Peacebuilding Challenges
for the UN Development System

Edited by Stephen Browne and Thomas G. Weiss
with a foreword by Lakhdar Brahimi

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**FUTURE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

The Future United Nations Development System (FUNDS) project supports and helps accelerate change in the UN Development System (UNDS), to strengthen its capacity to respond effectively to existing and emerging global developmental challenges in the post-2015 global development agenda.

The UN's development pillar is now its largest in terms of professional staff and resources. It encompasses some 30 development organizations, headquartered in 16 different cities, with about 50,000 staff and almost US$20 billion in annual expenditures.

There is an urgent need for radical reform to address three related UNDS challenges: lack of coherence, undefined capacity, and increased competition both within and beyond the UN. Such reform would allow the UN to draw more effectively on its unparalleled collective wealth of experience, pool its expertise and resources, and boost its development impact.

Realizing that many frustrations have accompanied UN reform efforts in the past, FUNDS– which was launched in 2009–will be a multi-year process, designed to help build consensus around the necessary changes. The UNDS's role, functioning and performance, and the opportunities for and obstacles to reform, will all be thoroughly examined in the light of the rapidly changing global environment.

The UN We Want for The World We Want
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Executive Summary

The year 2015 marks the "use-by date" for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and will see the adoption of their replacement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ushering in what has been billed as a new era for global development. It is also the beginning of the final stage of Ban Ki-moon's second term as secretary-general, when candidates hoping to succeed him will start to come forward. But most significantly, in 2015 the UN celebrates its 70th anniversary, while faced with unprecedented numbers of people affected by disaster and violence, and a growing gap between needs and resources. The UN's 2015 humanitarian appeal identifies 75 million people in need; 80 percent of those it hopes to help are in countries mired in complex, drawn-out conflicts.

As the world wrestles with these devastating crises, the need has never been more urgent to examine the changing nature of conflict, and ask whether the tools currently available to the UN for resolving and preventing them are fit for purpose.

The moment was most timely for an off-the-record discussion on 19-20 March 2015 organized by the Future United Nations Development System (FUNDS) project, in cooperation with the UN Office in Geneva and with support from the Swiss government. Some 50 experts and practitioners (see Annex 1) gathered at the Palais de Nations in Geneva for an open exchange about the past, present, and future role of the UN system in conflict-prone states. The meeting was held under Chatham House rules and was aimed at encouraging the frank and uninhibited views of experienced practitioners and analysts.

The goal of the conference was to ask whether the UN is equipped for twenty-first-century peacebuilding, and whether or not this task is a comparative advantage of the entire system—security, human rights, humanitarian, *and* development. Can it reverse the trend of states relapsing into conflict? Faced with the reality of multiple, complex, unpredictable, violent conflicts—and their fragile, equally unpredictable aftermath—are the UN's resources and the mandates given even up to the task? If not, what is the UN's future in peacebuilding? And how can its prospects be improved?

In the face of these challenges, the meeting determined that the "door is open to change" at the UN because of three ongoing review processes directly relevant to the future of UN peacebuilding. These system-wide processes—the negotiation of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, and the Advisory Group on the Review of Peacebuilding Architecture—together aim to help transform the UN's development, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding work and infrastructure, encouraging reform and a new strategic agenda for the next 15 years.

It is important that their recommendations do not end up "agreed by everyone but implemented by no one," as has too often been the case in the past. It is clear that radical changes are needed if the UN and its development system is not to become even further marginalized. The following recommendations from the Geneva gathering are put forward in that spirit.

1. Re-examine the UN's field presence in conflict-prone states

The United Nations should, as an absolute priority, re-examine its field presence, including the nature and composition of a more unified country presence, leadership, the selection and training of suitable staff, provision of resources, and clear and unified delegation of authority from New York and Geneva.

The review should:

- Better prioritize elements of all mission mandates as well as the comparative advantages of individual organizations.
- Seek to understand the complexities of contemporary intrastate conflicts, including the ethnic, religious, political, and other bases of local disharmony.
- Focus on strategy as well as tactical implementation.
- In the near term, address local issues and finesse the UN's own structural problems.
- Include women from the beginning of planning for missions, not as an afterthought.
- Review the structure and purpose of special political missions (SPMs).
- Prioritize the UN's role at key transitional stages in peacebuilding—for example, in implementing peace agreements and negotiating constitutions and first elections, where its legitimizing power is most effective.
- Deploy development organizations of the system earlier in order to facilitate the transition from peacekeeping and the transfer of knowledge and contacts.
- Encourage more active engagement with important local and international non-state actors.

2. Prioritize research, knowledge, and learning

The operational United Nations should support staff through:

- Facilitating more in-depth understanding of the actual and potential causes of conflict, including in states where open conflict has not yet occurred or re-occurred.
- Undertaking analysis early enough to be useful—for instance, when planning missions and determining their mandates.
- Encouraging more effective engagement with local actors, and women's groups in particular.
- Developing more effective and unitary communications strategies.
- Supporting research on the political economies of conflict-prone states, especially rebel groups and other non-state actors, including sabbaticals by practitioners to unpack their experience.

3. Recruit staff with conflict experience

If the UN development system is to increasingly concentrate on conflict-prone states, the underlying theme of the meeting, there exists a requirement for more staff with familiarity with instability and the causes of armed conflicts, and with specific knowledge of the regions in which missions are deployed. The process of knowledge transfer to local UN staff should be more carefully conceptualized and institutionalized in order to maximize impact and eventual ownership.

4. Promote harmony in policy as well as operations

To be successful, the Delivering as One (DaO) initiative should foster more policy harmonization, rather than more unwieldy joint programming processes, to ensure that peacebuilding actions by different agencies and programs are dovetailing toward the same goals and can access the same contextual intelligence. Special efforts and modalities are required for UN operations in conflict-prone states because of the complex nature of unstable environments.

5. Integrate peacebuilding fundraising

There is a need to design fundraising strategies that focus on the most pressing needs, maximize the UN's comparative advantage, and encourage coordination between donors to increase efficiency. The UN and World Bank should revisit the notion of a common strategy in order to consolidate impact and leverage.

6. Reform the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and Fund (PBF)

The PBC is far less effective than it should be. Its continued operation necessitates the clarification of its mandate and relationship in particular to the Security Council. It also needs to identify its comparative advantage among the many New York- and Geneva-based UN organizations. While the Security Council is focused on high-profile conflicts—such as Afghanistan and Iraq—the PBC could complement the weaknesses of the Security Council by focusing on lower-profile conflicts.

Reform of the Peacebuilding Commission should include:

- Working regionally with other intergovernmental organizations and civil society.
- Recruiting a pool of experienced advisors to facilitate relationships between domestic governments and the commission.
- Facilitating dialogue among parties, especially after elections.

Reform of the Peacebuilding Fund should include:

- Supporting more systematically non-UN actors in conflict-prone states.
- Allocating additional and more reliable resources for both emergencies and prolonged crises.

7. Make use of the 2016 election of the secretary-general to push reform

A rare occasion to elevate reform issues is the campaign for and election of the ninth secretary-general. Declared candidates for the position of UN secretary-general should be asked to spell-out explicitly and defend publicly their visions, expectations, and priorities for the UN's operational activities, including how to make better use of permanent and contractual members of the international civil service.

Foreword

The primary task of the United Nations as spelled out in the opening paragraph of the Charter is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." To a significant degree, it is also the yardstick by which it is judged by the peoples it exists to serve.

Major global conflict has been averted, but the world has continued to be riven by conflict that the UN has often proved powerless to prevent. Because of such failures—which secretaries-general and members of the Secretariat if not always its member states have acknowledged—former secretary-general Kofi Annan established a panel on UN peace operations in 2000, for which I was privileged to serve as chair. The panel called for significant institutional change, increased financial support, and renewed commitment on the part of member states, if the United Nations was to be more capable of executing the critical peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks assigned to it. Many of the recommendations, such as those on integrated peace missions, were initially met with some hostility. However, some were actively followed up, but many remained unimplemented.

In the last 15 years, the challenges have not gone away. Indeed, they are greater than ever as the causes of conflict along with weapons continue to multiply. Inter- and intrastate armed conflicts have become more complex. Some are overlain by religious ideologies and ethnic or tribal exclusiveness. International criminal networks are at work accentuating violence. Governments are facing increasingly hostile publics demanding regime change.

There are still too many conflicts that the UN has been powerless to stop, and too many where it has been present but unable to prevent the explosion of armed violence. Post-conflict situations also pose challenges in which the whole of the UN system needs to be involved, but where there is even a greater lack of cohesion and effectiveness. Where peacebuilding is not working, however, member states also have a lot to answer for. The most powerful are excluding the world organization from some of the world's most critical flash-points. In others, they are attempting to influence and arm the belligerents, in others using their vetoes to impede effective action. All of these actions undermine the very basis of its legitimacy.

While the United Nations is still falling short, this year sees not one but two timely new reviews of its operations: the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Advisory Group on the Review of Peacebuilding Architecture. They could not come soon enough. There is an urgent need for renewed introspection about the role of the UN in peacebuilding, and I was pleased to be able to attend the conference organized by the FUNDS Project and to write this foreword because these kinds of off-the-record conversations and publications can make an important contribution to answering at least some of the growing clamour for continued change. The FUNDS Project, with the support of the Swiss government, brought together an impressive group of people, many with considerable experience with the United Nations and its peace operations. One of them is the chair of the Advisory Group.

Some lessons of experience are already evident. The Peacebuilding Commission was established a decade ago but is generally agreed to not be working as it should; and its status, particularly in relation to the UN Security Council, should be reviewed as part of the revision

of the peacebuilding architecture. The UN must continue to deploy integrated missions where it can. But their planning needs to be more strategic and measured. Some missions are large and sprawling, not cost-effective, and far from cohesive. There are still far too many separate parts of the UN seeking to exert their own influence and precluding system-wide effectiveness. Perhaps most importantly, fundamental disconnects exist between the military and civilian arms of the major operations.

There is an absence of continuity where the commitment to assisting conflict-prone states needs to be far more comprehensive and longer-term. The UN has many talented people but not enough of them are engaged in the UN's most important functions of enforcing and maintaining peace and security or in the essential challenges of turning the page on war and beginning the arduous journey of post-conflict reconstruction. While the choice of personnel is important, those who are deployed need to be given a greater understanding of the nature and causes of conflict. In phases of reconstruction, an intimate understanding of specific local circumstances is required, as well as the nature of internal and external forces preventing cohesion. It must seek to be as inclusive as possible, building alliances with local actors wherever feasible. The UN needs also to be wary of blueprints purportedly designed to instantly create modern states with the wave of a magic electoral wand.

Above all, courageous steps are needed within the UN both to strengthen its capacities and bring about a change in culture. Only then will the world organization be more effective in performing its most important function of countering conflict.

The conference raised many pertinent questions and provided some answers. My hope is that this excellent brief report and the accompanying essays will be widely circulated and read by those who have the capacity to influence the direction of change. There is no more urgent priority for the United Nations and the world today.

Lakhdar Brahimi
Paris, May 2015

Acknowledgements

The successful convening and completion of this conference would not have been possible without the inputs of several institutions and individuals.

First, we wish to acknowledge the generous financial contribution specifically for the conference in Geneva from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs. Switzerland has also been a key supporter of the core activities by the FUNDS Project, along with three other governments (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). Our applied research would not be possible without the contributions from these key governments.

Second, we are grateful to the acting director-general of the UN Office in Geneva, Michael Moeller, and to his staff, especially Sigrun Habermann-Box and Maria Teresa Wieteska, for their assistance with the meeting's preparations in Geneva.

Third, we wish to acknowledge our own staff members for their contributions before, during, and after the gathering in Geneva. To our media coordinator, Fiona Curtin, and to our program officer, Nick Micinski, for their essential help in the organization of the conference and the timely appearance of this publication. And to Danielle A. Zach for the help in editing and fact-checking the final manuscript.

Finally, we thank all the participants who responded to our invitation and gave freely of their valuable insights and opinions.

S.B. and T.G.W.

Geneva and New York, June 2015

Abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
AU	African Union
BINUB	UN Integrated Office in Burundi
CAR	Central African Republic
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMCO	Civil-Military Co-ordination
CNDD-FDD	Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DaO	Delivering as One
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSRSG	deputy special representative of the secretary-general
EU	European Union
FAB	Forces Armées Burundaise
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FUNDS	Future UN Development System
IHL	international humanitarian law
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	international nongovernmental organization
IO	intergovernmental organization
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
PKO	peacekeeping operation
M23	Mouvement du 23 Mars
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo

MONUC	UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
PAO	political affairs officer
PBA	peacebuilding architecture
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PoC	protection of civilians
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
R2P	responsibility to protect
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESG	Office of Special Envoy of the Secretary-General
SF	Strategic Framework
SPM	special political mission
SRSG	special representative of the secretary-general
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNDS	UN Development System
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRC	UN Resident Coordinator

Illustrations

Introduction

The Future United Nations Development System Project organized an intense set of conversations in Geneva on 19-20 March 2015 with a view to probing the problems and prospects of pulling together the UN system in conflict-prone states. The meeting was held under Chatham House rules in order to encourage an open debate, and quotations used throughout this introduction are anonymous but striking and pertinent.

The 50 experts gathered at the Palais des Nations were invited to consider: "What is the UN we want" as part of the theme for the SDGs of "the world we want" in these tumultuous times. Moreover, how can we achieve it? While many diverse opinions were voiced, at a time when the UN is perceived as scrambling for peace rather than building it, the meeting coalesced around the belief that action must be taken to challenge three basic assumptions that underlie the ambitions of the ongoing UN processes—the negotiation of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, and the Advisory Group on the Review of Peacebuilding Architecture—and UN reform generally:

- First, that such global review process and global accountability mechanisms create local-level peace and development;

- Second, that a unified, coherent international community will lead to better local results; and

- Third, that the existing international institutions largely have the appropriate tools and capacity to build lasting peace and sustainable development in conflict-prone states.

This introduction is based upon reactions to a set of specially commissioned essays by authors who, among other things, aim to reconsider these underlying assumptions and address the institutional flaws that underpin them. There are three general overviews. Stephen Browne and Thomas G. Weiss report the findings of the FUNDS Global Experts Survey on the future of UN peacebuilding, including expert opinions on the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission and the DaO strategy. Thierry Tardy examines the structural barriers to military-civilian relations that the UN has struggled with since it began peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. And Charles Petrie and Adrian Morrice discuss the evolving face of peace operations, with particular focus on expanding mandates and special political missions. There follow three distinct case studies that provide specific illustrations of problems and prospects for UN efforts in conflict-prone countries. While it is true that all cases are distinct, nonetheless the specific realities on the ground in three in-depth country cases help to move the debate from generalities to specifics: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, by Tatiana Carayannis), Afghanistan (by Antonio Donini), and Burundi (by Susanna Campbell).

The most salient items of the debate are reported as partial responses to four questions: Who should build the peace? What is the role of the state? Why is the UN development system so ill-equipped for twenty-first-century peacebuilding? What are the Peacebuilding Commission's shortcomings?

Who Should Build the Peace?

In an era of tight funds and alternative actors, a key question raised at the conference was whether the universal membership UN should remain a broad organization with a major role to play in emerging and middle-income states, or rather concentrate its operations and expertise on the poorest and most unstable regions? If the world organization opts for the broad approach, participants warned that it may be necessary to lower expectations of what the UN can deliver in peacebuilding. If, as many consider both inevitable and essential, it becomes more focused on conflict-prone states, the post-2015 UN development system will need to both wind down operations in more developed countries, and bring its peacebuilding toolkit, methods, and personnel up-to-date with the realities of twenty-first-century conflicts and threats.

It is also vital to recall that the UN is only one part of a larger jigsaw puzzle of peace, which includes governments, donors, other international organizations, and myriad local actors. The UN must therefore identify and maximize its own comparative advantage at different stages of conflict and phases of peacebuilding. It should feel more comfortable handing over certain responsibilities to other institutions in order to focus its resources and good offices where and when they are most effective. Each peacebuilding case requires a specific mix of organizations and expertise, but strategic choices are usually avoided. Within the UN, individual development organizations tend to invite themselves into situations, claiming mandates from their respective governing bodies, and mobilizing funds to pursue their priorities. This leads to a plethora of partners and inter-agency competition for attention and funds. The hydra-headed UN development system is often criticized for a lack of integration and continuity among its various moving parts.

The choice of organizations to be involved in UN peacebuilding is itself a challenge. As peace and war often co-exist, peace operations invariably move "downstream" into the realm of development, where the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) have the most extensive field networks and play predominant roles. Yet peacebuilding frequently takes place in states still plagued by violence, thus necessitating a move "upstream" toward armed conflict. The lines are blurred and as one participant stressed, especially because the different phases are not sequential: in reality, peacebuilders must also be peacekeepers, and vice versa, making the need for well-defined mandates and strategies even more pressing.

The UN should feel empowered to make choices about when to enter into a conflict and when to say "no," instead of invariably choosing the line of least resistance. Unfortunately, decision making in the UN is an exercise in papering over disagreements, which can lead to the system overpromising and overextending its capacity. One participant suggested that the UN should recruit a high-level official for each mission who is designated to act as a devil's advocate— someone to always make the case for no intervention in order to force decision makers to consider the counterargument, or in the case of existing missions to stop and ask, "Why are we here?"

It is crucial for the UN to focus on *the* problem and not on *its* problems—that is, to tackle the actual situation on the ground and not worry endlessly about "UN plumbing and configurations." Rather than attempting to reform the entire UN system, missions need to be

better planned and based on stronger analysis from the outset. Some situations call for a small but specialized footprint but others a larger and more significant presence. However, when conflicts are complex and drawn-out, with huge numbers of people displaced for many years, the organizations needed to build trust and the rule of law take a long time to take hold, and states need a commitment to a longer-term peacebuilding presence.

At numerous junctures, participants stressed that ultimately it is local people, governments, and institutions that must build and maintain peace. The UN's role is to help build trust, accommodate and reconcile differences, and encourage the conditions under which good governance and the rule of law can succeed. One participant insisted that the UN "has to respect local people, make them feel ownership; not do peacebuilding for them, but help them to find out what makes their peace sustainable." This approach takes time and local knowledge but can prevent the tragedy of recurring conflicts. The sensitivity of the work involved in peacebuilding is just one reason why the choice of UN personnel can be even more critical than the existence of a clear mandate and strategy.

Participants also emphasized integration—especially of technical and development cooperation within political missions. Success involves a recognition that all types of peacebuilding activities have political elements and cannot always be or even appear to be neutral. Some UN humanitarian organizations resist, and are even hostile toward, integration efforts because of the claim that they could constrain their actions. Others suggested that there are institutional advantages to maintaining separate offices in country: it may be politically advantageous for UN organizations alternatively to play "good cop/ bad cop." For example, one agency may point out human rights violations, while the other works to increase development cooperation. The UN must highlight human rights concerns, but there are opportunities to leverage political pressure to avoid conflict with national governments. Integrated missions may make it harder for different organizations to push parallel agendas in conflict-prone environments. Participants called for stronger integration of peacebuilding strategies and policy harmony among UN entities, pointing out that while full operational integration can be cumbersome and costly, there should at least be a common compass guiding the direction of UN peacebuilding.

As the system stands now, there are no "institutional incentives to share other agencies' objectives" in the opinion of more than one participant. It was also noted that even when different UN bodies and programs are working together well in the field, problems can stem from turf rivalry and competition in headquarters. As a result, the challenges of the so-called continuum from relief to development are still prevalent after several decades.

Other lingering questions are: how do we define "conflict-prone states"? While the term "peacebuilding" was originally coined with post-conflict situations in mind, it is possible— for example—for states to be conflict-prone because of turmoil in neighboring countries. So, when and where should peacebuilding begin? Can the UN concern itself with conflict-prone countries before ceasefire agreements are signed, or before fighting breaks out in the first place? And finally, the answer to "Who is responsible for building peace?" often assumes that the "who" refers to state actors and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). How can UN peacebuilding engage more successfully with both internal and external non-state actors and belligerents to build long-term peace?

What is the Role of the State?

The United Nations was said to "work most effectively when dealing with those most like it, e.g., donor governments and other international organizations, and least effectively when dealing with those least like it, e.g., militias and illicit networks." The unique legitimacy that the UN enjoys comes from the universal membership of states, but this quality also blinds the organization to issues and factors that do not necessarily prioritize state interests. The UN Charter was principally concerned with interstate war, especially among the great powers, and not with intrastate conflict. Arguably, the best example of postwar peacebuilding was the (non-UN) Marshall Plan, but the nature of conflict has changed dramatically since World War II, and especially since the end of the Cold War. The UN is hard-wired for state-building, but sometimes it has to find ways to move beyond or finesse it.

The conflicts that the UN now faces are ever-more complex, involving intrastate violence, civil wars, and ethnic or religious strife. The primary actors are not state officials and armies but rather rebel groups, insurgents, guerrillas, warlords, independent militias, and terrorist groups. The traditional tools used by the UN to engage belligerents and manage armed conflict are no longer up to the task. While planning peace operations, the UN needs to be less state-centric, for example when collecting and analyzing intelligence. There is in particular a continued misreading of the political dynamics in Africa, with far too much emphasis on states and not enough on the local actors that are often the most influential players not only in conflicts but also service provision, trade, and communications. Sometimes, a situation that looks disorderly and chaotic to an outsider is actually governed by patterns and even order, just not necessarily organized by states.

The UN's role in peacebuilding is based on its universal legitimacy, its universal norms and values, and its capacity to play an honest broker. This comparative advantage emerges because no other organization wields quite the same power as a legitimizing factor, and no other actor deploys the same range of expertise and services. In practice, however, the UN is mainly called on to come to the rescue in active armed conflicts that are judged to threaten international peace, whereas it is virtually absent from Latin America.

The rise of intrastate conflicts is a challenge to the Security Council's evolving understandings of what threatens international peace and security. Internally displaced people and ethnic and religious violence are issues of pressing concern for communities around the world, but the UN is lagging behind when it comes to updating its mechanisms to properly address such threats to human security. There is a mismatch between UN mandates and actual appetite for risk. It must recognize that ever-expanding mandates do not make missions more effective; rather they reveal a lack of commitment and poor prioritization of goals. While early withdrawal is risky, there is also a danger of a long mission experiencing diminishing returns. Experts note that the role of the world organization is most crucial where there are "transitional political arrangements." But the UN must take care not to squander key moments to build peace, for example when helping to draw up constitutions, build institutions, and oversee elections.

The UN's legitimacy cannot always be taken for granted. It is no longer always welcomed with open arms as it was for much of the postwar era. Today the UN must earn respect by its actions

and not by merely waving its blue flag. It is better able to play an effective role when states consent to its presence in country. One of the lessons from the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is that consent still matters and should never be taken for granted. The essence of successful peacebuilding is building and maintaining trust. At its best, the UN embodies the values of trust, impartiality, understanding of local contexts, and open communication with all parties. But when conflicts are still hot or when a ceasefire has yet to be reached, the UN sometimes becomes a direct participant in the armed conflict; and choosing who to speak to and who not to speak to is itself a highly political act; true impartiality is not always possible.

When the UN only negotiates with states, it automatically takes sides in the conflict and can leave key issues unresolved. The clear lesson here is that the UN needs to engage with and understand the motivations and networks behind non-state belligerents, without necessarily equating their legitimacy with that of the state. The FUNDS 2014 Global Expert Survey reveals that the UN is reasonably successful in maintaining contact with women and marginal groups, but it is less so in reaching out to non-state belligerents. This is difficult terrain for the intergovernmental United Nations, and such contacts are especially tricky where they are controversial for the main sponsors of a UN mission—for instance, Afghanistan is an obvious case. In many conflict-prone countries, the regional context is also of great consequence as non-state belligerents often operate across borders. UN representatives and envoys, as well as political analysts, in neighboring states could share intelligence more actively and devise common strategies.

In complex peacebuilding situations, the UN is faced with many challenges in keeping a dialogue open to all sides and is invariably associated with building the state. For the UN development system, peacebuilding is largely about strengthening local capacity, but the world organization should always be cautious that it is actually engaging in local capacity *building* and not local capacity *substitution*. One of the main ways that the UN generates this capacity and knowledge is through employing nationals in its missions; and so questions should be asked before recruiting expatriates.

Why is the UN Development System so Ill-Equipped for Twenty-First-Century Peacebuilding?

It is becoming clear that, when it comes to peacebuilding, UN development organizations will be called upon to assume major responsibilities. While peacekeeping and special political missions have expanded with robust mandates, they do not usually have the opportunity to nurture longstanding relationships with governments and communities. The development system thus is uniquely placed to leverage social and political capital, having developed local connections over decades of presence in a country. But the development system is not well-adapted to working in conflict-prone settings, or to responding to frequent changes in the dynamics between the UN and the host country. Can the UN's development organizations embark on peacebuilding even in circumstances where there is precious little peace to keep let alone build upon?

In countries not actually engulfed in, or on the brink of, armed conflict, the UN presence is represented by the country team, which is encouraged to work more closely as part of the

Delivering as One initiative. However in the FUNDS survey as well as more generally, DaO was perceived negatively. The difficulties of working together operationally are exacerbated by a lack of harmony among UN administrations in organizational headquarters. The answer may be to concentrate more on policy. As one participant explained, "it is not enough to *deliver as one* but we also need to *think as one*." Policy harmony is as important as harmonizing operations, and more incentives are needed to encourage closer cooperation.

UN country teams do have many tools at their disposal—for example, in confidence building and risk reduction—but in more challenging conflict-prone circumstances, they do not have the same logistical resources as special UN missions and peacekeeping operations. This difference in capacity exacerbates the difficulties of transitioning from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. The UN needs to marshal different resources at different stages in peacebuilding processes, and deploy the right people, with the right skills, at the right time. These staff need to have expertise that is "contextually relevant" even if in reality the UN is often not configured for the environment in which it finds itself.

Participants identified a lack of high-quality political analysis, particularly in understanding the root causes of conflict, which the FUNDS survey had identified as the *sine qua non* of improving UN effectiveness. Analysis should be undertaken early enough to be useful—for instance, when planning the mission and determining its mandate. It should also be internally generated and not always outsourced to consultants. The case was also made for a strong political affairs unit to be incorporated into UN missions, and for its analyses to be integrated, cross-cutting, and shared widely. The silo-driven character of the UN does not help, especially because these political analyses by definition are subjective. Both field missions and headquarters thus are reluctant to examine the failures and learn from these challenges.

Peacebuilding is now experiencing a "local turn": the UN is grappling with how it can make peacebuilding more inclusive of local actors and ensure local ownership that is required to secure lasting peace. The debate centers on the fact that local needs and knowledge must be balanced with regional and global interests when designing peace operations. Because regional and global actors often have representatives at the table, local interests and actors can get overlooked, particularly in high-profile cases. However, the UN system must take care not to romanticize the "local" since not all local players necessarily are legitimate. In addition, while it is desirable to include local staff where possible, sometimes peacebuilding operations require very specific skills and experience that may not be locally available. One participant also pointed out that "the local is never truly local" as many such actors are connected nationally, regionally, and internationally to larger interests and social movements.

What people in conflict-prone/post-conflict states seek most is a sense of justice; it is relatively easy to deliver a "peace dividend" in terms of building bridges and schools, but bringing a sense of justice is much tougher, and ultimately linked to trust. As one participant stated, "development is not about economics, it is about anthropology." In addition, modern communication technologies are creating new challenges as hate speech and negative propaganda can spread with lightning speed, creating depths of mistrust and enmity that can be very difficult to redress—Ukraine was mentioned as the most recent illustration. It is also increasingly easy for disaffected local actors to tap into international illicit markets, which can reduce their incentive to engage in peacebuilding by diminishing profits. UN

peacebuilding, particularly in the post-2015 sustainable development environment, must deal with these emerging challenges and navigate ways to be more inclusive and participatory. Simultaneously, it also still has to prioritize its original mandate to reconcile differences, deliver development, and increase state capacity. As one participant commented: "the UN does not have the resources or legitimacy to do long-term grassroots peacebuilding; it needs to build up an effective state to provide security and deliver social services."

What are the Peacebuilding Commission's Shortcomings?

The Peacebuilding Commission was established a decade ago and has struggled to establish itself as a relevant and impactful institution. There are examples of the commission working well. For example in Burundi, the PBC invoked the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to support national dialogue. Although peace did not prove to be sustainable, the blame cannot be laid on the PBC. It was also pointed out that the PBC can be instrumental in non-mission settings. In Guinea, there was concern about the effects of neighboring conflicts and with poor intelligence. By investing wisely, the PBC helped prevent conflict from breaking out, saving both lives and money. The PBC often works in smaller states, like Guinea and Liberia, which are otherwise neglected, and where the PBF can be used as an incentive to encourage states to "go the extra mile" in peacebuilding.

It was also proposed that the PBF could potentially be used to enhance its effectiveness with other actors. Instead of always being dispensed by the UNDP through UN organizations, it could be used for civil society organizations and even regional bodies as long as adequate accountability mechanisms are in place.

However, there were criticisms of the PBC on at least two counts: one practical, one statutory. The practical problem is that in some countries it is considered to have been ineffective and thus, for some, has irrevocably lost credibility. The FUNDS survey found that 38 percent of respondents believed the PBC to be ineffective or very ineffective and only 20 percent found it to be effective (almost half of the respondents were neutral). Statutorily, the PBC was designed to be separate from the Security Council. But because of this independence, the Security Council considers the PBC to be a threat: its members believe that the Security Council should have a monopoly on security concerns. This independence also means that the PBC only operates in countries that specifically request its support, and not necessarily where the UN is mandated to act. The PBC could complement the weaknesses of the Security Council by focusing on low-profile conflicts and working with regional actors. The PBC was never intended to be "another head of the UN peacebuilding hydra" but rather to complement what the UN is already doing by using its convening power to engage local and regional groups, civil society, and other parties. Most importantly, it was to encourage behavioral change essential for lasting peace. In this context, a chorus of participants urged that there was no need for new institutions: "Don't create new layers. Focus on implementation. Fix what exists!"

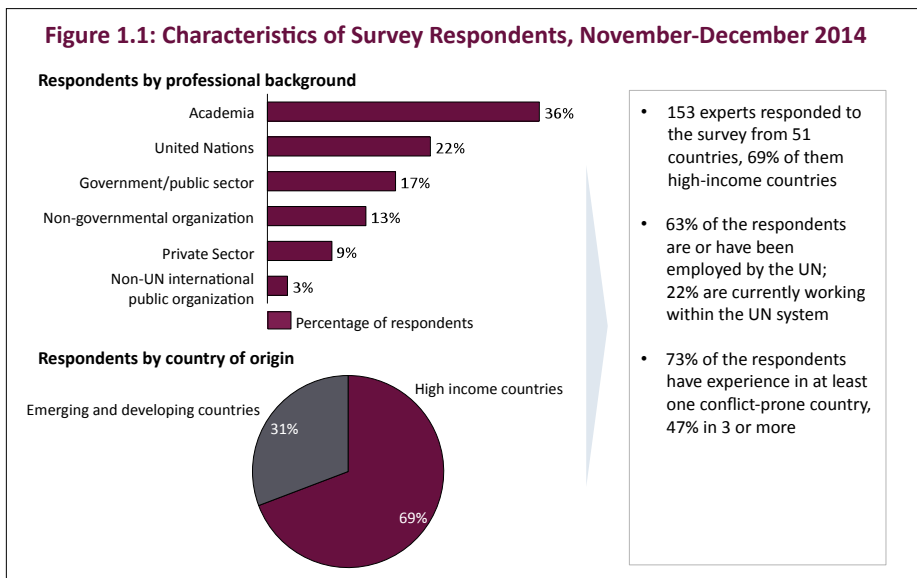# 1. What's the UN's Future in Peacebuilding?

Results of the December 2014 Expert Survey

By Stephen Browne and Thomas G. Weiss

In preparation for the March 2015 workshop in Geneva—*Pulling Together the UN System in Conflict-Prone States: Problems and Prospects?*—the Future UN Development System (FUNDS) Project devoted one of its expert surveys to soliciting views about the perceived performance of the United Nations system in fragile and conflict-prone states. The goal of the survey was to learn lessons for the post-2015 era in order to help identify the UN's comparative operational advantages and disadvantages. A common theme in much of the project's previous research and surveys was the need to reflect on the past and future roles (political, security, and humanitarian as well as social and economic development) of the organization in transitions from armed conflict to development. The profiles of some 150 experts are found in Figure 1.1. Perceptions are perceptions, but the extensive exposure of this elite set of voices is hard to dismiss in identifying weaknesses and strengths in the pivotal 2015 year.

Overall Perceptions of UN Effectiveness

The United Nations was found to be effective by 57 percent of the sample taken. There was little variation in these perceptions among those with greater or lesser work experience of the UN in conflict-prone states. The former's views, however, were far more positive—over two-thirds—than those who had no work experience (39 percent).

Figure 1.1: Characteristics of Survey Respondents, November-December 2014

Respondents by professional background

Professional background	Percentage
Academia	36%
United Nations	22%
Government/public sector	17%
Non-governmental organization	13%
Private Sector	9%
Non-UN international public organization	3%

Percentage of respondents

Respondents by country of origin

High income countries 69%
Emerging and developing countries 31%

- 153 experts responded to the survey from 51 countries, 69% of them high-income countries

- 63% of the respondents are or have been employed by the UN; 22% are currently working within the UN system

- 73% of the respondents have experience in at least one conflict-prone country, 47% in 3 or more

The Effectiveness of Delivering as One (DAO)

Since 2006, the UN has been experimenting with and promoting the Delivering as One initiative to encourage various organizations within the system to work more closely together in the field. The initiative took place, however, essentially in more stable developing countries. The eight initial pilot countries have now been joined in the initiative by an additional 36 countries. Only a striking minority (27 percent) of respondents found the DaO to be effective, while far more (38 percent) found it ineffective, including 10 percent very ineffective. Perceptions differed little between those with and without UN experience; but those with more experience in fragile and conflict-prone states were actually more negative about the DaO initiative than those with less.

The following are representative comments:

"Where the UN has strong resident coordinators, the joint work is much better than it was. However, still too much my-agency-first thinking."

"Effective in some countries, ineffective in others."

"There is still a lot of competition for resources among agencies."

"Many employees do important work, but it is too individualized; fragmentation, overlap and lack of strategic coherence among UN actors in peacebuilding hampers impact."

"DaO has to be more than just an exercise in efficiencies, but about ensuring a more coherent policy and operational approach."

UN Effectiveness in Selected Functions

Respondents were asked to comment on the relative effectiveness of the United Nations in three areas: humanitarian aid and human rights; security and peacekeeping; and peacebuilding and development. Humanitarian aid and human rights was the area in which by far—almost three-quarters of respondents—the UN was considered the most effective (73 percent), and peacebuilding and development the least (52 percent). However, the numbers appear worse when taking into account exposure: those without UN experience were more positive about the UN's peacebuilding role (63 percent) than those with UN experience (48 percent); and those with most experience in armed conflicts were less positive about the UN's peacebuilding role (47 percent) than those without such experience (61 percent).

The following are representative comments:

"Effectiveness of the UN varies greatly from situation to situation. Much depends on local UN leadership and the degree of support of member-states."
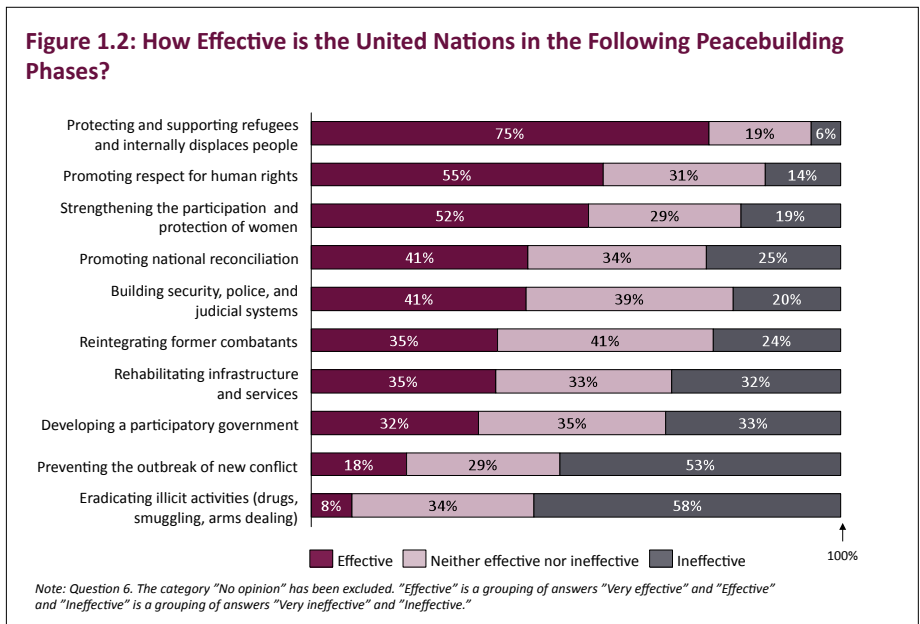
"Of the three areas, peacebuilding is the least well-funded."

"The mandates on security and peacekeeping have often been unclear leading to lack of effectiveness."

"There does not seem to be the level of commitment—or good staffing—for peacebuilding effectiveness."

UN Effectiveness in Different Peacebuilding Phases

Figure 1.2 depicts the perceptions of the three most effective peacebuilding functions: fully three-quarters put protecting and supporting refugees and internally displaced people at the top of the list, which was followed by promoting respect for human rights (55 percent) and strengthening the participation and protection of women (52 percent). The least effective functions were seen to be preventing the outbreak of new conflict (18 percent) and eradicating such illicit activities as drugs, smuggling, and arms dealing (8 percent). These percentages, in contrast to earlier findings, were substantially lower among those without UN experience. Differences were negligible across levels of experience in armed conflicts.

Figure 1.2: How Effective is the United Nations in the Following Peacebuilding Phases?

	Effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Ineffective
Protecting and supporting refugees and internally displaces people	75%	19%	6%
Promoting respect for human rights	55%	31%	14%
Strengthening the participation and protection of women	52%	29%	19%
Promoting national reconciliation	41%	34%	25%
Building security, police, and judicial systems	41%	39%	20%
Reintegrating former combatants	35%	41%	24%
Rehabilitating infrastructure and services	35%	33%	32%
Developing a participatory government	32%	35%	33%
Preventing the outbreak of new conflict	18%	29%	53%
Eradicating illicit activities (drugs, smuggling, arms dealing)	8%	34%	58%

Note: Question 6. The category "No opinion" has been excluded. "Effective" is a grouping of answers "Very effective" and "Effective" and "Ineffective" is a grouping of answers "Very ineffective" and "Ineffective."

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

Like perceptions of DaO, the survey reveals very negative views about the PBC's performance, which was found to be ineffective or very ineffective by 38 percent of respondents and effective by a mere 20 percent (almost half of the respondents were neutral). Significantly, no one judged the decade-long experiment to be "very effective." Those with UN experience were only slightly less negative than those from outside. Respondents who were more experienced with armed conflicts and more knowledgeable about the PBC, gave the most negative views.

The following are representative comments:

"Its major contribution has been to allow for additional support in cases where major international investments had ceased, following a peace agreement and the conclusion of a peacekeeping phase,

or where no peacekeeping presence took place."

"The PBC has supported some valuable programmes in a limited number of cases and at a limited level of resourcing….PBF works quite well."

"Effectiveness has varied substantially across countries."

"Overall, the still limited ability to ensure coordination and collaboration between the PBC, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council is a disappointment. There has been a good deal of churn within the PBSO."

"The political reality is that the main show in NY is the Security Council (SC). Unless the SC devolves the peacebuilding portfolio fully to the PBC more resources will not add value."

"Distance the PBC from the SC."

"The problem is operational and the PBC does not have an operational capacity, so why give it more resources?"

"It has not worked as intended. So few countries on the PBC agenda; in-country competition and mistrust between PBC and UN missions. Local levels and civil society not involved enough."

"The PBC duplicates a number of pre-existing organizations and its value added is not easy to demonstrate."

"If it is going to be the chosen vehicle, it needs serious leadership in New York and really good people on the ground. Not clear it has either."

"The PBC on a wrong footing from the beginning…too New York-centric."

"The work of the PBC urgently needs to be reinforced with prevention activities along the whole UN portfolio, including understanding and spreading knowledge on how countries' corruption could lead to conflicts and strongly spreading core values to the general public and in house."

UN Engagement with Different Actors

Figure 1.3 illustrates the extent to which respondents were extremely positive about the UN's record of engaging with donor governments and international NGOs; and they also were positive about contacts with local governments, NGOs, and governments of the region. At the same time, they were overwhelmingly negative about the UN's engagement with rebel groups and diasporas. Those with the widest experience in armed conflicts were slightly more positive about contacts with rebel groups.

The following are representative comments:

"More involvement with women who have to rebuild societies from the ground up."
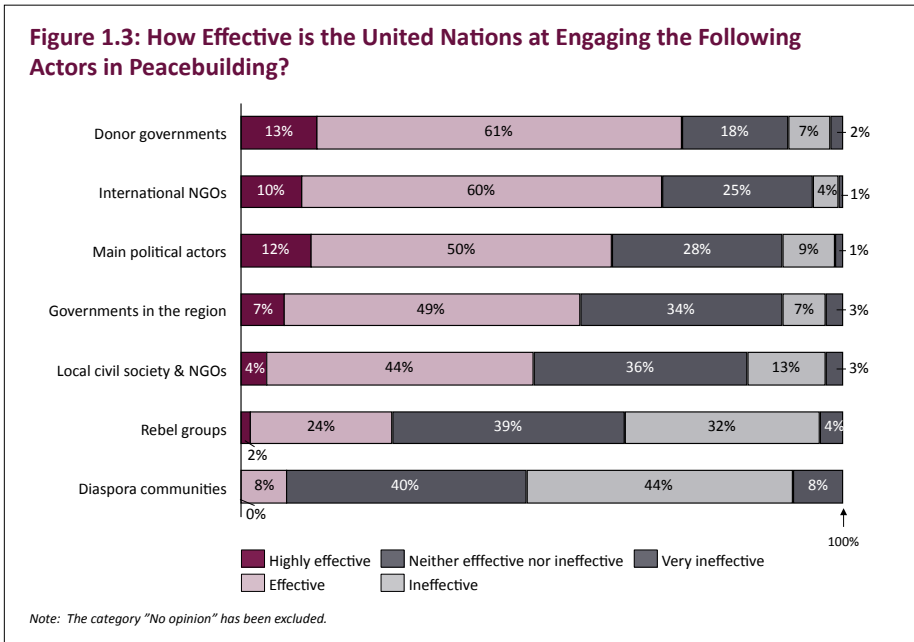
"Truly integrating women at all levels in all discussions, design and implementation of programmes, nationally and within UN teams."

"Provide open space for dialogue among the key stakeholders, including civil society, public opinion, ability to bring in other partners from the region, international, diaspora, private sector, etc."

"Cultural understanding and support for genuine civic society initiatives for change would hugely improve effectiveness."

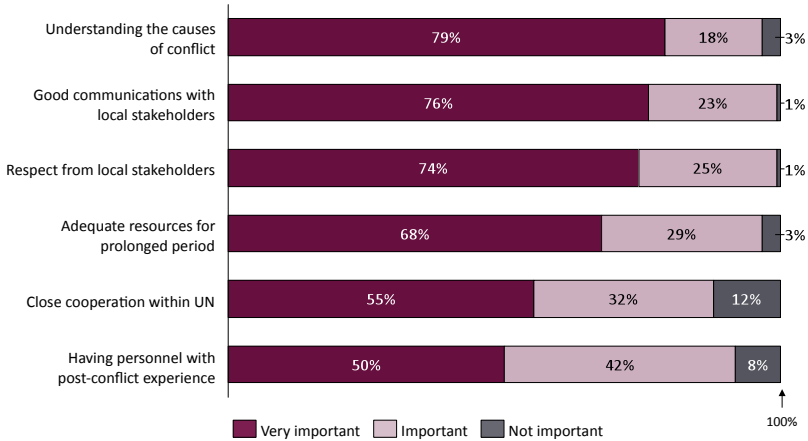*"Respect from stakeholders is something you earn through tangible results."*

"To be effective, politics needs to be recognized, and the building of 'social contracts' promoted in conflict-prone countries."

Figure 1.3: How Effective is the United Nations at Engaging the Following Actors in Peacebuilding?

Actor	Highly effective	Effective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Ineffective	Very ineffective
Donor governments	13%	61%	18%	7%	2%
International NGOs	10%	60%	25%	4%	1%
Main political actors	12%	50%	28%	9%	1%
Governments in the region	7%	49%	34%	7%	3%
Local civil society & NGOs	4%	44%	36%	13%	3%
Rebel groups	2%	24%	39%	32%	4%
Diaspora communities	0%	8%	40%	44%	8%

Note: The category "No opinion" has been excluded.

Factors Contributing to UN Effectiveness in Peacebuilding

Figure 1.4 depicts the survey's findings about at least three essential factors that explain UN effectiveness in fragile and conflict-prone states: understanding the causes of armed conflict; communicating with and gaining the respect of local stakeholders; having adequate resources over a prolonged period. Responses were consistent across kinds of work and field experience. When asked about possible reforms, virtually every respondent (98 percent) considered that closer cooperation among the political, security, development, and humanitarian activities of the UN system in-country was "indispensable" or at least "desirable." A similarly high proportion (96 percent) backed better coordination at the headquarters level as well. The appointment of a single UN head with delegated powers was endorsed by four out of five respondents whereas almost three-quarters supported more authority and resources for the PBC and almost two-thirds supported a smaller and more focused UN country presence.

Figure 1.4: How Important are the Following for the Effectiveness of the United Nations in Peacebuilding?

	Very important	Important	Not important
Understanding the causes of conflict	79%	18%	3%
Good communications with local stakeholders	76%	23%	1%
Respect from local stakeholders	74%	25%	1%
Adequate resources for prolonged period	68%	29%	3%
Close cooperation within UN	55%	32%	12%
Having personnel with post-conflict experience	50%	42%	8%

100%

■ Very important ■ Important ■ Not important

Note: Question 8. The category "No opinion" has been excluded. "Not important" is a grouping of answers "Neither important nor unimportant" and "Unimportant."

The following are representative comments:

"With all the areas of expertise we have in the UN, one area sorely lacking is expertise in understanding the root causes of conflict and the ways a given community/society/context 'ticks,' how do societies negotiate power relations, take decisions, who are the change agents."

"Build the capacity and competence of the international civil service to analyse conflict and to engage fully in executing the tasks formally set out in huge volumes of UN policy recommendations."

"Have a genuine unity of command with a single set of instructions from HQ rather than multiple chains of command."

"A smaller and more focused UN presence is highly desirable, but not very relevant to a peacebuilding context."

"A single head is not necessarily feasible as one expects too many qualities in that person."

"Closer cooperation among different UN actors at local level if a strong Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) is in place."

"In the effort to have closer UN collaboration, we must maintain space for independent humanitarian action."

"More use of local capacities in staffing UN presences. Greater delegation of authority combined with robust oversight and accountability mechanisms. Increased openness to ongoing 'client' feedback and quality improvements."

"The UN should address short-term need for building local leadership committed to national interest as well as long-term need for building governance systems based on democratic values and rule of law."

Recommendations from the survey

In light of the work of the two high-level panels (on peace operations and peacebuilding) and the ongoing conversations about the shape of the post-2015 UN Development System, the survey makes clear the following recommendations for operations in fragile and conflict-prone states:

1. The UN should, as an absolute priority, re-examine its field presence, including the nature and composition of a more unified country presence, leadership, the selection and training of suitable staff, provision of resources, and clear and unified delegation of authority from New York and Geneva.

2. The operational United Nations requires a far more in-depth understanding of the potential and actual causes of conflict; ways to engage more effectively with local actors, and women's groups, in particular; and more effective and unitary communications strategies.

3. The PBC is far less effective than it should be. Its continued operation necessitates the clarification of its mandate and role, relationship to the Security Council, and position among the many New York- and Geneva-based UN organizations.

4. If it is to be maintained, the Peacebuilding Fund should have additional and more reliable resources for both emergencies and prolonged crises.

5. If the UN Development System increasingly concentrates on fragile and conflict-prone countries, there will be a requirement for more staff with familiarity with symptoms of instability and the causes of armed conflicts.

6. To be successful, the DaO initiative should foster more policy harmonization rather than merely joint programing; special efforts and modalities will be required for UN operations in such countries.

2. Military-Civilian Interactions in Multidimensional Peace Operations:

What Comparative Advantages for the United Nations?

Thierry Tardy

By nature, multidimensional peace operations have over the last two decades raised the issue of the interaction between their military and civilian components. Back in the early 1990s, conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia saw the simultaneous presence of armed forces and humanitarian actors whose cultures and *modus operandi* were genuinely different. Yet the mere fact that they were concomitantly operating on the ground required some degree of coordination. A decade later, while these two sets of actors have done a lot in terms of conceptualizing and facilitating their relationship, the Afghan theatre and then Iraq brought new complexity to the question owing to the coercive operations of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the self-assigned humanitarian and development role played by the military through the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

In parallel, the United Nations was examining the issue of internal coordination through its work on "integrated missions" and then "system-wide coherence," thus revisiting the military-civilian cooperation issue. Other institutions such as NATO and the European Union (EU) followed suit with reflections on the Comprehensive Approach, which in both cases have civil-military relations at their core. Over this period, while the specificities of humanitarian and development activities were reasserted, all military/security and humanitarian/development actors have come to consider the necessity of facilitating cooperation with other actors of multidimensional operations, and a fair amount of policy guidelines have been issued for that purpose. Overall, civil-military cooperation has improved as a result. In the meantime, the relationship has continued to suffer from structural factors as well as from certain evolutions within peace operations.

This essay looks at military-civilian relations in three moments. First, it briefly examines the nature of the problem and how military and civilian actors have evolved so as to facilitate their interaction in the field. Second, it considers three types of evolutions in UN peace operations that bring new light to the debate, namely hybridization, the issue of civilian protection, and the trend toward more robustness in mandate implementation. Third, the piece examines some of the UN's comparative advantages in handling military-civilian interactions. It concludes with some policy recommendations.

Civil-Military Relations: Achievements and Limitations

The very nature of contemporary peace operations means that military and civilian actors interact within the same international framework. Over the last two decades, a lot has been done in terms of facilitating this interaction. The military accept that their own action can only produce long-term effects if civilian actors operate alongside them and take over after

military tasks have been conducted. In return, civilian actors, be they from the humanitarian, development, or political affairs communities, acknowledge that a certain level or security is necessary for them to operate or simply that the military presence is often a fact of international life and that a certain degree of coordination/cooperation with military actors is therefore indispensable. Humanitarian and development actors nonetheless reassert the key principles of their own action and warn against the risks of politicization of their role and of the amalgamation of the military and civilian sides (humanitarian, human rights, development, etc.) of a multidimensional operation. While civil-military relations need to be facilitated and institutionalized, this should not come at the expense of the civilian actors' long-term credibility and effectiveness.

In this context, all crisis management actors have developed a corpus of guidelines on civil-military cooperation, and the two communities have inevitably come closer through their interaction in the field. Within the UN system, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have produced most of the policy guidelines on military-civilian relations.[1] At the core of their approach is the need to preserve the integrity of humanitarian action while maximizing the UN effort's effectiveness and impact. In the mid-2000s, the work on the concept of "integrated mission" made the UN a precursor in the conceptualization of inter-agency coordination, beyond only the relationship between the military and humanitarian actors.[2] Ten years after the first documents on integrated missions, the need for flexibility in the level of integration is widely accepted, yet civil-military coordination is all the more important as peacekeeping operations are multidimensional and entail the possibility of coercion.

NATO came to the notion of Comprehensive Approach mainly as a result of its engagement in Afghanistan. Three sets of issues drove this process. First, the fact that NATO became involved in civilian activities through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Not only did this raise the question of inter-institutional coordination—in very different terms depending on which country (United States vs. Norway or Germany) was leading the PRT—but it also put the coordination debate in the broader context of the role and added-value of the military in non-military tasks, the legitimacy and long-term effectiveness of such actions, and their impact on humanitarian space and its related principles.[3] Second, NATO's counterinsurgency role and the associated need to conquer the "hearts and minds" of the Afghan population shed new light on the merits of military-civil coordination. Third, several years of presence in Afghanistan led NATO leaders to come to the conclusion that "military means, although essential, are not enough on their own to meet the many complex challenges to our security,"[4] and that coordinating with the civilians was thus indispensable. NATO's conception of military-civil coordination remains, however, NATO-centric. It is about facilitating coordination with non-military actors as leverage to pursue NATO's own objectives.[5]

For its part, the EU developed the two parallel concepts of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Civil-Military Co-ordination (CMCO) a decade ago as it entered the business of crisis management within the framework of its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). More recently, the EU has broadened its approach and adopted the term Comprehensive Approach to signify EU-wide strategic coordination.[6] Although the EU conducts military

and civilian operations separately within its CSDP (there are no "EU integrated missions"), the Comprehensive Approach implies a better coordination of military and civilian actors in crisis management whenever they are simultaneously engaged. In an EU context, this means coordination between the military and the civilian side within the framework of CSDP as much as between the military and the European Commission—where development (DG Devco) and humanitarian (ECHO) actors sit.

These various processes have drawn on field interaction and lessons learned exercises. Overall, what results from this is tangible improvement in the level of civil-military cooperation. The two sets of actors are today better able to factor in the constraints of their own environment and how these constraints impact other crisis management actors. Instruments are now in place that allow for a degree of coordination that was not observed twenty years ago.

In the meantime, there are certain variables that characterize the civil-military interaction that are likely to remain and will inherently limit the potential of the relationship. There is first a methodological and practical limitation to the notion of military or civilian actors, which can hardly be taken as unitary entities. On the military side, in the same theatre—take Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), or the Central African Republic (CAR)— there can be several components of an international military intervention in addition to government forces and other armed groups (see below). The civilian side is even more fragmented, with entities being affiliated with intervening states or organizations together with nongovernmental organizations, local or international. Not only do these institutions have different mandates or objectives, but they may also differ in their conceptions of their relationship with the military. Even within a given field (development for example), there exists a variety of approaches to cooperation with the military and how it should be operationalized. In general terms, the degree of fragmentation of military and civilian actors is such that not only effective coordination appears difficult to achieve, but moreover any attempt to draw general conclusions on the nature and evolution of the civil-military interaction is methodologically uncertain (What may be true for a certain category of actors may not be observed for another one; what might be observed in a given place might turn out differently in another situation).

> Civil-military relations are chronically hampered by a certain level of reciprocal mistrust.

Second, if there is space for a rapprochement between different sets of actors, there are also fundamental cultural and operational differences between the military and civilian actors that will remain and inevitably hamper cooperation among them. In the field, all actors develop procedures and practices that are shaped by their own organization and institutional cultures, be it in relation to security, information collection and sharing, data protection, planning, decision-making processes, interaction with the local actors. The extent to which these practices can be harmonized so as to facilitate inter-agency cooperation is inherently limited. More generally, civil-military relations are chronically hampered by a certain level of reciprocal mistrust and to an extent the difficulty for military personnel to work under civilian command, or simply to share information.

Third, in a conflict management setting, the military-civilian relationship may also reflect

a state versus civil society dichotomy that can only partially be tackled. Inasmuch as they are defined by states and intergovernmental organizations, crisis management policies are by essence state-centric. They aim at restoring functioning states that fit the Westphalian or Weberian model. In the field of security, this approach is conveyed by the military (as well as police forces) whose mandate is to restore the state's monopoly on legitimate violence. Conversely, civilian actors are not necessarily emanations of states (NGOs, for example) and as such may pursue a different agenda and target different groups of people. This aptly illustrated in the difference between state security and human security and how these different conceptions of security shape policies and priorities (e.g., absence of fighting vs. justice; security vs. development, short-term security vs. long-term peace).

Fourth, surveys on civil-military relations consistently underline that alongside guidelines and tools for a smooth interaction, the quality of leaders and their propensity to cooperate with the other part are instrumental to effective civil-military relations. Most importantly, guidelines and other types of incentives can hardly shape the relationship in the absence of a genuine and sustained commitment from top leaders to play the cooperation game.

Fifth, despite the work done on conceptualizing civil-military cooperation at different levels and providing a series of instruments to facilitate such cooperation, field interaction seems to remain ad hoc and to vary significantly from one situation to the other. And finally, the main concern of some civilian actors of a politicization of their work owing to close cooperation with the military is here to stay. The narrative behind military-civilian cooperation and comprehensive approach often underestimates the risks for the civilian actors of peace operations or complex emergencies of being too closely associated with the military, especially when military actors are engaged in openly coercive operations. Irrespective of the liberal values they may promote, international military interventions are always political endeavors and locally perceived as such. The myth of benevolent interveners that must cooperate to establish sustainable peace regardless of their political agendas or identities is yet to be deconstructed.

These impediments do not suggest that civil-military interaction is doomed to fail, but that there are inherent limitations to what can realistically be achieved.

New Trends in Civil-Military Relations

In this context, the evolution of multidimensional operations over the last decade has brought new challenges to optimal civil-military cooperation. First, the process of hybridization of peace operations has complicated civil-military interaction in the sense that it has multiplied even further the number of actors involved. Hybrid operations are understood as operations that bring together two or more international actors that operate simultaneously or sequentially, and the activities of which imply a certain degree of inter-institutional cooperation. They are hybrid in the sense that they are not run by one single institution and therefore are the exclusive product of neither of the actors involved. Rather they are the result of the interaction of at least two different conflict management policies or cultures, as much as a hybrid species is the product of the interaction between two different breeds or varieties. What distinguishes hybrid operations from traditional (non-hybrid) peace operations is the level of integration among the actors. Presumably it takes more than mere interaction to get a hybrid. In reality

though, the interplay between several institutions that cooperate at different levels directly impacts the nature of the operation as it shapes decision-making processes, financing procedures, command and control arrangements, operational practices, and accountability and reporting mechanisms.

While hybridization of operations may in the long run bring military and civilian actors closer, in the short to medium term, it increases the risks of tensions or administrative hurdles emanating from different institutional cultures as it transforms crisis response into a "n-player" game. In today's hybrid operations, aid agencies have to operate alongside armed forces of the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the EU, or African sub-regional organizations, in some cases with two organizations at the same time. In Mali, for example, UN and EU aid agencies or NGOs have interacted with the AU, the EU, and the UN's military operations, as well as French-led forces, not to mention the Malian military and armed groups present in the northern part of the country. The Central African Republic has offered a similar configuration.

Second, the recent trend toward civilian protection as a mandated task within peace operations has brought new complexity to the military-civilian interaction. The protection of civilians (PoC) has become mainstreamed in UN peace operation mandates as of 1999 in Security Council resolution 1270, with the creation of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)—the mandate of which refers for the first time to the "protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence." Eleven of the 16 UN peacekeeping operations in 2015 are explicitly mandated to protect civilians, while some have adopted specific protection strategies. Civilian protection has thus become a primary blue helmet activity. In the meantime, however, a lot of civilian agencies are also engaged in civilian protection, and the link between these activities and the newly mandated tasks needs to be clarified. Within the humanitarian community, coordination on PoC takes place in the Protection Cluster led by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where peacekeeping missions are represented. However, the operationalization of civilian protection by blue helmets—that is, how to translate in operational terms the task of protecting civilians—has been uneasy. Blue helmets are not trained for this new task and procedures for joint actions with civilian actors are yet to be fully designed.

Equally crucial is the level of coordination that the military is able to build with the civilian actors in the field, on issues such as priority settings; functional and geographical division of tasks; and information sharing. While significant progress has been observed at the normative and strategic levels, field coordination seems to remain difficult and ad hoc.

In 2010, Hansjoerg Strohmeyer of OCHA noted that "in the DRC and in many places where we have exercised coordination, where IDP [internally displaced person] movements or refugee return has been helped by peacekeeping, where patrols have been used in a very tactical and specific manner—we have achieved very positive results indeed."[7] Yet an in-depth analysis of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) revealed difficulties in coordinating the military and civilian sides on PoC issues and the lack of awareness about civil-military coordination guidelines and best practices.[8]

Furthermore, protecting civilians may ultimately imply that blue helmets resort to force against the ones that threaten civilians. This may change the posture of the force, and with it

the relationship with civilian actors that are also engaged in civilian protection. Along with the mainstreaming of civilian protection in peace operation mandates has come the idea that protecting civilians is primarily a military task. However, not only are military actors often ill-equipped and reluctant to carry out these tasks, but they are also largely unaware of the role of civilian agencies in this field.

In this context, the debate on the responsibility to protect (RtoP) has further complicated the civil-military interaction. The third pillar of RtoP on decisive action against a sovereign state that is either unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens can be seen as a way to reconcile military action with humanitarian objectives. Such interpretation is, however, not prevailing. Humanitarian actors tend to refuse the conceptual rapprochement and fear the implications of "resorting to force on humanitarian grounds" on their own principles. Although this debate does not directly relate to peace operations, connections between RtoP and PoC within peace operations do exist both at the conceptual and operational levels, and tend to negatively impact the civil-military interaction.[9]

Third, UN peace operation mandates have become increasingly robust in the sense that the contingents are authorized to resort to force in the implementation of their mandate (to protect the civilians, to defeat "spoilers," or to enforce a particular aspect of their mandate). Although this has remained rather theoretical to date in a UN context, the tendency toward more robust mandates is likely to complicate military-civilian relations, as the scope for cooperation tends to decrease as the level of coercion of the military operation increases. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which comes close to war-fighting, is a case in point. The AU mandates of the two operations in Mali and the Central African Republic (respectively, AFISMA and MISCA) were also more robust than any typical UN mandate. As for the UN, the creation of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in March 2013 provides an example of the trend toward more robustness. Established by UN Security Council resolution 2098 as part of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the FIB was mandated to "use all necessary means to neutralize armed groups" in eastern DRC, which made it a peace enforcement rather than a peacekeeping operation. Because of its coercive and contested nature, the FIB was said to be created "on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice to the agreed principles of peacekeeping."

> Not only are military actors often ill-equipped and reluctant to carry out these tasks, but they are also largely unaware of the role of civilian agencies.

In practice, however, the FIB's posture, operating within MONUSCO yet abiding by different rules of engagement, raised the question of whether it had become a party to the conflict under international humanitarian law (IHL). For most lawyers, as well as for the UN Office of Legal Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the FIB has indeed become a party to the conflict, and IHL must therefore apply to its members. Furthermore, as the brigade is not a legal entity distinct from MONUSCO, the argument can also be made that the MONUSCO itself has become a party to the conflict. This has huge consequences for the

military components of the UN operation that become "legitimate targets" of the parties to the conflict under IHL.[10] In principle, MONUSCO civilian staff retains civilian status under IHL, yet the changing status of the FIB creates a tension that makes any amalgam between the military and civilian component of the operation potentially dangerous. Going back to the hybridization of peace operations, and looking at the situations in Mali or the Central African Republic, one may also wonder how the interaction of UN missions with more openly coercive operations (Operation Barkhane in Mali and Operation Sangaris in the CAR) will impact on the legal status of the former and consequently on the impartiality of humanitarian and development actors.

On the occasion of the AU consultations of the UN High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in February 2015, the AU director of peace and security observed that "Peacekeepers find themselves operating alongside and hand-in-hand with foreign Special Forces engaged in counter-terrorist operations, or international law enforcement tasks such as controlling piracy and illegal narcotic trafficking."[11] The mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for example, is defined in robust terms and could, if implemented, put the mission in a confrontational posture against northern Mali's armed groups. The UN Secretariat has insisted that MINUSMA could not conduct joint operations with the French-led Operation Barkhane partly to prevent the amalgam.

Beyond the issue of mandate robustness, the trend by which UN operations are increasingly deployed where there is no "peace to keep" de facto places civilian actors in a complex situation vis-à-vis the military, which may have to engage in coercive activities against armed groups. In a way, the tendency toward more robustness within UN operations is susceptible to reproduce the type of dilemmas that aid agencies were confronted to in Afghanistan. And indeed, humanitarian actors have become increasingly targeted as a result of their engagement in non-permissive environments.

Interestingly enough, robust peacekeeping is often presented as a means to better protect civilians, yet robustness increases the chance that peace forces are perceived as a party to the conflict, which in the end may have a negative effect on the ability of civilian actors to implement their own mandate.

The UN's Comparative Advantages

Recent evolutions in multidimensional peace operations have impacted civil-military relations in several ways, while the main actors of crisis management are increasingly aware of the necessity of making their military and civilian components work together better. In this context, the UN offers comparative advantages provided that certain conditions on the nature of its activities are met.

First, in a comparative analysis, the UN—broadly understood—is by far the institution that has the most practiced and reflected upon civil-military relations over the last twenty years. Compared to the UN, NATO, the EU, or the AU have only recently started to look at the issue and furthermore have far less experience to draw on in their lessons learned exercises. Conferences in EU circles on the issue often reveal that debates on the EU Comprehensive Approach mirror the ones held in UN circles ten years ago. Furthermore, the few and modest-

in-size EU-led military operations have hindered the development of practical civil-military interaction on the scale observed within the UN. As of the winter 2014–2015, there were five EU military operations, and only the one in the CAR (which is a 9-month deployment) really interacts with humanitarian and other civilian actors. Within NATO, the civil-military relations debate has been prominent throughout the NATO deployment in Afghanistan. But it is today less central as NATO is not involved in any significant operation (the Kosovo operation is relatively small and unproblematic) and is refocusing on collective defense priorities in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. In any case, the dominant military culture of NATO did shape the civil-military interaction debate in a way that could hardly place the two entities of the equation on a par. As for the AU, it is certainly the organization that is the least acquainted with the civil-military relations problématique. AU civilian components barely exist, and cooperation between the aid agencies and AU military operations, in Somalia for example, can hardly be taken as a template to draw on. Overall, while this means that the UN is by default better prepared to handle civil-military relations in a UN-only context, for humanitarian actors working with non-UN operations may generate friction as a result of weak mutual acquaintances.

Second, the UN is arguably better integrated than any other organization. True, the UN military culture (that is by and large the culture of the troop contributing countries) is different from the institutional culture of OCHA or the UN Development Programme. Also, integration is potentially a source of confusion rather than effectiveness when it means blurring the lines between different agendas and know-hows. However, the UN has put in place the guidelines and instruments to optimize the civil-military interaction in a way that none of the other conflict management actors has. In addition, the civil-military interface has been made easier by the fact that, in the framework of UN operations, civilian actors and the military come from the same organization. Despite the friction, UN humanitarian and development actors are in most cases structurally part of the multidimensional peace operation, while it is never the case within the EU, NATO, or the AU, where the humanitarian and development components are always separate.

In Afghanistan and Kosovo, for instance, the military and civilian components pertain to different organizations that have their own culture and conception of the civil-military interface. NATO remains an organization with a military culture, and its operations are fundamentally different from parallel civilian activities. Even within the EU that is theoretically integrated, CSDP military and civilian operations are legally and operationally distinct, not to mention the role of the European Commission that operates parallel to CSDP operations. This difference is important in the context of transitions from security-focused operations to longer-term peacebuilding efforts where, again, the UN is comparatively better placed than the EU or NATO. The EU has done some work on transitions strategies, for example, on how CSDP operations can hand over to the EU delegation (that is, the EU representation in the operation's host state) to then coordinate longer-term development efforts. Yet these policies are still in the process of being designed. For the UN, structural integration can be counterproductive if handled badly, but can generate influence and impact if correctly managed.

Third, the UN comparative advantage in facilitating civil-military cooperation lies in the nature of its operations. UN peace operations are political entities that try to maintain a

certain degree of stability in fragile countries while directly or indirectly contributing to long-term peacebuilding. These operations are supposed to be relatively impartial in the sense that, with a few exceptions, they do not take the side of one party against another. Furthermore, despite the latest developments toward robustness, UN operations remain low-key military operations, i.e., operations where the use of force is neither central to their mandates nor considered at the strategic level. For civilian actors, these characteristics are more conducive to sound civil-military relations than more coercive operations such as the ones conducted by NATO or the AU. Civil-military relations are arguably easier in a UN peacekeeping context than they were in Afghanistan or Iraq, or than they are in Somalia. It is with this in mind that the Force Intervention Brigade in the DRC or any attempt to design more robust mandates (for civilian protection, for example) are likely to undermine the military-civilian interaction and should as a consequence be seen with great caution.

Conclusion

Civil-military relations require clarity about who is doing what according to what mandate. A lot has been done over the last two decades to bring clarity to the debate, both at HQ level and in the field. All organizations have made an effort to conceptualize and operationalize civil-military interaction, with some degree of success. Indeed, civil-military coordination is arguably better conceptualized and implemented in 2015 than it was twenty years ago.

> Improving civil-military relations is a work in progress and will remain an aspiration.

In the meantime, we have seen how civil-military relations are still hampered by structural factors as well as by recent evolutions in peace operation mandates and practices. In this context, improving civil-military relations is a work in progress and will remain an aspiration. While major improvements are unlikely, it is essential that all entities involved in civil-military relations pay renewed attention to the following issues, at both the strategic and operational levels. At the strategic level, the grey zone of contemporary peace operations, in which the distinction between low-end crisis management (peacekeeping) and peace enforcement (war-fighting) is being blurred within the same operation, and this creates tensions for military-civilian relations. Not only is clarity required on where various military operations stand on the spectrum of missions, but UN peace operations should also stay away from more coercive operations that the UN is ill-equipped to conduct. Second, the work on improving internal coordination of institutions has produced results and needs to be continued while preserving the specificity of civilian actors' activities (proximity within a single mission—as in UN integrated missions—is an asset only if such proximity is not detrimental to the specificity of civilian actors' activities). Third, the protection of civilians needs to be conceptualized as a transverse activity that involves the military as much as civilian actors and that therefore must be tackled in a coordinated manner. Fourth, civil-military relations need to be examined while taking account of the growing hybridization of operations, through which cooperation becomes much more complex and multilayered (with the idea of a "n-player" rather than a two-player game).

At the operational level, awareness needs to be raised in all institutions (including through education and training and the systematic dissemination of policy guidelines). Second, units in charge of civil-military relations within operations have to be better staffed, so as to reflect the importance of civil-military coordination. Third, civil-military relations need to become a central feature of mission planning and mission termination (transition between peacekeeping and peacebuilding). Fourth, efforts produced at the strategic level require to be translated into practical changes at the field level and across the operations. Finally, operations' senior leaders must be selected on the basis of their ability and commitment to play the cooperation game.

Notes

1   See OCHA, "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defense Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies – 'MCDA Guidelines' – Rev. 1" (January 2006); "Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defense Assets in Disaster Relief ('Oslo Guidelines') – Rev.1.1" (November 2007); DPKO, "Civil-Military Coordination Policy" (2002); DPKO/DFS, "Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC)" (October 2010); IASC, "Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies – an IASC Reference Paper" (June 2004).

2   See in particular E. Barth Eide, A. Kaspersen, R. Kent, and K. Von Hippel, *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group (2005).

3   See M. Dziedzic and M. Seidl, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan," *Special Report* 147 (Washington, DC: USIP, September 2005); M. Hofman and S. Delaunay, *Afghanistan. A Return to Humanitarian Action* (Paris: Médecins sans Frontières, March 2010); S. Haysom and A. Jackson, "'You don't need to love us': Civil-Military Relations in Afghanistan, 2002-13," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 2 (2013): 1-16.

4   NATO Chicago Summit Declaration, 20 May 2012, §18.

5   See Thierry Tardy, "NATO and the Comprehensive Approach: Weak Conceptualization, Political Divergences and Implementation Challenges," in *Understanding NATO in the 21st Century*, ed. G. Herd and J. Kriendler (London: Routledge, 2012), 102-118.

6   See Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative on the Comprehensive Approach (November 2013).

7   Remarks by H. Strohmeyer, chief, Policy Development and Studies Branch, OCHA, at the Challenges Forum, "Challenges of Protection of Civilians in Multidimensional Peace Operations," Australia (2010), 227.

8   See Wendy Fenton and Sean Loughna, "The search for common ground. Civil-military coordination and the protection of civilians in South Sudan," *HPG Working Paper* (December 2013). The survey reports that tensions arose between the military and civilian components of UNMISS when the military decided to hand over Sudanese civilians to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army while

the civilian component of the mission had told the Sudanese that they would be safe within UN compounds (12).

9 See Thierry Tardy, "The Dangerous Liaisons of the Responsibility to Protect and the Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping Operations," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 4, no.4 (2012): 424-448.

10 See Scott Sheeran and Stephanie Case, *The Intervention Brigade: Legal Issues for the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (New York: IPI, November 2014).

11 "Statement delivered on behalf of the African Union Commissioner Peace and Security by the Director of Peace and Security," Addis Ababa, 14 February 2015, available at http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/statement-delivered-on-behalf-of-the-african-union-commissioner-peace-and-security-by-the-director-of-peace-and-security#sthash.Bz31hwHA.dpuf .

3. Scrambling and Pulling Together the UN's Civilian Capacities in Conflict-Prone States

Charles Petrie and Adrian Morrice

This chapter opens with reflections on changing international and local dimensions of armed conflicts and violence as well as peace and reconciliation. It then discusses problems and prospects for international community responses to civil wars and their aftermath,[1] and more specifically for those of the United Nations. While much has been written on this topic, this chapter presents an overview of key challenges concerning UN missions and non-mission settings and suggests reforms to improve their effectiveness. This essay reflects informed observations drawn from decades of policymaking experience, including in field operations in conflict contexts.

The Changing Face of Armed Conflict

Since the end of the Cold War, conflicts are no longer regulated by two superpowers. It could be argued that at the time, the dynamics of conflict were fairly well managed as one superpower supported its favored belligerents against the other's allies. Since the end of the Cold War and crumbling of dominant ideologies, along with the "emancipation" of the Muslim world (started ten years earlier with the revolution in Iran), armed actors are much more diverse in their motivations and aptitudes for waging war. Thus rather than being mainly part of a confrontation between two major blocks, armed conflicts have become far more complicated. The nature of possible outside intervention, therefore, has also become more complex, in part given the rising influence of countries such as China, India, and Brazil.

Thus, an increasing number of contemporary intrastate conflicts are the result of a more intricate mix of ingredients, especially the numbers of non-state actors in the fray. The causes of conflict may stem from a desire for control over territory by ethnic, religious, or tribal groups, pursuit of economic interests (greed), or redress of grievance, including socioeconomic deprivation. Further accentuating the acuteness of violence are local, national, and international criminal networks along with religious ideologies. Against a backdrop of growing inequity and rising poverty, communities in many parts of the world are joining a religious struggle against the West, perceived as being opposed to, and corrupting of, long established Islamic beliefs. These new dimensions have significant implications for international efforts to support local actors and processes to resolve armed conflicts.

It would be incorrect, however, to assume that populations in conflict zones passively accept the violence unleashed upon them. Local leaders and communities often resist and attempt to contain the encroachment of armed elements. The operations of a number of the local councils in rural Damascus serve as an example. A number of such entities were formed by engineers and related elements of civil society at the time of the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime. Now, with the support of traditional leaders, they attempt to resist the takeover

of their communities by armed militia by continuing to provide services and support to their constituencies, an endeavor rendered more difficult by the challenges of raising the necessary funds to keep services going.

Resilience is also evident in communities continuing to maintain their leadership structures while fleeing violence and hiding. Karen villagers in Myanmar, for example, maintained community networks as they hid in the jungle. Moving every two to three years, as a result of environmental depletion (slash-and-burn agriculture) or owing to a government military offensive, they continued to regularly elect their leaders and representatives.

Somalia offers another example of enduring social cohesion, as businessmen maintained rudimentary social support networks in the midst of almost a quarter-century of upheaval in Mogadishu. These networks play a significant role in cultivating some form of normality in parts of the Somali capital that were inaccessible to the international community. Similar local mechanisms define the survival of communities in Afghanistan, and in fact many other parts of the world.

Limits of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

This section examines an important conceptual limitation of peacebuilding projects. It then analyzes four critical problems confronting UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

Conceptual Limitation

A central challenge for the international community supporting peace is implementing a conceptual response that may not actually be totally fit for the purpose. In many of the new configurations of violence, the notion of the centralized state (as opposed to multi-state structures [empires] or confederations) is not only being seriously tested, but its functionality is put in question. The situations of Yugoslavia (which resulted in the collapse of not only the state, but also the nation), the Soviet Union, Somalia, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and now possibly Yemen attest to the fact that once a dominant, frequently ruthless, central authority collapses, the state fractures. It does so very frequently along ethnic lines. As populations flee mixed areas to the relative safety of zones in which they are the majority, relatively homogenous sub-regions emerge. Once broken, strong multi-ethnic and representative central governance becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to re-build let alone re-establish.

In many contexts, "statebuilding" through the establishment of a strong central authority can be the wrong project, at least initially. For many populations affected by ethnic-based violence, too early a focus on the establishment of strong central authority can imply buttressing an exclusionary force that represents one faction. Such a statebuilding project also fails by supporting fragile centralized authorities that do not seek legitimacy or to represent all citizens. As Table 3.1 demonstrates, interim or transitional political arrangements[2] frequently now last more than five years at key transformational moments in a country's trajectory out of armed conflict. Yet the default setting of many international instruments seems to be to wish to recreate as quickly as possible strong central authority.

Table 3.1: Transitional Political Arrangements before Post-conflict Elections[3]

Country – Election	Years of transitional arrangements	Post-conflict election
Afghanistan – Presidential	4 years	2005
Democratic Republic of the Congo – Presidential and Parliamentary	7 years	2006
Sudan – General elections	5 years	2010
Côte d'Ivoire – Presidential	6 years	2010
South Sudan – Referendum	6 years	2011

The idea here is not to challenge the concept of the sovereign state, which is one of the pillars of international order and the basis for the UN Charter. But rather that the international community seems so fundamentally hardwired to deal with other states that it cannot adapt tools and mindsets to support peace processes and corresponding transitional political arrangements that may involve some period of alternative political and administrative structures. The push to "consolidate state authority,"[4] when neither the state nor armed groups may hold a monopoly of violence, is a case in point. Another is the push to centralize planning and goals between nationals and internationals into singular transitional compacts; a 2012 study concluded that these agreements are more effective if signed "when elected—rather than transitional—governments are in place."[5]

A new model needs to be found that is less dominated by a state-centric thinking and that acknowledges new realities on the ground, and possibly even integrates them into a governance solution. But also any new approach needs to accommodate the role, impact, and influence of new "partners" such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS).

Four Pervasive Operational Problems

The first problem is the very definition of the sometimes abstract and artificial notion of "international community." It is a structure that is needed to support a conflict-affected country. But what precisely is that community, and how to measure its effectiveness in any one case? For the most part, and as used here, the term refers to UN member states—or of regional and other intergovernmental organizations with a direct interest in a particular conflict and that are or should be represented in a group of friends or international contact group. There is a need to create such a grouping or community in order to avoid conflicts resulting from, at least in part, opposing approaches and interests between key member states.

A second problem is the challenge that individual donors have in managing their own "whole-of-government" response. In an environment in which many local actors define the elements of an armed conflict, there is already a low probability that any one supporting government can influence the range of protagonists making up the political landscape. Yet these very same governments are also rarely successful in exercising influence over their own governmental

parts. Some governments have made concerted efforts to set up joint interdepartmental units and strategies to support conflict prone states. They pass executive orders that direct collaboration, but many of these governments have arguably more "silos" and different cultures between departments than even the UN. The context of the on-going War on Terror is a current example, which leads to a further fragmentation of the political landscape. The UN is often asked to bridge these divides—a difficult task even in a mission setting that has clear Security Council mandates.

A third problem stems from the international peace and security community—specifically the peacekeepers—having become adept at deploying formed military and to some extent formed police units rather than civilian, military, and police expert advisors into conflict and post-conflict settings. Figure 3.1 depicts mission mandates compared to uniformed and civilian deployments. It has long been demonstrated that police and military advisors and civilian peacebuilders are the best vehicles for the attainment of a mission's long-term objectives. Yet the last two decades of experience with peace and security efforts and dozens of peacekeeping operations and political missions have not provided the UN or the international community with a well-organized system of deployment. "Force generation" generally reflects what is readily available (battalions) rather than what is needed, and, as explained below, favors peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and not special political missions (SPMs).

A fourth problem relates to the possible legacy of the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions on the nature of the assistance provided. The UN's engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq violated

Figure 3.1: UN Personnel and Security Council Mandates for SPMs & PKOs[6]
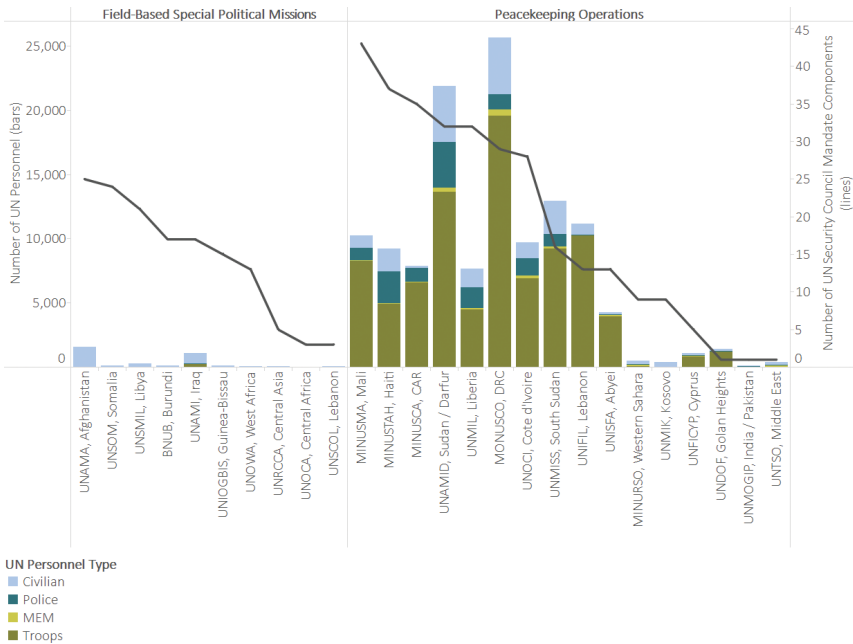
two of three long-standing peacekeeping principles (consent and impartiality) along with other lessons from modern peace operations—first among them: deploy only when there is peace to keep. It was also an exclusively Western operation. The resulting lessons of both interventions would seem to be the heavy emphasis of donor aid on achieving very specific governance outcomes, rather than focusing on supporting processes to achieve broad goals. This phenomenon is evidenced in the heavy focus by a number of Western donors on the need for well-defined and specific outcomes in the various results frameworks and matrices. Western donors seemingly have returned to a period where aid has a clear engineering (social, political, or other) component. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s social engineering was driven by development ideologies, today it is by political and security sector outcomes. This pattern also is reflected in part by the merging of Western development ministries with those of either foreign affairs or trade, and by the convergence of development and security agendas in many conflict-affected countries.

Recent UN Responses

The prospects for UN missions and non-mission configurations in civil wars and their aftermath can be viewed from five angles: the similarity between PKO and SPM mandates yet their very different operational methods and capacities; poor SPM design and support; the need to better utilize political affairs officers (PAOs); the need to change lines of authority in non-mission settings; and the need to learn from the one-phone-call electoral assistance model.

PKOs and SPMs: Similar Mandates but Different Methods and Capabilities

The efficacy of UN crisis management and longer-term peacebuilding is fundamentally affected by the way each conflict is defined by the Security Council, in particular its three Western permanent members (P3). Almost every issue related to "scrambling and pulling the moving civilian parts together" is influenced by P3 and other politics that define the international dimensions of the conflict and the UN field configuration that follows. It is both one of the greatest strengths and one of the greatest weaknesses of the current UN peace architecture. If a case is agreed to be "a threat to international peace and security" then invariably a PKO or SPM, or both are deployed. If not, then the UN response is to organize itself as a "non-mission setting," described in more detail below.

One little known trend is that the number of field-based SPMs spiraled more than 15 years ago, and their council mandates have since doubled.[7] SPMs might once have been characterized as deploying for conflict mediation or sent much later for post-conflict peacebuilding. In fact in the last decade and a half, PKOs and SPMs have both been deployed across the full spectrum of conflict cycles and high- and low-risk environments, a reality not yet recognized on the Security Council's website.[8] Comparing countries in Figure 2, those with SPMs have as high battle deaths and other forms of violence, humanitarian worker deaths, and extreme threats faced by UN staff as do PKOs. A comparison of comprehensive peace agreements in countries that have had PKOs and SPMs shows that their peace processes have had a similar array of provisions negotiated between the parties to implement.[9] Logically, as described in the Brahimi report, UN missions then operate "under the contour of peace process provisions,"[10]

which in turn guide the language of Security Council mandates, and which should then guide the capabilities required. It follows that the similarities continue in the number of mandate components between PKOs and SPMs as depicted above in Figure 2, in particular if the "use of force" and related mandate texts are removed.

Setting aside this important difference that peacekeeping operations have rules of engagement for formed units and corresponding need for significant logistical support, SPM means do not match their mandates. In a PKO there may be 100 public information officers to implement their mandate; in an SPM there may be one spokesperson. PKOs may have over 50 integrated field sites deployed across some of the largest countries in the world, a medium-sized air force and trucking fleet. SPMs lack subnational presence in many cases in which such a presence could prove decisive in understanding the local dimensions of conflict and local actors' interests, being ready to prevent localized conflict from escalating, and coordinating civilian and other capacity at the level that programs are implemented. SPMs are instead often one office in the capital city (a "peace office" not a "peace operation"), and have no sticks—only a short supply of political carrots, expertise, or good will to achieve their mandates.[11] Many SPMs have few or no police or military experts to engage with state and non-state armed groups, to understand changing threats and motives and intent of non-state armed (and arming) groups.

> The number of field-based SPMs spiraled more than 15 years ago, and their council mandates have since doubled.

Further, although SPMs have no purely military tasks, many have mandates that overlap considerably with military ones related to disarmament, demobilization, transnational threats and organized crime, and security sector reform. Relationships with armed groups and armed forces cannot be nurtured from small SPM civilian offices.

Poor Design and Support of SPMs

Since the 1990s SPMs have been left out, silenced, and sidelined by the better-organized and more photogenic peacekeeping industry.[12] "Peace operations" have for two decades been synonymous with peacekeeping, not with "peacekeeping and field-based political missions." This continues, with 95 percent of the 60 articles by analysts submitted to the High-level Panel on Peace Operations explicitly mentioning peacekeeping, and only three referring to field-based SPMs, and three to sanctions bodies.[13] At the same time, SPMs are the council's principal tool in 38 percent of the countries on its agenda.[14]

There are several lessons to learn from changes to PKO support and mission design. First, over time member states have provided PKOs with strong rapid deployment, funding, and backstopping, which were triggered by failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and the Balkans. Second, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations uses a strong PKO community among member states and like-minded think tanks who collectively push and advocate peacekeeping to be more effective and perform at a higher level.[15] Third, this community helps get agreement to deploy and fund larger numbers of military and police experts, and other capabilities such as UN volunteers, and other substantive staff such as civil affairs officers.[16] The General Assembly

applies pressure to downsize when country conditions dictate. SPMs have no such funding and backstopping arrangements, no community that advocates for missions or for urgent reform to SPM support; and the history of SPMs is mostly of small missions with minimal creativity in design.

Political Affairs Officers: An Underutilized Asset

Who do we delegate responsibility to scramble and pull the moving parts together, and are they effective and being supported? Much has been written and reformed on the recruitment and the evolving roles and responsibilities of special representatives to the secretary-general (SRSGs) and deputy SRSGs, and the integrated planning and operational decision-making structures and processes that they lead. But these leaders can only be in one place at a time, and they rely heavily on their team of political affairs officers. In mid-2014, for instance, there were 563 PAO staff deployed in 37 PKO and SPM political affairs components. However, we know next to nothing about how this group performed and their support.[17]

If one PAO averages about $200,000 to keep in the field a year, PAOs as a group are a UN field asset worth over $112 million per annum. Day-to-day PAOs are trying to understand, anticipate, and solve peace process and peacebuilding challenges. And where necessary, they coordinate or facilitate competing or complementary work between security, human rights, development, and other actors. In doing so, they are the de facto leaders of an integrated UN approach, advising the SRSG on his/her efforts to ensure that UN support balances and prioritizes between political and technical imperatives.

PAOs also prepare material for SRSGs and their deputies in peace talks, conduct diplomacy at international, national, and subnational levels, and make sense of security, conflict, and political trends to inform mission and UN strategy. In addition to the over-the-horizon function, they are normally involved in responses to all crises, looking for ways to prevent conflict or its escalation. They draft and coordinate input for almost all UN reporting, including to the Security Council on benchmarks. Those reports shape national and international analysis on any given country, and explicitly locate the UN's efforts in one integrated narrative.

To compare outside the peace and security domain, many professions have an occupational group that "brings everything together," and they have bodies overseeing national and international industry and individual standards: pilots for aviation, doctors for health, and engineers for construction. In UN mission settings, there is no such focus for political affairs officers, perhaps the most important UN civilian occupational group. There is little recognition of the integrating role that they play, and it appears no attention has been brought to bear to support and improve the group as a strategic asset.

Inappropriate Lines of Authority in Non-mission Settings

Further complicating the landscape of the coordination of international community responses in situations of armed conflict or contexts following wars is the case of non-mission settings, which are characterized by the reporting lines for the UN resident coordinator (UNRC) that go to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) administrator rather than to the UN secretary-general. While it is one thing in a development setting to have weak political acumen and

limited access to the UN's political departments, it becomes dangerous and even irresponsible to let such deficiencies persist when supporting countries at war or in a political crisis. Yet many non-mission settings are characterized by a chaotic array of largely uncoordinated and generally apolitical UN efforts, often under anemic task forces in New York and equivalent field structures—rather than under direct UN Secretariat authority with light guidance from the skeletal offices of the resident coordinator. The exceptions (e.g., Nepal) are more a result of individual initiative than collective UN leadership.

The resident coordinator system, created by General Assembly resolution 32/197, was built on the premise that the "overall responsibility for, and coordination of, operational activities for development carried out at the country level" was to be entrusted to a single official who would be designated "in consultation with and with the consent of the Government concerned." The definition of what constituted operational activities for development was narrower than it has since become. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War, member states and the UN system have together agreed that peace, security, human rights, and development are deeply intertwined and reinforcing. Coherence means that it is no longer possible to dissociate operational activities for development from political, humanitarian, human rights, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding functions. This is particularly true in countries affected by war or other political transitions.

Thus, for the last decade at least, in many contexts the UNRC has, by necessity, taken on responsibilities broader than those initially envisaged by the General Assembly. This anomalous situation poses problems for operational partners who fear that any involvement in addressing political issues complicates, or even compromises, on-going development efforts.

Serious consideration thus should be given to changing the line of authority and accountability. While some member states could see linking the UNRC to the secretary-general as an entry point for UN Security Council involvement in internal affairs, a number of governments have also understood the advantages of a direct link to the UN Secretariat as a means to ensure a better understanding of the political realities of a conflict-affected country. When political goals dominate relations with another state, the executive response is to direct the foreign ministry to lead and to coordinate, to ensure other government departments do not compromise those goals.

Making "One Phone Call," an Underexploited Model

Where competition between internationals supporting peace processes can be healthy, in conflict-prone states there remains a great deal of unhealthy and unproductive competition between international providers of expertise (donor, international and not for profit organizations). This undermines many efforts, including integration of UN and international efforts, and it smothers national actors in turf fighting. Recent attempts to modernize and standardize a vision for how UN expertise can be organized globally and then integrated in the field have shown limited results.

One model is UN electoral assistance, which works well as an effective service provider platform, or in the words of the 2011 civilian capacity review, it is "one of the most rapid and versatile units of civilian capacity in the United Nations."[18] SRSGs and UNRCs generally know that there is only a single phone number to ask for UN electoral expertise. So are there lessons

for other areas of capacity? Elections provide a useful measure for UN and international community support to peacebuilding processes because they are explicitly political and time bound; and they have been the largest scale and arguably the most complex national and international exercises the UN has supported. They openly test former combatants' political will to present contrasting policies and ideologies and to compete in public. In almost all cases organizing these elections completely overwhelms the country's institutions, logistics, and infrastructure. The pressure to "deliver" the elections is in part because they are also a pivotal national and international benchmark for nearly all peace and development activities that follow.[19]

Elections also test the UN to deploy qualified experts quickly, and for them to be effective at integrating UN, international community, and national efforts. The Security Council historically mandates the UN family to deliver ambitious support. Yet there is no standing workforce of UN electoral teams; on the contrary, significant numbers of staff, including UN volunteers, are recruited for time-bound deployments. An effective centrally administered roster controls staff quality. Electoral assistance has developed these and other capacities and standards in large part because the General Assembly decisively answered many UN global roles and responsibilities questions between 1990 and 1992.[20]

A recent study, the first for 20 years that has looked at the UN's integrated electoral assistance, compared seven large-scale elections, reviewed member state and UN integration and electoral assistance policy, and still found much to improve.[21] Hundreds of practitioners contributed to the research, and the first lesson was that the Security Council and General Assembly still often send mixed messages on integration, and this undermines coordination between entities that need clear direction from them. That said, the most significant policy gap is between the General Assembly and UNDP's Executive Board. The latter clearly does not recognize, and certainly does not validate and buttress, the General Assembly's electoral assistance policies. This undermines field staff and their efforts at collaboration.

A third lesson is that UN integration is not as important as the effort required to pull together a tripartite platform of coordination between national state actors (the election management body, the ministry of home affairs), national non-state actors (political parties, former armed groups, domestic observers), and the international community. The UN is normally mandated to coordinate the international community in this endeavor. A fourth lesson is that too often UN staff (civilian and uniformed internationals in general) work with themselves and other internationals, and "do" the job of organizing the elections. This is a failure of creativity, leadership, and long-term vision. National actors should be accompanied, not substituted. A fifth lesson is that unified leadership and clear integrated structures from the outset are essential. UN headquarters needs to assert these principles, specifically having one UN electoral component working to one plan, led by one double-hatted chief reporting to the SRSG and the lead department, and ultimately to the Security Council. These operating methods and principles can be applied to many other areas of assistance.

Conclusions

Despite the improved and professionalized support from the UN and other sources, some fairly straightforward policy issues remain. The authors question whether the changes in the very nature of twenty-first century conflicts may not have outpaced the evolution in the responses: is the conceptual model used by the international community to deal with conflict still fit for purpose? Even if some of the policy challenges have simple solutions, the political will as well as vision and leadership to carry them out are lacking. Nonetheless, four suggestions follow from our analysis.

First, a new approach should be found to address the changing nature of new conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War, the dynamics of a growing number of conflicts have evolved. Many new conflicts are no longer being "contained" by one or the other superpower. These new conflicts are a result of the implosion of a formerly strong central authority, and the violence unleashed leads to a fragmentation of the country frequently along ethnic or tribal lines. Thus in numerous conflict-affected states any attempt to prematurely recreate a strong central authority is not only difficult to achieve, but could actually trigger much greater violence, at least for as long as the legitimacy of the central authority continues to be contested by the population it is meant to serve. A new model needs to be found that acknowledges the new realities that are to be found on the ground, and possibly even integrates them into a governance solution. But also any new approach needs to accommodate the role, impact, and influence of new "partners" such as the BRICS.

> Even if some of the policy challenges have simple solutions, the political will as well as vision and leadership to carry them out are lacking.

Second, the strategic gap in the Security Council's assets needs to be filled to address the lack of appropriate funding and support for SPMs as well as capabilities to understand and address threats. While it is essential to maintain the difference between PKOs and SPMs in the use of force, the capability gaps between these two types of mission are far too wide. Member states and think tanks should look at the full spectrum of threats and of peace and security missions to match them, and ensure the gap is narrowed. Mission design can be improved by reviewing failures in recent SPMs and considering whether mistakes were made by what the Brahimi report called "best-case planning assumptions."[22] Should these missions be deployed into conflict zones without suitable subnational offices and without expertise in military and police matters? Although the secretary-general presented practical SPM funding and backstopping options in 2011 (A/66/340), a convincing substantive case for change has yet to be made in capitals.

Third, a high-level panel should review the occupational group of political affairs officers. Former SRSGs, heads of political affairs components, and non-UN strategic human resources experts could focus attention on this key strategic asset. The review could investigate the state of the political affairs officer occupational group, in all PKOs and SPMs and the Secretariat, and recommend how to recruit, train, and sustain that workforce suited to current and future challenges, including their integration functions.

Fourth, in political crises and conflict-prone settings, the leadership of UN non-mission structures in the field should report directly to the UN secretary-general. Non-mission settings are characterized by reporting and accountability lines that go to the UNDP administrator. This transfer of UN headquarters "ownership" frequently leads to a structural rupture in the response, and as a result the UN has had difficulty maintaining its political lead while transiting from one coordination model to the next. Serious consideration should be given to shifting the line of authority and accountability of the UNRC from the UNDP administrator to the secretary-general and the UN Secretariat. In a world of growing interdependence, a circumscribed UN presence in a country makes increasingly little sense. This is especially true for situations of countries emerging from war, where the international community, and even in some cases newly formed governments, place acute demands on the secretary-general and have expectations that the UN system should assume an expanded role supporting such processes.

Fifth, UN specialist support to conflict-prone states should rest on a one-phone-call model that ensures timely expertise for national actors, SRSGs, and UNRCs. UN leaders in the field need a simple model of support, such that they only need to make one phone call to headquarters to get assistance in any one area of expertise. These clear lines of accountability need to be legislated by member states (and not involve complicated and ineffective dispersed responsibility). They could follow three simple standards: one focal point for each thematic area globally, publishing UN policies and contemporary lessons; a quality-controlled roster of UN experts in one place that everyone can access; and a clear needs assessment process that looks at every country differently, responding to written requests for assistance from countries, or mandates from the Security Council—that is, not responding either to turf-conscious demands from donors or UN organizations.

Notes

1   "International community" in this chapter refers to member state engagement in UN and other multilateral fora, and their bilateral support for conflict-prone states.

2   These extended periods are when parties involved in the peace process co-rule under power sharing, transitional governments, and other extra-constitutional measures. They are generally formalized in peace agreement text for national decision making and end with first post-conflict elections if parties who "lose" accept the election result. At subnational or local levels, however, transitional arrangements continue much longer, with central state authority more contested, and informal systems for justice, security, and commerce common.

3   See: Adrian Morrice, Francisco Cobos Flores, and Mary O'Shea, "Lessons Learned: Integrated: Politics, Peacekeeping and the 2004 Electoral Assistance in UN Mission Settings," UNDPKO, Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and UNDP, 2013, http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/DZ/lessons-learned-integrated-electoral-assistance-in/view; and Scott S. Smith, *Afghanistan's Troubled Transition Presidential Election* (Santa Ana, Calif.: First Forum Press, 2011).

4   Security Council language for peacekeeping operations. Currently seven have "territorial control /

consolidation of state authority" as an explicit mandate, and most other PKOs and SPMs with regional or other peacekeepers have it as an implicit mandate. See: United Nations, *Field Mission Security Council Mandates Table*, Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch, Security Council Affairs Division, DPA, November 2014, http://www.un.org/en/sc/programme/

5   Christina Bennett, *Aid Effectiveness in UNDP Fragile States: Lessons from the First Generation of Transition Compacts*, International Peace Institute, April 2012, http://www.ipacademy.org, 5.

6   The graph is provided with assistance from the Center on International Cooperation. The two sources for the data are: 1) Mandate data is from United Nations, *Field Mission Security Council Mandates Table*, Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch, Security Council Affairs Division, DPA, November 2014, http://www.un.org/en/sc/programme/[un.org]; and 2) Mission staffing was provided to the authors in April 2015 by the Center on International Cooperation, based on CIC's *Review of Global Peace Operations (2014-2015)*, forthcoming. All SPM and PKO data is as of June/July 2014, except MINUSCA data as of October 2014. In addition: a) The "civilian" category includes 33 support and substantive occupational groups, as well as international staff, local staff, and UN volunteer categories. b) Data on police personnel is sourced from the DPKO Police Division. c) Data on all military personnel (troops, military observers or MEMs) were provided by the DPKO Force Generation Service (FGS). d) The categories "troops" and "MEMs" are used to classify military staff where: "troops" refer to both troops and staff officers and "MEMs" include all military personnel engaged in an observer, liaison, or advisory capacity, including military observers (MilObs), military liaison officers (MLOs), or military advisers (MilAds). Military personnel other than troops in all peacekeeping operations are categorized as military observers. When known, MEM personnel in political missions have been further classified.

7   Report of the Secretary-General, "Review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions," UN document A/66/340, 12 October 2011, Figures I and II.

8   United Nations Security Council, *Frequently Asked Questions*, http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/faq.shtml#missions, para. 11.

9   See, for example: Adele Harmer, Abby Stoddard, and Kathleen Ryou, *Aid Worker Security Report 2014: Unsafe Passage – Road Attacks and their Impact on Humanitarian Operations*, Humanitarian Outcomes, August 2014, https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org; Upsala Datasets at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/; and, Suhrke, Wimpelmann, and Dawes, *Peace Processes and Statebuilding: Economic and Institutional Provisions of Peace Agreements*, Figure 1.

10 United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, UN document A/55/305-S/2000/809 (2000), 9.

11 Center on International Cooperation, *Annual Review of Political Missions 2011*, 2011, http://www.cic.nyu.edu/politicalmissions/index.html. For an overview of political challenges in SPMs, see the thematic chapters.

12 See, for example, United Nations, Security Council Presidential Statement, "Maintenance of international peace and security," S/PRST/2010/18, 23 September 2010.

13 Center on International Cooperation and International Peace Institute, *What needs to change in UN Peace Operations: An expert briefing book prepared for the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, November 2014, http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/wp-content/

uploads/2014/11/Briefing-Book-PK-Final.pdf.

14 This is also not counting any of the 11 envoys and special adviser SPMs, or 13 sanctions, monitoring teams, groups, and panel SPMs. For statistics see: United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council*, A/69/363, 17 October 2014.

15 The Brahimi report then articulated a broader vision of change for multidimensional operations, but further vision and change were almost entirely contained in and limited to PKOs, such as DPKO's *Peace Operations 2010* submitted to member states in 2005, *New Horizons* in 2009, and *Global Field Support Strategy* in 2010.

16 Advocates include the well organized and collegiate community of military attachés supporting the Committee of 34 and the Security Council's committee on and regular thematic debates about peacekeeping; senior officer veterans, and members of parliament in troop-contributing capitals, and Western government and INGO think tanks whose principle focus remains PKOs.

17 This makes PAOs the fourth largest of 33 occupational groups across all missions. Data provided to the authors by Center on International Cooperation, based on CIC's *Review of Global Peace Operations (2014-2015)*, forthcoming.

18 Independent report of the United Nations Senior Advisory Group, *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict*, A/65/747-S/2011/85 (2011), 22 February 2011, 22.

19 United Nations, *Monitoring Peace Consolidation: United Nations Practitioners' Guide to Benchmarking*, 6 December 2010, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso.

20 See: United Nations General Assembly resolution, "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections," A/RES/47/138, 18 December 1992; and, United Nations General Assembly resolution, "Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes," A/RES/45/151, 18 December 1990.

21 See seven case studies and summary report: Adrian Morrice, Francisco Cobos Flores, Mary O'Shea, *Lessons Learned: Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission Settings* (New York: DPKO, DPA, and UNDP, 2013), http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/DZ/lessons-learned-integrated-electoral-assistance-in/view

22 United Nations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, UN document A/55/305-S/2000/809 (2000).

4. The UN in the Congo:

Lessons Over a Half-Century

Tatiana Carayannis

The United Nations came of age in the Congo. Barely an adolescent, the United Nations Security Council was first introduced to the Congo in July 1960, when UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter for the first time in the organization's history and the Security Council responded by authorizing the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC). That was the UN's largest and most expensive peace operation until the UN Security Council authorized its second peace operation there, MONUC (UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), nearly four decades later. It thus would not be an exaggeration to say that Congo has been the de facto laboratory for the UN Security Council's response to complex conflicts, especially since the end of the Cold War.

In the end, ONUC achieved its intended objectives of ending the Katanga secession and the Congolese civil war, removing foreign armed elements from the country, and preserving the territorial integrity of the Congolese state. But it did so at enormous cost for the UN and for the Congo, both of which lost beloved leaders. The Congo experience also helped this young organization mature. First, it stimulated the development of the UN's peacekeeping architecture. Second, it raised the visibility and significance of the role of the UN secretary-general and demonstrated that secretaries-general could be more *general* than the *secretary* than they had been until that point.[1] And finally, the UN, through its experience in the Congo in the 1960s, learned that it would be challenged, and challenged by force. How to respond to that challenge has been a struggle throughout the UN's lifetime, in Congo and elsewhere.

The story of the UN experience in Congo over the last five decades is long and complex and has been told in great detail elsewhere. It thus would be impossible to cover all of it in this short paper. This analysis draws largely on some of my earlier publications, as well as my forthcoming book, a mission history of ONUC.[2] It concludes with a few broad lessons on Delivering as One from the UN's experience in the Congo.

The Three Congo Wars

Over the last two decades, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has witnessed an extraordinary number of attempts by regional and international actors to resolve the largest war that Africa has seen since independence. The conflict, however, persists, at an enormous cost. The most that these attempts have achieved are several partially respected cease-fire agreements. They have failed to end the violence now focused on eastern DRC or to reestablish central government authority throughout the country.

The recent conflict in the Congo is best understood as three interlocking wars: While the Congo wars trace their roots to the Rwanda genocide of 1994, the first war began in September 1996 as an invasion by a coalition of neighboring states of what was then Zaire, and resulted in

Map No. 4007 Rev. 10   UNITED NATIONS
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replacing President Mobutu Sese Seko with Laurent Kabila in May 1997. The second broke out in August 1998 when a similar configuration of neighboring states, some of whom had been Kabila's patrons in the first war, broke with him and attempted a similar ouster, but without their earlier success. It ended with the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999 by the Kabila government and the two rebel groups fighting it (the Mouvement de Libération du Congo [MLC] and the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie [RCD]), the result of a stalemate and considerable external pressure.

In both the first and second wars, neighboring states established local proxy movements in an attempt to put a local stamp on their activities. However, the bulk of Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire in the first war were foreign (mostly Rwandan); while in the second war this was less so. During the second war, the MLC rebel group fighting Kabila consisted largely of Congolese trained by Ugandan officers, while the Rwandan-backed rebel group, the RCD, was largely integrated with Rwandan troops and commanders.

When the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed, three rival Congolese rebel groups—the MLC and the RCD (at the time split between two factions, RCD-Goma and RCD-K/ML)—controlled two-thirds of the DRC's territory.[3] Laurent Kabila's government in Kinshasa, which had itself taken power by force two years earlier, controlled the remaining third. Since the signing of the Lusaka agreement, there was relatively little violence or combat along the

ceasefire lines between Kinshasa-controlled and rebel-controlled regions.

The withdrawal of most foreign troops shortly following agreements brokered in Pretoria, created a power vacuum in rebel-held territories, and a third "war" began behind UN-monitored ceasefire lines in northeastern Congo. This war was fought between ever smaller groups—foreign and domestic—that have since become significant actors in the illicit activities in that region. In June 2003, following a national dialogue and a series of regional agreements, the DRC swore in a Government of National Unity consisting of leaders representing almost every local actor in the wars. This transition culminated in a UN-supported national election in 2006 that narrowly elected Joseph Kabila to the presidency after two hotly contested rounds of voting.

The current context builds upon a nearly 20 contiguous-year history of United Nations peacekeeping in the DRC, from the UN Security Council's authorization of MONUC in 1999, to the transition to MONUSCO (UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) in 2010. Succeeding mandates have aimed to tackle a series of tasks, from implementing ceasefire agreements, assisting political transitions, stabilizing the east through joint operations against armed groups, and helping to build credible institutions. Despite MONUSCO's creation in 2010 to focus more on stabilization, the resulting crisis of legitimacy after the DRC's botched second post-transition elections in 2011 prompted a relapse in violence. After relying on former Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP, a 2006–2009 rebellion led by Laurent Nkunda) elements in North Kivu for coercion and intimidation during that electoral process, Kinshasa attempted to dismantle their illicit economic networks after the vote. This, combined with a rise in Rwandan-DRC tensions, led to the mutiny of many former CNDP and the creation of yet another foreign-backed armed actor, the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) in May 2012—its name in reference to the 23 March 2009 peace deal, which they claimed was never fully implemented.

Although the M23 was unable to establish a Congolese social base for support, it was able to mobilize a web of alliances among smaller armed groups in the region, and received logistical, financial, and recruitment support from Rwanda and to a lesser extent Uganda. This was documented by the UN Group of Experts in its 2012 reports and corroborated by many international sources.[4] This led to US and UK aid freezes to Rwanda and a series of sanctions against M23 leaders. The M23's dramatic takeover of the strategic city of Goma on 20 November 2012 displaced around 140,000 Congolese. It symbolized to many the perennial weakness of Kinshasa and the UN's failures.[5] This embarrassment for the Congolese government and MONUSCO led to calls for the international community to reassess its approach and re-engage with the politics of the region.

Combining Politics and Force: The PSCF and the FIB

This rude awakening led to a refocusing of international donors' engagement with the DRC and the Great Lakes region, heeding the calls of analysts and advocates for renewed political engagement with the region and the need for a comprehensive political process. This led to the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF), and the creation of the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG) for the Great Lakes Region—

headed first by former president Mary Robinson and now by Ambassador Said Djinnit.

After the fall of Goma, there was also recognition in many capitals that a new assertive approach was needed to target the numerous armed groups in the east of the country. The UN system initiated a strategic review of its operations to reconsider the so-called root causes of the conflict and assess some of the proposals emerging from the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and Southern African Development Community (SADC)—most notably the July 2012 proposition to create "a neutral International Force to eradicate M23, FDLR and all other negative forces in Eastern DRC."[6] After much debate on the composition and configuration of this force, the renamed Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was created within the MONUSCO to carry out targeted offensive operations "either unilaterally or jointly with the FARDC" (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo), neutralize armed groups, and provide the space for stabilization activities.[7]

Initially, this dual approach provoked hope that finally there was a structure to hold all parties to account and extract commitments from the region of noninterference and stability, and from the DRC, a commitment to move forward on the various reform initiatives that were stalling its political development. But there was also apprehension that while the international community finally had its credible threat to go after armed groups, the FIB raised decades-old questions about the UN and the use of force. Not surprisingly, the implementation of this two-pronged strategy has had mixed results. Today, while one can point to the dissolution of the M23 as a partial success story,[8] other threats are now reasserting themselves, including a series of attacks in and around Beni since mid-October 2014; furthermore, a polarizing electoral process and stalled demobilization initiatives now threaten Congo's fragile gains. Moreover, there has been little progress on implementing the regional or national commitments made under the PSCF, and the relationship between MONUSCO and the Congolese government has become increasingly tense. As 2015 begins, President Kabila has once again requested a reduction of UN peacekeepers and in MONUSCO's political profile.

Phases of the UN in the Congo

The current UN peacekeeping and now stabilization mission in the DRC, despite being the largest and most expensive mission fielded to date, was initially strongly resisted by the Security Council. It took significant pressure from the region to convince the Security Council that external intervention was necessary. The regional powerbrokers who mediated the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement recognized the limitations of a divided region in undertaking the implementation of the agreement.

MONUC's Chapter VII mandate was initially a "Chapter VI and a half" mandate—its enforcement capability was limited to the protection of its own personnel, that of humanitarian relief workers, and some Congolese civilians. It was not authorized to disarm militias by force but rather through voluntary compliance. This first phase consisted of the initial UN deployment of a small observer mission in 1999 to support the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. Phase two coincided with the political transition in the Congo begun in 2003. By 2004, MONUC had grown into a substantial integrated mission with a mandate to support the Government of National Unity and the transition, and a complex and expensive

national electoral process held in 2006.

The mission's third phase began in 2009 when, in keeping with its reinforced mandate, MONUC entered a more robust peacekeeping phase, focusing largely on the unfinished business of the stabilization of eastern Congo. A series of joint military operations with the Congolese national armed forces against armed groups in the east yielded mixed results and came under heavy criticism for its failure to protect civilians. Most significantly, these joint military operations, conducted with a national army known for human rights abuses, exposed the operational tensions in the mission's multiple mandates called for in resolution 1856.

In 2010, four years after Congo's landmark post-conflict national election in 2006, the UN Mission in the Congo entered its fourth, and what some had expected, final phase as the renamed MONUSCO. On 28 May 2010, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1925, substantially reconfiguring the UN mission in the Congo and reframing the force as a stabilization mission. Resolution 1925 authorized the withdrawal of up to 2,000 troops from the country, further concentrating the mission's attention on civilian protection and military operations in the east, and established a reserve force that can react, in principle, to incidents throughout the country. By 2013, nearly 15 years since it was first deployed, the UN mission in the Congo broke new ground and became an offensive combat mission with the integration of a regional intervention brigade.

The UN Security Council followed the signing of the PSCF with the renewal of MONUSCO's mandate on 28 March 2013 (S/RES/2098), but made some considerable changes to complement the framework. On the military front, the mandate incorporated the regional proposal for a more offensive force—the Force Intervention Brigade—under its command, part of an authorized troop ceiling of 19,815. While the Security Council emphasized that the FIB was authorized "on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent or any prejudice to the agreed principles of peacekeeping," and in order to inspire the creation of a Congolese "Rapid Reaction Force" with similar objectives, it did provoke a great deal of debate. Many questioned if this model would be applied to other cases, and how MONUSCO would handle being a "party to the conflict" and overcome the expected command and control issues.[9]

Furthermore, resolution 2098 mandated the mission to be much more politically engaged and assertive through the good offices of the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG). In particular, the SRSG was called to use his good offices to encourage an inclusive political dialogue, accelerate security sector reform, and support the prompt establishment of civilian structures to oversee the mining sector, while the rest of MONUSCO's civilian structures were given advisory authority with regard to human rights; police reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and other areas.[10] Finally, the mandate called for a clear roadmap to transfer many of the mission's responsibilities to the UN country team and relocate many of its military and civilian assets to the east, thereby reducing its presence in Kinshasa and other areas not affected by conflict.[11] These extensive tasks were handed to a new leadership team: Martin Kobler of Germany became MONUSCO's new head of mission and SRSG in June 2013, and Brazilian Lt. General Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz became MONUSCO's new force commander in May 2013. Resolution 2098 also further defined the SESG's role, including a reference "to lead a comprehensive political process that includes all relevant stakeholders to address the underlying root causes of the conflict."[12]

Conclusion

One can identify three broad legacies of the UN that still haunt the wars in the Congo today, as well as efforts to resolve them: the legacy of suspicion of the UN in the region as an instrument of imperialism and domination; the legacy of the affirmation of Congolese unity and territorial integrity; and the legacy of robust peacekeeping and peace enforcement, which had and continues to have mixed results in the Congo.[13] There are also many lessons. The first set of lessons relates to the challenges of so-called integrated missions and political analysis, a second relates to the trend of mandating robust peacekeeping, and a third set of lessons relates to the changing nature of organized violence.

The Challenge of Integrated Missions

The challenges of mission integration are well known and are well-trodden territory.[14] Integrated missions are often filled with mistrust and turf wars, and silos of information sharing; there are conflicting approaches and ontologies, bureaucratic inertia, systemic problems like the absence of incentive structures to deliver as one, and individual agendas, predilections, and idiosyncrasies.

> Integrated missions, like many bureaucracies, are set up to incentivize competition more than cooperation.

Although the integrated mission concept did not emerge on the UN reform agenda until 1997, even ONUC in 1960, which was de facto an integrated mission with a huge military component and a less well known but significant civilian capacity strengthening component, had its share of issues. For starters, Ralph Bunche, UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld's representative to the Congo, and General Van Horn, the force commander, immediately fought over who was really leading the mission. Little has changed. Integrated missions, like many bureaucracies, are set up to incentivize competition more than cooperation.

That said, one can live with these internal tensions provided that there is a controlling analytic framework that guides the mission's strategic objectives. So the objective should not be to integrate operations or only share resources (although that is difficult), or even to spend time drafting a coherent strategy, but rather ensure that intellectual capacities cut across political, security, humanitarian, and development mandates. There is a need for more comprehensive political analysis in peace operations, and the analysis itself needs to be integrated and cross-cutting and shared across the UN and with other stakeholders. Integrated analysis does not mean that everyone agrees or that the analysis is boiled down to its lowest common denominator. But someone needs to set the political agenda, and this begins with the analysis that sets the priorities, the compass. Mission concepts and resolutions are often so broad that the mission still needs to set the priorities and operationalize them. If everyone knows which direction the ship should be pointing at, there is no need to waste time on building top down coherence.

This highlights the need for knowledge acquisition of local contexts and a deeper understanding of the causes, dynamics, histories, and actors of a conflict. Some of this contextual analysis can be gotten from external sources[15] but the need for a well-staffed, strong political affairs division (PAD) in missions for guidance, coherence, and information exchange cannot be overstated.

Mission PADs need to have the capacity to serve as the clearinghouse of information in order to help everyone in the mission better understand political developments, trend analyses, and the consequences of different courses of action so that adjustments can be made on the ground in real time. In Congo there has been a history of the neglect of PAD, with strategic priorities being set in other departments or by the SRSG with little internal consultation. This poses a challenge across the mission, particularly for the humanitarian side of the house, which needs to anticipate and plan humanitarian response. Others, such as the UN Country Team, also have analytical needs that sometimes blindside the mission as happened in 2010 when the UN was surprised during a strategic review mission by the DRC's request for the mission's drawdown. The danger of a weak PAD is an over-reliance on the Joint Mission Analysis Centre which is limited to military (and thus only partial) intelligence. Even an SRSG with the best political instincts does the mission a disservice by not building capacity for cross-cutting political analysis. In the Congo, this has often led to an opera of dysfunction. The key takeaway here is that the UN cannot deliver as one in conflict zones without a coherent, mission-wide political strategy and without the capacity to absorb, produce, and adjust to solid, evidence-based contextual analysis.

The Challenge of "Christmas Tree" Mandates and Robust Peacekeeping

While the council passed a total of 46 resolutions on the DRC in the post–Cold War era (1989–2013), over 90 percent of them (42) were passed since the start of the third war and the authorization of the UN peace operation in the DRC (first MONUC then MONUSCO) in 1999. The first Congo war saw only two council resolutions when the war broke out in 1996 and one in February 1997, just weeks before the anti-Mobutu alliance took the capital. Surprisingly, the council was mostly silent during the second war, which broke out on 2 August 1998, passing one resolution only in April 1999. Once the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed in the summer of 1999, council resolution 1258 in August 1999 authorized the deployment of military observers to the Congo, the precursor to MONUC.

The Security Council in the Great Lakes region in the last two decades has been largely reactive and has often found itself having to play catch-up. By the time resolutions are adopted, the context on the ground has shifted. The intense engagement during the 2003–2006 transition was followed by a gradual disengagement, in particular after the 2006 elections, only to find itself confronted again by crisis after the botched 2011 elections. This ad-hocery has been reflected in council mandates and particularly evident in the council's growing trend toward authorizing robust peacekeeping mandates while calling for the protection of civilians. It has also exposed the operational tensions in the mission's multiple and sometimes competing mandates.

In 2008, following some targeted and reprisal killings by the CNDP of an estimated 150 villagers in the village of Kiwanja, council resolution 1856 mandated MONUC to attach the highest priority to the protection of civilians and tasked the mission with coordinating operations with the Congolese army. The resulting joint MONUC-FARDC military operations yielded mixed results, with some operations called "catastrophic" for civilians by international human rights observers.[16] In contrast to council intent, robust military action undermined civilian protection and led to growing pressure to either condition support to the FARDC in joint operations or to cease operations altogether. A study conducted a year later by the

Table 4.1: UN Security Council Resolutions on Congo/DRC since 1960

Year/Period	Number of Resolutions
1960-1989	10
1989-2015	49
• First Congo War (1996–1997)	2
• Second Congo War (1998–1999)	2
• Third Congo War/post-Lusaka violence in eastern Congo (1999–2015)	45

Stimson Center for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in 2009 revealed several gaps in capacity, knowledge, and training about the protection of civilians.[17] While the council was authorizing strong civilian protection mandates, there was little operational guidance for it, and as a result, little consensus of what was meant by civilian protection in the context of peacekeeping. This ad-hocery in New York translated to ad-hocery on the ground, as MONUC sought to improvise on the run—in some cases (for example, the Joint Protection Teams) more successfully than in others.

The UN mission in the Congo not only broke new ground with the Force Intervention Brigade, it also was the first UN peace operation to deploy drones (or AMVs—aerial manned vehicles), in 2013. Once the FIB became operational, its air assets, which included attack helicopters and surveillance drones, and its mobile infantry provided the FARDC with much greater support capacity and offered a credible threat to the M23. The Congolese army also benefitted from a series of reforms after the embarrassment of Goma. It streamlined its command chains by appointing new commanders and transferred about 100 officers to Kinshasa to break-up local racketeering networks in the east and remove those suspected of embezzlement. This combination was crucial during the planning and execution of the three-front offensive,[18] which began on 25 October and which was able to quickly dislodge the M23 from Kibumba, Rumangabo, and Rutshuru. These successful operations led the M23 to renounce its rebellion on 5 November 2013.

But an equally determining dynamic was a successful diplomatic campaign to end Kigali's support for the M23. This was led by the United States, exhibited by strategic aid cuts in July 2013, and was also supported by the Team of Special Envoys—the E-Team's coordinated messages and visits with President Kagame. Eventually, their collective efforts convinced Rwanda not to answer the M23's final call for military reinforcements, leaving them no other option but to abandon the fight. After another month of disagreements about how it would all end, "Joint Declarations" were issued on 12 December 2013 in Nairobi, which included guidelines on amnesty, demobilization, transitional security arrangements, and even commitments to set up and participate in a national reconciliation commission. While many observers were simply satisfied with the end of the Kampala process, quite a great deal of follow-up is still required as many of the M23 leaders have sought refuge in Rwanda and Uganda. Months later, the DRC government was finally allowed to make two technical visits to the M23 holding camps in May

and July 2014; but delays to the repatriation process continue with DRC's neighbors claiming conflicting judicial obligations for extradition.[19]

One of the lessons on the use of force is that even the most robust peacekeeping operations are essentially political missions. The use of force without political engagement will not get very far. The successful dismantling of the M23, as currently with the FDLR and other armed groups in eastern DRC, required a lot of political heavy lifting even with a credible force. The PSCF, in its conceptualization, accurately recognized the need to bring together Congolese actors and the region under a comprehensive political process that had been missing since 2006. That comprehensive political process, coupled with a robust instrument of force (the FIB), was a welcomed and innovative approach in that it sought to connect various registers of conflict. However, the implementation of the PSCF process has been slow and difficult, partly due to the purposeful neglect of Kinshasa that led to the delayed establishment of a toothless National Oversight Mechanism for the framework's six national engagements. This was hastily set up just days before the initial visit of the UN secretary-general and his Special Envoy Mary Robinson in May 2013. The structure was set up to report to the presidency, but was also left in the hands of someone with little initiative or authority to act. In addition, key national ministries have been uncooperative as they see the extra-institutional mechanism as a nuisance at best and a competitor at worst. MONUSCO has thus far been unwilling to engage with what most see as an overly technical approach to a political process driven by the special envoy, and the guarantor of the process.

So if one lesson is that force must be an instrument of a broader political process, another lesson is the need to integrate the technical with the political. Elections are a good example. They provide unique opportunities to build democratic institutions, or at least the building blocks for democratic space, as MONUC and its partners helped Kinshasa do in the run-up to the landmark 2006 election. Transitional institutions included a Truth Commission, an authority for the protection of the media, and a national electoral commission. Of those, only the electoral commission actually got off the ground. Much of the meaningful institution-building since then can be credited to national actors like the DRC parliament or enterprising government ministries. A more recent example is the National Oversight Mechanism for the PSCF's six national engagements that Kinshasa agreed to and which represent the bulk of the country's political and institutional reforms. Many observers believe that process was set up to fail and drown under an overly technical approach. To its credit, it did produce a thorough and credible benchmarking process. Over five months, the body, with the help of the UNCT, reached all eleven provinces, engaged with civil society actors and local leaders, and created a matrix designed to track political will at every level of government engagement in reforms. It also targeted the intelligence agencies and designated an entire chapter on how to make the security services more accountable through annual reports and oversight. The document in total lists 56 benchmarks and 347 indicators, and despite its immense scope, could be a useful tool and point of reference for those trying to drive the reform agenda. But a matrix does not a political process make.

> Even the most robust peacekeeping operations are essentially political missions.

The trend toward the greater use of force in UN peace operations raises the need to distinguish between the use of force for enforcement (for example, counterinsurgency), and the use of force for protection, as in policing. The needs are different for each, and each raises useful lessons in the use of force. One lesson is that the credible use of force, and sometimes the use of force, as noted above, is necessary. In Congo in the 1960s, force eventually proved necessary to end the Katanga secession. A second lesson, is that it is difficult for the UN to be both peacemaker and peace enforcer within the same context. In 2014, the UN has been mandated both with brokering and guaranteeing a political process among national and regional actors, on the one hand, among forcibly dismantling armed groups that supported by these actors, on the other hand. This has challenged the ability of the mission to be perceived as an honest broker. Related to this is the overemphasis on military activities in eastern DRC. This strategy of "stabilization in the east and peacebuilding in the west" has, in reality, meant that whatever attention and resources international donors have for Congo are devoted to supporting military operations in the east, which leaves a very weak UN development system in the rest of the country for the mission to "hand over" development and humanitarian responsibilities.

Yet a third lesson from Congo is that consent still matters, which makes the implementation of political mandates all that more difficult. The Security Council has, as has MONUC/MONUSCO, consistently faced the dilemma between supporting key actors in the region and condemning human rights violations and has often remained silent in the faces of exactions against civilians—both to protect regional allies (e.g., the United States and Rwanda) but also to avoid alienating the Kinshasa authorities who have repeatedly over the years threatened the expulsion of the UN mission. Some SRSGs have handled this tension better than others, although the fear of being declared persona non grata along with a tendency among SRSGs with ambassadorial backgrounds to see themselves as ambassadors to Kinshasa has tended to tip the balance more toward self-censorship. There are lessons to be learned from both—timid responses in the face of repressive tactics because of sovereignty muscle-flexing can still lead to invitations to draw down prematurely as was learned by the UN in 2010. But being outspoken without being driven by a political strategy can yield the same result as MONUSCO learned in December 2014—plus get the representative of the UN high commissioner for human rights expelled.

A fourth lesson on the use of force from the Congo wars is that, while the post–Cold War trend in the council has been increased reliance on regional actors to intervene in their own regions, "backyard operations" have their limits. When an entire region is deeply divided by war, it cannot effectively enforce the peace, even if it has been successful in reaching a negotiated settlement. In other words, combatants cannot enforce the peace against themselves. They can participate in peacemaking, and ultimately must do so, but if there is to be peace enforcement, others will have to do it. Those others must have a council mandate.

The UN peacekeeping and now stabilization mission in the DRC, despite being the largest and most expensive mission fielded to date, was initially strongly resisted by the Security Council. It took the region to convince the Security Council that external intervention was necessary. The regional powerbrokers who mediated the Lusaka ceasefire agreement recognized the limitations of a divided region in undertaking the implementation of the agreement. During pre-Lusaka discussions about an Organization of African Unity (OAU)-led, inter-African peacekeeping force for the Congo, OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim acknowledged

publicly that his organization lacked the capacity to successfully undertake such an operation.[20] In addition to constraints in capacity, members of the OAU supported widely divergent policies in the Congo wars—some supported Kinshasa, some the rebels, and some opted for neutrality. It was virtually impossible to obtain agreement on a common policy, leaving aside the absence of capacity and means. For the Southern African Development Community there were similar concerns about resources and capacity. South Africa, the region's dominant economy, made it clear that it had no intention of carrying the financial burden of a regional peacekeeping force. "I think there is a growing consensus that any DRC mission should not be just a SADC affair. We want other western countries to join in. We know if it is just SADC then South Africa will be left to underwrite the whole deployment. We do not want the DRC buck to stop here."[21]

Although largely absent as an institutional force from the first war, SADC responded in three significant ways to the later wars in the Congo: through mediation, military intervention, and advocacy with the UN Security Council. Many of the efforts to mediate a peaceful settlement during the second Congo war were SADC-driven and much of the mediation in both wars was undertaken by leaders in the SADC region. President Mandela was especially instrumental in the Mobutu-Kabila negotiations in 1996–1997, and President Chiluba led regional efforts to pressure the parties into signing a ceasefire agreement. While some SADC powerbrokers were, from the beginning, deeply committed to achieving a ceasefire, clearly others were motivated by the belief that military victory was unlikely or would be too expensive.

Despite the limits of regional actors given deep regional divisions, however, regional actors can (and did) initiate and successfully negotiate agreements to end conflicts in which large and important portions of that region were themselves participants in the conflict. That said, a final lesson from the Congo also suggests that the more regionally based the conflict is in terms of state actors involved in it, the more difficult the task of mediation becomes without external partners—partly due to capacity constraints but mostly to the need for external guarantors and credible, punitive threats for noncooperation. In the Great Lakes, the problem has not been negotiating agreements but in ensuring their implementation once they have been signed.

The Challenge of the Changing Nature of Conflict

Finally, if we can draw one overarching conclusion from UN engagement in the Congo, it is the growing disconnect between the international conflict response toolkit and the complexity of violence on the ground—a disconnect that is not limited to the Great Lakes as trends in the changing nature of organized violence globally attests. There is an overwhelming yet under-addressed need to manage conflict complexity, including transnational dynamics and the proliferation of non-state actors in conflict. Many contemporary conflicts defy traditional distinctions between "intrastate" and "interstate" armed conflicts. While the battlefield may be local, violence transcends territorial boundaries. These conflicts are at the same time inter-personal, local, national, regional, and international in nature, and link both state and non-state actors, sometimes with a global reach.[22] There is rarely a neat dividing line between the external and internal dimensions of contemporary threats yet our responses remain state-centric and flat-footed. Thus there is a growing need for the UN system to develop instruments like the UN Group of Experts that, in principle, have the dexterity and flexibility that peace operations do not have. These can cross borders to follow networks of violence where peace

operations cannot. Yet, they are perennially underfunded and are often orphaned within the system because they tell inconvenient truths.

The local in Congo, as elsewhere, is never truly local. Local armed groups are tied to national and even to regional elites in interesting and complicated ways. Money and arms flow in from outside the region and back out in border-crossings that are not limited to mission settings. Often, public authority in post-conflict and fragile settings is not constituted by formal or traditional systems and actors, but by formal *and* traditional ones, and these condition local communities' access to security and justice. Increasingly, states, armed groups, financial flows, criminal syndicates, ideas, and ideologies all cross borders. Our responses must be able to follow.

Notes

1   See Simon Chesterman, ed., *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

2   Much of this background is drawn from Tatiana Carayannis and Aaron Pangburn, "DRC" in the *2014 Annual Review of Peace Operations* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2015); Tatiana Carayannis, "The Democratic Republic of Congo, 1996-2012" in *Responding to Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, 2nd ed., ed. Jane Boulden (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 177–202; and from Tatiana Carayannis, "Challenges of Peacebuilding in the Congo," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, June 2009. Tatiana Carayannis, "The Complex Wars of the Congo: Towards a New Analytic Approach," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 38, no. 2-3 (2003): 232-255. [Reprinted in Rose Kadende-Kaiser and Paul J. Kaiser, *Phases of Conflict in Africa* (Willowdale, ON: de Sitter Publications, 2005).]

3   The RCD quickly split into two movements as a result of internal disagreements: the RCD-ML backed, by Uganda, and the RCD-Goma, backed by Rwanda. The MLC, another anti-Kabila armed group in the second war, was established with Ugandan support in northern Equateur Province some months after the founding of the RCD. The MLC was a way for Uganda to hedge its bets against the faltering RCD-ML, which they backed.

4   The group issued an interim report on 21 June with an Addendum on 27 June, which more directly focused on Rwanda's involvement. The final report, which was released on 15 November 2012, also includes the various responses and rebuttals to the interim report by the regional governments.

5   Interview with Barbara Shenstone—OCHA, "DRC: Humanitarian Barbara Shenstone on the cost of the Goma crisis," IRIN, 30 November 2012.

6   "Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) on the Security Situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," Addis Ababa, 12 July 2012, http://www.genprev.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Addis-Declaration-120715.pdf.

7   UN Security Council, resolution 2098 (2013), para. 9 and 12b.

8   Partial both because the victory was not entirely due to the brigade but also to the repositioning of FARDC elements in the east and concerted international pressure on Rwanda to end its support to the

M23. Partial also because there are reports that some elements of the M23 are rearming.

9   These concerns were most effectively raised by Ret. Major General Patrick Cammaert's reflections in his International Peace Institute Issue Brief, "The Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo," July 2013.

10 UN Security Council resolution 2098 (2013), 28 March 2013, para. 14 and 15.

11 Ibid., para 19: "and reduce, to the fullest extent possible for the implementation of its mandate, its presence in areas not affected by conflict in particular Kinshasa and in western DRC."

12 UN Security Council, resolution 2098, 28 March 2013, para. 4.

13 Tatiana Carayannis, *Pioneers of Peacekeeping: ONUC, 1960-1964* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Press, forthcoming).

14 See, for example, the special issue "Integrated Mission Revisited: Policy and Practitioner Perspectives," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (2008), ed. Kathleen M. Jennings and Anja T. Kaspersen.

15 The Brahimi report of 2000 recognized this need, and as a result, the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum was established at the Social Science Research Council in New York to provide high level UN decision makers quick and unfettered access to scholars and expert practitioners on and from regions in which the UN is engaged. See http://www.ssrc.org/programs/cppf/. However, this can only supplement, not replace, a mission's solid information network in-country.

16 Philip Alston, special rapporteur for human rights, over MONUC's Kimia II operations that resulted in an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced persons in the Kivus and thousands killed. "UN Rights Official Denounces Drive Against Rebels in Congo," *Washington Post*, 16 October 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/15/AR2009101503635.html.

17 Victoria K. Holt and Glyn Taylor with Max Kelly, *Protecting Civilians in the Context of Peacekeeping*, Stimson Center, 17 November 2009, http://www.stimson.org/books-reports/protecting-civilians-in-the-context-of-un-peacekeeping-operations/.

18 For greater detail on the operations, please see Darren Oliver's description on African Defense Review (30 October 2013), http://www.africandefence.net/analysis-how-m23-was-rolled-back/.

19 While much of the speculation for the delays claims Uganda and Rwanda are trying to use the M23 focus as leverage for other interests, the judicial argument is based upon DRC's death penalty policy. Although it has been in moratorium since 2003, it is thought that Rwanda and Uganda have requested further assurances before processing the extradition of any member of the M23.

20 International Crisis Group, *Africa's Seven-Nation War*, 8.

21 A South African defense official, quoted in United Nations, "Military Apprehensive ahead of DRC Peacekeeping," IRIN, 27 August 1999.

22 Carayannis, "Complex Wars of the Congo"; see also, Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

5. A UN Cautionary Tale:

Deep Lessons from Afghanistan

Antonio Donini

The international response to the Afghan crisis spans a 30-year period that saw the end of the Cold War, the ensuing disorder and reshuffling of political, military, and economic agendas in Central and South Asia, and the tentative emergence—and now the likely decline—of a hegemonic order built around globalization and securitization. Thirty years of failed interventions, civil wars, and aborted nation-building attempts have resulted in unprecedented levels of human suffering and volatility in Afghanistan and the region. The high hopes of peace and stability raised by the US-led intervention after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States have given way to widespread despondency, disillusionment, and the evaporation of the mirage of *Pax Americana*.

United Nations peace and humanitarian initiatives have been constants in Afghanistan's troubled recent history. They have waxed and waned in line with the changing nature of the conflict and the wider developments in the international community's approaches to political upheaval and crisis. Setting a coherent course by the UN in Afghanistan has never been easy. Attempts at developing coherent or "whole of UN" strategies in Afghanistan have had short-term and limited effects. As such, Afghanistan constitutes a laboratory that straddles the Cold War and post–Cold War eras from which much can be learned about UN political, humanitarian, and human rights agendas and their intersections.

This short paper looks at two key moments when coherence was central to the UN agenda and how they fared: the Taliban period and the post-9/11 bursting of Afghanistan on the international scene. The manner in which the UN responded to the humanitarian assistance and protection needs, as well as the fluctuations of the response over time, was heavily influenced by political agendas that were sometimes at odds with each other. From the start, as in most complex emergencies, the space for humanitarian action was determined by politics. This intrusion of the political has ranged from the relatively benign to the overt manipulation of humanitarian action for partisan purposes. This intrusion has come from external political and military actors, successive Afghan governments and warlords, the media, and aid agencies themselves. In fact, it is safe to say that all parties to the conflict and all the players involved—including the UN itself—have used the humanitarian enterprise as a tool to achieve non-humanitarian objectives.

There are two important lessons that are quite obvious and commonsensical but all too often disregarded. "That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked in *Alice in Wonderland*, "because they lessen from day to day." The first is that there is a negative correlation between direct superpower involvement and the ability of humanitarian actors to engage with crises in a relatively principled manner. In Afghanistan, the "highs" in politics (Cold War and post-9/11 interventions) corresponded to "lows" in principles. Conversely, superpower inattention to the Afghan crisis, as in the 1992–1998 period of factional fighting,

allowed more space—but much less financial support—for principled approaches and for significant innovations in how the United Nations and other relief actors could do business in a crisis country. The corollary to this law is that when great power interest is high, the political players in donor and UN bureaucracies take over policy and decision making, including on humanitarian and human rights issues, thereby undermining principles and displacing humanitarian actors who often have a better understanding of realities on the ground.

The second lesson is that the relationship between the UN political, human rights, humanitarian, and development wings is often fraught with risks and misunderstandings: despite sometimes good intentions, the subordination of UN humanitarian and human rights activities to UN political objectives rarely works. Subordination to the "higher" imperatives of Realpolitik may allow for some short-term political gains but, over time, it proves counterproductive. In Afghanistan, blow-back from the politics and the manipulations of the 1980s continues to this day.

Five Phases

It is useful, for analytical purposes, to separate the political and humanitarian response to the Afghan crisis into five distinct phases. The first is from the Soviet invasion to the fall of President Mohammad Najibullah (1979–1992)—or the Cold War period and its immediate aftermath. This was the happy-go-lucky era of nongovernmental organization (NGO) cross-

border solidarity support to the Mujahideen during which UN humanitarian agencies operated, by necessity, only in neighboring countries while simultaneous UN attempts to broker peace followed a formulaic, and ultimately unsuccessful, Cold War script.

The second is the civil war and the triumph of warlordism (1992–1996). The volatility of the situation in Afghanistan, which included the devastation and complete breakdown of institutions, hampered the provision of assistance and provoked great soul searching in the assistance community as well as growing disillusionment in a UN peace process that was increasingly reduced to "talks about talks."

The third is the Taliban regime period (1996–mid-November 2001). The rise of the Taliban triggered a resurgence of interest in humanitarian and human rights concerns and was coupled with a robust attempt by the UN to promote coherence and coordination among the assistance, human rights, and political dimensions of the UN's response. The face of the UN was humanitarian, as no development or capacity building was allowed by major donors while the political UN played a low key monitoring role and pursued more "talks about talks."

The fourth consists of the post-9/11 phases from "nation-building lite"[1] to "declare victory and leave." The heavy engagement of the international community in Afghanistan since 2001 has, again, been characterized by politics trumping principles in a vain quest for a durable peace. This period comprises an ascending phase, where post-conflict rhetoric ruled and the need for humanitarian action was dismissed, and a descending phase, resembling in many ways the end of the Soviet occupation. The key characteristic of this phase is the alignment of the political UN on the international liberal peace and global-war-on-terror agendas and a resultant loss of equidistance, and credibility, of the overall UN endeavor.

The current post-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) withdrawal interregnum— with all its Gramscian morbid symptoms that prevent the "new" from being born[2]—is difficult to read. Analysts seem to hesitate between "back to the future" and "back to basics" scenarios— both implying a very limited UN political role, some human rights monitoring, support to governance, and a potentially escalating humanitarian caseload as conflict and structural underdevelopment issues continue to take a heavy toll.

Each of these periods corresponds to a shift: from a weak unitary state to fragmenting state; from a fragmenting to failing state; from a failing to rogue state; and from a rogue to a corrupt and fissured "protégé" state.

First Attempts at Integration

The hopes that the fall of the Najibullah regime in April 1992 would lead to durable peace were short lived. As intense factional fighting with frequently shifting alliances replaced the anticommunist struggle, two things happened: the political UN basically threw in the towel and abandoned any pretense that there was a peace process to support, a fact facilitated by the disappearance of Afghanistan from the international community's radar screen. At the same time, aid agencies started asking themselves some hard questions. What did the assistance effort add up to? Had it prolonged the war? This field-based quest for more effective and principled action was helped by emerging processes at UN headquarters aimed at improving overall UN performance in protracted crises in accordance with the "unitary approach" that

was articulated in the UN secretary-general's *Agenda for Peace*. As a result, in 1998 the Strategic Framework (SF) for Afghanistan was born to engineer a more productive and synergistic UN system-wide response to complex crises. The key assumption was that by reducing the disconnects between the political, assistance, and human rights pillars of the UN there was a better chance for effective bottom-up and top-down peace efforts to emerge. This was both the strength and, in the end, the weakness of the Strategic Framework.

The SF's objective was to provide a stronger voice, or at least equal billing, to humanitarian and human rights concerns vis-à-vis the UN's political initiatives. Principles and modalities for common programing were agreed across the assistance community including the vast majority of NGOs—and functioned much in the same way as the "cluster system" does today. UN coordination on the ground was boosted as was the ability of the aid system to present a

> There is a negative correlation between direct superpower involvement and the ability of humanitarian actors to engage with crises in a relatively principled manner.

relatively united front in its difficult negotiations with the Taliban for access and acceptance. Aid actors invested in developing common policy positions. This was facilitated by the fact that donors were limiting their involvement in Afghanistan to humanitarian action: capacity building of Taliban-run state institutions was proscribed for fear of legitimizing the regime. Development policy discussions were not a priority for the Taliban who were intent on winning the war and gaining international recognition.

The SF was criticized by some for the alleged subordination of humanitarian and human rights concerns to the UN's political agenda. Some organizations, particularly at the Dunantist end of the humanitarian spectrum, like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), claimed that humanitarian principles were being compromised because it provided a single umbrella for the three components of UN action in Afghanistan—political, humanitarian, and human rights. In fact, quite the opposite happened: because the SF contained a clear set of principles and objectives to which all segments of the United Nations and the vast majority of the NGOs had subscribed, the humanitarian voice had a better chance of being heard. This was, of course, facilitated by the fact that no major power had strategic political stakes in Afghanistan, that humanitarian action was the main form of UN engagement on the ground, and that the UN's political activities were limited to low key monitoring of civil society and maintaining contact with the belligerents. The "talks about talks" did not result in substantive discussions, and the efforts by the UN to bring them to the negotiating table were ultimately unsuccessful.

The Strategic Framework facilitated consensus in the aid community on how to deal with restrictive Taliban policies and on issues such as negotiations for access to vulnerable groups, particularly to "internally stuck people" too poor to move or prevented by the Taliban from moving. In the case of Afghanistan, it can be argued that issues of principles and rights got a hearing because of the relatively strong degree of unity in the humanitarian community and because the SF allowed the humanitarian voice to be heard at the political UN and donor levels.[3] In the end, there was little integration between the assistance and the political pillars of the Strategic Framework. While it is true that the SF was based on the assumption that

assistance activities should "advance the logic of peace," because the Taliban were ostracized and the peace process was going nowhere, aid-induced pacification was more virtual than real.

Principles under the *Kilim*

All this changed utterly after 9/11. Whatever coherence the Strategic Framework may have brought to UN political, human rights and humanitarian actions in Afghanistan was shattered by the political and military hurricane that followed. Humanitarian and human rights concerns were pushed aside. They were swept under the *kilim*.

The nature of the crisis was radically changed by the US-led intervention. The Bonn Agreement, and the UN Security Council resolutions that endorsed it, resulted in a process of taking sides by the United Nations and the aid community. Three "original sins" were committed in the aftermath of 9/11:

- The Bonn Agreement was a victor's peace from which the Taliban were excluded.

- Reviled and despised warlords who had been defeated by the Taliban were bankrolled and brought back and soon occupied key political and military positions.

- No effort was made to address impunity and accountability for egregious human rights violations that had characterized prior administrations. Thus, spoilers earned influence in the new national state institutions by virtue of their capacity and potential willingness to unleash violence. Or, in the words of President Karzai, "Justice is a luxury…we must not lose peace for justice."[4]

The Karzai government was legitimized by its Western backers but hobbled from the start, and its internal legitimacy was questioned by many Afghans. Donors urged the UN and NGOs to work with the government. To be fair, few needed prodding. To aggravate matters, the post–Bonn situation was defined and accepted by all except a handful of analysts as "post-conflict" and no longer in need of humanitarian action. Of course, humanitarian needs did not disappear; the designation warped the analysis. As a consequence, the strong UN humanitarian capacity that existed in the country up to 9/11 was summarily disbanded.

The locus of UN integration shifted from the humanitarian to the political arena—and the former increasingly subordinated to the latter. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established as the most integrated UN operation until then.[5] All UN political, assistance, and human rights functions were brought under the stewardship of a single official. The mission's operating system revolved around the twin mantras of "support the government" and "nothing must derail the peace process." In other words, politics—in this instance support for the Karzai government—ruled. These features of UNAMA had a number of consequences. Because of the lack of decisiveness in the UN assistance pillar, into which the previous humanitarian assistance coordination structure had been folded, and the Klondike-style rush of aid agencies attracted by the sudden availability of funds, aid coordination essentially collapsed. Donors set up shop in Kabul and privileged their own bilateral channels and implementing agencies. This undermined multilateralism and defeated any attempt at coherence in the assistance realm. NGOs distanced themselves from the UN, either because they distrusted the politicization of UNAMA or because they were now flush with funds. The

myriad new reputable or fly-by-night players that appeared on the scene simply ignored it.

At the same time, the UN humanitarian agencies that had been the main visible presence of the UN on the ground in Taliban times came to be seen as antagonistic to the peacebuilding agenda by the political side of UNAMA, largely because they were trying to hold on to the principled approach of the Strategic Framework and were resisting the politicization of humanitarian action. It thus became much more difficult to raise protection and human rights concerns within and outside the mission. After the routing of the Taliban regime, at the end of 2001 and early 2002 there were massive abuses in the north of the country—including reprisals against communities thought to be pro-Taliban, forced displacement and recruitment, as well as the rape and killings of aid workers—but there was little interest or traction on the senior UN and Coalition sides either to acknowledge or take action to curb theses violations.[6]

As a result, what remained of the humanitarian community, and the wider assistance community, came to be perceived by the Taliban and other insurgent groups as having taken sides in a "Western conspiracy" and as providing a prop for the corrupt Kabul administration, whose legitimacy was increasingly questioned and whose writ outside the capital remained weak. In sum, the integration agenda implemented by the UN: (a) marginalized humanitarian action and subordinated it to a partisan political agenda; (b) made it more difficult for aid agencies to access vulnerable groups; and (c) put the lives of aid workers at risk. The charitable explanation is perhaps to say that the post-9/11 enthusiasm clouded the vision of the main actors in the UN leadership, Western donors, and aid agencies. Peace seemed within grasp. Nonetheless, there were good reasons to be skeptical of the integration/coherence agenda whether writ narrow—i.e., limited to the UN—or writ large across the joined-up approaches of the NATO military coalition and its civilian appendages.

If we fast forward to 2015, the optimism of 2002 has been replaced, within and outside the aid community, by growing despondency, if not foreboding. Many, in Western establishments saw Afghanistan as a testing ground for new approaches to world ordering. Some, on the heels of Kosovo, and, later, Iraq even, waxed about a new and benign imperialism.[7]

For the past 14 years, Afghanistan has been a testing ground for "joined up," "comprehensive," "whole of government," or coherent approaches to conflict resolution. While the UN had had a political-led integrated mission since early 2002, the integration of Coalition efforts, where political, military, and civilian activities fit into a single strategy, came later. Both Afghanistan and Iraq (and now Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan) are laboratories where different types of military/political/assistance hybrids have been tested by the United States and its partners.[8] These can be grouped under the moniker of "stabilization" operations and cover a range of approaches ranging from the relatively indirect—where civilian assistance activities are delivered from more or less militarized Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)—to the direct involvement of the military in activities dubbed "humanitarian assistance."[9]

In the language of the military, the objective of stabilization is to "shape, clear, hold and build." Once a particular area is deemed cleared of insurgents, the theory goes, the UN and its agencies, the government, and NGOs come in, first with quick impact projects and then with programs geared to transforming the situation into durable human security. This is based on the postulate that "hearts and minds" and other assistance activities can actually "deliver"

durable security, an assumption that has been increasingly questioned.[10]

In the post-Bonn period, all major assistance donors—with the exception of Switzerland and India—were belligerents. This is unprecedented. The militarization of aid and its incorporation into political agendas reached unheard-of levels. The post-conflict narrative meant that there was little interest in and funding for humanitarian activities from bilateral donors. Until about 2010, there was much denial in donor capitals as to whether the deepening crisis had generated humanitarian needs. Apart from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office and the US Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance—relatively principled branches—there were no officials with humanitarian portfolios in donor embassies in Kabul as late as 2011.[11]

The UN and Humanitarian Action: A Failed Mandate

Donors support for so-called "coherent" agendas is not a surprise, but a host of questions arise when the UN follows suit. Afghanistan is the only complex emergency where the UN is politically fully aligned with one set of belligerents and does not act as an honest broker in "talking peace" to the other side. Efforts by the UN's humanitarian wing and the broader humanitarian community to negotiate access with the other side were initially not supported by the political UN. This represents a failure of mandate[12] and of leadership. The UN humanitarian coordinator acts also as deputy special representative of the secretary general in charge of assistance and as UN resident coordinator. This conflation underscores the consequences of integration from a humanitarian perspective: it is difficult if not impossible for the same person to be an advocate for humanitarian principles and impartial humanitarian action and at the same time act as the main interlocutor on reconstruction and development issues with the government and Coalition forces.

The one-sidedness of the UN stems, in part, from various UN Security Council resolutions establishing UNAMA, supporting the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom. These resolutions repeatedly refer to "synergies" and strengthening cooperation and coherence between the UN, the foreign military forces, and the Karzai government.[13] The frequent references to links between the US civilian and military surge and UNAMA's activities reinforced the impression that the UN was joined at the hip with the international military intervention and the Karzai government. Both the UN secretary-general and his special representative have publicly and repeatedly welcomed the military surge and the prosecution of the war.[14] Many aid workers, UN and NGO alike, felt that the UN secretary-general's remarks to the press expressing "admiration" for ISAF, after the October 2009 attack on the Kabul Bakhtar guest house in which five UN staff were killed, were particularly insensitive and uninformed of crisis dynamics.[15] Such statements allowed the armed opposition to underscore the lack of impartiality of the UN as a whole for not acting "as per its responsibilities and caliber as a universal body" and for "calling for more brutality under the leadership of USA."[16]

It is true that in recent years the UN has become more vocal on issues of civilian protection. The well-publicized reports produced by the UNAMA human rights team as of 2008, which systematically documented incidents resulting in civilian casualties, helped to put the

impact of the war on civilians on the agenda, These reports can be credited for modifying some of the tactics of the warring parties—for example, night raids by Coalition forces and the use of schools or clinics as staging grounds by the Taliban.[17] In recent years, the UN has acknowledged the need for negotiated humanitarian access, which implies talking to the insurgents. But its posture—an integrated mission in support of the government, aligned with the Coalition, ensconced in government-held towns—and its credibility remain weak. It will be difficult for the UN to shake off the legacy of this lack of neutrality and equidistance from the warring parties.[18]

The aid community suffers from the confusion faced by ordinary Afghans, not to mention the armed opposition, in distinguishing humanitarians from other aid and political actors. The perception that the UN and the aid enterprise have taken sides is, of course, reinforced by the fact that they are only present in government-held towns and that travel to rural areas by road has become practically impossible.

> **Box 5.1: The Red, the Blue, and the Black**
>
> The confusion of identities in the minds of ordinary Afghans is illustrated by a snippet from a conversation with the driver of an international NGO. Asked if Afghans could distinguish between the various types of UN agencies, he replied: "It's very simple: there is the good UN, the so-so UN, and the bad UN. The good UN goes around in white vehicles with a big red cross. They do good work. The so-so UN goes around in big white vehicles with blue markings. They are OK. The bad UN are those guys who have big white vehicles with black markings and drive around like crazy."

In the fraught urban geography of Kabul and other major cities, there is little to distinguish UN compounds from those of the Coalition or of private security companies, which thus reinforces the perception that the UN and foreign militaries are parts of a joint enterprise. Bunkerized behind blast walls of seemingly ever-increasing height,[19] the beleaguered aid community has cut itself off from the Afghan population whom it is meant to assist. For the UN and NGOs as well, the operational horizon is rapidly shrinking: long-standing relationships with communities are fraying because of the impossibility of senior staff to visit project activities. Responsibility and risk are being transferred to local staff, and the risk of being associated with the government or the Coalition is one that, understandably, many are not prepared to take. As a result, agencies are allowing their universe of responsibility to be defined by political and security considerations rather than by the acuteness of need and the humanitarian imperative to save and protect lives. Funds for assistance are now rapidly shrinking. Even so, Afghanistan will not go back to the harsh Taliban era. The paradox, as an acute observer of matters Afghan has quipped, is that "the changes that have happened in Afghan society are irreversible; but the changes that have happened are unsustainable."[20]

Some Lessons

What can we learn from the contested experience of UN integration in Afghanistan? Did integration deliver, or would separation or insulation between the different wings of the UN

have served Afghans—and nation-building—better?

The nation-building process has been deeply problematic. Many claim it has been an outright failure. But the UN was not in the lead of the overall process and cannot be solely held responsible. Certainly, the lofty goals of a peaceful and democratic Afghanistan where the rights of women would be respected and structural underdevelopment issues addressed have not been achieved. More Afghans than ever before have access to education and health care, and numerous vibrant civil society organizations are championing human rights and gender equity. There is a robust media, and young people have access to information and social media as never before. The UN contributed to some of these processes—particularly education and health—but others were endogenous.

The UN also worked on governance issues (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; judicial and administrative reform) with much more mixed results. Because of how it was set up, the process initiated in Bonn in 2001 has given rise to numerous governance failures and frustration. The concentration and abuse of power, which has marginalized and disempowered large segments of society, is particularly concerning. A rising number of young people (and three quarters of the country's population is under 25) have different aspirations than those of the warlords who were reinstated by the Coalition and the elites now running the country. They want a government that is honest, accountable, and focused on the security and wellbeing of all Afghans. The 2014 presidential elections were another lost opportunity. They ended in chaos with the results never to be disclosed and a bicephalous and shaky power-sharing agreement between a technocratic president and a former *jihadist* chief executive. While it did not directly get involved in the election (unlike the previous time around), the greatest failure of the UN, of course, is that it has been absent from the actual peacemaking process where, critics say, it could have played a more neutral honest broker function.

> It will be difficult for the UN to shake off the legacy of this lack of neutrality and equidistance from the warring parties.

From a humanitarian perspective, Afghanistan demonstrates that humanitarians should not take sides. They should not pronounce themselves on whether a war is just or unjust as this would undermine their ability to help vulnerable and at-risk groups and mitigate their suffering. Neutrality is not an end in itself—it is a means to fulfilling the humanitarian imperative. In practice, only the International Committee of the Red Cross and a handful of NGOs at the "Dunantist" end of the spectrum (MSF, Emergency, Solidarités) can qualify as principled humanitarians in Afghanistan today. Most NGOs are multimandate agencies that perform a variety of relief and/or development functions and in most cases receive funds from belligerent nations and/or work as government implementing partners. As for the UN agencies, they are perceived as having lost all semblance of independence and impartiality, let alone neutrality.[21] The UN is, and has been seen as, aligned with the US-led coalition intervention. It has provided uncritical support to the Karzai government and has limited capacity to interact with insurgents.

Even if humanitarian agencies are not involved in stabilization activities, these can have potentially dangerous consequences for the perceived neutrality and impartiality of

humanitarian actors. They are likely to make the negotiation of humanitarian space—which requires a minimum of acceptance and trust from all belligerents—that much more difficult. Re-establishing the *bone fides* of the humanitarian UN will be difficult, as long as the political UN continues to be unable or unwilling to position itself in a more equidistant manner from the contending parties to the conflict.

There are good practical reasons for separating or insulating principled humanitarian action from integrated missions. An even stronger theoretical argument points to the flaws of incorporating humanitarian action in the "coherence" agenda. Humanitarian action derives its legitimacy from universal principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international humanitarian law. Such principles often do not sit well with Security Council political compromises; politics, the "art of the possible," is rarely informed by ethical principle. Incorporating a function that draws legitimacy from the UN Charter (or the Universal Declaration) within a management structure born of political compromise in the Security Council is questionable and, in the case of Afghanistan, has proven to be counter-productive.

The issue of better insulation of principled humanitarian action, if not complete separation from politics, is likely to remain an unresolved one on the humanitarian agenda for some time. On balance, the integration/coherence agenda has not served humanitarianism well: it has blurred the lines, compromised acceptance, made access to vulnerable groups more difficult and put aid workers in harm's way.

From a broader UN perspective, the alignment of the UN with the United States and its allies' counterinsurgency and nation-building objectives has effectively cut off the UN from any meaningful role in nurturing the emergence of a genuine democratic process, based on values that Afghans understand and support. A fundamental lesson of post-9/11 Afghanistan is that Afghan society and not a handful of selected strongmen need to be in charge of *their* democratization process and shaping a future that genuinely allows for inclusive and legitimate governance. This includes engaging with the Taliban, building state institutions that serve the national interest, and developing a political culture that is democratic and fair from an Afghan perspective.

Conclusions

Four conclusions come to mind when analyzing post-conflict situations in Afghanistan and beyond. The first concerns contextual intelligence. Once a situation is labeled in a particular way—"post conflict" in the case of Afghanistan—it is extremely difficult for the UN and other international actors to break out of the dominant narrative. Defining Afghanistan as "post-conflict" was wrong, but shaking off the mantra that "we are on the right track" proved unpalatable. This had obvious consequences for humanitarian action, the need for which was largely denied. But also for other aspects of the nation-building agenda. For example, donors and NGOs were quick to assume that the Karzai government was a legitimate development partner, and much funding was channeled through it. This largesse in turn generated huge levels of corruption and compromised the credibility of the entire development effort. This could have been largely avoided had a "less is more" approach been adopted.[22] It seems that it

is near impossible for the UN—from the Security Council down—to change its posture once it has been cast in stone by a resolution establishing a UN presence on the ground. While alignment with the US-led coalition might have made some sense in Afghanistan in late 2001, it soon became apparent that the assumptions behind this decision were deeply flawed. Despite the evident signals, the political UN (less so the humanitarian UN) was unable to develop a strategy that was relevant to actual ground realities. Similar situations of disconnect between aspirational narratives and realities have since arisen in Somalia and South Sudan.

The second is to distinguish "We the peoples" from the temple of states. UN senior staff must resist the pressure to abide by policies that are detrimental to the values that the UN is supposed to uphold. While mandated by the Security Council to align with ISAF, little effort was made to advocate against the negative aspects of this decision nor to chart a different way forward, for example one based on more equidistance between the warring parties. It will be interesting to see if the Human Rights Up-Front agenda promulgated in late 2013 by the UN secretary-general,[23] which states that human rights are the "lifeblood" of the UN and requires all UN staff to put human rights and Charter values at the forefront of what they do, will have any meaningful and useful impact in future crises.

The third is that any formulaic implementation of "coherence" and "integration" agendas is deeply problematic. These agendas need to be context-specific, and the pluses and minuses of integrating human rights and humanitarian action into UN integrated missions must be carefully considered especially when there is a risk of subordinating to Realpolitik actions that draw their legitimacy from universal human rights and

> Sacrificing diversity and flexibility on the altar of consistency may not always be a good idea.

humanitarian principles. Moreover, situations change over time: integration may be viable when there is a genuine post-conflict situation and all major stakeholders agree on the way forward; it can be detrimental if the situation deteriorates or if there is a full-blown conflict.

The fourth is obvious yet ignored: one size does not fit all. The UN can provide a range of functions in crisis countries but not all, and not always, do these need to be coherent. Playing bad cop (documenting human rights violations) should not necessarily be done within the same organizational framework that plays good cop (working with government on development issues)—even if an overarching UN strategy is in place. Firewalls—as between the collecting of evidence on human rights violations and negotiating humanitarian access with alleged perpetrators of such violations—need to be in place, and respected. In sum, sacrificing diversity and flexibility on the altar of consistency may not always be a good idea.

Notes

1   Michael Ignatieff, "Nation-Building Lite," *The New York Times*, 28 July 2002.

2   "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear." Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the*

Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 276.

3   For a detailed analysis of the Strategic Framework, see Mark Duffield, Patricia Gossman, and Nicholas Leader, "Review of the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan," Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Islamabad, 2001. On negotiations with the Taliban see, Antonio Donini, "Negotiating with the Taliban," in *Humanitarian Diplomacy: Practitioners and their Craft*, ed. Larry Minear and H. Smith (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007).

4   BBC "Hard Talk" interview with Lyse Doucet, 14 June 2002. Similar statements were made by UN special representative of the secretary-general Lakhdar Brahimi although in recent times he has recognized that impunity should have been put on the Bonn agenda and that the state-building experience was flawed: Lakhdar Brahimi, "State Building in Crisis and Post-Conflict Countries," Contribution to the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing/Building Trust in Government, Vienna, Austria, 26–29 June 2007. On the *problématique* of human rights in Afghanistan, see Norah Niland, "Rights, Rhetoric and Reality: A Snapshot from Afghanistan," in *The UN Human Rights and Post Conflict Situations*, ed. Nigel White and Dirk Klaasen (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005).

5   A fact facilitated by the appointment of Lakhdar Brahimi, who had given his name to the "Brahimi report"—the UN's rulebook for integrated missions—as special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG). See Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, UN Report A/55/305 - S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

6   See Norah Niland, "Justice Postponed: The Marginalization of Human Rights in Afghanistan," in *Nation-Building Unraveled? Aid, Peace, and Justice in Afghanistan*, ed., Antonio Donini, Norah Niland, and Karin Wermester (West Hartford, Conn: Kumarian Press, 2004), 61–83.

7   Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (London: Vintage, 2004).

8   The incorporation of relief and other forms of assistance into military operations is nothing new. US NGOs were willing participants in such approaches during the Vietnam War. See George C. Herring, ed., "Special Issue: Non-Governmental Organizations and the Vietnam War," *Peace & Change* 27, no. 2 (2002).

9   There was no single model for PRTs. Some were more civilianized or, like the Dutch PRT in Oruzgan, under civilian command. In theory, this meant that assistance activities maintained some separation from military objectives. Others were more militarized and more integrated. On balance there was a progressive militarization of PRTs with civilians increasingly excluded from decision making; see Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al., *Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds. Exploring Afghan Perceptions of Civil-Military Relations*, British Agencies Afghanistan Group and European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan, London, 2008.

10 Winning hearts and minds has been the subject of several reports issued by the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University: https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=34085650. See also A. Wilder, "A 'weapons system' based on wishful thinking," *The Boston Globe*, 16 September 2009.

11 Personal observation.

12 UN General Assembly resolution 46/182, which established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (now the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid, OCHA) specifically gives OCHA the responsibility of "actively facilitating, including through negotiation if needed, the access by the operational organizations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned" (Annex, para. 35 (d)).

13 See, for example, UN Security Council resolution 1868 (2009) extending UNAMA, para. 4 (b); resolution 1917 (2010) (b) extending UNAMA, para. 5 (b); resolution 1890 (2009) extending ISAF, para 5.

14 See, for example, "UN Afghanistan envoy backs call for more NATO troops," *Xinhua*, 23 October 2009.

15 "I express my admiration for all the dedication of the women and men of the United Nations, voluntary humanitarian workers, NGOs and other members of the international community, including ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] for their dedication and commitment," press conference, Kabul, 2 November 2009.

16 Statement of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, 5 November 2009; it goes on to lament, "We have not seen any resolution by the Security Council, which speaks of grace, tolerance and altruism."

17 See the Every Casualty Campaign reports at: everycasualty.org; also Astri Suhrke, "From Principle to Practice: US Military Strategy and Protection of Civilians in Afghanistan," *International Peacekeeping* 22, no. 1 (2015): 100-118.

18 Contrast with the UN in Myanmar where, interestingly, the objective of neutrality and impartiality is central to the 2015 UN country strategy.

19 This trend, which does not only apply to Afghanistan, is analyzed by Mark Duffield, who describes the international "gated communities" in urban areas, the fortified aid compounds, and the movements of staff between the secure sites of the "archipelago" of international aid. See his "Risk-Management and the Fortified Aid Compound: Everyday Life in Post-Interventionary Society," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4, no. 4 (2010): 453–474.

20 Barnett Rubin speaking at the Jaipur Literature Festival, 20 January 2014, available on You Tube.

21 See P. Benelli, A. Donini, and N. Niland, *Afghanistan: Humanitarianism in Uncertain Times* (Boston: Feinstein International Center, Tufts Universtity, November 2012).

22 As recommended, for example, by the Feinstein Center studies on hearts and minds cited above. See also: Astri Surkhe, *When More is Less: The International Project in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia Univerity Press, 2011).

23 See: http://www.un.org/sg/rightsupfront/.

6. Governing Globally, Acting Locally:

Lessons from Burundi for International Peacebuilding Reform

Susanna Campbell

Palm trees were placed at an equal distance along the broad avenue. Inside, a long staircase blanketed in deep red carpets led up to the ballroom. Crystals dangled from each of the 16 chandeliers, gently welcoming visitors into its opulence. Twenty-five round tables were set with placards and microphones. Government ministers, international experts, high-level international bureaucrats, and representatives from global civil society took their assigned seats. The subject of discussion: violence and inequality.

The United Nations is currently facilitating three parallel high-level consultations to improve the capacity of states and the United Nations to help war-torn countries recover from the destruction that has enveloped them. The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Advisory Group of Experts to Review the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations were each initiated by different parts of the UN and aim to influence how UN member states, UN peacekeeping, and the UN specialized agencies involved in peacebuilding work in conflict-affected countries.[1] In other words, they are global processes that aim to influence the behavior of the UN and bilateral donors at the local-level in conflict-affected countries.

In spite of the breadth of knowledge of the participants, the institutions that they are assessing and the elite-focus of the consultations leave them largely detached from the local realities that they aim to influence. These global processes are focused on the preferences of states and their high-level representatives, with little sustained input from the communities most affected by violence and civil war or state and non-state actors who perpetuate them. To truly improve the conflict prevention and peacebuilding effectiveness of the UN and its member states, these global processes must ground themselves in the local reality.

By local, I do not only mean the community level. I use the term local to refer to the domestic institutions in fragile and conflict-affected states that UN peacekeeping, UN peacebuilding, and international aid aim to influence. Each of these community-, provincial-, and national-level domestic institutions has particular characteristics and stakeholders that constitute their "local" reality. Before international actors can transform these domestic institutions, they have to understand their existing "local" characteristics and develop approaches that that directly address them.

For these global policy processes to deliver changes in the behavior of the UN and bilateral donors at the field level, they need to focus on altering the three main flawed assumptions of the existing system: the focus on global accountability, international coherence, and the separation of the political and technical aspects of peacebuilding. These flaws will not be overcome by creating new layers, processes, or strategies at headquarters. Instead, we need to refocus reform efforts on enabling global processes to help individual country offices be more

responsive to the country environments that they aim to influence. Global policy processes and consultation are only as effective as their local counterparts. To create effective local counterparts, the UN and its member states need to institute and incentivize three local-level practices: downward accountability, bottom-up coherence, and the integration of political and operational capacities. Moving the chairs around on the deck will not change anything if the chairs, themselves, are broken.

Using evidence gathered from extensive examination of the United Nations, other multilateral organizations, and bilateral donors in Burundi and elsewhere, this analysis will show that there are three systemic problems that these global processes need to overcome if they are to improve the capacity of the UN and its member states to address the problems plaguing conflict-affected countries today. It first provides a brief background to the context of UN peacebuilding in Burundi. Then, it discusses the first problem: the focus on global rather than local accountability. It follows with a discussion of how the preoccupation of the UN and its member states with global policy coherence can actually undermine the local-level effectiveness of their interventions. Then, it discusses how the bureaucratic tendency to separate tasks into those that are political and those that are technical further undermines the capacity of international bureaucracies to achieve their global aims in highly complex conflict-affected environments. The analysis closes by outlining three concrete recommendations

that these global review processes should adopt to improve the effectiveness of international intervention in conflict-torn countries.

Burundi's War-to-Peace Transition

In October 1993, Burundian army officers assassinated Burundi's first democratically elected president, Melchior Ndadaye who was a Hutu, sparking large-scale massacres of the minority Tutsi population and deadly reprisals by the Tutsi-run army against the majority Hutu population. The country quickly descended into a civil war fought between the Burundian army (Forces Armées Burundaise, FAB) and two Hutu rebel groups, the Forces Nationales de Libération du Peuple Hutu (Palipehutu-FNL) and the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD). Burundi's Arusha peace process resulted in the signature of the Arusha Agreement in August 2000, although fighting continued because the two rebel groups were excluded from the agreement. In December 2003, Pierre Nkurunziza and his CNDD-FDD rebel group were integrated into Burundi's transitional government bringing an end to fighting in the most of Burundi's territory. The FNL rebel group remained outside of the government and engaged in combat with the Burundian army until 2009.

In August 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza was elected as Burundi's new president, ushering in a new era of hope on the part of Burundians and international actors alike. In October 2005, the Nkurunziza's government notified the UN that it wanted the world body to make the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Burundi, withdrawing the large peacekeeping operation that had overseen the elections and replacing it with a political mission that would focus on supporting the Burundian government's efforts to consolidate peace. This was one of the Bujumbura's first signals that it would not tolerate the imposition of policies by the UN or international donors, but instead wanted them to provide crucial support to the Burundian government so that it could show the population that peace would deliver dividends. Over the next ten years, the government repeatedly attempted to exercise its sovereign authority over the actions of the UN, bilateral donors, and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) working there. For example, it effectively expelled four out of the six special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) posted there.

In 2006, however, the UN responded to the Burundian government's desire to focus on peacebuilding by selecting Burundi as one of the first two countries on the agenda of the newly created UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) formed the three components of the UN's new peacebuilding architecture (PBA), which General Assembly resolution 180, passed in December 2005, established to prevent post-conflict countries from returning to war. Between 2007 and 2014, the PBF provided over \$61 million to the UN in Burundi to implement peacebuilding projects. Over this period, the configuration of PBC members focused on Burundi was chaired by Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The PBA made a clear difference in Burundi's war-to-peace transition. Through several smart, targeted interventions implemented by Security Council–mandated missions in Burundi, the PBF helped to unblock political deadlocks, support crucial reforms in security institutions, and implement aspects of the council's mandate that did not otherwise have funding. The

PBC, on the other hand, helped to raise resources, mediate between the government and international donors, and focus political attention on Burundi's post-conflict transition.

In spite of these clear successes, there were significant flaws in most of the projects that the PBF funded in Burundi. During the first tranche (PBF I) of $35 million, only seven out of 18 projects achieved their goals and were relevant to Burundi's peacebuilding process. Some of the unsuccessful PBF projects even had a negative impact. During the second tranche (PBF II) of $9.2 million, many of the PBF-funded activities were not actually designed as peacebuilding activities, but were instead standard development or humanitarian activities. In two out of the 13 villages where my team and I conducted interviews, PBF-funded activities had a negative impact on their intended beneficiaries.[2]

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office states in its guidelines that "strengthening or rebuilding the foundations of a society that has been torn apart by conflict is not business as usual."[3] But, the evaluations that I led found that most PBF-funded projects were "business as usual": the recipient UN organizations simply implemented their standard type of project but put a peacebuilding label on it.[4]

Furthermore, the violent protests in Bujumbura in the spring of 2015 demonstrate that the PBA's impact was and is limited by the policies and practices of Burundi's political actors. Contrary to its mandate, the PBA does not have the capacity or political weight to prevent countries from returning to war. If feasible, this type of heavy-handed intervention would require a degree of military, political, and financial intervention that is neither permitted under current interpretations of state sovereignty nor financially feasible in the broader geopolitical climate. Instead, the PBA has the potential to accompany countries on their postwar transitions, providing crucial peacebuilding resources to the UN and targeted political advice to host governments. But, as the PBA's experience in Burundi shows, if the host government does not wish to create a more inclusive, democratic government, there is little that the PBA can do. Within these obvious constraints, however, the UN and its member states can provide crucial support to a country's war-to-peace transition if they address the three flawed assumptions discussed below.

Global Accountability Needs Local Accountability

The post-2015 process, the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and the Review of UN Peace Operations share the assumption that increased global accountability leads to greater success at the local level. In reality, higher degrees of global accountability may undermine local-level effectiveness.

The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda has developed a list of 17 goals that all countries and their development partners commit to achieving by 2030. UN peace operations are mandated by and report on their progress to the UN Security Council. The assumption is that this global body has the knowledge and expertise to develop mandates that will enable the peace operation on the ground to build the foundations for lasting peace. The same holds for the much weaker UN Peacebuilding Commission, composed of a broader group of member states and focused on the few countries on its agenda. The PBC is supposed to ensure that post-conflict countries do not return to war by enabling all members of the international

community to work toward, and be held accountable for achieving, its Peacebuilding Priority Plans for each country.

The problem with each of these uses of global accountability is that they lack a basic understanding of how organizations work. Organizations act in relation to targets.[5] They focus their systems, their staff capacities, and their resources on fulfilling the targets that they are held accountable for achieving.[6] As the mantra goes: "what gets measured, gets done."

But goals and mandates that are developed via consensus at the global level are inevitably partly irrelevant to the needs of a specific country, particularly one undergoing a high degree of instability and change. A mandate or set of goals developed one month may be irrelevant the next. As Charles Petrie and Adrian Morrice demonstrate in an earlier chapter, Security Council mandates for UN peacekeeping operations shows that each mission is given the same general mandate, challenging the assumption that each mission is targeted toward the specific needs and capacities of each conflict-affected country. Alone, global goals and mandates lead to country-level actions that are irrelevant to the local needs and realities.

To make these global ideas relevant to local needs in fragile and conflict-affected countries, a broad group of domestic actors in the recipient country should be given the authority to make these international actors locally responsive.[7] In countries where the government is strong, represents the majority of the population, and governs a state that can deliver social services throughout its territory, it is more likely that the state will ensure that these global targets (to which it has consented) result in locally relevant policies. After all, international organizations, such as the UN, and state aid agencies are more accountable to states than to the local actors in the countries in which they intervene.[8]

But these strong democratic states are not where the UN deploys the majority of its peace operations and peacebuilding efforts. The UN deploys its peace operations and peacebuilding efforts in countries where the governments are rarely strong enough to ensure that international mandates and goals address the particular causes and manifestations of the country's conflict. In these contexts, global accountability simply reinforces the preferences of the host state and the priorities of the UN and its member states, largely ignoring the perspectives of civil society, local communities, or opposition parties. What is needed is local accountability beyond the host state to ensure that these international interventions are relevant to the needs, capacity, and preferences of the specific local institutions that they aim to transform.

In Burundi, the UN was able to achieve its peacebuilding aims only when it established these downward accountability mechanisms, or strong country-level partnerships with civil society members, likeminded government officials, community members, and UN member states who were pursuing similar goals.[9] For example, its Cadre de Dialogue project—which facilitated dialogue among Burundi's political parties between 2007 and 2009—established a monitoring group made up of individual participants that represented the diversity of the political spectrum; the project was housed in the Ministry of Good Governance and was co-directed by a representative from this ministry and from the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB); its progress was discussed at the country level by monitoring groups made up of interested UN member states, civil society representatives, government representatives, INGOs, and other UN staff focused on the peace and governance sector.[10] Through these

downward accountability mechanisms, the UN Mission in Burundi was able to ground part of its mandate from the Security Council in country's local reality.

Global Coherence Can Undermine Local Effectiveness

International civil servants and bureaucrats spend a lot of time in coordination meetings that attempt to create common strategies and goals and avoid duplication. The assumption is that greater coherence among the different components of the UN, member states, and INGOs will lead to more effective interventions by these actors in conflict-affected states. At the global level, this takes the form of large consultative processes among UN member states and civil society actors, such as the post-2015 process. It takes place within the UN bureaucracy through meetings at the political and technical level that draw staff from across the UN system. These global level processes focus on finding points of consensus on how these organizations should operate and their strategies and policies. At the field level, there are a large number of efforts to create coherence among the dozens of intergovernmental organizations (IOs), INGOs, bilateral aid agencies, and private contractors operating within each country that aim to help them share information, develop common strategies, and even implement joint projects. The problem is that the very effort to create coherence can actually reduce the capacity of the UN and its member states to respond effectively to the complex and changing dynamics of fragile and conflict-affected countries.

War-to-peace transitions are marked by instability, unpredictability, upturns, and downturns. Different political and security actors vie for power and authority. Civil society and communities attempt to make the transition from being the coerced subjects of their government to active participants in an emerging democratic system. Within this dynamic context, shared analyses become quickly outdated and irrelevant. The related strategies and plans—that IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors have invested months developing—become misguided. Efforts at coherence among international actors are only as good as the analyses on which they are based. By focusing more of their energy on aligning with one another than on aligning with the contemporary context in the country, international coordination efforts may lead the UN to implement irrelevant and largely ineffective strategies.[11]

Country-level coordination meetings require country-level staff to spend an enormous amount of time in meetings with other international actors, government representatives, and other elites. This reduces the amount of time that these international actors have to understand the broader context that they aim to influence and the perspective of its multiple stakeholders. It reduces the amount of time that they have to implement and monitor their activities, assessing whether they are having the desired effect on the evolving context and learning from both successes and failures. It also encourages intervening organizations to judge their effectiveness in terms of whether or not they implement activities that correspond to their common plan and their corresponding Western models of state-society relations, rather than with the particular reality and needs of the conflict-affected country at that point in time.

For efforts at coherence to lead to more effective international intervention in conflict-affected states, they need to be driven by particular events and needs in the countries in which they intervene. Rather than simply aiming to reduce duplication or come up with a common

strategy, coordination efforts should focus on how the UN and other international actors can work together with local actors to address particular problems and needs. For example, BINUB achieved some of its most important effects on Burundi's ongoing peacebuilding process when it combined the programatic capacity of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the political capacity of the UN mission, the local knowledge and political prestige of its partners in the Burundian government, and the feedback from stakeholders most affected by its activities. This bottom-up coherence helped the UN to leverage its capacities to target specific problems.

In 2008 and 2009, BINUB and several key donors helped the Burundian army more effectively integrate former rebels into its ranks by supporting the rehabilitation of the army barracks, helping to move families out of these barracks, and supporting the integration of conflict resolution techniques within the army's staff training module.[12] In other words, the UN and key donors provided complementary support to address the specific needs of the Burundian army at that point in time.[13] These activities may have been supported by an overall top-down strategy—such as the Peacebuilding Priority Plan—but this overall strategy only resulted in a real effect on Burundi's institutions when it was focused on a specific problem that these actors collaborated to address together on a daily basis.[14] If they do not focus on a specific need or problem in the particular country context, efforts at international coherence may undermine the effectiveness of its participating organizations.

Implementation is not just Technical but also Political and Strategic

Underlying these three global processes is the belief that once the UN or member states have developed the right strategy and the right analysis, the corresponding projects simply need to be implemented by people with technical expertise. Most UN entities and member states organize their activities along a traditional political-technical divide. Those at the top of the organizational hierarchy focus on political concerns whereas those who implement projects and programs focus on the technical realization of the project as designed, without adjusting the project to fit with changing circumstances or new revelations about the conflict and peace dynamics.

But the PBSO's guidelines articulate that rebuilding the foundations of war-torn societies requires flexible, context-specific efforts that can address fluid circumstances on the ground.[15] For activities to address the potential determinants of conflict or peace, it is now widely accepted that they need to be sensitive to political dynamics—conflict sensitive—and adapt as these dynamics change.[16] This is not only true at the strategic level, but also at the operational level where representatives of the UN, member states, and their partners attempt to transform the behaviors of local actors and institutions. As the PBSO writes: "peacebuilding is about 'how' things are done as much as about 'what' is done."[17]

Peacebuilding is based on theories about the factors that will contribute to peace in that particular country.[18] But, these theories are derived from other countries and contexts and are therefore at least partly irrelevant to the new country context that they aim to influence. The actors are different. The history is different. The culture is different. The institutions are different. The individuals are different. The politics are different. As a result, the way in which a project is implemented should be different.[19]

The UN and its member states allocate a great amount of time to developing strategies, indicators, and conflict analyses, but once a project is underway they often do little to monitor or accompany its implementation. This was a consistent finding in the two evaluations that I led of the PBF in Burundi and in the other studies that I have carried out of INGOs and bilateral donors.[20] In Burundi, the PBF-funded projects that were effective were those where the top country-level UN leadership and their close staff were strongly implicated in their design, implementation, and monitoring. These key staff used their political leverage and power to resist the inevitable local intimidation and backlash that comes from trying to alter individual and institutional behavior. They used their strong political networks to gather information about the evolving political context and to share information about their evolving project, helping to sustain the buy-in of key players. They also established informal groups of stakeholders who gave regular feedback on the effectiveness of the ongoing project and recommended changes to the way that it was being implemented, creating local-level accountability.

> International actors need to focus on instances of bottom-up coherence, not fulfilling comprehensive top-down strategies.

But only a handful of the PBF-funded projects followed this approach. The other projects were implemented in the standard way. Once political staff did the conflict analysis and developed the strategy, the technical staff (who have much less power in the organization and are often national staff) implemented the projects as designed. These technical staff neither received support from their leadership necessary to resist intimidation from the Burundian government nor did they receive guidance as to how they might shift their programing in response to changing dynamics in the context. They were largely left on their own to transform the behavior of individuals and organizations in a complex and highly dynamic environment, which they were rarely able to do.

Recommendations

The political crisis in Burundi in the spring of 2015 shows the limits of the UN's capacity to prevent countries from backsliding into war. Within this uncertain political context, my research shows that peacebuilding works when it is targeted toward crucial fleeting opportunities in the country context.[21] Through these targeted, politically sensitive interventions, the UN, donor governments, and INGOs can help to create momentum in the direction of possible peace rather than war. But to do so, these global institutions have to respond to the local reality, requiring downward accountability, bottom-up coherence, and the integration of their political and operational capacities.

Develop Downward Accountability

To counteract the predominance of upward accountability within the UN and bilateral aid agencies, these actors need to develop complementary downward accountability mechanisms that enable a representative group of local stakeholders to provide regular feedback on the relevance of the projects being implemented as well as offer suggestions as how to increase their local relevance and impact.

Focus on Bottom-up Coherence

Rather than focusing on a common plan or a comprehensive strategy, international actors need to focus on instances of bottom-up coherence, not fulfilling comprehensive top-down strategies. Bottom-up coherence identifies event-specific or sector-specific problems that require multifaceted solutions—such as the reform of the security sector or a malnutrition crisis—and creates a common strategy to address a particular need at a particular point in time. Regular sector-specific meetings may help to facilitate bottom-up coherence, but are insufficient to create it. Bottom-up coherence does not automatically result from regular sectoral meetings among international actors because they are focused on information sharing not on figuring out how the actors with the requisite capacity can collaborate to address specific problems in the context.

Integrate the Political and Operational

Rather than focusing on creating a coherent approach among all UN entities or all bilateral donors operating in one country, international actors should aim first for the vertical integration of the political and operational capacities in each individual organization. One UN entity cannot force another UN entity to integrate political awareness into all of its activities. Each UN entity is fundamentally accountable to its own governance structure and will respond to the incentives that each governance structure establishes.[22] The only way for the UN to become more effective at peacebuilding is for each UN entity to develop a strong peacebuilding capacity, which requires that field-level leadership and senior staff be highly engaged in the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring peacebuilding activities.

Notes

1   The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda is a multi-year series of global consultations, following on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to develop a clear set of global targets and corresponding framework to enable equitable sustainable development globally, including by addressing the special needs of countries torn apart by civil war and violent conflict. In October 2014, the UN secretary-general established the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, which is tasked with suggesting how the UN can strengthen the capacity of its peacekeeping and special political missions and its mediation services to prevent violent conflict, resolve potentially violent disputes, and sustain and build peace. In December 2015, the UN secretary-general nominated an Advisory Group of Experts to review the UN peacebuilding architecture, with the aim of improving the overall effectiveness of UN peacebuilding.

2   Susanna Campbell et al., *Independent External Evaluation: UN Peacebuilding Fund Project Portfolio in Burundi, 2007 - 2013* (New York: PBSO, 2014).

3   United Nations, *UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 14.

4   Ibid.; Susanna Campbell, *Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi*, Evaluation (Bujumbura, Burundi: BINUB, 2010), http://www.unpbf.org/burundi/burundi-progress.shtml.

5   Barbara Levitt and James G. March, "Organizational Learning," *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988): 319–340.

6   Chris Argyris, *On Organizational Learning* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

7   Susanna Campbell, "Not Built for Peace: Why Informal Accountability Determines International Peacebuilding Success," unpublished working paper (2015); Susanna Campbell, *Global Governance and Local Peace* (unpublished book manuscript, 2015).

8   Ruth W. Grant and Robert O Keohane, "Accountability and Abuses of Power in World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 29–43.

9   Susanna Campbell, *Organizational Barriers to Peace: Agency and Structure in International Peacebuilding* (Medford, Mass.: A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2012); Alnoor Ebrahim, "Accountability Myopia: Losing Sight of Organizational Learning," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2005): 56–87.

10   Campbell, "Not Built for Peace"; Campbell, *Global Governance and Local Peace*.

11   Susanna P. Campbell, "(Dis)Integration, Incoherence and Complexity in UN Post-Conflict Interventions," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (2008): 556–569.

12   Campbell, *Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi*.

13   Ibid.

14   Ibid.

15   United Nations, *UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation* (New York: United Nations, 2010), 14.

16   Ibid., 14-16.

17   Ibid., 14.

18   "Theory of change" refers to the project's theory about how it will influence the likely drivers of conflict and peace that it has identified. See Susanna P. Campbell, "When Process Matters: the Potential Implications of Organizational Learning for Peacebuilding Success," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 4, no. 2 (2008): 20-32, and Susanna P. Campbell, *Organizational Barriers to Peace: Agency and Structure in International Peacebuilding*, Dissertation, Tufts University, 2012.

19   Susanna Campbell, "Routine Learning? How Peacebuilding Organizations Prevent Liberal Peace," in *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding*, ed. Susanna Campbell, David Chandler, and Meera Sabaratnam (London: Zed Books, 2011), 89–105.

20   Campbell, *Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi*; Campbell et al., *Independent External Evaluation: UN Peacebuilding Fund Project Portfolio in Burundi*.

21   Campbell, *Global Governance and Local Peace*; Campbell, "Not Built for Peace."

22   Susanna P. Campbell and Anja Therese Kaspersen, "The UN's Reforms: Confronting Integration Barriers," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 4 (2008): 470–485.

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