Global Peace Operations Review

July 2016

A monthly newsletter from the Center on International Cooperation
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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The Center on International Cooperation is solely responsible for the content of this publication. Any errors of fact or analysis, and any and all judgments and interpretations about missions and operations discussed herein, are those of CIC alone.
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DEMYSTIFYING INTELLIGENCE IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS: TOWARD AN ORGANIZATIONAL DOCTRINE

Olga Abilova and Alexandra Novosseloff

In a way, the title of our research paper “Demystifying Intelligence in UN Peace Operations: Toward an Organizational Doctrine”, speaks for itself. We all know that the UN secretariat has been walking on eggs with this issue of intelligence for years; doing it without saying it and without realizing it. But with peace operations involved in increasing complex and demanding situations and one senses that this “fog about intelligence” can no longer be sustainable. This report complements other earlier attempts to “demystify” that charged term of intelligence and to define what “intelligence” means in the UN context and its peace operations.

THE CONTEXT AND LIMITATIONS

We think that the expression “UN intelligence” is different from the intelligence conceived by each and every member states and that it cannot summarize itself to “military intelligence”. It is different by the mere nature (multidimensional, multinational and multicultural) of the UN and its peace operations because it is a “club” of all countries and distinct from regional organizations or military alliances.

It is different also because UN operations are constrained by several limitations.

The first limitation is the existence of a weak system for the protection of information. The existing classification of documents is unfortunately not linked to any prosecution procedures, no proper system of sanctions to individuals breaking that confidentiality. This creates difficulties in sharing information with parallel forces deployed along peace operations.

A second limitation is due to the need for the UN to keep its impartiality if it wishes to maintain its credibility towards the different parties to the conflict. The line should therefore be drawn at engaging in unethical covert and clandestine methods of information gathering.

The third limitation is its (increasingly difficult) relationship with the host nation depending on the political context, on the degree of acceptance of the UN presence and of the peace/political process. The host-country government is very suspicious of the possibility of the UN mission of “spying” on it or infringing on its sovereignty. One has to say also – it is not political correct but it is a reality – that the presence of national staff in UN missions is, indeed, an asset for better understanding the local environment but can also be an issue in sharing information within the mission.
THE NEEDS

Intelligence, in general, is the result of information analysis as well as a capacity to analyze information, along with a capacity to protect it. Fundamentally, we think that what is really needed is for the UN to improve its analytical capabilities in all peace operations, and at all levels, strategic, operational and tactical. This is the reason why we conceived “UN intelligence” as first and foremost a “multidimensional situational analysis”. That analysis is indeed targeted for a specific audience, within a particular decision-making process and is not accessible to everyone. For intelligence to be effective it requires process and structures that favor common assessment, information sharing and integration across the civilian, the police and the military components; it needs to be governed by strict rules and procedures, tasking and guidance.

Improving information analysis can indeed help set priorities in a context where the Mission cannot be present everywhere and to make those priorities evolve over time and circumstances. These improvements in information gathering and analysis must all be geared towards decision-making, to allow decision-makers to make better-informed decisions in order to effective response to the situation. Information analysis is needed to drive practical decisions of the senior mission leadership. They also need to improve the planning process as well as the chain of command and control.

Last but not least, improved “UN intelligence” should serve the larger objective of ensuring the safety and security of the UN personnel and the local populations, and to contribute to obtaining a long-term political solution to the country in crisis.

Intelligence or multidimensional situational analysis is a tool that needs expertise and training, and that has a cost. Strong information gathering and analysis requires adequate training and human resources, as well as the need to increase or strengthen institutional memory of Missions. Training is particularly important when it comes to senior mission leadership; they have to be educated to understand what assets are at their disposal and then request information and provide feedback. They need to use intelligence as a tool in their everyday work with the following understandings:

It is best being developed in a work environment that is not siloed, where you confront ideas, analysis and information.

It requires trust to function and this is lacking currently throughout the chain of command.

Intelligence is not a magic tool: it is useless in the absence of a clear political strategy. Good analysis, multidimensional situational analysis is not a science: it is an art. Modesty and patience are key in using it.

But the benefits of good intelligence could be dramatic for the UN and its peace operations. It is worth the investment of all member states.

You can download the full report "Demystifying Intelligence in UN Peace Operations: Toward an Organizational Doctrine" here. This report has been written with Olga Abilova from IPI and with the support of the Training for Peace program at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

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WITH “SUSTAINING PEACE” CAN THE UN TURN RHETORIC INTO ACTION?

Gizem Sucuoglu and Tanisha Hewapola

In April 2015, Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza announced that he would be seeking a third-term of office—a move that his opponents decried as unconstitutional. Protests and clashes between opposition supporters and security forces followed. Amid a rapidly deteriorating climate of serious human-rights violations, extrajudicial killings, intimidation, media suppression, and the stoking of ethnic tensions, fears of widespread violence rose, triggering mass cross-border displacement.

For nearly a decade prior to these events, however, Burundi had been largely hailed as a success story for United Nations-assisted peacebuilding. Following a devastating civil war that left 300,000 dead, Burundi had passed a new Constitution and held relatively peaceful elections in 2005 and 2010, successfully integrated various rebel groups into a new national army and police, and instituted a power-sharing form of government that guaranteed quotas for women, ethnic groups, and other minorities. The relative stability that ensued enabled around half a million refugees to return home, and the economy grew, albeit modestly.

The wave of political instability and violence last April set back much of this progress, and Burundi quickly found itself back on the UN Security Council’s agenda. Nkurunziza’s controversial reelection that July exacerbated the political violence, ethnically divisive rhetoric, refugee flows, and growing authoritarianism that had taken hold.

The episode was a prime example of the deep and ongoing challenges that the United Nations faces in preventing conflict and building peace. At inception, conflict prevention was one of the organization’s principal goals. Through the first article of the UN Charter, Member States pledged to “take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.” Since then, the rhetorical commitment to prevention has continued. In recent months, all of the candidates to replace Ban Ki Moon as Secretary-General have highlighted conflict prevention as a priority, and each of the 2015 reviews (which are aimed at making the organization more “fit for purpose” and responsive to global challenges) emphasized prevention as the primary formula for peace.

In parallel, the UN improved its ability to identify early warning signs of conflict, through such initiatives as Human Rights Up Front. However, as the Burundi case shows, early warning has rarely led to early action, and the UN has too often been unable to act in a timely and effective way to prevent countries from lapsing or relapsing into conflict.

One key reason for this has been the chronic lack of systematic attention that countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict have received. Instead, the priority has been the urgent need for the UN to respond to the crises of the day. Scarce attention and resources have consequently been diverted from longer-term structural-prevention efforts that seek to address root causes of conflict and prevent violence. Better balancing of these priorities could save lives and resources in the long term.
When the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture—the New York-based Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)—was established in 2005, it aimed to help bring attention to countries’ peacebuilding priorities, under the framework of national ownership. However, the sensitivity of some Member States to the possibility that conflict prevention efforts could lead States’ sovereignty to be violated resulted in the curtailment of the UN’s peacebuilding mandates from the outset. Conflict prevention was excluded, and peacebuilding was limited to post-conflict situations, where the ravages of war had already been borne out.

For Burundi, the establishment of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture had had the potential to bring much needed intergovernmental attention and resources. In 2006, it was one of only two countries that were referred by the Security Council to the Peacebuilding Commission. Between 2007 and 2014, the Peacebuilding Fund provided more than $60 million to fund post-conflict peacebuilding activities in Burundi. Financing from other donors poured in as well and the Peacebuilding Support Office employed dedicated specialists to the country. Following the immediate post-conflict period, however, international attention waned, and with it, the associated political and financial support. The Peacebuilding Commission—which had proved to be a useful venue for convening relevant actors to discuss in-country developments beyond the strictures of the Security Council—was shown to be ill-equipped to secure donor support on the scale required, and to reacting to indicators that the risk of violence in Bujumbura and beyond was increasing.

By the time Burundi’s political crisis erupted in 2015, the UN presence on the ground had dwindled, with much of its field expertise lost during the transition from a Security Council–mandated peace operation to a UN country team structure. Budget cuts, incomplete security-sector reforms, inadequate reconciliation, a failure to address ongoing political divisions from the previous conflict, political malfeasance, rising ethnic tensions, and misdirected development assistance (which focused on institutional reform, rather than on the provision of services to communities), all took their toll.

THE ADOPTION OF SUCH FAR-REACHING AND COMPREHENSIVE RESOLUTIONS WAS NO SMALL FEAT. IT SENDS A CLEAR MESSAGE FROM MEMBER STATES THAT UN BUSINESS AS USUAL IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO PREVENTING CONFLICT AND SUSTAINING PEACE, AND THAT A CHANGE IN APPROACH IS EXPECTED.

The 2015 Advisory Group of Experts, which was tasked with reviewing the UN’s peacebuilding architecture, starkly revealed how inadequate the existing architecture was to the task of bringing a long-term approach to conflict response. This was in part because of the aforementioned prioritization of urgent humanitarian and military responses—especially in light of the scale and number of simultaneous crises that were occurring across the globe, which were triggering vicious cycles of conflict and response, and overloading the Security Council’s agenda. Beyond this, however, the Advisory Group found that the post-conflict focus of the peacebuilding architecture had, in effect, stifled its potential to provide advice, convene key actors, and bridge different parts of the UN system to prevent conflict. The impact of this cleavage between peacebuilding and conflict prevention was having profound consequences. The Advisory Group pointed to the urgent need to bridge different parts of the UN system around a long-term vision of peace, one that did not follow the common sequenced model for UN intervention, of humanitarian action, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development.
In April 2016, UN Member States, acknowledging the importance of bringing coherence to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, resolved to rectify this situation. Overcoming their own endemic divisions and longstanding disagreements about the contours of the concept of “prevention,” the General Assembly and Security Council laid out, in identical resolutions, a narrative of how the UN could bridge its silos and work together with common purpose around the core concept of “sustaining peace.”

The “sustaining peace” resolutions, which were heralded by UN officials as “visionary,” suggest a fundamental shift in the way the organization looks at conflict and prevention. However, in many ways this shift signals a return to its founding goals, and to earlier notions of how it should work in pursuit of those aims.

The resolutions call for a long-term, holistic perspective to sustaining peace, to be brought forward in all of the organization’s engagements—before, during, and after conflict. They emphasize the need for the UN to pivot away from a linear approach to addressing conflict, and toward a continuous, cross-pillar, and cross-sectoral approach to prevention. They reflect the fundamental need for all parts of the UN system, at both the intergovernmental and operational levels, to understand their responsibility for sustaining peace, and to be held accountable for achieving it.

Among the resolutions’ key innovations is the expansion of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission beyond post-conflict situations. In keeping with the principles of national ownership and inclusivity, the role of the Peacebuilding Commission has been enhanced, to enable it to provide a venue where conflict prevention priorities and cross-cutting thematic issues can be brought to the attention of Member States, the UN system, and other relevant actors. A recent series of Peacebuilding Commission-related events, including the Commission’s Annual Session, a dialogue with ECOSOC on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in conflict affected countries, a visit to West Africa, and an interactive dialogue with the Security Council, point to the current enthusiasm for enhancing the Peacebuilding Commission’s capacity to take the sustaining peace agenda forward. However, this energy and interest will need to be built upon in a coordinated way over the coming months. This could include the Peacebuilding Commission working with other UN bodies to provide additional opportunities to broaden understanding—including within Member State delegations—of the interrelated aspects of the sustaining peace agenda, and the linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts.

Preventing conflict, just like sustaining peace more broadly, is a monumental task, which no one body or organ in the UN system can undertake singlehandedly. The call in the resolutions for Member States and the system to be jointly responsible for implementing the sustaining peace agenda will require clear communication channels to be set up. Mexico’s recent establishment of a Group of Friends on Sustaining Peace has the potential to serve a key role, helping to bring leverage, legitimacy, resources, and support to the agenda.

As the process of advancing the UN prevention agenda takes hold, one of the major challenges likely to arise is the current lack of a definition of “conflict prevention”—one that encompasses what different parts of the UN system understand by the term, which tasks fall within its remit, what gaps in the system need to be filled in order to achieve it, and how to improve coordination and coherence in order to ensure progress. As Youssef Mahmoud, Senior Adviser at the International Peace Institute puts it, the policy, programmatic, and financial implications of the renewed focus on prevention needs to be fully appreciated, and have adequate resources to match such efforts. The prevention aspects of recent reviews and processes on peace operations, World Humanitarian Summit, preventing violent extremism, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda may provide some useful
insight into how the different parts of the system can work together to identify key issues, plan prevention activities, gain political support, attract resources and capacities for implementation, and engage in follow-up and evaluation. The upcoming review by the UN Development Group, which will focus on the capacities of agencies, funds, and programmes to undertake conflict prevention, could also catalyze these discussions.

To address the multi-faceted challenges of prevention, the UN will also need to draw upon, in an integrated and strategic manner, its full array of tools, including its monitoring and early warning systems, common analytical and strategic frameworks that connect mission components, and cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organizations. It will also need to address the current fragmentation between peacebuilding discussions at UN headquarters and the realities on the ground. This will require establishing more flexible, context-specific approaches that enable global processes to support national and local-level peacebuilding, and which ensure coherence between political analysis and operational capacities, promote the agreement of realistic UN mandates that are adequately resourced, facilitate different UN actors as they work together around their comparative advantages, and encourage effective on-the-ground leadership around a common purpose and a long-term vision.

The adoption of such far-reaching and comprehensive resolutions was no small feat. It sends a clear message from Member States that UN business as usual is no longer adequate to preventing conflict and sustaining peace, and that a change in approach is expected. The success of these resolutions, however, will ultimately be measured by how effectively they are implemented. On the prevention side in particular, this will require bold leadership from both within the UN and among Member States.

While conflict prevention has long been a difficult issue for the UN to make real progress on, the sustaining-peace framework provides an opportunity to put into action the UN’s longstanding rhetorical commitment to conflict prevention, by making sustaining peace a common driver of UN action across all of the organization’s pillars. Strong leadership from both the current and next Secretary-General will be critical to taking the collective support and energy behind the sustaining-peace agenda and transforming it into a renewal of focus and purpose for the organization.

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July 21, 2016

FROM CURSE TO BLESSING: HOW AFRICA’S NATURAL RESOURCES CAN BUILD PEACE

Jonathan Rozen

While natural resource development can generate economic success, it can also increase the likelihood of conflict, particularly in Africa. Ongoing violence in Nigeria’s oil-rich Niger Delta is a good example of the so-called “resource curse” in action. In response, African governments continue to grapple with how best to use their resource endowments to foster both economic opportunity and peace. At a time of much soul-searching for the United Nations, there is a unique opportunity to put responsible and effective resource development at the heart of African peacebuilding. But how might local communities take greater ownership of these processes?

The UN Peacebuilding Commission is now examining where and how it can contribute to better management of natural resource development, as part of its newly enhanced mandate to seek prevention of global conflict. “We’ve been supporting the type of discussion that needs to happen between citizens and governments and between governments and companies,” Oscar Fernández-Taranco, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, told me.

In Liberia, for example, the UN Peacebuilding Fund is looking to help improve resource contract management and community complaint mechanisms to ameliorate tensions that may lead to conflict. Over the last two years, Liberia has suffered from the effects of the Ebola epidemic and slumping global commodity prices. Resource extraction sites have correspondingly become loci of unrest, including hostage-taking and riots. The Liberian government sought support from the UN to improve, among other things, citizen engagement in natural resource investment deals, operations, and revenues. It is here—in helping manage the space between communities, governments, and companies—that UN agencies believe they are best positioned to act.

The African Union is also looking to develop greater community involvement in the extractive sector as it takes on more responsibility for ensuring peace and security on the continent. The AU adopted the African Mining Vision in 2009, followed by a corresponding Action Plan in 2011 and Country Mining Vision Guidebook in 2014. African regional economic communities have also developed additional governance frameworks. Notably, the Economic Community of West African States’ 2008 Conflict Prevention Framework includes initiatives for bolstering community involvement and empowerment around natural resources. These various plans all link natural resources to conflict prevention and stress the importance of community negotiation.

The UN and AU have in turn combined efforts to target illicit financial flows out of Africa. This is in keeping with the findings of February 2015’s Mbeki Report, which stressed the need for resource revenues to remain within their country of origin. The report also highlights unequal contracts that fuel bribery, tax avoidance through abusive transfer pricing, and the complicity of international financial institutions in these practices.
By restructuring natural resource contracts and limiting illicit financial flows, African countries may gain additional capacity to boost development and peacebuilding project spending. But this is by no means guaranteed to benefit remote communities, which are often negatively impacted by extraction projects, especially where government institutions are heavily centralized.

**BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH LOCAL ENGAGEMENT**

According to the African Development Bank 2014 Annual Report, the extractive sector accounts for over half of Africa's exports, and in some countries up to 90%. This level of dependency creates significant risks during commodity market downturns such as the one currently being experienced.

Increasing interaction between communities and the extractive industries can help to diversify the types of extractive activities that take place and better cater to companies' procurement and labor needs. Isabelle Ramdoo, Senior Adviser at the African Minerals Development Centre, has outlined the value of dedicated local content policies within extractive operations, as a means of achieving this.

Increased community engagement can also improve social resilience. Greater dialogue and coordination between communities, companies, and governments may serve to prevent social tensions. As an October 2015 assessment of mining in Mali's Kayes region notes, disputes between communities can arise over employment opportunities and the distribution of other benefits such as health centers or schools. In Kayes, company-community consultation processes failed to adequately consider negative impacts on villages outside of the mines' direct areas. This heightened tensions over perceptions of unequal benefit distribution. Additionally, companies' selective consultation and recognition of land title disagreements stirred inter-community disputes.

Increased land ownership and initiatives to formalize the extractive sector could reduce potential violence over natural resources, especially among vulnerable or marginalized groups. For example, a 2016 panel noted how legal frameworks could provide land rights and access to dispute resolution mechanisms for “artisanal” female miners. Additionally, formalization of this nature may offer avenues for dividends from the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes. Improved and formalized community interaction with companies and governments around natural resources can prevent development of informal economies that may be more easily used to finance criminal or armed groups, and thus decrease fragility. Positive and mutually beneficial relations between communities and companies have, nevertheless, proven elusive until now.

From a business point of view, investing in responsible and locally focused operations can ensure a social licence to operate, as well as compliance with international standards such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and those contained in the UN Global Compact. Proactive investment in community relations and conflict prevention may also reduce operating risks, thereby improving productivity and profit margins. As a 2005 International Alert guide for extractive industries outlines, conflict imposes costs such as destruction of materials, as well as temporary delays in operations from strikes, stoppages over safety concerns, and supply chain disruptions. A 2014 Harvard Kennedy School report examined 50 cases of sustained company-community conflict around the world and found that lost productivity resulting from delays was the most frequently cited, but often overlooked, financial cost of community-level conflict.
While many resources companies do pursue strong community relations through the lens of corporate social responsibility, a 2013 study from the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining notes that community relations and development remain absent from the mining industry's core business model. This means that when commodity prices drop, investment in these areas may suffer from cost-cutting.

The Pan-African Investment Code being developed by several of the continent's governments offers an improved legal framework for companies operating in Africa. But further political commitment is needed to end the view of Africa as merely a lucrative business opportunity. “It cannot be that Africa is just a place where you go to do business in risky situations for high returns,” said Monica Juma, Principal Secretary at the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, at an International Peace Institute event in May this year. “This must come to the table in terms of stabilizing risk factors for Africa.”

Meanwhile, the mining sector and affected communities are facing new challenges such as climate change, making social and economic stability even more important for conflict prevention. Indeed, the African Development Bank’s High-Level Panel on Fragile States identifies issues around extractive industries, climate disruption, and resource conflicts as key drivers of fragility in Africa. Peacebuilding strategies must therefore promote conflict- and climate-sensitive contracts between all parties.

AFRICAN OWNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Maged Abdelaziz, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, told me that building the necessary linkages between resource extraction and resilience on the continent must begin with the AU. “The UN will not be able to start this kind of global approach on extractive industries because it will be faced with opposition from countries that have big multinational corporations that are benefiting,” he said.

Further progress will be tied to the UN and AU’s continued consideration of how best to pursue the concept of “sustaining peace.” The UN Security Council and General Assembly adopted identical resolutions in April this year advocating this new vision of peacebuilding, which moves away from a reactive, peacekeeping-heavy approach to the deployment of more preventative strategies. Improved natural resource governance in Africa, principally through increased community involvement, has the potential to prevent conflict by fostering inclusion and promoting resilient economic development. The UN and AU should therefore pursue improved dialogue with local stakeholders and more equitable contracts for resource development, while continually stressing the business rationale for doing so. This is an invaluable opportunity to create African ownership of African peacebuilding.

This article as originally published by the International Peace Institute (IPI) on July 18, 2016

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GLOBAL LEADERSHIP NEEDS A SHOT IN THE ARM, STARTING WITH THE NEXT SG

Karin Landgren

This week, the UN Security Council plans to hold its first, non-binding straw poll in the process of recommending the next Secretary-General. In our polarized, confrontational political climate, the choice matters greatly. The leader of our sole truly global intergovernmental body must bring singular qualities to the task of being a brake and a buffer against forces pulling the world apart, bridging big-power divisions while supporting the excluded peoples of the world.

A successful UN wields political weight derived from its standing in the world, as a recent open letter from UN staff rightly points out. The SG must constantly reinforce and deepen that weight. While some member states reputedly do not want a strong SG, they will all, at some point, find it in their interest to have one. Only a solidly-led organization can take on the great span of issues that demand international cooperation and compromise.

That the ideal SG be diplomatic, dexterous and charismatic goes without saying. Beyond this, the profile required for four roles needs particular consideration. The next SG will be expected to assert global intellectual leadership, while also maintaining a credible moral voice. He or she must orient the entire UN system towards greater candour, collegiality and coherence. Finally, the SG must communicate and represent the UN's vision, deftly connecting the organization with a world of constituencies.

Global leadership needs a shot in the arm. Expectations of the new SG are high, and the Security Council would do a disservice to the world if it gravitated to the candidate perceived as ruffling the fewest feathers or offering the best backroom deals.

ASSERT GLOBAL INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP

UN colleagues remark on the bygone era when an independent-minded Secretariat functioned as a principal organ of the UN, as its founders intended, and its officials played more meaningful intellectual, political and operational roles. Over the years, something vital has been lost.

There is a hunger among many for an SG who will not only engage extensively with a range of thought leaders but also bring his or her own intellectual contribution to bear on the challenges of the era. The current SG deserves credit for major achievements, notably the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change. For the next SG, these ambitious political commitments will need continued leadership for the test ahead, namely their implementation.

The UN needs a leader who will articulate and shape the UN's role and place in the increasingly complex international security climate. Last year’s reviews of the UN peace and security architecture set out many ways in which the UN might respond to the
challenges. There’s no shortage of proposals, but it is the SG who will set strategic direction, overall and on specific issues. This demands a candidate with policy depth, and in particular, deep understanding of the links among peace and security, development, and human rights.

In the age of social media, leaders are judged more hastily than ever. But resolution of international crises remains slow and tough, whether the issue is climate change, terrorism, drugs or wars; last month’s peace agreement in Colombia, for example, came after more than 50 years of conflict. The times may be past when an SG could take days away from the office to reflect and exchange ideas with thinkers and artists, as Dag Hammarskjöld did with the sculptor Barbara Hepworth and others. But resisting the siren song of quick fixes in favour of profound analysis and long-term strategies ranks high among challenges for the new Secretary-General.

**MAINTAIN A CREDIBLE MORAL VOICE**

Hammarskjöld is also remembered as the SG most clearly driven by principle, which determined his navigation of crises during the Cold War, in Congo and elsewhere. The sense of the UN as an organization based on principles is eroded every time the UN meets a crisis with acquiescence, paper-shuffling or delay.

There are too many examples from the recent past. Last month, Ban Ki-moon yielded to Saudi Arabia’s demand to be taken off a UN “list of shame” for the maiming and killing of children in Yemen. Unusually, the SG made public the pressure he had faced, including the likelihood that “countries would de-fund many UN programmes.”

At every turn, the UN leadership mismanaged its response to the crime of child sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic during 2014–15, from failing to protect the children to diverting energy into an internal witch-hunt. It is thought that Nepali UN peacekeepers introduced a deadly cholera strain to Haiti in 2010, and for long years, the UN’s public posture was to squirm silently behind lawyers.

After parts of the UN failed to call out gross violations in Sri Lanka, human rights was elevated to an organization-wide operational priority in 2013, but this is not yet firmly entrenched at all levels. The Ebola Interim Assessment Panel, acknowledging that declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern can lead to disagreements with governments, found that in this regard the WHO Director-General and Secretariat had not shown the necessary independent and courageous decision-making in the initial months of the crisis.

In seeking to maintain a moral voice for the UN, the SG will constantly come under great pressure. This is all the more reason for the SG to be supported by a staff that presents ethical, principled positions. While “humility” is often listed as a desirable quality for an SG, it is at odds with the heft the role requires. This quality might best be interpreted as personal restraint coupled with receptivity to alternative viewpoints. For this, the SG needs to begin by confidently appointing smart, tough-minded senior officials, and also insisting that they work as a team.
ORIENT THE UN SYSTEM TOWARDS CANDOUR, COLLEGIALITY AND COHERENCE

Unforeseen developments are the UN’s daily reality. A UN corporate culture that prefers to gloss over profound challenges and to reward placidity is ill-equipped to deliver the vision, integrity and courage needed to support the next SG. Changing this culture is a long-term project.

In re-establishing a positive UN culture, the tone from the top matters more than anything, including formal structures. The next SG needs to model new behaviours and signal expectations explicitly to senior staff, even to those who previously served as presidents or prime ministers in their own governments.

The new SG should introduce an expectation that problems will be dissected candidly at senior levels. Recently, 51 serving US diplomats called for a different approach to engagement in Syria via the State Department’s dissent channel, a formal alternative process for substantive policy matters. The UN has no equivalent. “Our dissent channel is Inner City Press,” joked a UN colleague, referring to a journalist known for asking difficult questions and publishing leaked internal documents. An active, managed internal forum would make that unnecessary.

The SG will be hobbled from the start by staff limitations. UN member states have made it hard for the Secretariat to select the best staff, and fire the worst. Staff themselves grow discouraged (or emboldened) when a lack of integrity brings rewards and no consequences. Only a bold approach with member states can change the current dispiriting inability to hold staff to the highest standards.

The staff’s disproportionate maleness has been well documented. By January 2015, women had fallen to 23 per cent of USG positions, and 22 per cent of ASGs; in the year that followed, men walked away with 92 per cent of USG and 77 per cent of ASG positions. As all declared candidates for the SG-ship have committed themselves to redressing this, their recent records should be scrutinized.

Every Secretary-General wants the Secretariat, UN agencies, funds and programmes to sing from the same song sheet. At country level, there have been attempts to gain greater coherence among UN actors, while inter-agency discourse has grown and improved. Nonetheless, as an SRSG, I often heard complaints from Headquarters that the SG could not “direct” the agencies. That is the wrong starting point. Rather than pressing for greater centralization, integration, and command-and-control, the leadership should invest in clearer articulation of the strategic direction, by country and by issue, engaging the partners in the discussion from the outset.

Member states have work to do, too, in supporting greater UN-wide coherence. However, the Secretariat’s work could start at home. A recent external review of the UN’s humanitarian coordination body, OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) found that the failure of its senior managers to communicate a common cohesive vision “led to confusion and a lack of clarity with both internal and external stakeholders.” The good news is that this should be among the easier internal problems to remedy.
COMMUNICATE A VISION OF POSITIVE, PRINCIPLED OUTCOMES

Surveys suggest that there is considerable global public support for the United Nations, but it is latent: electorates more often look inwards, making multilateralism generally a low priority. But with no other body able to play its role in peace and security, human rights, or setting global norms, the UN must sell itself. The SG is charged with communicating the purpose, vision and actions of the UN to build public understanding, trust and even warm feelings for the organization, while guiding and inspiring the UN and its member states towards better outcomes.

Does the SG have to be a born communicator? Yes, probably. The team has to give high priority to the communications strategy—it would be a mistake to approach this as a subsidiary task. But brilliant speechwriting takes an SG only so far: successful communication is audience-specific, and requires a leader able to gauge the room, adjusting tone and nuance on the spot. Credibly representing a positive, principled vision demands deep and diplomatic communication skills. If respect for the SG starts to crumble, no communications strategy will save it.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE NEW PROCESS

The General Assembly’s public hearing of the SG candidates is a victory for good sense and democratic consultation. The NGO 1 for 7 Billion campaign, the UN member states who took the lead, and General Assembly President Mogens Lykketoft deserve warm praise for this innovation. Similar scrutiny should now, without delay, be brought to the selection of UN Undersecretaries-General heading the major Secretariat components and UN agencies, funds and programmes.

The GA hearings cannot convey all we’d like to know about how candidates will respond to pressure, threats and moral dilemmas, or if they will uphold their promises. Going for popular appeal and likeability is a risk in any review process, where an able raconteur tends to generate immediate goodwill. Greater due diligence is also required on the candidates’ past performance in their posts, an element which is not built in to the current process. There is still time to fix this, if done quickly.

Ultimately the choice of SG will lie behind closed doors, with governments that may disagree on the qualities they want to see. Even so, the current process is likely to leave all the UN’s member states, NGOs, and the interested public feeling far more strongly vested in the success of the chosen candidate. That alone ought to give the incoming SG a boost.

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July 18, 2016

SOUTH CHINA SEA AND WORLD DISORDER

WPS Sidhu

The ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague against China’s claim on the South China Sea in a case brought before the court by the Philippines should prima facie have remained a bilateral matter between the litigants. In reality, however, it has become an exemplar of China’s role in the ongoing contest to determine the world order. China’s shrill and bellicose response during and after the ruling has only served to heighten alarm over Beijing’s intentions and behaviour among all the major powers, including India.

China’s attitude ranged from benign disengagement and denial of the court’s jurisdiction to rabid intimidation and downright threats. It made little effort to engage with either the PCA or to build support for its cause. Instead, it erroneously assumed that as a global power, it had earned the right to violate the very rules that it had signed up to earlier.

Among China’s paltry and dubious supporters were land-locked Afghanistan and Niger. Ironically, though Taiwan’s rejection of the PCA ruling was along the lines of China (as the former also claims the South China Sea), Taipei’s support is of no consolation to Beijing. Bizarrely, Pakistan supported China’s rejection of the ruling and called for resolution of the dispute “through consultations and negotiations by states directly concerned, in accordance with bilateral agreements” even as Islamabad’s representative at the UN demanded implementation of international resolutions to address bilateral disputes. Had China garnered some modicum of support, its “optional exception” argument—though legally untenable—might have had some political viability. Instead, as US defence secretary Ashton Carter foretold, China’s actions have built a “Great Wall of self-isolation”.

China’s approach to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the PCA and the South China Sea case was in stark contrast to India’s successful engagement in 2008 (with a little help from Washington) of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to seek a one-time waiver. This exception was granted partly in recognition of India’s growing global role and partly on account of New Delhi’s constructive diplomatic outreach and engagement with key capitals (apart from its non-proliferation record).

The PCA ruling also challenges two additional myths of an emerging peaceful world order. First, that the greater the economic and trade links, the less the geopolitical competition between countries. However, this is not the experience vis-à-vis China.

In 2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) became China’s third largest trading partner. According to Chinese statistics, in 2015, bilateral trade between China and the Philippines grew by 2.7% and hit a new record of $45.65 billion. The Philippines was one of only four Asean countries to retain a positive growth with China. Similarly, according to Philippine statistics, in 2015, China was the second largest trading partner and third largest export market of the Philippines. Yet, as the bitter stand-off over the PCA ruling underlines, none of this translated into political bonhomie.

Second, there is also the perception that the closer the web of international institutions and arrangements, especially with dispute resolution mechanisms, is woven, the less the inclination of nations to resort to brute force or the threat of use of force. This too has been belied by China’s actions.
In fact, contrary to the benign perception of international cooperation buttressed by closer economic, trade and institutional integration, it is more likely that China’s reaction to the adverse ruling will have a negative impact on other multilateral processes; it will certainly cast a shadow on the China-led September G-20 summit in Hangzhou and the October BRICS summit in Goa, and diminish the already dim prospects of UN Security Council reforms. Conceivably, even the resolution of the China-India border is likely to regress.

Similarly, although the PCA ruling is unlikely to be enforced (given that the only country which could do so—the US—has not ratified UNCLOS and is presently unwilling to challenge China militarily) Beijing has issued a not-so-veiled threat to escalate military tensions by unveiling a pair of so-called “carrier-killer” missiles.

Welcome to a more chaotic, dangerous and disorderly world.

This article was originally published by LiveMint on July 18, 2016

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July 7, 2016

GETTING CLEAR ABOUT CONFLICT PREVENTION AT THE UN

Gustavo de Carvalho and Adriana Erthal Abdenur

The 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN) last year has prompted new questions about the organisation's ability to effectively address peace and security problems around the globe.

The UN peace and security architecture has expanded dramatically since the Cold War. This has partly been in response to the changing nature of conflict, but it is also a reflection of the organisation's own ability to provide effective responses.

After an increased number of complex intra-state conflicts in the 1990s, the world saw a sharp decrease in numbers in the early 2000s. However, in the past five years, these numbers have again been on the rise.

This is particularly important for peace operations; perhaps the most visible of international responses to conflicts. Peace operations have, at best, delivered mixed results. This is particularly true for robust missions, which are drawn out over prolonged periods, and face increased challenges in their ability to deal with transnational threats such as terrorism and the protection of civilians.

Attempts to reform the UN's peace and security mechanisms have been undertaken since the 1990s.

The so-called Brahimi Report of 1999 was a response to the challenges faced by UN peacekeeping in the '90s, especially the failure to protect civilians in Bosnia and prevent the genocide in Rwanda. The report led to positive changes – including the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2005.

Problems of effectiveness, funding, coordination and coherence remain, however. Peace operations have not, for example, been able to fulfil the goals of protecting civilians; nor has the UN been effective in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.

It is not surprising that a new series of reviews of the UN's peace and security architecture were conducted in 2015, namely on peace operations; the Peacebuilding Architecture; and women, peace and security. These reviews focused on bettering the role played by the UN and recommended that conflict prevention be placed at the core of responses.

The 2015 reviews argue that the fragmentation and 'silos' that typify UN responses to conflict are not just costly, but also reduce the overall impact of UN efforts. Many – both within the UN and outside of it – believe that an increased focus on conflict prevention would be far cheaper than a continued narrow focus on ongoing or recurring conflicts.

But if the idea of turning conflict prevention into a core UN responsibility is broadly accepted among stakeholders, why has the UN been so slow to implement it?

One challenge is the difficulty that any organisation faces in shifting to behave in a precautionary manner; even when such a stance is considered to be more cost-effective than remedial measures.
Likewise, it is hard to get stakeholders to think about the root causes and to adopt a long-term view of conflict, precisely given difficulty in assessing the overall impact of preventive measures.

How do we know when conflict prevention works? Without better mechanisms to plan and evaluate conflict prevention, it will be difficult to alter the structure of incentives, and this principle will remain a secondary function of the UN.

In general, the UN has – even if implicitly – adopted short-term and insular views on the causes of conflicts, which consequently shape its responses to instability. Existing conflict-prevention mechanisms, such as early-warning systems, are mostly designed to detect only imminent or recurring conflicts.

Outbreaks of conflict are typically the manifestations of much longer trends and underlying factors, which means this short-sighted approach is suited only to a small number of instances.

The emphasis on imminent conflicts, rather than long-term trends, has also made conflict prevention a politically sensitive topic. Member states fear that being included on such lists may lead to stigma and even undesired intervention.

In addition, early-warning mechanisms at the UN have widely been designed and implemented in an ad hoc and piecemeal manner; involving different components within the mission structure and UN agencies – from the UN Security Council to the Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC).

The JMAC, in particular, illustrates some of the limitations of the current UN approach. Although it aims to coordinate analysis and provide early warning, in reality, it often does not optimally utilise the information and capabilities of all mission components, such as police and the UN Department of Safety and Security.

This results in skewed and incomplete analysis, which is insufficient for effective early warning and operational planning. An effective early-warning system should provide integrated analytical tools, which would allow decision-makers to take quick and calculated operational decisions, but also long-term assessments. This should become an intrinsic part of sustainable peace-planning processes.

However, the biggest challenge is that only focusing on conflict prevention still won't be sufficient. The concept of conflict prevention remains too vague; and therefore difficult to implement.

There are still critical questions on what it really means for specific roles and responsibilities, especially within the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Peacebuilding Architecture.

In order to translate the concept into policies and mechanisms within the UN and partner organisations, such as the African Union, there must be more to conflict prevention than just principled acceptance from stakeholders. Specifics are needed, along with practical elements that would allow for concrete strategies and plans to be formulated.

For conflict prevention to become a central element in the UN's approach to peace and security, there is essential groundwork to be done. This includes an improved understanding of what makes conflict prevention effective; to better identify the types of mechanisms that should be put in place.
This is particularly important in reducing the fragmentation between different components – such as peace operations, peacebuilding efforts and conflict prevention.

In the end, strategic choices will have to be made. If everything counts as conflict prevention, then conflict prevention means very little indeed. The UN needs to focus on understanding not only the key drivers of conflicts, but also the conditions needed for durable peace. Only then will it be able to anticipate and address the root causes of conflict; and design and implement innovations for effectively preventing it.

This article was originally posted by ISS | Africa on July 7, 2016

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RESOLUTION 2282 (2016)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 7680th meeting, on 27 April 2016
FEATURED DATA AND GLOBAL STATISTICS ON PEACE OPERATIONS

The infographics below show 2016 UN Senior Appointments by Gender and Nationality, as of midyear. These visualizations are further research based on Karin Landgren’s commentary The Lost Agenda: Gender Parity in Senior UN Appointments. Click the below links for visualizations of headline data and trends in global peace operations. You can select global and mission specific data from the Data & Trends main menu.

2016 SENIOR APPOINTMENTS, BY GENDER
2016 SENIOR APPOINTMENTS, BY NATIONALITY
CONTRIBUTIONS

TOP 20 UN UNIFORMED PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTIONS

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CHINA

Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Nepal to UN Operations (2000-Present)

This pie chart shows China’s contributions of uniformed personnel to UN missions as of June 2016, broken down by number of personnel contributed to each mission. China currently makes the 12th largest personnel contribution of any UN member state.
CHINA (CONT)

Major Uniformed Personnel Contributions by China to UN Operations (2000 - Present)

This line chart shows China’s total contributions of uniformed personnel to UN missions since 2003 (top line), as well as the five missions to which China made its largest personnel contributions from January 2003 through June 2016.

SENEGAL

Top 5 Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Senegal to UN Operations (June 2016)

This pie chart shows Senegal’s contributions of uniformed personnel to UN missions as of June 2016, broken down by number of personnel contributed to each mission.

Major Uniformed Personnel Contributions by Senegal to UN Operations (2008 - April 2016)

This line chart shows Senegal’s total contributions of uniformed personnel to UN missions since 2001 (top line), as well as the six missions to which Senegal made its largest personnel contributions from January 2001 through April 2016.
The Global Peace Operations Review has received generous support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, French Ministry of Defence, German Federal Foreign Office, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.