Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges in United Nations Peace Operations

with the *Geneva Centre for Security Policy*

Caty Clement and Adam C. Smith, eds.

JULY 2009

INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE

ABOUT THE EDITORS

CATY CLEMENT is Faculty Member and Co-Director for the New Issues in Security Course, Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

ADAM C. SMITH is Senior Program Officer at the International Peace Institute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Caty Clement and *Adam C. Smith*, rapporteurs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Overstretched," "underresourced," and "overmatched" are terms commonly used to describe UN peacekeeping. The first is a result of the vast number of conflicts the Security Council has chosen to address with peace operations. The second is due to a lack of available specialized equipment, highly trained personnel, and funds—a constraint compounded by global recession. The final descriptor, "overmatched," is, at least partly, a consequence of the challenging, complex environment in which the UN operates. The multiplicity of actors involved, the unpredictability of the environment, and the enormous obstacles to sustainable peace all suggest a complexity through which the UN—a large bureaucracy dependent on the will and capacity of its member states—is often unprepared to navigate.

In recent years, efforts to integrate UN organizations and activities in the field, streamline decision making, improve communication, and strengthen planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes, implicitly acknowledged the challenges specific to complex operating environments. Management, as a field of study and of practice, attempts to do the same: limit unpredictability, anticipate crisis and response, improve efficiency, and measure and learn from the results to improve effectiveness. This report, and the seminar on which it is based, outlines the challenge of being "overmatched" by complexity, while offering suggestions for understanding and dealing with complex environments.

Five key challenges, relating to planning, leadership, organizational complexity, interagency cooperation, and exit strategies, were identified:

The first and possibly most important element of a peace operation resides in its planning. Sound planning processes are critical in forecasting and responding to the highly unpredictable nature of postconflict environments. Planning, due in large part to the unique circumstances of each conflict, needs strong and sustained input from those in the field with the best knowledge of the situation on the ground. This field-based input must be sustained through the life of a mission because of changing events on the ground, suggesting the need for a full-time, devoted field-planning officer or unit within each peacekeeping operation (PKO). Planning must be coordinated on—at the very least—a cursory level with the activities of the host government, bilateral donors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and must address input from ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

A second crucial aspect pertains to leadership, which, like planning, is key to the success of complex endeavors. To choose the right leadership for its peace operations, UN headquarters must inject more transparency into the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) selection process, as well as give the individual SRSGs more room to hand select a complementary senior staff. Most importantly, perhaps, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his or her deputy bring coherence to the varied activities of the UN mission, agencies, funds, and programs. He or she works to overcome the structural and resource challenges inherent in UN peace operations. To accomplish these goals, the SRSG must be provided with better analytical and political support from headquarters and be given clearer authority on budgeting and questions of conduct and discipline.

Third, flexibility and the capacity to adapt are essential to making missions effective. Managing a complex environment requires the ability to learn and adapt to changing circumstances and the capacity to institutionalize those lessons learned

into policies, procedures, and guidelines. Unfortunately, peacekeeping is at a structural disadvantage when it comes to organizational learning. Peace operations are temporary and ad hoc by nature, contracts are often short term, training opportunities are limited, and, consequently, staff turnover is high. Exacerbating this is the constant state of crisis and response that typifies a peace operation in the field, making it difficult to prioritize systematic learning. Dedicated best-practice officers in every mission, increased staff retention through harmonized conditions of service, defined career paths, and regularized training would all assist the organizational learning process.

Fourth, the UN does not operate alone in any environment, and in many ways, success or failure depends less on the UN than on the other organizational entities working around it. Regional organizations now operate side-by-side with the UN in some missions, while host governments, bilateral donors, NGOs, international financial institutions, and, often, spoilers together comprise the postconflict landscape. Success depends on the UN's ability to leverage its partnerships with other organizations and groups, coordinate activities among them, bring spoilers into the political process, and enable and strengthen host governments. For this to happen, a common strategic vision is required, developed in coordination with all key stakeholders. Some suggest that a broader compact involving the major players at the UN—the Security Council, the Fifth Committee, and the troop-contributing countries—as well as the international financial institutions and other major actors, such as regional organizations, is needed to support an operation from start to finish.

Finally, to manage a successful exit, the handover of all activities to the host government must be anticipated from the first entry of the UN. Planning for exit or transition starts at the very beginning and needs steadfast political support from the international parties and more analytical support from the UN Secretariat.

INTRODUCTION

UN peacekeeping celebrated its sixtieth birthday in 2008. By the end of that year, more than 91,000 uniformed personnel were serving in sixteen peacekeeping missions. That number increases to roughly 110,000 when local and international civilian staff are included.[1] This second surge of UN peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War equates to a more than six-fold increase from just a decade ago.

In addition to the number, the scope of peace operations has dramatically increased. Multidimensional peace operations can contain more than twenty occupational sections, from administration and aviation, to civil affairs and security. Put simply, UN peace operations are performing far more activities with many more people and machines, and much more money than ever before. As the scale and scope increase, so does the complexity of the terrain. Considering that most of these tasks are performed by multiple actors with varied goals in insecure environments and tenuous political contexts, the challenge seems even more formidable. In a complex environment predictability is low, unintended consequences are many, and effectively organizing and managing resources becomes both more daunting and more essential.

The UN Secretariat and UN member states have devoted substantial thought and effort to readying UN peace operations for contemporary challenges. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) have embarked on an agenda of reform involving several interrelated processes. The guiding strategy of this agenda is based on "Peace Operations 2010," which aims to clarify the policies and procedures needed to effectively support and further professionalize peacekeeping over the next decade.[2] At the planning level, the Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP) is an effort to provide a much-needed integration framework for the full UN presence in the field.[3] Additionally, working in collaboration with the UN membership,

1   United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), "Monthly Summary of Military and Police Contribution to United Nations Operations," December 2008, available at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/Yearly06.pdf .

2   See DPKO, "'Peace Operations 2010' Reform Strategy (Excerpts from the Report of the Secretary-General)," 2007, available at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/po2010.pdf .

3   See United Nations, "Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP): Guidelines Endorsed by the UN Secretary-General," June 13, 2006, available at www.undg.org/docs/9907/IMPP-Revised-Guidelines-130606.pdf ; and United Nations, "IMPP Guidelines: Role of Headquarters: Integrated Planning for UN Field Presences," May 2009.

DPKO worked "to codify the major lessons learned from the past six decades of United Nations peacekeeping experience" through the "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines [Capstone Doctrine]."[4]

Such efforts are taking place, however, at a time when many believe that UN peacekeeping is already in crisis.[5] Three main challenges related to the capacities of peacekeeping missions, the environments in which they operate, and the political backing they receive, are repeatedly cited. First, limited financial and human resources are regularly overstretched, testing the managerial and organizational capacity of the mission. Second, deployments are often mandated or planned for places where there is little or no peace to keep—an existential test for peacekeeping. Third, peacekeeping efforts in postconflict societies involve many different political actors with a wide array of political agendas. While the former challenge may admit to more straightforward solutions, the latter two suggest further managerial and political dilemmas. Personnel in the field not only have to deal with "traditional spoilers," but also governmental and nongovernmental actors who can exploit the managerial, legal, and political weaknesses of a mission to near paralysis. Such an environment requires factoring in higher levels of risk and uncertainty to planning and budgeting. Accordingly, these dilemmas require improved methods of engagement and communication among key stakeholders (i.e., the UN Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries, the UN Security Council, the General Assembly's Fourth and Fifth Committees, regional organizations, relevant donors, and regional powers).

In an era of limited resources, entrenched political divisions, and challenging operational contexts, robust and effective operations on the ground seem more difficult than ever. Such increasing complexity calls for a deeper understanding of the specific managerial, organizational, and political challenges of UN peacekeeping operations, and the sharing of lessons learned from outside the UN context. UN peace operations need to develop models of organization, styles of management, skills, and procedures—in key areas, such as planning, decision making, and monitoring—that will allow them to succeed in the highly complex environments in which they operate.

It is in response to these trends that the International Peace Institute (IPI) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) organized a seminar on the theme "Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges of UN Peace Operations." The seminar gathered scholars and practitioners with extensive expertise in peace operations or knowledge of other complex contexts. It tackled two objectives: (1) gain a better understanding of managerial and organizational challenges; and (2) devise concrete operational recommendations. Efforts to strengthen peace operations around the world are under way on multiple fronts. This seminar aimed to facilitate exchange among the people guiding those efforts and to provide a service to the UN Secretariat and membership by collecting ideas that might be useful for further work in this field.

The seminar was held under the Chatham House Rule. This meeting report represents the substance of the discussions and does not necessarily reflect the views of the IPI, GCSP, or individual participants.

MANAGING UN PEACE OPERATIONS IN A PERIOD OF CRISIS

Events on the eastern edge of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in late 2008 and early 2009 all too clearly demonstrated the limitations of UN peacekeeping. If the protection of civilians is the standard by which UN peacekeeping is measured in the public eye, then the UN—and the international community more broadly—still does not have the correct configuration of resources, structures, or will in place to predictably and

4   UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines [Capstone Doctrine]" (New York, January 2008).

5   See, for example, Richard Gowan, "The Strategic Context: Peacekeeping in Crisis, 2006-08," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (August 2008): 453-469; Harvey Morris, "Conflict Interventions Push Close to 'the Outer Limit of Peacekeeping,'" *Financial Times*, July 24, 2008, p. 5; Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann, "Rescuing the Blue Helmets," *International Herald Tribune*, July 22, 2008; Harvey Morris, "UN Peacekeeping in Line of Fire," *Financial Times*, May 17, 2008, p. 5; Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), p. 2; Security Council Report, "Twenty Days in August: The Security Council Sets Massive New Challenges for UN Peacekeeping," Special Research Report no. 5 (New York, September 8, 2006), pp. 9-10.

consistently meet such a standard. The DRC situation is not unique, however; stalemate persists in Darfur, and postconflict peace is tenuous in West Africa and elusive in Somalia. The persistent challenges force a reexamination of how peacekeeping can be made more effective in the twenty-first century— and, most likely, without the benefit of additional resources. In the context of a global economic recession, observers and practitioners of peacekeeping wonder what political will and commensurate resources will remain for peacekeeping in the near future.

If management improvements are urgently needed, political challenges still abound in the current global context. Within the UN setting, renewed tensions between member-state blocs from the East and the West have exacerbated the traditional North-South divisions. These tensions—highlighted by debates over Georgia, Myanmar, Kosovo, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere— center on the rights and responsibilities of state sovereignty, the preemptive use of force, humanitarian intervention, and, more generally, on the security and development priorities within the UN. Debates over financing—whether funds should be put toward development or security use, for instance—are particularly captive to the North-South divide. Not surprisingly, the debates have a great deal of influence on the direction and conduct of UN peacekeeping. Whether to authorize a mission, which tasks to mandate, what size force to authorize, where to generate troops and materiel, and how soon the UN should exit, are all questions with answers tied largely to these broader political debates. In an increasingly multipolar and interdependent world, the stakes for multilateral cooperation are indeed greater; however, such divergences threaten to derail reform and delay the critical strengthening of peace operations.

Amid calls for a new "Brahimi Report" on peace operations (or simply the full implementation of the original), those that see a crisis in peacekeeping can be divided into three groups. First, the "Guardians" believe that the problem lies with the UN straying from its traditional core principles of nonuse of force except in self-defense, consent of the host parties, and strict impartiality. They believe that in the DRC, for instance, the UN's military presence has sacrificed its impartiality

through its robust pursuit of spoilers and is now incurring the costs of that aggressive stand.

A second set of observers, the "Heroes," puts its faith in the ability of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to mediate effectively, to show leadership, and to deal preemptively with political stakeholders and potential spoilers. This group believes that the UN leadership has not engaged constructively with the political process in the DRC, including dealing with Rwandan leadership or rebel leaders.

Finally, the "Managers" feel that the most practical way to improve UN peacekeeping in the short term is to shore up its management structures, processes, and policies to operate more efficiently and effectively—especially during a time of constrained resources.

Clearly, no single solution will right the listing ship, but the debate over the purpose, and use of, peacekeeping will need to be settled eventually. However, the fact remains that political disagreements over direction are no excuse for poor management. And the reform of management is about much more than "rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking ship," as some critics have called it. Management is not only about reshuffling structures, units, and departments or rewriting doctrines and practices, although those things are clearly needed at times. Management is about the following:

- Setting common goals and shared values: management's first job is to think through, set, and exemplify key objectives, values, and goals. In the context of peacekeeping this means improving strategic planning, coordination, and integration.

- Processes: management is deeply embedded in culture. In a multicultural environment like peacekeeping missions, "how" goals are achieved is clearly essential.

- Human beings: management's task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths visible and their weaknesses irrelevant.

- Enabling the enterprise and its members to grow and adapt as needs and opportunities change: more can be done to improve learning, training, and professional development in peacekeeping.

- Measuring performance and making decisions based on these measurements.

While effective management is not a panacea for

all political challenges, it is possible to find examples of creative management solutions to tricky political problems. In Kosovo, as well as in Darfur, the UN has successfully adapted management mechanisms to achieve some modest goals. In Kosovo, in the face of political resistance to a transition to a European Union (EU) presence, the UN presence was cleverly drawn down and the UN logistics team was moved to the far suburbs of the city. At present, the EU provides the bulk of peacekeeping there. In Darfur, the UN brought more flexible arrangements and transparency to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in response to frustrations of donors and troop contributors regarding the lack of funding flexibility and transparency. The adaptation of UN management structures prevented the mission from folding and allowed it to continue in its present form as UNAMID (the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur).

While these are modest successes, they show that management solutions can provide answers in politically complex environments. These are sometimes described as "second-best solutions." With limited resources and rigid political constraints, second-best solutions are often the best the UN and other intergovernmental organizations can offer.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Successful implementation of any task begins with a good plan. Peacekeeping is no different. Given the multiplicity of actors and tasks involved, planning for and during a peace operation becomes at once extremely important and extremely challenging. Not only does peacekeeping take place in a very complicated environment, it takes place in a highly complex environment. This difference is more than semantic. A system that is complicated has many intricate parts, but with some effort, can be understood, and its actions or reactions are predictable. A complex environment, however, has a nonlinear relationship between its parts and actors, and the actions of those actors are less predictable and often dependent on the actions of others.

All of the tasks of a peace operation are framed within a wider peacebuilding system and are interrelated. For instance, effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) not only depends on one part of the system carrying out effective disarmament but on another carrying out effective reintegration as well. How exactly one is done greatly affects the success of the other. The effects of these activities, moreover, affect so many other issues: the country's stability, the calculations of the political actors, the economy, etc. Similarly, the knock-on effects from anything as transformative as security sector reform are many and sometimes unpredictable. This is true for nearly every aspect of a peace operation. Such interrelation and interdependency reduces predictability, and requires flexibility and adaptation on the part of those making plans. And because the wider peacebuilding system involves not just the UN and its many agencies and programs, which channel less than half of the international community's assistance, but many other non-UN actors as well, the planning process cannot simply focus on the mission itself.

What does this complexity mean for UN peace operation planning in practice? First, planning must take into account the unpredictability of events and be prepared to change course as a result. Both redundancy (i.e., having replacement parts in a system) and flexibility are important. Currently, staffing plans and, particularly, funding plans (i.e., budgeting) leave very little room for either redundancy or flexibility. Second, unpredictability requires adaptation. There is a tendency to focus too much on planning and implementation, while making little room for adaptation. Planning must be present through the life of a mission, adjusting to unforeseen reactions and consequences of the mission's work. The mission's monitoring and evaluation should feed back into a planning loop, adjusting the planning based on the results of internal and external monitoring.

Third, planners must have deep knowledge of all the actors and the general environment. The peacebuilding system within a postconflict country is too particular, too large, and too complex for headquarters-based staff to conduct all the planning. Some planning functions, both at the outset of a mission and throughout its life, must be conducted in the field. This suggests that every multidimensional peace operation should have a

field-based planning officer. However, because of the intergovernmental buy-in required in multilateral operations, a certain level of planning must reside at the headquarters level. This is necessary to engage the member states in order to create a feeling of ownership in the operation. Finally, as discussed above, planning should be based on a peacebuilding framework that includes the main stakeholders, as well as the private sector and the NGO community.

Peace operations, however, are above all political. It is in large part the politics and the interchange between political actors that account for the demanding complexity of the postconflict environment. And it is the politics which typically confound peace operations. The political dimensions of every conflict are different, and as such, every peacebuilding framework or mission plan requires that more emphasis be placed on political analysis prior to deployment. This requires strong representation from the political side on any planning team and it requires a better understanding of how to work with member states and regional organizations to strengthen the UN's overall analytical support to peace operations. One challenge to this, however, is that political issues are, by nature, sensitive. In any intergovernmental forum, such as the UN, certain contingencies that might come up during a planning exercise (which involve one or more member states or their interests) will be impossible to state in writing due to their sensitivity. It is a challenge that may be best worked around during the planning process in the field.

The UN's major effort to improve its planning for peace operations, the Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP), took on some of these recommendations, notably the need for a comprehensive and integrated analysis with views from the field. However, critics have noted the risk that this planning process, if followed to the letter, is so time and resource intensive within the UN system that it leaves little room to engage with other actors outside the UN's circle. The need for efficiency must then be balanced against the need for coordination. Not every actor should be included in every meeting. Thus, rather than seen as one network, coordination should be understood as a web of networks, with a core that is more densely integrated than the periphery.

On planning, the example of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could be illustrative. Unlike the UN, NATO requires consensus among its members to take action, involving more engagement with member states. This in turn improves ownership and the political engagement of the member states with the missions themselves. Such an arrangement commits the organization to staying focused on the core political purpose of the missions—something that, arguably, is lost at times at the UN. Within NATO, planning serves two main functions: to empower the field through proper commitment of higher-level resources and expertise, and to synchronize activities and resources internally and externally. The planning functions of NATO are described as continuous, cyclical, and permanent. NATO planners prefer to keep most planning functions at headquarters level to reduce the footprint on the ground and to ensure ownership by member states. There is, however, an acknowledgement of the need to defer to the unique insights of those on the ground.

However, NATO is equally challenged by existential questions relating to its role within the larger international system. Like other regional organizations, it reflects on its purpose and its role in peacekeeping. Should NATO be a first responder or a responder of last resort? Should it focus on longer-term postconflict recovery or short-term stabilization? Such questions involve the broader global multilateral system for conflict management, and cannot be answered in isolation. Fora such as the IPI-GCSP seminar on Managing Complexity, where multilateral organizations can exchange and share lessons learned, could play an important role in answering some of these questions.

LEADERSHIP ON THE LINE: MANAGING FIELD COMPLEXITY

The full complexity of the postconflict peacebuilding environment is perhaps understood best by those who head peace operations. Typically given the title of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the senior United Nations official in a country is responsible for guiding the actions of the entire UN effort and coordinating these with other international actors (member states and NGOs) and the many national actors. He or she is responsible for the safety and the actions of the entire staff of a mission, national

and international, civilian and military; account-able for the mission's annual budget; and can be credited or blamed, even if unfairly, for the mission's success or failure. The SRSG or Head of Mission sets the strategic direction for the mission and often serves as chief political mediator and public face of the UN's efforts. The combination of these challenging roles defines a position that is often described as impossible.

Given the overwhelming importance and respon-sibility of the role of the SRSG, the selection, preparation, and support of the post are critical. Critics of the current selection process describe it as too political, too opaque, and done without a larger strategic vision of the roles and abilities required for the particular post to be filled. The three main tasks of the SRSG, as mediator, coordinator, and manager, require a unique combination of skills that are not often easily found. The Secretary-General could improve the selection process by repeating in his reports to the Security Council the importance of the right leadership team and the criteria that need to be fulfilled. In identifying the profile of the SRSG, it is necessary to determine what skill set among the three should receive priority at the time. Once the selection of the right SRSG is made, due consideration should be given to creating a complementary senior management team. For instance, if the SRSG is selected for mediation skills and experience, selecting a deputy with significant experience managing and coordi-nating within the UN system is critical. Finally, roles and responsibilities of each member of the mission's senior management team have to be clearly defined. These roles need not be identical for each mission, but should be adjusted to fit the relative skills and abilities of the particular team.

Even the most experienced diplomats, UN officials, and political figures who become SRSGs are not quite prepared to handle the breadth of the challenges they face upon arrival in a mission. The Senior Leadership Induction Program (SLIP) is a good first step for those future mission leaders unfamiliar with the UN system and its intricacies. However, it is an introduction, rather than training; it is too short to be comprehensive, and only a handful of civilian mission leaders have attended it. Much of the senior leadership requires a country-related induction, one specific to the circumstances of the conflict, the actors and politics involved.

Management is a key function—and formidable challenge—of the SRSG and his or her team. It takes a skilled and experienced chief to manage a staff that can include thousands of civilians, police, and soldiers—both national and international. An SRSG who has to deal with labor grievances, security protocols, and discipline, but has never received management training or has little experi-ence in such a setting, is set up to fail.

Several key issues and recommendations were identified. First, while in mission, SRSGs should receive as much support as the UN system can muster. Some have suggested the need for a mentoring system for SRSGs. An SRSG mentor could be a former SRSG, an academic, or a trainer to serve as a soundboard and a repository of advice. The SRSG could have complete control over how he or she chooses to use the mentor and the mentor would have no role in evaluating the performance of the SRSG.

Second, current and former SRSGs have voiced a consistent complaint about the parameters of their job description. While all accountability for safety, finances, and success or failure resides with the SRSG, the authority to make some key decisions is lacking. SRSGs have very little control over a budget that is set in advance, largely inflexible, and guarded over by the chief administrative officer.

Third, SRSGs feel particularly hamstrung by stringent personnel rules and procedures that do not allow them to handcraft a well-balanced and agreeable team. Once on the job, SRSGs are often faced with sometimes suboptimal staff that have been recycled from one mission to the next and whom he or she is unable to discipline. A staff member caught stealing or otherwise misbehaving is not subject to immediate dismissal or suspension without pay. Rather, the SRSG must start formal procedures against the staff member that can take up to two years to resolve. Often, the SRSG chooses to send the underperforming staff member to another mission, only prolonging the problem within the larger UN presence in the field. This lack of discipline erodes the authority of the SRSG and the morale of hardworking mission staff, and creates a culture of impunity all too often seen within the UN system. There is thus a call to create mechanisms for the faster administration of justice within missions and to allocate more authority over budgetary and personnel matters to the SRSG in

order to balance their authority and their account-ability. A commensurate increase in accountability might involve subjecting the SRSG to 360-degree evaluations by those with whom he or she works most closely (e.g., senior management team).

Third, the very high turnover—field-based UN employees typically stay less than two years within the UN—and vacancy rates—some for critical posts—were highlighted as important limitations to mission efficiency. At headquarters, analytical capacity is limited while bureaucratic frustrations are common. Desks at DPKO and DPA are often understaffed and overburdened, resulting in slow or insufficient responses from New York. In the field, current staff have no options for a career path, few incentives to train, or to even stay within DPKO. Mission staff regularly leave DPKO to work for agencies and programs that provide better benefits and compensation, and a more defined career path. Very few mission staff, even middle management, have ever received training in management. In fact, the human-resources paradigm must shift to view peace operations and civilian professionals in the field as more permanent fixtures of the UN. Field-staff compen-sation and benefits should be reevaluated with an eye toward longer-term retention. This includes incentives for training and for good performance. In so doing, the UN can both create the next generation of trained-and-ready field staff, but also make life easier for current field leadership in the process.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING: MANAGING KNOWLEDGE

Recent scholarship on organizational learning in postconflict environments supplements traditional theories regarding the success and failure of peace operations. Much of the literature to date suggests that the success or failure of international efforts in a postconflict setting is determined in large part by the specifics of the environment within which a mission operates. As such, in two separate cases of peacekeeping, differences such as the intensity of the conflict, how the conflict ended, the intentions

of the actors, the absence or presence of spoilers, etc., will likely result in two different outcomes.[6] A second theory points to the will, interests, and engagement of the UN Security Council's members or other strong regional actors as the determining factors of success or failure. In essence, great (or regional) power politics can put sufficient pressure on the players and deliver the necessary resources to ensure peacekeeping success.[7]

Adding to these mainstream theories, new scholarship suggests that how a mission manages its learning in the field can also affect its success. In particular, this approach claims that organizational learning, specifically "first-level" learning, is a necessary, although not sufficient, component of successful mandate implementation.[8] First-level learning concerns lessons learned on the ground about how best to implement a mandate, including gathering and analyzing information, coordination, engagement with the surrounding environment, and exercising leadership. This type of learning must take place in the field, not at headquarters, in part through the mechanism of the Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC). First-level learning becomes organizational learning when such lessons are then incorporated into an organization's doctrine, official practices, or strategy.

Acknowledgement of the importance of organi-zational learning in peacekeeping is not limited to academia. The post-Brahimi Report period at the UN has seen the creation of a Best Practices Unit in DPKO, which has since expanded and been placed under the umbrella of the Division for Policy, Evaluation, and Training. Indeed, many missions now include a best practices officer to help coordi-nate "first-level" learning, integrate such lessons into the policy-development process, and facilitate easy access to guidance material. The best practices offices in a given mission attempt to connect the "first-level" learning that happens in the mission to the "second-level" learning at headquarters.

Systematic learning, however, is still new to peacekeeping, and is often relegated to the background during the mission's nonstop crisis management. A typical obstacle to the development of an organizational-learning culture is the temporary nature of peacekeeping. Missions are established, and staff contracts typically awarded,

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6 For a look at the relation of an operating environment to the success of the implementation of a peace agreement, see George Downs and Stephen John Stedman, "Evaluation Issues in Peace Implementation," in *Ending Civil Wars: the Implementation of Peace Agreements*, edited by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 43-70.

7 The effect of external actors on the success or failure of the implementation of peace agreements was first significantly addressed in Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace [USIP], 1996).

8 See Lise Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

on a six-month-by-six-month basis, which frustrates the establishment of institutionalized learning processes. Harmonization of conditions of service between all UN entities, facilitation of staff mobility between field and headquarters, and the development of a professionalized cadre of civilian peacekeepers would go a long way toward institutionalizing lessons learned and strengthening the organizational learning processes.

Not surprisingly, organizational learning is also a high priority for similar institutions. The United States Army, for instance, focuses its efforts at the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The Army embeds a CALL unit with every deployed brigade to collect lessons from the field. A process called the After Action Review (AAR) is the primary vehicle by which the CALL formulates lessons learned. During this process, a CALL staff member meets with a unit to revisit the critical points of an operation: what happened, how the situation changed from what was originally planned, and what the results were. The AAR is also used as a training tool where scenarios can be replayed after the fact. The results of the AAR meetings are not disseminated to the army as a whole, but rather collected and analyzed for trends for study within the CALL.

CALL publishes "gap reports" from these findings, which are then distributed to the rest of the institution. It works to facilitate cross-organizational dialogue by presenting the AAR process to the armed forces of other states and other organizations, such as the UN. The Center is also used as a source to help determine measures of success and performance indicators. One important indicator of performance identified by CALL is the army's ability to communicate with the local population, particularly in stabilization missions, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Clearly, the same need for effective communication with host nationals is applicable to UN peace operations.

At the UN, there is said to be a bias among some member states against increased funding for training, although training is one important way to make sure lessons are not just learned, but applied in the field. Training often focuses on "static" modules, such as gender mainstreaming, rather than skill-based training, such as political assessment. Increased and improved skill-based training would help to strengthen knowledge management capacity in UN peace operations, and in the process help to further professionalize the field of peacekeeping.

MANAGING COMPLEX PARTNERSHIPS: DILEMMAS OF COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION ON THE GROUND

The UN is not the sole player in the field of peace operations—nor was it ever meant to be. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter outlined a role for regional organizations in the settlement of international disputes, and explicitly endorsed regional organizations to take enforcement action if authorized by the Security Council. Indeed, regional organizations have become increasingly active in the field of peacekeeping. In recent times, and for various reasons, the UN has engaged in partnerships (e.g., in Darfur, Chad, Kosovo, Somalia) with diverse organizations. Depending on the exigencies of the situation, the partnerships take diverse forms, including sequential deployment, co-deployment, hybrid or integrated missions, compacts or coordinating structures. One size does not fit all; having some flexibility in forms of organization allows the UN and its partners to fit form to function. As of yet, however, a comprehensive and clear understanding of the most appropriate forms of cooperation for each situation has not been realized.

Partnerships not only diverge in terms of their structure and form, but also with regard to the actors involved. The UN in particular has engaged three different types of partners: international and regional institutions (e.g., the World Bank, NATO, the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], the African Union [AU], the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN], and subregional actors, such as the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS]), national government authorities, and nonstate actors, such as NGOs. In some cases, cooperation between institutions has gone beyond a peace operation and has become more institutionalized. For instance, the UN and EU issue joint declarations, hold strategic meetings twice a year, and engage in a continuous stream of ad hoc contact. Partnership between the UN and AU has been regularized through the AU-UN Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations mans an African Union Peacekeeping Support Team in Addis Ababa, providing expertise and logistical support to the development of the African Standby

Force.

Of late, cooperation with regional organizations has allowed the UN to operate in contexts in which it would otherwise be denied access. Participation by the African Union in the Darfur mission (UNAMID) was pivotal in overcoming the government of Sudan's reluctance to accept an international intervention. The AU's participation is said to be the "passport" by which the UN enters Sudan. This passport, however, does not come without its own unique set of challenges. In addition to the persistent difficulties involved with complicated lines of command, control, and communication that arise from interorganizational cooperation, UNAMID suffers from the same pitfalls as many standard UN interventions: it has received inadequate contributions of materiel (e.g., an absence of attack and/or transport helicopters), and is based in a difficult environment with little peace to keep and a large number of splintered rebel groups.

Ideally, cooperation between international organizations and other actors would be structured to capitalize on each organization's strengths. However, efficient and effective organization between two large and complex entities is not without its difficulties. A first set of challenges entails the differing operating procedures employed by organizations and the existence of multiple chains of command. This confusion of the command chain leads to a diffusion of authority and accountability, divide-and-conquer strategies by spoilers, or to mission personnel working at cross- or overlapping-purposes.

A second hurdle concerns divergent mandates. With two organizations working side-by-side, a shared purpose and understanding is a critical ingredient of success. At times, however, the two organizations will have mandates that can be seen as conflicting, a situation most clearly illustrated when military and humanitarian actors operate in tandem. Humanitarians have a strong incentive to maintain their neutrality, which often requires a distancing from military partners. When there is an important military component to the mission, other approaches tend to be seen through the prism of the success of the military operation.

A third difficulty is the capacity gap between actors, notably when postconflict countries carry the burden of coordinating the diverse and multiple donors. In general, due in part to the limited capacity of host governments, the UN transition from serving as protector/provider to being an equal partner with national authorities is a difficult one to master. In such a situation, the UN must rely on the government to carry out certain responsibilities itself, sometimes forcing the mission to operate on a less efficient level in the short term.

The proliferation of such partnerships raises the question of a potential doctrinal shift within the UN system. The recently released *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* briefly highlights the issue of planning and operating peace operations with partners, but does not codify guidelines or principles for such activity. Developing doctrine or a common strategy on this issue is a challenge in itself, due to the large numbers of potential partners and the various situations in which they could be engaged. As a start, the UN DPKO could initiate an independent study of the comparative advantages in peacekeeping of regional and subregional organizations, as well as of lessons learned from the various forms of institutional partnerships with the UN.

Partnerships do not mean all parties agree, but rather that the parties come to an agreement on a common strategic vision. It is important that the various actors make clear their objectives and develop a shared framework in order to guarantee engagement through a feeling of mutual ownership. Such partnerships have been developed between the UN and EU in both Chad and Kosovo, between the UN and AU in Darfur and between the UN, EU, and World Bank in Georgia.

MANAGING TRANSITION: EXIT STRATEGIES AND PEACE CONSOLIDATION

Although, as stated above, member states should see peacekeeping as a core and permanent function of the United Nations, each individual peace operation is temporary and will, at some point, come to an end. The conditions under which an operation ends do not always conform to well-considered plans and optimal circumstances. Often, budgetary or political pressures voiced by members of the Security Council or pressures from

within the host country can hasten peacebuilding plans and result in a premature departure. All too often in places like Haiti, the Congo, and Angola, the UN has witnessed its peacekeeping efforts dissolve after its departure due to a sudden recurrence of conflict.

Aside from the internal pressure within the host country and budgetary pressure in the Council, there are operational constraints to a well-timed, purposeful withdrawal or transition. These constraints include the absence of clear or agreed-upon criteria for achievement of success, and the absence of a system-wide methodology to measure progress or success. While little can be done to reduce the budgetary pressure on member states, there is much work to be done on these operational constraints.

What does a successful peace operation look like? What is the end-state the UN is trying to leave behind? As simple as these questions may be, they are very difficult to answer. One way to define success is to predicate it on the fulfillment of the mandate. Another, possibly minimalist, definition would be the cessation of all armed conflict, called "negative peace." Such definitions, though, have proved to be inadequate. First, lack of conflict does not necessarily mean sustainable peace. Negative peace could be based on fear or the threatening power of an unjust ruler. Second, peace can be extremely tenuous if the underlying factors, or root causes, of the original conflict have not been addressed. It is precisely the minimalist definition of peace—and the political pressures that propagated it—which led to early withdrawals in previous decades.

In recent years, scholars and practitioners have embraced the more comprehensive approach to peace by trying to analyze and address the root causes of a conflict to bring about a so-called "positive peace." This carries with it its own difficulties—not least of which being a tendency to set the bar too high. Despite advances in conflict analysis, there is still no consensus on how much of a factor each particular element or "cause" contributes to a conflict. Given the numerous identified causes of conflict, from poverty, to cultural or religious divides, to barriers to legal justice, it is clearly difficult to know which cause is the key to resolving a given conflict. And if that

cause is lack of economic development, for instance, how much can the international community do and when should those efforts end?

The lack of meaningful measures of effectiveness hampers exit planning. Missions need to establish benchmarks that are measurable and meaningful indicators of progress. These benchmarks should measure impact and outcomes, not just output. For instance, it is not enough to know how many judges have been trained, but rather it is important to know what level of trust the population has in the judicial system, and how much respect the judges have for human rights law. These are arguably more difficult to measure, but would reveal a good deal more about the state of a society.

Other than the sheer difficulty of quantifying the sometimes unquantifiable, developing a peacebuilding plan with benchmarks can be a highly political act. The politics of benchmarking can conflict with the technical aspects of benchmarking. Indicators are necessarily context specific and the mission needs to develop benchmarks in close cooperation with the host government and local population—those who inevitably know best what the most meaningful indicators are. In Liberia, for instance, the JMAC engaged in an open political dialogue with the government to develop benchmarks to address corruption. However, the different players inside and outside the government have a stake in the various activities of the mission and in the length of time the mission exists. While the Security Council may be pushing the mission to draw down, the host government might be delaying political progress to extend the life of the mission—and the aid money that follows. The mission is therefore vulnerable to political manipulation of its benchmarking process, possibly necessitating a process or evaluation of the process that is somewhat independent from the mission. Further, the discord between the technical benchmarking and the politics can be reconciled if the politics are recognized and dealt with, rather than wishfully ignored.

A number of other challenges vex peacebuilding planners. One is the multitude of actors involved in peacebuilding work. Even if measurable and meaningful indicators can be developed, the UN is only one of many actors in a postconflict setting. Herding bilateral donors, international financial

institutions, and regional organizations to monitor all peacebuilding activity and assess progress is a significant hurdle. Another challenge is successfully transitioning from the role of provider and protector to partner. The UN has a lot of experience in the former roles, but the latter role is a challenge, especially when the UN and the host country do not agree on relative priorities or courses of action. Prolonging the roles of protector and provider can perpetuate the life of a peace operation indefinitely. Developing host governments' capacities to transition from being the focus of international efforts to being the driver of their own efforts is a process the UN has not yet perfected. This is aggravated by a lack of host government capacity, which is often exacerbated by the UN's tendency to skim off the top of the national talent pool for its own staff.

Those who see the most difficult challenge as getting all the actors on the same page propose the idea of a compact between all parties: the Security Council, the General Assembly's Fifth Committee, the host government, the mission, and bilateral donors. Agreement on a shared understanding of the desired end-state and the path to arrive at that point, from entry through to exit, would solve the resource problems, the political discord, and the lack of strategic focus. Lacking a compact, there is a need for an SRSG experienced in mediation to ramp up the political negotiations throughout a mission's life to achieve that shared vision before transition or exit. Finally, the resources to develop a peacebuilding plan with meaningful indicators need to be present from the very start of a mission. Planners at the outset of a mission should already be thinking about a plan to make the UN presence unnecessary in the future. Dedicated resources for developing this exit-strategy thinking need to be allocated throughout a mission's life. Preventing the recurrence of conflict, one of the clear aims of peacebuilding, will require clear and expert strategy from the UN's entry into a country until its eventual exit. Resources at UN headquarters, particularly in the Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office, are thus needed to improve the ability of the UN as a whole to do strategic analysis and planning around UN peace operations.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, peace operations no longer function as they once did. Once peacekeepers observed ceasefires and maintained buffer zones; now they advise

Participants at the conference, "Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges in United Nations Peace Operations," December 1, 2008 at IPI.

judges, protect civilians, disarm combatants, and train police officers. Once the neutrality of peacekeepers was unquestioned, but today peacekeepers are often under fire and in danger from disaffected armed groups. The list of changes in peacekeeping is long and stark. As the tasks the UN has been asked to perform have become more numerous and difficult, the UN's ability to operate successfully in such complexity has been severely challenged.

The politics surrounding peacekeeping—from its inception to its exit phase—have also become more complex. Tensions between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, between the Council, the Secretariat, and the General Assembly, between the North and the South, as well as East and West, persist. The UN's inability to raise troops for the hardest missions calls into question its relevance as the principal arbiter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Political challenges are, of course, no excuse for poor management. In fact, in times of limited resources and challenging operating environments, proper management is more important than ever. Yet, similar to the political challenges, the challenge of complexity admits no easy solutions. Due to its unpredictability, complexity cannot be solved, only managed. Efforts to improve management are underway in the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support. Such efforts, however, must be informed by the unique problems posed by a complex environment.

Operating in a complex environment means expecting the unexpected, preparing for unintended consequences, and navigating one system that is complexly interrelated with other systems. Plans must be made with the wider peacebuilding system in mind, and no actor, nor group of actors, can be considered in isolation. Although standardization of procedures and mechanisms is important in any large bureaucracy; in times of complexity, flexibility—in plans, budgets, and methods—is essential. There must be experienced and able managers in the field who are willing to adapt their styles, processes, and decision making to the specific situation. Finally, those in the field need certainty at home. When operating in difficult environments, support from headquarters, both analytically, politically, and operationally, must be predictable, robust, and unwavering.

Keynote Address: Managing Complexity

*Alain Le Roy**

I am delighted to be with you today. I very much welcome IPI and GCSP's initiative to bring together scholars and practitioners with extensive expertise in peace operations. The question of how we manage the political and organizational complexity of UN peacekeeping is timely. As you all are well aware, we continue to see an ongoing surge in demand for UN peacekeeping, *complex* UN peacekeeping.

We manage eighteen operations deployed across twelve time zones in five continents, comprising 140,000 authorized personnel, of which 110,000 are currently deployed, including 75,000 military, 11,500 police, and 23,500 civilians. This compares to 30,000 deployed personnel just ten years ago. Two operations have been deployed during 2008, to Darfur and Chad/Central African Republic, and these deployments are still ongoing. Eleven of these operations have been either deployed or strengthened in the past five years.

The paper prepared by Cedric de Coning for this seminar distinguishes complex systems from *complicated* systems, making the point that highly complicated systems, such as a NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] space launch, may be difficult to manage, but each component of the system is inherently predictable and interacts with the others predictably. *Complex* systems, on the other hand, are made up of components that have dynamic and unpredictable relationships.

By this definition, peacekeeping operations are exceedingly complex. Peacekeeping operations must draw support from, and navigate between, numerous components, each one of them variable and potentially unpredictable. And, arguably, uncertainty and unpredictability are growing across many levels of the peacekeeping system today.

- At the level of the Security Council, the political consensus which provides the "fuel" for an operation is often strained. We have seen strong differences among Council members on the question of how to move forward on a wide range of missions, from Darfur to Georgia, to Kosovo to Somalia.

- At the broader international level, there are open questions regarding how UN peacekeeping should evolve, how robust it should be, on burden sharing between troop contributors and the Security Council, and on the linkages with other multilateral peacekeeping options. Differing views on these questions impact how the Secretariat, and member states, respond to ongoing operations and the degree of consensus they enjoy in New York.

- At the regional and national levels, too, political support is often hard to come by and strong counter-vailing winds are working against many UN operations. We have seen the impact of diminished host-government support in Eritrea and at the outset of UNAMID [African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur] in Sudan. And in Afghanistan, the regional context for the peace process is increasingly complex and difficult.

- At the level of resources, the availability of troops and resources from member states is increasingly under strain. The lack of helicopters for Darfur is emblematic of the issue, but in fact, across peacekeeping as a whole, it is increasingly difficult to generate and sustain the resources needed.

- The mandated tasks of our missions are growing, and each task also depends on a complex political, economic, and security dynamic. For instance, elections in Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire are scheduled for next year, but the clock, and the support of political leaders, is running against them. This uncertainty impacts, in turn, on the rest of the mandates there. Security is an ever greater concern for staff vulnerable to the military and terrorist threat, even as they are asked to carry out more complex mandates that require close interaction with local populations, which, therefore, exposes them.

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* Alain Le Roy is United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

- At the level of headquarters, we continue to work to build our managerial systems and to integrate efforts across the UN system, yet the transaction costs to achieve a "whole of UN" effect are still higher than they should be, given that we are addressing one integrated problem.
- At the level of personnel, we are struggling to build and maintain the staff resources that we need. The average peacekeeper serves for less than two years, and the turnover and loss of institutional knowledge brings its own uncertainty and complexity.
- Other organizations and agencies deployed alongside the UN peacekeeping operation may play a critical part in building and solidifying peace and each of them bring their own political and managerial complexity.

Mr. Alain Le Roy, United Nations Under-Sercretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, IPI President.

Serious disruptions at any one of these levels may threaten the success of a complex peacekeeping operation. Yet, we must remember that, even with all this inherent instability, UN peacekeeping operations often represent the most stable and robust institution in the postconflict environment. They are often the most critical prop upon which weak governments lean as they build strength and legitimacy and make the transition from conflict to peace. Millions depend on UN peace operations as the main bulwark between state collapse and hopes for peace.

How do we maximize the potential for their success? Clearly, we must strengthen the system wherever we do have leverage, to make it more robust and able to stand the exogenous shocks that may lie in store.

First, we must apply the right tool for the job. Is there a peace to keep? UN peacekeeping operations are an expression of the political will, emanating from the Security Council, of the international community to act. The Secretariat must assess the situation as accurately as possible. And then, the Brahimi [Report's] recommendations continue to ring true: we must tell the Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear.

It is the basic lesson of the 1990s. Yet the political pressures on the Secretariat and the Council to act will continue to make this simple recommendation far from simple to carry out. With Somalia, the UN faces the issue today. There is a fragile peace process, yet no full peace agreement. Conflict continues, yet the African Union is deployed. The Ethiopian government has indicated that it may withdraw, building pressure for an increased, international presence. The Secretary-General has advised that with no peace to keep, the situation calls for a multinational force, yet so far none is forthcoming. The pressure to act is building. But is peacekeeping the right tool? The dexterity of the manager cannot compensate for the choice of the wrong tool.

Once the Council has made its decision to deploy an operation, to use the tool, there must be enough political and material resources, enough muscle behind the tool, so to speak. I spoke earlier of the helicopter gap in Darfur. I think that experience underscores the wisdom of the Brahimi recommendation that the Council should not finalize a resolution mandating a mission until it is clear the resources can be found to implement it. This would certainly be worthwhile should peacekeeping be considered for Somalia, where the capabilities required would far outstrip what was called for in Darfur.

Of course, it takes both muscle and competence to properly wield any tool, and so one cannot point only to the member states. The Secretariat must maximize its impact by improving its expertise, diversifying the models we apply, and becoming more nimble in interacting with peacekeeping partners in the security, humanitarian,

and economic development spheres.

The ongoing effort to professionalize peacekeeping has certainly advanced DPKO [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations] and DFS [UN Department of Field Support] a significant distance, but there remains a long way to go. Richard Gowan's paper pointed to the "Heroes, Guardians, and Managers" typology as a way of describing differing schools of thought on how peacekeeping operations should be guided. Of course, we need a strong combination of each strain. We must find and retain the best individuals, ensure they have the right training and guidance on which to base their work, and that the organizational structures that support them are flexible and adapted to the field.

We are moving on all these fronts. We are working on widening the pool of candidates we draw on for leadership positions, to deepen our rosters, and to include more women. At the staff level, the human resource reforms that are currently proposed by the Secretary-General are critical to ensuring we can attract and retain the best staff and build up a core peacekeeping staff that can grow and develop.

At the level of training we continue to refine a global integrated training approach, which centralizes cross-cutting training requirements and supports decentralized training for specialized areas. We continue to develop doctrine and guidance under the overall umbrella of our so-called Capstone Doctrine, and we are working intensively on key policy areas, such as protection of civilians. We are also developing senior leadership and senior management training programs, an area which certainly deserves more attention.

We also need to recognize that collectively our expertise is not very deep in critical peacebuilding areas. The UN does not retain in-house expertise on many aspects of statebuilding, yet we are mandated to assist in building national institutions. Individual experts are often found in national government service, yet they may not be ready to apply their skills in the postconflict environment. The finance expert from a national treasury system may not be accustomed to the lack of a banking system; the police trainer may not be prepared to deal with a dysfunctional, politicized Ministry of Interior.

The Standing Police Capacity in DPKO offers an important model that may be worth emulating in some sectors. Individual experts are retained and revolved through various missions, assisting in planning, mission start up, and implementation during critical periods. Such rosters, which can draw on expertise from the "North" and "South," need to be further explored. Each peacekeeping operation may be "sui generis," yet, there are shared elements that are peculiar to the postconflict environment and we need to retain and build that type of knowledge. We have deep knowledge among generalists, but we are relatively poor when it comes to specialist expertise. We need to decide in which sectors we will develop deeper expertise and increase the specialization. This may also require that across the UN system we promise to do a bit less, but deliver more reliably in the areas we do engage in.

At the organizational level, we need to further improve how we integrate the international effort. We have made some progress in integrated structures for missions, but we need to focus now on integrated approaches that go beyond the mission. We are working on building better-integrated assessment and planning tools. I have also been asked by the Secretary-General to chair an Integrated Steering Group to bring together relevant UN partners at the ASG [Assistant Secretary-General] level to improve our integration across planning, support, mandate implementation, and accountability. The upcoming SG report on Peacebuilding will also provide an opportunity to tackle the issue of achieving an effective, integrated strategy to drive the international community's efforts as a whole. In most peacebuilding situations, only 20 percent of international assistance, or less, goes through the UN. The UN will need to offer a stronger model for wider international coherence if the overall international impact is to be improved.

At the level of management systems, I think we must have a frank discussion with the member states. They, quite correctly, want accountability from managers. Yet they are also asking the UN to deploy missions rapidly to extremely hostile, inhospitable, and distant locations. With operations worth over a billion dollars, the UN's management committees focus budgetary deliberations at the level of each post. We need to find a balance, by which mission managers are empowered to implement with sufficient delegated authority, and their decisions are subjected to fair audit later.

While we must continue to improve our management systems, it is worth remembering that, although member states have been relatively generous in building up DPKO and DFS, the UN's peacekeeping management structure is nevertheless very light. DFS and DPKO comprise some 1,000 staff, a fraction of what the EU [European Union] or NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] would employ to manage 140,000 personnel spread across the world. For each EU and NATO operation a dedicated operational command is established outside the organization's headquarters and distinct from the Force Commander in the mission area. For our operations, the strategic and operational level of management is, in effect, divided between headquarters and the mission, without the intermediate command, and managers at both levels are pulled by competing responsibilities. At headquarters, managers cover multiple missions and must focus on the diplomatic and political interaction with member states, and at mission level managers must deal with ever-pressing tactical demands while continuing to keep the strategic horizon in view.

At the level of the mission, we need to build leadership teams with a good combination of political leadership, technical expertise, and management acumen. We will never find all the characteristics required in one SRSG [Special Representative of the Secretary-General], rather he or she must lead a complementary team. UN missions are complex, expensive organizations that are launched, peak, and disappear in extremely short order compared to comparable organizations. They have little time to develop effective organizational cultures, and therefore leadership impact—positive and negative—is even greater than in long-standing institutions. This also requires stronger accountability.

Here I should mention the unfortunate, ongoing problem that continues to bedevil peacekeeping—sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeepers, both uniformed and civilian. We have made some progress in combating this issue. However, much more needs to be done. Member states must do their part to hold perpetrators to account, but also, on the part of the Secretary-General and DPKO, there is a determination to increase managerial accountability and hold managers and officers accountable also, wherever this is justified. There can be no other way to deal with this terrible problem, which harms individuals and communities alike.

UN peacekeeping is today characterized by complexity. To support political transitions, humanitarian response, security sector reform, economic recovery, human rights reform, the build-up of rule of law institutions, we depend upon global partnerships across the UN system, with the World Bank, and bilateral partners. We are working with regional organizations and financial institutions to establish frameworks for predictable cooperation that encompass coordinated planning, as with EU-UN efforts in Chad, as well as effective communication on our respective activities, as with NATO and the EU in Afghanistan. Our relationship with the African Union is particularly intense, as we seek to support the AU in building its own capacities for peacekeeping and to ensure that together we construct a mutually reinforcing network of capabilities.

Peacekeeping has moved from a relatively marginal instrument of international affairs to what it is today: a central tool for the management of conflict. However, the fundamental challenges are well-known; financial and human resources to United Nations peacekeeping are severely overstretched, while blue berets are often deployed to places where there is little or no peace to keep. Our systems need to be strengthened and they must continuously adapt. At the same time, we must recognize that peacekeeping will always be a high-risk business. Yet, when missions fail, one will inevitably find exogenous shocks play their part.

It seems clear to me, therefore, that we will need to collectively consider how to address more effectively the political problems that lie at the root of the conflicts, and consider more deeply how we respond to the various interrelated aspects of conflict resolution; political, security, humanitarian, and early recovery. In particular, I think that the methodologies used by the UN are relatively weak when it comes to addressing the resource questions that drive conflict. In eastern DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo], for instance, the peacekeeping and political tools that we can bring to bear focus on issues of military, political, and ethnic division closely, but do little to address the tensions over natural resources that underpin a good deal of the conflict there.

Clearly, UN peacekeeping has come a very long way thanks in good measure to the Brahimi reform process. Now, in many areas we are overstretched, as missions lack the resources—human, material, and political—to

fully address all the expectations placed upon them. I think some of the key questions we must consider are the following:

- In light of the changed political, economic, and security environment in which we find ourselves, do we need to review our comparative advantages and consider the streamlining of mandates and tasks in order to ensure better use of our limited global resources?

- What sorts of mandates are appropriate for UN peacekeeping? When is it the right tool, and what are the other tools that should be available to the international community for conflict resolution?

- What are the benchmarks against which we will measure the success of UN peacekeeping and how can they help us to prepare for the transition to longer-term peacebuilding activities?

- How can we advance our thinking on the relative roles and interoperability of the UN and the African Union, European Union, and other regional and subregional peacekeeping actors?

- Do we need a new dialogue with member states on the question of whether the United Nations is properly configured with the right systems and rules and regulations to grapple with the sheer logistical challenges of deploying at huge scale, rapidly into extremely distant and difficult terrain?

- How can the UN address the issue of the waning consent from host countries that we see in a number of cases, and what does this mean for the standing of UN peacekeeping and its effectiveness?

- And what can we do together to ensure the strong, ongoing political and diplomatic support from member states that UN operations need in order to succeed?

Thank you.

DISCUSSION PAPERS

"Moving the Ravioli Around": Managing UN Peace Operations in a Period of Crisis

*Richard Gowan**

INTRODUCTION: GUARDIANS, HEROES, AND MANAGERS

A recent history of the US Army identifies three recurrent schools of thought about warfare: Guardians, Heroes, and Managers.[1] The Guardians—intellectual descendants of the Corps of Engineers that fortified America's eastern coast in the early 1800s—see war as a technical business driven by technology rather than human factors. By contrast, Heroes emphasize the importance of morale and courage on the battlefield. This tradition can be traced to the Indian wars and has most recently reappeared in the "surge" in Iraq.

For Managers, "war is fundamentally an organizational (as opposed to engineering) problem—the rational coordination of resources, both human and materiel."[2] This school of thought often asserts itself when frontline failures spark demands for army reform:

> Too often, this takes the form of what military personnel cynically term "moving the ravioli around": drawing elaborate diagrams to rearrange (and "re-acronymize") the chains of command, the force structure, and the budget priorities, while leaving the military institution and its fundamental problems virtually untouched. In the name of reform and modernization, Managers are perpetually engaged in the radical reorganization of administrative structures and tactical units, creating new concepts and buzzwords, and promoting their new, transformed military organization as superior to the one it replaced.[3]

This analysis of attitudes to war-fighting gives us pointers about how we should and should not think about peacekeeping. Although the analogy should

Mr. Francesco Mancini, IPI, H.E. Dr. Fred Tanner, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and Mr. Richard Gowan, Center on International Cooperation.

not be stretched too far, the United Nations has its own schools of Guardians, Heroes, and Managers. Here, the Guardians are not obsessed with perfecting military technology—in cases such as Darfur, the UN's overriding challenge is often to get hold of any serviceable military technology at all. Instead, the UN's Guardians are those thinkers and policymakers (both in the UN Secretariat and among member states) who see themselves as protecting and applying time-honored principles of UN peacekeeping: consent, impartiality, and the nonuse of force.

The Capstone Doctrine promulgated this spring by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) reaffirms the utility of these concepts as "a navigation aid, or compass, for practitioners in the field and at United Nations Headquarters."[4] While this phrasing is meant to imply some flexibility in

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* Richard Gowan is Associate Director for Policy at New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

1 Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Ibid., p. 9.

4 UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines [Capstone Doctrine]" (New York, January 2008), p. 31.

how traditional principles are interpreted, there is a natural tension between the Guardians and peacekeeping's Heroes. The latter believe that personalities play an all-important role in making operations succeed or fail, placing particular emphasis on the political role of the UN's Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs).

The Heroic school of thought is (perhaps inevitably) strong in the UN Secretariat, especially among the generation of officials formed in the field over the last two decades. Its underlying credo is sharply summarized in a recent essay by Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed, who argue that the range of operational tasks required of any medium- or large-scale peace operation makes it "easy to lose sight of" the fact that "skilled political process management is critical to keeping the parties [to a peace agreement] engaged, and effective mediation is also needed to broker additional agreements between the parties."[5]

Brahimi and Ahmed fear that this art of political-process management is being lost. One reason is that Special Representatives of the Secretary-General "cannot shirk their leadership responsibilities to ensure good order and discipline of personnel, proper management of mission assets and effective integration and unity of effort across components." But this "can come at the expense of the political role, and vice versa."[6]

This political role is at risk because, while the UN's Guardians and Heroes still have influence, Managers are now the dominant force in the organization. The 2000 Brahimi Report only partially addressed undeniable managerial gaps that haunted peacekeeping in the 1990s. The UN has been on a sporadic and frequently quixotic quest for better management ever since.

This has taken the form of a series of reform efforts, large and small, that have rarely had their anticipated effect. These include the development and frequent redefinition of the integrated-mission concept; the introduction of Results-Based Budgeting as a (less than satisfactory) management tool; the Peacekeeping 2010 agenda to shake up

how different parts of DPKO work together; and, most recently and substantially, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's decision to form a stand-alone Department of Field Services (DFS) alongside DPKO. In short, the UN has moved a truly vast amount of ravioli around for almost a decade.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS

This is not to argue that individual initiatives have been unnecessary or misguided. DPKO and DFS are far better-staffed and more professional than DPKO was ten years ago. But this progress is hampered by three main flaws. First, while these elements of the UN may have improved, they still suffer from major gaps, especially in staffing. Missions such as that to South Sudan have notoriously suffered vacancy rates of up to 35 percent.

Secondly, the process of constantly reshuffling elements of the UN system has resulted in a certain obsession with management reform for its own sake. This is one part of what Manuel Fröhlich calls "reform as a modus operandi" at the UN: the process by which all Secretaries-General enter office as "reformers," initiate changes that go awry or that lead to unintended consequences, and then have to launch corrective "reform of the reform."[7]

The third flaw is that this cyclical process, taking on a life and logic of its own, has become increasingly detached from the strategic realities surrounding UN peacekeeping. This is not simply to repeat Brahimi and Ahmed's concern that SRSGs and their senior colleagues cannot fulfill their political tasks because of their managerial distractions. As I have argued elsewhere, UN peacekeeping faces simultaneous systemic and paradigmatic crises—neither of which can be resolved through management reform alone:[8]

- **The systemic crisis:** the UN's ability to concentrate effective military and civilian resources is increasingly constrained by a shortage of assets like helicopters and police units—compounded by the dearth of experienced civilian mission managers at all grades. In the absence of resources, management reform can only achieve limited results—rather as restructuring the Ford Motor Company

5 Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed, *In Pursuit of Sustainable Peace: The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2008), p. 2.

6 Ibid., p. 4.

7 Manuel Fröhlich, "The Ironies of UN Secretariat Reform," *Global Governance* 13 (2007): 151-159.

8 Richard Gowan, "The Strategic Context: Peacekeeping in Crisis, 2006-08," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (2008): 453-469.

will only have limited results if it stops being supplied with tires and windshields.

- **The paradigmatic crisis:** the UN's management systems are based on two political assumptions that are incorrect in many environments. The first is that host countries will be broadly supportive of effective and integrated missions on their territory—this is true of the Liberian government, but not of the Sudanese regime in Darfur. The second assumption is that the Security Council and troop-contributing countries can agree on strategies for the UN to implement. This has proved untrue in Kosovo (where Russia and the West have split over the UN's role) and Darfur (where African troop contributors, the US, and Europe disagree over how to balance peacekeeping with the International Criminal Court's [ICC] pursuit of President Omar Bashir).

Where the UN lacks sufficient resources or international political backing, the question of what constitutes effective management takes on new dimensions. The pursuit of the UN's standard goals (an integrated mission or even a full set of mandated tasks) may be impossible or irrelevant. The real task may be to limit or reduce the weaknesses of a resource-poor mission by managing what little it has as efficiently as possible—or to manage an operation in such a way that somehow meets conflicting political imperatives.

WHAT IS MANAGEMENT FOR? NAVIGATING DARFUR AND KOSOVO

An obvious example of managing a resource-poor mission can be found in the case of Darfur. The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was a source of contention between the AU and Western donors, not only because of its vulnerability in a heinous environment, but also because of questions from the donors over how efficiently their funds were managed. Tensions also arose over limits on how the funding instruments were used to support AMIS: some were short term, some could not be used to fund military hardware or were too bureaucratic.[9]

From an early stage, DPKO played a quiet role in helping the African Union (AU) do the accounts. This role was formalized in the creation of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to replace AMIS. While the Sudanese government has exploited the UN's shortage of assets by playing on the mandate's requirement that the mission have "an African character," UNAMID was designed to place mission management firmly in the hands of the UN.

In a report of June 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and then AU Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konaré submitted a report proposing that the AU appoint UNAMID's commander—but that "operational directives will be implemented through an integrated headquarters structure, *including a mission support division led by a United Nations director of administration*" (emphasis added).[10] They added that "the overall management of the operation will be based on United Nations standards, principles and established practices." In essence, UNAMID was constructed on a deal by which the AU *commanded*, but the UN *managed*.

Without such a deal, many donors might have refused to keep funding the African peacekeepers. The UN's management role has been to sustain a weak operation—but one that is arguably still much better than having no mission at all. This is an unpleasant truth, but a potential model for the UN's role in hybrid missions in Africa and beyond.

By contrast, Kosovo is a case where the UN's management role has involved circumnavigating international political splits. Since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, the UN mission there (UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo [UNMIK]) has been in an increasingly absurd position: under Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999, it is still the ultimate source of authority in the province. Russia has insisted this continue. But the Kosovars, EU, and US have wanted UNMIK to exit and be replaced by a smaller European mission.

As Resolution 1244 is open-ended, and neither Russia nor the West has risked reopening it in the Security Council, there has been no definitive political direction on which way UNMIK reconcile

9   See Thierry Tardy, "The European Union in Africa: A Strategic Partner in Peace Operations," (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2006), p. 8.

10 United Nations Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the Hybrid Operation in Darfur*, UN Doc. S/2007/307/Rev.1, June 5, 2007.

their competing demands. Officials speak of living in "parallel universes" resulting from the need to respect 1244 while also adapting to local realities. But the UN has done a surprisingly adept job of using managerial arguments to address the situation.

In the summer of 2008, Ban Ki-moon declared that in his capacity as the UN's "Chief Administrative Officer," he no longer believed UNMIK sustainable in its current form. His officials, including a new SRSG apparently selected for the purpose, have set about cutting back the mission's civilian staff by four-fifths and contriving legal and political means to hand off policing and legal duties to the EU—while leaving a residual UNMIK in place for formal reasons. This process has often been ill-tempered, but the managerial maneuver worked better than many analysts foresaw.

The maneuver could be described as "managing up": identifying an operational position that somehow satisfies the competing political desiderata of the Security Council. I have argued elsewhere that the UN's "overarching strategic task is to build up a minimal consensus between the US, its allies, and its rivals about what UN peacekeeping is for in an age of tensions between them."[11] While Ban's sleight-of-hand in the Kosovo case may have put Russia's nose out of joint, it shows how such minimalist deals may emerge.

There are obvious differences between the Darfur and Kosovo cases, both in the pressures the UN has faced and the partner organizations (the AU and EU) involved. But they share two characteristics. The prime goal in both has been mitigation: identifying managerial options that avert worst-case scenarios. This has meant viewing managerial decisions in their immediate political context, not as a function of "reform of the reform."

Although no one would argue that these are models for future operations, both challenge us to think outside standard UN frameworks (integration, etc.). With peacekeeping facing multiple crises, the idea of management as mitigation may be the best option the UN has.

RETHINKING MANAGEMENT: THE CONGO SHOCK

While the UN has tried to navigate difficult times in Darfur and Kosovo, it has received a shock from events in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).[12] Laurent Nkunda's rebels, once meant to integrate into the Congolese army under UN oversight, have seized territory, displaced hundreds of thousands, and encircled UN troops in Goma.

The immediate crisis there is not managerial: it is military and humanitarian. But there is a sad disconnect between the energies that the UN mission (UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo [MONUC]) has put into coordinating its activities and its lack of political leverage over the rebels. Brahimi and Ahmed's warning of the dangers of losing control of a political process ring true here: it is generally agreed that MONUC has lost most of its political influence since 2006.

The fact that the UN's largest military force came close to a major military defeat also highlights the scale of the systemic crisis for peacekeeping noted above. It transpires that even a well-armed mission is not well-armed enough to take on an effective military threat such as that posed by Nkunda's infantry. The implications for the understrength mission in Darfur and the proposed UN deployment in Somalia are very grim.

The DRC is likely to focus international attention on the broader crisis of peacekeeping, and stimulate questions about the UN's overall posture. Justifiable doubts will be raised—or are already being raised—about the UN's use of military assets, its relations with European and African governments (which have been tested by the crisis), and its command-and-control structures. Management issues will find their way onto the agenda.

Some responses by the UN's differing schools of thought are predictable. If the Heroes will argue that the DRC shows the need for a politically empowered UN field presence, the Guardians will argue that MONUC strayed too far beyond traditional UN principles.

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11 Richard Gowan, "No Bed of Roses for Le Roy," *Guardian Online*, August 20, 2008.

12 This discussion of events in the DRC reflects the situation in the final quarter of 2008. Events have moved on considerably since then, but the debate over the UN's role continues.

What about the Managers? Prior to autumn 2008, critics of MONUC argued that its current woes were rooted in the mission's failure to adopt a coherent approach to disarming and reintegrating rebels in previous years.[13] Advocates of this position may argue that MONUC shows the need for more comprehensive, integrated strategies in the future.

All these arguments have merits—this paper is not meant to adjudicate between them. But it has sought to show that the ensuing debates should not privilege structural questions (such as integration versus decentralization) over context (the utter mess in the DRC). That was the mistake made by the Managers in the US military after Vietnam. "We did not manage the war in Vietnam efficiently or effectively," one wrote. "In the main, our organizational problems stemmed from the omission of basic management theories and techniques."[14] The myopia of this statement is striking. Vietnam was perhaps the most self-consciously "managerial" war

ever. The American defeat was rooted not in poor management, but in an emphasis on management that obscured the war's political realities.

Any response to the current set of peacekeeping crises needs to incorporate a realistic appreciation of the likely challenges to any mission. What will be the gap between mandate and resources? What external political factors may require managerial readjustment? How robust will management techniques prove during periods of sustained violence, as in the eastern DRC? If the political and strategic context looks unfavorable, what is the minimal level of success or sustainability the UN can achieve? These are uncomfortable questions. But these are uncomfortable times for peacekeeping. Rather than "moving the ravioli around," the UN must address the challenges ahead without indulging in the illusion that "reform as a modus operandi" is the best answer.

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13 Rener Onana and Hannah Taylor, "MONUC and SSR in the Democratic Republic of Congo," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (2008): 501-516.
14 Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, p. 200.

Planning for Success

Cedric de Coning*

There seems to be a growing acknowledgement of the complexity of peace operations, both in practice and research. The emergency relief community coined the term "complex emergencies" in the early 1990s.[1] The peacekeeping community now widely uses the concept "complex peace operations" to describe the multidimensional and multifunctional nature of contemporary peace operations. But what does complexity refer to in the context of peace operations? The common-sense use of the concept usually concerns two factors: the first is the sheer number of international and local actors that need to be coordinated and consulted, and the second is the wide range of activities undertaken by these actors across the political, security, developmental, humanitarian, economic, governance, rule of law, and human rights dimensions.

It is thus surprising that the link between the complexity observed in the peace operations context and the science of Complexity has not been pursued more vigorously. If the systems within which peace operations function are complex, we may be able to apply some of the insights gained from Complexity to help us improve the sustainability, effectiveness, and impact of these operations in the future.

Complexity originated in physics and cybernetics[2] and then spread into the social sciences, where it had a profound impact on sociology, psychology, and the management sciences.[3] Many of the core theories developed in the physical sciences have proved relevant in the

Mr. Diego Ruiz Palmer, Operations Division, NATO, and Mr. Cedric de Coning, ACCORD and NUPI

social sciences.[4] Although there has not been a lot of research done on the applicability of Complexity to international relations, conflict management, and peace operations,[5] the multiagency, multidimensional peacekeeping environment make it a likely candidate for the application of Complexity.

It is probably obvious that Complexity does not lend itself to a neat and concise definition. In fact, one of the basic characteristics of something complex is that it cannot be reduced to a more compact or concise form. One way to characterize complexity, therefore, is to distinguish between what is truly "complex" and what is merely "complicated." If a system appears complex, but can be understood to the point where its behavior can become predictable, it is merely complicated. The

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*   Cedric De Coning is Research Fellow at African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI).

1   A "complex emergency," as defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), is "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single and/or ongoing UN country programme." IASC, "Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies," IASC Reference Paper (New York, June 28, 2004).

2   See Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1948); Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General Systems Theory* (New York: Braziller, 1968); H. Maturana and F. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (New York: Springer, 1980); Gregoire Nicolis and Ilya Prigogine, *Exploring Complexity* (New York: Freeman and Co., 1989).

3   See R. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic, 1984); Niklas Luhman, "The Autopoiesis of Social Systems," in *Essays on Self-Reference*, edited by Niklas Luhman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and R. Mayntz, "Chaos in Society: Reflections on the Impact of Chaos Theory on Sociology," in *The Impact of Chaos on Science and Society*, edited by C. Grebogi and J. A. Yorke (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1997).

4   See P. Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism: Understanding Complex Systems* (London: Routledge, 1998); Niklas Luhman, "The Concept of Society," in *Contemporary Social Theory*, edited by A. Eliot (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); and Fritjof Capra, *The Hidden Connections: Integrating the Biological, Cognitive, and Social Dimensions of Life into a Science of Sustainability* (New York: Doubleday, 2002).

5   The work of Robert Jervis is one of the exceptions. See, for instance, R. Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

International Space Station, for example, consists of so many parts and requires so many different technologies that no one person can understand it all. However, it is possible to fully explain its workings, even if this may require several experts in different disciplines and a truckload of manuals. That is why it is possible to plan and execute a mission that involves departing from earth and arriving at a specific point in space, so that the crew of the International Space Station can be replaced and its stores replenished. These missions require a highly complicated planning process, but it is possible because enough of the causal factors are linear and thus predictable.

Something that is complex, on the other hand, has a dynamic and nonlinear relationship among its constituent elements, i.e., they change over time, adapt to the environment, and do not follow a specific cause-and-effect path. The complexity results from the interaction between the elements of the system, and is manifested at the level of the system itself.[6] The human brain, language, and social systems are complex.[7] Peacekeeping operations and the conflict systems within which they operate are truly complex. It follows that planning something that is complex would require an approach that is quite different.

PEACEKEEPING IS EMBEDDED IN A LARGER PEACEBUILDING SYSTEM

We cannot deal with the complexity of peacekeeping planning if we are going to isolate it from its role within the larger peacebuilding system. Peacebuilding systems consist of a large number of individual programs, undertaken by multiple agencies. These agencies are independent with each their own mandates, decision-making structures, and resources. At the same time, they are interdependent in that no single program can achieve the overall goal of the peacebuilding system—consolidating the peace—on its own. This does not mean that every activity at the program level carries the peacebuilding label. It is when they are considered together, however, in the context of their combined and cumulative effect over time, that their part in the larger peacebuilding system

emerges.[8]

Peacekeeping planning only makes sense when it is connected to a larger network of interrelated programs. The disarmament and demobilization (DD) that peacekeeping missions now typically undertake, for instance, rely on the assumption that others will provide a series of reintegration (R) programs. And the whole DDR process relies on the assumption that there is a series of other programs in place that will create security, improve opportunities for education, create employment, and invest in sustainable livelihoods. Although each agency independently undertakes programs that address one or more facets of the problem, a combined and cumulative effort is needed to achieve the overall peacebuilding objective. In highly dynamic environments, the systems that do well have a certain degree of robustness, i.e., they have multiple ways of responding to changes in the system, and some degree of overlap and duplication is thus actually healthy.

Peacekeeping planners thus have to recognize that peace operations are embedded within a larger peacebuilding system and depend on a UN integrated and non-UN interconnected field-based planning process that is networked within the broadest cooperative framework possible.

THE NEED FOR AN OVERALL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This implies that peacekeeping planners should, as a first priority, engage with partners in a process that will generate the strategic vision, goals, and objectives of the overall peacebuilding framework. The traditional approach to peacekeeping planning is that the process starts within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at UN headquarters and then ripples out. This would be an appropriate approach in a security-first and/or UN-centric context. However, given that the goal of security cannot happen independently of other goals and that the UN is only one of many important actors, the ripple effect often comes too late or has too little impact to influence the core assumptions in the overall peacebuilding framework.

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6 Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism*, p. 3.

7 Ibid., p. x.

8 C. H. de Coning, "Coherence and Coordination in United Nations Peacebuilding and Integrated Missions: A Norwegian Perspective," (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, December 2007), p. 14.

It is not necessary for all agents to be part of every coordination process. A balance needs to be struck between being as comprehensive and inclusive as possible and reaching agreement on the way ahead, to act and to deliver. These are not mutually exclusive objectives; both can be pursued, but trade-offs and compromises will need to be made. Coordination in this context is thus about managing interdependencies. A web of networks is the most appropriate structure, with the core being more densely connected than the periphery. While the agreement of some partners is critical, it may be enough to simply consult others and move ahead. Competition among different policy options is healthy as it ensures checks and balances are in place and guards against group-think.

The terms "overall" and "comprehensive" in this context do not just refer to a multidimensional (political, security, and developmental) approach, but also to a whole-of-actor approach that goes beyond UN integration. There is a danger that the UN integrated peacekeeping planning process can be so time- and resource-intensive that it leaves little room for the UN partners to engage with the other peacebuilding agents. The UN has the legitimacy and credibility to be the catalyst for the overall process, but then it must be committed to, and invest in, the overall peacebuilding framework. This does not, of course, negate the importance of UN integration, but it alters the process flow by recognizing the primary value of the overall system effect, articulated through some form of strategic framework, and the role of the peacekeeping mission within it.

TRACKING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

Peacekeeping planning has, until recently, essentially represented a "shoot and forget" model. Once the plan has been approved at headquarters it is implemented in the field. Since, as pointed out above, complex systems are nonlinear, dynamic, and, therefore, unpredictable, they require a highly adaptive planning process, able to continuously adjust to changes in the environment. This implies that planning and implementation should not be understood as separate functions, but rather as one continuous-feedback cycle informed by a tracking and monitoring process that is focused on a range of indicators to track changes at the systemic level.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

It is important to recognize, however, that no intervention in a complex system can have only one effect. Once again, complex systems are dynamic and respond to interventions in a nonlinear fashion. It may be possible to anticipate some of the ways in which a complex system will respond to an intervention. However, the system will also respond in ways that cannot be anticipated.[9] If we accept that unintended consequences are a natural outcome of the dynamic nature of complex systems, then we also have to recognize that they cannot be avoided altogether. Some unintended consequences should have been foreseen or anticipated, especially if they have occurred under similar circumstances in the past, while others may be totally unexpected. Unintended consequences are a predictable side-effect of peacekeeping operations, i.e., the likelihood that there will be unintended consequences is predictable, but the specific unintended consequences are not always foreseeable. This possibility should therefore be factored into the planning, coordination, and monitoring of peacebuilding frameworks.[10]

CONCLUSION

This discussion paper explores the utility of applying some of the insights gained from the study of Complexity to help understand how to plan peacekeeping operations that are part of complex peacebuilding systems in a highly dynamic and nonlinear environment. It was argued that peacekeeping planning cannot take place in isolation, but has to recognize that peace operations are embedded in a larger peacebuilding framework. Peacekeeping operations are interdependent with other peacebuilding agents, hence unable to achieve their objectives independently. Coordination in this context is about managing mutual interdependencies.

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9   Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism*, p. 3.

10 Chiyuki Aoi, Cedric de Coning, and Ramesh Thakur (eds.), *The Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007).

Peacekeeping planning needs to recognize its role within the larger peacebuilding system, and this means that its first priority should be to contribute to, encourage, and perhaps even facilitate a wider strategic peacebuilding framework process. In a dynamic environment the planning process needs to be highly adaptive and this argues for integrating a tracking-and-monitoring process into an ongoing field-based planning process that will shift the planning emphasis from headquarters to the field. Finally, the planning process needs to anticipate unintended consequences in this kind of environment, and thus take steps to anticipate and monitor the effects its interventions are having, and adjust accordingly.

Leadership on the Line: Managing Field Complexity

Pierre Schori*

Being an SRSG has been the most demanding and exciting, revolting and rewarding experience of my professional life. Demanding for me as a newcomer to a large field mission under considerable internal and external pressure, exciting with the daily adrenaline shots which both energized me and sometimes kept me sleepless, revolting in seeing the gap between the misery and powerlessness of the poverty-stricken majority and the glaring riches and arrogance of the ruling classes, and finally rewarding for having had the opportunity to work with committed and dedicated colleagues and, by common efforts, seeing misery reduced, international solidarity mobilized and hope again glimmer in the eyes of people.[1]

When UN Secretary-General (SG) Kofi Annan asked me to be his Special Representative (SRSG) in Côte d'Ivoire, he argued that the situation called for a person who had executive and legislative experience in government and parliament, insider experience dealing with the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), one who came from a country with no colonial past and a tradition of supporting the liberation struggle in Africa, who spoke French and personally knew key African leaders.[2]

It turned out that the SG was right. Without the multifaceted mixture of politics and diplomacy, and experience in international organizations, I would have been at a loss in Côte d'Ivoire, where I served from April 1, 2005, to February 15, 2007. This speaks to the critical need for, and the challenge of selecting, SRSGs with the rare combination of skills and experience needed to lead a UN peace operation.

Despite this, it took me six months to somewhat get my bearings of the mission's nature and scope, as well as of the Ivoirian land and its people. It felt as if the SRSG was to be an omnipotent renaissance person, a master of all arts. At the same time, while the SRSG ultimately has macro-responsibility for the success or failure of the mission, the SRSG

H.E. Mr. Pierre Schori, FRIDE, and Dr. Martin Barber, University of Edinburgh

cannot engage in its micromanagement.

It is not easy for a new SRSG to take over an ongoing mission, which has developed its own life, trends, dynamics, and human relationships. The SRSG inherits a certain mission "culture," as well as its established and resilient structures. And, consequently, when change is needed, it takes a lot of time to implement it. It is important for the new SRSG to set the proper tone for his or her staff. The lack of any sense of urgency, crisis awareness, team spirit, or team work on the part of some staff members makes it difficult to meet defined goals and objectives, or agree on deadlines and benchmarks in supporting the implementation of the roadmap for peace.

Strong leadership of a UN peace operation does not only start with the SRSG, but requires a reliable and capable senior management team. In this I was fortunate and greatly helped by colleagues, especially as I was not greeted by any handover note or given my predecessor's end-of-assignment report, if it existed. Through all this I was fortunate to have Alan Doss, who had previous experience in the mission and in the region, at my side in the first year of service.

LEADERSHIP AS GOOD GOVERNANCE[3]

Organizations with strong, centralized power are often weak on transparency, and thus run the risk of being weak on developing fair staff policy and promoting a positive team spirit. I saw it in my own mission, and I tried to combat those leadership excesses by being flexible, egalitarian, transparent, and in a constant listening mode, while leading by example.

A good team leader should be able to inspire and encourage others, not only give orders, pull rank with those around and below him or her, and engage in turf wars with other senior staff. This would also lead to a greater loyalty among the staff toward the mission, which, in turn, might reduce the misconduct and discipline cases.

Good governance, which we preach to others, must also begin "at home," in our own mission. Implicitly, good governance dissociates itself from all forms of nepotism and hierarchical rigidity, which I would call "commando practices and structures." There are ways of dealing with these problems. Building on and highlighting "best practices" is one way but not the only one. Studying and learning from "bad practices" is, in fact, a very useful and educational way of improving standards.

Given these realities, *mandatory 360-degree evaluation processes should be introduced in all missions* to focus in a first phase on senior leadership, from section and unit chiefs and up. In general, I found it most helpful and healthy for the mission to be the object of regular external scrutiny. "Barril"-style missions and other assessment missions, such as groups of experts, audits, and Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) visits, have proved to be useful instruments for monitoring the implementation of the mission's mandate and for measuring the constraints, gaps, and additional resource requirements. Those assessment missions provide an opportunity to get a fresh and independent look at the missions themselves, and give headquarters more insight and knowledge. Those evaluation missions should involve other departments in addition to DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS), such as the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs (OCHA).

OVERCOMING RESOURCE LIMITATIONS

The human, material/logistical, and financial resources at the disposal of the mission typically prove inadequate to address the serious and increasing challenges confronting the mission, especially during security-related disturbances. For example, in January 2006, the UN offices in Abidjan and all UN agencies in the western part of the country were under attack by violent mobs organized by local militia leaders and linked to the government party, which opposed the latest Security Council resolutions. During that difficult week we found out, much to our regret, that the mission was not properly prepared for handling riots by civilians. The tear gas was neither sufficient nor modern enough to deter or stop the constant attacks by mobs throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. Nor did we have sufficient formed police units (FPUs) at our disposal. It must be underlined that the mission and the SG himself repeatedly asked for reinforcements of troops and relevant material to the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) but each time found the Security Council divided on the matter.

SRSG AS COORDINATOR

The multiplicity of external actors with sometimes diverging and competing political agendas, including noticeable disagreements among key actors within the Security Council, make it difficult to promote a strong and coordinated international response to emerging risks and challenges. In the field, coordination with UN agencies is clearly important. It serves to show the local population and government the unity of purpose and action of the UN family. Good practices evolving from coordination include the timely dissemination of the conclusions of senior management team (SMT) meetings; the broadcast of security advisories on anticipated disturbances and related precautionary measures; and the sharing with the heads of UN agencies sensitive political issues to enlighten them about the complexity of the crisis and the options for addressing the related challenges. However, the coordination exercise is made difficult by the tendency of some UN agencies to protect their turf

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3 Based on a response to a DPKO questionnaire on "Senior Leadership Appointment Policy," December 16, 2005.

vis-à-vis the mission's perceived interference in their areas of responsibility. My view is to advocate *as much mission integration as possible when possible; promote synergy from diversity*.

The Deputy SRSG (DSRSG) plays an essential role in the mission. At the same time, I wonder whether the quintuple-hatting of the DSRSG is really a good idea. He or she is at the same time DSRSG, Resident Coordinator (RC), Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), UNDP Resident Representative (RR), and alternate Designated Official (DO). As I see it, this structural contradiction and schizo-phrenic duties rendered my deputy's situation extremely difficult, not to say impossible.

It is also necessary to realize that the UN is not the only actor with a stake in resolving conflict. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are increasingly taking responsibility during crises on the African continent. This shared responsibility can result in occasional turf battles among regional leaders in the pursuit of competing agendas or preoccupations. During my tenure in 2005 and 2006, the AU and ECOWAS dedicated four summits exclusively to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as two others where Côte d'Ivoire was on the agenda. Given their limited resources, ways and means should be found to offer regional and subregional organizations the possibility of sending staff to spend time at DPKO, the EU, or other similar bodies to improve their skills. Each mission should identify focal points at the relevant regional or subregional organization to liaise with the relevant technical units in the mission to facili-tate monitoring and follow-up on actions required in implementing decisions made by those organiza-tions and the UN.

Finally, the UN mission should explore the possibility of initiating the establishment of a mechanism for coordinating donor support to the peace process. In order to promote transparency and accountability, the mission should also encourage the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Union to monitor and audit public expenditures, especially in the natural-resource sectors.

SENIOR-MANAGEMENT-RELATED PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Things may have changed since 2007. However, it is my impression that every SRSG would admit that one of the major lasting challenges of managing a mission is related to personnel and financial/budgetary arrangements. Personnel Management and Support Services (PMSS) is a friend indeed, but it is sometimes a slow friend. Rules and budgets are imposed by others, not least by the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), but within given frameworks, there should be room for more flexibility and creativity. This is also the case for the UN Office of Human Resources Management. Missions should be allowed to set up their own shortlists drawn from Galaxy (the UN e-staffing system) based on personal experiences of colleagues' qualities. The other friend, Financial Management Support Services (FMSS), sometimes intervenes and prohibits measures that are recommended by other branches of DPKO. A case in point was my ambition to strengthen regional offices by relocating a political affairs officer from Abidjan to Bouaké. This was deemed "not allowed" by FMSS while the rest of the system is crying out for decentralization and reinforcements in the field.

In general, the headquarters-based personnel management systems are inadequate to fulfill the needs of field managers. I have personally seen two cases related to key senior posts, where the differ-ence in the candidates selected was extremely wide in both quality and performance. They should not even be in the same league. This raises the question of how shortlists are being composed. It is also important to try to maintain gender balance in the recruitment campaign. A major hindrance to attracting qualified female candidates is the classifi-cation of some missions as non-family-duty stations.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

On a final note, gender mainstreaming, I believe, is an important facet of leadership in UN peacekeeping operations. It is a must, not only for policy reasons but also for successful and sustain-

able outcomes. The message from headquarters is genuine and strong, but it is encountering serious obstacles in the field. The gap between policy and directives from New York and actual implementation in the missions is much larger than I could ever have imagined. Repeated reminders of Security Council Resolution 1325 are to no avail if the receiver of the message is not prepared for it or, even, unable to understand it.

I believe the UN has to attack this dilemma at its roots, in the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) themselves. Based on my contact with many officers from the TCCs, I strongly recommend that such predeployment training should be assisted from headquarters. In this regard, a special task force should be set up, led by a committed person with experience of a peacekeeping mission, preferably a former SRSG.

I also recommend that a gender mainstreaming course should be mandatory for all SRSGs before leaving for the mission station. Without proper gender mainstreaming awareness, senior leaders cannot be the role models they need to be in relation to national and other institutions, where often gender is substantially downplayed.

CONCLUSION

Heading a UN peace operation is a truly challenging yet rewarding experience. The various roadblocks explained above attest to the overwhelming difficulty of the position. The many roles of the SRSG force him or her to be a master of all trades and responsible not only for the lives of those serving under him or her, but also for the fragile peace process he or she is mandated by the UN Security Council to support. Success as a leader in this challenging environment requires transparency, accountability, equanimity, and patience—not only with the situation on the ground, but also with UN headquarters in New York. For the UN to succeed in improving the effectiveness of its field missions, it should continue to learn the lessons of previous missions, select experienced and knowledgeable SRSGs, and finally, give them the authority and space to do the jobs for which they were selected.

Organizational Learning: Managing Knowledge

*Lise Morjé Howard**

Since the end of the Cold War, of the eleven most complex, multidimensional peacekeeping missions in civil wars, the UN has been successful at implementing its mandates in seven cases—Namibia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Cambodia (mixed), Eastern Slavonia, East Timor, and Sierra Leone.[1] The number of successful cases is surprising given the extensive media and academic attention to failure. While positive peace—i.e., peace beyond fulfillment of the multidimensional mandates—has not necessarily been established in all cases, the majority of the basic tasks that the UN set out to do was accomplished. What are the sources of success in UN peacekeeping in civil wars?

In the academic literature, the two most common arguments about the causes of success and failure are that situational factors (e.g., the number of battle deaths, the length of the war, the type of terrain, the existence of a mutually hurting stalemate, etc.), or the will of the Security Council determine the outcomes of peacekeeping operations.[2] In contrast, this paper argues that organizational learning within the UN Secretariat's peacekeeping operations is equally, if not more, important and is a necessary factor for achieving success.

Organizational learning in UN peacekeeping missions occurs on two levels: first, within the peacekeeping mission while it is in progress, and second, at headquarters, between missions. First-level learning is defined here as the *increasing ability to engage in multidimensional peacekeeping.* This definition has its roots in both the cognitive and the efficiency schools of the study of organizational change, and rejects arguments that equate

Mr. David Futch, US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, and Dr. Lise Morjé Howard, Georgetown University.

learning with increasing complexity of thought. First-level learning refers to learning on the ground, while a peacekeeping mission is in operation. In the field during a peacekeeping mission, members of the organization learn innumerable daily lessons.[3] When aggregated, these lessons can amount to members of the Secretariat learning how to implement the mandate. This learning is then considered to be organizational learning when new ideas are manifested as changes in organizational procedures, routines, strategies, structures, and goals.

This view of organizational learning, in contrast to the efficiency literature, focuses on the process of learning, or increasing ability; learning is not determined by the final outcome of the peacekeeping operation. The outcome of an operation—be it success or failure—is considered to be separate from the independent variable of organizational learning.[4]

* Lise Morjé Howard is Assistant Professor of Government, Georgetown University

1 This discussion paper is based on findings from Lise Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

2 Jacob Bercovitch and Jeffrey Langley, "The Nature of the Dispute and the Effectiveness of International Mediation," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4, no.4 (1993); I. William Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); "An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy and Peace-keeping," Report of the Secretary-General (17 June 1992, UN Doc. A/47/277- S/24111); and David Malone, *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004).

3 George Breslauer and Philip Tetlock make the apt distinction between "learning that" and "learning how." See Breslauer and Tetlock, *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991), p. 6. For example, one can learn "that" a stove is hot, but "how" to cook.

4 To further explain with a cooking metaphor: when one is learning how to cook, there are certain indicators of increasing cooking ability that do not depend upon the final outcome. Even after learning how to cook, not every dish may turn out to be fabulous, possibly due to factors beyond the cook's control.

FIRST-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

There are four basic indicators of first-level organizational learning. These consist of the organization's ability to (1) gather and analyze information; (2) coordinate among the different divisions of the peacekeeping mission; (3) engage the organization with its post-civil-war environment; and (4) exercise leadership in such a way that the organization commands authority from all actors, even during crises.[5] Table 1 presents a summary of the preconditions indicating possible learning, as well as indicators of learning, or its opposite, organizational dysfunction. The preconditions represent structures that must be in place before the organization can engage in the learning process. Learning is possible if the preconditions are present, but the presence of these conditions does not ensure that learning will occur.

Of the four indicators, probably the most crucial concerns organizational engagement with the environment. A wide distribution of UN staff in the field, among the local population, is a precondition for learning. Learning itself is indicated by two primary factors: the profile of the organization, and the operation's ability to disseminate information. The profile of the organization in the host country can range from "colonial" to "integrative." A colonial profile is one where staff stay on compounds, do not interact with locals, are heavily armed, and senior UN representatives are often involved in the daily decision making of the UN operation.

In contrast, an integrative organization engages actively with the local population, at lower, middle, and elite levels of society.[6] A learning organization will tend toward the integrative end of the continuum, whereas a dysfunctional organization often maintains a colonial profile. Another important aspect of organizational engagement with the environment involves the UN's ability to communicate its intentions to the local population,

Table 1: Indicators of First-Level Organizational Learning

	Information	Coordination	Organizational Engagement with Environment	Leadership
Preconditions Indicating Possible Learning	Mechanisms in place to gather technical information from a wide variety of sources	Peacekeeping operation takes charge of international-organization coordination	Low level of head-quarters engagement with daily decision making; wide distribution of staff in field	Mission leadership is appointed early in the negotiation process and is familiar with the conflict
Indicators of Learning	Problem definitions/political judgments based on technical information and derived from the field	Task prioritization is incrementally reevaluated and realigned	Organizational profile tends toward integration with environment; organization is able to communicate intentions to local population	Mandate is interpreted as a "baseline;" leader of UN operations is able to alter incrementally the goals of warring elites; leader learns how to manage crises

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5 Inspiration for this descriptive model comes from Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990). This section also builds on the work of many scholars, including Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government* (New York: Free Press, 1963); Graham T. Allison, *The Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little Brown, 1972); Chris Argyris and Donald Schon, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996); Herbert Simon, *Reason in Human Affairs* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983); Lloyd S. Etheredge, *Can Government Learn? American Foreign Policy and Central American Revolution* (New York: Pergamon, 1985); James G. March, *Decisions and Organization* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Jack Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (1994): 279-312; Frans Leeuw, Ray C. Rist, and Richard C. Sonnichsen, eds., *Can Governments Learn? Comparative Perspectives on Evaluation and Organizational Learning* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994); and Andrew Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973-1996* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

6 J. P. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), p. 39.

which indicates learning. The absence of an active UN information campaign indicates dysfunction.

In the cases of successful mandate implementation, the military and civilian components had the ability to gather technical information, analyze and evaluate combatants' motives, coordinate the different international operations in the field, manage crises, alter the goals of the warring parties, and change the UN operations on the ground in light of new understandings of problems. At times, even when the Security Council expressed low levels of interest, and parties to the civil war were reneging on promises, the UN was able to learn on the first level, and the operations were successful at mandate implementation.

For example, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) mission in Namibia, with recent Nobel Peace laureate Martti Ahtisaari as Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), was successful in large part because of first-level organizational learning. While at the outset of the operation, forces sympathetic to South Africa and South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) began fighting, the leadership of UNTAG was able to dispel this and other crises through diplomatic efforts and by establishing moral authority rather than enforcement powers. The leadership of UNTAG sought to change Namibian society by helping to create "a new atmosphere and climate of reconciliation," and to interact directly with the Namibian people, not simply with political elites.[7]

The UNTAG mission had a clear and centralized chain of command. It was also spread wide throughout the vast country, in order to engage the organization directly with its environment. Staff members would attend church services on a regular basis, and meet often with community leaders, student groups, political groups, traditional groups, veterinarians' associations, and farmers' unions.[8] Many of these meetings would last up to four or more hours. The reach of the organization allowed it to learn about the needs and worries of ordinary Namibians, while teaching them about the coming elections, political parties, and democratic governance.

In the "eyes, ears, and voice" of UNTAG, as the district and regional centers have been called, staff members knew well the overall mission objective and the time frame. But other than these restrictions,

> staff were provided with broad guidelines, rather than detailed recipes, on how to execute their functions. This required that district staff initiate and adopt a *modus operandi* which took into account the diversity of their respective areas. Daily reports were fed to the capital, Windhoek, which not only permitted the flow of information, but also allowed for adjustments in both policy and working methods. Staff were in constant contact with the local population and thus had instant feedback on their own performance permitting adjustment as necessary.[9]

The combination of well-structured, widely disbursed offices, with flexible mandates provided an efficient and legitimating framework for information gathering and political coordination.

Ahtisaari maintains that a major reason why he was able to establish a trusting and smooth relationship between UNTAG and Namibians was that he had a trusting and solid relationship with his staff.[10] The Special Representative was also given the power to answer only to the Secretary-General, thus he alone was in political charge of all aspects of UNTAG. Aside from the decision to appoint a Deputy Special Representative, changes in the operation and the specifics of how to implement various tasks were generally the domain of UNTAG in the field, not Secretariat headquarters or the Security Council. Alterations in operations, such as suggestions for new methods and targets for the information program, were initiated from the Special Representative's office, based on recommendations he had received through the numerous channels of information available to him. In other words, the UNTAG central offices were managed, and derived their success, primarily from the field, rather than from UN headquarters. First-level organizational learning was a crucial

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7 Martti Ahtisaari, as quoted in Heribert Weiland and Matthew Braham, eds., *The Namibian Peace Process: Implications and Lessons for the Future* (Freiburg: Arnold Bergsträsser Institut, 1994), p. 67, note 18.

8 See Christopher Wren, "Outjo Journal: UN Namibia Team Makes Some Unlikely Friends," *New York Times*, January 19, 1990, p. 4-A.

9 United Nations, "UNTAG Namibia: Description and Analysis of the Functional Performance of the Mission," unpublished report, May 1990, pp. 36-37, paragraphs 75-77.

10 Personal interview with President Martti Ahtisaari, Kulturanta, Finland, July 10-12, 1998

component of the success of UNTAG.

SECOND-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

In contrast to first-level learning, or "learning while doing," second-level learning is much broader, and entails learning at the strategic level, at UN headquarters. It often involves postmission evaluation and organizational change at headquarters in response to evaluation. Second-level organizational learning can be defined as change in the organization's overall means, structures, and goals, in response to new understandings of problems and their causes. An important indicator of second-level learning, which also provides a link between the first and second levels, is improvement in the preconditions for first-level learning (see Table 1 for details).

Second-level organizational dysfunction is indicated when components of the organization are unable to adequately define problems, implement strategies, or realize goals. An intermediate stage of less severe organizational learning, which could be called "incremental adaptation," is characterized by programs being transferred from one mission to the next, regardless of the new context, and new programs or bureaucratic structures being added without adequate streamlining or reevaluation of means-ends relationships.[11]

There are some signs of second-level learning in the UN in the acknowledgement and institutionalization of two related principles: first, that the UN should not try to keep the peace where there is no peace to be kept, and second, that the UN does not hold the legitimacy or the means to engage effectively in peace enforcement (and that active peace enforcement should be the domain of single states, regional organizations, or coalitions of the willing). While both of these principles are being challenged rhetorically under the increasing weight of the "responsibility to protect" doctrine and the current real-life challenges in the DRC and Darfur, the Brahimi Report has given support to members of the UN Secretariat to "say no" to some of the recent impossible missions (such as that in Iraq).

CONCLUSION

The Brahimi Report, issued in 2000, represents the most comprehensive review of UN peacekeeping to date. While many important ideas were advanced, the institutionalization of the ideas that are related to the greater resourcing of DPKO and augmentation and alteration of its structure at headquarters have not necessarily improved the efficiency or effectiveness of UN peacekeeping overall. The report makes many very important suggestions, especially with respect to decreasing the amount of time it takes to deploy peacekeepers and consistency in troop training. But the unspoken, central idea behind the report is that increases in the size and configuration of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will solve the problems of complex UN peacekeeping. In light of this central recommendation, the size of the DPKO has increased in size more than two-fold since 2000. The central problem with this solution is that, based on the findings from successful cases of UN peacekeeping, the organizational change that is needed is not at UN headquarters, but in the field.

Future organizational changes at the center ought to be focused not on getting the bureaucratic size and coordination structures right in New York, but rather on enabling field operations to do what they need to fulfill the mandate. Having more people to answer to at a politically charged UN headquarters does not seem likely to help missions learn on the ground. In order to engage in more first-level learning, which is the primary source of success in UN peacekeeping, there needs to be greater learning on the second level, at UN headquarters, with an overall goal not of increasing organizational size and political strength in New York, but rather toward streamlining operations at the center and delegating responsibility and decision-making authority to the field.

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11 On "incremental adaptation," see Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power*. On the sources of organizational dysfunction, see Giulio Gallarotti, "The Limits of International Organization: Systematic Failure in the Management of International Relations," *International Organization* 45, no. 2 (1991): 183-220; and Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organization," *International Organization* 54, no. 1 (1999): 699-732.

Managing Transition:
Exit Strategies and Peace Consolidation[*]

Richard Caplan[**]

All United Nations peace operations, complex or otherwise, are created with the termination of the operation in mind.[1] No peace operation is intended to endure indefinitely, even if a number of operations, in actual practice, have been of long duration. Termination need not and does not necessarily entail the end of all UN and other third-party involvement in a conflict situation. However, when a UN peace operation is established, it is assumed to be a temporary measure that will endure until, in the best case, a lasting solution to the conflict can be found that will allow the UN to withdraw without jeopardizing the peace or, in the worst case, circumstances on the ground deteriorate and a continued UN presence is no longer thought to be able to contribute to maintaining the peace. UN peace operations may also end through the transfer of responsibility for the operation to another organization.

If all UN peace operations are expected to end, the conditions under which they are brought to a close do not always conform to well-considered plans (assuming such plans exist in the first place). Budgetary pressures from the assessed contributors, for instance, can result in the "premature" termination of an operation. Similarly, political pressures for closure from the Security Council can undermine peacebuilding plans, while pressures for transition from within the host country can also distort strategic plans. It can be very difficult for the UN Secretariat to manage budgetary and political pressures originating from member states or conflict territories. However, there are other constraints on the design and implementation of effective exit or transition strategies. These constraints are no less serious than budgetary and political ones, but, because they are largely of an operational nature, they are, in principle, more

Dr. Richard Caplan, University of Oxford, and H.E. Dr. Fred Tanner, Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

susceptible to positive intervention by the Secretariat. This paper will concentrate on two of the more significant of these constraints.

The first of these constraints is the **absence of clear or agreed-upon criteria for the achievement of success** in the stabilization of a country.[2] A sound exit strategy depends on clarity and consensus with regard to peacebuilding success. If it is not clear or if there is not agreement as to what constitutes peacebuilding success, then it will be difficult to determine what measures are required to achieve success or when and if success has been achieved. The problem, in part, is that there are no hard measures or indicators of a self-sustaining peace—in contrast, say, to the indicators of a prosperous economy or a healthy population. The ultimate test of a self-sustaining peace necessarily comes after the fact—that is, only when the international community has drawn down significantly or exited. One measure of sustainability, therefore, is the survival of a peace following the first election *after*

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1 For purposes of this study, UN peace operations encompass a UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) peacekeeping mission and the UN Country Team.

2 Charles T. Call, "Knowing Peace When You See It: Setting Standards for Peacebuilding Success," *Civil Wars* 10, no. 2 (2008): 173-194.

peacekeeping forces have departed.[3] Yet, while this may be a reliable measure and useful for analytical purposes, it is not a practical one for transitional planning purposes.

Different standards may be employed to evaluate the success of efforts while peacebuilding is under way. One approach is to predicate success on mandate fulfillment: if the mission completes the essential tasks of its mandate then the mission is deemed to be a success. The problem with this approach, to analogize from medicine, is that an operation may be a success and, yet, the patient dies: in other words, a peacebuilding mandate may be fulfilled without a sustainable peace having been established. Mandate fulfillment is never a stated measure of peacebuilding success but the standard often informs the thinking of practitioners in the field.

Another standard of success is the absence of major armed violence between states or of internal war within a state—what is known as a "negative peace." The problem with this approach is that the achievement of a negative peace is generally thought by itself to be insufficient for two related reasons. One is that it may not be an adequate basis for a stable peace. If, for instance, a negative peace in a country or territory is achieved through the exclusion or repression of its citizens, it will be an unjust peace and therefore it may be an unstable one.[4] The other reason is that a negative peace does not address the root causes of a conflict—such as poverty, inequality, unsustainable development, and unaccountable governance—the persistence of which, it is widely believed, can result in conflict recurrence. In addition to any empirical evidence that may underpin these claims, there are strong normative imperatives at work in favor of a more robust concept of peace: autocratic rule, for instance, may be found to be effective in maintaining peace, but would be anathema to the United Nations and other third parties.[5]

Within the UN system there is broad acceptance of the view that a sustainable peace is a comprehensive peace that entails not only the provision of basic security but also the (re)establishment of functioning political institutions and processes and the achievement of at least a minimum level of economic and social development.[6] This is essentially a "root causes" approach to peacebuilding. The difficulties associated with this approach are two-fold. First, despite significant advances in conflict analysis, we still do not understand well enough the contribution that various political, social, and economic factors make to the maintenance or degradation of peace. It is also questionable whether and how far we can generalize on the basis of the knowledge that we have. As Charles Call observes, "many postconflict countries (e.g., Guatemala) have failed to address the root causes of war, but have not experienced a reversion nor is there one on the horizon."[7] Second, difficulties arise in efforts to specify the content and the limits of such broad goals as the eradication of poverty for the purposes of designing a peace consolidation strategy and, by extension, an exit strategy. As one contributor to a recent UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) study observed, "UNDG/UNCT [United Nations Development/United Nations Country Teams] struggle to determine, and agree on, what the critical peace-building fault lines are, notably in terms of the causal links between poverty-related issues and threats to peace. Does every poverty-related problem constitute a threat to peace or an obstacle to peace consolidation?"[8]

Even where there may be clarity and agreement in principle on what the critical peacebuilding fault lines are, tensions may arise with regard to the operationalization of strategy. For instance, the Security Council may have views about the timing

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3   B. Blechman et al., "Effective Transitions from Peace Operations to Sustainable Peace," (Washington, DC: DFI International, 1997).

4   M. W. Doyle and N. Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 73.

5   And, yet, Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and M. Söderbom observe, "Severe autocracy appears to be highly successful in maintaining the post-conflict peace… If the polity is highly autocratic, the risk [of reversion to conflict] is only 24.6 percent; whereas if it is not highly autocratic the risk more than doubles to 62 percent." The authors conclude that liberal democratic development may be intrinsically desirable, but it should not be viewed as a mechanism for increasing the durability of a postconflict peace. See Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom, "Post-Conflict Risks," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 4 (2008): 470.

6   United Nations, "No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-Making and the Closure or Transition of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," UN Doc. S/2001/394, April 20, 2001, §20. See also World Bank/UN Development Programme Initiative on State-building in Crisis and Post-conflict Contexts, "The Role of State-building in Post-Conflict Transitions—Country Focus (Concept Note)," September 18, 2007.

7   Call, "Knowing Peace When You See It," p. 183.

8   PBSO, "Measuring Peace Consolidation and Supporting Transition," p. 9.

of the drawdown of peacekeeping forces that are at variance with the views of the Secretary-General or DPKO, which in turn may be at odds with the thinking of the host country. Or the Secretary-General and his or her Special Representative may not always be in agreement with regard to implementing particular aspects of a strategy. And, of course, there is an inherent tension between the UN as driver of reform and the UN as partner in its relations with host countries. Sometimes these tensions are not significant; at other times they may be obstacles to coordinated and coherent action.

A second and related constraint on the design and implementation of effective exit or transition strategies is the **absence of a system-wide country monitoring methodology to inform planning** or the inappropriate use of benchmarking to chart progress toward a sustainable peace within a country. The lack of a common approach to country monitoring means that different UN agencies sometimes operate on different assumptions about the country situation (including threat analysis, national capacity, and the likely consequences of particular international initiatives) at any given moment. The inappropriate use of benchmarking occurs when operational performance and other such outputs are the objects of evaluation rather than outcomes that are more indicative of the degree of peace consolidation achieved.

A sound transitional strategy needs clear operational measures of effectiveness that can help UN peace operation leadership and their national counterparts to determine when the support offered by the UN system should be altered or reduced. (Of course, a good transitional strategy first needs a good entrance strategy: if the strategic goals of an integrated peace operation are unrealistic or poorly defined, then sound transitional planning will be much harder to execute.)

The scholarly and policy literature suggest that the following seven general principles should inform transitional planning and efforts to measure

progress toward peace consolidation:[9]

1. The objectives (intended outcomes) of a peace operation need to be reevaluated in view of the conditions that characterize the postconflict environment once stabilization has been achieved. Do these objectives still support the broad strategic goals of the mission? Have new or unanticipated threats or impediments to a stable peace emerged (e.g., external security challenges, new population displacements) that require the articulation of new or altered objectives? Has available implementing capacity—internationally and nationally—changed and what implications does this have for meeting the objectives? Are the (new) objectives clearly understood and accepted by all international implementing agents and national counterparts?

2. Core tasks need to be specified that will enable the peace operation to meet its objectives, and just as objectives will need to be reevaluated as conditions on the ground improve, so will the core tasks associated with them. It is also important to gauge whether the theoretical assumptions underpinning these tasks are sound. For instance, is a weapons buy-back program actually reducing the supply of weapons in a country or merely creating a new regional market for the sale of arms?

3. Benchmarks need to be measurable using meaningful indicators. Indicators should focus on measuring outcomes and impact, not just output. If, for instance, one of the benchmarks is the establishment and development of a professional, impartial, and independent judiciary, then appropriate measures of progress would be whether there is evidence of ethnic or other bias on the part of judges in the performance of their duties, how much trust the court system enjoys among the general public and endangered population groups in particular, and whether judges are respectful of international human rights norms. Measuring how many judges are trained, by contrast, while important, is not a meaningful indicator of the level of competence that the judiciary has attained.

4. Benchmarks and indicators to measure a country's progress need to be consistent across the international system. If donor states, the UN, and other multilateral agencies each employ different benchmarks and indicators, it will be difficult to

9   These principles are derived from a wide body of literature, including Craig Cohen, "Measuring Progress in Stabilization and Reconstruction," Stabilization and Reconstruction Series no. 1 (Washington, DC: USIP, March 2006); Kenneth Menkhaus, "Impact Assessment in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Challenges and Future Directions," (Geneva: Interpeace, July 2004), available at www.interpeace.org/pdfs/Publications_(Pdf)/Current_Reports/Challenges_in_peacebuilding_impact_assessment.pdf ; Tanya Spencer, "A Synthesis of Evaluations of Peacebuilding Activities Undertaken by Humanitarian Agencies and Conflict Resolution Organizations," (London: Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance, November 1998); and UNDG/World Bank, "Joint Guidance Note on Integrated Recovery Planning Using Post Conflict Needs Assessments and Transitional Results Frameworks," (New York, September 2007).

arrive at a common assessment of progress toward peace consolidation and to adjust course accordingly. This is a difficult principle to observe in some cases however, as donor governments are accountable to their legislatures, and watchdog agencies may wish to employ their own criteria to assess the effective use of tax revenue.

5. Host-country buy-in for and participation in benchmarking are essential. Host-country counterparts need to participate in the design of transitional plans and the establishment of the benchmarks and indicators related to implementing those plans. As recovery proceeds, effective implementation of peacebuilding plans will depend increasingly on the willingness and capacity of host-country stakeholders to come together, own the process, and eventually drive it forward.

6. Effective evaluation requires adequate resources from the start of an operation. Evaluation processes in support of transitional planning need to be built into a postconflict peacebuilding strategy from the initial phase of an operation.

7. The tendency to politicize metrics design and reporting must be avoided. There is a temptation to proclaim "success" in the face of pressures and criticisms from donor governments and others, even when the evidence does not support such a claim. Similarly there is a temptation to obscure inconvenient truths. Reporting and evaluation need to be protected against politicization. For this reason it may be advisable to employ an independent body, outside the UN, to evaluate operations or particular areas of operations.

CONCLUSION

This paper has concentrated on two constraints on the effective management of transition in peace operations: the absence of agreed standards of peacebuilding success and the absence of sound monitoring of progress toward success. The two constraints are closely related: without clarity about the particular standards of success that a peacebuilding operation seeks to achieve, it is not possible to evaluate progress meaningfully toward those ends. There are other constraints on designing and implementing effective exit strategies, including limited planning capacity within and between some UN agencies to support sequencing and transition; the lack of adequate structures to share information and plan jointly (notwithstanding the strides that have been made in the integration of various parts of the UN system in the planning and delivery of field operations through the Integrated Mission Planning Process [IMPP]); and a lack of broad knowledge within the UN system concerning the actual experience of transition and exit, which means that practice (good and bad) is not always broadly shared, or, if it is shared, it is not often translated into policy, guidance, or tools for integrated peace operations. The two constraints discussed in this paper, however, arguably constitute the two primary challenges to designing sound transition and exit strategies.

ANNEX

Conference Agenda

Monday, December 1, 2008

09:00   Breakfast

09:30 – 09:45   **Welcome and Introduction**

                      H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, *President, IPI*
                      H.E. Dr. Fred Tanner, *Director, GCSP*

09:45 – 11:00   **Panel 1: Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges of UN Peace Operations**

                      This panel will help frame the discussion of subsequent panels, providing the strategic, political, and managerial context in which peace operations are taking place. Panelists will briefly define the key political and managerial dilemmas in today's peace operations as they see them.

                      Chair
                      H.E. Dr. Fred Tanner

                      Presenter
                      Mr. Richard Gowan, *Associate Director for Policy, Center on International Cooperation, New York University*

                      Discussants
                      H.E. Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations*
                      Mr. Francesco Mancini, *Deputy Director of Studies, International Peace Institute*

11:00   Coffee Break and Group Photo

11:15-12:00   **Keynote Address**

                      H.E. Mr. Alain Le Roy, *Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*

12:00-13:30   **Panel 2: Planning for Success: Off to a Good Start**

                      The importance of planning for and in a mission cannot be overstated. While efforts have been made to improve planning, in particular to make planning processes more integrated, UN planners still struggle to align resources and actors with mandates. What are the key challenges to strategic planning? What are the roadblocks toward integrated planning? What can be done to remove these roadblocks? How can both guidance and implementation be improved?

Chair
H.E. Ms. Susana Malcorra, *Under-Secretary-General, Department of Field Support, United Nations*

Presenter
Mr. Cedric de Coning, *Research Fellow, ACCORD and NUPI*

Discussants
Ms. Margaret Carey, *Director, Africa I Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*
Mr. Diego Ruiz Palmer, *Head of the Planning Section, Operations Division, NATO International Staff*

13:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 **Panel 3: Leadership on the Line: Managing Field Complexity**

The success of a mission often depends not only on consistent and unambiguous leadership from the headquarters and top field management, but also on determined and skilled guidance from middle management in the field. How important is leadership in complex operations? What are the key skills needed to manage complexity? How can the UN develop appropriate leadership? What are the key impediments to be overcome in the exercise of leadership in a mission?

Chair
Mr. Edmond Mulet, *Assistant-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*

Presenter
H.E. Mr. Pierre Schori, *Executive Director, FRIDE*

Discussants
Dr. Martin Barber, *Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh*
Mr. Haile Menkerios, *Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations*

16:00 Coffee Break

16:15-17:45 **Panel 4: Organizational Learning: Managing Knowledge**

Learning is a key notion in shaping the work of organizations and individuals. In peace operations learning happens at many levels: across missions at headquarters level, within missions in the field, and at an individual level. The challenge is to transform the widespread knowledge at all levels into organizational change and improvement. How has the UN gone about trying to promote organizational learning? Where has it succeeded or failed? What works and what does not? How can the UN improve its organizational learning so that new ideas and best practices can manifest as change in organizational procedures, routines, strategies, structures, and goals?

Chair
Ms. Angela Kane, *Under-Secretary-General, Department of Management, United Nations*

Presenter
Dr. Lise Morjé Howard, *Assistant Professor, Georgetown University*

Discussants
Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, *Director of the Policy, Evaluation, and Training Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*
Mr. David Futch, *Senior Military Analyst, Center for Army Lessons Learned, US Army Combined Arms Center*

19:00   Cocktail Reception

Tuesday, December 2, 2008

08:30-09:00   **Breakfast**

09:00-10:30   **Panel 5: Managing Transition: Exit Strategies and Peace Consolidation**

Major challenges exist in planning the termination of a complex operation or its transition (e.g., scaling down a multidimensional peacekeeping mission to become a peacebuilding mission). Clearly, a good exit strategy depends on good entrance and intermediate strategies. At the same time, in UN peacekeeping a poorly conceived exit strategy can jeopardize the fragile achievements of a peace operation. What are the key political and organizational challenges of creating an exit strategy? When and under what conditions can exits be successfully achieved? What are the benchmarks? How should the exit strategy be prepared? How can the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding be best managed?

Chair
Mr. Dmitry Titov, *Assistant Secretary-General, Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*

Presenter
Dr. Richard Caplan, *Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford*

Discussants
Ms. Sofia Carrondo, *Policy Adviser for Post-Crisis Transitions, United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, United Nations Development Group*
Ms. Jane Holl Lute, *Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations*

10:30-11:00   Coffee Break

11:00-12:30   **Panel 6: Managing Complex Partnerships: Dilemmas of Cooperation and Integration on the Ground**

The UN is not the sole player in the field of peace operations. The African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, and NATO all have deployed missions with military components. The

OAS and OSCE have established civilian missions, and joint operations are increasingly common. What are the most serious dilemmas facing the UN in managing complex partnerships on the ground? What are the most successful models—sequentially deployed, co-deployed, "hybrid" operations—as we look to the future? Under what conditions do the various models work best? What can be done to ensure that institutional partnerships function as effectively as possible?

Chair
Lt. General Chikadibia Obiakor, *Military Adviser, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations*

Presenter
Dr. Michael Lipson, *Visiting Fellow, Center on International Cooperation, New York University*

Discussants
H.E. Mr. Rodolphe Adada, *Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur*
H.E. Mr. Pedro Serrano, *Head of the Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union*

12:30-13:15   **Wrap-up Session: Conclusions and Next Steps**

Chair
H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations*
Dr. Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, *Vice President of Programs, EastWest Institute, New York*
Dr. Edward C. Luck, *Senior Vice President and Director of Studies, International Peace Institute*

Conference Participants

H.E. Mr. Rodolphe Adada
Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur,
African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation
in Darfur (UNAMID)

Dr. Martin Barber
Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh

Dr. Richard Caplan
Professor of International Relations,
Department of Politics and International
Relations, University of Oxford

Ms. Margaret Carey
Director, Africa I Division, Department of
Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations

Ms. Sofia Carrondo
Policy Adviser for Post-Crisis Transitions,
UN Development Operations Coordination Office
(UNDOCO), UN Development Group (UNDG)

Mr. Xavier Chatel
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of France to
the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of
Ghana to the United Nations

Dr. Caty Clement
Faculty Member and Co-Director for the New
Issues in Security Course (NISC) Geneva Centre
for Security Policy (GCSP)

Mr. James Cockayne
Senior Associate, International Peace Institute
(IPI)

Mr. Cedric de Coning
Research Fellow, The African Centre for the
Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)
and The Norwegian Institute of International
Affairs (NUPI)

Mr. Stephen Del Rosso, Jr.
Chair, International Peace and Security, Carnegie
Corporation of New York

Mr. Ettore Di Benedetto
Team Leader, Leadership and Management Team,
Integrated Training Service (ITS), DPKO,
United Nations

Mr. Emmanuel Delorme
Intern, Permanent Mission of France to the
United Nations

Col. Hammad Ahmed Dogar
Military Adviser, Permanent Mission of Pakistan
to the United Nations

Ms. Elena Donova
Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Russian
Federation to the United Nations

Mrs. Souad El Alaoui
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Morocco to the
United Nations

Dr. Efrat Elron
Senior Fellow, IPI

Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles
Director, UNDG

Mr. David Futch
Senior Military Analyst, Center for Army Lessons
Learned, US Army Combined Arms Center

Mr. Richard Gowan
Research Associate and Associate Director for
Policy, Center on International Cooperation
(CIC), New York University

Ms. Alison Gurin
Program Assistant, IPI

Mr. David Haeri
Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General,
DPKO, United Nations

Dr. Abdel-Kader Haireche
Team Leader, DPKO-AU Peacekeeping Support
Team (DPKO-AUPST)

Mr. Adrian Hills
Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General,
Department of Field Support (DFS),
United Nations

Ambassador John L. Hirsch
Senior Adviser, IPI

Dr. Lise Morjé Howard
Assistant Professor, Department of Government,
Georgetown University

Ms. Adriana Jacinto
Policy and Training Officer, Integrated Training
Service, DPKO, United Nations

Mr. Julian Junk
Research Fellow, Department of Politics and
Management, University of Konstanz, Germany

Ms. Angela Kane
Under-Secretary-General, Department of
Management, United Nations

Mr. Paul Keating
Acting Deputy Chief, Peacekeeping Best Practices
Section, DPKO, United Nations

Ms. Elizabeth Kissam
Associate Political Affairs Officer, DPKO,
United Nations

Mr. Benno Laggner
Minister, Head of UN Coordination Unit,
Directorate of Political Affairs, Political Affairs
Division III, UN and Other International
Organizations, Federal Department of Foreign
Affairs, Switzerland

Mr. Sébastian Lapierre
Political Affairs Officer, Peacekeeping Best
Practices Section, DPKO, United Nations

Mr. Alain Le Roy
Under-Secretary-General, DPKO, United Nations

Dr. Michael Lipson
Visiting Scholar, CIC, New York University

Dr. Edward C. Luck
Senior Vice President and Director of Studies, IPI

Ms. Jane Holl Lute
Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding
Support Office (PBSO), United Nations

Ms. Susana Malcorra
Under-Secretary-General, DFS, United Nations

Mr. Francesco Mancini
Deputy Director of Studies, IPI

H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of
Switzerland to the United Nations

Ms. Ariel Morvan
Chief, Senior Leadership Appointments Section,
Office of the Under-Secretary-General, DFS,
United Nations

Mr. Edmond Mulet
Assistant-Secretary-General, DPKO,
United Nations

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
Director, Policy, Evaluation, and Training
Division, DPKO, United Nations

Dr. Alexandra Novosseloff
Policy Adviser on UN Issues, Directorate for
Strategic Affairs, French Ministry of Defense

Lt. General Chikadibia Obiakor
Military Adviser, DPKO, United Nations

Mr. Richard Ponzio
Senior Policy Analyst, PBSO, United Nations

H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen
President, IPI

Mr. Diego Ruiz Palmer
Head of the Planning Section, Operations
Division, North Atlantic Treaty Organization
(NATO)

Dr. Dirk Salomons
Director of the Program for Humanitarian Affairs,
School of International and Public Affairs,
Columbia University

H.E. Mr. Pierre Schori
Executive Director, Fundación para las Relaciones
Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE)

H.E. Mr. Pedro Serrano
Head of the Liaison Office of the General
Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

Dr. Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu
Vice President of Programs, EastWest Institute,
New York

Mr. Carl Skau
Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sweden
to the United Nations

Ms. Jenna Slotin
Senior Program Officer, IPI

Mr. Adam C. Smith
Senior Program Officer, IPI

Ms. Rana Taha
Special Assistant to the Joint AU-UN Special
Representative for Darfur, African Union/
UNAMID

H.E. Dr. Fred Tanner
Director, GCSP

Mr. Dmitry Titov
Assistant-Secretary-General for Rule of Law and
Security Institutions, DPKO, United Nations

Ms. Pim Valdre
Special Assistant to the President, IPI

Col. Willem Van Dullemen
Chief Current Military Operations Service, Office
of Military Affairs, DPKO, United Nations

Ms. Sofia Wartmann
Political Affairs Officer, Office of Operations,
DPKO, United Nations

Ms. Vanessa Wyeth
Senior Program Officer, IPI

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