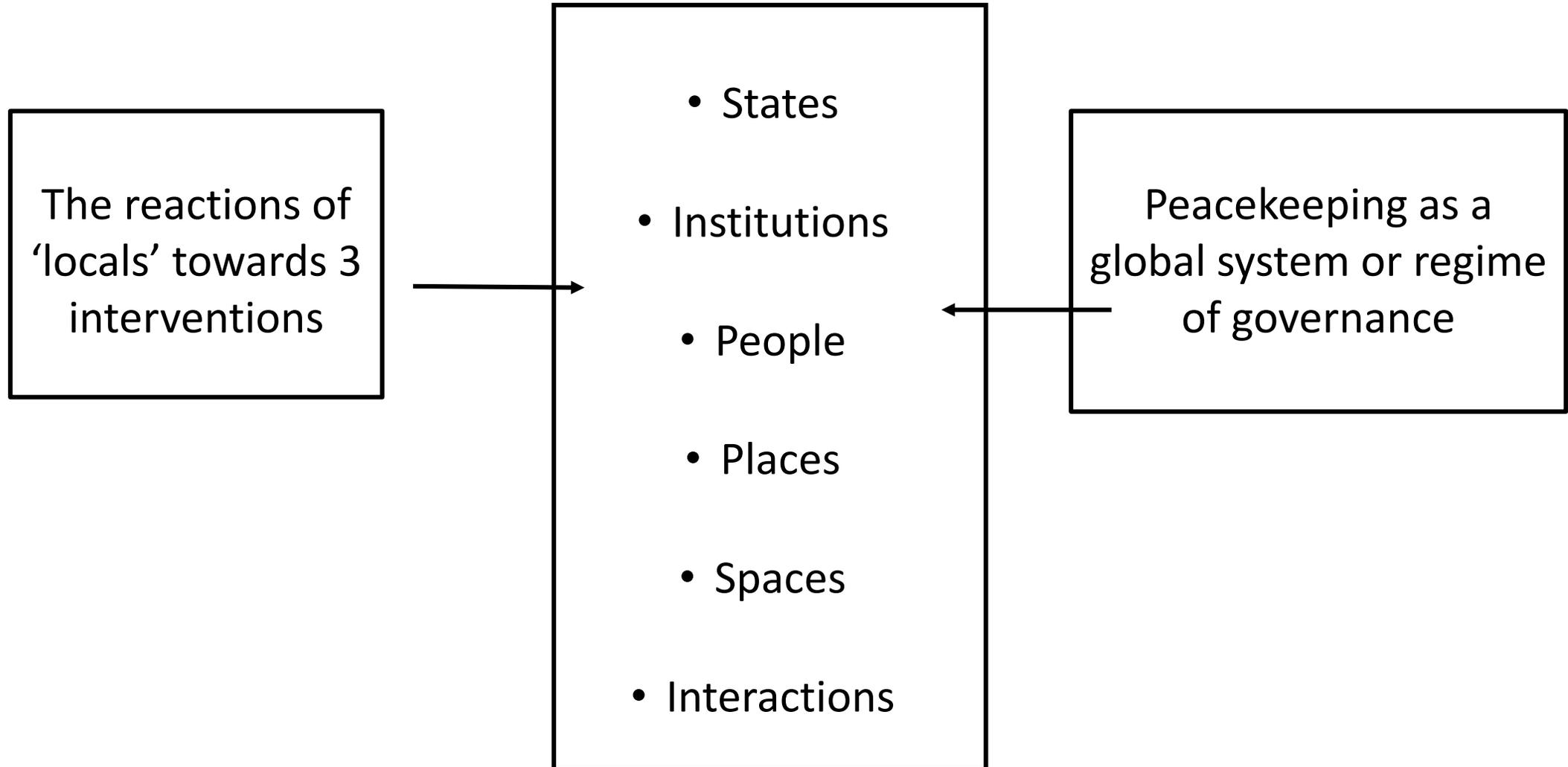
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- Congo
- 1960-1964
- 20.000 UN soldiers

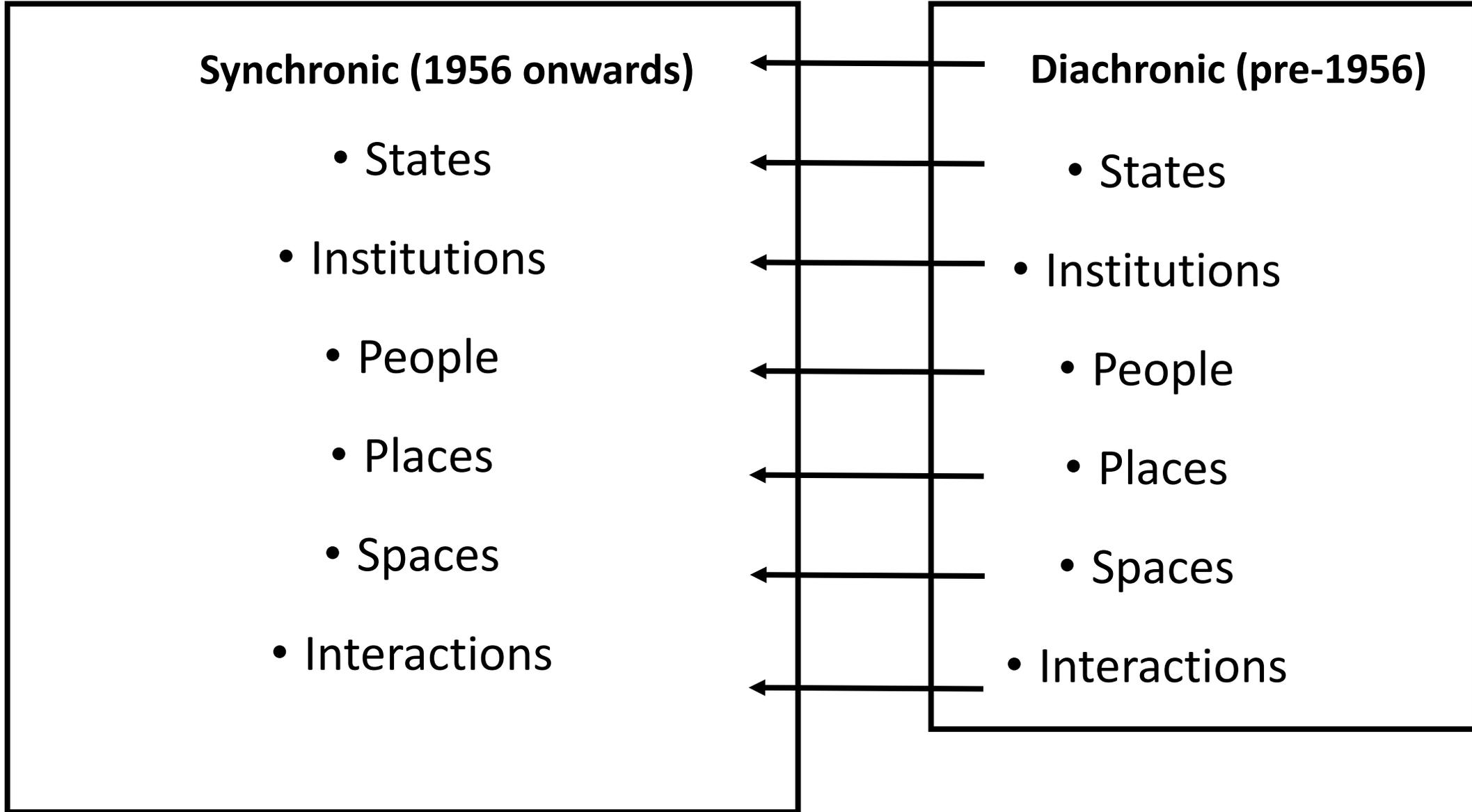
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- West Papua (West Irian)
- 1962-1963
- 1.200 soldiers

Understanding Peacekeeping as Phenomena in Global History (I)



Understanding Peacekeeping as Phenomena in Global History (II)



Literature and sources

- Colonial historiography
- Cold War social science research (then contemporary)
- (International) Cold War historiography
- (national) Peacekeeping historiography

- Archival material from the United Nations Archive in New York (3 months)
 - Egypt and Gaza Strip
 - Congo
 - West Papua (West Irian)
- Materials in the Danish National Archives from the interventions in the Gaza Strip and Congo
- Foreign Relations of the US-series
- Published diaries and memoirs

Egypt and Gaza Strip: Dominant views in research and politics

- International police force (1956-1958)
- Peacekeeping as defined by principles in UN Secretary-General in 1958-study
- Successful 'Classical' peacekeeping according to these principles from 1958-2016: 'Buffer operation', neutral, & part of peaceful international order (India, Canada + Nordic countries in particular)

- Write according to (inter-)national narratives
- No use of colonial/imperial/global historiography => No thinking about continuity from British era or part of an emerging global system of governance
- No interest in historicising the bodies, spaces, interactions etc. of the "mission area"

Egypt and Gaza Strip: Background

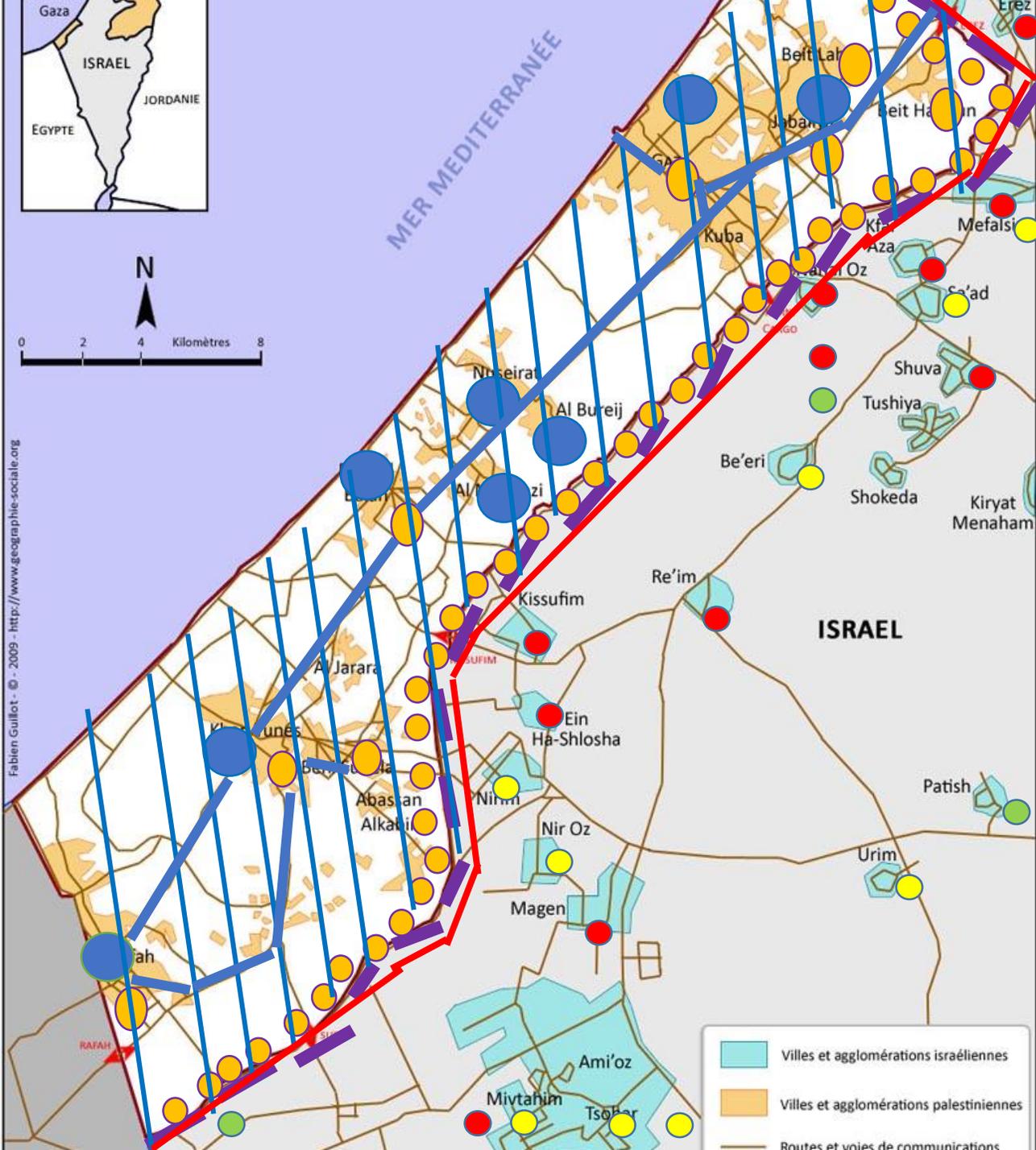
- Connected to inter-imperial project of Suez Canal (Huber 2012 & 2013)
- Connected to ideas of internationalising the Suez Canal with UN force since 1951 (volatile Israeli-Egyptian relations) (*UN records*)

- Not planned, but outcome of British 'decolonisation' of Egypt and Mandate Palestine + joint British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt and the Gaza Strip (*ie. Smith et al 2008, Diehl*)
- Became part of Eisenhower administration's multi-pronged strategy + cooperation with pro-Western UN leadership due to importance of oil supplies for Western Europe and Commonwealth trade (*FRUS records + UN Advisory Meeting records*)
- Aim of reopening and securing canal (*FRUS records + UN Advisory Meeting records*)

Egypt and Gaza Strip: the UN force/staff

- Canadian (and 'white') commander from 1956-1962 with friendly relations with British-French commanders (down through 'white' ranks) (*memoirs and diaries*)
- Forces
 - Canal-users or close with canal-users (Denmark, Norway, India & Canada)
 - NATO (Canada, Denmark, and Norway)
 - Commonwealth (Canada & India)
 - Pro-American states (Brazil & Columbia)
 - Friends of Egypt & neutral (Indonesia & Yugoslavia)
 - No pro-Soviet forces
- Civilian staff
 - Not British and French, but predominantly Western

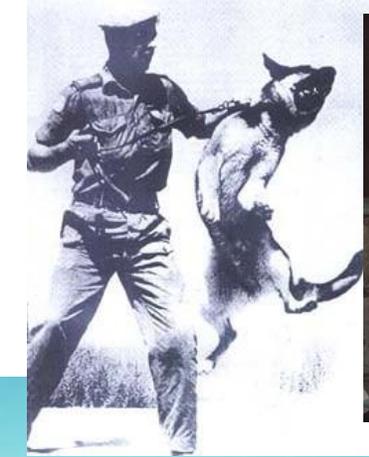
Reactions to insecurities and precarity



- Return of Egyptian Police and Palestinian Border Guards
- UN military presence with 5.500 soldiers enforcing no-crossing regime
- ‘peacekeeping economy’ with international presence pushing up prices and egyptians buying luxury goods from Lebanon + remittances from Gulf states
- UN traffic accidents
- Intensifying Israeli overflights + patrols on land/water

- Occasional shootings and arrests of Palestinian and Bedouin adults and children in ADL zone + retribution via mines + stabbings + fights (women on ADL and in villages)
- Land compensation scheme after pressure on Egyptian gov.
- Establishment of Fatah and deployment of armed companies in 1959 almost forced out UN forces from fear of clashes
- Girls marrying younger as family means of getting extra support, but overweight of boys (Gulf remittances scheme)
- Establishment of PLA in 1964 after Pal. pressure
- **Continued rise of angry young males + reinforcement of enemy image**
- **Nassir: Accept formation of Fatah + Formation of Palestinian Liberation Army and Executive Council + Gulf remittances regime**

"The mission area" (parallels to Mandate)



Imperial multilateralism? (Cunliffe 2013)

- Continuing decision-making from afar (from British era)
- Continuing externalisation of government bodies (from British era)
- Continuing few 'local' means of influence (from British era)
- Continuing little or no accountability to population (from British era)
- Continuing insecurity for 'local' populations (from British era)
- Continuing aid-Dependency (from 1948)

Congo: Dominant views in research

- Then contemporary Cold War research: political science/international relations
 - Partly focused on diplomatic issues and geopolitics (*Hoskins 1966, James 1969*)
 - Sceptical but still mostly pro-Western stance (*mostly British, American and Canadian scholars*)
 - Partly focused on 'technical' issues such as logistics, finances etc.
 - Supportive and close to insider-work (*mostly American and Canadian scholars*)

- Post-Cold War research
 - Some 'technical'/lessons learned on 'stabilisation'
 - Some national Cold War/Peacekeeping history (Spooner 2009)
 - Increasingly sceptical of
 - Pro-Western role of United Nations (*Blommaerts 1990, Gibbs 1991, 1993 & 2000, Kent 2010*)
 - Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations and US involvement in Congo (*Gibbs 1991, 1993 & 2000, Kent 2010*)
 - Other western states (James 2000)

Congo: Background

- Colonial state focused on self-sustainability and colonial economy, mostly mining & plantations (Kent 2010)
- Belgian colony provided important metals and uranium in WWII and after (Helmreich 1996)
- To gain support, Belgium invited members of US upper political elite to invest in Congo in 1950s as they had done with the British in the 1920s (Gibbs 1991 & 1993)
- Belgian military infrastructure was also part of NATO's strategic sea lines of communication that stretched across the globe (Maloney 2002)
- Growing unrest due to drop in commodity prices in late 1950s (Kent 2010)

- Emergence of various Congolese parties
- Calls for decolonisation within Congo
- Growing pressure from USSR/US to push for decolonisation
- Time schedule for independence agreed upon
 - Outflow of Belgian corporate funds
- Elections ensured Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba
- Independence process ended in insults, chaos, mutiny
- Request with UN to help

Congo: The UN force/staff

- US airlift (as in Egypt/Gaza Strip)
- UN force (19.800 at highest)
 - Commander
 - NATO (Denmark, Norway, Canada)
 - Pro-Western or Western-oriented and some with US military bases (Argentina, Brazil, Iran, Sweden, Tunisia, Morocco, Pakistan, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone)
 - Neutral/non-aligned: Yugoslavia, UAR, Ghana)

- UN staff (5.800 in late 1963)
 - Experts from the West, Western colonies or former European colonies flown in, often first class (UN records)
 - Local employees

Congo: Engendering insecurities and precarity

- Initial UN leadership in New York and Congo + US promotion of pro-Western politicians + parties => ethnic division
- Divergence between US & UN concerning support of anti-Soviet forces, the use of CIA and the use of force for direct political ends (*kent 2010*)
- Murder of Patrice Lumumba in 1961 (De Witte 2001)
- Precarity and poverty gradually felt all over Congo due to rebuilding of colonial state institutions on basis of US policies of budget cuts, salary reductions etc. by way of World Bank & IMF (*Kent 2010, UN records*)

- Shift from trading mainly with Europe to US => 50% of trade in early 1962 (*UN records*)
- Failure to offer protection to internally displaced and large scale refugee camp of 80.000 people (*UN records*)
- Re-occupation of Belgian military bases and complete take-over of racialised labour-relations and prostitution regime (*diaries, letters & UN records*)
- Colour-bar and racism in towns upon seizing Belgian villa neighbourhoods (*diaries, letters & UN records*)

Congo: Reactions to insecurities and precarity

- Personal and 'local' anger to racism, violence etc.:
 - Local small-scale attacks in streets
 - Minor ethnic groups attacked UN units (*diaries, memoirs, UN records*)
- Personal Despair:
 - Some men began prostituting their family members to the UN soldiers, often on the base (50% of UN soldiers expected to be hit by STD) (*UN records & diaries*)

- Collective Despair + Anti-Western sentiment:
 - Revolts from localised to several provinces
 - => UN withdrawal during revolts and US use of Southern African mercenaries + support coup of Army Commander Mobuto

Imperial multilateralism? (Cunliffe 2013)

- Continuing decision-making from afar (from Belgian era with US/UK twist)
- Continuing externalisation of government bodies (from Belgian era with US/UK twist)
- Continuing few 'local' means of influence (from Belgian era with US/UK twist)
- Continuing little or no accountability to population (from Belgian era with US/UK twist)
- Continuing insecurity for 'local' populations (from Belgian era with US/UK twist)

West Papua (West Irian): Dominant views in research and politics

- Shameful Pro-Western Sacrifice of nation to Indonesia for gains in Cold War (*Van der Veur 1964*)
- Shameful Pro-Western Sacrifice of nation to Indonesia for gains in Cold War + subsequent decade-long Indonesian exploitation of oil and minerals and counter-insurgency campaign (*Saltford 2003*)

West Papua (West Irian): Background

- Pacific = American 'imperial lake' with base network (*Friedman 2000, Green 2010, Kramer 2006, Lutz 2009, Sandars 2000*)
- Dutch decolonisation after US pressure => Indonesian state built on colonial state's violent and discriminatory practices and ideas (*Berger 1997, Nordholt 2011, Purwanto 2009*)
- US/USSR struggle to influence Indonesia (*Anwar 2012, Boden 2008, Lau 2012*)
- West Papua last Dutch colony (*Saltford 2003*)
- Indonesian government wants West Papua due to oil, minerals, nationalism (*Saltford 2003*)

- Low intensity but escalating tension between Indonesian and Dutch military units over early 1962 (*Saltford 2003*)
- The Dutch governments sends several war ships assigned to NATO (*Saltford 2003*)
- Kennedy administration interested in region and wants Dutch government to focus on Europe and commitments to NATO (*Saltford 2003*)
- Kennedy administration decides West Papua should be Indonesian (*Van der Veur 1964, Saltford 2003*)
- United Nations becomes vehicle for transfer (*Saltford 2003*)

West Papua (West Irian): The UN force/staff

- US airlift (as in Egypt/Gaza Strip & Congo)
- Pakistani UN force (*MacMahon 1988*)
 - Trained according to British military colonial/imperial warfare doctrine
 - Pakistan entered CENTO-alliance with (UK, Turkey etc.) in 1955
 - US arms supplies pick up from 1959
- Civilian staff (*UN records*)
 - Dutch and Papuan officials
 - Other Western staff
- Malaysian units for UN police force (*UN records*)
 - Trained by British as colonial police (rather than community police) for especially rural counter-insurgency
 - Partly recruited similarly structured tribal cultures as on West Papua

West Papua (West Irian): Reactions to insecurities and precarity

- UN take over control of West Papua from Dutch
- UN move to prepare for Indonesian tax and legal system despite referendum for Indonesia or independence in 1968 (*UN records*)
- UN pays local (Dutch-trained) staff less than the Dutch gov. (*UN records*)
- Undisputed influx of Indonesian military units and administrators before handover (*Saltford 2003*)
- Growing discrimination and random violence by Indonesian units + gradual Indonesian pressure on press and freedom of speech (*Saltford 2003, Van der Veur 1964*)
- Handover to Indonesia 1963

- Complaints from Public workers unions of salaries
- Anger with UN dismissal of minimum wage
- Growing discontent in remote hillside villages and towns
- West Papuan National guard close to riot => UN force disarms 'national guard' (*Saltford 2003*)
- Urban and tribal discontent shift to insurgency after handover in 1963
 - From 1965: increasingly coordinated response to
 - Indonesian migration of 100.000+ Indonesians
 - Indonesian (and Western) exploitation of oil and minerals
 - Indonesian counter-insurgency

Imperial multilateralism? (Cunliffe 2013)

- Continuing decision-making from afar (from Dutch era)
- Continuing externalisation of government bodies (from Dutch era)
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- Continuing little or no accountability to population (from Dutch era)
- Continuing insecurity for 'local' populations (from Dutch era)

Concluding thoughts

- Parallels in the regimes of governance concerning

- Health/demographics (*Connelly 2010*)
- Migration/mobilities (*Huber 2012 & 2013*)
- Agriculture (*Hodge 2008*)
- Law (*Anghie 2007*)
- Development (*Duffield 2007, Didier 2014*)

- **Imperial multilateralism?** (*Cunliffe 2013*)

- *Imperial globality and global coloniality?* (*Escobar 2004, Mignolo 2011*)

- Focusing on the logics and practices in the technologies of power of international regimes via prisms of rupture vs. continuity, global historians need to pay attention to

- the shift from a global system of multiple imperial (world-)systems
- to an emerging inter-imperial system
- to a still emerging 'international' system