



Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations

Trends and Challenges
Seminar in New York,
24-25 May 2007

Seminar proceedings
by Sara Batmanglich, Richard Gowan and Benjamin Tortolani.

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Preface¹

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway co-organized with the Center on International Cooperation the fourth in a series of regional seminars on trends and challenges related to UN multidimensional and integrated peace operations in New York on 24-25 May 2007.

The seminar benefited from a range of experts and practitioners from the field and headquarters. There was broad participation from the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN funds and programmes, Department of Management (DM), the World Bank (WB), Non-governmental organizations, academia and senior management from missions as diverse as Sierra Leone, Burundi, East Timor, Liberia, Haiti, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Kosovo. In addition a number of key member states participated actively throughout the seminar.

¹ The views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Government. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Executive Summary²

The fourth in a series of regional seminars on trends and challenges related to UN multidimensional and integrated peace operations took place in New York on 24-25 May 2007 focusing in particular on issues pertinent to strategic policy, planning, headquarters integration, UN intergovernmental mechanisms, mandates, funding and resources.

Participants agreed that the concept of integrated missions has been accepted into the UN system and that there has been progress in the debate on the concept, although significant problems remain in the implementation of the concept. Participants identified several signs of momentum in favour of integration: efforts within the UN, particularly in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), based on awareness of its shortcomings in its approach to integration; practical progress towards integration that has been made in field missions; and the pre-eminence of the UN in understanding integration. At the same time, the participants voiced some caution about integration's value, noting that: integration is not an end in itself; the demand for UN peacekeepers being at a record high, headquarters is operating with a reduced capacity to focus on integration; integration is not always politically viable; it has proved hard to align security and development concerns, as in Burundi and Sierra Leone; and it has proved very difficult for the Security Council to devise mandates for integrated missions that adequately reflect the challenges involved. Additionally, the participants made a number of observations on the requirements of integration: integrated mission strategies need to reflect the politics of the states involved; Security Council mandates need

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to be aligned with the UN's resources; at an early stage, inter-governmental and field-level political considerations need to have a development perspective, taking "ownership" into account, a perspective that must in turn be informed by a greater understanding of peacebuilding dynamics; and integration needs to be entrenched in the UN, ensuring that good practice in missions is not overly reliant on particular individuals (although the integration concept requires UN staff on the ground to have a high level of flexibility).

Inter-governmental negotiations and the problem of funding were discussed. While the peacekeeping element of integrated missions is funded through assessed contributions from UN member states, all other elements – including humanitarian and development activities – are funded through voluntary contributions. This presents a series of challenges: absence of assessed funding for the earliest stages of peacemaking and the initial development of mission concepts; lack of clarity over the medium and long-term resources available for peacebuilding and developmental activities; disparity between the overall resources available to specific missions; leaders of integrated missions often having very limited financial manoeuvrability; acute lack of funds for projects in the transitional phase between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, although now partially addressed by the creation of the Peacebuilding Fund); and transition from a full-scale UN peacekeeping operation to a peacebuilding mission bringing technical problems, for example the missions may involve the same individuals in administrative posts but they have to maintain separate budgets. The participants discussed these solutions for the short-term: mechanisms should be devised to make assessed contributions available to support political mediation processes and UN strategic planning in the start-up phase of peace operations; mission leaders should be given greater discretionary funds, especially to ensure "early and timely" effect on the ground; new mechanisms need to be agreed to ensure that the Peacebuilding Fund "money flows" rather than being held up by capacity issues; and there should be procedures for streamlining the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding missions, removing separated budget lines.

Further discussing funds, participants argued that also other parts of the UN, including the Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in creating momentum around financial changes. Also, there was some disagreement on the debate over the use of assessed contributions to fund peacekeepers from other organizations, specifically those of the AU in Darfur.

Participants discussed the DPKO, strategic planning and mission leadership, focusing on improving planning cooperation. The Integrated Mission Planning Process initiated by the DPKO was seen as having potential to improve the Secretariat's response to Security Council mandates for integrated peacekeeping operations but the participants pointed to other methods of improving planning cooperation: the Peacebuilding Commission and Support Office could play important catalytic roles in shaping planning assumptions; the Support Office could also specialize in managing relevant knowledge and identifying medium and long-term threats to peacebuilding and state-building processes; and the Peacebuilding Support Office could also make use of (a) a focused body of expertise and (b) its institutionalized link to the Commission. Participants recognized three potential problems with the current UN approach: (1) the risk of overloading the most senior staff, (2) a shortage of good managers able to support mission leaders and (3) the risk of missions becoming excessively "personalized".

The challenge of "local ownership" in successful integration was discussed. The idea of local ownership proved to be a controversial one, with some participants warning of local political leaders who wish to abuse their power, and others arguing that the concept can be treated as an unquestionable public good without sufficient thought. Nonetheless, a majority of participants saw it as necessary for the legitimacy and functioning of UN missions. There is an inevitable tension between the goals of integration with that of local ownership, by which domestic actors should shape the objectives. Participants highlighted the need for the UN to devise ways of including domestic political voices in strategic planning for integrated missions.

Finally, participants discussed harmonization, staffing and benchmarking. Harmonization was seen as necessary for: UN rules and regulations; security management; employment incentive structures; providing coherence in the messages of outreach and public information strategies; and technologies and procurement. On the subject of staffing, it was noted that integrated missions suffer from very high vacancy rates and this has, obviously, negative effects on missions. At the same time it was noted that there can be staff unfit for the purpose of the mission: as missions take place over time, goals and needs often change quite dramatically; a flexible staffing policy may be required. Benchmarking was also recommended, with participants observing that a method for tying common planning to a shared understanding of how integrated missions should be implemented could be the use of benchmarking to track the UN's progress.

1. Introduction: The integration concept and its strategic context

Participants agreed that the idea of integration is now widely accepted in the UN system. When the concept was first introduced, it was not yet fully developed. But it has become recognized as a standard and necessary approach to UN peace operations.

Significant problems remain in the implementation of the concept. Bureaucratic procedures have not been altered to reflect the importance of integration, and different elements of the UN family still fear that the concept reduces their influence. Military personnel often view integration as too politically-oriented, for example, yet many humanitarian workers believe that it prioritizes military concerns.

Nonetheless, participants highlighted the fact that UN discussions of integration now centred on “how?” not “why?”, suggesting that there has been progress in the debate on the concept over the last decade. Moreover, participants highlighted reasons to hope that the UN’s attitude to integration will continue to evolve positively:

- Members of the UN family, have become increasingly aware of the shortcomings in their approaches to integration, and have become active in attempting to improve them. Participants highlighted DPKO’s efforts to form integrated mission planning and operational teams to facilitate better communication with other parts of the UN.
- Practical progress towards integration has been made in field missions, which are pushed to closer coordination by immediate circumstances and are better integrated than UN headquarters. Good practice is emerging “from below”, although participants warned that it is often reliant on individuals in missions and that the central UN bureaucracy is not always quick to learn these lessons.

- Because it brings together such a wide variety of assets and agencies, the UN remains the international organization with the most sophisticated understanding of integration. This gives it an important comparative advantage in its relations with other peacekeeping actors including regional organizations (such as the African Union (AU)) and military alliances (such as NATO). While participants concurred that future UN operations must involve collaboration with such partners, they argued that the UN's expertise in integration would make the "nucleus" of these operations.

In spite of these signs of momentum in favour of integration, participants highlighted a number of reasons for caution (and even humility) about integration's value:

- UN staff and outside experts recognize that while it is one thing to know how to "do" integration, this is not the same as knowing how to "do" peacebuilding and state-building. Integration is a means and not an end, and has to be implemented in a wide variety of post-conflict environments. Improved integration must be accompanied by greater knowledge of (a) cross-cutting factors contributing to post-conflict stability and (b) specific political and security factors in the countries where the UN deploys.
- At a global level, the demand for UN peacekeepers is at a record high (the DPKO command more than 100,000 personnel in the field) and the strain on UN planners and senior management is intense. Although efforts have been made to reduce this participants warned that the growth in UN operations may continue for some time to come, reducing headquarters capacity to focus on the details of integration.
- While the UN Secretariat and Security Council alike have grown accustomed to the integrated mission concept, it is not always a politically viable option. This was demonstrated in the case of Lebanon in 2006, when it was decided that the expanded UNIFIL

should remain a purely military mission, detached not only from the humanitarian and development agencies in its area but also from UN political envoys.

- Some participants noted that, even where integrated missions are politically viable, there are increasing challenges of consent to the UN's presence. These can take the form of direct violence against peacekeepers, but also clashes over the "ownership" of political processes and economic reforms.
- Although there has been significant if incomplete progress in understanding how peacekeeping and humanitarian priorities can be balanced within an integrated mission, it has proved much harder to align security and development concerns. Participants underlined that integrated missions work on a far shorter timeframe than development agencies, and the recent cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone have underlined the difficulties of transitioning to a development-led approach. The balance between peacebuilding priorities and more traditional development concerns is difficult to define in this context, and needs further investigation.
- In light of these complexities, it has proved very difficult for the Security Council to devise mandates for integrated missions that adequately reflect the challenges involved, creating major gaps between mandates and available resources.

In this context, participants made a wide variety of observations on the strategic, field-level and process issues involved in integration and these are described below. However, a number of recurrent themes emerged in the course of the discussions:

- The need for integrated mission strategies not only to align members of the UN family, but also to reflect the politics of the states involved. Participants (including those with humanitarian

and development expertise) observed that peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be predicated on real political processes.

- The need for Security Council mandates to be aligned with the UN's resources, not only a matter of Security Council debates, but of inter-governmental negotiations in the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission.
- The need for a development perspective, taking account of "ownership", to be fed into inter-governmental and field-level political considerations at an early stage. However, this perspective must in turn be informed by a greater understanding of peacebuilding dynamics, requiring further dialogue within the UN system.
- The need to entrench integration in the UN, ensuring that good practices are spread throughout the system, and that missions are not overly reliant on particular individuals (participants noted the need for a stronger management culture throughout the UN to achieve this). However, participants also observed that the integration concept required UN staff on the ground to have a high level of flexibility.

2. Inter-governmental negotiations and the problem of funding

The participants highlighted that – while the idea of integration had originally emerged from within the UN Secretariat at the behest of Kofi Annan – it relies on the political support of the inter-governmental forums at the heart of the UN system.

In particular, the Security Council is obviously central to the development of any integrated mission, as the terms of integration are defined in its mandate. Participants welcomed the fact that the Security Council has become increasingly willing to lay out multidimensional mandates that recognize the full spectrum of tasks involved in peacekeeping. But they also noted that the Security Council has a very short attention span because of its pressure of work, and that the problems facing specific countries and missions tend to be forgotten between mandate renewals.

Inter-governmental debate on the implementation of integrated missions often shifts to the General Assembly and in some cases the Peacebuilding Commission. In looking at the roles of these forums, the participants highlighted their importance to funding issues and the tensions inherent in financing integrated missions.

While the General Assembly has authority over funding for the DPKO, participants remarked that integration presents significant challenges to UN funding mechanisms. While the peacekeeping element of integrated missions is funded through assessed contributions from UN member states, all other elements – including humanitarian and development activities – are funded through voluntary contributions.

This discrepancy presents a series of strategic challenges to integrated missions:

- There is an absence of assessed funding for the earliest stages of peacemaking and the initial development of mission concepts. This

makes it much harder for the UN to nurture domestic peace processes and refine its own strategies early.

- There is a lack of clarity over the medium and long-term resources available for peacebuilding and developmental activities. Inter-governmental debate too often focuses on the immediate costs of peacekeeping rather than its strategic context.
- There is a disparity between the overall resources available to specific missions, for example Kosovo receiving far greater aid than Burundi.
- Because the majority of development funding comes through voluntary contributions – and is subject to numerous rules and regulations – the leaders of integrated missions often have very limited financial manoeuvrability. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are recognized as crucial in the early phases of many missions but are focused on confidence-building activities, and on demonstrating visible progress where important to public perceptions, rather than on development per se. It is important that development resources are quickly deployed to deal with the larger-scale and long-term needs, so that QIPs do not take on the role of development funding by default.
- There is often an acute lack of funds for projects in the transitional phase between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, although this has now been partially addressed by the creation of the Peacebuilding Fund. Indeed, the Burundi case saw the money available from the Fund outstrip the capacity to program it.
- In operational terms, the transition from a full-scale UN peacekeeping operation to a peacebuilding mission brings technical problems, even though both are funded by assessed contributions. While the missions may involve the same individuals in administrative posts, they have to maintain separate budgets.

Participants argued that the UN member states should aim to rationalize funding mechanisms for integrated missions, and many commented that a long-term goal should be to make assessed contributions available for peacebuilding activities.

However, it was recognized that this proposal was liable to encounter significant political obstacles, and participants recommended a number of smaller-scale options:

- Mechanisms should be devised to make assessed contributions available to support political mediation processes and UN strategic planning in the start-up phase of peace operations, treating these as integral to the mission process.
- Through the use of assessed contributions – and potentially designating some voluntary contributions – mission leaders should be given greater discretionary funds, especially for QIPs (it was notable that military participants at the event were particularly in favour of increasing the use of QIPs in high-risk areas).
- While the Peacebuilding Fund permits funds to be ready for programming during peacekeeping-peacebuilding transitions, new mechanisms need to be agreed to ensure that the “money flows” rather than being held up by capacity issues.
- Procedures must be agreed to streamline the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding missions, removing the obstacles of separated budget lines.

Participants noted that the Secretariat should encourage member-states’ confidence in new financial procedures by (a) ensuring that all missions include public management and finance teams to oversee resources and (b) missions should promote self-evaluation mechanisms to monitor the impact of funds. Participants added that such evaluation would also increase UN missions’ accountability to the people they operate among.

3. Funding

The role of the Peacebuilding Commission

Participants argued that the Peacebuilding Commission has an important role to play in creating momentum around these financial changes – especially those involving the use of assessed contributions. Participants concurred that the Commission has got off to a slow start. But it includes the main financial and manpower contributors to UN missions, and answers to both the General Assembly and Security Council – it has a unique potential to act as forum to discuss aligning mandates with resources.

Yet participants admitted that the Commission is hampered by doubts over definitions of peacebuilding (partially addressed by the Peacebuilding Support Office) and an impression that it only exists to handle follow-ups to DPKO-led missions. (It was suggested that the Commission should assert the breadth of peacebuilding by considering countries where no peacekeeping mission is currently deployed.)

Relations with Regional Organizations

Looking beyond the UN system, participants noted the developing debate over the use of assessed contributions to fund peacekeepers from other organizations, specifically those of the AU in Darfur. The advisability of this option was the subject of significant differences, with some participants warning that it risked sacrificing the “global standard” of UN peacekeeping for cheaper alternatives.

Other participants argued that it was a political necessity, and would help build African capacities in particular. It was noted that the AU has begun to take an interest in integration issues in its own right, although lacking financial resources. Creating closer UN-AU ties through budgetary means could reinforce this trend.

4. DPKO, Strategic Planning and Mission Leadership.

While discussing the centrality of inter-governmental decision-making to integrated missions, participants also underlined the role of the DPKO in coordinating the planning of integrated missions and their implementation. They also noted the extent to which the success of integration often rests on senior mission management in the field.

Problems can still be identified in the DPKO's relationship with other elements of the UN system. Participants argued that these are to some extent structural, as the DPKO's perspective is inevitably shaped by (a) its funding through assessed rather than voluntary contributions and (b) the relatively short-term nature of its priorities.

Nonetheless, participants from all parts of the UN system acknowledged that the DPKO's relationship with its partners has improved in recent years. At the same time, it was noted that this was in part due to personal efforts by senior DPKO management; questions remained over how better relations can become more systematic and less *ad hoc*.

In this context, participants noted the importance of deepening planning cooperation across the UN system. The current Integrated Mission Planning Process initiated by the DPKO was seen as a newly-formed and imperfect planning tool for integrated peacekeeping operations, but one that still has potential to improve the Secretariat's response to Security Council mandates. However, participants pointed to other methods of improving planning cooperation:

- Although the Peacebuilding Commission and Support Office do not have operational roles, they could play important catalytic roles in shaping planning assumptions. Participants proposed that Support Office staff could act as a neutral broker in planning processes, getting involved in needs assessments even before missions are deployed. This might act as the basis for more holistic planning.

- The Support Office could also specialize in identifying medium and long-term threats to peacebuilding and state-building processes (as opposed to the day-to-day challenges of peacekeeping and humanitarian action) and work with missions to develop strategies to mitigate potential threats from the earliest possible stage.
- At an inter-agency level, it was noted that the Secretary-General's Policy Committee had already played a comparable catalytic and advisory role on some issues. However, the Peacebuilding Support Office could also make good use of (a) a focused body of expertise and (b) its institutionalized link to the Commission.

While advocating a widening of consultation in the planning process, participants argued that the implementation of integrated mission plans relied on strong mission leadership, supported by an effective senior management team.

Where a single individual is simultaneously the DSRSG, Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative (as is the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo), it is possible for him/her and his/her staff to set priorities and identify synergies with authority. Participants noted that the advantages are not purely operational but also political, as the UN gains credibility by putting its mission under direct civilian control.

Participants recognized three potential problems with the UN approach: (1) the risk of overloading the most senior staff, (2) a shortage of good managers able to support mission leaders and (3) the risk of missions becoming excessively "personalized". Furthermore, the UN has had a mixed experience in persuading military Force Commanders to accept civilian authority; many believe that they maintain *de facto* operational autonomy, or that they answer to their national capital.

5. Successful integration and the challenge of “local ownership”

Participants argued that the most pressing challenge for leaders of integrated missions is not differences between members of the UN family, but the need to balance integration with recognition for the principle of “local ownership”.

The idea of local ownership proved to be a controversial one, with some participants warning that offers cover the local political leaders who wish to abuse their power. Others argued that the concept is treated as an unquestionable public good without sufficient thought in some UN forums (specifically the Peacebuilding Commission).

Nonetheless, a majority of participants agreed that recognition for local ownership of political and economic processes is necessary for the legitimacy and functioning of UN missions. However (in the words of one participant), “we are not good at it.”

There is an inevitable tension between the goals of integration – the creation of a strategy meant to unite elements of the international community around common objectives – with that of local ownership, by which domestic actors should shape the objectives. More specifically, the partners in an integrated mission tend to provide services and jobs that post-conflict governments cannot, and that harms those governments.

Participants highlighted the need for the UN to devise ways of including domestic political voices in strategic planning for integrated missions. They underlined that this can be a two-way process, as the development of a common strategy through integration gives the UN family greater “leverage” in political affairs. Conversely, participants noted that local actors do not necessarily want immediate direct ownership over processes the UN handles effectively, but that consultation reassures them that they so have indirect ownership over the processes and results.

6. Harmonization, staffing and benchmarking.

In addition to questions of financing, planning and overseeing integrated missions, participants identified many more practical challenges to integration. Many of these concerned the need to shift from strategic agreement on integration's importance to administrative cooperation. One recurrent theme was the need for greater harmonization of the elements of an integrated mission and the UN family:

- *Harmonizing rules and regulations:* while there has been an emphasis on joint planning as the key to integration, this should be accompanied by an emphasis on harmonizing day-to-day working practices across elements of the UN system.
- *Harmonizing security management:* a particularly sensitive area is security and risk management, where differing operational standards can be particularly divisive during crises, especially with regards to humanitarian activities.
- *Harmonizing incentive structures:* employment structures in different UN departments and agencies currently penalize staff moving between them, reducing the lack of common loyalties and operational culture across institutional lines. This should be reversed to permit much greater staff mobility, which will in turn contribute to integration efforts by reducing perceived rivalries and splits.
- *Harmonizing the message:* participants expressed concern that elements of integrated missions often pursue separate outreach and public information strategies (although it has been noted that UN-run radio services such as “Radio Okapi” in the DR Congo are often very popular). Missions should aim to ensure that their members develop coherent shared messages if they are to be credible.

- *Harmonizing technologies and procurement:* even within relatively well-functioning integrated missions, problems arise from the use of incompatible technologies. One participant described how two of his staff from separate agencies sat next to each other, but found that it took 24 hours for e-mails to pass between their computers via servers in New York. A standardized strategy for procurement and selecting technologies would make basic integration easier.

A related area, identified as extremely sensitive by many participants, is that of staff recruitment and retention. It was noted that most peacekeeping missions in general suffer from very high vacancy rates (a third of posts in Timor-Leste were empty at the time of the event, as were two-fifths of those in Sudan). Although this is not an integration problem *per se*, participants pointed out its obviously negative effects on missions. This is another area in which harmonization may have an important role to play: there are significant differences between different elements of the UN family over employment policies, especially for professional-grade posts. However, participants also highlighted that the more basic problems of pay and conditions are widespread throughout the organization.

Conversely, some participants expressed concern over whether all staff in current missions are fit for the purpose of the missions; it was noted that job profiles are not always updated in a timely fashion. This reflects an often-overlooked factor of integrated missions: as they take place over time, their goals and needs often change quite dramatically. A more flexible staffing policy may be needed to rotate specialists in and out of missions as necessary, for example to ensure a timely shift from a humanitarian focus to a peacebuilding perspective after the initial post-conflict phase is over.

Again, this is a managerial challenge, requiring strong leadership to decide when such shifts should take place. This also points to another theme that recurred throughout the conference: benchmarking. Participants frequently observed that a key method for tying common planning to a shared understanding of how integrated missions should be implemented could be rigorous use of benchmarking to track the UN's progress.

Participants noted that benchmarking could be of particular use in phasing the transitional process from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and in setting out the terms on which strategies and staff could be shifted. It would also be useful in relations with domestic political figures and civil society.

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