

Building Partnerships for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding between the United Nations and Regional Organizations

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The International Peace Academy is an independent, international institution dedicated to promoting the prevention and settlement of armed conflicts between and within states through policy research and development.

On April 4-5, 2006, some thirty representatives of regional organizations (ROs), the United Nations (UN) and experts from four continents convened in Vienna, Austria, at the invitation of the International Peace Academy (IPA) to examine how the UN and ROs could reinforce their cooperation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The meeting grew out of the desire of many ROs to engage with the UN Department of Political Affairs as it develops its mediation capacities, and their intent to contribute to the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission. The relationship between the world body and regional groups forms an important component of IPA's new program on global capacities for crisis prevention and response.

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This report was prepared by Dr. Catherine Guicherd, Visiting Fellow at IPA. It reflects the rapporteur's interpretation of the conference discussions and does not necessarily represent the view of other participants.

Main Findings

- The United Nations (UN) plays an important role in legitimizing international action, including that taken through and by regional organizations (ROs). But in most conflict cases, the UN will not be the main operational implementer of solutions. The lead will be taken by others: major donors, international financial institutions (IFIs), and ROs. A "grand coalition" of actors will need to be involved in any conflict management or resolution effort, combining three success factors: a) sufficient power; b) enough money; and c) broad legitimacy.
- If conflict prevention and peacebuilding require combining the assets of a multiplicity of players, this cannot be done via a fixed format arrangement. Instead, what is needed is a toolbox from which international actors can choose depending on the specifics of the situation on the ground, and elements of a process to guide this choice. A compendium of best practices in dealing with conflict in different kinds of situations, including mediation and economic factors, might help identify the elements of this toolbox.
- Economics deserves more attention in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. While the international community has a relatively broad and deep knowledge and experience in providing humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, it must put more effort into the search for ways to place post-conflict or transitional countries on the path to sustainable economic development. International actors must also try harder to link the political institutions that provide moral authority or legitimacy with those that steer the economic development process.
- The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) should take regional aspects of post-conflict situations seriously. At a minimum, the PBC should consider regional linkages in country-focused work, and it should also seriously consider placing regional cases on its agenda.

Introduction

However diverse, ROs representing different parts of the world have much in common with each other and with the UN: the conflicts they face often have similar characteristics; many of them are fully mobilized and almost always overstretched; they explicitly or implicitly work from similar assumptions, such as the interdependence of problems, the need for long-term involvement, and the importance of taking into account the regional dimensions of conflict; most perceive an active field presence as required to fulfil their mission adequately; and many – although not all – share the conviction that democracy and the rule of law must be part of the outcome if peace is to be long lasting.

As the UN acquires enhanced capacities for mediation¹ and the PBC and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) become operational, ROs are seeking ways to enhance their cooperation with the UN in tackling conflict. The April 2006 Vienna meeting organized by IPA was a first step in this direction in providing a forum for a broad-ranging discussion among a group of senior UN and RO officials engaged in comparable conflict situations and sometimes on the same terrain. The present report draws on the impressive sum of their collective experience in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The Vienna discussion, however, was just a first step, focussing on a comparison of experiences. Identifying ways for the UN and ROs to cooperate and develop effective partnerships on practical issues in particular geographic areas will require much more work in the years to come.

1. Conflict prevention and mediation

All of the ROs represented at the Vienna meeting are involved in mediation activities, although in various forms and in varying degrees of intensity. With the notable exception of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs still predominates, those activities cover both inter-state and intra-state conflicts.

The importance of prevention

Several of the experienced mediators around the table made a strong plea for greater investment in conflict

prevention. At present, the international community still too often takes a “fire-fighter approach”, addressing the symptoms of conflicts rather than their root causes, spending huge amounts on peacekeeping while failing to invest seriously in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The latter are often two faces of the same coin, as demonstrated in many regions by the resurgence of conflicts a few years after a peace agreement. The international community has yet to fully understand that investing in conflict prevention is cost-effective, both in terms of lives spared and financial resources saved. However, mobilizing the necessary political will is difficult, as there is little public and press attention to simmering conflicts, and governments of countries experiencing problems are often reluctant to permit external involvement until it is too late.

Lessons from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

The office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is, to some extent, an exception to the situation just described: it represents a rare example of institutionalised prevention. Established against the background of conflict in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the HCNM is mandated to intervene early in situations involving minority issues that could, in his view, lead to conflict. The parameters of his work include: (a) the freedom to decide autonomously which cases he takes up (he does not need an authorization from the OSCE political bodies); (b) confidentiality in his contacts and recommendations; (c) the exclusion of individual cases of minority right violations; and (d) the exclusion of situations where violence has already broken out, including terrorism.

The “winning combination” in the HCNM’s approach to reducing risks or tensions arising from minority issues is “integration with respect for diversity”. In practice, this means granting cultural rights to minorities and ensuring that they have the opportunity to participate fully in the economic and political life of the country in which they live. The key – and the challenge – is to convince both the majority and the minority that they will benefit more from achieving a balance of mutual rights and duties than from risking conflict.

As any mediator, the HCNM has to be extremely cautious

¹ The September 2005 World Summit endorsed the UN Secretariat’s request to develop its mediation capacity. Subsequently, Member States endorsed the creation of a small Mediation Support Unit at the Department of Political Affairs and an increase in mediation-dedicated posts in DPA’s geographic sections.

that he is not seen as threatening to the government of the country concerned. Keeping recommendations confidential, proposing practical solutions (often in the form of legislation), presenting his role as advisory, and in the first place, being a seasoned diplomat, are all ingredients that facilitate success. It was suggested at the seminar that the principles guiding the HCNM approach could also be applicable to other continents, for example in Africa, where ethnic groups often straddle borders.²

What does it take for mediation to work?

An active discussion on mediation took place, whereby the concern was to identify ingredients of a successful intervention, whether carried out in the framework of the UN or an RO. It led to the following conclusions:

- First it is important to recognize that there are circumstances under which diplomacy cannot work. This is the case when at least one of the parties to a conflict has no political interest to cooperate. One such example was the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1996-1997: despite the UN's and the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) best attempts to mediate (including the services of the best possible mediator in Africa at the time, Nelson Mandela), this was to no avail as the AFDL³ rebellion, with the support of a number of countries in the region, was determined to march on Kinshasa to dislodge the Mobutu Government.
 - Generally, mediation has the greatest chance of success if the following conditions are satisfied:
 - a. The situation is ripe, whereby the subjective perception of the parties is at least as important as their objective position on the ground: the parties must have come to a point where they believe that they will gain more through a mediated settlement than through a continuation of the confrontation.
 - b. The timing is right. "Windows of opportunity" to mediate are often narrow. It is important to identify them. Generally, informal contacts will help test the ground. In this context, a partnership between the UN and an RO can be useful,
- building on their respective access to, and legitimacy with, key actors in the conflict.
- c. The parties trust the mediator. It is not uncommon for mediation to fail because one of the parties sees the mediator as biased. Maintaining this impartiality over time is a tall order, which places a heavy burden on mediators. Overall, it was felt that the mediator had more clout if he or she was not acting on behalf of a single country but of a group with broader legitimacy. One participant pointed out that, in some cases, the simple prestige of the UN can convince the parties to gather around the negotiating table – although he conceded that this was by no means a guarantee of success. In Africa, legitimacy can sometimes be entrusted to a respected statesman, such as President Bongo of Gabon in the case of the UN and OAU settlement in the Central African Republic in 1997. This is reflected institutionally in the African Union (AU)'s decision to create a "Panel of the Wise" to assist the Peace and Security Council in averting conflict.
 - d. Strong external players are ready to back politically, practically, and financially the implementation of the solutions agreed by the parties.
- The use of "carrots and sticks" to accompany and support mediation is a difficult matter politically, practically and at a conceptual level. Some participants felt strongly that no mediation could be successful without pressure on the parties, but when and in what form to apply this pressure was a delicate issue. On the other hand, in some cases threats can be counterproductive and positive incentives can have greater effect, as they support the relationship of trust between the mediator and the parties. Overall, the key to a successful mediation seems to be in combining the impartiality of the mediator with pressure exercised or incentives given by external players at the right time and in the right amount, but little is known about the parameters of the "winning combination."⁴ Comparative case studies might help bring some clarity to this challenging issue.
 - One difficult question encountered by all mediators is

² Readers interested in the work of the HCNM can consult his website, <http://www.osce.org/hcnm>.

³ Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre.

⁴ A version of this dilemma is being played out in international efforts to persuade Iran to abandon its intent to build nuclear weapons.

to decide when to go public. Publicity is usually a way to put pressure on one of the parties. Traditionally, the UN has preferred quiet over public diplomacy: (a) this makes it easier for the parties to make concessions; (b) it is more compatible with respect for national sovereignty and what the government perceives as its dignity; (c) it safeguards the ownership of the outcome by the parties, which is the best guarantee that they will implement the solutions agreed. One drawback of quiet diplomacy from the UN perspective is that the Organization can be accused of doing nothing when it is in fact active but cannot say so because this would jeopardize its ability to reach success. In the discussion, it was recognized that there was no standard rule for choosing between public and quiet diplomacy, and that even in a single case, it may be advantageous to use both in turn at various stages of the process. There might also be value, in some instances, in the UN and an RO coordinating their approach such that one takes a confidential approach and the other a vocal one. Case studies may help identify the parameters of successful combinations. As an element of this dilemma between publicity and confidentiality, all experienced mediators around the table agreed that handling relations with the media was, and would always remain, a difficult matter.

- Engaging non-state actors in the mediation effort is essential but difficult. This includes guerrilla or terrorist organizations that can derail a peace process, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or business that can foster or undermine it. The role of the latter was illustrated negatively by the case of Myanmar, where sanctions were imposed by some important international actors (United States, European Union, etc.), but failed because business did not cooperate.
- Mediation requires resources in the form of finance, human resources, and experience. Many ROs keen to involve themselves more in mediation have yet to build such capacity. In this context, it was suggested that a compendium of best practices in mediation and peacemaking would be helpful. This may be a task for

the new Mediation Support Unit at the UN Department of Political Affairs, building on the extensive experience of the UN.

The importance of universally accepted norms

The presence or the absence of a set of norms universally accepted by the members of the organization is a key factor that determines which form of intervention by an external actor – whether the UN or an RO – is acceptable in a conflict. Since the adoption of the “Moscow document” in 1990, the OSCE is allowed to intervene in the domestic affairs of its participating states.⁵ The Charters of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the AU respectively endorse principles guiding the make-up of the domestic political order of their members. This gives them legitimacy to intervene if those principles are violated. For example, the AU reacted forcefully to the unlawful takeover of the Togolese presidency by Faure Gnassingbé following the death of his father, President Gnassingbé Eyadéma in February 2005, and to the military coup in Mauritania in August 2005. ASEAN, on the other hand, still operates under the principle that inter-state conflicts should be left to the parties, and domestic ones to the government concerned. However, this is gradually evolving, as ASEAN’s increasingly explicit criticism of the military regime in Myanmar demonstrates.⁶ ASEAN is also working on a Charter, which will set common standards of political behavior that all members are bound to uphold. The Charter will give ASEAN legal personality and facilitate the group’s engagement with the UN.

This being said, a consensus on values within an RO is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of success in peacemaking. Indeed, there is often a wide discrepancy between the general commitment of a government to certain principles in a political declaration of intent in peacetime, and action upon those principles in a particular conflict in which the same government is enmeshed. The “responsibility to protect” is a case in point.

The UN itself does not have a mandate to take action to shape the political systems of its member states or to respond when a particular form of government is replaced

⁵ *Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE* (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the predecessor of the OSCE), http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/1991/10/13995_en.pdf; in this document, participating states “categorically and irrevocably declare that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”

⁶ See for example Nick Cumming-Bruce, “Myanmar Gets Stern Warning from ASEAN,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 9, 2005.

by another. For example, it does not necessarily react to the overthrow of governments by force, which makes it appear less principled or more pragmatic than some ROs – depending on one’s perspective. However, the existence of eleven UN political and peacebuilding missions,⁷ the role that democratization played in some transitional administrations,⁸ and the endorsement by the Millennium Review Summit of the creation of a UN Democracy Fund, demonstrate that the Organization has a certain degree of legitimacy in engaging in the political aspects of state- and institution-building. In addition, the UN has an array of instruments at its disposal characterized by varying degrees of intrusiveness. For instance, it can be an advantage that the Human Rights Commissioner takes a strongly critical stand on a country when the Special Representative of the Secretary General is much more flexible. While each is fulfilling his/her role, the combined effect will be supportive of UN goals. As the instruments of ROs develop, they will be increasingly able to use the same combination of tools as the UN.

2. Field missions

The perspective of the discussion under this heading was, again, an exchange of experiences between the UN and ROs rather than a systematic search for synergies or differentiations. Field missions play a key role as they are the “eyes and the ears” of the organization in the field. If solutions are to be owned by local actors, it is essential to understand them, their aims, strengths, ambitions and relationships. For this reason, field missions are essential and ROs represented in Vienna expressed a general desire to enhance their presence on the ground. It was observed, however, that field missions were only one among a set of tools for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For the OSCE, they are a “second generation” instrument, following more traditional diplomatic and confidence-building measures. From another perspective, the growth in field missions goes hand in hand with the increasing acceptance of external interference in addressing domestic problems.

The role of field missions

The nature and scope of field missions vary a great deal, even across a single organization. Many combine conflict prevention and peacebuilding tasks, blurring the

somewhat arbitrary frontier between the two. Those tasks may include (a) confidence-building; (b) facilitation of political dialogue during tense periods such as elections; (c) training programs for capacity-building in government and civil society; (d) offering NGOs a focal point to channel their investment in the peace process; (e) early warning, including by watching over destabilizing developments in neighboring countries or at borders (especially as borders in conflict regions are demonstratively porous to arms and drugs trafficking); (f) verification of ceasefires or disarmament agreements; and (g) mobilization of domestic and international efforts to support economic reform and reconstruction. For ROs whose members have agreed principles regulating their domestic order, field missions additionally help the local authorities implement the commitments they have signed up to in areas such as democratization or human rights. Such is the case of OSCE missions.

The effectiveness of field missions largely depends on the density and the quality of the network of contacts they are able to establish locally with local and international actors. For ROs, this means developing close working links not only with UN-led field operations, but also with UN specialized agencies as well as with other ROs, local and international NGOs, the media and representatives of public and private foreign bodies who tend to converge toward conflict areas (including foreign political parties or foundations, and private security companies).

Political limitations on field missions

The work of field missions is always sensitive as they represent a certain degree of encroachment on the national sovereignty of the countries in which they are deployed. Their presence is not unanimously appreciated by the hosts, some of whom interpret them as a mark of discredit. For the OSCE, the strong presence of field missions in the region spanning from South Eastern Europe to Central Asia may also exacerbate the perception of some participating states that there is an imbalance in the geographical focus of the Organization’s activities. Three specific concerns common to ROs and the UN were highlighted during the seminar:

- The relationship of field operations with NGOs: NGO support for the aim of the mission is essential, but NGOs often tend to expect radical action which the

⁷ As of April 2006. For a list, see UN website at <http://www.un.org/peace/ppbm.pdf>.

⁸ For instance, UNTAC in Cambodia, UNMIK in Kosovo, UNTAET in East Timor.

international agency cannot take because it must work within the parameters set by the sovereign national state. This is the cause of frequent tensions and mutual frustrations. Achieving the dual “ownership” of the peace process by both the state authorities and civil society is therefore often a tall order.

- Information gathering: good and timely information is essential to the performance of the mission’s tasks, but its collection can nevertheless easily be misconstrued as an “intelligence” activity, leading at best to non-cooperation by the national government, and at worst to the expulsion of the mission.
- Cross-border issues: field missions are usually neither mandated nor equipped to address cross-border issues. This can be highly problematic as weak states, where most missions are deployed, are vulnerable to sources of instability in neighboring countries. One example is the Central African Republic, where the conflicts in Darfur / Chad on the one hand, and the Great Lakes on the other, repeatedly reverberate.

Practical difficulties of field missions

Practical difficulties are mainly related to the financing of missions and the recruitment, training and retention of staff.

- In the UN context, peacebuilding missions are financed from the assessed UN budget. However, they tend to be much less well-endowed than those operations with a military component, allowing only for a minimalist implementation of their mandate and little in terms of accompanying measures.⁹ Few ROs have field presences. The OSCE is the only one with comparative sizes and roles to UN missions. OSCE field presences are funded under the Organization’s regular budget,¹⁰ of which they represent no less than 70 percent. But as this budget remains extremely modest, projects that are compatible with the mandate often have to be financed by voluntary contributions. African missions, whether in

the context of the AU or a sub-regional organization, do not currently have a secure funding basis. They are often financed by donors, with the bulk of the support coming from the EU.¹¹ A durable and predictable source of funding has yet to be devised.

- The area of human resources is also difficult for field missions. Recruiting and retaining willing and able staff is a constant challenge, which international organizations seek to address in different ways. The OSCE, for example, relies on staff secondments from member states. While the model allows the Organization to bypass budgetary limitations, it also constrains its ability to recruit staff in the numbers and quality required, and to retain them. Another challenge, shared by the UN and ROs, is the recruitment of local staff. Problems include the sensitivity of components of the mission, which in some cases cannot be entrusted to nationals, and the negative impact of missions on the labor market in the form of brain drain and inflationary pressures, as overqualified locals vie to get jobs that are well-paid by the country’s standards.¹²

Given both the importance of field missions and the difficulty of managing them well, relatively “young” organizations such as the AU and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), who are interested in developing their field mission capacity, suggested that they would be interested in the UN facilitating an exchange of experiences in this area.

Relationship between headquarters and the field

The relationship and the balance of decision-making between headquarters and the field has an administrative component, but in most cases, it raises truly political issues. Decentralization is key in order to empower field operations, but often, there is a fine line between decentralized and ungovernable structures. Most participants in the seminar believed that the right approach, overall, resides in combining strong decision-making autonomy for those in the field with stringent and frequent reporting requirements. This being said, the

⁹ In the EU context, accompanying measures are more and more often financed by the European Commission to support foreign and security policy actions led by the Council, the inter-governmental branch of the EU. This was not discussed at the seminar.

¹⁰ €168,585,100 in 2005. http://www.osce.org/documents/osce/2005/05/14484_en.pdf.

¹¹ For example, through its rapid reaction mechanism the European Commission financed all ceasefire monitors in Burundi in 2003 and the Ndjamena talks on Darfur in 2004.

¹² The distortions caused by peacekeeping operations on the local labor market and the local economy are analyzed in M. Carnahan, W. Durch and S. Gilmore, “The Economic Impact of Peacekeeping,” UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Peacekeeping Best Practices, Unit, March 1, 2006. The report also includes recommendations as to measures the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations could take to mitigate this negative impact. See http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/pbpu/library/EIP_FINAL_Report_March20_2006doc.pdf.

frequency of reporting depends on the mandate and the aim of the operation: missions that have a long-term capacity-building role, such as most OSCE and OAS field presences, can report less frequently than those that have a direct conflict resolution or immediate post-conflict stabilization task (six months versus three months could be a rule of thumb). Similarly, by definition, the issue of “exit strategies” is less pressing for such long-term missions, reducing the requirement for benchmarks whose implementation will trigger termination.

When does headquarters need to intervene? Most clearly, when there is a crisis. In extreme situations, this means the decision of the host state to cease cooperation. This is a rare case, which the OSCE, for instance, experienced only once, leading in quick succession to the exclusion of the participating state from the Organization followed by the expulsion of the mission.¹³ In most cases, problems are of a lesser magnitude and can be resolved through alterations to mandates – which highlights the need for regular reporting requirements so that such alterations occur in a climate of calm rather than in crisis conditions.

3. Incorporating the Economic Dimension into Conflict Resolution

The need to fill the gap between political and economic actors was deeply felt by most participants in the seminar, prompting an active discussion of this topic. In essence, this confirmed the rationale behind the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. The sense of the debate was that economics were often insufficiently taken into consideration in discussions on peacekeeping and peacebuilding by “diplomacy-focused” international actors such as the UN and some ROs. Security Council deliberations were described as particularly typical of this shortcoming.

Key principles in articulating economics and politics

One of the keys to success, but also one of the greatest difficulties, is to associate the moral and political authority of the institutions that give legitimacy to international action and the impact of those agencies that steer the economic development process. Key players are the UN on the one hand, and the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the other. An example of the lack of coherence is the destabilizing effect of IMF and World Bank policies that request payment of arrears as a condition for further assistance even as civil servant salaries are not being paid. Another example, conversely, is that of a country where economic reform advised by the international financial institutions (IFIs) had succeeded in generating additional tax revenues, but these resources were misspent as the IFIs had failed to use the leverage capacity of major donors and the political agencies to steer government expenditure in the right direction. But in some situations, political and economic actors do appear to be cooperating fruitfully, as evidenced by OAS interaction with the Inter-American Development Bank.

An important reason behind the need for economic and political agencies to work together is that in many post-conflict countries, a return to long-term stability hinges upon disconnecting the sources of political and economic power. As has been pointed out elsewhere, too often, analysis of political/security risks is not linked with analysis of economic governance risks.¹⁴ In practical terms, the introduction of proper management and audit procedures can help mitigate the problem, but this often encounters political resistance and this resistance must be addressed politically. Another aspect that deserves political attention is the need to ensure that economists remain mindful that the solutions they propose balance the benefits between the parties to a conflict. This balance is generally a condition of acceptability of any settlement. Finally, partnership supports predictability, as certain types of political solutions are premised on a certain sustained level of funding in particular areas. Thus political actors, and especially the UN and ROs, need to ensure that international development partners and national governments respect the pledges they make at donors’ conferences.

It is important, however, not to make the mistake of believing that all conflicts are solvable through economics: some disputes are fundamentally of a political nature (the Middle East and some parts of the Caucasus were cited). In such cases, no degree of effort to promote confidence-building via economics will succeed. This should be recognized early in order to avoid wasting time and political capital looking for the wrong solutions.

¹³ The participating state in question was Yugoslavia, which was excluded from the CSCE in December 1992. The CSCE mission there was withdrawn in July 1993, as a consequence of Yugoslav authorities blocking further extension of its mandate.

¹⁴ “Putting Decisions into Practice: How Will the UN Peacebuilding Commission Fulfill its Mandate?” Report of an IPA/Wilton Park Seminar (February 9–10, 2006), <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/documents/conferences/WPS06-2/pdfs/WPS06-2.pdf>.

From peacebuilding to development

Peacebuilding must rest on sustainable development. However, although the international community enjoys a relatively deep experience in the provision of humanitarian assistance and physical reconstruction of post-conflict countries (the latter via the World Bank and the UNDP), it has not yet found a definitive route for post-conflict or transitional countries towards sustainable economic development. Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania were mentioned as examples where, despite successes in some areas such as banking reform, lingering unemployment rates of 30-50 percent continue to hamper economic sustainability. Micro-credit and micro-finance are important tools to regenerate economies in post-conflict countries and they do so in a way that promotes the ownership of the development process by locals. However, they may not be sufficient, as the case of the Balkan countries illustrates.¹⁵

The benefits of a regional approach

All participants were convinced of the need to take a regional approach to peacebuilding in order to (a) counter the negative dynamic created by the cross-border character of many conflicts, as demonstrated by multiple cases in Africa, the Balkans and the Caucasus; (b) foster a positive dynamic via cross-border cooperation projects (infrastructure links, trade development) in order to generate mutually beneficial relations that will offer resistance to conflict (although full insurance against future outbreaks can never be provided). Such a regional approach will be very important for the Peacebuilding Commission, which therefore should place not only country but also regional cases on its agenda.

Disputed issues

Most current peacebuilding endeavors place emphasis on institution-building, including the generation of state capacity to collect taxes that will restore a degree of autonomy to the authorities in financing economic development. As part of this process, the curtailing of smuggling can help ensure that the efforts of the government and international donors are not neutralized by resource flows stemming from the informal economy – which can be much larger than flows from the licit economy. However, forceful action to arrest smuggling can

be sensitive, as it will threaten those who see their sources of revenue suddenly drying up. In cases where this is a large component of the population, such a move may even be straightforwardly destabilizing, as the risk arises of “transforming traders into soldiers.”¹⁶ Thus, in 2004 Ossetians raised arms in response to the Georgian Government’s move to send troops to seal a notoriously porous border between the mainland and the separatist region. In such situations where there is no alternative livelihood to the informal economy, moves to curb it have to be carefully considered.

Another issue which did not gather consensus among the participants was the proper balance to seek in the allocation of resources devoted to security and those directed to development. While a majority tended to regret that the former was often favored over the latter, there were also dissenting views pointing, for example, to Iraq: without security there, it was impossible for development agencies to make any meaningful investment.

4. Cooperation between regional organizations and the UN in peacebuilding

The contribution of regional organizations to peacebuilding

Many ROs are, in one way or another, engaged in peacebuilding. Usually, this engagement combines “operational peacebuilding” directly focused on the mitigation of particular tensions or crises, and “structural peacebuilding” through activities such as the promotion of good governance and democratization, election management and observation, etc. ROs also exercise a watchdog function to ensure that economic issues receive sufficient and timely attention. This comprehensive approach may derive from a political statement of aims, but it also reflects years of practice in trying to prevent or mitigate conflict. Among the ROs represented at the seminar, this was the experience of the AU, the OAS, the OSCE, and the EU.

Most ROs are also keen to improve their capacity to consolidate peace after progress has been made in the settlement of a conflict. This translates into the development of new instruments. For example, the AU is preparing a “Policy

¹⁵ According to surveys, Bosnia now has the 9th most efficient banking system worldwide in terms of providing credit to small- and medium-size enterprises.

¹⁶ As put by one seminar participant.

Framework for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development”, expected to be endorsed by the heads of states and governments later in the year,¹⁷ and the OIC is retooling itself to increase its capacity to act upon conflict situations. For the EU, peacebuilding is part and parcel of its developing European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The main ESDP reference document, the EU Security Strategy, adopted in December 2003, stresses the need for a comprehensive approach to conflict and the resulting linkages between EU instruments. In that context, ESDP aims to provide the secure environment essential for peacebuilding activities, which rely in turn on a combination of ESDP and Commission instruments.¹⁸ Examples of the EU’s comprehensive approach are to be found in the Balkans, but also, increasingly, in Africa. For instance, EU action in the Democratic Republic of Congo combines military support (“Artemis” operation in 2003, reinforcement of the UN mission during the 2006 elections); a police mentoring and advisory mission (EUPOL Kinshasa); a security sector reform mission (EUSEC DR Congo);¹⁹ and a variety of activities by the Commission to foster democratic institution-building efforts and development.

Elements of success in RO approaches to peacebuilding

Four main elements of success in RO peacebuilding work were highlighted:

- All members of the RO must be “on board”: not only must major actors support the peacebuilding program, but it is also important that smaller countries participate, demonstrating the existence of a genuine collective political will.
- The government of the country concerned needs to be fully and positively engaged.
- The peacebuilding strategy must take into account regional interactions – which ROs are better placed to perceive than external actors – and they must incorporate the regional economic organizations; this is now central to the approach of the OAS and the EU, for example.
- For ROs covering the African, American and European continents, democratization, the rule of law and state institution-building are seen as particularly

important for the consolidation of long-term peace.

How can ROs work with the Peacebuilding Commission?

The PBC is expected to bring progress in many of the areas discussed in Vienna by establishing the necessary linkages between the political and economic, global, regional and bilateral stakeholders. The PBC is still in a constitutive phase. This, from the perspective of ROs, is an advantage rather than an inconvenience, as it gives them an opportunity to shape developments.

Most ROs are still unclear as to how they will engage with the PBC. However, they are keen for a genuine partnership, with consultations beginning at an early stage of work on specific cases. Barring this, it may be difficult for the PBC to count on the essential support of ROs in implementing strategies. At a more philosophical level, ROs will be more inclined to work with the PBC if it is sympathetic to their view that its approach to post-conflict situations should be regional. This means, at minimum, giving ample consideration to regional linkages in its country-focused work, and at best taking up regional cases.

At the practical level, there are many stages at which the partnership could develop and, in this, the contacts with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) will be essential. RO involvement with the PBSO could include (a) RO input into strategy formulation by the PBSO, which will involve matching objectives with available resources; (b) implementation of particular components of the peacebuilding strategy where it has been agreed that ROs have a comparative advantage; (c) participation in the periodic assessment and review of implementation; (d) participation in a “peer review” process by which each stakeholder in the strategy will have to account for the accomplishment of the task it has agreed to assume – this will in particular enable ROs to hold donors accountable for the pledges they have made, something on which they have little leverage at present; (e) participation in any lessons-learned work that could be carried out by the PBSO on a continuing basis. Conversely, the PBC could serve as a channel for support by the UN and others to regional peacebuilding efforts. One relevant area of work in this context may be in assisting the AU in implementing its post-conflict reconstruction framework.

¹⁷ http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/Past/2006/February/PSC/Framework_PCRD.pdf.

¹⁸ *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, EU Security Strategy, December 2003, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

¹⁹ For details on all components, see <http://ue.eu.int/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=en&mode=g>.

Building Partnerships for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding between the United Nations and Regional Organizations

Vienna, 4-5 April 2006

PROGRAMME

April 4, 2006

- 13:00 - 14:00 Registration
- 14:00 Introduction by H.E. Mr. Terje RØD-LARSEN, President of the International Peace Academy
- Welcome by H.E. Mr. Marc PERRIN DE BRICHAMBAUT, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- Welcome by H.E. Mr. Ernst-Peter BREZOVSKY, Director of the Department for International Conferences and International Organizations, Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- 14:30 -16:00 **SESSION 1: MEDIATION AND DIPLOMACY AS TOOLS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION**
- Under which circumstances can diplomacy work? What are the advantages of quiet vs public diplomacy? When and what kind of accompanying measures (incentives or threats) are necessary for diplomacy to work? How can the diplomatic action of one actor be supported by other regional or extra-regional actors, including the UN? What kind of assistance from / coordination with regional organisations would be necessary to enable the UN to take full advantage of the Summit's decision to enhance its capacity for mediation?*
- Chair: Dr. Carolina HERNANDEZ**, President, Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, The Philippines
- H.E. Mr. John de FONBLANQUE**, Director, Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Dr. Termsak CHALERMPALANUPAP**, Special Assistant to the Secretary-General, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- H.E. Mr. Ibrahima FALL**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes region
- Discussion
- 16:00 -16:30 Coffee break

16:30 -18:00 **SESSION 2: POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF FIELD MISSIONS AS INSTRUMENTS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING**

To what extent can field missions be an instrument of early warning, mediation and peacebuilding in conflict zones? What are their capabilities and limits? When do they need freedom of action from the centre and when is support needed? What tools and mechanisms must be put in place to ensure coherence of approaches between field missions and the centre?

Chair: Prof. Dr. Andrei ZAGORSKI, Associate Professor, Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO-University)

Gen. (ret.) Lamine CISSÉ, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Central African Republic

Dr. Monika WOHLFELD, Deputy Director and Head of Mission Program, OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre

Discussion

18:00 -19:00 Reception

19:00 Dinner

Keynote address by H.E. Dr. Thomas MAYR-HARTING, Director General for Political Affairs, Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, on “The Role of the EU as a Security Partner of the United Nations and other Regional Organisations”

April 5, 2006

9:30 -11:00 **SESSION 3: INCORPORATING THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION INTO CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The economic dimension plays a key role in many conflict and post-conflict situations. Many conflicts have their roots at least partly in disagreements about access to resources. In almost all post-war situations a major challenge is to dismantle a “war economy” marked by trafficking, corruption, and a lack of government control on economic and financial flows; establish the basis for a transparent and regulated economic system; and disconnect the sources of economic and political power. This session will look at how the diplomatic capacity of organisations such as the UN or the OSCE can be combined with the financial resources of bodies such as the World Bank, or those that can engage a broad range of assets, such as the EU, to untie this conundrum.

Chair: Mr. Levent KORO, Program Analyst, United Nations Development Program, Pristina, Kosovo

Mr. Rory O’SULLIVAN, Consultant

H.E. Mr. Roy REEVE, Head of the OSCE Mission in Georgia

Mr. Hisham YOUSSEF, Chief of Staff of the Secretary General, League of Arab States

Discussion

11:00 -11:30 Coffee break

11:30 -12:45 **SESSION 4: COOPERATION BETWEEN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS IN PEACEBUILDING**

One of the major outcomes of the September 2005 UN Summit was to endorse the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC's role will be to coordinate the contributions of the major international actors in post-conflict peacebuilding in order to avoid gaps and overlaps, ensure proper sequencing and maintain the requested level of political attention. Regional organizations have been identified by the Summit document among the contributors to this overall effort. What are their capabilities? How can those be brought to bear? What kind of communication and coordination mechanisms have to be put in place for this? It is proposed here to examine these questions in the light of two main areas of peacebuilding: re-establishing the rule of law and jumpstarting the economy in a post-conflict country.

Chair: Prof. Dr. Sven BISCOP, Senior Research Fellow, Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium

Mr. El Ghassim WANE, Head, Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission

H.E. Mr. Víctor RICO FRONTAURA, Director, Department for Crisis Prevention and Special Missions, Organization of American States

Mr. Alexandre VULIC, Foreign Affairs Adviser, European Union Council General Secretariat

Mr. Christopher COLEMAN, Chief, Policy Planning and Mediation Support, Department of Political Affairs

Discussion

12:45 Conclusions by the Secretary General of the OSCE

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS*

Co-hosts:

H.E. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen
International Peace Academy

H.E. Mr. Marc Perrin de Brichambaut
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

H.E. Dr. Thomas Mayr-Harting
Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Austria

H.E. Mr. Ernst-Peter Brezovszky
Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Austria

Ms. Sogdiana Ajibenova
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Ms. Sadine Bauer
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Gen. Lamine Cissé
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Mr. Karl Deuretzbacher
Austrian Ministry of Defence

H.E. Mr. John de Fonblanque
Office of the Organization for Security and
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National Minorities

H.E. Mr. Ibrahima Fall
Special Representative of the United Nations for the
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Mr. Didier Fau
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* Representatives of other national delegations to the OSCE also attended the meeting.

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Organization of the Islamic Conference

Mr. Woon-ki Lyeo
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