The Global Peace Operations Review is an interactive web-portal presenting in-depth analysis and detailed data on military peacekeeping operations and civilian-led political missions by the United Nations, regional organizations, and ad-hoc coalitions. The web-portal is a product of the New York University Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and a continuation of its long-standing print publications the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations and the Review of Political Missions.

Providing the most comprehensive overview of multilateral contributions to peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and post-conflict peacebuilding, the Review aims to initiate and inform discussions on the comparative advantages and appropriateness of different missions, and through constructive analysis to further strengthen existing partnerships necessary for them to succeed.

Through the Country & Regional Profile pages, the Review provides background information and regularly updated key developments on peace operations and the contexts in which they operate. The analysis is further enhanced by the provision of detailed data on each of the UN's peace operations, and headline data on missions fielded by regional organizations and ad hoc missions, which can be accessed in full through the Data & Trends section. Data on non-UN peace operations was compiled by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). For more details, please see our Data guide. The Strategic Summary provides an overview of main developments in mission settings over the past year and presents analysis on trends and the impact these may have on shaping peace operations of the future. Thematic essays presented in the In Focus section unpack issues critical to peace operations, providing analysis and guidance on possible approaches.

The Library section enables readers to download full text .pdf files of past editions of the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations (2006-2012) and the Review of Political Missions (2010-2012). For those interested in conducting their own analysis using the data generated for these publications, we have provided spreadsheets of all the statistics used to compile these reports.

Scope of the Global Peace Operations Review

The Review covers more than one hundred multilateral peace operations active in the previous year including missions fielded by the UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, OSCE, OAS and coalitions. It uses a broad definition of peace operations that includes multilateral and ad hoc military and police missions, as well as civilian led political missions. Neither type of mission has a simple definition. Alongside more straightforward peacekeeping missions, the Review, mindful of the need for peace operations to adjust to the changing nature of conflict, also includes peace enforcement operations that employ the use of force and engage in active combat.

Under political missions, we include multilateral civilian-led missions that have political engagement in the form of launching and supporting political processes at their core. This includes, for example, the EU's Special Representatives and the African Union Liaison Offices that support the implementation of peace agreements and accompany political processes. We have excluded missions, such as EU delegations and other liaison offices that may engage in political activities, but as their core function serve more as regular diplomatic or developmental presences. Along the same reasoning, we have also excluded election observer and human rights monitoring missions.

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## Thematic Essays

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## Related Publications
THE “GAPING HOLE” IN THE UN FOR SUSTAINING PEACE

Sarah Hearn

In 2015, multiple reviews of the UN’s peace efforts have added to the collective realization that UN peace operations – designed in the 1990s to support post-civil war peace deals – may have reached their limits for maintaining international peace and security. A UN High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations has just published its report on the UN’s peace and security efforts.

A commission led by Madeleine Albright and Ibrahim Gambari has concluded a panel report on global governance. A study will shortly be released on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Amidst all this activity, an advisory group of experts released in June a new independent review of the UN’s peacebuilding efforts, The Challenge of Sustaining Peace.

None of these reviews are revolutionary in their recommendations. What they do is coherently synthesize known problems and deficits. They recognize that great power politics is not favorable to a strengthening of the UN; they recognize that today’s transition to a multipolar order makes consensus-building on UN reform extremely difficult; and they recognize that the UN is but one among many international peace, security and development actors. Indeed, many of these reviews’ recommendations have been circulating for years, but they have usually not been implemented for political reasons.

The Challenge of Sustaining Peace is a robust analysis of the UN’s challenges and does offer sorely needed recommendations. But international attention must now focus on implementation. Ideas are now required for early actions and commitments that can build a longer-term consensus on deeper changes to the UN. Before change, however, must come debate.

The Challenge of Sustaining Peace feeds into the UN’s ten-year review of its “peacebuilding architecture,” which marks one decade since the 2005 World Summit, whereby world leaders made a bold commitment to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world. They established a new UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) with the purpose of helping countries transition from war to peace. The PBC and the Human Rights Council were launched with great fanfare as major new UN institutions. They were the institutional legacies of then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was determined to implement important lessons of Srebrenica and Rwanda: a need for more resolute UN monitoring and action on human rights violations, and more coherent and effective international responses to conflict.

The PBC’s founders hoped it would unite international actors in providing more coherent and sustainable attention to maintaining peace. Ambition extended to the disjointed peace and security, development, human rights and humanitarian arms of the UN, as well as the wider international system. A Peacebuilding Fund was established to provide emergency assistance and start-up funding for peace plans. A Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was charged with providing analysis, with building the skills of the whole UN system, and with supporting international coordination.
Ten years on, *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace* echoes the diagnosis of 2005: there is a **gaping hole** in the UN’s machinery for sustaining peace. It adds that there have been serious shortcomings in the UN’s efforts to fill it. The review’s authors argue that too many parts of the UN system work in silos, all contributing disjointed pieces to an ever more complex puzzle of local and transnational conflicts, and UN and other international responses.

At the **organizational level**, the authors argue that the different arms of the UN still fail to work together, and the PBC and PBSO have often added to the silos rather than rise above them to build international coherence. The links between the UN and other parts of the multilateral system are often ad hoc and thus fall short of serious and systemic global coordination driven by the UN.

At the **policy level**, they argue that the UN’s approach to sustaining peace is deeply flawed, tending to focus on supporting governments to the detriment of building trust between states and societies. Too often, the UN confuses “national ownership” – which is the sine qua non of an enduring peacebuilding process – with supporting ownership by a narrow group of governmental elites. The review also underlines that the UN makes no coherent or dedicated monitoring effort to help countries prevent conflict in the first place. And the review argues that the UN’s development and human rights actors pay insufficient attention to building inclusive development processes that can sustain peace.

The result of these **gaping policy and organizational holes** is that funding and attention is not sustained for the time needed to restore trust between states and societies, or to build inclusive and functioning institutions that prevent further conflict.

- The *Challenge of Sustaining Peace* makes a series of recommendations for addressing the UN’s gaping holes:
  - Charge the Peacebuilding Commission with bridging the divide across all UN inter-governmental bodies (the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and the Economic and Social Council) to better support conflict prevention and sustainable peacebuilding.
  - Make major improvements in the analytical capacity and authority of the PBSO to strengthen the PBC and the UN system.
  - Introduce significant improvements to the UN’s skills, knowledge and approaches on the ground for sustaining peace, as well as better operational planning: longer UN mission timelines, better transition planning between the spectrum of UN peace and development operations, and joint planning and delivery for sustaining peace in the long term.
  - Build partnerships with other global and regional multilateral institutions to help sustain peace, especially international financial institutions (IFIs) and regional organizations.
  - Provide more predictable funding for peacebuilding programs over the time it takes to develop institutions and resolve the drivers of conflict.
  - Focus more efforts on building national governmental and non-state leadership, and encourage inclusion in processes to sustain peace.
All of these findings are complementary with the parallel review of peace operations, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace*, which makes four main points: the UN must recognize the primacy of national politics in developing solutions to conflict; it must make more flexible use of the whole UN system and the whole spectrum of tools for sustaining peace (including and beyond military operations); it must build stronger partnerships with key actors (such as multilateral development banks and the African Union); and it must be more focused on the field and on people (not the New York machinery).

The problem is that *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace* and *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace* both remind us that too little has changed since previous reviews. The General Assembly last reviewed the Peacebuilding Commission in 2010, recommending very similar, although less ambitious, reforms to peacebuilding. The UN Security Council and General Assembly took note of the 2010 review’s recommendations, but few, if any, were implemented. The reasons are political, and sceptics – including this author – have expressed reservations in the past about the depth of political will at the UN to address shortcomings.

When attempts leading in to the 2005 World Summit to expand the Security Council’s permanent membership failed, the PBC quickly became a safety valve for international discontent. The bargains over the PBC’s mandate in the months following the Summit reflected these tensions. The PBC was given little authority and decision-making powers, and burdensome New York-focused procedures quickly mushroomed. The successes enjoyed by the PBC had been driven by good inter-personal relations, but not by a comprehensive UN drive to strengthen capacities for sustaining peace on the ground.

While both reviews offer robust analyses of many of the problems and solutions, neither review separates out the more feasible “quick wins” from an assessment of the steps needed to achieve more contentious structural change in the UN. International attention must now focus on mapping out those potential actions, acting quickly on the “low hanging fruit” in 2015 and 2016, as well as identifying steps necessary to transform the UN system in the longer-term.

**“EARLY WINS”?**

The UN’s ten-year peacebuilding review process is split into two parts: an independent review, and inter-governmental negotiations. The Security Council and General Assembly are expected to adopt resolutions on *The Challenge of Sustaining the Peace* later this year. In parallel, Ban Ki-moon is expected to produce a report in response to *Uniting our Strengths for Peace*. A response that incorporates recommendations from both reports would make most sense, but there may be structural impediments to this. While *Uniting for Peace* is a report commissioned by and for the Secretary-General, Sustaining the Peace is not. The peacebuilding review is an inter-governmental process. Ban’s implementation report may make references to the Review, but will probably not address it in any detail. In confining his response to peace operations, he would be perpetuating the existing problem: a UN that works in silos.

With an integrated approach, the Secretary-General could have listed a range of quick win proposals and commitments focusing on strengthening the UN on the ground. As Challenges to Sustaining Peace recommends, the Secretary-General could commit to agreeing on “peacebuilding compacts” upfront with countries exiting conflict. These would govern the timelines and benchmarks for mission transitions. He could task the UN on the ground with reassessing its approaches and deepening its knowledge base on building state-society relations. He could task his leaders on the ground to work with national actors to develop sustainable strategies that are intended to far outlive any given UN mission. He could commit to deepening his partnership with the World Bank, as well as other existing and new multilateral banks, to drive significant efforts into inclusive development.
empowers all national leaders, that empowers women and youth, and that helps to leverage larger and more transformative investments in solutions such as infrastructure and job creation, is a UN that could have a more lasting positive effect on people's daily lives.

In these regards, UN leaders can and must all push on open doors in 2015 and 2016. In Addis Ababa in mid-July, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development committed to ensuring funding for the poorest, most vulnerable and conflict-affected countries (although no new resources or concrete plans were put on table). In September in New York, new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be adopted to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs contain a number of radical changes from the MDGs, including a new goal for building peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and inclusive, accountable and effective institutions. While the world does not yet know how to achieve this goal, it reflects an international consensus on the links between peace and development that did not previously exist.

The peaceful societies goal opens up a significant global opportunity to align peace agreements, national development and peacebuilding priorities, and international assistance, and to conduct better monitoring and prevention of risks to development. This emphasis on development draws in a far wider range of pivotal actors, including rising powers and new multilateral development banks, civil society and the private sector. The UN's challenge is to mandate and empower its leadership on the ground to work with all actors and resources to sustain the peace. In 2015 and 2016, Ban Ki-moon could identify pilot countries for rolling out a new UN approach.

In 2016, Turkey will host the World Humanitarian Summit. Here too, countries, the UN, civil society and the private sector can agree to joint solutions for monitoring and preventing emergencies, for reducing global risks, and for sustainably resolving protracted displacement and crisis.

In actively taking advantage of these opportunities, the Security Council and General Assembly might mandate some up-front "no-brainer," "bite-sized" changes to the UN. They could mandate the PBC to work with the UN's inter-governmental bodies on sustaining the peace across conflict-affected countries (the review recommends a range of sensible ad hoc working practices). The Security Council could request the PBC's advice on progress against transition benchmarks in conflict-affected countries. It could also mandate the PBC to incorporate the UN and international system to promote coherent efforts towards sustaining the peace across countries on the Council's agenda. The General Assembly and Security Council have weak track records when drawing on the PBC. But if member states want to expand partnerships and encourage more inclusivity, it would be wise to give the PBC teeth, and hold it accountable for progress.

The General Assembly, for its part, could exact more coherent performance from the UN development system for supporting peaceful and inclusive societies through the UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (a review of the UN's global development performance, functions and resources), which will next take place in 2016.
LONGER-TERM STRUCTURAL CHANGE OF THE UN

While quick wins need to focus on action on the ground, longer-term dialogue and consensus should be built around deeper structural transformation of the UN. These more difficult tasks of filling the UN's gaping holes will realistically only fall to the next Secretary-General from late 2016 onwards.

She could organize dialogue around creating a system-wide model for improved monitoring response to conflict risks. While few if any member states will object to the concept, the practice may prove contentious because the current application of the ‘sovereignty’ principle makes it difficult to take early action before the onset of conflict. Building consensus around increased investment in development and conflict prevention would be more straightforward. In this regard, the new Secretary-General should focus on building strong links between the UN and the rising powers and new development banks. As these entities’ global roles in peace and development grow and evolve, they are in learning mode. The next five years present a window of opportunity to build strong partnerships beyond the Bretton Woods order.

The UN secretariat’s structures and capacities could also be reviewed. Given sufficient political will, the reset button could be pressed on PBSO, potentially addressing the coherence of the UN secretariat by merging multiple departments with duplicate responsibilities. But here too, reform will be tough. Hostility and power politics from within the Secretariat will slow reforms unless countries are seriously willing to forgo control of national appointments to the existing structures. The case has yet to be made that a significant reform exercise in New York would lead to the kinds of changes to people’s lives that would merit a Secretary-General’s finite political capital. Perhaps it would be better if the next Secretary-General focused on empowering her people on the ground, advancing “bite-sized” changes to the bureaucracy in New York.

New tools and responses will also be needed to address emerging drivers of conflict, including the growth of violent extremist movements that are impervious to the UN’s current approaches for mediation, conflict resolution and development. Here too, international consensus must first be built on the drivers of contemporary conflicts and appropriate responses. These challenges will continue to fall to the UN on the ground. Some of the UN’s responses may be operational, but many may also be in the normative space. There are significant gaps in international norms on cyber security, regulation of new weapons technologies (such as 3D printed weapons), maritime security, and tackling illicit financial flows, among many other areas that are key to contemporary conflicts.

None of this year’s UN reports will be headline grabbers. They rightly focus on the UN’s operational coherence, management and politics, because these are the building blocks to improving the UN’s performance. What actors need to do now is articulate clear pathways, achieving some quick wins in 2015 and 2016, and instigating longer-term processes towards deeper structural reform. In the coming months, candidates for Secretary-General should articulate their campaign priorities. How to fill the UN’s gaping holes for sustaining peace must surely come high on their priority lists.

*I am grateful to colleagues at CIC and participants at the Beijing Conference on “Emerging Views on Global Peace Practice” (hosted by AFSC, QUNO, SSRC and UNA-China) for their comments, insights and discussions during the preparation of this essay.

Sarah Hearn is an Associate Director and Senior Fellow for Global Development at the Center on International Cooperation. | Twitter: @SarahEHearn
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: GENDER AND THE UN’S PEACEBUILDING AND PEACE OPERATIONS REPORTS

Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins

Gender issues are now a regular feature of the international community’s approach to promoting peace and security. Two high-profile reports recently issued by the UN – on peace operations and the organization’s peacebuilding architecture – include significant content on the role that women play in war and its aftermath. Both reports stress the need to see women as agents of conflict prevention and resolution, rather than just victims in need of protection.

However, neither report succeeds in overcoming the ‘add women and stir’ curse familiar to advocates of gender mainstreaming in peace and security institutions. The reports fall short of addressing the structural issues that result in women’s exclusion from peace and security processes, both domestically and internationally. Neither report diagnoses the shortcomings of existing efforts to implement what has come to be known as the women, peace and security agenda. Taken together, the two reports represent a missed opportunity to identify a coherent set of reforms to ensure that existing commitments are fulfilled.

The headline finding of Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, is that speeding up force deployment and improving peacekeeper training are less important to the success of peace operations than the ability to understand local politics, particularly the prospects for ‘spoilers’ to undercut an agreement between warring parties. The report’s key recommendation in this area is to strengthen the UN’s conflict and political analysis capacity, in part by merging existing units within the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The creation of a new Deputy Secretary-General position (for peace and security) is also proposed. But nowhere in the political analysis section does the report address gender – a major social cleavage that affects everything from the ideology of armed groups to the delivery of public services.

For example, Uniting for Peace analyzes links between demographic change and conflict propensity and notes the high proportion of youth in the populations of conflict-affected and fragile states. It warns that high unemployment among young people is associated with elevated levels of radicalization and violence. Yet the report does not interrogate the gender dynamics driving these demographic shifts. Policy responses should acknowledge the link between steep gender inequalities and the misogyny exhibited by some extremist groups, and incorporate women’s empowerment into long-term conflict prevention efforts.

Apart from the imperatives of preventing (and prosecuting) war crimes against women and increasing their numbers in UN mission staff, many UN member states and senior UN officials lack an understanding of what needs to be done to promote women’s participation in peace and security processes. Reflecting these uncertainties, Uniting for Peace proposes no concrete accountability mechanisms to remedy the exclusion of women from peace talks or from post-conflict planning processes. Instead, as has been the case for years, UN leaders are urged to consult – on a ‘structured, regular’ basis – with women’s civil society groups.
There are no specifics about what constitutes ‘structured’ or ‘regular,’ and no indication of how to hold officials accountable if they fail to hold consultations or to respond constructively to women’s concerns and proposals.

One of the structural obstacles to women’s peace leadership is that women’s groups, decimated by conflict, can be nearly invisible in national politics. Uniting for Peace fails to mention the need to rectify this state of affairs through core funding to women’s organizations. Nor does it mention the resource that matters almost as much as cash: information about upcoming peace and security processes, and a direct invitation to engage in them. A more robust approach would be to mandate routine participation of women’s organizations in peace talks – even if only as observers – and in donor conferences.

Uniting for Peace does express concern about the low proportion (roughly 20%) of women among mission managers. It recommends a review of the factors that have held back progress in this area. While more female staff would not necessarily make mission practice more gender-responsive, their visibility and seniority is significant because it signals to all local stakeholders the sincerity of the UN’s commitment to gender equality. Increasing the proportion of women in senior field positions will require reforms to address serious constraints in their recruitment and retention. So will increasing the proportion of female uniformed peacekeepers. A tantalizing half sentence in the report states that Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) could be offered incentives such as reimbursement premiums for supplying more women soldiers and police. This, however, was not stated explicitly in the report’s recommendations.

There is also no mention of another potentially fruitful area for reform: increasing the share of women among locally recruited civilian staff in UN missions, such as drivers, secretaries, translators, and policy analysts. Women hold an average of 17% of these jobs. Recruiting more women would require affirmative-action policies and perhaps skills-building, but would send a strong message about the priority of gender equality in the UN’s approach to preventing and resolving conflict. It would also help make the UN more approachable for local women, supporting the push for more sustained and substantive consultation.

Uniting for Peace gives welcome attention to the issue of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by uniformed and civilian UN personnel. But the recommendations differ little from current practice, except for two changes. First, a ‘naming and shaming’ approach is proposed to call out TCCs that fail to investigate allegations and punish perpetrators. This will help to signal the sincerity of the UN’s zero tolerance policy. Second, the report recognizes that victims of SEA need support and compensation – but, strangely, the UN trust fund it proposes would not be used to award compensation to victims. Instead, it would pay for prevention and awareness-raising activities. The already acute awareness of high levels of SEA suggests that a lack of local knowledge is not the key problem. Secure and reliable reporting mechanisms that do not put victims at risk are a shortcoming for which the report does not suggest a remedy.

It might be expected that gender issues would find a more central place in The Challenge of Sustaining Peace, the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture. Peacebuilding – the effort to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of armed conflict – extends more naturally into ‘development’ work, a field in which the promotion of women’s rights is more deeply entrenched. Sustaining Peace does call for renewed efforts by the UN and other international actors to involve women’s organizations in conflict-prevention, and to ensure their full engagement in economic reconstruction.

That every element of “sustaining peace,” from security sector reform to administrative restructuring, has a gender dimension is never in doubt. The panel even acknowledges that 15 years of rhetoric about involving women in peacebuilding “have yet to
translate into sufficient material changes in women’s lives, or even in the UN’s peacemaking and peacebuilding processes” (78). Unfortunately, Sustaining Peace provides very little analysis of the causes of continued under-performance. On some issues, there is no recognition that a problem exists at all. While noting that “electoral reforms can ... introduce quotas to increase [women’s] representation in elected bodies at all levels”; (79), the report is silent on whether the UN is doing all it can to ensure that quota-based systems are adopted in countries where women are chronically under-represented in politics. Consequently, the report proposes no reforms – not even a requirement of more concerted political pressure from UN officials – to ensure that promoting gender quotas is an integral component of UN electoral assistance.

As for financing, Sustaining Peace refers to the commitment, in the Secretary-General’s 2010 7-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, to spend at least 15% of resources in peacebuilding contexts on projects that promote gender equality or women’s empowerment. To its credit, the report acknowledges that, with the partial exception of the Peacebuilding Fund, the 15% pledge has gone largely unfulfilled. There is no explanation for why this might be the case, though the report’s recommendation for how to improve this glaring failure implies that a lack of management incentives is at the root of the problem. It suggests that achieving the 15% pledge “be written into the Secretary-General’s performance compacts with senior UN leaders on the ground, in mission and non-mission settings, and backed up with an enhanced system for monitoring and tracking achievement” (182).

If adopted in concert with one of the report’s key overall recommendations – that all UN agencies operating in Security Council-authorized missions be placed under a single leader, such as an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General – this could introduce the incentives that to date have been lacking. Making senior field managers specifically accountable for achieving the 15% spending commitment would in effect reverse the exemption from this pledge that DPA and DPKO negotiated for themselves five years ago. It would also make the 15% commitment applicable at the country (rather than the global) level, a change that might further enhance accountability.

Sustaining Peace’s recommended reforms to the management of UN field operations might also have included, but did not, institutional changes to elevate the status of gender issues within UN mission planning and operations. To date, gender advisors are sometimes, though not always, deployed. They are often isolated from senior mission management and from the priority technical functions of missions. This issue is addressed in Uniting for Peace, which recommends integration of gender experts to all functional components of missions, as well as the placement of a senior gender advisor in the office of the mission leader. This would be a major improvement, but only if recruitment guidelines, terms of reference, and reporting lines are carefully designed to ensure collaboration with UN Women.

Both reports reference the potential role that UN Women could play in a revised mission architecture, but remain vague about how this might work. Uniting for Peace states that ‘Missions should have full access to the policy, substantive and technical support from UN Women’ (243, 3). Sustaining Peace issues a bland call for DPA and DPKO to “actively explore enhanced ways to work in partnership” with UN Women and other relevant UN agencies (159). The absence of details (or a timeline) for this enhanced collaboration allows the two departments with the most decision-making authority in peacebuilding contexts – departments whose power would be enhanced if field leadership is consolidated, as Sustaining Peace recommends – to avoid institutionalizing sustained attention to gender issues.
In fact, the only other concrete gender-equality proposal in Sustaining Peace concerns UN entities that DPKO and DPA can safely ignore: the intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission and the secretariat-based Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which supports the PBC. Sustaining Peace urges the PBSO to “work closely” with the rest of the UN system (including DPA and DPKO) “to ensure that gender expertise is available” to the PBC as it develops peacebuilding plans with the countries on its agenda (183). The PBC is also encouraged to engage with women’s organizations as it develops these plans and monitors their implementation (185). Neither measure would influence decision-making at any level, least of all among senior management in the field.

Both Uniting for Peace and Sustaining Peace state that implementation of the UN Security Council’s seven resolutions on women, peace and security must improve. The element of these resolutions that has seen the most focused and sustained action is conflict-related sexual violence, which is an international crime. The promotion of women’s leadership and participation in conflict-resolution, peacemaking and post-conflict recovery does not have the same legal status. Implementation instructions, whether from the Security Council or from within the UN system, typically take the weakest possible form, e.g. “encouraging engagement with women’s organizations.” There are no consequences for failure. These two reports have continued this pattern.

One more major review of the UN’s peace and security work is due this coming October: the “Global Study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security,” managed by UN Women. It is a crucial opportunity for the UN to recommend bold accountability reforms, without which its longstanding commitments will continue to remain unfulfilled.

Anne Marie Goetz is a Clinical Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, New York University Center for Global Affairs, New York University. | Twitter: @amgoetz

Robert Jenkins is in the Department of Political Science, Hunter College, City University of New York.
WHAT I SAW IN AFGHANISTAN

Barnett Rubin

When the late Richard Holbrooke was the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, he would periodically invite members of Congress to breakfast meetings with his staff, on which I was serving. On September 16, 2009, we met with Representative Nita Lowey, the chair of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. As chair of the subcommittee, Lowey had more authority over funding for civilian activities in Afghanistan than anyone else in the U.S. Congress. She was also the representative of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s home district, and Clinton attended the meeting.

Holbrooke declared the meeting to be on the record, since my former boss at the Council on Foreign Relations, Holbrooke’s friend Les Gelb, was there covering it for a profile of Clinton. Before Lowey arrived with Clinton, Holbrooke cautioned us, “She gives us the money.” Lowey told us that a chorus of influential members was questioning why we were spending so much money in Afghanistan. The women’s caucus and others in Congress were up in arms about the lack of progress on women’s rights and fighting corruption, and about the ongoing dispute over the results of the August, 2009, Presidential election. Transforming Afghan society, Lowey argued, would take a long time and would be a permanent drain on the U.S. budget. Holbrooke responded, “Transforming Afghan society is not our mission. Girls’ education is a big issue in many places. We are in Afghanistan because of our national-security interests.”

Toward the end of the meeting, Holbrooke surprised me by asking me to summarize the work I was doing on a political settlement with the Taliban, which he generally tried to shield from exposure even within the government. At that time, we were trying—and failing—to get reconciliation onto the agenda of the policy review led by President Obama. In the papers we drafted, Holbrooke prohibited use of the term “political settlement” in favor of an inter-agency-friendly euphemism that we came up with: “threat reduction.” I outlined the concept of reconciliation for Lowey, noting that it would be possible only if the Taliban separated itself from Al Qaeda. Lowey looked at me with some surprise. If the Taliban was not with Al Qaeda, she said, we wouldn’t get a cent from Congress.

No one who knew Afghanistan before 9/11 can fail to note the remarkable changes that have taken place there: the dramatic increase in life expectancy and decrease in child and maternal mortality rates; the elections for President, parliament, and provincial councils; the distribution of millions of cell phones, many connected to the Internet; the flourishing of the mass media; the construction of office and commercial towers, roads, and, airports; and, perhaps most important, the spread of education, which is creating a generation of professionals who, as they move into positions of influence, are sure to transform the country. And yet, after thirty-seven years of continual warfare, the population is traumatized. Both civilian and military casualties are on
the rise. Extreme poverty, vulnerability, and violence, especially against women, are pervasive, as are government corruption and other abuses of power. And all of the progress hangs by a thin, fraying thread—Afghanistan depends on foreign aid to finance two thirds of the government's operating budget and virtually all of its development projects and national-security forces.

Many, including myself, have criticized the mistakes, misconceptions, and organizational dysfunctions that contributed to the shortcomings of efforts to build or strengthen the state in Afghanistan. But such terms presume a common goal of building peace and stability, whereas the U.S.'s “clear and focussed goal” in Afghanistan, as defined by President Obama has been “to disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to prevent their return to either country in the future.” The reason that the U.S. government has sacrificed thousands of lives and spent hundreds of billions of dollars on Afghanistan is because Al Qaeda attacked the United States while its leadership was based in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Other countries joined mainly because the United States took the lead. The intervention in Afghanistan was a counter-terrorist intervention. That, not analytical errors or bureaucratic politics, is why some U.S. policies proved to be obstacles to peace and stability.

The conflict between the goals of counter-terrorism initiatives and peacemaking began at the U.N. talks on Afghanistan in Bonn, Germany, in November and December of 2001 (generally known as the Bonn Talks), in which the U.N. brokered a political settlement among Afghan groups opposed to the Taliban. The current regime in Afghanistan is based on that settlement, which included élites of the former royal regime (many from high-ranking Pashtun tribes and most of whom had been exiled since at least the early nineteen-eighties) and the armed groups, mostly non-Pashtun and Islamist, that were leading the fight against the Taliban on the ground. The U.N. team at Bonn, which was led by the Special Representative of the Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi and on which I served, saw its mission as a continuation of the work of the U.N. Special Mission to Afghanistan, which had been trying, for years, to broker peace between the Taliban and the groups fighting them. Brahimi accepted that the ongoing war made it impossible to invite the Taliban to Bonn, but the agreement was meant to launch a process that would enable them to be incorporated. Multiple studies on political settlements of civil wars have concluded that the more inclusive the settlement, the more durable the agreement.

The Bonn Agreement did make Afghan government and politics more inclusive, but it could not overcome U.S. counter-terrorism policy, which dictated the exclusion of the Taliban and was supported by a broad international consensus. The day after the signing of the agreement, December 6, 2001, the Taliban leadership agreed to a truce with President Karzai in return for an amnesty that would allow them to live in security and dignity. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld overruled it, saying that there would be no negotiated solution. In a meeting in his office in November, 2008, President Karzai told me that soon after his inauguration, on December 22, 2001, he received letters of support from Taliban leaders who had returned to their villages. These leaders were soon hunted down by U.S. Special Forces; some of those who escaped, such as Mullah Baradar, became leaders of the insurgency.

In the U.N. office in Jalalabad in May, 2002, I met Haji Ruhullah, the nephew of Jamil-ur-Rahman, the founder of the Salafi movement Jama'at al-Da'wa, a group allied with the Taliban. I had come to Jalalabad at Brahimi's request to report on the second round of indirect elections to the Emergency Loya Jirga. Ruhullah was trying to participate. He had brought a binder full of biographies and photographs of his movement's candidates. Three months later, on August 21, 2002, U.S. soldiers came to his village, in Kunar province, arrested him, and sent him first to Bagram and then to Guantánamo. Since his release, in 2008, he has been living peacefully in Afghanistan, but he and his fellow former detainees are not always inclined to accept the legitimacy of a government based on a process from which counter-terrorism policy excluded them.
The American-led intervention in Afghanistan began with the C.I.A.'s transfer of tens of millions of dollars, in cash, to the leaders of armed groups. On September 24, 2001, while the C.I.A. was starting to deliver knapsacks and cartons of hundred-dollar bills to commanders in Afghanistan, Richard Haass, then the head of policy planning in Colin Powell's State Department, convened a meeting (in which I participated) to discuss the future of Afghanistan. In the first part of that meeting, a State Department official told a representative of the Rome group, a group of exiles led by the former Afghan king Zahir Shah, that his office needed to better account for the expenditure of the modest grant that the U.S. was giving it. No more funds would be disbursed without receipts.

But in that meeting we did not discuss oversight of the far larger funds appropriated by the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to pay commanders, at first to fight the Taliban and then to provide goods and services, including security, to U.S. and NATO troops through private companies the Afghan groups controlled. The U.S. did not include the expenditures of covert or military operations in the investigation of corruption until mid-2010, when several task forces began to oversee military contracts, though not C.I.A. contracts. This contracting with Afghan power holders, the total size of which is difficult to determine, provided much of the financing for the country's patronage networks. That is why President Karzai accused the U.S. of financing his opponents and weakening the government. He was wrong to think that the U.S. did it intentionally, but it did it nonetheless.

Here is an illustration. In November, 2009, I was invited to Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, to participate in a daylong training for the leaders of the 82nd Airborne Division before their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. During lunch, I sat with a group of soldiers, some of whom had already been through one or more deployments in Afghanistan. One of them told me that he had been stationed at the principal U.S. military base at Bagram. Perimeter security, he said, was the responsibility of a private company headed by a former Afghan commander. The commander's brother had a factory that supplied cement to the base for construction. The commander, he noted, was the most powerful Afghan in the district. The profits that the commander and his brother earned from contracts far outweighed any capacity-building or rule-of-law assistance received by the local administration. Such contracting may not amount to corruption in the legal sense, but it conveyed the message that power derived from operational and financial links to the U.S. rather than from the legal authorities.

One case in which the U.S. started a serious effort to counter corruption illustrates a different aspect of the problem. In early 2009, the Obama Administration deployed the recently established Threat Finance Cell (T.F.C.) from the Treasury Department to Kabul to investigate terrorist financing. Initially, based on assumptions inherited from the previous Administration, the investigations focussed on the link between narcotics revenue and Taliban funding. But the investigators kept following the money, which eventually led them to the New Ansari Money Exchange. The more the T.F.C. investigated New Ansari, the more the subject of the investigation broadened beyond terrorist financing.

On September 14, 2009, Rina Amiri, a fellow senior adviser to Holbrooke and a former United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan official, was sitting next to me at the weekly gathering co-chaired by Holbrooke and the White House director for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Doug Lute, when a Treasury Department representative handed out a classified PowerPoint presentation about the investigation. As Amiri and I paged through the slides, our astonishment mounted at the relationships it revealed. As Dexter Filkins reported in the Times in 2010, New Ansari was “suspected of moving billions of dollars out of the country for Afghan politicians, drug traffickers and insurgents. Kabul Bank [a private bank that collapsed after being looted by shareholders in a Ponzi scheme] used the firm, whose dealings are nearly impossible to track, to transfer at least $60 million out of the country, a bank shareholder said.”
The first arrest resulting from the investigation was of Mohammed Zia Salehi, the chief of administration for the National Security Council of Afghanistan. The Times reported that “Salehi often acts as a courier of money to other Afghans, according to an Afghan politician who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he feared retaliation.” Salehi was soon released from detention, under pressure from President Karzai. He had once worked as a translator for the former militia leader (now Vice-President) Abdul Rashid Dostum, one of the commanders funded by the C.I.A. to topple the Taliban in northern Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks. The Times also reported that Salehi was “being paid by the Central Intelligence Agency, according to Afghan and American officials.”

There is no indication that the C.I.A. intervened to have Salehi released or did anything in violation of U.S. law. It was carrying out the mission that the President assigned to it—“to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan”—which involved paying Afghan officials for information or collaboration, even though, from the standpoint of Afghan law, those payments constituted illegal corruption. One part of U.S. policy corrupted Afghan officials while other parts tried to investigate and root out corruption. Given the interest that defined the mission, concerns about corruption did not trump those of covert action.

Corruption is not a problem solely because it wastes money and undermines trust in the government. It can prevent the government from functioning. On March 5, 2015, John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, sent a letter to a number of military commands describing a fiscal crisis. The Afghan government could not meet its “budgetary obligations,” which mainly consisted of paying the salaries of employees, including teachers and health-care workers (but not security forces). One of the likely reasons for this is corruption in the collection of customs, the government’s largest source of the domestic revenue. U.S. officials estimated that corruption took about half of the potential customs revenue, according to Sopko.

While some corruption resulted from weak oversight of the customs service, a larger problem was the domination of border points by U.S.-funded militias. Abdul Raziq, the security commander of Kandahar Province, was previously the commander of the border police at the customs point between Kandahar and Balochistan, where he is reported to have engaged in a profitable trade in smuggled used cars as well as the usual narcotics. Human Rights Watch also implicates Raziq in extrajudicial killings and the torture of detainees, including the “application of a power drill to their heads.” The U.S. military, however, has backed him and credits him with securing Kandahar City and expelling the Taliban from nearby rural districts. Even if President Ashraf Ghani wanted to remove him, for any number of reasons, he would have to weigh those considerations against the fact that Raziq’s security forces are responsible for the defense of Kandahar. (Raziq has denied all allegations of wrongdoing.)

Furthermore, elimination of corruption in customs would be only a partial solution to the problem of funding the government. Customs revenues constitute about one third of domestic revenues, which currently pay for no more than one quarter of the national budget. Therefore, roughly speaking, even eliminating all corruption and doubling the customs revenues would enable the country to pay for less than half of its budget. And the budget does not account for donors’ direct expenditures, including, crucially, the billions of dollars spent by the U.S. on Afghan national-security forces. As a result, the solvency, security, and stability of Afghanistan depend upon the wisdom and generosity of the Congress of the United States.

The pattern of assistance through institutions that the Afghan state cannot sustain is not the product of mistaken models. It is the result of an assistance program designed to support the immediate needs of the military campaign. In the spring of 2010, as U.S. commanders tried to apply General David Petraeus’s counterinsurgency doctrine to Kandahar, the military proposed a quick fix to the city’s electrical supply: hooking up the city’s distribution network to diesel generators and paying for the fuel. That would generate employment and good will. U.S. civilian officials objected that the Afghans would never be able to afford the millions of
dollars of diesel fuel required. But, according to one military official interviewed at the time, “This is not about development—it’s about counterinsurgency.” Kandahar got the diesel generators.

Five years later, the Department of Defense will terminate funding for the diesel by this fall, pulling the plug on this unsustainable project and on thousands of factories and homes. The U.S. has no convincing plan for the supply of electricity when it cuts the funding, according to a recent report by SIGAR.

Today, Abdul Raziq claims that he has secured Kandahar, pushing the Taliban back more than fifty miles from the city. But what will happen after the autumn of 2015? Unemployment will rise, the economy will falter, and more young men may join the insurgency. If security deteriorates, the usual voices in Washington will criticize President Obama for withdrawing troops too soon. But, however long the troops stay, military operations will still favor tactically effective quick fixes that collapse when the troops leave, as they will some day. This is not the fault of the military: it has tried to carry out the task that the President assigned it. But the problem of Kandahar’s electricity illustrates why military interventions are unlikely to provide a framework for stability.

Two possible models could keep the Afghan state and civil society operating at close to the current levels. The first is to keep assistance coming indefinitely. In that unlikely case, as Representative Nita Lowey foretold, a peace process might be a liability. Though a settlement with the Taliban could reduce the cost of the security forces, it would also reduce the perception that Afghanistan is a source of threats that require a sustained response.

The second model is the one that I believe President Ghani is trying to implement: to start Afghanistan on the path to greater self-sufficiency and sustainability. Ghani appears to believe that such a path first requires peace with Pakistan and insurgents, cooperation with all the country’s neighbors to make Afghanistan into a transit hub or “roundabout,” and then the development of extractive industries for the country’s vast mineral deposits. Without a quick turnaround in global perceptions of the risks associated with investing in Afghanistan, capital will not come. Furthermore, since Afghanistan is a landlocked country, whose northern neighbors are also landlocked, it cannot connect domestic investments to world markets without efficient and economical transit through Pakistan and Iran.

That, more than any political motivation, most likely explains the speed and radicalism of President Ghani’s turn to China and attempted rapprochement with Pakistan. It also illustrates the tremendous stake that Afghanistan has in any easing of tensions between the U.S. and Iran. When Ghani came to Washington in March, the media focussed on adjustments to the troop redeployment schedule and pledges of assistance. But what Ghani needs most is political and diplomatic support, backed up by investment, to support a peace process, provide incentives for its success, and enable Afghanistan to start generating revenues to sustain its own state.

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Barnett Rubin is Associate Director and Senior Fellow at the Center on International Cooperation of New York University | Twitter: @BRRubin
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Testing Indonesia’s Commitment to UN Peacekeeping

Jim Della-Giacoma

Indonesia is committed to becoming one of the top ten countries contributing to UN peace operations. With its Roadmap Vision 4,000 Peacekeepers, Jakarta aims to dramatically increase the 2,724 peacekeepers now deployed in ten UN missions by 2019.

Compared to 2014, this would be a doubling of troops deployed in only five years. This is a noble and ambitious goal of international good citizenship, but what will be the challenges on this journey?

Last month a panel of experts chaired by Nobel laureate and former Timor-Leste president Jose Ramos Horta gave a few hints when it laid out an ambitious vision about how to bring the organization’s peace operations into the 21st century.

Commissioned by the outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as a legacy project, Uniting Our Strengths for Peace issues a challenge to the Security Council and member states to change the way peace operations are conducted.

The panel argued for four shifts in UN peace operations.

First, it made the case for the primacy of politics in peace operations, which include peacekeeping, special political missions, and the mandating of envoys.

Second, it said these missions needed to be more flexible in responding to the situation on the ground, including deploying more quickly. Indonesia’s bold commitment could help this.

Third, the UN needs to be a better partner to other organizations, sometimes acting as much an enabler as an implementer. Finally, the UN Secretariat need to be change the way it administers peace missions to be more field-focused and people-centered.

The proliferation of peace operations shows they have value as a strategic tool, especially in those situations where something must be done but in the face of competing national interests nobody quite knows what to do. After the drawdown of NATO forces from Afghanistan, the United Nations is the go to organization deploying the largest number of troops and police to global hotspots — more than 120,000 uniformed and civilian personnel serve under the blue flag in 39 missions.

But as Indonesia prepares to host the Asia-Pacific Regional Peacekeeping Meeting in Jakarta on July 27-28 policymakers should study closely Uniting for Peace.
In it, they may find some positions that are close to their own. In other cases, the panel has set out to confront those who mandate, pay for, and supply personnel to peace operations.

In a public address at the UN in New York in February, Indonesia's Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Muhammad Anshor expressed hope that the panel would provide some viable solutions to current challenges. He recognized mandates are becoming more complex and multi-dimensional, such as the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO).

"While the Brigade has been seen as an effective element in neutralizing armed groups, there are risks whereby MONUSCO is seen as a party to the conflict and perceived partial. This has undermined the credibility of the mission, and might be harmful to future peacekeeping and other related UN overtures there as well," Ambassador Anshor remarked.

The last major review of peace operations was the Brahimi report of August 2000 and it focused on the UN's ability to credibly project force. The latest panel has deliberated after a decade and a half where military force has been vigorously applied in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya but has lead to neither peace nor stability in these lands.

The panel acknowledges the Security Council has been mandating new types of missions, such as helping combat Ebola in Liberia, but has made an argument that limits need to be set. Robust interventions such as those in Somalia in 1993 or the DRC in 2013 with the FIB should be exceptional. As peacekeepers become the targets of terrorists in Mali, the experts opined that UN operations are unsuited to counter-terrorism missions.

But the panel is not making a case for withdrawal from the world's problems. The challenge is to match mandates with capabilities.

Protection mandates must be realistic, it says, and recommends that they be integrated as part of a wider political approach to resolve the underlying conflict.

In an echo of Brahimi, its makes the case for the Secretariat to be frank with the Security Council about what resources it needs to do these difficult jobs.

Member States like Indonesia should provide more resources, including peacekeepers, to carry out these complex mandates, including protecting civilians.

"When a protection crisis occurs, UN personnel cannot stand by as civilians are threatened or killed. They must use every tool available to them to protect civilians under imminent threat. Each and every peacekeeper — military, police and civilian — must pass this test when crisis presents itself," the panel stated.

Indonesia by becoming a more prominent contributor to peace operations is exposing itself to greater burdens of responsibility and in the future graver moral dilemmas. UN peacekeeping is not all about getting a promotion, international experience, or coming home with some extra spending money from saving UN per diems. It can be about protecting civilians in ambiguous situations like civil wars where there may be not yet any peace to keep.
The UN may be trying to limit its exposure to war fighting scenarios, but it does not make peacekeeping an easy job. Whether as a civilian official, riot police, helicopter pilot, combat engineer, or rifle-bearing infantryman, the panel makes it clear that national caveats or other exceptions cannot release peacekeepers from a sacred duty when deployed to difficult peace operations. The ghosts of Rwanda and Srebrenica still haunt the international community. The protection of civilians, it says, is a core obligation of the UN.

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*Jim Della-Giacoma is the Deputy Director at the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, and Editor-in-Chief of the Global Peace Operations Review* | Twitter: @jimdella
Karin Landgren was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) overseeing the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) when in 2014 the Ebola epidemic struck the West African nation. Landgren calls it her most challenging time over a long and distinguished international career that began at The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), including working in the wake of the Rwanda genocide. The leadership position in Liberia was also the apex of Landgren’s work on peace operations that included appointments in Nepal and Burundi, where as SRSG she headed two special political missions as they wound up and began the difficult transition to peacebuilding.

Landgren harnessed this breadth of experience when leading UNMIL, a peacekeeping mission most at threat from a disease rather than armed combatants. Completion of her assignment in early July coincided with the launch of Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, a report by the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO). In an interview with CIC Deputy Director Jim Della-Giacoma, Landgren emphasized the importance of the panel’s emphasis on political analysis, strategy and strengthening the field orientation of UN peace operations. The following is an edited transcript of this conversation.

Jim Della-Giacoma: The High-level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) has produced its report Uniting Our Strengths for Peace. It is a lengthy document with much detail. Can you start by reflecting on what you regard as some of the important points from this report?

Karin Landgren: Finding peaceful resolutions and preventing the escalation of crisis is the core business of the UN. Every country, every region is somewhere on that continuum from stability to fragility to complete breakdown, and as the UN we need to be on top of that.

There are a few points of entry to this. One way is more active political analysis with partners. The UN shouldn’t feel that it needs to do this on its own. More could be done to reach out to partners for these analyses on the range of issues relevant to conflict prevention and resolution – political, security, human rights, social and economic factors. I’ve just come from a discussion on the structure of the Liberian economy, which I see as an impediment to ending that country’s fragility. Liberia is still running on a pre-war economic model, an enclave economy that benefits a small elite. Tell me that is not a socio-political problem? And yet when I raised the economy at a meeting on peace consolidation, a colleague told me that participants’ eyes glazed over, as if the economy were a separate matter from stability. It’s essential that the UN get the political analysis right.
A second and related issue is, at what point does a peacekeeping operation transition? This is an active question for us right now in Liberia. Sometimes one hears from the Council that “it has been over ten years”, as if ten years were an outer limit to a peacekeeping operation. Or, that “the country has held two successful presidential elections”. Strong political analysis can get us away from formulaic approaches to transition, and towards thinking of transition as part of the overall political strategy.

JDG: Are you saying that these decisions are solely based on factors found here or in the UN Security Council in New York rather than any analysis of what’s going on in the Liberian economy?

KL: These decisions aren’t bereft of analysis, no, but many pressures are brought to bear on Mission drawdown. Liberia’s own fragility and its incomplete reconciliation have not always been front and center.

A third issue around political strategies and necessary change is the number of actors crowding for space both inside and outside the UN, especially in post-conflict situations. One day it’s crowded − and then suddenly the caravan moves on. That was the situation in Liberia, pre-Ebola: after the Ivorian emergency subsided, few UN and NGO partners remained outside the capital. How do we attain a political strategy that also drives the agencies, funds and programs in a given country’s situation? How can this become true UN coherence, rather than the supply-side thinking that is still dominant? The agencies, funds and programs do excellent work, but we haven’t yet moved to a UN approach that’s more than the sum of its parts. We have an excellent country team in Monrovia, and could do even more with stronger UN integration. We’re not there yet.

JDG: Uniting Our Strengths for Peace argues for a more field-focused and people-centered approach to peace operations. Having just come from three years in Liberia, is there anything in the report that you think could have an impact on the lives of people in those countries where there are UN peace operations?

KL: The most striking recommendation in that regard is on engaging with communities. That’s also one of the biggest challenges for peacekeeping, where staff risk being insulated − not just in the white cars and all, but because of real danger. How do we talk to local communities? How do we know we’re talking to the right people? If Ebola taught us one thing it was the importance of supporting change at community level. There were evident benefits of encouraging behavioral changes, and also of discouraging rumours and false beliefs. Communities in Lofa that thought Ebola was brought by Muslims, for instance. For successful engagement with local communities, the role of partners is essential, reaching out to experts, including anthropologists, who have invested their lives studying the country. I was with UNHCR at the time of the Rwandan genocide and remember when HCR engaged with Gerard Prunier to expand the organisation’s understanding of that crisis and the way forward. National expertise is the most valuable, in this regard, as long as one takes care not to expose local contacts and sources to added risk.

JDG: What about conducting public opinion research? Some peace operations around the world have tried such techniques. Have you used them and, if so, how did you incorporate them into your decision-making?

KL: Yes − in Burundi we worked with Afrobarometer, as I recall. BNUB [the United Nations Office in Burundi], the Special Political Mission I headed, had developed benchmarks with the government, and many of them lacked baselines. The mission needed to gather data and opinions from scratch. In the end, the government was on board with this polling, and the results were useful in helping BNUB understand where work needed to focus. In Liberia, UNMIL has sampled opinion in locations where the Mission has already drawn down, seeking to understand whether the public’s sense of security has changed with the Mission’s local absence. I absolutely endorse having more social science research.
JDG: What kind of community outreach did you do?

KL: Personally, I traveled a lot. One of the great assets of UNMIL was that in addition to its military and police presence, we had a civilian office in every one of Liberia's fifteen counties. These offices developed strong local relationships with superintendents, NGOs, peace committees, women's groups, representatives of religious groups, of youth and others. UNMIL had also been promoting the establishment of county security councils. At the time of Ebola, UNMIL was the outfit on the ground that had national reach, local contacts and trust. These were assets UNMEER [the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response] and WHO could plug right into. I would meet with these individuals and groups, and also counted on the UNMIL county offices to keep an ear to the ground and report back. One good initiative was UNMIL's use of Quick Impact Projects. QIPs aren't new, but UNMIL stepped that up and sought more local involvement in decisions. And when Ebola hit, we turned all our QIPs to Ebola support.

JDG: What kind of projects were these?

KL: They were tracing projects, communications initiatives, or providing supplies. They were whatever the local superintendent and community said they needed most to respond better to Ebola. It differed all over the country. I do think that missions need more programmatic resources in general. But missions aren't necessarily set up to manage projects. It's useful to have mission staff from agencies where projects are their bread and butter. There can be a disconnect between the country team having the resources and the project capacity, while the mission has been mandated with the strategic lead on a particular issue. UNMIL sought in the current budget to double our QIPs funding from $1 million to $2 million, and we got it. This shows a change in understanding of needs of peacekeeping missions. Just a few years ago Security Council members were more sceptical about peacekeeping's use of QIPs, seeing that as development work. The ACABQ [Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions] and 5th Committee have understood the importance for peace operations to have this resource.

JDG: The World Development Report of 2011 tells us moving from conflict to stability is a long-term project. The average life of a UN peace operation is increasing and is now about 15 years. We recently also witnessed violence return to Burundi. How long does it take to create peace and stability?

KL: Burundi is problematic for drawing broader lessons, I would suggest, in that the current developments are so directly related to the president himself. Had he stepped aside, done something akin to what [former Nigerian President] Goodluck Jonathan did, he would certainly have cemented his place in history as a visionary leader. The East African Community is in some ways a model of a regional arrangement, and has been supportive of Burundi's movement towards long-term stability. But ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] has found it easier than the EAC [East African Community] to discuss presidential term limits. How long is long enough (for peace and stability)? I would like to see the Security Council not chop and change mandates too often. We're seeing better-crafted mandates, but still they can be overly heavy. One should remember, though, that a mandate is also a communications tool. The Council has moods, too. There was a period a few years ago when they were very keen on benchmarking, which I've found useful in both Burundi and Liberia. Another Security Council initiative a couple of years ago directed missions to review the transfer of tasks from the mission to the UN country team. This was less productive, since peacekeeping missions aren't generally engaged in tasks that can readily be handed off to a UN agency, fund or program not mandated by the Security Council. But both initiatives go in the direction of recognizing the range of potential drivers of conflict, as well as the need for seamless transitions involving other UN actors.
JDG: What were some of the specific lessons you learnt from leading UNMIL during the Ebola crisis?

KL: UNMIL’s response was clear: we needed to remain in Liberia, while protecting our personnel and giving maximum support to the crisis – which went beyond a health crisis. We heard from some senior UN actors that the time of Ebola was not a time for state-building, but only for emergency response. That was incorrect. Ebola turned out to be a useful time to work on and advocate for state-building: the needs, the lessons, were so striking, they gave a push to decentralization in Liberia, for example. The capital, Monrovia, was a bottleneck for Ebola response. Ebola also led UNMIL and the Government to implement a very practical approach to decongesting prisons by reducing pre-trial detention. There was a great fear of Ebola entering overcrowded prison environments packed with pre-trial detainees who make up about 70 per cent of the prison population. That the crisis gave clarity and focus to investments needed in state-building was a silver lining. It was hard to argue over structural reasons for Liberia's weak capacity to respond to a shock of this nature.

JDG: How did other aspects of the mission adapt to Ebola?

KL: The mission's structure didn't change, but I convened our Crisis Management Team daily, and the heads of UN Country Team members weekly. We needed to adapt our exposure and strengthen the knowledge and confidence of our personnel, because my first task was making it possible for UNMIL to remain present and effective.

We also needed to persuade the capitals of troop- and police-contributing countries [TCCs/PCCs] that Ebola was a manageable risk, because we needed their people to stay. Some TCCs contemplated pulling their people out. Much as I may have told everyone that we signed up for a degree of risk when we signed up for peacekeeping, nobody felt they had signed up for a risk like Ebola. But this would have been the wrong moment to abandon Liberia. Discussing how to stay was consistent with current UN security policy.

Ebola revealed a level of national fragility. There were some security incidents, there was public mistrust, there was popular dissatisfaction with the failure promptly to collect the dead. The Liberian security sector itself was being deployed nationally, but often lacked protective equipment and training. At a very practical level UNMIL gave logistical support, training and supplies to our counterparts, and stepped up logistics support to the UN family as well. UNMIL Radio, which reaches 85% of Liberia and is highly trusted, quickly began broadcasting Ebola information in 17 languages, including Liberian English. UNMIL provided advice to the government at central and county level. We worked with non-UN organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières and the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] and members of the UN family to review what ought to be done. No one had seen an epidemic like this before. It didn't fulfill WHO's prediction that it would flare and then burn itself out. There was learning and adaptation on everyone's part.

We adapted our human rights monitoring, starting up an Ebola Rights Watch. Several direct and indirect consequences of Ebola had human rights implications, whether it was the army being called out, the state of emergency declaration, the ostracism experienced by Ebola victims, or rumor-mongering to the detriment of some communities.
JDG: And were you able to manage the risk [to staff]?

KL: Yes, up to a point. We kept all our thousands of personnel safe for six months. We were challenged in obtaining rapid response to UNMIL's increased medical support needs, including guarantees of MEDEVAC [medical evacuation]. An eye-opener was the U.S. evacuating two of its nationals from Liberia at the end of July 2014. Up until that moment, the general sense was that one didn't move people with Ebola, and certainly not to an Ebola-free country. With that one gesture, the U.S. showed that this could be done safely – and it was the right thing to do. This helped advance discussions UNMIL was having with Headquarters. Mind you it still took our Headquarters a while to sort out the MEDEVAC question and I would have liked greater alacrity on that score.

There is a variable with Ebola that you cannot control for, and that is whether people are telling the truth about having had risky contacts. Ebola monitoring relies on self-reporting. At UNMIL, we couldn't monitor what people did outside working hours. One staff member denied any risk of exposure, and came to the UNMIL premises on the day she died; our UNMIL lab technician became infected, we assume in the course of responding to her. In the space of about two weeks we lost two colleagues. That was simply devastating. By the time our lab technician passed away in mid-October, the epidemic was declining. In December, we had two further Ebola cases among our personnel, both of whom survived. The death of two staff members to Ebola was my most difficult moment in the mission.

JDG: Your career in peace operations includes a number of missions in transition. What reflections do you have on the evolution from peacekeeping to peace building? How do we sustain the peace?

KL: Often sustaining the peace is about strengthening national institutions and public trust in those institutions – whether this means participatory political processes, the rule of law, having a viable security sector, or translating core elements of peace agreements into constitutional reform. These require the support of many partners. We shouldn't really refer to just Peacebuilding Commissions, Peacebuilding Support Offices, and the Peacebuilding Fund when talking about the UN's peacebuilding architecture. That's too limiting to constitute the UN's entire peacebuilding machinery. Peacebuilding is a bigger, broader and more inclusive job.

Smooth and seamless transitions are where the rubber meets the roads in terms of Headquarters structures. The UN now has different models of follow-on presence to a peacekeeping mission. We need to get away from saying, "This is now shifting from being a peacekeeping operation to being a special political mission." Instead of going straight to those categories, which can trigger templated thinking, the design of an evolving UN presence should begin with the analysis of the country's changing need for UN support. Categorization can come later. I would like to see transitions planned early and with all UN actors in the room – including the agencies, funds and programs.

JDG: You've come up through the agencies and have had a number of appointments in different countries. How did you acquire the experience to be an SRSG? Looking back, which were the most valuable moments that prepared you for this leadership role?

KL: I've spent over sixteen years in the field, and started my career with UNHCR. That was extremely valuable partly because UNHCR is so field-oriented. The assumption is that the field is the center of gravity; it's where you're delivering, where refugees are being protected or not. It's the fieldwork by which the organisation will be judged. The headquarters enterprise is in support of the
field, and it has surprised me that anybody could think differently about this. The HIPPO report makes valuable recommendations around having a stronger field orientation.

With HCR as well – working on humanitarian issues that were highly political, and were matters of life and death – one could be in the field as a P1 or P2 and be in charge of making a critical difference to someone's survival and protection. I saw some of the best of the UN while working with UNHCR. Another valuable experience was working together with the military peacekeepers during the war in former Yugoslavia, in the early 1990s. Coming from a human rights and humanitarian background, I approached that engagement with some hesitation, and was surprised at what I found. When the military were good they were really great, efficient, prompt, and sometimes more straightforward than working with civilians. So the whole field orientation, the protection orientation, the human rights and refugee protection aspects, and the conflict experience I think have stood me in very good stead.

Field orientation also means rotation. The expectation that just about everyone should rotate is also a practical expression of giving priority to the field. I would like to take rotation thinking further and see rotation among the main field-based agencies and the Secretariat as well, and UN field missions. This would give us a strong mix of skills, while also helping bridge the gaps in understanding that can arise between agencies, funds and programs and peace operations.

Early in my career I headed the UNHCR staff representatives, so I have a sort of industrial relations perspective that comes in handy when running a large mission or negotiating in any way. HCR gave a lot of leeway to its representatives in the field, backing their decisions. UN peace operations need this, too. It's frustrating being second-guessed by Headquarters. The Secretary General has told us: “SRSG's, you are the captains of your ship, you are the CEOs of your operations." Headquarters needs to get fully behind this idea. It's painful for an SRSG to read the HIPPO criticism of the calibre of field leadership. But if that's the view, then the UN has to invest more in that leadership.

Collegiality is important, too. We cannot achieve lasting results through command and control, through directives. We advance by a shared sense of the enterprise and of the desired outcomes. One needs a high degree of unity within the field mission, because who knows the hour or the day when a crisis may hit you. Will your people be with you then? One of my most useful experiences in Liberia, as a mission manager, was meeting with my Liberian staff in small groups. Until then, there had only been town hall-type meetings. UNMIL has about a thousand national staff. I learned a lot about my national colleagues, and about strengthening communication within the mission. This dialogue started six or seven months before the Ebola crisis and gave me a stronger basis for communicating with all staff later about Ebola. Personal communication and predictability by mission leadership help create trust, and people do their best work in a climate of trust.

**JDG: How do we have more women participate in peace operations?**

**KL:** Right, the numbers are very poor. As I recall, the HIPPO report says things are looking much better than they were in 2007, but even so, in 2015 only 13 per cent of senior field appointments have been women. Somewhere I saw an argument about it being difficult to find women able to step into field posts – but the statistics on Headquarters appointments are no better.

Peace operations can be a challenging environment, both practically and politically. Not only for women, of course, but I've observed when interviewing as part of appointments panels that male candidates in general bring more reflection about their own past leadership roles and profiles. Forgive the generalization, but women will often say "We as an organization delivered ..." or "I was part of a team that did X ... ". Men are more prone, it seems to me, to identify their personal leadership experiences. As an
SRSG one can't be too shy about one's personal leadership role. The job involves leading a lot of people. I encourage senior women in the UN to reflect and obtain feedback and encouragement on their qualities as leaders.

Jim Della-Giacoma is the Deputy Director at the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, and Editor-in-Chief of the Global Peace Operations Review | Twitter: @jimdella

Karin Landgren is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, and former SRSG and Coordinator of United Nations Operations in Liberia | Twitter: @LandgrenKarin
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UN GLOBAL PEACE OPERATIONS

**UN PEACE OPERATIONS 2013 - 2014**

**Peacemaking Operations**
- MINUSMA: UN Mission in the Republic of Mali, Gao
- UNOCI: UN Mission in the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, Gourma
- UNMIL: UN Mission in Liberia, Monrovia
- UNMFP: UN Mission in the Faroe Islands, Torshavn
- UNAMSIL: UN Mission in Sierra Leone, Freetown
- UNMIL: UN Mission in Sierra Leone, Freetown

**Political Missions**
- UNOMSUN: UN Mixed Financial office in the Central African Republic, Bangui
- UNMIL: UN Mission in Monrovia, Monrovia
- UNOCI: UN Mission in the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, Gourma
- UNMIL: UN Mission in Liberia, Monrovia
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