Global
Peace Operations
Review

December 2015

GLOBAL PEACE OPERATIONS REVIEW

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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December 17, 2015

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SUPPORT MECHANISMS: MULTILATERAL, MULTI-LEVEL, AND MUSHROOMING

Teresa Whitfield

THIS IS THE SEVENTH ESSAY IN A SERIES OF SEVEN THAT LOOKS AT THE ROLE OF MULTILATERAL ENVOYS IN PEACEMAKING.

The idea that "peace processes must be well-supported politically, technically and financially", as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated in the introduction to the **UN Guidance for Effective Mediation**, is something of a truism. Certainly, no one would ever advocate poor political technical or financial support to a peace process. But the appearance of mediation support as a dedicated activity, along with formal mechanisms to pursue it, is a relatively recent development with significant implications for the work of multilateral envoys.

The establishment of support mechanisms represents a shift in the manner in which peacemaking is conceived and conducted. While this is welcome, the institutional capacity to provide effective support has not yet caught up with the collective aspiration to offer it. In some cases, senior envoys may resist the idea of support outside their trusted staff, grounded in the confidence that they have been engaged for their lifetime experience and authority, and no further expertise or training is required. In others, resource constraints present a problem. Elsewhere, there may be an open door to mediation support and the resources available to provide it - the negotiation of the Libreville agreement on the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2013 for example - while the underlying conditions for a durable settlement are not present. Even when effective support is provided, it may have a limited causal impact on the outcome.

The establishment of a Mediation Support Unit (MSU) within the UN led to rapid understanding of the utility of a standing support structure for good offices, conflict prevention and the mediation efforts of an envoy. Regional organizations have sought to improve their capacity to support envoys with technical expertise and comparative experience, drawing on others like the UN, EU and sometimes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help them.

Individual governments and NGOs have also developed their own support mechanisms, frequently with a disposition to extend support to others as well. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, or HD Centre, established its Mediation Support Unit in 2007; Swisspeace and the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich, established the Mediation Support Project in 2005; more recently in September 2015, the United States, in a **Presidential Memorandum** that represented the first guidance on support to UN peace operations in two decades, made a clear commitment to support for conflict prevention and mediation. This work is informed by a growing body of guidance, guidelines, training and other materials, as a well as a healthy degree of cross-fertilization among peace processes on issues such as constitutional reform, national dialogues and the inclusion of gender perspectives.

THE EMERGENCE OF MEDIATION SUPPORT

Mediators and envoys have long relied on a combination of a small, unified team and the capacity to call on specialist knowledge from outside when appropriate. But for many years the process to assemble both was surprisingly ad hoc. Even successful negotiations conducted from inside the United Nations, such as those on El Salvador, Guatemala and East Timor during the 1990s, were largely dependent on the personal contacts and initiative of the envoys and their small teams, rather than any additional institutional support. A long-running **project** developed by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) sought to preserve and pass on the lessons gleaned from the experiences of envoys and representatives of the Secretary-General, but there was little follow-through in making use of them in any operational sense.

In recognition of the growing disconnect between the demand for UN mediation and the resources devoted to it, the report of the **Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change** observed in 2004 that "mediators and negotiators need adequate support". Two years later, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) established the first **Mediation Support Unit.** It took shape quite slowly amidst considerable skepticism amongst some envoys who were its potential beneficiaries.

Attention to mediation and the legitimacy of mediation support received a boost in 2009 with the publication of a **report** to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General on "enhancing mediation and its support activities". This report advocated the need for "systematic preparation" for mediation, and called for UN mediators to have at their disposal "a reasonable level of operational support". In addition to political analysis, this support was described as including: "(a) experts on the design and management of mediation, facilitation and national dialogue processes; (b) thematic experts from specialized partners within the United Nations system, as well as external experts — on issues such as security arrangements, constitution-making, elections, power-sharing, the rule of law, human rights, refugees and internally displaced persons, gender, child protection, transitional justice, and wealth-sharing; (c) flexible funding arrangements; and (d) versatile administrative and logistics options for different situations".

The report further stressed the need for closer partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations and other mediation actors, noting that DPA "should be ready to offer its support to mediation partners, assist in building their mediation capacity, and exchange lessons learned and best practice".

SETTING A STANDARD: THE UN MEDIATION SUPPORT UNIT

The UN's Mediation Support Unit has as its primary "clients" the envoys and representatives of the UN Secretary-General. But it has also developed as a global asset, available to the mediation efforts of Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations and other partners through the delivery of services in three main areas: technical and operational support for peace processes; capacity-building; and guidance development, lessons learned and best practices in the area of mediation.

The MSU's technical and operational support usually takes the form of assistance in the development of strategies and advice on thematic issues. These include security arrangements (ceasefires, DDR and SSR), constitution-making, power-sharing, natural resources (wealth-sharing), and gender and social inclusion. The MSU also develops mediation guidance, and captures lessons learned and best practices for mediators and their teams. One recent example was guidance on **natural resources and conflict**, jointly developed by DPA and the UN Environment Programme. Capacity-building and training on mediation and negotiation

techniques and skills, strategy development, and process design is offered to UN mediators and envoys in widely varying configurations. Even within the UN, some envoys draw on the MSU a great deal, while others hardly at all.

In addition to its own staff, the MSU is home to the Standby Team of Mediation Experts, who are based in their home countries and can be deployed anywhere in the world within 72 hours. It maintains a mediation roster of senior mediators, operational-level mediators and technical-level experts who are available to be hired as consultants on a longer-term basis, either by the UN or other actors. Finally, the MSU has developed partnerships with a network of NGOs and academic institutions that can be called upon to provide expertise in support of mediation, facilitation and dialogue - again, either by the UN or by others.

A steady rise in the engagement of the MSU speaks eloquently to growing acceptance of the utility of mediation support. Deployments have included support to UN envoys working on Syria, in the Great Lakes, and in the negotiations between Guyana and Venezuela, to peace processes taking place in contexts where UN peacekeeping operations are present, such as the CAR and Mali, as well as to processes such as the Kampala talks between the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebels, led by other actors. In an interesting example of variegated support, during 2013 and 2014 the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Yemen drew on both the MSU and external experts as well as political and diplomatic support provided by the Gulf Cooperation Council, EU and five permanent members of the Security Council in the "Group of 10".

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND SUPPORT CAPACITY

The perceived success of the MSU has been one of the factors encouraging regional organizations to develop their own capacities for envoy support. This has taken place to a somewhat uneven extent, reflecting the different levels of peacemaking activity within regional and sub-regional organizations (ASEAN's limited involvement in regional peacemaking means no envoys and therefore no support mechanisms), as well as the distinct level of resources they can draw upon. In some cases organizations have pursued separate units, mirroring the MSU within the UN: the EU has a Mediation Support Team; the OSCE and Commonwealth established a dedicated Conflict Prevention Centre and Good Offices Section respectively. Others, including the Organization of American States and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, have sought to build capacity within existing structures.

In 2009 the African Union (AU) launched a two-year "Plan of Action to Build the AU's Mediation Capacity", with the backing of the UN and non-governmental mediation support actors who joined forces in an AU Partner Group to avoid duplication in their efforts. The plan foresaw a training curriculum that was developed by the AU in collaboration with the South Africa-based civil society organisation ACCORD and the Crisis Management Institute of Finland. Efforts were bolstered by desk-to-desk, lessons-learned exercises organized by the UN MSU. The HD Centre facilitated the development of Standard Operating Procedures to help define the support the AU Commission is expected to extend to its mediation teams and envoys in the field and helped produce a **three-volume handbook for AU practitioners on managing peace processes**.

Progress in building the AU's support mechanisms has, however, been disappointingly slow. Some Member States' perception that an independent institutional capacity within the AU Comission might threaten their interests limited the resources they were prepared to commit. Consequently, its mediation support capacity remained embedded in its conflict management division, and the support arrangements available for AU envoys something of a mixed bag. Former President Thabo Mbeki, as Chairperson of the High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan, could draw on around fifteen experts, some seconded from the World Bank or governments. Former President Alpha Konare, Chairperson of the High Level Panel for Egypt, had four or five

experts, while other envoys generally have more skeletal teams. The high level of most envoys means that they receive no formal training, and the literature, tools, management skills and knowledge developed in recent years are still quite scarcely used. A recent decision that the Peace and Security Department will host a new mediation support unit should help introduce a more consistent use of expertise and resources.

Sub-regional organizations in Africa have prioritized the creation of standing mediation support divisions or units. But the pressures of other work and a lack of resources have meant that they have also taken shape quite slowly. In February 2010 the ECOWAS Commission decided to establish a Mediation Facilitation Division, but progress in putting it in place – it was only formally constituted in 2015 - was painfully slow. In the interim, ECOWAS was adept in finding support from other sources, including the UN Office in West Africa, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, and the HD Centre. Meanwhile, in 2012 the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) established a small Mediation Support Unit (this had also been under discussion since 2010). The Southern African Development Community took steps in the same direction in 2014, operationalizing mediation, conflict prevention and preventative diplomacy structures that had originally been agreed to at a SADC Summit meeting in 2004 (and as the need for support was highlighted by mediation interventions in Lesotho in 2007, Zimbabwe in 2008, and Madagascar in 2009). The IGAD unit was particularly active in the establishment of the office of the Special Envoy for South Sudan, and all IGAD envoys are required to undertake training in mediation skills and conflict resolution prior to deployment. More broadly, however, the integration of these sub-regional capacities with AU structures will likely prove a difficult task.

The European Union has long been an important donor to, and partner in, the mediation work of others, but it has developed its own understanding and approach to mediation only relatively recently. The **Concept on Strengthening of EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities**, adopted in 2009, acknowledged the particularity of the EU as a mediation actor: alone among the regional organizations it has no internal mandate, although it does have some internal involvements, such as in Cyprus. The Concept recognised EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), who answer to Member States through the Political and Security Committee, as a mediation resource but also acknowledged the role of other EU actors. The expectation was implicit that the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Heads of EU delegations would increasingly assume responsibilities in the field of mediation and support to peace processes, not least because of the political role assigned them by the Lisbon treaty. In several contexts, Myanmar and Yemen for example, Heads of Delegation indeed been able to play a positive role.

A Mediation Support Team (MST) established within the EEAS is loosely modelled on the UN's MSU. It has a broad remit reflecting the far-ranging reach of EU mediation and mediation support and the complex institutional means by which it is delivered. The team offers operational support; knowledge management and the assessment of lessons learned; training and capacity building; and networking and coordination with partners in the UN, AU, other regional organizations and civil society. Its clients include those EUSRs with facilitation/mediation tasks within their mandates, the top hierarchy of the EEAS involved in mediation efforts (as in the case of the Iran nuclear talks), Heads of EU Delegations as well as EEAS Managing Directors, envoys or advisers who served as facilitators or mediators in a specific context (as in the case of the Great Lakes and Myanmar).

In recognition of the role played by various MEPs as mediators or facilitators of dialogue (as for example the high profile involvement of former Presidents Pat Cox and Alexander Kwásniewski in Ukraine, but also the role of others in Sudan or Myanmar), in 2014, the European Parliament set up the European Parliamentary Mediation Support (EPMS) Service. The EPSM seeks to provide expert professional support for MEPs engaged in conflict prevention, mediation and facilitation efforts within the framework of the EU's comprehensive mediation strategy.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND HYBRID SUPPORT

The challenge of aligning the EU's engagements is indicative of an increasingly crowded stage of envoys and support structures. As explored elsewhere in this series, competition between multilateral – as well as national and non-governmental – envoys and actors at the political level can be a significant impediment to effective peacemaking. There are, however, grounds for cautious optimism that the prospects for coordination among support mechanisms may be improving.

This optimism is rooted in a number of different developments: first, there is new appreciation within the UN, EU, and other multilateral organizations of the value of partnerships, collaboration and cross-institutional support. The UN MSU, for example, is in 2015 providing support to the OSCE in Ukraine and IGAD in South Sudan. Another positive development is the disposition shown by some institutions and organizations to supply staff to multilateral envoys. A staff member of the HD Centre was among the team of outside experts providing support to the UN's Special Advisor on Yemen in 2013 and 2014, while Swisspeace has provided in-kind support to the UN including by seconding a staff member to the team of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara. Further signs of optimism come from experiments with hybrid support structures, as well as concerted efforts at collaboration within the mediation support community, most vividly illustrated by the formation and development of a Mediation Support Network (MSN).

The MSN was established in September 2008 and met for the first time in Switzerland. It is a global network composed of the UN's MSU and primarily non-governmental organizations that support mediation in peace negotiations. Over the years its membership has grown to around twenty regionally diverse members. They meet once or twice a year in order to exchange information, explore opportunities for collaboration in joint activities and share analysis of trends and emerging challenges in peace mediation. Although not specifically constituted to provide support to multilateral envoys, this network and the presence within it of a number of hybrid actors (e.g., Swisspeace and the U.S. Institute of Peace) that retain direct ties to their respective governments, as well as others regularly engaged in the support of sub-regional organizations, has improved the exchange of information within the sector and helped break down barriers to more structured coordination.

The EU's interest in more hybrid structures of mediation support is suggested by both the initiation in January 2014 of a project intended to facilitate EU mediation support to third parties, and the establishment of the European Institute for Peace (EIP). The project "Technical assistance to European resources for mediation support", or ERMES, is implemented by a consortium of non-governmental mediation support entities able to provide fast and flexible support to international, regional and local actors. The EIP, meanwhile, resembles USIP in its quasi-governmental status, but with a narrower thematic focus. It is conceived as "**an independent partner to the European Union and Europe**" and pursues mediation, informal dialogue and multi-track diplomacy and acts "as a flexible, external tool in support of EU mediation efforts where the EU has limited freedom to act".

MORE SUPPORT, BUT MORE CHALLENGES?

The mushrooming of support mechanisms is a positive development in the peacemaking field. It has encouraged an understanding of mediation as a professional activity which can benefit from structured and professional support; contributed to the production of a rapidly expanding body of guidelines, guidance and other materials that reflect best practice and lessons learned (or at least identified, as the field is awash with examples of lessons not learned); and put in place the means to deploy high quality expertise and support on a range of issues to those multilateral envoys who request it. As the report of **High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations**, submitted to the Secretary-General in June 2015, suggested, it has also opened up the possibility of dedicated support to help national governments and others address emerging conflict situations.

It is however, premature to declare the emergence of mediation support structures and mechanisms as an unqualified success. Core functions in support of conflict prevention and mediation by the UN are still not funded by the UN's Regular Budget – a situation the High-Level Independent Panel criticized as "unacceptable". The building of mediation capacity within some regional and multilateral organisations has met with resistance, institutional rivalries and resource problems. Meanwhile, the profusion of support on offer has not always been adroitly linked to the envoys concerned. And even the best mediation support – whose impact is always difficult to quantify -- cannot be expected to compensate for problems in the appointments of multilateral envoys, the institutional limitations or overcrowding of the political space with which they operate, let alone the more fundamental structural or regional obstacles to settlement seen in many of today's conflicts.

In sum, mediation support works best when offered to an envoy capably leading a peace process, or at least his or her engagement within it. Such support can be an extremely useful, indeed essential, auxiliary feature of a complex peace process, but it cannot and will not rescue or redeem a process that may be failing for other reasons.

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December 15, 2015

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CAN FORCE BE USEFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF A POLITICAL STRATEGY?

LESSONS FROM THE UN MISSIONS TO THE DR CONGO

Jason Stearns

The UN peacekeeping mission in the DR Congo has been critical in the testing and development of peacekeeping doctrine. Its fifteen-year lifespan–—the longest in the UN's history if we except deployments that are strictly confined to observation–—has seen the mission take on a variety of mandates and roles: It has observed ceasefires (1999-2003), played a key part in a political process (1999-2006), been the guarantor of a transitional government (2003-2006), and managed a stabilization program (2010-present). Most recently, it has also seen the use of more aggressive, robust peacekeeping, both in Ituri (2005-2007) and in the Kivus under the auspices of the Force Intervention Brigade (2013-present).

This laboratory of peacekeeping has provided some useful lessons for peacekeeping in general. While MONUC and MONUSCO are best known for the military failures and successes, it is their largely unsung successes in the political arena that deserve greater attention. The mission played a critical role in unifying the country, shepherding the peace process through repeated crises, and helping set up a variety of democratic institutions. Where it succeeded in deploying military force, it was usually due to a propitious political environment–—as in the case of the Ituri conflict and the M23 insurgency. Where its military mandate of protecting civilians foundered, it was due to an excessively apolitical and reactive approach to dealing with conflict.

Sadly, since the 2006 election, the mission has been marginalized from what it does best, namely implementing a political process, and confined to military arenas in which is has not performed well: the protection of civilians and dismantling armed groups. This should be a cautionary tale both for stabilization missions, as well as for deployments employing robust peacekeeping.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RECENT UN MISSIONS IN THE DR CONGO

The conflict in the Congo can broadly be described as an interplay of three levels of conflict–—at the national, regional, and local levels. At the national level, the legacy of Belgian colonialism, coupled with 32 years of misrule by Mobutu Sese Seko, had resulted in a dysfunctional, predatory state. This provided fertile opportunities for rebellions from several neighboring countries, which by 1996 had all established rear bases in the Congo (then Zaïre). It was this regional conflict that provided the trigger for the 1996 war, with Rwanda invading the eastern Congo to break up the refugee camps that hosted the forces that had perpetrated the 1994 genocide, with support from Uganda, Angola, and various other African countries. Finally, at the local level in the eastern Congo, the absence of a strong state and meddlesome neighbors fueled local conflicts over land, power, and identity that would escalate dramatically once the war began.

The First Congo war was a short affair–—the foreign armies propelled a coalition of Congolese rebellions to power in Kinshasa within nine months, facing little resistance from Mobutu's faltering forces. The government they installed in power under the

leadership of Laurent Kabila, however, ended up being extremely shaky. Within a year of taking office, Kabila fell out with his Rwandan allies, prompting the Second Congo War, which began in August 1998 and split the country and subcontinent. Kabila was backed by Angolan, Namibian, and Zimbabwean troops, the main two rebellions in the eastern and northern Congo received support from Rwanda and Uganda, respectively.

The UN Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was initially deployed in 1999 as a small observation mission to observe the ceasefire agreed upon in the Lusaka Agreement of July 10, 1999. That agreement––which was signed by the Congolese government and five countries in the region, and later by the main rebel groups––provided the blueprint for the peace process that would, after many delays, produce a viable settlement. All parties were bound to a ceasefire, committed to the demobilization of foreign rebels based in the Congo, and the Congolese belligerents pledged to begin a national dialogue to end the conflict.

In February 2000, the mission was enlarged to 5,537 military personnel, who were given the mandate––on top of supporting the peace process and monitoring the ceasefire––to use deadly force to protect civilians in imminent danger, one of the first UN missions to receive such a mandate. Over the next three years, MONUC would also expand its staff and troops in order to strengthen its demobilization and repatriation program for foreign armed groups, as well as human rights, political affairs, child protection, and humanitarian affairs divisions. This was in line with the prevailing thinking at UN headquarters about multidimensional, complex crises.

The most progress, however, continued to be made when MONUC's mandate was able to impact the political dimensions of the conflict. Through its field-based reporting and monitoring, as well as the diplomacy of the various SRSGs and UN special envoys, the mission played a critical role in guiding negotiations to the Global and Inclusive Agreement, signed by all major Congolese belligerents in Pretoria on 16 December, 2002. This agreement also elevated MONUC to become the guarantor of a transitional government that emerged out of this deal, as well as the coordinator of a donor support mechanism in Kinshasa. The results were impressive: the country was reunited, 130,000 combatants were demobilized––including 30,000 children––, and democratically elected institutions were created at the national and provincial level.

This strong political mandate, built on top of a process that had broad buy-in from the main Congolese players and foreign donors, enabled MONUC to play a powerful role during the 2003-2006 transition. It stepped in to resolve disputes between signatories to the agreement, provided nuanced reporting on critical events, and to coordinate donor leverage at key moments. In August 2004, when the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD)––one of the main belligerents––threatened to pull out of the transition, MONUC rallied diplomatic pressure on the RCD and its Rwandan allies to keep them in the peace process. When the historically most important opposition party, the UDPS, boycotted the electoral process over delays in 2005, MONUC was able to vouch for the electoral commission and lend legitimacy to the polls. The eventual success of the 2006 vote, despite fierce fighting in downtown Kinshasa between units loyal to Joseph Kabila and those belonging to runner-up Jean-Pierre Bemba, was in no small part due to MONUC.

This heyday of UN involvement, however, came to an end with the elections of 2006. The government of Joseph Kabila, empowered by its popular mandate, no longer felt that MONUC should play a political role. The UN mission was unable to carve out a role in security sector reform––despite its mandate to do so––and was consistently sidelined from peace talks with remaining armed groups in the eastern Congo.

Nonetheless, while the peace process had officially come to an end, violence escalated again. In large part, this Third Congo War, as some call it, was the result of dynamics created by the peace process itself. One of the main belligerents, the Rwandan-backed RCD, was extremely unpopular and would eventually go from controlling a third of the country to four percent representation in national institutions. In anticipation of its electoral defeat, hardliners led by General Laurent Nkunda and backed by Rwanda launched a new rebellion, the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), in an effort to protect their interests. At the same time, the flawed integration of armed groups into a national army and an increasingly neo-patrimonial political elite fed a new, perverse logic of armed violence, in which politicians and army officers often partnered with armed groups in order to secure access to local resources and to bolster their powerbase.

While violence escalated––the number of displaced people increased by a million between 2006 and 2008––the UN mission paradoxically transitioned into a post-conflict approach. Since the government had stripped the mission of its ability to play an effective role in peace talks between armed groups, MONUC began to focus on extending state authority, reforming the security sector, and securing mining areas. This approach became formalized when the mission changed its name to become a stabilization mission in 2010, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). It was now supposed to focus on supporting national institutions, including the army, and coordinating international support to the country's stabilization plan. In 2014, the mission moved most of its peacekeepers and substantive staff to the eastern Congo from Kinshasa, accentuating its departure from the Congolese political scene.

Without a willing partner in the Congolese government, however, the mission made little headway on institutional reform. The stabilization program built roads, administrative offices, and police stations, but without local ownership these reforms were short-lived. The roads were not maintained, the police only paid irregularly, and administrative offices deprived of meaningful budgets, with the UN was effectively locked out of security sector reform.1 For the Congolese government, the UN had little business in getting involved in the internal functioning of state institutions. At the same time, the stabilization mandate, which implied military support to the Congolese army, undermined the neutrality of the mission and compromised their ability to interact with armed groups. And yet, the mission––deprived of a formal role in mediating, and mandated to partner with an army that was itself party to the conflict––had been told to make protection of civilians its highest priority.2

In 2012, the newly-formed M23 rebellion––a new version of the CNDP––occupied the regional hub of Goma in eastern Congo. This crisis, along with the failures of stabilization, prompted a rethinking of peacekeeping and foreign engagement in the Congo. Donors, the United Nations, and regional bodies brokered the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) in February 2013. The deal, which was signed by eleven countries in the region, created, for the first time since 2006, a semblance of a peace process. It identified the two drivers of the Congolese conflict as institutional weakness and foreign intervention, and created domestic and regional mechanisms to address these challenges.

At the same time, a proposed regional observation force was transformed into a new part of MONUSCO: the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB).3 This new brigade, composed of 3,069 peacekeepers from Malawi, Tanzania, and South Africa, was deployed in April 2013 and played a critical role in the battle against the M23 that culminated in the rebels' defeat in October 2013.

Nonetheless, this new peacekeeping approach––at once more political and more ready to apply military force––showed its limitations. The defeat of the M23 can be chalked up as much to bilateral diplomatic pressure as to the FIB. For the first time since Rwanda's official withdrawal from the Congo in 2002, western donors openly identified Rwanda as a spoiler and applied substantial financial leverage. In addition, the prospect of engaging in proxy warfare with South Africa and Tanzania, two regional rivals, raised the stakes substantially for the government in Kigali. When the FIB and the Congolese army launched their final offensive, the Rwandan army pulled the plug on the M23, forcing them to flee with relatively little fighting.

Some of the same factors that made the FIB an asset also hampered the UN mission. The second offensive the FIB was supposed to launch was against the Rwandan FDLR rebels. The Tanzanian and South African governments were less enthusiastic about engaging their troops against Rwanda's archenemies, with the Tanzanian government going so far as calling the rebels "freedom fighters" and saying Rwanda had to negotiate with them. In the end, a deterioration of relations between the mission and the Kinshasa government stalled the offensive.

Meanwhile, the new PSCF did not produce a real peace process and quickly became bogged down in bureaucracy. The Kinshasa government continued to resist any outside interference in institutional reform, while most of the progress against the M23 came through bilateral pressure––especially by the United States––outside of the PSCF. MONUSCO continued to be locked out of negotiations with armed groups and had little say in security sector reform.

ANALYSIS

The UN mission in the Congo is perhaps best known for its military successes and failures. Scandals over inaction in the face of mass violence, and sexual abuse by uniformed personnel have made international headlines. On the other hand, robust peacekeeping operations have claimed successes and influenced UN-wide debates on the use of force.

The argument outlined here tries to reframe the question about the use of force. Instead of "What can the UN do to protect civilians?"––which tends to orient the answer toward questions of resources, tactics, and the willingness of troop contributing countries to fight––I ask under what conditions the UN can play a role in addressing the conflict dynamics. This shifts the focus from the military toward the political and toward questions of the mandate, the interests of the main actors, and international diplomacy.

THE MILITARY FAILURES AND SUCCESSES

The list of the failings of MONUC and MONUSCO is long. In May 2002, Rwandan-backed rebels massacred over 160 civilians close to a UN base in Kisangani. In 2003, blue helmets did little but defend themselves in their bunkers as armed groups fought for control of Bunia, the capital of Ituri district, killing hundreds of civilians. In May 2004, renegade RCD officers, who then went on to sack the town, raping and killing dozens, overran UN forces in and around town of Bukavu. In October 2008, over a hundred civilians were killed in the town of Kiwanja, within earshot of a large UN base.

These are only some of the incidents in which UN blue helmets could have done more to prevent large-scale atrocities in the Congo. There are various reasons for these failings. During the transition, the UN felt conflicted between its commitment to keep all belligerents at the negotiation table, and its obligation to protect civilians against some of the same forces. At other times, troop

contributing countries were extremely reluctant to place their soldiers in harm's way, at times even refusing orders given to them by UN commanders. Given that the UN is extremely dependent on a few countries for troops, there was little leverage to be used against this sort of foot-dragging.

Finally, the nature of the conflict and the country rendered the UN mandate extremely difficult to fulfill. When interpreted reactively, "protecting civilians in imminent danger," meant that peacekeepers always arrived too late to the scene of violence. By the time news of violence was relayed to the UN and they were able to deploy troops to the field––the area of which armed groups are scattered is the size of Portugal––it was often already too late.

Nonetheless, the UN mission has, paradoxically, become a sort of standard-bearer for robust peacekeeping. This is largely thanks to two episodes: the 2005-2007 period of robust peacekeeping in Ituri, and the FIB offensive against the M23 in 2013. In both cases, the mission leadership decided to interpret its mandate in a proactive fashion, declaring demobilized zones and carrying out offensives against armed groups who refused to disarm, in collaboration with the Congolese army. In the Ituri case, this resulted in the demobilization of over 18,000 combatants, while the M23 was defeated by the Congolese army and the FIB.

In addition, the mission has helped pioneer new approaches to the protection of civilians. Its Joint Protection Teams (JPTs) and Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) helped render the mission more sensitive to the needs and demands of the communities they are supposed to serve.

These military successes, however, were enabled by the political context. The armed groups in Ituri were politically marginal and had lost their Rwandan and Ugandan backing by the time the UN offensive began. The UN mission there had been preceded by the brief deployment of a European Union force and the arrest of many of the major armed group commanders. In the case of the M23, I have outlined above the importance of donor pressure on Rwanda preceding the offensive.

THE ENABLING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

MONUC and MONUSCO have been most effective when they have been deployed to implement or facilitate a political process. The peak of this involvement was during the transitional government, which culminated in the 2006 elections. Without sustained UN involvement, the transition would probably have faltered on the deep mistrust and conflicting interests of the belligerents.

A particular political and economic environment allowed the UN mission to play this role. First, no belligerent was strong enough to win out militarily––by the time the peace process finally began in earnest in 2001, there had been over two years of stalemated, costly fighting, with little advance on any front. The belligerents had little choice but to make peace.

Secondly, the main belligerents were heavily dependent on outside forces: the Kabilas on Angolan and Zimbabwean troops, the rebels on the Ugandan, Rwandan, and Burundian militaries. Some of these countries––in particular the governments in Kigali, Kampala, and Kinshasa, which depended for over half of their budget on foreign aid––were susceptible to donor pressure. Criticism from those donors mounted on Kigali and Kampala, in particular, after their armies fought two deadly battles over power and resources in Kisangani, undermining their claims that they were only involved in the Congo out of self-defense. Three reports by UN panels of experts––which played a critical role at various points in the peace process––detailing the individuals and countries profiting from the Congolese conflict, also enhanced pressure on these outside military players.

Lastly, the Congolese conflict was relatively free of superpower politics. Despite its human cost, and the involvement of nine African armies, none of the permanent UN Security Council members perceived that its core national interests were at stake in the conflict. This made the passing of UN resolutions and multilateral diplomacy easier. While Rwanda and Angola, in particular, did have critical security and economic concerns regarding the conflict, they were not so vital as to be unshakable.

Once democratic elections, however, took place, the UN mission lost much of its leverage on the Congolese political scene. It was reduced to a bystander in most of the negotiations with armed groups, while the Congolese government refused to allow it to carry out its mandate in security sector reform, and it failed to play a significant role in the deeply flawed 2011 elections. Meanwhile, donors became more focused on their bilateral security and economic interests, which at times stood in tension with the goals of the UN mission.

CONCLUSION

The deployment of the FIB in 2013 elicited much commentary about the use of force in peacekeeping operations, suggesting that the UN missions' largest failings––but also successes––have been in the protection of civilians. This conclusion is misleading. The missions have been most valuable when they have been able to play a political role in the implementation of a peace process. And while robust peacekeeping has indeed saved lives and reshaped the security dynamics in the eastern Congo, this has been as much due to the political environment as to strong UN leadership.

I end with several broad recommendations. First, UN missions should never lose sight of their political context into which they are deployed. In some places, there will be no peace to keep, elsewhere that peace process may be flimsy and difficult for the UN to shape. The first duty of UN leadership is to understand these limitations and to work with their bilateral and multilateral partners to reshape these political confines. If these parameters cannot be changed, or the host party refuses to grant the mission a significant political role in shaping the peace process, the UN should think carefully about how it engages and, if needed, withdraw its forces altogether. In the Congolese case, the UN should have mobilized international attention on the negative role played by Rwanda at a much earlier stage, and should have engaged much more critically with its Congolese host during the 2011 elections. There is real reason to doubt whether, given the lack of local ownership and ongoing conflict, the UN mission should have transitioned into a stabilization mission.

Second, force can be a crucial component of peacekeeping missions, and in the Congolese case the UN mission should have been much more willing to interpret its military mandate more proactively throughout. It is rare, however, that force alone can ever solve violence. All armed groups are embedded in social structures and have ties to broader social and political dynamics. The UN will never kill all FDLR combatants, for example, and should think carefully about how it can combine political and military approaches. For example, after over a decade of refusing to negotiate with FDLR commanders, there is a growing consensus that the UN should try to facilitate the departure of leaders who have no criminal record to third countries of exile.

These considerations militate for modesty. We should highlight the valuable technical lessons that the Congolese experience has provided––the JPT and CLO concepts, the evolving doctrine of robust peacekeeping, and strong UN leadership. But we also need to recognize the limits of what can be done in the confines of the political environment into which blue helmets are deployed.

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ENDNOTES

[1]Oxfam, "For Me, But Without Me, Is Against Me: Why Efforts to Stabilize the Eastern Congo Are Not Working," Policy Briefing, July 2012.

[2]UN Security Council Resolution 1925, Article 12.

[3]The brigade was initially proposed as part of an interposition force for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICLGR), then adopted by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and eventually integrated into MONUSCO.

This article was originally published by the *Congo Research Group* on December 11, 2015

December 15, 2015

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LE RECOURS À LA FORCE EST-IL UTILE EN L'ABSENCE DE STRATÉGIE POLITIQUE ?

ENSEIGNEMENTS DES MISSIONS DE L'ONU MENÉES EN RDC

Jason Stearns

Cette analyse a d'abord été préparée pour le compte du Center on International Cooperation et du International Peace Institute, dans le cadre d'une série d'articles internes commandés par le Groupe d'études indépendant de haut niveau sur les opérations de paix (High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations).

La mission de maintien de la paix des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo a joué un rôle prépondérant dans la formulation d'une doctrine de maintien de la paix. Tout au long de ses quinze années de déploiement, la plus longue mission de maintien de la paix de l'histoire de l'ONU (si l'on ne tient pas compte des fonctions d'observation simple) a endossé plusieurs rôles et mandats : faire appliquer les différents cessez-le-feu (1999-2003), jouer un rôle clé dans le processus politique (1999-2006), soutenir le gouvernement de transition (2003-2006), coordonner le programme de stabilisation (2010 à ce jour). Dernièrement, la mission a également mis en œuvre des opérations de maintien de la paix plus « musclées », plus agressives, autant en Ituri (2005-2007) que dans les Kivu, sous l'égide de la Brigade d'intervention (FIB – Force Intervention Brigade) établie en 2013 (Résolution 2098).

Ces essais en matière de maintien de la paix ont permis d'apporter de précieux enseignements pour la pratique du maintien de la paix en général. Si la MONUC et la MONUSCO sont avant tout connues pour leurs actes (échecs et réussites) militaires, ce sont surtout leurs réussites, plus discrètes, accomplies dans l'arène politique qui méritent d'être analysées. La Mission a joué un rôle déterminant dans l'unification du pays, en guidant le processus de paix à travers les crises répétées, et en contribuant à façonner plusieurs institutions démocratiques. Partout où la mission est parvenue à déployer la force militaire, le contexte politique y était favorable : par exemple, dans le cas du conflit en Ituri et de l'insurrection du M23. Les manquements dans son mandat militaire de protection des civils sont attribuables à sa gestion du conflit trop apolitique et trop réactive.

Malheureusement, depuis l'élection de 2006, la mission a été écartée de ce qu'elle sait faire de mieux (mettre en place un processus politique), et s'est vue confinée à des opérations militaires visant la protection des civils et le démantèlement des groupes armés dans lesquelles elle ne s'est pas illustrée de façon positive. Cela doit servir de mise en garde pour les futures missions de stabilisation et déploiements militaires qui prônent une approche plus « musclée » dans le processus de maintien de la paix.

BREF HISTORIQUE DES DERNIÈRES MISSIONS DE L'ONU EN RDC

De manière générale, on peut décrire le conflit en RDC comme un rapport de force à trois échelons : national, régional et local. Au niveau national, l'héritage du colonialisme belge, associé à la gestion chaotique du pays par Mobutu Sese Seko pendant 32 années avait créé un État prédateur et dysfonctionnel. Un terreau fertile pour les rébellions de plusieurs pays limitrophes qui avaient établi des bases arrière au Congo (ex-Zaïre) dès 1996. C'est précisément ce conflit régional qui a été l'élément déclencheur de la guerre de 1996, lorsque le Rwanda a envahi l'est du Congo pour détruire les camps de réfugiés abritant les factions ayant perpétré le génocide de 1994, avec le soutien de l'Ouganda, de l'Angola, et d'autres pays africains. Enfin, à l'échelon local dans l'est du Congo, l'absence d'un État fort et la présence de voisins interventionnistes ont contribué à alimenter les conflits locaux prenant leur source autour des questions de territoires, de pouvoir et d'identité. Tous ces aspects ont évidemment dégénéré lorsque la guerre a éclaté.

La première guerre du Congo fut de relativement courte durée : les armées étrangères ayant propulsé une coalition de révoltes congolaises au pouvoir à Kinshasa en neuf mois et rencontrant au passage peu de résistance de la part des forces chancelantes de Mobutu. Le gouvernement installé au pouvoir sous l'égide de Laurent Kabila s'est avéré être extrêmement fragile. L'année qui a suivi son accession, Kabila s'est brouillé avec ses alliés rwandais, ce qui a donné lieu à la deuxième guerre du Congo (commencée en août 1998) et à la division du pays et du sous-continent. Kabila était soutenu par l'Angola, la Namibie, et les troupes zimbabwéennes, les deux principales rébellions de l'est et du nord du Congo avaient obtenu les soutiens respectifs du Rwanda et de l'Ouganda.

La Mission des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo (MONUC) a été déployée en 1999 pour mener une petite mission d'observation du cessez-le-feu convenu dans le cadre de l'Accord de Lusaka du 10 juillet 1999. Cet Accord, signé par le gouvernement congolais et les cinq pays de la région, puis dans un second temps par les principaux groupes rebelles, a fourni le plan directeur du processus de paix qui a finalement abouti sur un règlement viable après de nombreux reports. Toutes les parties avaient signé un cessez-le-feu et s'étaient engagées à démobiliser les rebelles étrangers établis au Congo ; les belligérants congolais pour leur part avaient promis d'entamer un dialogue national dans l'espoir de mettre un terme au conflit.

En février 2000, la mission a été élargie à 5 537 militaires ayant pour mandat, outre celui d'appuyer le processus de paix et de surveiller le cessez-le-feu, d'utiliser la force léthale pour protéger les civils en cas de danger imminent. Ce fut l'une des toutes premières missions de l'ONU à recevoir un tel mandat. Durant les trois années suivantes, la MONUC allait également élargir son personnel et son contingent pour renforcer son programme de démobilisation et de rapatriement des groupes armés étrangers, mais aussi les agents affectés aux droits de l'homme, aux affaires politiques, à la protection des enfants, et aux affaires humanitaires. Ceci fait partie des éléments faisant de la MONUC une mission pleinement multidimensionnelle.

Des progrès ont néanmoins continué à être réalisés lorsque le mandat de la MONUC a commencé à avoir un impact sur les dimensions politiques du conflit. Grâce à ses rapports et son suivi sur le terrain, mais aussi grâce à la diplomatie des divers représentants et envoyés spéciaux de l'ONU, la mission a joué un rôle décisif en guidant les négociations vers l'Accord global et inclusif signé le 16 décembre 2002, à Pretoria, par les principaux belligérants congolais. Cette entente a également permis à la MONUC de s'élever au rang de garant du gouvernement de transition né de cet accord, ainsi qu'au rang de coordinateur d'un dispositif d'appui des pays donateurs à Kinshasa. Les résultats qui en ont découlé sont impressionnants : le pays a été réunifié, 130 000 combattants ont été démobilisés (y compris 30 000 enfants), et des institutions démocratiquement élues ont été créées aux échelons national et provincial.

Ce mandat politique fort, élaboré sur la base d'un processus bénéficiant de l'unanimité des principaux acteurs congolais et pays donateurs étrangers, a permis à la MONUC de jouer un rôle non négligeable pendant la transition entre 2003 et 2006. Elle est intervenue pour résoudre les différends entre les signataires de l'accord, produit des rapports nuancés sur des événements critiques, et coordonnés la mobilisation des pays donateurs aux étapes clés. En août 2004, lorsque le Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD), l'un des principaux belligérants, a menacé de se retirer de la transition, la MONUC a su exercer une pression diplomatique sur le RCD et ses alliés rwandais en parvenant à les maintenir dans le processus de paix. Lorsqu'en 2005 l'UDPS (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social), le grand parti historique d'opposition, a boycotté le processus électoral invoquant des retards, la MONUC a été en mesure d'apporter sa garantie à la commission électorale et la légitimité des scrutins. Le succès final du vote de 2006, malgré de violents affrontements au centre-ville de Kinshasa entre les factions fidèles à Joseph Kabila et celles de son opposant Jean-Pierre Bemba, est largement attribuable au travail accompli par la MONUC.

Cet âge d'or de l'intervention de l'ONU a néanmoins pris fin avec les élections de 2006. Le gouvernement de Joseph Kabila, habilité par son mandat populaire, estimait que la MONUC ne devait plus jouer de rôle politique. Dans ce contexte, la mission de l'ONU n'est pas parvenue à se frayer une place dans la réforme du secteur de la sécurité, en dépit de son mandat ; elle a par ailleurs été systématiquement exclue des pourparlers de paix avec les derniers groupes armés en place dans l'est du Congo.

Mais, alors que le processus de paix avait officiellement pris fin, les violences se sont à nouveau intensifiées. Dans une large mesure, cette « troisième guerre du Congo » a été le fruit de la dynamique créée par le processus de paix lui-même. L'un des principaux belligérants, le RCD, soutenu par le Rwanda et devenu très impopulaire, a fini par rallier à peine 4% de représentation dans les institutions nationales, alors qu'il contrôlait un tiers du pays. Avec la perspective de sa défaite aux élections, les partisans de la ligne dure dirigés par le général Laurent Nkunda et soutenus par le Rwanda ont créé une nouvelle formation rebelle : le Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) ayant pour objectif de défendre leurs intérêts. Au même moment, l'intégration maladroite des groupes armés dans l'armée nationale, et les pratiques de plus en plus néopatrimoniales de l'élite politique ont alimenté une nouvelle logique perverse de violence armée, qui induit la collaboration de certains hommes politiques et officiers militaires avec les groupes armés aux fins de sécuriser l'accès aux ressources locales et renforcer l'assise de leur pouvoir.

Alors que les violences dégénéraient (le nombre de personnes déplacées a connu une hausse d'un million entre 2006 et 2008), la mission de l'ONU s'est de façon paradoxale transformée pour adopter une « approche post-conflit ». Puisque le gouvernement lui avait retiré son droit de participer efficacement aux négociations de paix entre les groupes armés, la MONUC s'est alors intéressée aux aspects de l'élargissement de l'autorité de l'État, de la réforme du secteur de la sécurité, et de la protection des sites d'exploitation minière. Cette approche s'est formalisée en 2010, année où la mission a changé de dénomination pour devenir une « mission de stabilisation » : la Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo (MONUSCO). Son mandat devait alors porter sur un appui aux institutions nationales, notamment à l'armée, et coordonner l'appui international au plan de stabilisation du pays. En 2014, la mission a déplacé l'essentiel de ses Casques bleus et personnel de Kinshasa vers l'est de la RDC, accentuant de ce fait sa sortie de la scène politique congolaise.

Sans partenaires disposés à négocier au sein du gouvernement congolais, la mission a fait très peu de progrès sur le plan de la réforme institutionnelle. Le programme de stabilisation a permis de construire des routes, des bureaux d'administration et des postes de police, mais sans l'appropriation nécessaire par les collectivités locales, ces réformes ont été de courte durée. Les routes n'étaient plus entretenues, les policiers ne recevaient plus leurs salaires, et les bureaux administratifs ne pouvaient pas fonctionner avec les budgets attribués. Enfin, les Nations Unies se sont trouvées une fois de plus exclues des discussions relatives

à la question de la réforme du secteur de la sécurité.1 De l'avis du gouvernement congolais, l'ONU n'avait pas à intervenir dans le fonctionnement interne des institutions étatiques. Parallèlement, la mission de stabilisation, laquelle impliquait un soutien militaire à l'armée congolaise, a miné la neutralité de la mission et compromis sa capacité à interagir avec les groupes armés. Et ce, alors même que la mission (alors privée de son rôle officiel de médiation et mandatée pour travailler étroitement avec une armée impliquée dans le conflit) avait reçu les ordres de faire de la protection des civils sa plus haute priorité.[2]

En 2012, la rébellion du M23 nouvellement créée (une nouvelle version du CNDP) occupa le centre régional de Goma, dans l'est du Congo. Cette crise, ajoutée aux échecs du processus de stabilisation, a provoqué une remise en question des objectifs de la mission de maintien de la paix et de la raison d'être de l'engagement international en RDC. Les pays donateurs, les Nations Unies et les organismes régionaux sont parvenus à négocier l'accord-cadre pour la paix, la sécurité et la coopération en février 2013. L'accord, signé par onze pays de la région, a permis d'entamer pour la première fois depuis 2006, un semblant de processus de paix. Le document identifie la faiblesse des institutions et l'ingérence étrangère comme les deux éléments moteurs du conflit congolais, et a mis en place des mécanismes nationaux et régionaux pour surmonter ces difficultés.

Par ailleurs, une proposition de force d'observation régionale a été concrétisée avec la création d'une nouvelle composante de la MONUSCO : la Brigade d'intervention (FIB).[3] Cette nouvelle entité composée de 3 069 Casques bleus provenant du Malawi, de Tanzanie et d'Afrique du Sud, a été déployée en avril 2013 et a joué un rôle déterminant dans la lutte contre le M23 qui a abouti à la défaite des rebelles en octobre 2013.

Néanmoins, cette nouvelle approche de maintien de la paix, plus robuste, a montré ses limites. La défaite de la rébellion du M23 est de fait attribuable autant à la pression diplomatique bilatérale qu'à la brigade d'intervention. Pour la première fois depuis le retrait officiel des troupes rwandaises de RDC en 2002, les pays donateurs occidentaux ont ouvertement identifié le Rwanda comme fauteur de trouble et mis en branle un effet de levier financier de grande ampleur. En outre, la perspective de livrer une guerre par alliés interposés avec l'Afrique du Sud et la Tanzanie, deux rivaux régionaux, a considérablement augmenté l'enjeu pour le gouvernement de Kigali. Lorsque la Brigade d'intervention et l'armée congolaise ont lancé leur assaut final, l'armée rwandaise avait déjà coupé les vivres au M23, l'obligeant à fuir en combattant très peu.

Certains des éléments qui ont fait de la Brigade d'intervention un atout ont également entravé la mission des Nations Unies. La Brigade d'intervention devait lancer une seconde offensive contre les rebelles rwandais des Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). Les gouvernements de Tanzanie et d'Afrique du Sud étaient moins enthousiastes à l'idée de mobiliser leurs troupes contre les ennemis héréditaires du Rwanda ; le gouvernement tanzanien ayant même employé la dénomination de « combattants de la liberté » en référence aux rebelles et déclarant que le Rwanda avait dû négocier avec eux. Finalement, c'est la dégradation en rélations avec le gouvernement de Kinshasa qui a empêché la brigade ce commencé cette offensif.

Pendant ce temps, le nouveau Accord cadre n'a pas donné lieu à un véritable processus de paix et s'est rapidement embourbé dans la bureaucratie crée par le processus. Le gouvernement de Kinshasa a continué à résister à toute ingérence extérieure dans la réforme institutionnelle, alors que la plupart des avancées réalisées contre le M23 ont été obtenues à travers une pression bilatérale, en particulier celle des États-Unis, à l'extérieur de l'Accord cadre. La MONUSCO a continué d'être exclue des négociations avec les groupes armés et a eu peu d'influence sur la réforme du secteur de la sécurité.

ANALYSE

La mission onusienne en RDC est peut-être mieux connue pour ses succès et ses échecs sur le plan militaire. Des scandales autour de l'inaction quant aux actes de violence de masse et de sévices sexuels perpétrés par des soldats en uniforme ont défrayé la chronique internationale. D'autre part, les opérations de maintien de la paix « robustes » ont été couronnées de plusieurs réussites et permis de peser dans les débats sur le recours à la force dans l'ensemble des organes des Nations Unies.

L'argument présenté ici cherche à redéfinir la question de l'usage de la force. Plutôt que de poser la question « Que peut faire l'ONU pour protéger les civils ? » (Question qui risque d'orienter la réponse sur l'aspect des ressources, des tactiques et de la volonté des pays qui fournissent des contingents à se battre), je préfère poser ceci : « Dans quelles conditions l'ONU peut-elle jouer un rôle dans les dynamiques du conflit ? » Cette nuance permet de changer l'emphase portée sur les forces militaires pour se concentrer sur les forces politiques, sur le mandat, les intérêts des principaux intervenants et la diplomatie internationale.

ÉCHECS ET SUCCÈS MILITAIRES

La liste des manquements reprochés à la MONUC et à la MONUSCO est longue. En mai 2002, les rebelles soutenus par le Rwanda massacraient plus de 160 civils non loin d'une base de l'ONU à Kisangani. En 2003, les Casques bleus n'ont rien fait d'autre que de se défendre à couvert pendant que les groupes armés combattaient pour l'obtention du contrôle de Bunia, la capitale du district de l'Ituri, faisant des centaines de tués parmi les civils. En mai 2004, des officiers renégats du RCD ont défait les Casques bleus dans la ville de Bukavu et ses environs avant de mettre la ville à feu et à sang, violer et tuer des dizaines de personnes. En octobre 2008, plus d'une centaine de civils ont été tués dans la ville de Kiwanja, à proximité d'une grande base de l'ONU.

Je ne cite ici qu'une poignée d'incidents dans lesquels des Casques bleus auraient pu faire davantage pour empêcher des atrocités de grande ampleur d'être commises en RDC. Plusieurs raisons expliquent ces manquements. Pendant la transition, l'ONU s'est sentie partagée entre son engagement à maintenir tous les belligérants à la table de négociation, et son obligation de protéger les civils contre certaines de ces forces. À d'autres moments, les pays fournisseurs de contingents se sont montrés très réticents à mettre leurs soldats en danger, allant jusqu'à refuser les ordres des commandants de l'ONU. Puisque l'ONU dépend entièrement d'une poignée de pays pour contribuer à ses opérations, sa marge de manœuvre s'est trouvée réduire pour changer cette situation.

Enfin, la nature du conflit et du pays a compliqué le mandat de l'ONU. La consigne visant à « protéger les civils en danger immédiat » se traduisait par le fait que les Casques bleus arrivaient toujours trop tard sur le théâtre de violences. Le temps que les informations sur l'occurrence d'actes de violence parviennent à l'ONU et que le déploiement des troupes s'organise, il était souvent déjà trop tard. Pour rappel : la zone où sont dispersés les groupes armés est comparable à la taille du Portugal.

Néamoins, la mission onusienne est paradoxalement devenue une sorte de porte-drapeau des opérations de maintien de la paix « robustes ». Cette réputation tire son origine de deux épisodes : la période de maintien de la paix « musclé » en Ituri (2005-2007), et l'offensive lancée par la Brigade d'intervention contre le M23 en 2013. Dans les deux cas, les coordonnateurs de la mission avaient décidé d'interpréter leur mandat de façon proactive, de dessiner des zones démobilisées et de lancer des offensives contre les groupes armés ayant refusé de se désarmer, avec l'appui de l'armée congolaise. Dans le cas de l'Ituri, cela a entraîné la démobilisation de plus de 18 000 combattants, tandis que le M23 a été vaincu par l'armée congolaise et la Brigade d'intervention.

En outre, la mission a aidé à entamer de nouvelles approches visant la protection des civils. Ses équipes mixtes de protection des civils et ses officiers de liaison avec les communautés ont contribué à sensibiliser la mission aux besoins et aux demandes des communautés qu'ils sont censés protéger.

Ces réussites militaires ont été possibles grâce au contexte politique. Les groupes armés en Ituri étaient politiquement marginalisés et avaient perdu leur soutien rwandais et ougandais au moment du lancement de l'offensive onusienne. Sur place, la mission de l'ONU avait été précédée d'un bref déploiement d'une force de l'Union européenne et de l'arrestation de nombreux commandants clés des groupes armés. Dans le cas du M23, j'ai souligné plus haut l'importance de la pression des pays donateurs sur le Rwanda avant l'offensive.

UN ENVIRONNEMENT POLITIQUE FAVORABLE

La MONUC et la MONUSCO ont été très efficaces lors de leur déploiement pour mettre en œuvre ou faciliter le processus politique. Le pic de cette participation a eu lieu pendant le gouvernement de transition, qui a abouti aux élections de 2006. Sans la forte implication de l'ONU, la transition aurait probablement échoué sur une grande méfiance et l'émergence de conflits d'intérêts entre les belligérants.

Un environnement politique et économique bien particulier a permis à la mission onusienne de jouer ce rôle. Premièrement, aucun belligérant n'était suffisamment fort pour remporter la bataille militaire ; le processus de paix avait commencé pour de bon en 2001, après plus de deux ans d'impasse, de lourds combats, et peu d'avancées sur tous les fronts. Les belligérants n'ont pas eu d'autres choix que de faire la paix.

Deuxièmement, les principaux belligérants étaient fortement dépendants des forces extérieures : les Kabilas avec les troupes angolaises et zimbabwéennes, les rebelles avec les militaires ougandais, rwandais et burundais. Certains de ces pays, en particulier les gouvernements de Kigali, de Kampala et de Kinshasa, qui dépendaient de l'aide étrangère pour plus de la moitié de leur budget, étaient sensibles à la pression des pays donateurs. La critique de ces pays donateurs s'est faite surtout à l'égard de Kigali et de Kampala, après que leurs armées aient livré deux batailles meurtrières lors de la prise de pouvoir des sites miniers à Kisangani, niant les revendications que ces factions étaient uniquement impliquées en RDC dans une démarche de légitime défense. Trois rapports de groupes d'experts de l'ONU, lesquels ont joué un rôle déterminant sur plusieurs facettes du processus de paix, en décrivant en détail les noms des individus et des pays qui profitaient du conflit congolais, ont également permis d'exercer une pression croissante sur ces intervenants militaires extérieurs.

Enfin, le conflit congolais a été relativement peu affecté par les politiques des superpuissances. Malgré son lourd bilan humain, et l'engagement de neuf armées africaines, aucun des membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU n'a considéré que ses intérêts nationaux fondamentaux étaient en jeu dans le conflit. Cela a facilité l'adoption de résolutions de l'ONU et le recours à la diplomatie multilatérale. Si le Rwanda et l'Angola en particulier ont connu des problèmes sécuritaires et économiques autour du conflit, ces problèmes n'étaient pas insurmontables.

Cela dit, peu avant le déroulement des élections démocratiques, la mission onusienne a perdu beaucoup de son influence sur la scène politique congolaise. Elle a été réduite au statut de spectatrice dans la plupart des négociations avec les groupes armés, puisque le gouvernement congolais lui a refusé de remplir son mandat en matière de réforme du secteur de sécurité, elle n'a

pas réussi à jouer un rôle clé dans le très corrompu processus électoral de 2011. Pendant ce temps, les pays donateurs se sont concentrés davantage sur leurs intérêts sécuritaires et économiques bilatéraux, lesquels étaient parfois en compétition avec les objectifs de la mission onusienne.

CONCLUSION

Le déploiement de la Brigade d'intervention en 2013 a fait couler beaucoup d'encre sur le recours à la force dans les opérations de maintien de la paix, en suggérant que les pires échecs des missions de l'ONU (mais aussi ses réussites) avaient eu lieu dans le cadre des missions de protection des civils. Cette conclusion est trompeuse. Les missions ont apporté une aide précieuse lorsqu'elles ont pu être en mesure de jouer un rôle politique dans la mise en œuvre d'un processus de paix. Et tandis que le travail de maintien de la paix « robuste » a effectivement sauvé des vies et refaçonné la dynamique de la sécurité dans l'est de la RDC, ceci peut être attribué de manière égale entre l'environnement politique et le leadership fort des Nations Unies.

Je conclus avec plusieurs recommandations générales. Tout d'abord, les missions de l'ONU ne doivent jamais perdre de vue le contexte politique dans lequel elles sont déployées. Dans certains conflits, il n'y a pas de paix à maintenir, dans d'autres, le processus peut être fragile et difficile à façonner. Le premier devoir des équipes dirigeantes des Nations Unies doit consister à comprendre ces limites et à travailler avec les partenaires bilatéraux et multilatéraux pour redéfinir ces limites politiques. Si ces paramètres ne sont pas modifiables, ou si l'Etat-hôte refuse de conférer à la mission un rôle politique important dans l'élaboration du processus de paix, l'ONU doit réfléchir soigneusement à la façon dont elle mobilise et, au besoin, doit retirer les forces déployées. Dans le cas de la RDC, l'ONU aurait dû attirer bien davantage l'attention de la scène internationale sur le rôle néfaste du Rwanda et être beaucoup plus critique envers son hôte congolais lors des élections de 2011. Au fond, on peut douter de la pertinence de la transformation de la mission de l'ONU en une mission de stabilisation, au regard du manque d'appropriation par les communautés locales et la nature du conflit.

Ensuite, l'usage de la force peut être une composante essentielle des missions de maintien de la paix, et dans le cas de la RDC, celle de l'ONU aurait dû interpréter son mandat militaire de façon plus proactive. Il est rare, cependant, que l'usage de la force seul permette la fin des violences. Tous les groupes armés sont imbriqués dans des structures sociales et ont des liens plus étroits avec des sphères sociales et politiques. L'ONU ne tuera jamais tous les combattants des FDLR, et doit prendre le temps de réfléchir à la façon dont elle peut combiner des approches politiques et militaires. Par exemple, après avoir passé plus d'une décennie à refuser la négociation avec les commandants des FDLR, il y a un consensus croissant sur le fait que l'ONU devrait essayer de faciliter l'exil vers des pays tiers des dirigeants dont le casier judiciaire est vierge.

Ces réflexions soulignent les enseignements précieux que l'expérience congolaise nous a apportés sur le plan technique : en particulier avec l'apport des équipes mixtes de protection des civils et ses officiers de liaison avec les communautés, une doctrine en pleine évolution sur les opérations de maintien de la paix « robustes » et le fort leadership des Nations Unies. Mais il faut également être conscient des limites de ce qui est faisable dans le périmètre de l'environnement politique où sont déployés les Casques bleus.

Cette analyse a été initialement écrit pour le Centre sur la coopération internationale et l'Institut international de la paix dans le cadre d'une série de documents internes pour le Groupe de haut niveau indépendant sur les opérations de paix (HIPPO).

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NOTES DE FIN

[1]Oxfam, "For Me, But Without Me, Is Against Me: Why Efforts to Stabilize the Eastern Congo Are Not Working," [Pourquoi les efforts déployés pour stabiliser l'est de la RDC ne fonctionnent pas]. Note d'information, juillet 2012.

[2]Résolution 1925, paragraphe 12, du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies.

[3]La brigade avait été initialement proposée pour faire partie d'une force d'interposition dans le cadre de la Conférence Internationale sur la Région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL) puis adoptée par la Communauté de développement d'Afrique australe (SADC), avant d'être finalement intégrée à la MONUSCO pour des raisons liées à son financement.

This article was originally published by the *Congo Research Group* on December 11, 2015

December 9, 2015

MULTILATERAL ENVOYS: CHALLENGES TO ASSESSING SUCCESS

Center on International Cooperation

THIS IS THE SIXTH ESSAY IN A SERIES OF SEVEN THAT LOOKS AT THE ROLE OF MULTILATERAL ENVOYS IN PEACEMAKING.

Envoys dispatched to make peace deploy with a bag full of assumptions. Those who send them believe the multilateral framework gives their emissary the moral legitimacy to intervene. They think that pooling efforts under one collective engagement is more cost effective. They claim multilateral conflict prevention saves lives. But how can these and other assumptions about the effectiveness of multilateral envoys be tested?

As the UN and the AU have worked to improve their work in the field of mediation, they have concurrently strengthened their ability to measure and account for the results of their interventions. This builds on a growing body of evaluative work undertaken by the mediation community to identify success factors and articulate norms and good practices for an increasingly crowded field.

Any analysis of these efforts should begin with a review of the common obstacles to assessing mediation initiatives, examining the main success factors and the extent to which a multilateral approach renders these challenges more or less acute. In the low-control, multi-causal world of multilateral special envoy diplomacy, an examination of assessment issues reveals a range of implications and choices for how multilateral organizations go about deploying special envoys. Ultimately, such evaluations cannot escape the tensions inherent to multilateralism. If nothing else, they bring these tensions into even greater focus, while offering at the same time opportunities for sharpening the narrative for a multilateral approach to conflict prevention.

ASSESSING SUCCESS OR FAILURE

The difficulties in assessing, as objectively as possible, the success or failure of mediation and conflict prevention diplomacy have been well documented. Several of these challenges, such as the difficulty in determining a relevant baseline for many indicators or the lack of reliable counterfactuals, are inherent to the nature of the endeavor, regardless of the type of mediation or profiles involved.

Likewise, assessments of mediation efforts, whether undertaken from bilateral or multilateral entities, are also heavily influenced by perceptions and political agendas that are often divorced from facts and objective analysis. Maintaining confidentiality during and after various proceedings is an imperative of most if not all mediation processes, but it does affect post-assessment efforts.

The difficulty in establishing a foolproof counterfactual and the lack of access to all that was said and done combine, in turn, to make attribution notoriously resistant to objective metrics. Causal links between mediation efforts and ultimate outcomes, especially those concerning peace or justice, are seldom as direct and transparent as assessment sponsors would hope for. Lacking robust, unfalsifiable foundations, these links are often disputed on political and technical grounds.

Finally, the field of mediation is particularly vulnerable to the selection effect, whereby the most intractable conflicts receive the most attention, including when it comes to assessment. As a result, the sense that mediation is difficult, while axiomatic, is often amplified by a pundit focus on those truly complex cases.

Other assessment challenges, while also applicable to bilateral mediation, become particularly acute in the case of multilateral deployments. The aforementioned selection effect is a predominant feature of multilateral mediation assessments, precisely because the most difficult conflicts tend to be handed to multilateral organizations. Furthermore, building consensus on the objective of the mediation is even more difficult when the mandates and support for the mediation need to be negotiated among many competing member state agendas and perspectives. Often, agreement among member states to "get someone out there" can only be achieved on the basis of vague objectives, which renders assessments of results more complicated. Even within smaller multilateral organizations, shared definitions of success and goals prove to be problematic.

Multilateral mediation also faces more difficulty in delineating and obtaining consensus on a clear endpoint. For multilateral organizations, engagement never really ends, especially where the UN or regional organizations are intervening within their regions. When a mediator is called back, diplomacy continues in some form. Even when a formal mediation process is successfully closed, an assessment must consider the aftermath, which inevitably raises the question: when is it safe to declare mission accomplished? This conundrum affects all mediation initiatives, and is compounded by all of the aforementioned challenges, but it affects multilateral efforts with distinct intensity.

The mediation community has undertaken significant efforts to overcome these challenges. In recent years, it has shaped a growing consensus on the need to combine robust, data driven approaches with contextual analysis and, where relevant, imports from other disciplines such as psychology, rational choice and game theory.

Generally, reporting on mediation efforts has gained increased credibility, narrowing the understanding gaps among relevant actors including member states that oversee, authorize and fund multilateral efforts. However, beyond the increased complexity and costs of properly assessing mediation, this renewed focus on assessment brings into relief two broader, strategic questions.

The first question relates to the very real possibility of assessments "doing harm." From technical challenges to political pressures, there are various reasons for which an assessment can be discarded, misinterpreted or manipulated, in increasing order of harm. The repercussions are also varied. They can take the form of a damaged reputation for individuals, including the mediator, an institution or, more generally, for the practice of mediation. In the case of mediation failure or even stalemate, disagreements over an assessment and how to properly interpret its findings can also potentially undermine member state decision-making for corrective measures, with many avoiding self-examination as to if and how they may have contributed to such failure.

The question of what to do with an assessment, even in the rare instances where member states agree on its findings, underlies a second major consideration. It is fairly clear that a narrowly-defined drive for evaluative perfection is ill-suited to mediation. This truism should not be construed by mediation practitioners and institutions as a reason to dismiss assessments. But the incongruity of expecting a scientific formula means that member states and decision makers must debate mediation results in an effort to reduce the scope for disagreements.

The aim should be to maximize the value and relevance of the assessment findings in subsequent decision making. In the context of political negotiations, one may even argue that the inherent difficulty in drawing definitive conclusions is in itself valuable, as it forces debate and further engagement.

These debates are only productive if they are based on a reasonable set of interpretations. The value of assessments is to narrow, but not always to eliminate, the range of potential interpretations. Hence, rather than strive Sisyphus-like for technically perfect and indisputable findings, multilateral organizations should seek to develop and implement clear methodologies. Harmonizing the factors and indicators used to reach credible conclusions will also narrow the scope of potential interpretations. Such an approach would go a long way in shaping the necessary, and healthy, discussions among member states that such claims could trigger. In other words, keeping in mind the potential to do harm, assessments of mediation efforts should support, rather than stifle, conflict prevention dialogue and engagement in the public arena.

WHAT MAKES OR BREAKS A MEDIATION EFFORT?

While assessing the results of a specific multilateral engagement remains fraught with technical and political hurdles, there is little disagreement, in principle, on the factors that seem essential for mediation to succeed. These factors combine four broad distinctions:

• they range from the personal to the structural;

• several are well within the mediator and the mediating organization's control while many are not;

• they usually reinforce one another; and,

• for a few, their degree of relevance generally increases under a multilateral envoy framework.

A common feature of most success factors is that, more often than not, their significance is proved by their absence. Such is the case with conflict party willingnessto negotiate, and the perceived appeal of any alternative to a negotiated agreement, tragically demonstrated in Syria.Other well-documented variables which the mediation community collectively emphasizes as critical to any engagement include the timing of deployment; the legitimacy and personal qualities of the special envoy; the strategic use of thematic expertise to generate options or settle factual questions; and the *incentives* (negative or positive) that a mediation effort may have at its disposal to move the parties forward.

As with the methodological constraints described in the previous section, the relevance of several success factors increases when the mediation is conducted under a multilateral approach. With regards to legitimacy, multilateral cachet constitutes a double-edged sword, with claims of supra-national impartiality contending with suspicions by warring parties or other actors of hidden member state agendas and a history of malevolent interference. The perception of the multilateral organization and its special envoy is therefore highly contextual.

The AU's credibility as a mediator varied greatly from Kenya in 2008 to Madagascar in 2009. In Kenya, the AU mediator, Koffi Annan, was quickly accepted as the only mediator and benefitted from a great level of acceptance in the country. In Madagascar, the AU mediator suffered from the organization's difficult history with the island country.

Similar variances beset the UN, the EU, and other regional entities. In Guinea in 2008, the UN's regional special envoy enjoyed wide acceptance, built through a combination of personal efforts and local appreciation for the UN system's long-standing support to the country throughout the crisis. In 2008, the UN's regional Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) mediated the crisis. The UN enjoyed great legitimacy following its decision to maintain a significant presence throughout the violent incidents while other international actors withdrew or severely limited their presence. Such legitimacy, which similarly allowed the UN to offer timely assistance in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, is not something the organization can always take for granted.

Legitimacy can also be buttressed – or undermined – through the choice of status conferred upon the special envoy. In Madagascar, the UN's ability to sustain engagement, both among rival factions and between the international community, was undermined inter alia by the relatively low administrative rank given its mediator. Similar choices confront the EU, with changes in titles to its representatives providing signals, at times unintentional, as to the level of engagement, support and interest on the part of EU member states.

Communication and reporting on the process is a well-recognized mediation tool per se, but, particularly in a multilateral process, it can also make or break the special envoy's legitimacy. Any communication may expose her or him to accusations of member state manipulation and undermine the impartiality and principled approach that multilateralism is meant to embody.

A second factor compounded by a multilateral designation relates to the strength of the mandate. As noted earlier, such strength, which is critical for success, is notoriously difficult to achieve among member states for whom deployment of a special envoy is often the easiest and weakest common denominator they can agree on in the face of a conflict. The mediation in Madagascar provides a compelling illustration, since it can be argued that not even the lead-SADC mediator, let alone the UN and the AU, benefited from clear and robust mediation mandates.

The issue of legitimacy is inextricably and positively linked to the level of international support for a multilateral engagement. The extent to which member states (of the organization and beyond) are aligned behind the special envoy constitutes perhaps the single most determining factor for multilateral diplomatic success. The evidence for such a connection abounds. In Yemen, which up in 2011-12 presented the only "Arab Spring" case of a negotiated agreement, the UN Special Envoy's mediation has been significantly aided by a consistently unified international community within the UN Security Council and the GCC, in stark contrast with the bitter divisions that have undermined the joint LAS-UN engagement in Syria.

Similar examples of international cohesiveness were found in other "success stories": In Kenya in 2008, following an early plethora of competing efforts, the AU mediator achieved widespread support from key member states. In the Great Lakes in 2009, the UN special envoy managed to unify disparate efforts behind one multilateral process. The recent experiences of Syria, Madagascar and, to a lesser extent, Libya, offer a tragic illustration of the impact of disunity, when international divisions play directly into the interests of the warring parties, further weakening their willingness to negotiate and accept multilateral mediation. The UN's Special Envoy in Libya initially benefited from strong support from the UNSC. But this support began to fray following the UNSC authorized and NATO-led military operation. Significant divisions within the AU further undermined his ability to mediate between the two parties.

Sustained, unified international support also allows the special envoy a judicious use of pressures and even threats from various member states. Such mediation tactics are highly risky, and are usually only successful if well-timed and coordinated with relevant member states, as in Kenya, when the possibility of economic sanctions from leading donors was strategically mooted at key moments of the negotiation. Strong support also permits greater coherence with related initiatives designed to complement, rather than contradict, the special envoy's work. These can include track II diplomacy through bilateral channels, and the formation of a team of bilateral envoys under the multilateral framework of a group of member state friends to provide additional incentives and oversight.

For several multilateral organizations, a carrot and stick approach can also be built from within, depending on the weight and depth of the toolbox at their disposal. The ability on the part of the special envoy to leverage the organization's technical and financial resources can significantly contribute to her or his mediation efforts. In this regard, the playing field among multilateral institutions is highly uneven. An EU or a UN special envoy can usually rely on a range of tools, including aid financing and access to specialized expertise throughout a mediation process. In Yemen in 2011-12, for example, the legitimacy of the mediation in the lead-up to the National Dialogue was greatly enhanced by the use of the UN Peacebuilding Fund and the establishment of a trust fund to support the preparatory committee and finance the logistics of the conference proceedings. However, looking back now in 2015, the long-term impact of this intervention needs to be questioned.

Such resources may not need only financial support. An extensive country presence of related actors, e.g. development or humanitarian entities, can also provide the eyes and ears to support the mediation process and the special envoy's analytical capacities. The UN's engagement in Guinea or Kyrgyzstan, whereby the regional special envoy worked closely with UNDP and other agencies in conflict prevention programming, provides an interesting illustration of internal connectivity and its value for mediation. Such reach is however not available to all multilateral institutions. Even in those institutions with multidimensional mandates and capacities, leveraging of political, technical and financial resources in support of a mediation strategy is often under-utilized due to poor internal coordination and institutional silos.

Finally, no peace agreement can result in a sustained settlement in the absence of follow-on capacities and mechanisms for monitoring implementation of key provisions. In this regard, multilateral special envoys are in theory better placed to ensure sustained institutional follow up and support: few, if any, of their institutions ever completely withdraw from the scene following the end of a formal mediation process. In one form or another, the organization remains. The challenge, however, is to ensure that what stays behind is equipped, politically and financially, to support and monitor the aftermath. Here as well, the record is mixed, even for large multilateral organizations such as the UN, the EU, or the AU. This fact is often omitted from mediation claims, as this success criterion captures, along with the others just cited, a number of the political and technical dilemmas these organizations face when assessing their special envoy diplomacy.

DILEMMAS FOR MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

The list of success factors appears quite daunting – and in fact, no single mediation effort has benefited or will mostly likely ever benefit from all of them coalescing simultaneously. For multilateral special envoy deployments, this reality has two important corollaries.

First, as the factors listed above demonstrate, multilateral special envoys usually work in circumstances where they have at best only limited control over a number of important variables. From the mandate to access to resources, their operational space for independent maneuvering is beholden to a range of actors and motivations. In only a very few exceptional cases do the stars all align to provide an optimal mediation environment.

This fact shapes a second reality. For multilateral institutions, assertions related to their special envoy interventions are fraught with pitfalls. Beyond the technical challenges in assessing impact, any claim of results achieved must carefully factor in imperatives of national ownership and leadership in ensuring lasting political settlements. In particular, taking credit for success can rankle national sensitivities and upset delicate member state dynamics.

For multilateral institutions, these realities carry hard choices and implications across a number of areas. Among them, the initial decision to deploy, and the choice of special envoy, loom as the most sensitive. Regardless of the genesis for such deployment, multilateral organizations must communicate clear understanding of the elements that contribute to the "chemistry" in order to create the right "baseline" at date of entry for future strategy formulation. Questions of whether the time is ripe for multilateral engagement, and who is the right mediator, are critical, but they are not always left to the decision of the organizations themselves. Hence – especially when the choice to deploy is influenced by heavy member state pressures – multilateral organizations must improve their ability to shape discourse on how it will be assessed. This can be achieved by tracking and keeping record of the (often suboptimal) conditions in which the special envoy was deployed.

Similarly, astute assessment is required to inform the exit strategy, and the timing and conditions under which a multilateral special envoy should end its mediation. Here again, in complex situations, the decision will often balance competing factors. These may at times include political agendas and "do no harm" considerations, which can apply when a multilateral engagement seems to prolong the violence. In these cases, the organization must keep a close finger on the member states' pulse when thinking about initiating and publicizing any formal assessment of its mediation engagement. The conduct of an assessment can itself be potentially misconstrued as a harbinger of changes that key stakeholders may not necessarily wish for.

Finally, operational constraints on multilateral envoys have implications as to how the organizations report on their mediation efforts. Particularly in cases of success, recognizing the international mediator's role doesn't necessarily conflict with ensuring national ownership of the peace attained, or with giving credit to member state support. In their efforts to tread that careful line, multilateral organizations often end up either downplaying or overstating their case. This balancing act takes many forms. On one hand, claims of success are often overblown and unsubstantiated by robust evidence. On the other, the responsibility for failures is unduly accepted. And too often for multilateral diplomacy, evidence of genuine success resembles Melville's description of misery: it hides aloof, so we deem that it is none.

WHEN ARE ENVOYS EFFECTIVE?

Assessments of multilateral special envoy mediations bring into full display the fragile balancing act that is inherent to multilaterally-led diplomacy. Even reporting on results poses challenges that extend beyond the technical obstacles associated with evaluation of conflict prevention initiatives. As such, for organizations such as the UN, the AU or the EU, reflections on their special envoy deployments provide a stark reminder of the realities of multilateralism. Their envoys are rarely in full control of all success factors, and their mediation efforts and how they present them must constantly balance competing agendas.

These realities need not however obfuscate opportunities for multilateral organizations to shape a compelling narrative for their special envoy diplomacy. First they must acknowledge constraints, and then frame discussions of their mediation engagement around the core ethics of multilateralism. In the low-control, multi-causal environment in which these organizations operate, greater transparency in choices made and principles invoked, as well as enhanced clarity of responsibilities, would send a powerful signal to their member states: multilateralism is often the worst form of mediation – except for all the others.

CASE STUDIES: MAIN FEATURES OF SELECTED MEDIATION PROCESSES

Madagascar 2009: SADC, UN, and AU
- Lack of unified support from the international community: competing agendas and objectives
- Lack of clarity on roles amongst SADC, AU and UN mediators
- Good analytical capabilities within the UN mediation team but weak logistical support from the UNCT
- Weak mandate and status of the UN Special Envoy
- Weak political support within the organization

Kyrgyzstan 2010: UN and OESCE
- Standing and access, of UN Special Envoy and UN SRSG (regional)
- Effective collaboration between UN and OESCE
- Adequate timing of deployment
- UN systems and capacities on the ground to monitor the situation and inform the mediation strategies

Guinea 2008: UN
- Accessibility and responsiveness of UN SRSG (regional)
- UN SRSG mediation skills and approach
- Analytical capacities on the ground, and logistical support
- Link between mediation and programmatic tools and resources, through, inter alia, effective collaboration with UNDP

- Country acceptance and legitimacy of the UN, based on history of UNCT presence and support during the crisis

Yemen 2011-2012: UN and GCC

- Strong, unified international community support (UNSC, GCC) Accessibility and responsiveness of UN Special Envoy
- UN Special Envoy mediation skills and approach
- Link between mediation and programmatic tools, through, inter alia, trust fund for national dialogue and UN PBF funding

Libya 2011: UN

- Contradicting international goals and strategies
- Party (un)willingness
- Weak mandate of the Special Envoy and lack of programmatic tools resources to complement mediation effort

Kenya 2008: AU

- Unified international community behind one mediation process
- Standing and access, of AU Special Envoy
- Weak alternatives on both sides
- Strong external pressure at key moments
- Smart mediation approaches (communication, expert inputs)

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December 8, 2015

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WHERE ENVOYS AREN'T

Teresa Whitfield

THIS IS THE FIFTH ESSAY IN A SERIES OF SEVEN THAT LOOKS AT THE ROLE OF MULTILATERAL ENVOYS IN PEACEMAKING.

This series of essays was conceived to document and analyze the work of multilateral envoys, particularly their engagement in efforts to mediate or manage armed conflict. It necessarily focuses on the conflicts in which one or more multilateral envoys are present. This essay, in contrast, reviews the conflicts where envoys are not present, and attempts analysis of the reasons why this might be the case.

In their 2003 article "**Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?**", Michael Gilligan and Stephen John Stedman observed that the literature on the determinants of peacekeeping suffered from several methodological problems. The most prominent of these was "a tendency to select cases on the basis of the dependent variable and, by doing so, to restrict the sample to peacekeeping operations that the UN has chosen to undertake". This led characteristics that these cases had in common to be used as the basis for understanding UN intervention, while ignoring the cases of civil wars or interstate aggression in which UN peacekeepers had not been present. The result was analysis that could not fully address the factors responsible for the decision to intervene.

When the 'intervention' comes in the more modest form of a multilateral envoy, it is no less necessary to broaden the frame of reference to include the cases where multilateral envoys are not present. The high number of these cases serves as a sobering reminder that there are many other means of addressing armed conflict than the appointment of a multilateral envoy. There are also cases, perhaps Syria most prominent among them, where the presence of a multilateral envoy has quite clearly not advanced progress towards a settlement, or may reflect a strategy little more sophisticated than a desire for the international community to be seen to be doing something, rather than nothing, to bring an intractable conflict towards its end. Meanwhile, there are numerous examples of political processes in which other international actors – e.g., individual states and/or non-governmental mediators – have been involved. In some cases, the confidentiality of their engagement complicates their documentation. In others, the quiet or gradual engagement of a multilateral actor (for example through a mid-level official not formally named as an envoy) lends a degree of discretion to multilateral involvement that can also be difficult to quantify.

The data nonetheless indicates a relatively high number of armed conflicts in which sensitivities to national sovereignty or the nature of the adversary – especially in this era of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) - complicate external involvement in mediation or facilitation. The governments concerned instead pursue the military defeat of their opponent(s) or another purely internal solution.

Modesty is called for to excuse both the "snapshot" methodological approach adopted within this essay, as well as the limitations of its closing conclusions. The "snapshot" provided by the accompanying table correlates the incidence of armed conflict as documented by the **Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)** between 2011 and 2014 with the presence of one or more multilateral envoy. Obvious methodological drawbacks to this approach are that it does not attempt to factor in important issues such as the

gravity of the conflict (measured in battle-related deaths), its duration, or the moment within the conflict at which an envoy is appointed. Nor does the analysis include issues addressed elsewhere in this series such as the multiplicity of envoys present in some conflicts, or questions related to the challenge of evaluating their impact.

The findings developed from the data nevertheless suggest that "where envoys aren't" can largely be attributed to three distinct, but sometimes overlapping factors:

1) Regional dynamics, and in particular sensitivities regarding national sovereignty that manifest themselves in attitudes toward the UN and other multilateral actors.

2) Push-back from strong states, again for reasons of national sovereignty.

3) The nature of the adversary and, especially in the post-9/11 climate, the legal and practical difficulties of engaging with those labeled as terrorists and other extremists. This is a problem that has become more acute given the increasing fragmentation of armed groups, the blurring of criminal and political agendas, and the rapid spread of Salafi jihadist groups which have so far demonstrated considerable success in sowing division and polarization within and between a wide range of international actors.

ARMED CONFLICT 2011-2014

The UCDP defines an armed conflict as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths. Of these two parties, at least one has to be the government of a state". The table draws from the annual updates to the UCDP database Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014 included in the special data features published in the Journal of Peace Research, in each of the years 2011 (37 armed conflicts), 2012 (32 armed conflicts), 2013 (33 armed conflicts, subsequently revised to 34), and 2014 (40 armed conflicts). The figure of 40 armed conflicts made 2014 the year with the highest number of conflicts seen since 1999; it was also the year with the highest-number of battle–related deaths in the post-Cold War period.

Changes in the panorama of armed conflict during this four-year period are attributable both to processes set in motion by the upheaval in the Arab world that began in 2011 and to the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West. This has been at its most acute in Ukraine, but also manifests as hindrance to building international consensus on other crises, most notably including Syria. Revolutions and counterrevolutions in the Arab world contributed to the emergence of armed conflicts in Libya and in Syria, the latter by 2012 seeing exceptionally high levels of casualties for the post-Cold War period, as well as massive levels of displacement and other forms of humanitarian duress. Arab unrest also precipitated the deterioration of the situation in Iraq, markedly including the rise of the Islamic State, as well as the eruption of conflict in Mali and the exacerbation of violence and insecurity across much of North Africa and the Sahel. Elsewhere in Africa conflict surged in the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Somalia; South Sudan in late 2013 deteriorated into civil war.

This complex environment, in which many conflicts are characterized by the fragmentation of armed actors as well as the growing presence of jihadi groups, has brought with it unprecedented challenges to the tools of conflict management and response developed since the end of the Cold War. In many situations they have been found to be wanting.

The period was nonetheless one of active peacemaking. In Asia a major peace agreement was reached in the Philippines between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao, with a framework agreement signed in October 2012 and the final agreement in early 2014. However, the activity of other armed groups in the Southern Philippines contributed to the perpetuation of conflict in Mindanao in 2013, as well as the outbreak of a brief conflict in Sabah in Malaysia. Substantial progress has also been made in addressing Myanmar's long-standing ethnic conflicts, alongside impressive steps away from authoritarian rule. The complexity of the ethnic conflicts in Myanmar contributed to the resurgence of fighting between the government of Myanmar and the Karen, Polaung and Shan in 2013, and fighting continued with Kachin, Kokang and Palaung in 2014. But steady advances have been made towards a national ceasefire agreement that in October 2015 was signed by eight out of fifteen officially recognized armed groups.

Over the four years, given annual fluctuations reflecting the decline or settlement of some conflicts and the emergence of new ones, UCDP recorded a total of 59 armed conflicts. Of these, twelve conflicts (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine-Donetsk, Ukraine-Novorossiya, and Yemen) in at least one year surpassed the threshold of 1,000 battle-related deaths, leading UCDP to classify them as wars. Meanwhile there were eighteen "internationalized intrastate armed conflicts", which are defined by UCDP as armed conflicts that occur "between the government of a state and internal opposition groups, with intervention from other states in the form of troops". These conflicts were in Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), Afghanistan, Algeria, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel-Palestine, Mali (Ansar Dine/Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa [MUJAO]), Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Ukraine (Donetsk), Ukraine (Lugansk), Ukraine (Novorossiya), Uganda, the United States (with Al Qaeda), and Yemen.

WHERE ENVOYS ARE …

The table records the presence of multilateral envoys in more than half (34) of these 59 conflicts. With one exception (Pakistan), these conflicts include all twelve wars, and fifteen of the eighteen internationalized conflicts (the exceptions being Algeria, Mauritania, and the U.S.). This strongly suggests that both the gravity of a conflict and its degree of internationalization favor the appointment of multilateral envoys.

The 34 conflicts in which multilateral envoys have been present may nevertheless seem a low result given a widely shared perception of intense international activism. The number becomes lower still if we distinguish between those envoys directly mandated to engage in the mediation or facilitation of the armed conflict concerned, and those whose good offices or other role has a more tangential relationship towards it. In seventeen cases the envoys fall into the latter category, reducing the number of situations in which multilateral envoys were directly mandated to mediate or facilitate an end to armed conflict to only 17 out of 59, or little more than a quarter.

The conflicts in which an envoy, or more than one envoy was directly engaged include:

- Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)
- Ukraine (Donetsk)
- Ukraine (Lugansk)
- Ukraine (Novorossiya)
- Israel-Palestine
- Syria
- Yemen
- Cambodia-Thailand
- Central African Republic
- Ivory Coast
- Libya (Ghadafi)
- Libya (Zintan brigades)
- Mali (Azawad)
- South Sudan (internal conflict)
- South Sudan-Sudan (Abyei)
- South Sudan-Sudan border
- Sudan-Darfur/Sudanese Revolutionary Front.

It is striking that, of these seventeen conflicts, three were in Ukraine, nine were on the African continent, and four within or between South Sudan and Sudan, where several conflicts were addressed under the broad mandate of the Chairperson of the African Union's High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan. Only one, the very particular case of the Cambodian-Thailand conflict over the temple of Preah Vihear and their common border, was in Asia. This long-standing conflict was, exceptionally, resolved through talks facilitated by an envoy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The seventeen conflicts in which envoys have been present but played or continue to play more tangential roles generally embrace situations in which the UN and other international actors are heavily engaged, but do not have a direct mandate to act as mediator or facilitator in the conflict. This is typically because there is no peace process or engagement with the concerned armed group(s) taking place – with the Islamic State in Iraq, for example, or AQIM in Mali. Even in Yemen, where the UN has long played a central role, UN Special Adviser on Yemen worked closely with the Gulf Cooperation Council and the EU to support the Yemeni national dialogue but did not engage directly in the conflict between Yemen and Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula. (The role would have been coded as "more tangential" to the armed conflict were it not for the escalating violence in the conflict with the Houthis, with whom the UN was engaged, seen in 2014.)

Similarly, the UN and other envoys (the former, it should be recalled, work within the framework of a broad good offices mandate that **may be either implicit or explicit in the role of a representative or envoy of the UN Secretary-General**) played significant supporting roles but were not directly mandated to facilitate or mediate talks between:

Afghanistan and the Taliban (even as engagement with the Taliban was pursued by a variety of official and unofficial actors, including the UN)

Somalia and Al Shabaab (although successive UN SRSGs explored the possibility of supporting dialogue)

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the M23 (March 23 Movement, whose talks were facilitated by Uganda)

Mali and Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO)

Rwanda and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), with whom engagement would in June 2014 be attempted by the Community of Sant' Egidio, to the outrage of Rwanda)

Nigeria – where a high level UN envoy became engaged only in 2014, with his efforts largely concentrated on preparations for elections in early 2015 – and Boko Haram

The government of Myanmar and ethnic armed groups (although a UN Special Adviser on Myanmar offered support to the peace process overall)Meanwhile, in December 2011, three years after the collapse of the Juba peace talks between Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the **AU appointed a Special Envoy on the LRA**- but with a mandate to "provide overall political and strategic coordination of the operation against the LRA", rather than to attempt a new political process.

...AND AREN'T

Beyond the 34 conflicts in which envoys have been directly engaged or present, there are 25 cases in which no multilateral envoy has been involved. In some conflicts, as expected, this is because – as in the previous category – there is no public political process or engagement underway. In others, it is because a peace process has taken shape, but it has not been deemed appropriate or helpful to engage multilateral envoys within it. The regional distribution is of note: twelve (out of total of nineteen Asian conflicts) of the 25 no-envoy conflicts are in Asia; a further six (out of a total of 24 African conflicts) are in Africa;, three (out of eight) are in the Middle East; two (out of two) are in the Americas;, and two (out of six) are in Europe.

In a number of cases the state concerned sought a military solution against an armed group it held to be and/or formally designated a terrorist organization. Examples include the conflict between Russia and the Caucasus Emirates in Chechnya; that between Ethiopia and the Oromo Liberation Front; that between Algeria and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and MUJAO; and that between the U.S. and Al Qaeda. A number of these conflicts emerged or escalated during the four-year period. The Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) mutated into the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) and launched a dramatic offensive against the government of Iraq in mid-2014. Levels of violence in the conflict between Nigeria and Boko Haram, which first erupted in 2009 – and where, as noted above, a multilateral envoy was not directly involved - also accelerated from to over 1,600 battle-related deaths in 2013, and over 4,600 in 2014.

India and Pakistan, meanwhile, pursued distinct but predominantly militaristic policies against the six conflicts within the two countries. The four in India included its decades-old conflict in Kashmir; its conflict with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in states in central India; and territorial conflicts with two rebel groups, the Goro National Liberation Army, formed in 2010, and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, which had low but fluctuating levels of violence. Pakistan continued its territorial conflict in Baluchistan and its conflict with different branches of the Pakistani Taliban and other armed groups. The threshold of violence in the latter remained at a level of war in all four years under review (talks were attempted in early 2014 before a return to a military offensive). Concerns about sovereignty – especially on the part of India – have also long precluded the engagement of a

multilateral envoy in the inter-state conflict between the two countries, which was recognized as active by UCDP in 2014, albeit only at a low level.

The conflicts in Iran, Tajikistan and Mauritania did not register as such in the UCDP database after 2011. Iran appeared to have subdued the Kurdish rebel group Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan after a large offensive in 2011. In Tajikistan a low intensity conflict against the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan dwindled as the government pursued its leaders in the courts. And in Mauritania there was little fighting with AQIM after 2011 in part, **UCDP surmised**, because AQIM was active elsewhere, notably in Northern Mali.

The confidential nature of some peace processes, especially in their early stages, complicates their documentation, but in at least six of the conflicts in which no multilateral envoy was present there has either been a public peace process without the involvement of an envoy, or indication that a more confidential process has been underway. The latter is the case in the long-running conflict between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party where in early 2013 Prime Minister Recip Erdogan **confirmed the existence of talks with Abdullah Ocalan**, the imprisoned Kurdish leader.

Standing in contrast to the Turkish case is the complex and very public international involvement in the peace process in Mindanao, in the Southern Philippines, where multilateral organizations have been involved but kept at arms' length. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) facilitated talks with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that led to an agreement in 1996 from which later agreements have drawn. The Philippine government sought the involvement of ASEAN in the MILF process, but encountered resistance from Malaysia – which became the facilitator of the talks – over the involvement of Indonesia. The EU, meanwhile, was keen to develop a role for itself, but remained outside an International Contact Group (ICG) formed in 2009 with a composition that mixed states (Japan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Kingdom) with international NGOs (The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), Conciliation Resources and Muhammadiyah). Both the EU and OIC were mentioned in the **terms of reference of the ICG**, and implicit within its composition was an understanding that the EU would be kept informed and play a major role in peace process support. A peace process with the Communist Party of the Philippines, meanwhile, has languished, but continues with the facilitation of Norway.

Norway is also one of two facilitators – the other being Cuba – in a very active peace process, public since 2012, that seeks to bring to an end the armed conflict between the government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. The talks are held in Havana, Cuba. Other international actors involved include Chile and Venezuela as 'accompanying' states, and in 2015 delegates of the UN Secretary-General and the president pro-tempore (Uruguay) of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) were appointed to support talks on a ceasefire and disarmament.

Regional states also have leading roles in a slow developing peace processes addressing the conflict between Ethiopia and the Ogaden National Liberation Front, facilitated by Kenya, and in Southern Thailand. Early in 2013 Malaysia assumed facilitation of the process between Thailand and the Pattani insurgency, which had long been conducted confidentially by the HD Centre. The HD Centre and the Community of Sant'Egidio, work in a coordinated fashion to facilitate different tracks of the peace process between the government of Senegal and separatist movements in the Casamance.Unofficial actors also played a successful role in support of the peace process between the government of Mozambique and RENAMO, the Mozambican National Resistance, that concluded in an agreement to end the low-level armed conflict that had developed in advance of the elections held in 2014.

FINDINGS

There are exceptional cases in which the gravity of a conflict or crisis such as a coup precipitates the appointment of an envoy or envoys without consent. However, in most circumstances, the factors determining the presence of a multilateral envoy reflect issues of both supply and demand. A multilateral entity has to be ready to deploy the envoy, and the parties concerned – with the government invariably the primary interlocutor for an envoy sent in representation of other states - have to be ready to receive and engage with him or her.

The data suggests three broad findings to explain the interplay of supply and demand that determines the appointment of multilateral envoys:

FINDING 1: SENSITIVITIES TOWARD NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY EVIDENT WITHIN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE UN AND OTHER MULTILATERAL ACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO DETERMINING THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ENVOYS.

There is considerable regional variance in the cases in which no envoy is present. Most striking is a comparison between Africa and Asia, the two regions with the highest number of armed conflicts in the 2011-2014 period. Envoys were not present in only seven out of the 24 armed conflicts in Africa, but 12 out of 19 conflicts in Asia. Moreover, even this figure skews low given that five out of the seven Asian conflicts in which an envoy is indicated as present were in Myanmar, where the UN Special Adviser had limited direct involvement in the peace processes with ethnic groups. (An envoy of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation was in 2014 appointed to address the issue of the Rohingya.) A fourth was the anomalous case - in Asian terms - of Afghanistan.

The data reflects what is amply documented elsewhere in this series: multilateral organizations vary greatly in the mandates and sensibilities with which they approach conflict intervention due primarily to the sensitivities of member states over their sovereignty. The UN has a universal mandate, but finds differing degrees of receptivity to its involvement in different regions, and little room for a political role in Asia. The European Union, uniquely for a regional organization, has no internal mandate and a global presence, but rarely assumes the lead in a mediating effort; in Ukraine, it is unsurprising that it is the OSCE, whose membership includes Russia and Ukraine, as well as EU member states, that has assumed the prime responsibility for peacemaking.

The African Union and African sub-regional organizations, on the other hand, have developed norms and practices that reflect a high tolerance for intervention and appoint envoys on a regular basis. As the reach and capacity of African regional organizations has grown, so the tendency for their envoys to engage - either with the support of the UN or independently of it - has also developed. (The relatively small role, in political terms, played by the UN in efforts to resolve the conflict in South Sudan is a good example of this).

In Asia, meanwhile, sensitivity to intervention is high and regional organizations do not have robust mandates for peace and security. There is insufficient consensus within ASEAN's member states, for example, to play the good offices role outlined in its Charter, where the first or the organization's purposes is defined as being: "To maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region". A more generalized aversion to the formalization of diplomatic roles contributes to a dearth of envoys. In several cases it has facilitated the involvement of non-governmental organizations in mediation and mediation support.

FINDING 2: PUSH-BACK FROM STRONG STATES CAN PREEMPT THE APPOINTMENT OF ENVOYS.

A high number of the conflicts in which no multilateral envoy is present take place in strong states that actively resist external involvement, and especially that of a multilateral organization. Russia, India and Pakistan have clearly rejected the engagement of multilateral actors in their internal conflicts (seven in the four-year period under review). Nigeria similarly long resisted the involvement of either the UN or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the regional organization in which it is the dominant power, in its conflict with Boko Haram. This was even as it was – in contrast to Russia, India, Pakistan or indeed China - relatively open to the involvement of NGOs (for example in efforts to address conflicts in Jos state). In 2014, in the exceptional circumstances of increased international attention after Boko Haram kidnapped over 200 schoolgirls, **Nigeria did accept the engagement of a high level UN envoy**. However, his efforts were focused on preparations for the general elections held in early 2015. During 2015 Nigeria assumed the lead of an ad hoc coalition of West African counterterrorism troops – the Multinational Joint Task Force – to fight Boko Haram in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

Senegal has also resisted the involvement of ECOWAS in the Casamance. Ethiopia, meanwhile, preferred the facilitation of Kenya in its conflict over the Ogaden to the involvement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an eight-country sub-regional organization whose peacemaking capacities have long been complicated by the regional rivalries amongst its membership (prominently on display in the peace process it leads in South Sudan).

The power of strong states to resist outside intervention within their borders or in their "near abroad" has also been evident in a number of long-standing conflicts with levels of violence below the UCDP threshold of armed conflict between 2011-2014. There have, for example, been no multilateral envoys in Tibet, or to address China's conflict with the Uighurs. The UN, meanwhile, was discouraged by Russia from exercising too assertive a role in Ukraine, and by South Africa, as well as Zimbabwe itself, from involvement in the latter. In the European context, Spain's sensitivity to its sovereignty ensured that there was no EU or other formal international role in the Basque conflict – in contrast to Northern Ireland where the British government welcomed the engagement of a US mediator. But this did not impede a rather an unusual mix of informal international involvement in a peace process that contributed to the **decision by the separatist group ETA to end its violence in October 2011**.

FINDING 3: THE NATURE OF THE ADVERSARY, ESPECIALLY IN THE POST-9/11 CLIMATE, BRINGS LEGAL AND PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES TO ENGAGEMENT AND RESTRICTS THE APPOINTMENT OF ENVOYS.

An overlapping number of conflicts in which no envoy is present are those in which a state is in conflict with an extremist group, understood or classified by the state itself and the international community as a terrorist organization. (It is important to note that **states routinely consider internal insurgencies as terrorist organizations**, regardless of the existence of underlying grievances or legitimacy among some sectors of the population.) As we have seen, there were no multilateral envoys mediating or facilitating talks with extremists with varying links to Al Qaeda in Russia, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia or indeed the Philippines (Abu Sayaf). And after the collapse of the peace process with LRA in Uganda in 2008, international engagement has been focused on support to military efforts to secure its defeat.

Engagement with extremists - especially by formal mediators – brings with it particular constraints of both supply and demand. In many cases international opinion has coalesced behind a view that only a military solution that brings the defeat of the terrorist

opponent is acceptable. Legal impediments to engagement are also significant obstacles to many multilateral actors. These are most evident in restrictions on "material support" to foreign terrorist organizations contained within US legislation, but also reflected in national counter-terrorist legislation and UN sanctions regimes. UN officials enjoy diplomatic immunity from national legislations, but are nonetheless subject to political pressures from member states that can complicate their engagement. NGOs may frequently have greater capacity for early contacts and the opening of discreet channels for communication. All potential mediators, meanwhile, are challenged by situations in which an armed group has no wish to talk and will violently prevent engagement, or is prepared to engage but only on terms that restrict what there might be to talk about – for example, absolutist demands for an Islamic Caliphate.

CONCLUSION

These findings have different implications for the conflict resolution field. The presence of a multilateral envoy, or not, is a result of a variety of different contextual factors. In itself it may be value-neutral, even for the wider engagement of the international community, as innovative international support provided to the peace processes in the Philippines and Colombia demonstrates. And the increasing sophistication of mediation support offers new possibilities for the helpful involvement of multilateral actors such as the UN or EU even in situations when their envoys may not have a mandated role.

Meanwhile, there would appear to be a rising number of contexts "where envoys aren't", in which either individual states or experienced non-governmental actors may be more acceptable than a multilateral envoy. Both may be able to engage with more discretion than a representative of a multilateral actor. Non-governmental actors in particular are less restricted by political and diplomatic constraints than a representative of a multilateral actor, or even a state. They may therefore be able to make and sustain contacts with an armed group with a degree of acceptability that might elude a more formal actor.

Opposition from a strong state represents perhaps the greatest obstacle to the engagement of a multilateral actor, state, or indeed an NGO. But as adroit diplomacy by the UN has demonstrated in some cases, there may be circumstances in which what appeared to be unwavering hostility to its engagement can gradually be shifted towards acceptance that it might play a helpful role. The case of Nepal is illustrative. In that instance the UN was able to overcome initial Indian objections to a formal envoy through the quiet deployment of a skilled mid-level official. Over time, his efforts helped pave the way for a substantial UN role in the support of the peace process. In Colombia progress towards what seems a likely UN role in the monitoring of the ceasefire has followed a different route. Respect and support for negotiations led by national actors and an ad hoc number of individual states has paved the way for the UN's technical know-how, and capacity to deploy a mission into what will surely be a complex post-conflict environment.

Regardless of the presence or absence of a multilateral envoy, in a world of increased armed conflict, but also diffusion of power, intense international activity, but also polarization, the fragmentation of armed actors, as well as the presence of increasingly powerful transnational networks and capacities, creative diplomacy is required. This should involve careful attention as to which entity may be best placed to provide it in order to avoid regional and bureaucratic rivalries that can further complicate an inevitably already complicated situation, rather than help nudge all involved forwards to a solution.

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ARMED CONFLICTS AND MULTILATERAL ENVOYS

Armed Conflicts[1]	Over govt. or territory	2011	2012	2013	2014	Inter-nationalized conflict[2]	Multilateral Envoy(s) present[3]	No Multilateral Envoy
Europe (6)								
Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh	T		x		x	X	X	
Russia-Caucasus Emirates	T	x	x	x	x			X
Ukraine (Donetsk)	T				X	X	X	
Ukraine (Lugansk)	T				x	X	X	
Ukraine (Maidan)	G				x			X
Ukraine (Novorossiya)	T				X	X	X	
Middle East (8)								
Egypt – Islamic State (IS)-Sinai	G				x			X
Iran—PJAK (Kurds)	T	x						X
Iraq-IS	G	x	x	X	X	X	(x)	
Israel-Palestine (Hamas, PU, PIJ)	T	x	x		X	X	X	
Lebanon- IS	G				x		(x)	
Syria-FSA, JaN	G	x	X	X	X		X	
Turkey-PKK	T	x	x	x				X
Yemen-AQAP, Houthis	G	X	X	x	X	X	X	
Asia (19)								
Afghanistan -Taleban	G	X	X	X	X	X	(x)	
Cambodia - Thailand	T	x					X	
India- Bodoland	T			x	x			X
India – Garoland	T		x		x			X
India - Kashmir	T	x	x	x	x			X
India – CPI-Maoist	G	x	x	x	x			X
India- Pakistan	T				x			X
Malaysia - Sabah	T			x				X
Myanmar - Kachin	T	x	x	x	x		(x)	
Myanmar - Karen	T	x		x			(x)	
Myanmar - Kokang	T				x		(x)	
Myanmar - Palaung	T			x[4]	x		(x)	
Myanmar- Shan	T	x		x			(x)	
Pakistan – Baluch.	T	x	x	x	x			X
Pakistan – TTP etc.	G	X	X	X	X			X
Philippines – Mindanao	T	x	x	x	x			X
Philippines – CPP	G	x	x	x	x			X
Tajikistan – IMU	G	x						X
Thailand - Patani	T	x	x	x	x			X
Africa (24)								
Algeria – AQIM/MUJAO	G	x	x	x	x	X		X

Conflict	Type							
CAR - Seleka	G	x	x	x		X	X	
DR Congo - Katanga	T			x	x		(x)	
DRC – M23, APCLS, PARC-FAAL	G		x	X	x	X	(x)	
Ethiopia – Ogaden	T	x	x	x	x			X
Ethiopia – Oromiya	T	x	x	x				X
Ivory Coast – post elections	G	x					X	
Libya – Ghadaffi-NTC	G	X					X	
Libya- Zintan Brigades	G				x		X	
Mali - Azawad	T		x		x	X	X	
Mali – Ansar Dine, MUJAO	G		x	x			(x)	
Mali- al-Murabitun, AQIM	G				x		(x)	
Mauritania - AQIM	G	x				X		X
Mozambique- Renamo	G		x					X
Nigeria – Boko Haram	G	x	x	X	X		(x)	
Rwanda - FDLR	G	x	x			X	(x)	
Senegal – MFDC, Casamance	T	x						X
Somalia – Al Shabaab	G	X	X	x	X	X	(x)	
S. Sudan – SSDM, SSLM	G	x	x	X		X	(x)	
S. Sudan – SPLM/A in Opposition	G				X	X	X	
S. Sudan – Sudan (Abyei)	T	x					X	
S. Sudan – Sudan (border)	T		x				X	
Sudan – Darfur/SRF	G	X	X	x	x		X	
Uganda – LRA, ADF	G	x		x	x	X	(x)	
Americas (2)								
Colombia – FARC	G	x	x	x	x			X
USA – Al Qaeda	G		x	x	x	X		X
Total	59	37	32	34	40	18	34 (17)	25

ENDNOTES

[1] Lists of armed conflicts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Armed Conflicts, 1946-2014 dataset drawn from annual data feature in the July issue of the Journal of Peace Research. x denotes armed conflict (generating a minimum of 25 battle-related deaths a year); X denotes conflict classified by UCDP as war (generating more than 1,000 battle related deaths in a year).

[2] Conflicts that saw international involvement with troop support from an external state to one or both warring parties, within this three-year period.

[3] Multilateral envoy(s) engaged within this three-year period; in situations in which an envoy or envoys are engaged but without a mandate to address this specific conflict through mediation, facilitation or conflict resolution this is indicated by (x).

[4] Themnér and Wallensteen (2014) reported 33 conflicts as active in 2013, but Petersson and Wallensteen (2015) subsequently revised the 2014 data to include the Myanmar-Palaung conflict as active in 2013.

December 7, 2015

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MEET THE ENVOYS: TRENDS IN ENVOY PROFILES AND APPOINTMENTS

Nora Gordon

THIS IS THE FOURTH ESSAY IN A SERIES OF SEVEN THAT LOOKS AT THE ROLE OF MULTILATERAL ENVOYS IN PEACEMAKING.

Since the first UN mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, was appointed in 1948 to serve as UN Mediator in Palestine, multilateral institutions have increasingly deployed envoys to mediate conflicts between and within countries, and more recently conflicts involving non-state actors. In 2013, some 52 multilateral envoys were working in 29 locations around the world. How does Count Bernadotte stand in comparison with these 52 envoys? At the spritely age of 53 at his time of appointment, if he were appointed in 2013 he would be among the youngest envoys, whose average age was 64.2. He would also be among many fellow Europeans, who make up 33 per cent of multilateral envoys in this sampled year, although the highest percentage of envoys in 2013 were African.

Although more women envoys have been appointed in recent years, Count Bernadotte's gender matches 94.2 per cent of the envoys that year. His experience and status would put him in good company with these mediators, as high-profile envoys are commonly sought after. This essay analyzes some key trends in the profiles of the envoys of 2013, including status, gender, nationality, age and region.

WHY ARE THERE MORE ENVOYS?

The overall number of active UN multilateral envoys, including those involved with border disputes, joint/double-hatted envoys, and heads of regional missions, more than **doubled from 2010 to 2013**, increasing from 6 to 16 envoys. A key reason behind this growth is enhanced emphasis on conflict prevention. The role of special envoys in mediation of disputes, and their efforts to defuse tensions before conflicts escalate, are in high demand. Experience has shown that as a conflict intensifies over time, it becomes increasingly difficult to resolve. This has fueled a renewed focus on conflict prevention among multilateral institutions involved in peace and security. In 2010, the then-UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Lynn Pascoe, **noted a re-emergence of preventive diplomacy and mediation**, describing these tools as cost-effective options for addressing crises.

Interest in prevention has continued to grow since Pascoe's time. Current USG Jeffrey Feltman has said **prevention should begin before conflict** is even visible, to keep unaddressed low-level tension from becoming more serious. Conflict prevention is central to DPA's current strategy. Feltman describes Good Offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys as "**pivotal in preventing conflicts from erupting and in bringing wars to an end … Our Special Envoys are perhaps the most visible manifestation of the Secretary-General's good offices mandate**". Although prevention efforts do not always halt the escalation of conflict, mediation and conflict resolution are crucial for achieving security and reconciliation in the long term.

Another reason the tool of envoy deployment has been used more frequently is that governments are more likely to comply with this approach. For governments, **cooperation with an envoy is a more palatable alternative to UN Chapter VII involvement** and inclusion on the Security Council's agenda.

The growing importance of rising powers in global decision-making, along with a shift in the U.S.'s approach to diplomacy, have also contributed to the **increased demand for mediation and conflict resolution**. President Barack Obama's call for a "new era of engagement" revealed a shift toward intensified multilateralism with a new focus on conflict prevention and negotiations.

Increased interest in mediation can be seen through the **strengthening of analytical capacities and technical expertise at the UN Department of Political Affairs**, such as mediation lessons learned and best practices. Other international and regional organizations are also responding to greater demand for conflict prevention through **the development of peace and mediation support mechanisms**. The Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (APSA) contains a number of conflict prevention initiatives including Africa's Continental Early Warning System, which **became fully operational in 2009**, and the **Panel of the Wise**, first appointed in 2007, which supports the Peace and Security Council and Chairperson in conflict prevention.

Envoys and mediators from multilateral institutions are more commonly used to negotiate peace agreements.According to **research from Uppsala University** on 70 formal peace agreements signed from 2001-2011, 84 per cent were brokered by third party facilitators or mediators. Of those mediators, 51 per cent came from multilateral institutions or ad-hoc multilateral coalitions; 30 per cent were state governments; and 3 per cent were third party individuals, including a former head of state, and an NGO representative. By contrast, from 1975-1985, only 24 formal peace agreements were recorded. Half of them were brokered by state governments and 37.5 per cent had no facilitator at all. Only three involved multilateral institutions.

The growing number of envoys means that there is a risk of crowding on the ground. Envoys are increasingly required to work together effectively to avoid duplication and maximize efficiency. The appointment of double-hatted envoys is a trending practice that multilateral organizations have utilized in order to streamline efforts.

Aside from the increase in numbers of envoys, what are the current trends in envoy profiles? In order to address this question, this essay utilizes confidential surveys and interviews conducted by CIC during spring 2014 with actors from nine multilateral institutions: the UN, AU, EU, OSCE, ECOWAS, OIF, IGAD, OAS, and the Commonwealth.

STATUS AND THE AFRICA EXAMPLE

Many multilateral organizations are appointing high-profile envoys to address conflicts. These include heads of state (HoS), former heads of state, and former heads of multilateral institutions. The main reasons for selecting envoys with such prestige is that they tend to have great influence, access and leverage for obtaining results in peace agreements.

AU interlocutors noted a trend of appointing more high profile envoys such as HoS and former HoS. They noticed a distinct advantage to such high profile appointments in that these envoys' opinions tend to hold more weight and are taken seriously by all parties to a conflict. It can be easier for former or current HoS to interact with HoS and government officials that are involved in a conflict, which helps facilitate conflict resolution. According to an officer at the AU Peace and Security Department, issues can be so complex that they require the access and leverage that comes with high-ranking envoys. Thus, political suitability is a major

consideration in envoy selection. In comparison to HoS, former HoS often have more leeway. Their political appointments as President have come to an end, but they still have the ability to leverage countries and actors for support.

AU officials frequently cited the example of former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP). As a former president with experience negotiating a complicated transition in South Africa and expertise in dealing with rebel movements, Mbeki is highly respected and seen as influential by all conflict parties, factors which informed his appointment. Interlocutors describe Mbeki as having more leverage and using his personal capital in the peace process.

Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chair of the High-Level Panel for Egypt, is also described as having significant influence. As former head of the AU and former president of Mali, Konaré's stature was a significant factor in his appointment. Also serving on the panel are the former president of Botswana and former prime minister of Djibouti. Sitting heads of state are also frequently called upon by the African Union to engage in mediation, such as the HLP in Cote d'Ivoire, which consisted of five African presidents, and the Ad hoc High-Level Committee on Libya, comprised of five African HoS and the AU Chairperson.

A third example mentioned by several AU interlocutors is Mohamed ibn Chambas, former Executive-Secretary of ECOWAS and Joint AU-UN Special Representative for Darfur. According to one interlocutor, Chambas was "easily accepted due to his stature and could alleviate fears and suspicions [of conflict parties]." He had experience dealing with Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, which informed his appointment.

There also are several challenges to appointing high-profile envoys. According to one respondent, "sometimes we take for granted that high profile people will know certain things … we need people who know all the daily nuts and bolts of the process, someone who knows all discussions and the complexity. Otherwise we can miss a lot." When high profile envoys are appointed, technical experts are crucial for backing their processes. A great number of AU officials emphasized that conflict resolution and prevention requires full-time expert-level staff to provide HoS and former HoS with input and analysis.

Some AU interlocutors argued that there are no great advantages to appointing current heads of state unless the conflict is very serious. "They are limited in what they can do and bound by time constraints in a process that shouldn't be bound by time," said one interlocutor.

The ability to mediate is not always taken into consideration, particularly for mediators of prominent stature. According to several interviewees, not all envoys have this ability, and it is not possible to sit down and train HoS and former HoS. In addition to ample expert level support staff, one interlocutor noted that development of a stand-by roster of skilled mediators could be beneficial for addressing this issue.

Multilateral institutions overwhelmingly noted that the status of the envoy chosen, whether a former head of state or foreign minister, depends on the context. However, there are differences in how envoys of prominent stature are received. In Madagascar in 2009, AU envoy Ablassé Ouedraogo was the former foreign minister of Burkina Faso. When SADC sent former Mozambican head of state, Joaquim Chissano, AU interlocutors noted that he was instantly shown a greater level of respect. Being a former head of state from the same region as the conflict also contributed to Chissano's strong influence.

Several other multilateral institutions mentioned the importance of appointing envoys with high-level profiles. One institution found that governments do not generally accept high-level envoys when they do not perceive a pending or existing crisis. These governments prefer to avoid the heightened media scrutiny that high-level envoys can attract to a conflict.

GENDER

UNSC resolution 1325 in 2000 urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices missions. However, it was not until March 2013 that Mary Robinson, **the first woman to serve as chief UN mediator**, was appointed. A 2012 UN Women study noted that the numbers of women participating at the negotiation table in official roles remain remarkably low, making up only 2.4 per cent of chief mediators from 1992-2011. It noted no significant improvement in women's participation in official negotiation positions since similar studies were conducted in 2010, but found that more consultations with women's civil society have occurred.

While the AU Chair is a woman, there are no female AU envoys dealing with specific conflict situations. At the time of writing, the only female special representative of the Chair was Bineta Diop, Special Representative for Women, Children and Armed Conflicts, but Diop was not included in this research as she is appointed to address a thematic issue rather than a specific conflict location. However, two out of the five members of the AU Panel of the Wise, which also holds mediation functions, are female. In 2008 **the AU appointed Graça Machel of Mozambique as one of three mediators** to address the Kenya elections.

Only three envoys, 5.8 per cent of the 52 included in this research, are female. Two represent the European Union, and one the UN. While this is some improvement since the 2012 UN Women study was conducted, the overall data still shows a notable lack of female representation in chief mediator roles, although it must be acknowledged that the criteria for inclusion of envoys in the UN Women study with its mediation focus may differ from CIC's.

Some studies observe certain character traits to be more prevalent in women, and make the case that those traits are desirable for mediators. However, arguing that women are natural peacemakers and have unique skills that make them inherently successful at mediation is a slippery slope. Character traits that are seen as beneficial to mediation can be perceived as either feminine or masculine and can be adopted by mediators of any gender.

Why, then, is women's participation in mediation an important issue? According to Bineta Diop, AU Special Representative for Women, Children and Armed Conflicts, **female mediators are more likely to prioritize gender issues**. Women's inclusion at the negotiation table sets the stage for the incorporation of women's issues into peace agreements and reconciliation processes. Studies show that countries with more gender equality are less likely to experience armed conflict. This could be incentive for taking steps to ensure that gender equality is improved through peace agreements, making the case for the **inclusion of women**.

A 2013 International Peace Institute (IPI) issue brief on women in mediation argues that women can bring different perspectives, mediating styles, and approaches to the negotiation table. The study also noted that a more "robust and resilient peace" is achieved as a result of the participation of women, and that inclusive peace processes are more likely to result in a durable peace. IPI and Diop also emphasize the role of men in contributing to both gender equality and peace efforts.

Furthermore, women mediators are likely to focus on inclusion in mediation processes. Exemplifying this, Mary Robinson has shown great commitment to the participation of women on high-level processes as well as gender equality. The IPI report argued that Robinson's approach to the inclusion of women in negotiations could be an effective model for other mediators to emulate.

While the idea that more women should be appointed to envoy positions is widely accepted and even incorporated into UN resolutions, progress in this area has been markedly slow. Furthermore, with the emphasis on experience and status in the selection of envoys, it can be more difficult for women to obtain the desirable characteristics of envoys, which contributes to their underrepresentation. Because of the dearth of women envoys, evidence indicating the success of women envoys in helping to facilitate lasting peace agreements has been limited. Perhaps with the growing numbers of women envoys, more studies can highlight the benefits of their leadership, and as a result the numbers of women envoys will grow more rapidly in the future.

NATIONALITY, LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

HD's Mediation Ten Years On report noted that in addition to the substantial growth in the numbers of mediators over the last decade, the emerging diversity among mediators was also remarkable. One way that diversity reveals itself is in the regional and national origins of envoys. In this study, 24 envoys are from Africa. There are seventeen Europeans, five from the Americas, three from Asia and the Pacific, and one from the Middle East.

AU officials observed wide-ranging diversity among African Union envoys. When multilateral envoys are chosen, some of the most important factors that play into appointments include country of origin and regional representation, language abilities and religion. There are political reasons behind appointment decisions. In Sudan, for example, the country of origin of the envoy, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, and that country's relationship with Sudan, was a significant factor. AU officials also recognized that the Sudanese would feel more comfortable with a Muslim envoy, and that factored into the AU's proposal to appoint Chambas, which was accepted by the UN.

IGAD's negotiations in Sudan also involved nationality as an important role in envoy selection. The lead negotiator, Seyoum Mesfin, was a former Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, a country that was seen as neutral and accepted by different parties in the conflict.

Religion is an important factor for acceptance by conflict parties, and religious sensitivities can sometimes make a difference in regards to the outcome of negotiations. One interlocutor described a situation in which a high-level panel distributed an idea during an Eid holiday and it was not well received by conflict parties. In Somalia, Al-Shabab argued that mediation attempts were part of Christian crusades.

In general, AU representatives found that the AU could propose certain envoy profiles, which would generally be accepted by the UN or other multilateral and bilateral actors involved in a conflict. UN consultations with the AU to define the needed envoy profile for a given conflict are therefore becoming more common. However, one AU interlocutor observed that the UN argues at times for a non-African envoy, who would be perceived as more "tough" on pertinent issues.

AGE

Preferences for appointing experienced and high-profile individuals have made the average age of envoys noticeably high. The average envoy in 2013 was 64.2, more than two years past the retirement age for most existing non-contracted UN staff and less than a year under the retirement age for new staff. Veteran Algerian mediator, Lakhdar Brahimi, was nearly 80 years old at the time of his appointment as the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative for Syria. **Brahimi's strong reputation as a high-profile mediator with experience in the region informed his appointment**. Brahimi had wanted to retire in May 2013, but pressure to follow up the Geneva talks kept him from doing so until he finally stepped down a year later. In addition to frustrations related to the conflict, health issues and exhaustion were factors contributing to Brahimi's resignation.

Former Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Guyana-Venezuela border dispute, Oliver Jackman of Barbados, passed away at the age of 76 in 2007. Three years later, Norman Girvan was appointed as his replacement. Just four years after that, Girvan passed away at the age of 72, also while still in office. At the time of this publication, Girvan had not yet been replaced. While Jackman and Girvan were well known and respected for their experience and intellectual capacities, qualities that tend to coincide with a diplomat's age, the Guyana-Venezuela border dispute is an example of how appointing older envoys can lead to gaps in mediation processes.

Other envoys have aged while in their positions, and because of many years of experience dealing with a specific conflict are seen as the best choice for continuing to mediate that conflict. Examples include 76-year-old Matthew Nimetz, who has served as Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Greece-FYROM talks since 1999, and 66-year-old Andrzej Kasprzyk, who has served as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference since 1997.

A 2009 Secretary-General report highlights the necessity of developing the next generation of UN mediators. To achieve this goal, the UN must create opportunities for younger UN staff to develop mediation skills and experience. The Secretary-General advocates for partnerships with member states and regional organizations in support of mediation training programs.

REGIONS AND DISTANCE

Regional organizations and states have increasingly played a role in mediation, and regional actors are often chosen to mediate in regional centers of conflict. The UN has emphasized the increasing importance of partnerships with regional multilateral institutions for addressing conflict. According to USG Feltman, "the crises we face are too complex for any one organization or Member State to address alone." Feltman has noted the importance of strong partnerships with regional actors such as the League of Arab States in Syria, and the African Union in Somalia and Mali. He also expressed the UN's efforts toward a strong partnership with ASEAN as the organization grows.

The African Union emphasizes the idea of "African Solutions for African Problems." This does not mean Africa should solve its problems in isolation, but that it should take a lead role in addressing them, working in partnership with the international community. Out of the 30 envoys working in Africa, 22 are African.

Despite efforts to increase regional engagement in conflicts, envoys are still traveling great distances to reach the countries in which they work. Of the 52 envoys in this study, only seven are actually based where the conflict is taking place. Of the envoys traveling from afar to the countries in which they work, from the incomplete data available in 2014, the average distance was about 7,300 km or more than 4,500 miles. There are some benefits for envoys to have distance from a conflict, such as backstopping at headquarters locations, reducing safety and security concerns, and preserving the perception of impartiality. However, traveling long distances to reach a conflict presents several challenges including time considerations, financing and more effort needed to gain a deeper understanding of the situation on the ground.

CONCLUSION

A 2009 UN Secretary-General report highlights that political and mediation skills, experience, knowledge, judgment, language abilities and personal characteristics suitable for cultural context are important for mediation. The report also emphasizes characteristics such as good listening and problem-solving skills, the ability to handle stress and criticism, and strong communication. It also noted that careful selection of mediators avoids The Seven Deadly Sins of Mediation; ignorance, arrogance, partiality, impotence, haste, inflexibility and false promises. However, few organizations surveyed for this publication mentioned the importance of specific skills and behaviors in the negotiating room when selecting envoys. Experience and status were much more commonly cited as attributes contributing to envoy appointments.

Some multilateral institutions such as the UN have developed standby units of mediators. These can offer a diverse selection of mediators with relevant skills that can be deployed on short notice to mediate conflicts as needed. The African Union is also developing the mediation component of standby rosters and working to further professionalize mediation at the AU. With multilateral institutions' growing emphasis on conflict prevention, efforts to select envoys of diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of skills will be even more crucial in the future.

Ms. Gordon wrote this piece in her personal capacity and it does not necessarily reflect the views of the State Department.

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December 14, 2015

THE LOST AGENDA: GENDER PARITY IN SENIOR UN APPOINTMENTS

Karin Landgren

As the clamour grows for a woman to be chosen as the next Secretary-General, other **high-level staff appointments** have been quietly but steadily defying the UN's longstanding goal of gender parity. Seemingly unnoticed, this year's selections for the seniormost level of UN staff have skewed nearly 92 per cent male. Between 1 January and 10 December 2015, 22 men and only two women were appointed as UN undersecretaries-general, **according to public sources**.

The rhetoric of UN achievements has overshadowed the reality. And the reality can be surprisingly hard to verify. A list of senior officials indicates that the UN designates some **80-plus persons worldwide as undersecretaries-general (USGs), and over 100 as assistant secretaries-general (ASGs)**.

Almost twenty years ago, **the UN made a commitment to achieving gender parity in managerial and decision-making roles** by the year 2000. This target having been missed, subsequent resolutions aimed for parity in "the very near future", except for the category of Secretary-General's Special Representatives and Special Envoys, **which was to be gender-balanced by 2015**.

Two recent developments in gender equality are worth noting. In October, the Global Study on UNSC resolution 1325 made the case for the UN to do a better job of including women in its core business, the field of peace and security. And last month, Canada's new Prime Minister Justin Trudeau showed leadership in announcing a cabinet with equal numbers of men and women. "Because it's 2015," said Trudeau.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon often mentions that he has appointed more women to senior UN positions than ever before, saying, "**You need to have political will**." Four years ago, he told a gathering that the UN's top humanitarian official, high commissioner for human rights, head of management, top lawyer, and "**even our top cop, are all women**." Today, they are all men. At that moment, too, the largest-ever number of women - "five and counting" - were leading UN peacekeeping missions. The same is true today: women head five out of sixteen UN peacekeeping missions.

This year also saw six women undersecretaries-general replaced by men, further undercutting the goal of building female leadership within the UN. The first female USG of the year was appointed only in October.

At the next level down – assistant secretaries-general, or ASGs – male appointments made up 77 per cent. Cumulatively, across the 59 USG and ASG appointments, 83 per cent were men. It is especially striking that of the 23 EU nationals appointed to top-level UN posts this year, all but one were men. Five were British men. Among African nationals appointed, women made up over one-quarter.

Nearly two decades ago, the General Assembly pointed out the importance of the Secretary-General's "visible commitment" to achieving the targets of women's participation in the UN. The dominance of male senior appointments this year calls into question Ban's commitment to gender parity at the top of the UN, so evident earlier in his tenure, and leaves in tatters what was shaping up to be a solid legacy.

Information on senior appointments can be patchy. Often, press releases omit the grade level, and do not distinguish decision-making positions from those that are part-time and largely unremunerated (and which are excluded from this review). Moreover, the UN can give the impression of massaging the data to show the appointment of senior women in a more flattering light, according to Professor Rob Jenkins, who cites a graph on senior managers in UN peace operations showcasing women "**in a managerial bracket specifically devised to include more junior positions and exclude some that are higher up**."

Several measures are needed. The first step is greater transparency around senior appointments. The UN should promptly set up an open database covering full-time, paid appointments at the most senior levels, making it easier to monitor benchmarks towards gender equality.

Second, governments themselves need to demonstrate stronger commitment to gender equality in the UN. Although UN staff are required to maintain independence from their governments, **some governments lobby hard to have their citizens selected for senior UN posts**. While proposals for good candidates, from any source, can be entertained, the impact on gender parity should be a stronger consideration.

Finally, to insulate the Secretary General more effectively from external pressures, the UN should set up a merit-based appointments mechanism for senior levels, as recommended by the recent **High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations**. More effort also needs to go into head-hunting great female candidates, as Kofi Annan did in naming former Irish President Mary Robinson to serve as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The biggest lesson of 2015 is how quickly gains turn to losses, without the dedicated attention of a gender-sensitive UN leadership – and how untroubled the UN and member states appear to be. The level of structural non-compliance facing the gender parity agenda won't be fixed simply by choosing a female Secretary-General. Years of General Assembly resolutions mean that this task is already in the job description of the next office-holder. Ending the gender disparity in top appointments would be a good place to start.

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USG AND ASG APPOINTMENTS BY MONTH, WITH CUMULATIVE NUMBERS:

Appointment #	USG	ASG	Male	Female
January 2015 - 4 male, 0 female. USG 1M, ASG 3M				
1	♂		**Atul Khare (India), USG : Department for Field Support**	
2		♂	**Joakim Reiter (Sweden), ASG UNCTAD**	
3		♂	**Janos Pasztor (Hungary), ASG Climate Change**	
4		♂	**Haile Tilahun Gebremarian (Ethiopia), ASG, Head of Mission, UN Interim Security Force Abyei (UNISFA) [military]**	
February 2015 - (cumulative numbers) 9 male, 1 female. USG 3M, ASG 6M 1F				
5	♂		**Nickolay Mladenov (Bulgaria), USG, Special Coordinator, Middle East Peace Process**	
6		♀		**Bintou Keita (Guinea), ASG, Ebola Crisis Manager, Sierra Leone**
7		♂	**David Gressly (USA), ASG, DSRSG MONUSCO**	
8		♂	**George Okoth-Obbo (Uganda), ASG, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations UNHCR**	
9		♂	**Volker Türk (Austria), ASG, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection UNHCR**	
10	♂		**Jan Kubis (Slovakia), USG, SRSG UNAMI**	
March 2015: 14 male, 1 female. USG 4M, ASG 10M 1F				
11		♂	**Yannick Glemarec (France), ASG UNWomen**	
12	♂		**Stephen O'Brien (UK), USG for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**	
13		♂	**Miroslav Jenca (Slovakia), ASG for Political Affairs (DPA)**	

Appointment #	USG	ASG	Male	Female
14		♂	Petko Draganov (Bulgaria), ASG, SRSG and head of UN Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, Central Asia (UNRCCA)	
15		♂	Michael Lollesgaard (Denmark), ASG, Force Commander MINUSMA [military]	
April 2015: 19 male, 1 female. USG 6M, ASG 13M 1F				
16		♂	Elliott Harris (Trinidad and Tobago), ASG, UNEP	
17		♂	Philippe Lazzarini (Switzerland), ASG, Deputy Special Coordinator, Lebanon	
18	♂		Peter Graaff (Netherlands), USG, Acting Head of UNMEER	
19		♂	Ali Al-Za'atari (Jordan), ASG, Deputy SRSG UNSMIL	
20	♂		Ismael Ould Sheikh Ahmed (Mauritania), USG, Special Envoy for Yemen	
May 2015: 24 male, 2 female. USG 6M, ASG 18M 2F				
21		♂	Robert Piper (Australia), ASG, Deputy Special Coordinator Middle East Peace Process	
22		♂	Mourad Wahba (Egypt), ASG, DSRSG, MINUSTAH	
23		♀		Mbaranga Gasarabwe (Rwanda), ASG, DSRSG, MINUSMA
24		♂	Toby Lanzer (UK), ASG, OCHA Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (Sahel)	
25		♂	Mamadou Diallo (Guinea), ASG, DSRSG, MONUSCO	
26		♂	Eugene Owusu (Ghana), ASG, DSRSG, UNMISS	

Appointment #	USG	ASG	Male	Female
June 2015: 28 male, 4 female. USG 9M, ASG 19M 4F				
27		♀		**Kelly T Clements (USA), ASG, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees**
28		♀		**Fatoumata Ndiaye (Senegal), ASG, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF**
29		♂	**Nikhil Seth (India), ASG, Executive Director UNITAR**	
30	♂		**Tegegnework Gettu (Ethiopia), USG, Coordinator for Multilingualism**	
31	♂		**Michael Møller (Denmark), USG, Director-General, UNOG**	
32	♂		**Kim Won-soo (Republic of Korea), USG, Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs**	
July 2015: 30 male, 4 female. USG 9M, ASG 21M, 4F				
33		♂	**Peter de Clercq (Netherlands), ASG, DSRSG UNISOM**	
34		♂	**Arthur David Gawn (NZ), ASG, Head of Mission, UNTSO [military]**	
August 2015: 35 male, 4 female. USG 13M, ASG 22M, 4F				
35	♂		**Farid Zarif (Afghanistan), USG, SRSG UNMIL**	
36	♂		**Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon), USG, SRSG CAR**	
37	♂		**Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), USG, SRSG UNMIK**	
38		♂	**Koen Davidse (Netherlands), ASG, Deputy SRSG MINUSMA**	
39	♂		**Jean Arnault (France), USG, Delegate to Sub-Commission on Colombian End of Conflict Issues**	

Appointment #	USG	ASG	Male	Female
September 2015: 35 male, 5 female. USG 13M, ASG 22M, 5F				
40		♀		Fadzai Gwaradzimba (Zimbabwe), ASG DSS
October 2015: 38 male, 8 female. USG 15M, 1F; ASG 23M, 7F				
41	♀			Heidi Mendoza (Philippines), USG, Internal Oversight Services
42	♂		Maman Sambo Sidikou (Niger), USG, SRSG MONUSCO	
43		♀		Laura Londén (Finland), ASG, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA
44		♂	Waldemar Vrey (South Africa), ASG, DSRSG UNMIL	
45	♂		Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi (Nigeria), USG, Joint Special Representative, UNAMID	
46		♀		Bintou Keita (Guinea), ASG, DSRSG UNAMID (second 2015 appointment: see note)
November 2015: 47 male, 9 female. USG 21M, 2F; ASG 26M, 7F				
47	♂		Tegegnework Gettu (Ethiopia), USG, Associate Administrator, UNDP (second 2015 appointment: see note)	
48	♂		Martin Kobler (Germany), USG, SRSG UNSMIL	
49	♂		Jamal Benomar (UK), USG, Special Adviser to the SG	
50	♂		Filippo Grandi (Italy), USG, High Commissioner for Refugees	
51		♂	Rashid Khalilov (Russian Federation), ASG for Partnerships, OCHA	

Appointment #	USG	ASG	Male	Female
52	♂		Michael Keating (UK), USG, SRSG UNSOM	
53		♂	Robert Glasser (Australia), ASG, Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction	
54	♂		Edmond Mulet (Guatemala), USG, Chef de Cabinet	
55		♂	Patrick Carey (Ireland), ASG, Deputy Chef de Cabinet ad interim	
56	♀			Catherine Pollard (Guyana), USG for GA and Conference Management
to 13 December 2015: 49 male, 10 female. USG 22M, 2F; ASG 27M, 8F				
57		♀		Kate Gilmore (Australia), ASG, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
58		♂	El-Ghassim Wane (Mauritania), ASG, Deputy Head of DPKO	
59	♂		David Nabarro (UK), USG, Special Adviser, Global Goals	

1) NOTE: THE THREE-MONTH INTERIM APPOINTMENT OF MARK KROEKER (USA), ASG, DEPUTY SRSG, UNMIL NOT INCLUDED IN CALCULATION.

2) NOTE: IF THE FIRST OF TWO 2015 APPOINTMENTS OF MR T. GETTU AND MS B. KEITA ARE EXCLUDED, THE FIGURES CHANGE MARGINALLY, TO 91% MALE USG, 79% MALE ASG, FOR 84% OVERALL MALE APPOINTMENTS.

INFOGRAPHICS

TOP 10 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO UN PEACEKEEPING BUDGET

Member States that pay for UN peacekeeping tend not to contribute troops. The approved budget for UN Peacekeeping operations for the 2015-16 fiscal year is about USD $8.27 billion. This is less than half of one per cent of world military expenditures (estimated at $1,747 billion in 2013).

Download a **.PDF** or **.PNG** of the Infographic
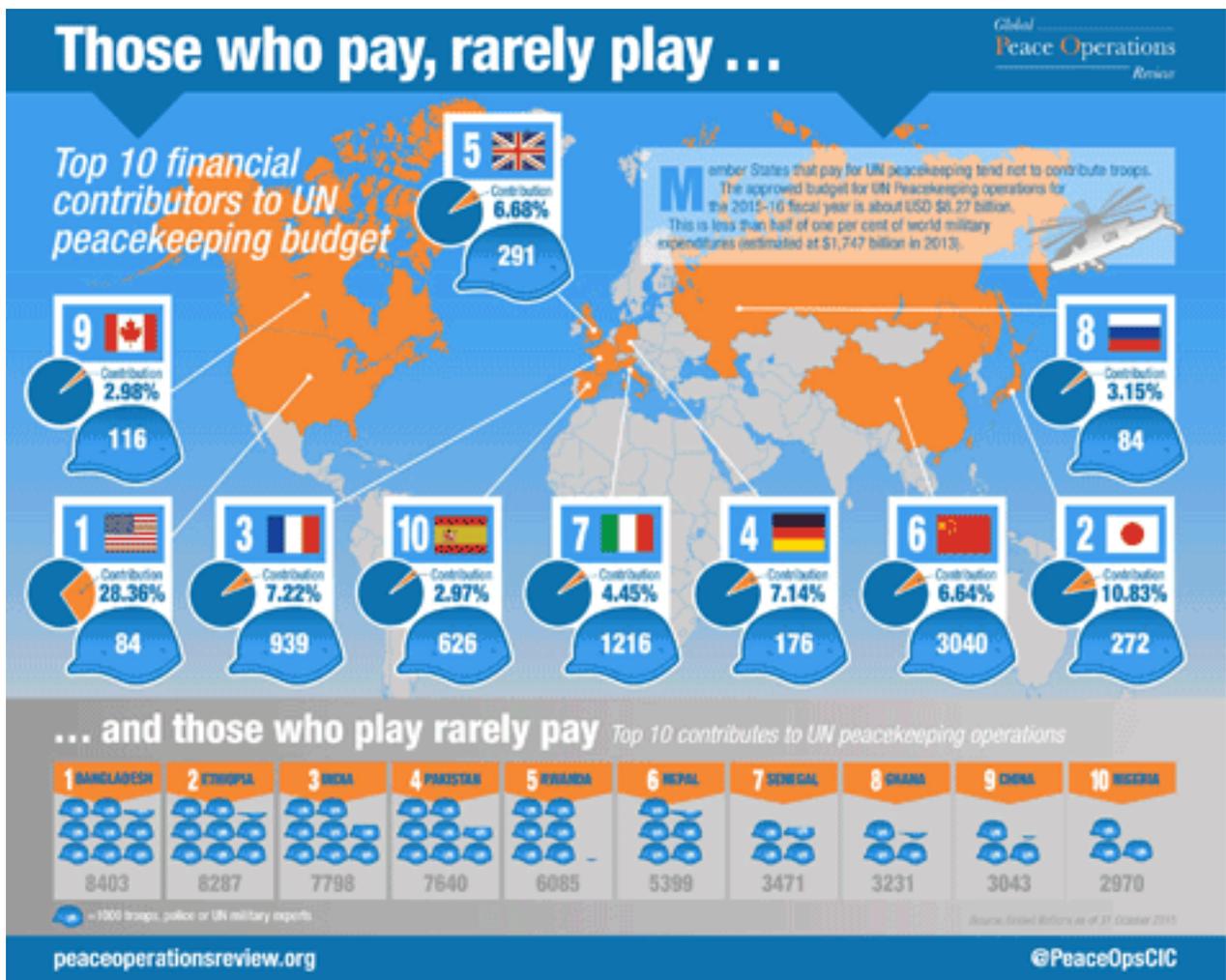
MAPS

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This map represents **UNDOF** (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force) Deployments in Syria for December 2015.

UNMISS DEPLOYMENT | DECEMBER 2015

This map represents **UNMISS** (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan) missions as of December 2015

UNOCI DEPLOYMENT | DECEMBER 2015

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