

Box 3.1.1 Peacekeeping Principles and Guidelines: The UN's Capstone Doctrine

UN peacekeeping has been a major tool in the management of interstate and intrastate conflicts for nearly sixty years. But despite the critical role that peace operations have come to play, especially in the post-Cold War period, the only documented body of principles instructing UN peacekeepers in the field and at headquarters is a set of vague guidelines produced in 1995, *Peace Operations 2010*.¹ The year 2007, however, saw some progress in this area with the UN's release of a new set of principles and guidelines for its peacekeeping operations, known as the Capstone Doctrine. A product of the UN's Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, this document represents the first major doctrinal contribution produced by Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

The development of a clear doctrine for UN peacekeepers is part of DPKO's larger reform agenda, as set out in *Peace Operations 2010*. The reform agenda aims to improve DPKO's ability to launch

new peacekeeping missions with increased professionalism, and increasing the efficiency of its management of existing missions. In this context, the Capstone Doctrine, which is still pending approval by Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno, aims to serve as an overarching guide for DPKO until it is reviewed again in 2010.

The fruit of an extensive consultative process, and drawing on the UN's history in the field as well as landmark reports such as *An Agenda for Peace* and the Brahimi Report, the Capstone Doctrine captures the dramatic evolution of UN peacekeeping over the past six decades. The comparative advantages and limitations exhibited by UN peacekeeping—lessons learned—inform Capstone's fundamental standards, which will instruct practitioners in the conduct of UN peacekeeping operations. The Capstone Doctrine provides instructions on a wide range of issues, including the evolving

international environment, administration and planning, the complex dynamics of managing integrated missions, and supporting host populations. While the document attempts to provide the most comprehensive multidimensional doctrinal guidance, covering the complex nature of contemporary peace operations, it does not provide military doctrine, as that will remain the prerogative of member states.

Recognizing the continued evolution of peacekeeping doctrine and the need for further refinement, the Capstone Doctrine by no means represents the final word on the matter, but it is hoped that the doctrine will initiate deeper consideration and debate within UN headquarters, in the field, and among the UN's peacekeeping partners. In this vein, future iterations of the Capstone Doctrine will benefit from regular engagement with member states, particularly troop-contributing countries, the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as experts.

Source: United Nations, *Capstone Doctrine, Draft 3* (New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, June 2007), <http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/pages/public/viewprimarydoc.aspx?docid=481>.

Note: 1. United Nations, *Peace Operations 2010* (New York: Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 1995), <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko/articles/article191006.html>.