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From New York to the Field: A Dialogue on UN Peace Operations

JANUARY 2010

On June 19, 2009, the International Peace Institute (IPI) convened a day-long conference entitled “Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and UN Member States: Towards an Interactive Dialogue.” This meeting note reflects the conversations held that day. It was drafted by Ellie B. Hearne, *rapporteur*. The conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, thus the meeting note reflects the *rapporteur’s* interpretation of the discussions and does not necessarily represent the views of all other participants.

The conference was held as part of an ongoing IPI dialogue on peace operations designed to make partnerships between UN member states, the UN Secretariat, and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General more productive. IPI’s work on peace operations is conducted within the context of IPI’s wide-ranging research and policy facilitation program *Coping with Crisis, Conflict, and Change*, which works to inform and assist decision makers in the UN, multilateral organizations, member-state capitals, and civil society to address emerging security challenges and strengthen multilateral response capacities.

IPI owes a great debt of gratitude to its many donors to the program *Coping with Crisis, Conflict, and Change*. In particular, IPI is grateful to the governments of Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

The *rapporteur* would like to thank Francesco Mancini, Jenna Slotin, and Adam Smith for their comments on an earlier draft, as well as all dialogue participants for their valuable insights and contributions during the event.

Introduction

The relationship between UN member states and UN peace operations is a complex one beset with obstacles—political, technical, and financial, inter alia—that may be best addressed by enhancing the dialogue among concerned parties. Indeed, only member states have the political, financial, and human resources needed to endow a UN mission with the components of success. Similarly, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), the heads of UN missions, are unique in their *ex officio* ability to make or break a peace operation, and in that they may significantly enhance an operation’s credibility and effectiveness through measured judgment, strength of character, and on-the-ground acuity. By improving the relationship between these individuals and member states, UN peace operations can be strengthened, thus yielding greater dividends for all concerned, particularly the host-country populace and UN staff. Indeed, the impact on the ground of decisions taken by member states is usually first recognized by SRSGs and their teams.

On June 19, 2009, the International Peace Institute (IPI) convened a day-long conference entitled “Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and UN Member States: Towards an Interactive Dialogue.” Attendees included a selection of SRSGs (current and former), permanent representatives of missions to the UN, representatives from the highest levels of the Secretariat, and keynote speaker UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The conference sought to foster closer ties and share lessons learned among those represented, with a view towards working better in concert. The meeting was held under the Chatham House Rule.

The conference was held the day after the IPI-hosted screening of *Sergio*, a documentary about SRSG Sergio Vieira de Mello and his final mission in Iraq. As a result, the day’s discussions were colored by Vieira de Mello’s experience in Iraq, which ended in the tragic bombing of the UN’s Baghdad offices, exemplifying some of the security, financial, legitimacy, and impartiality challenges facing SRSGs in the field and UN peace operations more generally. Indeed, it was noted during the conference that his experience was “eye-opening and instructive”: his working in almost impossible conditions demonstrates the sheer strength of character required of an effective SRSG. Yet Vieira de Mello’s tour in Iraq also starkly highlights where UN peace operations are lacking.

This report examines various facets of UN peace operations, as discussed during the IPI dialogue, including issues of impartiality and legitimacy; safety; peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict; and developing and implementing Security Council mandates. It examines each of these topics

with a particular focus on the roles of UN member states and SRSGs, and in so doing puts forward the conclusions that emerged in the course of the meeting.

Impartiality and Legitimacy in the Field

The UN faces heterogeneous problems in executing multiple complex missions worldwide simultaneously,¹ but many of these are amplified by the organization's "image problem," whereby the UN is seen by some to lack credibility as an actor. Indeed, by addressing the linked issues of impartiality and legitimacy, the organization could potentially gain more credibility at the international level and enhance its impact in those countries where missions are established. As one SRSg noted, perception is 80 percent of reality. Improvements made at the headquarters level (*vis-à-vis* mandates, resources, and overcoming bureaucratic silos) would in turn alleviate similar bottle-necks and inefficiencies in the field, where the impact of decisions made at headquarters is most felt.

In addition, and symptomatic of these broader issues, related obstacles to effective peacekeeping—including lengthy troop-deployment times, "diffuse attention in the Security Council," and "mounting financial pressures,"²—contribute to widespread perceptions of UN actions as cumbersome. In working to overcome misperceptions of partiality and in improving UN legitimacy, these other issues need also be addressed.

The UN needs to embrace its values in order to improve the organization's credibility, and to project those values accordingly. Among the topics discussed at length were the oft-confused notions of "neutrality" and "impartiality." The UN is not a neutral actor. Rather, it is a charter-based values-driven body that seeks to act with impartiality. Despite this, it is often perceived as being the opposite: an organization with no clear line to maintain, an impotent international player, often seen in the worst possible light by those it seeks to

help, as well as those in member-state capitals. This phenomenon of diminished credibility in the field was particularly visible in Iraq circa 2003, when Vieira de Mello faced allegations that the UN was an agent of the US administration. Indeed, credibility doesn't necessarily equal popularity.

As with other facets of peace operations, impartiality in mandates is useful, and universal principals and values, including international humanitarian law, should be reflected within them. Without impartiality, there would be little acceptance of UN presence on the ground. In operations such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the importance of impartiality is especially apparent. Militant groups that are often the targets of particular Council resolutions do not see them as neutral—indeed, they are not—but as hostile to their interests (Hizbullah and UNSCR 1559, for example). Some actors will always find the fundamental principles of the UN abhorrent, but the world body should not be deterred from carrying out its work. At this point in the discussion, a fundamental question emerged: does the UN put staff at risk by confronting such actors? There could be a critical disconnect between the goals of a given UNSCR and the safety of staff. SRSGs must overcome this significant hurdle to effective action (and credibility) by in practice interpreting mandates with measured judgment in difficult conditions with limited resources. In addition, priorities within mandates are often confused and illogically ordered, making an SRSg's work still more challenging.

It was further posited that UN staff, as international civil servants, are driven by the UN's founding values, whereas national diplomats are constrained by their duty to uphold and serve the interests of their capital. This is a fundamental disconnect, but, it was suggested, it may be partially addressed by finding common ground in the UN's mandate for a given situation and building consensus on it.

As the face of the UN, the figure of the SRSg may be capitalized upon as a local representative for the

1 The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) currently directs and supports seventeen peace operations around the world, and the UN has been involved in sixty-three peacekeeping operations since 1948. There are 113,223 individuals, uniformed and civilian, currently deployed across the UN's seventeen peacekeeping operations. See United Nations, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations—Background Note," June 30, 2009, available at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm.

2 Center on International Cooperation (CIC), "Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty," New York, Center on International Cooperation, April 2009, p. i.

organization, with a view to improving the organization's accountability in the eyes of host-country nationals. Indeed, by improving communication between the UN and host-country (and host-region) nationals, and by making SRSGs more accessible, people would begin to recognize the aims of the organization and the broader need to give it the tools and political leeway it requires.

Conditions can be improved not just by focusing on the SRSG, but on those regional mechanisms surrounding him or her in the field. Certainly, by regular cooperation between country teams and the SRSG, further engagement with local counterparts based on respect and transparency can be harnessed to improve trust in the UN, thus enhancing legitimacy. Regional bodies, when used as platforms for dialogue, help players reach solutions compatible with local traditions that are equally acceptable to all and thus are endowed with an increased likelihood of success. Indeed, one participant suggested that regional cooperation is the primary means to counter regional threats, and the SRSG should make him or herself part of that process.

UN Staff Safety in the Field

The United Nations operates in the world's most insecure environments, which are often beset by armed violence, poverty, and instability. While the importance of staff safety has gained greater awareness lately across the UN, there remains a dire need for a system-wide, multidimensional approach to safety, one that includes resources, communication, and training, *inter alia*. Indeed, in the meeting the importance of dealing with security and safety issues holistically, across the UN, rather than viewing safety as strictly a Department of Safety and Security (DSS) issue, was pointed out.

Efforts are already being undertaken at the UN along these lines. However, safety is an issue yet to be effectively and comprehensively tackled. In New York, member states are often more concerned with the politics of the financial and troop demands made on them. Safety, therefore, receives less attention than deserved from the Security Council, UN field offices, and beyond.

Participants agreed that currently field safety is clearly lacking, with the UN having failed so far to adopt a comprehensive approach to the safety and

security of its staff—a challenge not just for the UN system, but also for member states, who play a critical role in securing staff safety. Indeed, safety affects them in multiple capacities: as host countries (working in concert with UN missions to provide safety to the UN staff, which include a vast majority of host countries' citizens); as financial contributors, especially in voluntary-funded programs (as safety mechanisms, operations, and measures are financially costly); and as troop, police, and civilian contributors (whose deployed member-state nationals are those at risk).

UN field missions often lack the human, technical, and financial resources to work safely in what are, at minimum, challenging, and, more often, outright dangerous environments. While developed countries operating independently of the UN may often be able to afford the high financial costs of securing their nationals working in unsafe environments, the UN must seek to do the same—but without the benefit of ample resources.

The disconnect between field and headquarters needs to be bridged, primarily by communicating to member states the high stakes of inadequate safety conditions on the ground. As well as the vast financial obstacles to improving safety, field staff must negotiate the cumbersome safety and procurement processes associated with the large UN bureaucracy. In one particularly stark example, an SRSG circumvented usual protocol in the face of lengthy procedures in order to fit his offices with safety film for glass windows. Just days later, a bomb was detonated in the vicinity, which would likely have killed his staff were it not for the safety film he obtained by breaking protocol. By allowing SRSGs to call for, and receive promptly, the equipment required to protect the mission's staff, lives can be saved and staff morale can be boosted. This example, and others like it, highlight the need to reduce turnaround times in decision making, particularly when safety is concerned.

Security must not be looked at in isolation. Decisions need to be taken jointly by the UN as a system, together with host governments, which need to be involved in securing UN operations in their own countries. Through forming host-country committees, the UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) seeks to bring more local actors to the table to improve communications and put a national face on UN work, partly as working

through foreign ministries alone (often operating at minimum capacity) can be problematic. It was suggested that the SRSG ought to be the focal point of such decisions.

Indeed, as the UN's "man on the ground" in a given mission, the SRSG needs to command sufficient authority to credibly act on behalf of the organization. He or she is well-placed to creatively overcome bureaucratic hurdles to swift decision making and to assess mission safety conditions. Similarly, SRSGs can detect quickly when conditions improve and security may be stepped down. However, having a more proactive, visible, and accessible SRSG can also pose its own additional security risks, as the UN learned in the tragic Baghdad bombing in 2003. Participants at the meeting agreed that visibility and accessibility, while highly desirable for multiple reasons, can come at a steep cost.

An SRSG must have the resources, including improved staff training, and authority to do so. Member states, meanwhile, are the keys to providing these resources, furnishing UN missions with the civilian and military expertise needed for adequate safety, and in consenting to devolve authority to SRSGs. Participants repeatedly emphasized that field missions must be furnished, where possible, with more money, equipment, training and expertise to protect UN staff and premises from harsh ground conditions. As stated during the meeting, in the face of insecurity in the field, there is no substitute for resources. In addition, sources of funding should be predictable and financial processes coherent. This is not the case currently, and more systematized funding stands to benefit all UN agencies and missions.

To keep and build peace, funding and improved security are essential. The UN plays a vital role in many postconflict environments. However, to continue performing this role, more security is required, as recent attacks in Algiers, Islamabad, Kabul, and Mogadishu remind us. Unfortunately, peacebuilding and postconflict development cannot be performed behind the walls of secured facilities. As one participant elaborated:

The way to bring nations back into the fold is to build nations through job development, redevelopment, and stabilization. International organiza-

tions and NGOs must be present. But there will have to be realization that more security is required. It is expensive. You cannot do development from inside the walls of a facility. You must get out there. It is expensive. But the cost of not doing these things is greater.

Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict

The components of the UN's peacebuilding architecture—the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)—were created to address the fractures and weaknesses of the UN and the international community in assisting countries emerging from conflict. Fragile postconflict states tend to relapse into hostilities when provisions are not made to assist them in the transition from conflict to lasting peace.

A second topic of discussion at the meeting was peacebuilding in the "immediate aftermath of conflict," defined as the two years in the wake of hostilities.³ Such peacebuilding entails building or rebuilding institutions and infrastructure, as well as working to achieve political understanding among actors on the ground. Indeed, sustainable peace constitutes much more than the cessation of hostilities—namely, security, the rule of law, economic recovery, and other factors that allow a population to progress politically, socially, and economically. In achieving such peace, the first two years following a conflict represent the optimal time when foundations for lasting peace can be laid. Many participants emphasized that the peacekeeping-first-peacebuilding-last approach is misguided: peacebuilding must occur in parallel to peacekeeping, and the PBC must be involved from early on.

The PBC, the centerpiece of the UN peacebuilding architecture, together with the PBSO and the PBF, suffers from problems of perception: some host countries fear that if they were placed on the PBC's agenda, troops might be prematurely withdrawn by the Security Council. Further, member states that are not sitting on the PBC need to have a better handle on the PBC's role and activi-

³ United Nations General Assembly, *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/63/881-S/2009/304 (June 11, 2009).

ties. Definitional and communication problems are also common. Additionally, thought needs to be given to the relationship of the PBC to the UN Security Council and to the General Assembly, since both “fathered” the PBC, but have so far not clearly established the parameters of their respective relationships. That said, many of these issues are likely to be raised as part of the 2010 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Those involved in peacebuilding, including humanitarian and development actors, need to recognize the political nature of peacebuilding, especially in the first two years after a conflict. Many of the lessons learned from peacekeeping operations may also be applied to peacebuilding, in particular the importance of stand-by civilian capacity and clearer funding policies. Indeed, it was suggested that the PBF be seen as a source of funding, as opposed to the only source of funding. The UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and all departments involved in the humanitarian-relief phase have benefited from more predictable funding. More stable and predictable funding would also be appropriate for peacebuilding activities. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) could be used more often as a source of funding.

Still, further funding difficulties arise in reconciling multilateral and bilateral modes of financing, particularly as some donors may refuse to work with controversial or oppressive governments. In addition, competing priorities among member states involved in funding operations can translate to tensions on the ground.

A participant posited that, for every one year of conflict, there should be three or four of peacebuilding. For such long-term engagement, there needs to be a sound strategic framework incorporating multiple goals: physical security (as one participant put it, cultural development means nothing, if there are no police outside the museum); rule of law; sustainable governance, including provision of basic services, and multilateral and bilateral resources; social well-being, plus access to and delivery of basic education; and a sustainable licit economy. These pillars also represent means to legitimacy and local ownership. Building on these, lessons may be drawn from the World Bank’s priorities in postconflict settings. It gives highest priority to developing and/or strengthening state

authority, i.e., making the state the focus of statebuilding. Many noted that if the state doesn’t begin to take over the provision of basic services, reconstruction becomes an international undertaking with little legitimacy.

Lack of direct ownership also encourages government ineffectiveness. Indeed, where the UN, or another international actor, steps in to temporarily provide basic services (as with schooling and some social services in Gaza and the West Bank) local capacity struggles to develop and host countries are tempted to have the UN continue providing such services. Indeed, member states are particularly concerned with how and when to graduate countries from the PBC’s agenda. More consideration needs to be given to this, and SRSGs, in building alliances with key local, regional, and international players, may be able to smooth this important transition, with the requisite sensitivity to the local quirks of a given situation.

Such cooperation between SRSGs and host governments could alleviate many of the coordination problems that affect field operations. Three key needs in peacebuilding operations were highlighted in the meeting: (1) to empower SRSGs and Deputy SRSGs to better build capacity in host governments; (2) to create synergy among donors; and (3) to better coordinate headquarters with the field. Such aims reinforce the crux of peacebuilding: national ownership. While national ownership is not and could not be absolute, it is important to build it quickly and effectively, particularly where the security sector is concerned. These processes definitely ought to begin before elections take place, when security is needed most.

The discussion also examined the importance of having an organizational architecture that accommodates dynamics that change all the time. A complete UN-system overhaul would be impossible, but, realistically, the UN can commit to a common strategy, with a pooled-funding mechanism that could represent a package of incentives for a well-supported leader, backed by a strong team, to come to a coherent, cohesive strategy. The World Bank is already a very important partner and ally when it comes to peacebuilding, and many are calling for the African Union to also become more involved. In addition, the UN could place greater emphasis on conflict prevention and early-warning systems, which

would cost less than, and reduce the need for, peace operations, including peacebuilding.

Mandates: From Inception in the Security Council to Implementation in the Field

Peacekeeping missions are mandated by the Security Council, but communication between the field and the Council is still imperfect. Very often, mandates reflect political concerns of member states rather than realistic assessments of the practicality of implementing them. As a result, mandates are often far from being straightforward and tend to create difficulties for those in the field charged with implementing them.

DEVELOPING SMART MANDATES

Devising mandates is an inherently political process: Security Council members present affirmed that, in terms of member-state decision making, diplomats make proposals in their capitals and leaders there lay down rigid margins for negotiating, usually with little flexibility. Problems of credibility also plague Security Council mandate development. In the case of Iraq in 2003, the US appeared to seek UN involvement only as a means of legitimizing its actions, rather than as a substantive component of its plans for the Iraqi nation. Such use of the UN created frustration among staff, particularly those in the field, who faced accusations of bias and puppetry, and amounted to a blow to the organization's credibility worldwide.

In addition, the inner channels of the Council are seen by many member states as all but impenetrable. Many of those present at the dialogue suggested that the Council's permanent five (P5) members are key to improving transparency in this regard. Even the current "informal consultations" were deemed too rigid: member states are briefed, each takes a position, and questions are posed, and answered, in a very formulaic way. This scarcely constitutes a fruitful dialogue; participants felt this system overlooks the deep penetration of the issues that is needed.

Inclusivity was flagged by many as an important

area where the mandate-development process is lacking. Member states are concerned with the extent to which ideas from troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs and PCCs), and host countries will be incorporated into Council decisions. There is a need to emphasize that peacekeeping does not just involve the Security Council, but TCCs and PCCs, without which peacekeeping would be impossible.⁴ Many member states are interested in improving dialogue on mandates with TCCs, PCCs, and, in the case of mandate renewal, with forces on the ground and force commanders, and in involving these parties from an earlier stage. A participant also pointed to the potential value of involving relevant regional neighbors in the implementation phase.

Form and structure of mandates have changed over the years. In the mid-1990s, mandates were briefer and suffered from a lack of specificity, whereas today they occupy the other extreme, with the operative paragraphs often spanning multiple pages. But curiously the problem of lack of specificity still exists, even after this shift. Mandates can also be very brief and ambiguous, with different parties choosing to interpret the resolutions in ways that suit their own ends. In addition, in many mandates, *who* is charged with implementing its various facets is unclear.

Security Council members should better prioritize, or suggest a clear sequence for, the plethora of tasks required of a peace operation when developing mandates, as well as provide more specificity concerning who should carry out those tasks. Certainly, mandates are not black and white. Rather, as a participant noted, they are gray. Language is found that everyone can agree on, but can also interpret in their own way, since, very often, UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) amount to a series of political compromises. When a UNSCR needs to be revisited, therefore, all of the initial difficulties—previously unresolved or otherwise—resurface. This may be overcome in some cases by activism on the part of an SRSG who knows how to lobby for changes to mandates.

To make Security Council Resolutions "smart," the UN must build on the triangular relationship

⁴ Reinforcing recognition of the need for improved cooperation, a participant suggested that many such issues addressed in IPI's dialogue could segue into a productive Security Council retreat.

between the parties in the field, the Security Council, and the Secretary-General.⁵ It must also define what would constitute accomplishing a given mandate. Unless an SRSG is given a resolution with benchmarks, and realistic ones at that, tracking progress towards mandate achievement is impossible. Careful consideration, therefore, need also be given to which operational and logistical concerns affect benchmarks in mandates. Participants also called for the defining of political objectives in operational terms to make measuring their effectiveness easier.

Mandates should not be given if resources are not available to implement them. There exists the need to align mandates with objectives and with available resources.⁶ The UN must promise only what it can achieve, and try not to raise expectations to unrealistically high levels; there is thus a further need to improve communication across the UN's many agencies, programs, and funds in order to know what can be achieved and to express that to a host population. There also is continued recognition that something needs to be done about the lag time between passing a mandate and getting "boots on the ground."

IMPLEMENTING COMPLEX MANDATES

As an SRSG at the dialogue explained, Security Council Resolutions are often seen as the result of power plays that result in rigid orders, but the best SRSGs try to equate those with the values of the UN, i.e., upholding impartiality without neutrality.

But the hurdles to implementing mandates successfully will take concerted and sustained efforts to overcome. Indeed, problems of exclusivity and gray areas in mandates are most apparent, and most serious, in the implementation phase. Participants in the dialogue also noted the need for more effective, inclusive communication during the mandate-development and mandate-renewal phases: a forum for more informal and inclusive discussions among member states, particularly

TCCs and PCCs, leading up to Security Council decisions. Such measures would improve implementation in the field by, ideally, prompting troop and police contributors to cease issuing separate instructions to their forces—something that can undermine the authority of an SRSG or force commander.

In addition, by devolving some authority from New York to the SRSGs, the latter would have the weight (and, consequently, more credibility) to act swiftly and responsively to changing conditions, without overstepping the bounds of their office.

As with peacebuilding, involvement by regional players, such as regional economic communities (RECs), is important and holds relatively untapped potential for UN operations. Such interactions, however, will require a greater amount of trust on both sides. Actors at the subregional level are often skeptical of the UN's intentions, while the UN might question the capacities of regional or subregional organizations. Likewise, on key issues such as the protection of civilians (PoC), greater trust between member states must be developed. While many member states are interested in PoC and related issues, such countries are often not those responsible for implementing mandates, and TCCs in Africa and elsewhere are then skeptical of those countries that advocate, but leave others to enforce, mandates.

Indeed, the more intrusive a mandate is, the more important it is to have local players involved. Working closely with locals was seen to be especially useful in Haiti, where, for example, the popularity of soccer there made it easier for the Brazilian troops to interact with the locals. Similarly, in implementing mandates, resources, where possible, should be procured from local sources to increase the peace dividend. Using local goods and services would both accelerate local development and improve perceptions of the UN on the ground.

5 DPKO's "New Horizon" non-paper, published shortly following the IPI dialogue, puts great emphasis on qualitatively enhancing mandates and on elaborating the tasks associated with them. In addition, various member states, including Canada, Costa Rica, Japan, and Turkey, have been looking at ways to improve communication within the Council. An ongoing peacekeeping dialogue initiated by the UK and France is also looking at improving inclusivity in decision making. See United Nations Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) and Field Support (UNDFS), "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping," New York, United Nations, July 2009.

6 UNDPKO and UNDFS, "Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping."

Conclusion

United Nations peace operations represent a partnership among nations and myriad actors, and any effective partnership depends on the commitment, flexibility, and resources of its parties to progress and have a positive impact. This is particularly true in the fragile and often complex environments in which the UN operates. However, UN peace operations are replete with constraints born of resource shortages, political barriers, and the very nature of its universal membership, which, with some degree of irony, also makes it potentially such a useful instrument for achieving and maintaining peace and security.

While the IPI dialogue touched upon many heterogeneous issues associated with UN field operations, various cross-cutting lessons emerged. Indeed, every facet of UN operations should be supported with adequate resources; member states, SRSGs, and host-country actors need to better cultivate and maintain communication channels and, where possible, involve one another in decision making; funding should be predictable and funding channels and procedures should be clarified and systematized; the right personnel should be well-trained and ready ahead of time to enter a peacekeeping or peacebuilding operation,

and they should be well supported by the full UN system; UN procedures should be made more nimble to reduce the time and efforts expended in procuring vital resources and making decisions; and, lastly, flexibility and pragmatism, demonstrating sensitivity to the particularities of a given operation, must always be present. Indeed, flexibility is paramount since achieving a smart mandate in the beginning presents a different set of challenges than keeping it smart later on.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Alain Le Roy and UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support Susana Malcorra note that peacekeeping stands “at a cross-roads,”⁷ nearing the ten-year anniversary of the Brahimi Report and in the wake of the sixty-year anniversary of UN peacekeeping itself. Indeed, IPI’s reassessment of the issues discussed in this meeting report affords a timely step towards working better in concert to reinforce the credibility and effectiveness of UN peace operations. This would be beneficial for member states, who could rely more solidly on UN efforts and for those on the ground, both local populace and UN personnel, who could gain in terms of safety, quality of life, and chances for peace—which are all among the core values of the UN.

⁷ Ibid., foreword.

Further Reading

Center on International Cooperation. “Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty.” New York: Center on International Cooperation, April 2009.

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Slotin, Jenna, and Vanessa Wyeth, *rapporteurs*. “Improving International Responses to Armed Conflict.” New York: International Peace Institute, February 2009.

Smith, Adam C., and Katy Clement, eds. “Managing Complexity: Political and Managerial Challenges in United Nations Peace Operations.” New York: International Peace Institute, June 2009.

United Nations Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support. “A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping.” New York: United Nations, July 2009.

United Nations General Assembly. *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*. UN Doc. A/63/881-S/2009/304. June 11, 2009.

Conference Agenda

Friday, June 19, 2009

08:00 – 09:00 **Welcome and Introduction**

Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, *President, International Peace Institute (IPI)*

Keynote Remarks and Discussion

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, *Secretary-General, United Nations (UN)*

09:00 – 10:30 **Legitimacy, Impartiality, and Safety on the Ground**

How can the UN improve its perceived impartiality without compromising its effectiveness? Does robust peacekeeping help or hinder the UN's legitimacy? What are the principal organizational obstacles to keeping UN field staff safe? Are more resources, political or financial, needed from the member states to ensure the safety of UN personnel? Is staff training on safety and security adequate?

Chair

H.E. Dr. Joy Ogwu, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations*

Panelists

Mr. Miroslav Jenča, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA)*

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

Mr. Gregory Starr, *Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Safety and Security*

10:30 – 10:45 **Coffee Break**

10:45 – 12:45 **Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict**

What are the political and structural obstacles that prevent effective international action in the immediate aftermath of conflict? How can these be addressed? How can the UN ensure that developing national capacity is a core objective of peacebuilding efforts right from the start? What do UN leaders in the field need to ensure they have the necessary authority and capacity to facilitate prioritization and strategy development among national and international actors in early postconflict settings?

Chair

H.E. Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations*

Panelists

Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, *Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office*

Mr. Ad Melkert, *Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme*

Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, *Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Political Affairs*

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

13:00 – 15:00

Working Lunch

Developing Smart Mandates: A Dialogue with Members of the Security Council

Do complex mandates ask too much of an already resource-strained field? In a time of limited financial resources, how can cost-efficient tools other than peacekeeping (e.g., conflict prevention measures, etc.) be developed and regularly employed? How can the informal discussions among member states leading up to Council mandate decisions be made more inclusive, involving regional organizations, other states with detailed knowledge of the underlying issues and even likely TCCs? How can Council members receive better information on the underlying factors impacting the achievement of the specified mission outcome? Are there lessons to be learned from the way that PBC country specific configurations are working?

Chair

Ambassador Colin Keating, *Executive Director, Security Council Report*

Panelists

Mr. Jeffrey De Laurentis, *Minister Counselor, Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations*

Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen

H.E. Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations*

15:00 – 15:15

Coffee Break

15:15 – 17:15

Implementing Complex Mandates and Impartiality: A Dialogue with Headquarters

Given the broad scope of the UN's activity in the field, is it still reasonable to assume the UN can operate as an impartial actor? When do complex mandates become too complex? How can SRSGs better harness the resources available at Headquarters? How can the information flow between the Secretariat and the Council be strengthened? How can staff at Headquarters get more first-hand knowledge of the field?

Chair

H.E. Mr. Jean-Maurice Ripert, *Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations*

Panelists

Mr. Sam Ibok, *Deputy Director, Africa II Division, United Nations Department of Political Affairs*

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

Mr. Ashraf Qazi, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)*

Mr. Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, *Chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

17:15

Closing Remarks

Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen

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