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This note summarizes discussions among some forty participants from permanent missions to the United Nations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the European Union, NATO, and select donor capitals at a seminar held in New York on 20 February 2006. It was the one in a series of activities designed to further key items on the agenda of the September 2005 World Summit through practical dialogue among policymakers and practitioners.

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

THE UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR PEACEKEEPING

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has outlined his vision of an “an interlocking system of capabilities able to respond to and deal with the range of demands related to peace operations.”¹ At the World Summit in September 2005, member states favorably echoed his appeal, recognizing “the important contribution to peace and security by regional organizations,” stressing “the importance of forging predictable partnerships and arrangements between the United Nations and regional organisations,” and specifically pledging to “support the development and implementation of a ten-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union.”² Although not explicitly stated, it is understood that this commitment must come in support of Africa’s own efforts, as identified in the Durban Protocol establishing the key components of the African peace and security architecture (July 2002), the Policy Framework for the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF) (May 2003), the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defense and Security Policy (February 2004), and the ASF Roadmap jointly agreed by the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regions (March 2005).³ International partners, through the leadership of the G8, have pledged their support to the Roadmap and work is currently under way in Addis Ababa and in Africa’s five RECs/Regions to further its implementation through a series of five workshops on: 1) doctrine; 2) command, control, communication and information systems; 3) logistics; 4) training and evaluation; and 5) standard operating procedures.⁴

¹ Report of the Secretary-General, *Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, 15 December 2004, A/59/608, para 71.

² Most of these documents can be found on the World Summit Outcome Document, A/Res/60/1, 24 October 2005, para 93.

³ All documents to be found on the African Union website: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/index/index.htm>.

⁴ *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force*, Addis Ababa, 22-23 March 2004, EXP/AU-RECs/ASF/4(I), <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2005/au-gen-23mar.pdf>.

Although there is a UN commitment in principle to assist African capacity-building for peace operations, many political and practical issues remain. A common vision among UN member states of what a proper division of roles and responsibilities should be in the future between the UN and the AU/REC/Regions has yet to emerge. There are questions about the degree of collaboration which the AU and the UN should develop, including the issue of whether UN assets (e.g., logistics) could be put at the disposal of the AU/REC/Regions, which would pioneer a new form of cooperation between the UN and regional organizations. There are uncertainties created by the lack of clarity on what other partners, such as the European Union (EU), NATO or bilateral donors, are willing and able to provide. At a more practical level, there is also the need for the UN—especially the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)—to articulate the nature and scope of the assistance it can provide to meet Africa’s needs.

Many communities will have to be involved in bringing responses and clarity to those issues. To contribute to this process, IPA convened a day-long meeting among leading figures in the New York-based peace operations community on the eve of the annual session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, or C34, which is the main inter-governmental forum for setting shared priorities in UN peacekeeping. The IPA meeting was prepared in close consultation with select African member state military advisors and colleagues at DPKO. What follows is a summary of the main themes and perspectives that emerged from the meeting.

1. Africa’s efforts

There was unanimous agreement among participants that Africa has made much

progress over the past few years in mounting and managing peace operations. Operational progress was evident, according to several partners (UN, United States, NATO), who commended the AU and ECOWAS⁵ forces’ operational performance, and in particular the increasing quality of their HQ and commanding staffs. There was also progress in capacity-building, even if there was a slight delay over original plans. Specific steps were described in presentations by three New York-based African military advisers⁶: the setting up of Planning Elements (PLANELM), the first rung in the management of operations, was well on track both at AU and regional level; and a tight schedule of workshops was underway to define requirements in the five ASF Roadmap areas.

Difficulties remain, however. One set of problems was highlighted through the presentation of a joint UN-ECOWAS lessons-learned exercise analyzing the transition from ECOWAS to UN missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire. Particular weaknesses of ECOWAS missions included: the lack of unified command and control, since troop contributing countries (TCCs) kept close national control on their forces, which undermined the authority of the Force Commander; major differences in training and capabilities of contingents; the absence of a central logistic system, leading to a lack of coherence and predictability in logistic support; and lack of capacity to transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.⁷

Apart from institutional capacity-building, the other major challenge for African operations remains financing and logistics. The problem stands out if one compares the

⁵ ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States.

⁶ Power point presentations on the ASF, EASBRIG (East Africa Standby Brigade) and the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Standby Force are available from IPA.

⁷ For details, see DPKO Best Practices Unit, *Re-hatting ECOWAS Forces as UN Peacekeepers: Lessons Learned*, August 2005, <http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbpu/library/Transformation%20from%20ECOWAS%20to%20UN%20forces%20-%20Final%20Document.pdf>.

modest AU and REC/Regions budgets, as presented at the meeting, and the much larger DPKO estimates of what it would cost if the UN were to provide logistic support to African operations.⁸ African participants argued that donors had been very generous in financing training programs, but had not yet seriously addressed logistical requirements. There are many ad hoc exceptions to this, and the assistance provided to the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) is one of them, but the reality remains that there is no predictable, sustainable, and coordinated logistic system to support African operations in the long run. Options discussed for such a system included:

- An increase in African countries' contributions, confirming their willingness to take "ownership" of African peace-keeping;
- A logistic support system relying on donors. This would be congruent with the commitment made by the G8 at Sea Island to "work with interested parties [...] to develop a transportation and logistics support arrangement, which will help provide countries with transportation to deploy to peace support operations and logistics support to sustain units in the field."⁹ In practice, this could take the form of assistance in kind (troop transportation, donation of vehicles, provision of other logistic support) or the financing of contracts with commercial operators (as the UN and many Western countries do for their own operations), or direct financial support for Africa's acquisition of logistical capabilities, with a variety of intermediate options also possible. In

this context, it was remarked that a useful capacity-building element was the requirement that private contractors incorporate a "train-the-trainer" component for logistics management in their assistance packages. One important caveat which was not discussed during the seminar was the short duration of budget cycles in most donor nations, which makes long-term, predictable commitments difficult;¹⁰

- Drawing on the UN for logistical support. This was a theoretical option, but pros and cons had to be carefully weighed and General Assembly rules would necessarily constrain options (see below).

African representatives reported that planning for logistics arrangements was still in progress, with thinking now focusing on the build-up of two logistics depots on the continent, at least initially—not five as originally envisaged—one on the Atlantic and another on the Indian Ocean coast. The US and some other donors have expressed support in principle, as logistics depots on the continent could significantly increase the speed of deployment of African forces, they could serve as platforms for training in the management of operations, and they are the best way to optimize maintenance costs.

A final issue under this heading was the articulation of the peacekeeping contributions of the AU and the REC/Regions. This was discussed at the operational level only, although there is also an important political-strategic dimension to the debate. The ASF Brigades are meant to be capable of autonomous action in their region in the first instance, but they are also intended to be

⁸ DPKO power point presentation available from IPA.

⁹ *G8 Action Plan: Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support Operations*, Sea Island, June 2004, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/Art%2010%20Peacekeeping.pdf>.

¹⁰ Only the European Peace Facility for Africa, managed by the European Commission, would seem to escape this constraint, though this was not discussed at the meeting.

deployed outside, including in combination with other components of the ASF. While the question was raised, no indication was given during the seminar as to how inter-operability issues would be handled politically or practically.

2. An open question: who has the lead for peacekeeping in Africa?

The question of who should initiate and carry out peacekeeping operations in Africa was not on the agenda, but underpinned much of the discussion and technical recommendations.

Alongside unanimous endorsement of “African ownership” of peace operations, there was a more complex set of issues at play:

- There is, first, a degree of tension between African calls for international assistance and the demand for ownership. On the one hand, Africa’s current efforts reflect a new collective commitment to taking the lead in continental peace operations, which creates an incentive for outsiders to help more, but on the other, there is a political uncertainty which complicates discussions about burden-sharing and long-term investment in capacity-building. If “the responsibility for international peace and security lies with the UN” and if, by taking on the burden of peace operations in Africa, “the AU is doing the job of the UN,” as many African representatives argued at the seminar, can Africa truly “own” African peace operations? Reconciling the two principles would require harmonizing UN and AU decision-making and linking the UN lead at the grand strategic level with the African lead at the operational level. This is a difficult proposition, the

implementation of which assumes a new and extraordinarily high degree of coordination between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council.

- On the donors’ side, despite commitment to African ownership, too often assistance is still driven more by ingrained patterns and the interests of donors than by the needs of recipients. Existing assistance models have negative impact in terms of inter-operability of African forces, as equipment or training is often provided more because a donor is willing and able to offer it (for political or economic reasons), than because it responds to a genuine collective need defined by African actors. This already poses a problem within regional formations, and could further obstruct the cohesion of the ASF if components were to be deployed jointly or in mixed formations. Inter-operability must be a priority for the emerging ASF on the side of donors and recipients alike.
- Overall, there is also the question of the relative visibility of African and external contributions to peace operations in Africa, and sensitivity to questions about institutional lead. This did not come to the fore prominently during the meeting, but arose briefly in an exchange about the post-AMIS transition in Darfur where some called for significant numbers of African troops to be retained in the new mission, but without any mention of the AU.¹¹

3. International assistance and coordination

The nature, coordination and transparency of assistance flows was also a significant theme in the discussions.

¹¹ On African sensitivities in this respect, see for example the discussion of “Darfur/Sudan” in *Security Council Report*, Monthly Forecast, March 2006, pp.3-4, www.securitycouncilreport.org.

Donor representatives recognized some of the weaknesses of their assistance patterns. Training, it was acknowledged, was easier to sell politically to domestic constituencies than, say, equipment donations, which always faced difficult questions before publics and parliaments. African participants questioned the practical outcome of the G8's collective pledge to "train and, where appropriate, equip a total of approximately 75,000 troops worldwide by 2010."¹² Was this happening? What kind of training was involved? How could you measure progress quantitatively and qualitatively? Analogously, many participants noted the discrepancy between generous pledges of financial assistance at summits and press conferences, and the reality of much more modest, and often untraceable, disbursements. Donor participants acknowledged that, even in a single country, tracking the total amount of aid was extremely difficult since assistance was often delivered via multiple programs managed by different institutions or ministries, and aggregation was seldom undertaken.

This being said, coordination of assistance had much improved, thanks in particular to mechanisms put in place by the G8 in member states capitals and in Addis, but there was a sense that this process remained wanting, as not everyone brought everything to the table, and that it needed to be actively nurtured, as the centrifugal pull of old bilateral aid patterns remained strong. Africa had to do its homework, too: by setting up a Peace Fund in several regions, in addition to an AU Peace Fund, it left the donors much

room for "forum shopping" in reverse. Some greater clarity, via memoranda of understanding between the AU and the RECs/Regions or otherwise, was suggested by a donor representative.

The UN for its part regretted its insufficient participation in donor coordination and ASF capacity-building work conducted in Africa (Workshop on Doctrine, for example), which it attributed to two reasons: the lack of transparency in G8 coordination mechanisms, and its own lack of capacity—which DPKO would like to see addressed without delay.¹³ With more capacity, especially human resources, DPKO argued it could be much more systematic in the articulation of its own contribution with that of G8, EU¹⁴ and NATO partners. NATO representatives declared during the seminar that the Alliance had not been formally asked to help with the establishment of the ASF, but there was openness to consider any request—a suggestion that was well received by some African participants.

4. The role of the UN

So far, DPKO's assistance to the AU has focused more on day-to-day operations than capacity-building, given the urgency of the task in Darfur. Ideally, DPKO would like to see its capacity-building ability enhanced by the creation of a small New York-based team to provide guidance, and a larger one based in Addis to offer technical advice.

The domains in which DPKO could provide assistance, and how this effort would be

¹² *G8 Action Plan: Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support Operations*, Sea Island, June 2004, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/Art%2010%20Peacekeeping.pdf>.

¹³ The agenda of the C34 in 2006 included a request from the Secretary-General that additional resources be granted to DPKO to provide support for African capacity-building: "I propose to create within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations a dedicated full-time capacity that could serve as a single point of contact for AU and other partners on matters related to AU peacekeeping. This capacity would be the source for setting capacity-building strategies, coordinating and implementing assistance and support related to peacekeeping. It would be interdisciplinary and include experts in identified priority areas such as logistics, training, doctrine, and strategic and operational planning," *Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/60/640, 29 December 2005, para 31. The C34 has expressed support for this proposal, which has yet to be examined by the UN financial bodies.

¹⁴ Powerpoint presentation on EU support to AMIS available from IPA.

articulated with the support of other international donors, were only partially specified during the seminar. DPKO representatives singled out doctrine, under the assumption that there would be continuity between African and UN operations. This emphasis was reinforced by the proposition made by one African participant that, in the long term, the ASF Brigades could also be deployed under the UN banner outside Africa. This being said, DPKO recognized that UN peacekeeping doctrine was still a “work in progress” and that, to some extent, doctrine development would have to be a joint effort of the UN and Africa.

Other areas mentioned were strategic and operational headquarters management capacity, where assistance could take the form of secondment of staff both ways. There was also a suggestion that some DPKO lessons-learned work could be useful to the AU. However, areas would need to be specified as well as the degree of applicability of such lessons to the AU. In any event, DPKO’s intended assistance could be the subject of more concrete proposals to member states.

Possible UN logistic support to the ASF was reviewed in detail, including costing, via a DPKO presentation spelling out options ranging from a minimum that would consist of the provision of technical training, to a maximum involving full UN logistic management of African operations. Various intermediate scenarios were possible, depending on choices made in four major areas: HQ level cooperation, technical assistance, in-theatre support, and maintenance of regional depots.¹⁵ The challenge of providing UN logistic support to African operations should not be underestimated, however. The difficulty arises mainly from

the complexity of UN political, administrative and financial decision-making: any large UN involvement would require a UN mandate, and as soon as the UN was involved, the mission would have to follow heavy UN administrative and financial control arrangements. Applying those requirements to African operations could risk annulling one of their major benefits at present, i.e. their capacity to deploy swiftly to nip a crisis in the bud even if all the dots have not been aligned. In this respect, some participants concluded that pleading for UN participation and advocating the development of Africa-led operations were two contradictory propositions. As long as African deployments were short-term, ad hoc arrangements for donor assistance may be adequate. On the other hand, if African missions were to be of long duration, a more sustainable system of financing and logistical support would have to be found. UN member states may want to use the excellent background work done by DPKO for a fact-based discussion of possible options.

Looking at the bigger picture and the UN role, one conclusion of the debate is that the UN must be an important part of the equation of international assistance to AU capacity-building but that a leadership role in coordination is unlikely, given the UN’s modest input compared to that of other players. In order to leverage the most out of the UN’s contribution to this process, it will be important to ensure that the UN’s political and peacekeeping components are “joined up”. In this spirit, a DPKO representative mentioned that the principles drawn in a recent update of the UN’s Integrated Planning Process could also usefully be applied to assistance to Africa.

¹⁵ Details in DPKO powerpoint presentation available from IPA.

Agenda

- 8:45 Registration of participants.
- 9:15 Introduction by Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, President, International Peace Academy
Opening address by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations
Brief Q & A session
- 10:00-11:30 **Session 1: The African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Standby Force (ASF): Ambitions and Development**
Chair: Ambassador John L. Hirsch, Senior Fellow, International Peace Academy
Presentations:
Maj-Gal Daniel Frimpong, Military Advisor, Ghanaian Mission to the United Nations, “The African security architecture and the African Standby Force: Ambitions and Development”
Col. George Owino, Military Advisor, Kenyan Mission to the United Nations, “The ASF and progress made in the Eastern African region”
Col. Solomon Giwa-Amu, Military Advisor, Nigerian Mission to the United Nations, “The ASF and progress made in the West African region”
Discussion
The objective of this first session is to facilitate a shared understanding among participants of African objectives in peace operations as jointly defined by the African Union (AU), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Regions, to clarify the role of the African Standby Force (ASF) in this context, and to update participants’ information on implementation both at AU and sub-regional level, so as to inform the subsequent discussions on UN assistance options.
- 11:30-12:00 Coffee break
- 12:00-13:15 **Session 2: Can the UN Help and How?**
Chair: Ambassador John L. Hirsch, Senior Fellow, International Peace Academy
Presentations:
Mr. José Campino, Political Affairs Officer, Africa I Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations
Mr. Nicholas Seymour, Political Adviser, Change Management, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations
Mr. Tony Anderson, Chief, Global Peace Operations Capacity-Building Program, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canada, “A G8 donor’s perspective”
Discussion
The aim of this session is to provide the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs with a platform to explain actions already in train as well as future plans to assist the AU/REC/Regions. The session should also try to highlight zones of uncertainty regarding AU/REC/Regions plans, which should be lifted for the UN to tailor its assistance in an optimal fashion. The timeline should

be that of the ASF Vision 2010. A meaningful discussion on UN assistance assumes that a minimal consensus has been achieved on the future division of roles and responsibilities between the UN and the AU/RECs/Regions in peacekeeping in Africa. Is this the case?

13:15-15:00 Lunch: Meltemi Restaurant

(905 1st Ave, New York, NY 10022, between 51st and 52nd Streets)

15:00-16:15 **Session 3: Logistics, Mission Planning and Management - Options for UN Assistance**

Chair: LtCol. Ernst M. Felberbauer, Military Adviser, International Peace Academy

Presentations:

Brig. Max Kerley, Deputy Director, Logistic Support Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations

Mr. Frederick Mallya, Best Practice Unit, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations

Response by African representatives

Discussion

What specific assistance could the UN provide to African operations (whether carried out by the AU or sub-regional organizations) in the fields of strategic and mission level management, and logistics—two of the most crucial areas where African capacity needs to be built?

16:15-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-17:45 **Session 4: Logistics, Mission Planning and Management - Options for Partners' Assistance**

Chair: Mr. Richard Gowan, Research Associate, Center on International Cooperation, New York University, and Series Coordinator, The Annual Review of Global Peace Operations

Presentations:

Col. Fergus Bushell, European Union Military Staff Liaison Officer to the United Nations

Mr. Michael Bittrick, Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Regional and Security Affairs, US State Department

Response by African representatives

Discussion

What kind of assistance can or should African countries expect from bilateral and multilateral partners in the same fields of strategic and mission level management, and logistics? How can their contribution be harmonized with that of the UN? What kind of division of labor and coordination mechanisms should be considered?

17:45-18:00 Concluding remarks by H.E. Mrs. Judith Mbula Bahemuka, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations

