



International Peace Academy



**CENTER ON
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION**

Refashioning the Dialogue: Regional Perspectives on the Brahimi Report on UN Peace Operations

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Foreword

H.E. Sir Jeremy Greenstock
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

When the Government of the United Kingdom learned that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had asked Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi to convene a panel of experts to make recommendations to improve UN peace operations, we felt that this discussion was too important to be confined to the halls of the United Nations in New York. Once the panel's Report was published, therefore, we asked the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) of New York University and the International Peace Academy (IPA) to convene discussions of the issues raised by the Report.

The resulting project, gathering regional perspectives on the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report) at meetings in Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, Singapore, and London and presenting them in New York, has been extremely useful in developing debate on the future of United Nations peace operations. We are grateful for the work of CIC and IPA, as well as their partner organizations in the various regions.

I draw a number of conclusions from the reports that follow and the discussion that they stimulated at the meeting in New York at which they were presented. These can be considered in two categories: the lingering fears and apprehensions that are getting in the way of implementing the recommendations of the Brahimi Report; and points for action and follow-up. We now have enough analysis on the stocks: it is time to move things forward.

Fears and Apprehensions

Many people remain daunted by the sheer size of the problem in addressing conflict, not least in Africa. First, as this process has made clear, those who are willing to take action often do not have the capability, and those who are capable may not have the will. We need to understand the reasons that lie behind this. But, in the meantime, the UN system should focus on fixing what it can fix, rather than despairing that it cannot fix everything (and thereby fixing nothing).

Second, there is a worry about expense and over-commitment, particularly on the side of the developed world. I shall comment on resources below.

Third, both North and South are worried about losing control of their agenda. In the South, the concern is that the development agenda will be sidetracked by implementation of the Brahimi Report. I think it is becoming clear, however, that development and conflict management are linked, and that more and more people recognize this. In the North, states worry that other security priorities may be sidetracked by a focus on peacekeeping. In this area, the Millennium Summit and its aftermath, particularly the focus on Africa, have made conflict management more clearly a developed-world priority within the whole concept of a more effective approach to development.

Fourth, there are continuing worries about outside intervention in political matters. These were less evident in this process than in some other forums and should be containable if we consult widely.

Finally, we are all concerned at the difficulty of dealing with determined "arsonists" when we have only volunteer firemen to take them on. The hardest cases need further thought but that is no reason not to keep going where we can.

Action and Follow-up

So what is to be done in terms of action and follow-up?

First, the politics of conflict management is the main stumbling block. Political problems can only be resolved through a partnership between the willing and the able. The new sense of initiative and renewal in Africa, including the wish to develop such a partnership, is a hopeful example of this. In this respect above all, the roles of the regions are vital.

Second, while we all want to see new resources going into conflict management, it is no use just shouting for them. Resources come from faith in the potential outcome from their use: look upon them as an investment rather than a duty. We must therefore focus on maximizing the outcome – the resources will follow.

Third, it is clear that many people are concerned about quality and capacity, particularly of personnel. We must, among other things, encourage the Secretary-General to set minimum quality standards for both his own appointments and troop contributions.

Similarly, regional groups must be encouraged to sign up to minimum standards. This applies particularly to support for legitimate governments, law and order, social justice, and sound economic management. Regional groups should also be encouraged to share information on best practices.

Conflict prevention, as part of the Brahimi follow-up, must be regarded as more than just a matter of knowledge. We have enough analysis in most areas. It is much more a matter of action flowing from analysis, preferably on the basis of pre-agreed criteria. This in turn emphasizes, again, the need for partnership.

Peace-building has received some attention of late but can be effective only if conflict is minimized. We are right to see a seamless connection from early warning through to peace-building, but it is the earlier stages that need more attention.

Finally, process: perfect coordination may be a dream, but we must work for a better joined-up effort. The UN system needs:

- to consult more widely, and to broaden the ownership of the Brahimi approach (why not, for instance, bring a regional contributor into the examination of each specific issue within a refashioned Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat?);
- to delegate more authority on the ground to the local actors;
- to break the old molds of doing business, especially in promoting coordination from New York;
- to **implement** the Brahimi Report, this includes listening to the objections, answering them, and then getting on with it; and
- to then go beyond Brahimi, to address the underlying political constraints. The message from the regions, ultimately, is that Brahimi is the minimum threshold for change.

Background

In February and March 2001, meetings in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe provided regional perspectives on the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report). In Johannesburg, Singapore, Buenos Aires, and London, representatives of states, inter-governmental and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia gathered to discuss the Brahimi Report and the role of the UN in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peace-building.

The meetings were funded by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and (except in London) convened by the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) of New York University and the International Peace Academy (IPA), together with the following partner organizations: the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa; the Singapore Institute for International Affairs; the University of Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the Regional Coordinator for Economic and Social Research (CRIES), a network of Caribbean Basin academic institutes; and the Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London, with the International Institute of Strategic Studies.



Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock at the New York Meeting

On March 12, 2001, IPA and CIC convened a meeting in New York where representatives of the regional meetings presented their conclusions. Panelists and other participants from UN missions and staff, regional organizations, academia, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) discussed these views. His Excellency Jose Ramos-Horta, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the East Timor Transitional Authority, addressed the meeting after lunch.

Executive Summary

- There is no single “developing world” perspective on UN peace operations – nor, indeed, a single perspective from each of the regions that took part in the consultation. Nevertheless, some broad themes emerged in the course of discussion, conditioned by particular regional experiences with such operations. Each of the meetings emphasized the importance of the Brahimi Report and took note of the timing and resource constraints that limited the scope of the Report essentially to peacekeeping. All meetings in the developing world, where people feel marginalized from UN decision-making, rued the lateness of the consultative process, noting that building a constituency for UN peace operations requires more extensive, deeper, and earlier consultation with a broad range of regional and local actors. At the New York meeting one permanent representa-

tive observed that, returning to the organization after a fifteen-year absence, he saw that the UN, too, was now being affected by the global demand for transparency and accountability.

- The meetings in the developing countries confirmed both the depth of the crisis of confidence in the capability and willingness of the United Nations to conduct peace operations – especially evident in the African regional meeting – and the hopes that many people continue to place in the world’s only truly global organization. European participants engaged directly with the Report’s operational prescriptions, as they evidently felt more ownership of UN decisions affecting them. Though most participants saw the Brahimi Report as setting a useful baseline for a sober reassessment of what the UN can and cannot accomplish, they also agreed with its authors that the Report’s recommendations constitute only the

“minimum threshold of change” (para. 7) required by the UN.

- A recurring theme was that the Brahimi Report presents technical or operational solutions to essentially political problems. Many argued that the will of member states remains the primary obstacle to realizing the UN’s capacity in peace operations. This was seen in both the decisions of the Security Council and the commitment of resources. Participants contrasted the willingness of major powers to commit their own troops as well as massive funds to enforcement even without Security Council authorization in Europe, while refusing to send troops to or pay assessments for UN operations dealing with even more brutal and intense conflicts in Africa. Participants in the New York meeting sought to identify where this political will might come from; some suggested that only NGOs and other parts of civil society might supply it.
- In all regions, participants felt that the UN needs to work more effectively in partnership with others – regional and sub-regional organizations, the international financial institutions, NGOs, local actors – in order to ensure its own success. The Report’s recommendations and follow-up reports on conflict prevention and peacekeeping need to recognize that the UN is only one among several actors, and recommendations should be geared toward strengthening it for collaborative action. The Brahimi Report’s single paragraph (para. 54) on UN cooperation with regional organizations does not adequately reflect the latter’s importance for peace operations. Far greater consultation with regionally based scholars, practitioners, and other actors should occur throughout all stages of peace operations. Officials in New York claimed that, though the Report did not fully reflect it, the UN was making significant progress on this score, exemplified by the just-completed UN meeting with regional organizations.
- There was agreement at each of the meetings that **prevention** of violent conflict poses an urgent challenge to international actors, and that the UN should employ a far broader approach to conflict prevention than the fact-finding missions discussed in the Brahimi Report. Prevention should address the sources of conflict and not simply its symptoms. This broader approach to prevention is consistent with the Report’s statement that better cross-agency coordination and improved political and developmental tools are needed to address the roots and risks of conflict.
- In terms of the practice of prevention, the use of the good offices of the UN Secretary-General enjoys wide support. There was some reluctance to accord a significant role in prevention to other institutions of the UN, however, with a preference for utilizing regional and sub-regional organizations and networks, or individual heads of state (who will often work closely with the Secretary-General). Such organizations are more formalized in Europe and Africa, where it was suggested that stronger operational links might be established between early warning units of regional organizations and their UN counterparts. In Asia, the primary focus of regional organization is economic development, though such bodies as ASEAN and APEC have come to assume a significant role in preventive diplomacy. In Latin America, a variety of flexible, non-traditional forms of regional cooperation on security issues have taken the lead role (in place of the OAS). Greater analytical capacity within the UN, the Latin American participants argued, together with improved inter-agency information sharing and strategic planning, would strengthen the Secretary-General’s efforts in this area. Participants in New York learned that African permanent representatives were meeting to reconsider the Report’s recommendations for strengthening UN analytical capacity, which had gotten caught up in extraneous debates, and were likely to support some measures.
- The regions have had very different experiences of **peacekeeping**. Latin America has not had and does not foresee much direct experience with “blue helmet” operations, though some countries are significant troop contributors to operations elsewhere. Asia has been the site of few operations (broadly seen as successful), though many countries are also contributors to UN operations

outside the region. Europe had seen the UN dilemmas in Bosnia and the large operations there and in Kosovo, largely designed by European and North Atlantic organizations, which also provided most troops and much of the administrative infrastructure. Africa is the site of the greatest demand for UN peacekeeping and intervention and has been the site of perhaps the organization's arguably greatest failure (Rwanda) and several other major fiascoes.

- The bedrock principles of peacekeeping – consent of local parties, impartiality, and the use of force only in self-defense – remain an important part of peacekeeping. Nevertheless, impartiality should be seen in terms of the fair application of a mandate, not as an excuse for moral equivocation. In Africa in particular, there was strong support for more robust mandates for peacekeepers to deal with spoilers. The European meeting also emphasized the need for robust tactics, particularly in the early days of establishing a mission, before civilian personnel (other than humanitarian organizations) were on the ground. Training more regional staff (at least non-military staff) would help enable swift deployment of operations. African participants contemplated the need for better trained and equipped African regional or even continental peacekeeping forces in light of the reluctance of major powers to contribute troops to operations on the continent. There was some debate over whether this was feasible or whether – to mitigate the dominant role of regional hegemony and the lack of indigenous resources – it would be best to develop capacity and response jointly with the UN. The European meeting acknowledged a European role in building capacities in other regions.
- Participants in Africa, Asia, and Latin America all expressed, with differing intensity and degrees of grievance, the need to make **peace-building** a focus of peacekeeping activities and for greater local ownership of the processes of peace-building.



Mr. Christopher Landsberg, Maj. Gen. Henry Anyidoho, and Ambassador Dumisano Shadrack Kumalo at the New York meeting.

The UN cannot deliver sustainable outcomes without utilizing the knowledge and experience of local and regional actors. Training and capacity building for local civil society actors, including a large proportion of women, should therefore be a priority. Emphasis should be on building the capacity for local governance, as in the later stages of the East Timor mission, rather than on deploying a vast number of international staff of highly uneven quality.

- While local and regional resource constraints will require the UN to do the “heavy lifting” on peace-building outside of Europe, regional organizations have an important role to play and should not be marginalized. Latin American participants emphasized that peace-building funds should be part of peacekeeping assessments rather than voluntary contributions. A reasonable time frame for peace-building needs to be assured: quick-impact projects should not be temporary-impact projects. The essential elements for a sustainable peace – including rule of law institutions – need to be identified and adequately financed, and there should be a “seamless transition” from peacekeeping to peace-building. More effective monitoring, including by civil society organizations, is essential to ensure success in peace-building.

AFRICA Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa, 21-22 February 2001

Executive Summary

Participants in the African meeting argued that a UN Security Council dominated by powerful states was reluctant to conduct peacekeeping missions in Africa. Hence, while recognizing the primacy of the UN as the leading organization responsible for global peace and security, they stressed the importance of building regional capacities to enhance Africa's capacity for managing conflicts. They called for the establishment of a division of labor among the UN, the OAU, and Africa's sub-regional organizations, as well as civil society actors in Africa.

Conflict Prevention

- While many African leaders resist prevention, whether by the UN or others, participants largely supported preventive efforts, while insisting on the role of regional organizations and civil society.
- Several regional organizations have established early warning and prevention units, which should be linked to civil society actors in Africa and to the relevant UN bodies.
- In view of the economic roots of conflict, prevention should employ some of the tools of peace-building as well.

Peacekeeping

- While Africans should insist on the UN's responsibility for peacekeeping, they should build their own capacity to react to future Rwandas.
- African forces will require training and capacity building to meet higher requirements for troop contribution.
- Since the future of African peacekeeping lies in cooperation between the UN and regional organizations, problems of previous such operations should be studied.



Participants at the Johannesburg meeting.

- Africans should also receive additional training for civilian and police tasks in peace operations.

Peace-Building

- The UN with its superior access to resources will have to do the "heavy lifting" of peace-building.
- Since peace-building requires a good understanding of the dynamics of societies in conflict, the staff of such operations should include Africans from civil society, including women.
- Peace-building should focus on building local governance capacity, not interim international administrations.
- Peace-building requires a transition to sustainable development; quick-impact projects should not be temporary-impact projects.

Report

For two days Africans from across the continent engaged in spirited and frank debate about the implications of the Brahimi Report for their region. The same failures of peace operations that had inspired the UN to commission the Report in the first place evoked even stronger reactions among those at the meeting, many of whom had experienced first-hand the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Zaire/Democratic Republic of

Congo (DRC), Uganda, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. The bitterest memories were of the failure to respond to the genocide in Rwanda, which one participant called “the outstanding example of racism in international affairs.”

The participants recognized that the Report described its recommendations as constituting the minimum threshold of change (para. 7) but were unanimous in insisting how minimal that threshold was. They wished to place the Report’s analysis of and recommendations for UN peace operations in the larger context of international engagement with African conflicts. The discussion largely agreed on two broad points:

- A UN dominated by the Security Council, a Security Council dominated by the permanent members, and the permanent members dominated by the United States practiced a double standard that marginalized Africa with respect to peace operations. This lack of political commitment or will called into question the relevance of organizational or technical reforms of the UN. Participants leavened this criticism of the UN’s political leadership with ample criticism of the continent’s own political leadership and its failure to articulate a meaningful agenda for change.
- In view of the marginalization of African concerns within the UN, participants called for the strengthening of Africa’s own capacity for conflict management and peace operations, especially through regional and sub-regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and as mentioned briefly, in para. 54 of the Brahimi Report.

While some versions of these two points appeared to command broad assent, two voices emerged articulating different interpretations of their implications. These voices (more plural than this summary can recognize) proposed different readings of the slogan, “African solutions to African problems.”

- Most participants followed a pragmatic approach, which cautioned that the slogan might legitimize global disengagement from Africa and argued that, despite their frustrations, African actors needed to

engage and challenge the UN and the global community to live up to their own articulated standards, including by engaging with the “Brahimi process.” This did not, however, imply any devaluation of Africa’s regional initiatives.

- Another view urged that, given the lack of political commitment to African concerns by the UN and the powers that dominate it, the Brahimi Report was unlikely to contribute to Africa’s security concerns. African actors should primarily fall back on their own resources to establish their own capacity for conflict management, including peacekeeping.

In the end these divergent tendencies seemed to converge on a position supporting African-initiated action to address Africa’s problems jointly with the international community, while recognizing that such collaboration would be all the more credible and effective the more Africans clarified their own agenda and built their own capacity. Participants pointed out that presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria will soon release a joint statement on the future of Africa as part of a Millennium African Recovery Programme, which might provide important guideposts.

Some speakers also expressed discontent with the centralized nature of the “Brahimi process”. The Brahimi Report was first written at UN headquarters, and regional consultations (sponsored by private groups with the support of the UK’s Department for International Development) occurred only after the fact. This was the opposite of what should have happened.

Regional Organizations and Decentralization of Peace Operations

Much of the discussion revolved around regional peace operations and their relationship to the UN. Some participants called for a more far-reaching “decentralization” of international peace operations, including not only regional and sub-regional organizations but also civil society. Nonetheless, all agreed that the UN should not be let off the hook as the principal repository of responsibility for peace and security.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides that regional organizations can carry out peace operations, provided they are consistent with the UN charter and receive authorization, as necessary, from the UN Security Council. Africa possesses a complex system of such organizations. These organizations have at times shown initiative and capacity, but often they suffer from major flaws. Strengthening these organizations should be a pillar of peace operations in Africa.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which consists of most African states, is the center of the African regional system, including member states, the general secretariat, and sub-regional organizations, whose role within the OAU system is formally recognized by the Abuja Treaty of 1991. This treaty recognized the sub-regional organizations as blocks for economic cooperation, but most are evolving into security communities as well. Those most discussed at the meeting were the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Greater Horn of Africa. Not all are at the same level of development.

The UN has formal agreements with the OAU and SADC, and it is contemplating one with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). ECCAS, though it has existed since 1983, still does not have its own building. Thus far the UN has no agreement with ECOWAS, despite the latter's activity in peacekeeping and/or enforcement in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau, and its current sponsorship of a projected preventive deployment on the border between Guinea and Sierra Leone.

The terms of engagement between the UN and these regional organizations remain contested. Some argued for a relationship of "subsidiarity," in which problems are first addressed by the organizations closest to the problem (sub-regional), ascending to the OAU and UN to the extent that the problem exceeded the capacities of the lower-level organization. Most grappled with more complex notions of the division of labor. The UN, and, within the UN, the Security Council, has overall responsibility for global peace and security. As far as possible, it should be held to that responsibility, though

implementation should often include regional organizations as partners. Once regional military deployments create appropriate conditions, the UN system appears to have greater capacity to deal with massive humanitarian assistance and refugee crises, though some regional organizations (IGAD, ECOWAS, e.g.) are trying to improve their capacity in this field. The UN's superior access to economic resources would also make it responsible for the "heavy lifting" of peace-building. Some cited the emerging settlement of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea as a positive example of collaboration, with the OAU having acted as primary mediator and the UN taking responsibility for the peacekeeping and border-delimitation exercises. Similarly, African states and the OAU mediated the Lusaka Accords on the DRC in 1999, while the UN has become the focus for attempts at implementation through a small observer mission.

Some cited chronic problems in such collaboration: the Security Council wants to control and monitor peace operations, even when it is reluctant to authorize them, and the UN with its superior resources tends to push the OAU and other regional organizations aside. ECOWAS and the UN became competitors in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Speakers recognized that if such collaboration were to work, Africans would have to bring more to the table. Regional organizations are often divided and lacking in resources. They rely on donor contributions, and states do not pay their dues, even to the OAU. "If we want others to take us seriously, we must take ourselves seriously," said one speaker.

Some sub-regional organizations (notably ECOWAS) have potential hegemonies like Nigeria, while others (SADC) are factionalized by competition (between Zimbabwe and South Africa). Reliance on sub-regional organizations could mean reliance on regional giants like Nigeria and South Africa, who may have their own domestic problems or parochial agendas. Operations would thus take place only in small states. The DRC war illustrates one problem: there is no hegemon to intervene decisively, and the contention for this role is one of the causes of the war. Similarly, who would intervene if the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon escalates or if Nigeria itself were to descend into civil

strife? One suggestion was that sub-regional organizations communicate and coordinate with each other better and even engage in joint operations out of their own sub-regions, if necessary. Such collaboration could evolve into a continent-wide regime.

Some participants, especially those from NGOs, emphasized that decentralization and reliance on African actors had to include participation by African NGOs. Their monitoring activities are essential for prevention, and their links to society are vital for peace-building. Yet African regional organizations often resist participation by civil society. The recommendations of the Brahimi Report that the UN should open its doors to civil society should first of all include local civil society rather than external NGOs, and this recommendation applies equally to African regional organizations. Africa's regional organizations often resist civil society participation, as they are largely composed of states that are not even accountable to their own people. Strengthening the capacity of civil society to use information technology would enable it to contribute much more, especially to conflict prevention and peace-building.

The need for links of UN peace operations to regional and local actors emerged as a key topic in the discussions of the thematic areas of prevention, peacekeeping, and peace-building.

Conflict Prevention

Citing, among others, the current conflicts over land and governance in Zimbabwe, speakers noted that conflict prevention should not mean suppression of symptoms of problems, but should work for the transformation of the conditions that lead to violence. In view of the deep roots of conflict, others argued that prevention requires several dimensions of action: responding to early warnings of conflict events, transforming structural sources of conflict, and building regional capacities and regimes for peace and conflict management. Participants repeatedly evoked the need for democracy, respect for human rights, and an end to the "culture of impunity" on the continent.

Speakers from regional organizations noted that the Brahimi Report's discussion of the resistance of many

governments to fact-finding missions and quiet diplomatic attempts to avert problems remained pertinent to Africa. Many heads of state refuse such assistance as interference or violation of their country's sovereignty. The government of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, rejected several such preventive efforts and persisted in the policies that led to the recent and continuing troubles.

A civil society participant argued that such a narrow definition of sovereignty "does not reflect the aspirations of the people of this continent. The era of exclusiveness is over." Without the active involvement of civil society, quiet diplomacy was indeed likely to fail. Only the militancy of civil society assured that President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana stepped down as required by the constitution, this speaker contended. Others also emphasized the importance of civil society for early warning and prevention. Several sub-regional organizations (IGAD, ECOWAS), as well as the OAU, are setting up early warning units that will in part gather the views of "ordinary people" and civil society. These units should be linked to the UN bodies engaged in similar activities.

Several regional organizations like ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC are also engaged in attempts to suppress small arms trafficking, an important accelerator of conflict. Participants underscored the importance of these efforts but also pointed out that most of these arms come from outside Africa, and that the global preventive efforts underway in this area were needed to complement the regional ones.

In view of the social and economic roots of conflicts in Africa, preventive activities should also include some of the tools of peace-building. For instance, the quick-impact projects discussed in the Brahimi Report under peace-building should also be used proactively for preventive purposes, and should be linked to longer-term strategies. The tools for strengthening governance relevant to peace-building should also be used to strengthen local governance structures and democracy in areas where conflicts are emerging.

Peacekeeping

Overall, participants favored variants of UN partnerships with the OAU and sub-regional organizations for

peacekeeping, with far more emphasis on building the capacities of those organizations and of troop contributing states than figured in the Brahimi Report. The reports of two recent meetings of the African Chiefs of Defense Staff contained important guidelines on these topics and should be brought to the attention of the UN.

Some cautioned that African states and organizations have far to go before meeting the requirements of operations, especially according to the standards set forth in the Brahimi Report, as well as in meeting the political requirements for impartiality. But in view of the refusal of major states to contribute troops to UN operations in Africa, and the perception of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as particularly distant from African concerns and lacking in African personnel, no one saw any alternative to regional capacity building, though emphases differed. As one participant said, "We should hold the UN's feet to the fire" as the principal body responsible for peace and security, but "Africa should build its own capacity, so that if Rwanda happens again, we can do something."

Africa has demonstrated its willingness and capacity for peacekeeping operations through its significant contributions of troops and police to UN operations, as well as the operations that various regional organizations have undertaken outside of UN auspices. Nonetheless, especially in view of the requirements for inter-operability and for the deployment of larger units (brigade rather than battalion) recommended by the Brahimi Report, African militaries will need additional unit-level training and better equipment. Thus far some countries have resisted outside offers to provide such assistance (such as the US Africa Crisis Response Initiative [ACRI], which was seen by many Africans as politically selective and financially inadequate).

Many participants seemed to prefer that both the training and funding for these arrangements come through the UN. One suggested that peacekeeping assessments paid to the UN could be disbursed to regional organizations to implement the peace operations. Others argued that this proposal was a contradiction: Africans want to be self-reliant with outside funding. Another participant proposed that Africa initiate a partnership by approaching the UN

and others with "sound business plans" for regional capacity building for peacekeeping.

Since future operations in Africa would likely involve cooperation between UN and African regional forces, the UN should study the lessons of previous joint operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOMOG was given the responsibility of protecting the UN, even though the latter had more resources. The disparity in pay between the staff of the two components of the operation often led to tensions between the two organizations.

Besides these military components, participants also suggested that regional organizations should prepare lists of African candidates for leadership roles in peace operations. In addition, while African states were already significant contributors of civilian police, African police needed better training for peace operations, beyond what they now receive. Such training could be undertaken through the various associations of Regional Police Commanders, which collaborate with Interpol on regional crime control. At least one NGO (ACCORD in South Africa) is currently training civilian personnel from Southern Africa for peace operations. Lists of those trained and available should be supplied to regional organizations and the UN, and such training programs should be extended to all regions of Africa.

Some noted the problems and risks associated with reliance on regional capacities. Units trained for peacekeeping can use those skills for war, as when an ACRI-trained Ugandan brigade was deployed to the DRC. National interest, as one participant said, is the oil that lubricates regional interventions, which means that peacekeeping can be used as a cover for intervention or even aggression, as in the DRC. Sub-regional organizations, even the more developed, such as ECOWAS and SADC, lack the internal cohesion needed for successful and impartial peacekeeping operations and are composed of states that themselves have grave internal problems and lack resources. One participant suggested that the UN mediate the conflicts among the members of SADC over peacekeeping operations. For all these reasons, partnership with a more effective UN would be desirable. Without major change in the attitudes of the Security Council and the developed

world's troop contributing countries, however, such partnerships will not be effective, and the need to enhance the capacity of regional security organizations will grow.

Peace-Building

The passionate and immediate concerns of the participants with the need to halt and prevent ongoing conflicts in Africa meant that they spent less time discussing peace-building. In this area, the involvement of the UN appeared less problematic. Once peacekeeping operations, whether regional or UN-led, prepared the ground, the UN, with its access to resources would do the "heavy lifting" of peace-building. The one area where participants articulated the clearest dissatisfaction with UN peace-building operations occurred in statements from civil society representatives from Liberia and Sierra Leone, who accused the UN and ECOWAS of complicity with a "culture of impunity" that allowed war criminals to become presidents and ministers as parts of "peace settlements."

Participants expressed the same concern for African ownership of peace operations less through advocating a greater role for regional and sub-regional organizations than in articulating the need for ownership by local societies and communities of the processes of peace-building. Building peace after conflict requires an intimate knowledge of the local dynamics of conflict processes as well as of local capacities for peacemaking. These are found in local communities, civil society, and in particular among women, who have often been excluded from leading roles in conflict and the negotiations and peacekeeping that may end it. A peace-building operation must identify and incorporate all the stakeholders in peace.

Hence peace-building operations must establish firm relations with these local constituencies. This requires a staff recruited largely from the conflict-ridden region. The operation must build relations with civil society and NGOs, especially local NGOs, rather than the large transnational ones that have such a large presence in humanitarian operations. It is particularly vital to recruit and retain a high proportion of women in the staff of peace-building operations. The staff would require conflict resolution skills and perhaps a dedicated unit on conflict resolution.

Speakers expressed some skepticism about a standardized legal code for interim administration and emphasized instead the need to strengthen existing administrative structures to meet people's basic needs. Governance measures should go beyond law and order to strengthen dialogue, democracy, and the rule of law, without being totally co-opted by the existing state structures. The observations on civilian police training and deployment mentioned above under peacekeeping also apply to peace-building operations.

Peace-building operations need to incorporate programs for populations with acute needs such as refugees, internally displaced persons, and former combatants. Demobilization and reintegration must be fully funded from the main budgets of peace-building operations.

Finally, especially in Africa, where the economic roots of conflict lie so deep, peace-building must be extended to a transition to sustainable development. Quick-impact projects should not also be temporary-impact projects. The rule of law, governance, and democracy should provide a framework for people's livelihoods, and where governance and livelihood reinforce each other, peace-building becomes sustainable conflict prevention.

LATIN AMERICA Meeting

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 22-23 February 2001

Executive Summary

Thirty representatives of policy and academic institutes, government ministries, and non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations from eleven Latin American states met at the Belgrano University in Buenos Aires on February 22 and 23, 2001, to discuss the Brahimi Report's implications for the region. The principal findings were:

Peacekeeping Operations

- The Security Council uses political criteria when deciding which conflicts to respond to and with what resources. Participants found it unacceptable that there should be sufficient political will to pull together resources for operations in Europe but not in Congo.
- Participants viewed with concern the resistance of developed countries to contributing troops for UN operations.
- The time lag between a resolution to establish a peace operation and its deployment provides an opportunity for spoilers to undermine peace accords. The most useful tools for reducing this lag are stand-by agreements and quick-impact development projects.

Peace-Building

- There is a lack of effective coordination among the international agencies involved in peace-building activities, often leading to waste of human and financial resources.
- Peace-building activities should be financed from the UN's regular budget, and there should be an integrated peace-building unit in the UN Department of Political Affairs.
- International peace-building missions must better coordinate their work with local actors and institutions.



Participants at Buenos Aires meeting with co-chairs Ambassador Gelson Fonseca, Jr. (left) and Dr. Andrés Fontana (center).

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

- An information and strategic analysis system is essential for conflict prevention and management. An inter-agency task force should be created within the Department of Political Affairs that would house a data analysis unit that would also enforce inter-agency cooperation on information sharing and strategic planning.
- The Department of Political Affairs' overall weakness in staffing and expertise prevents it from developing its role in conflict prevention. This deficit must be resolved, despite ongoing budgetary constraints.
- Regional and sub-regional organizations should play a creative, flexible role in cooperative security for conflict prevention, especially in dealing with the major sources of ongoing conflict such as arms and drug trafficking.

General Considerations

- Zero-growth budgetary restrictions impede and undermine the current efforts to reform United Nations peace operations.
- Any restructuring of United Nations peace operations should be based on the premise that conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peace-building are often-overlapping stages of the same

process; UN agencies should have the capacity to act at any of these stages, rather than reacting to crises already under way.

Report

The meeting followed a workshop format during the first day. Participants divided themselves into three working groups, corresponding to the Brahimi Report's thematic organization: peacekeeping operations, peace-building, and conflict prevention/resolution. No overarching framework was imposed on the working groups; the intention was to invite unrestricted reflection and brainstorming. The results were discussed among all participants at a plenary meeting the second day, at which the full group commented on, modified, and in some cases dissented from the working groups' findings.

The perspectives voiced at the Buenos Aires meeting reflect the region's experience with United Nations peace operations. The discussion of conflict prevention and resolution often returned to Latin America's historical commitment to non-interference in domestic affairs by outside powers, but it also recognized the fairly recent positive experience of UN mediation in Central America and informally in Colombia.

Latin America has and can foresee virtually no direct experience of traditional "blue helmet" operations. Therefore, the discussion of peacekeeping primarily reflected a) the operational experiences of military and police officers who had served in various field missions; and b) the governments' concerns that wealthier developed states will continue to withhold resources for peacekeeping, leaving troop and resource contribution to less-developed countries.

The topic that most directly engaged the participants was the area in which there is current activity in the region: peace-building. Many practitioners currently or recently working with post-conflict projects in Central America were present, and the discussion clearly reflected their field experience.

The two points of convergence most often expressed by members of all three groups were, first, that the zero-growth budgetary restrictions on the core UN budget

will impede and undermine reform efforts; and, second, that the conceptual distinction among conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peace-building is artificial and counterproductive, and that any restructuring of UN peace operations should be conducted based on the premise that conflict resolution is a process incorporating these three stages. Participants repeatedly emphasized the urgency to approach this as a unified process and to increase coordination among the relevant agencies. Further, the end product, "peace," will only be sustainable if the agencies involved in the operation pay close attention to rectifying the actual causes of conflict from the first warning.

Disagreement reflected the diversity of perspectives and interests in the region, reflecting cleavages among the participants by sector (NGO, diplomatic, academic, or military) and by state or sub-region. For example, representatives from larger and wealthier states expressed a greater degree of distrust of UN peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, whereas participants from less developed states expressed a more sanguine view of UN intervention generally and tended to demand more intervention or assistance, rather than less.

Peacekeeping Operations

The Brahimi Report is being analyzed at an opportune moment, as it encourages the UN to take advantage of the lesson from recent negative experiences of complex operations, especially in Rwanda and Srebrenica. However, this is seen as a political response to recent disasters that seeks to highlight and correct the operational problems that were partially responsible. Thus, the Report operates simultaneously on two fronts: first, that of real world conflicts and the practical question of how to reduce or resolve them; and, second, that of the UN's own political logic. The Report was written and is being assessed as an internal document; therefore, the reform effort remains within the UN's political parameters. It does not present novel ideas -- most of the operational reforms have already been proposed in the past few years. UN officials and member states will analyze and implement the Report's proposals according to the logic of what is politically feasible. For example, the recommendation that

Security Council mandates be "clear, credible, and achievable" overlooks the fact that ambiguity is often built into mandates as a result of the complicated political dynamic of the Security Council, which is composed of states with diverse interests.

One recurring opinion was that the selectiveness of the Security Council in deciding which conflicts to respond to and with what kinds of resources undermines the goal of guaranteeing international peace and security. It is obviously very difficult for the Security Council to take measures that challenge powerful countries, as was seen in the delay in deploying the East Timor operation in the face of opposition from Indonesia. And participants considered it unacceptable that there should be sufficient political will to pull together resources for operations in Europe but not in Congo. In this regard, participants viewed with concern the resistance of developed countries to contributing troops for UN operations.

Members of this group noted a negative reaction to the Brahimi Report from other regions, which they attributed to the opposition generated by the concept of humanitarian intervention and suspicions aroused by an increase in the Secretary-General's autonomy. They considered that the majority of Latin American countries did not share this negative reaction, because Latin Americans generally do not have the same distrust of UN intervention as is evident in other regions. One participant strongly disagreed with this assertion. Nonetheless, several found the notion of an "imposition of peace," which was implicit in many of the Report's proposals, to be very worrying, and insisted that any such intention be made explicit and be subjected to a complete analysis.

Participants considered efforts to strengthen the UN to be valuable. They especially supported efforts to increase the UN's capacity in conflict prevention, emphasizing that preventive measures must focus on attacking the causes of conflict rather than the symptoms in order to prevent it from recurring or spreading. The demand for UN involvement in conflict prevention and resolution is growing, because the parties in conflict recognize their incapacity to resolve the situation by their own means. The fact that they are resorting to the UN for assistance reveals heightened

expectations of the organization's capacity to promote peaceful resolution of internal conflict, and these will have to be met.

Finally, participants were strongly in agreement with the recommendation to reduce the time lag between adopting a Security Council resolution and implementing it. Time lags provide an opportunity for spoilers to find ways to undermine peace agreements. The most useful tool for increasing the speed of UN peacekeeping responses is development of stand-by agreements. Participants viewed positively the recommendation to increase the autonomy of Special Representatives of the Secretary General in the field, especially with regard to administrative and budgeting functions. Special Representatives should be able to implement economic projects of immediate impact as a means of reducing the pernicious effects of the time lag between resolution and deployment. This point was reiterated in the plenary session, with the additional comment that the Report's proposal to include funds allocated for small, immediate impact development projects in an operation's peacekeeping budget would create a propitious climate for the operation. Further, it is all the more important to fund quick-impact projects as a conflict management measure where violence has not yet broken out. This would be a truly cost-effective initiative for conflict prevention.

Peace-Building

The meeting was enriched by the presence of several participants with personal experience in peace-building operations, particularly in Central America. They noted three main areas of fundamental concern in mission design, deployment, and conduct in the field.

First, they found a lack of effective coordination among the international agencies involved in peace-building activities, often leading to waste and fragmentation of human and financial resources. Coordination needs to be improved throughout the entire peace process, from prevention of incipient conflict to resolution of ongoing conflict and to post-conflict peace-building. The construction of peace must be based on an integrated understanding of what causes conflict, with special attention given to the socioeconomic dimensions.

Second, the mechanisms for post-mission follow up and continued monitoring are unclear. They fail to specify properly who is responsible for ensuring implementation of the accords after the mission's withdrawal, and how they should go about it.

Finally, they found that the missions' coordination with local actors and institutions was insufficient. Mission leadership should identify the local actors whose activities could be coordinated in partnership with the UN throughout the peace-building process, for example through the creation of mechanisms for institutional cooperation.

To address these concerns, they recommended, first and foremost, that peace-building activities should be financed from UN's regular budget.

Responding to the Report's proposal for an Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS), participants concurred that such a unit is vitally important for peace-building operations, as well as for conflict prevention, and that it should also be financed from the regular peacekeeping budget. Along these same lines, they agreed that "lessons learned" units should be strengthened.

Approaching the problem of peace from an integrated perspective, they recommended that UNDP and other agencies for social and economic development should have a much greater role in peace-building. Peace-building should be defined to include activities designed to address the root causes of conflict in order to prevent violence from recurring in the future.

To address the weakness of mission coordination with local actors, participants recommended that, in general, peace-building in the field should follow a framework of maximum decentralization and horizontal coordination. Mechanisms should be created to encourage multisectoral coordination of civic organizations, legislative officials, political parties, and the judiciary. These civil sectors should be given greater responsibility for monitoring the implementation of peace accords. This was attempted in Guatemala, but the mechanisms established for civil society monitoring were ultimately weakened and undermined in the domestic political process of implementation.

In the area of doctrinal and strategic concerns, the emphasis has to be placed on the sustainability of peace-building. For example, maximum effort should be made to prevent peace missions from becoming substitutes for national institutions, not only because this harms the development of healthy local institutions, but also because a multilateral operation is only in the country temporarily. The focus during the operation must remain on establishing and building the capacities of national institutions.

Specific actions that could be taken in this area include conducting an integrated analysis at the outset of the operation of the socioeconomic conditions that impede human development and incorporating where available analyses already produced by local organizations or think tanks. Second, the mission should conduct an inventory of national academic and other civic organizations, with the intent to utilize and strengthen existing capacities. UN agencies should include local academic networks and specialists (where appropriate) in project development. The mission office responsible for institution building should focus on developing training programs for civic organizations, legislative representatives, and political parties. Priority areas for capacity building are advocacy training for non-governmental organizations and training in negotiation and conflict resolution techniques. Another priority area is the establishment of civilian police training programs and development of strategic relations between police academies and academic and other civic organizations. The UN should place special emphasis on recruiting women for the civilian police units.

Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Of the three sections, "prevention of conflict" is the least well defined in the Brahimi Report. Several participants found this ironic, as the Secretary-General himself has stated that he considers conflict prevention to be the cornerstone of collective security in the 21st century. The Report addressed conflict prevention through an endorsement of the Secretary-General's use of fact-finding missions. However, members of this group concluded that the proposal to create an Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS) that would evaluate information from the field and

maintain a data management system is a more consistent and powerful measure to identify and prevent the outbreak of conflict. The discussion revolved around four major themes:

Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS)

For purposes of conflict prevention, the main advance in the Brahimi Report is in the proposal to create an Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) information analysis system. Most participants in this group agreed that such a unit is crucial if the UN is serious about preventing conflict. Information from UN agency field offices needs a channel that would reach to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Information from the field must be subjected to rigorous analysis, and relevant results must then be accessible to field offices on a need-to-know basis.

It appears that the Secretary-General has since chosen to leave this proposal for “further study,” an indication that some member states are alarmed by its implications. One participant suggested that this is primarily a problem of marketing: the Secretary-General needs to find a way to market the idea to member states in a manner that avoids arousing suspicions and mistrust. Many participants argued that these suspicions are anachronistic holdovers from Cold-War diplomacy, inappropriate under twenty-first century circumstances.

However, other members of the group strongly disagreed, arguing that government resistance to UN intelligence gathering on national territory is quite sensible. They noted several important points that were not clearly specified in the reference to fact-finding missions, such as:

- who would have the power to authorize a UN fact-finding mission (only the Secretary-General, or also the Security Council?);
- what kinds of envoys could be deployed; and
- what mechanisms would ensure that a fact-finding mission was initiated as a first step in a conflict prevention process (and not for some other purpose).

Despite these concerns, the majority of participants from all three groups recommended that an inter-agency task force be created within the Department of Political Affairs that would house a data analysis unit. Such a unit would enforce inter-agency cooperation on information sharing and strategic planning, from first warning through to conflict management and peace-building.

Capacity Building in the Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

The fact that the focus of the Brahimi Report is on operational and logistical reforms may reveal an underlying wariness of the political nature of conflict resolution. Members of the group suggested that there is a general fear among smaller states that conflict prevention connotes “humanitarian intervention” (understood as a euphemism for great power intervention), and, furthermore, that conflict prevention measures would be imposed by the Security Council based on inherently political selection criteria.

The open-ended mechanism of “good offices” of the Secretary-General is a useful tool for inserting the UN as third party mediator – where invited by the parties in conflict – but it is not a reliable tool for defusing potential conflict or for emergency crisis management. In order to deal with incipient conflict prior to the eruption of violence, the Department of Political Affairs must develop the ability to act proactively rather than reactively. DPA requires the capacity to analyze situations and respond with a menu of effective diplomatic measures. There have been several examples of effective UN action of this sort in Latin America, such as the initiation of dialogue between governments and opposition groups or among opposition groups, and the use of special envoys without official or specific mandates, as in Colombia. These are inexpensive, discreet, and deployed quietly without fanfare.

Participants also noted that the reactive nature of UN operations is in many ways the result of the principle not to intervene without the express invitation of all parties to the conflict. Since the UN is normally restrained from acting until requested, cases of UN action are usually those worst-case scenarios in which

UN peacekeeping is a desperate solution, and the situation has gone beyond the point at which preventive measures could be attempted.

It was often commented upon that DPA has a single unit covering both Western Europe and Latin America, with only one officer covering the Andean countries. The overall weakness in staffing and expertise, at least with regard to Latin America, clearly prevents DPA from developing a role in conflict prevention or management. This deficit must be resolved despite ongoing budgetary constraints. Unfortunately, operational and logistical adjustments to peacekeeping operations are far easier to justify to auditors, because they respond to quantifiable problems such as numbers of troops per officer and materiel requirements. Structural adjustments to the Department of Political Affairs, on the other hand, respond to political needs and obstacles, which do not lend themselves easily to quantitative measurement.

Partly in order to address this problem, it was recommended that DPA contribute to strengthening non-governmental and academic policy institutes, taking advantage of the growth of such institutes in recent years, particularly in Latin America. DPA could only benefit by including such analysis in its decision-making processes.

Regional Organizations and Cooperation

A strong contingent argued that regional organizations should have an important role in conflict prevention. They noted that the Brahimi Report does not speak to the issue of strengthening regional organizations' capacity in preventive diplomacy. Citing Latin America's tradition of intra-regional cooperation on issues threatening regional security, they recommended enhanced coordination at the Secretariat level between the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS), and cooperation especially at the planning stages for operations that would involve troop contributions from Latin American states.

In fact, many of these cooperative, rather than collective, security arrangements do not involve the OAS, which has historically been perceived as a projection of United States policy. The past decade has seen the

establishment of a variety of creative, flexible, nontraditional forms of regional cooperation on security issues, such as Argentine-Brazilian joint military exercises, the revitalized Rio Group, the hemispheric defense ministers' summits ("Williamsburg process"), and the efforts to form a Southern Cone Center for Conflict Resolution. Discourse at these forums has become increasingly cooperative, they have provided a channel for the sharing of strategic information, and have generally increased confidence among the region's militaries.

Although regional organizations have neither the resources nor the mandate to substitute for the UN, the OAS has developed the capacity to complement UN action. In the past decade the OAS has played an important role in the demobilization, training, and reintegration of former combatants in Nicaragua, promoted cooperation on demobilization and disarmament in other cases, increased the transparency of regional military budgets, and engaged in electoral observation. The UN has taken advantage of OAS human resources and expertise, for example by recruiting OAS staff for UN field operations in Latin America. Many post-conflict activities, such as demining in Central America, are feasible uses of OAS resources and are best undertaken by a regional or sub-regional organization because, while UN operations are of limited duration, Latin American organizations continue to be involved in the country. Regional organizations are also best suited to dealing with the major sources of ongoing conflict, such as arms and drugs trafficking. With major arms producers having permanent seats in the Security Council, the problem of arms trafficking is not likely to be resolved at the UN.

However, it was noted that UN and OAS integration in peacekeeping operations (in Haiti and Nicaragua) is extremely complicated and has had very mixed results. The OAS was not organized to develop the capacity to deploy field missions. If future cooperation in peace operations is envisioned, the division of labor will have to be more clearly specified. Further, increasing the role of the OAS in regional security action is not a solution to the perceived undemocratic nature of UN operations, as more powerful Latin American states will continue to dominate their weaker neighbors in a

regional organization. A regional or sub-regional organization is in many cases even more likely than the UN to be perceived as partial to one side of a conflict, because of the geographic proximity of member states. A regional organization has access to even fewer resources for expensive operations than the UN. Finally, arguments to increase the role of regional organizations are often used as a pretext for reducing UN expenditures or for failing to take decisive action at the global level.

The United Nations Security Council alone can authorize a military or quasi-military response to a threat to peace and security. It is a mistake to think of the sub-regional, regional, and international security agencies as if they could operate like a coordinated modular system, with sub-regional groups acting in a synchronized fashion with the OAS, which is ultimately synchronized with UN operations. These mechanisms are not structurally coordinated because they were established and developed in an ad hoc manner, responding to circumstances, and regional leaders are clearly not comfortable with closer coordination. Organizational responses should be invoked that are most appropriate to the situation, for example, in a case where Latin American governments are unwilling to resort to the OAS because they perceive the US as a threat, they should convoke the Rio Group and invite the Canadians to participate.

Concerns about UN Intervention to Prevent or Resolve Conflict

Preventive diplomacy is key to the future of conflict resolution, but participants noted that the UN's record of involvement in conflict situations is mixed. When the UN seeks to mediate in an open and public fashion, it runs the risk of internationalizing a conflict that might have been maintained domestically. The conflict then becomes the responsibility of the international

community, involves a variety of outside actors, and the situation becomes transformed into something even more complex. UN involvement in the Colombian peace process has been effective precisely because the representative maintains a low profile, is endorsed by the Secretary-General and present at the request of the parties, but has no formal mandate or agreement. In this way the UN is able to actively participate without giving the appearance of international intervention.

Conclusion

The Brahimi Report addresses operational adjustments, which must be resolved but does not or cannot speak to the political challenges the UN must confront in order to fulfill its core mission of maintaining international peace. These challenges are inherent in an organization of member states with diverse interests and become especially acute and visible in an era of increasing demand for UN peace services. Political obstacles are greatly exacerbated by the continuing budgetary restrictions. If this meeting produced any consensus of opinion, it was that requiring the UN to pursue actions that are part of its mainstream mission without permitting incremental growth of its budget undermines the effort and the organization's purpose.

The current process of reforming UN peace operations comes at an especially propitious moment in UN history. The process is being shepherded by a relatively popular Secretary-General, which lends the Brahimi recommendations a great deal of political capital and increases their chances for survival. Latin America has the advantage in this process of having had only good experiences with UN peacekeeping operations, especially as compared to African states. Many talented and experienced staffers from the region have worked in UN operations, and regional governments have a vested interest in improving the UN's effectiveness in this core area.

ASIA Meeting

Singapore, 26-27 February 2001

Executive Summary

On 26-27 February 2001, representatives of states, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia from the various sub-regions of Asia gathered in Singapore to discuss the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report) and the role of the UN in peace and security in the region.

- The overall assessment of the UN's role in peacekeeping was positive. Reservations were expressed about the UN's success in peacebuilding, however, where it should be doing more. By contrast, with the exception of the good offices of the Secretary-General, the UN was seen as having little formal role to play in prevention, where the preference was for local institutions and bilateral arrangements.
- Concern was expressed about the lack of involvement of Asian states in decision-making on peacekeeping. In addition to the larger question of representation on the Security Council, participants were concerned that, though the region contributes a large proportion of UN peacekeepers, it has little formal role in the establishment of mandates.
- The primary function of regional organizations in Asia is in the economic sphere, though this may provide the basis for developing confidence-building measures and establishing networks for preventive diplomacy. A majority of participants saw such organizations as having little or no formal role to play in peacekeeping operations, at least for the time being.
- Local actors should play a more active role in UN peace operations, particularly complex operations. East Timor in its later stages is seen as a relatively successful example of such engagement.
- The bedrock principles of peacekeeping – consent of local parties, impartiality, and the use of force



Dr. Shepard Forman, Dr. David Malone, Dr. Simon Tay, Ms. Hisako Shimura and Mr. José Ramos-Horta at the Singapore meeting.

only in self-defense – remain an important part of peacekeeping. Nevertheless, impartiality should be seen in terms of the fair application of a mandate, and not as an excuse for moral equivalence.

- The UN must do more to improve the quality of its personnel – both in terms of improving its internal recruitment mechanisms, and its relations with experts and local actors in the field. Failure to do so not only hinders the chances of success in a particular operation; it undermines the credibility of the UN more generally.

Report

Regional Perspectives

A preliminary question was whether it makes sense to talk of an “Asian” perspective in international affairs, when that term embraces such a large proportion of the world’s population and such diverse cultures. Although most participants agreed that there is no such thing as a single “Asian” perspective, a few themes developed over the course of the seminar that reflect attitudes broadly held across the region.

There was disappointment that the voice of Asia is not used more constructively in the United Nations. On the contrary, it is sometimes associated with obstructionism. Some participants argued that this was due to the lack of ownership Asians feel over international institutions and the dominance of “Western values” in

the work of the UN. There was some dissatisfaction concerning the low number of Asians represented at senior levels of the UN and the lack of influence of troop contributing countries (including many Asian states). When a region is contributing a substantial number of troops to UN missions, it was argued, those states should have a say in the planning of the operations.

The importance of consultation and consensus in decision-making was stressed repeatedly. Many Asians are suspicious of institutions that are susceptible to power, particularly when such institutions are used by powerful states when it suits them, but disregarded when these states find them inconvenient. NATO's action in Kosovo was seen as an example of this. When institutions formalize inequality, a common reaction is to disregard them.

This sense of marginalization reinforces several perspectives already prevalent in Asia. The first is a widespread wariness of trends that compromise the traditional rights and privileges of sovereignty. Many participants emphasized the principle of non-intervention and the importance of the consent of the targeted states in UN peacekeeping operations.

The preference for a limited role for the United Nations in Asia was a sub-text throughout the conference. In discussion on the case studies of Aceh and Sri Lanka, there was little consideration of any formal role for the UN. This is an important message for the UN leadership, indicating that it should be humble in assuming a lead role in all conflicts and selective when deciding in which conflicts it should become actively engaged.

At the same time, the involvement of the UN may have political consequences. In intra-state conflicts in particular, non-state actors (such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the Acehese in Indonesia) may desire UN intervention, while states reject it as an infringement on their sovereignty.

In preventing and resolving such intra-state conflicts, the role of regional organizations such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was emphasized far more than that of the UN.

There was broad consensus that regional organizations have a vital role to play in confidence-building measures and conflict prevention. ASEAN, for example, with its focus on dialogue and reconciliation is seen as an important tool in creating stability through economic integration. Even though ASEAN has no immediate aspirations to conduct peacekeeping operations, it provides important mechanisms for cooperation and dialogue that can be developed further and may be tapped into by the UN.

There was some division on the appropriateness of regional organizations playing a lead role in peacekeeping operations. Some participants viewed the UN as the only legitimate body to authorize a peacekeeping operation, while others disputed whether the UN was capable of fulfilling that role in practice and favored the expansion of the mandates of regional organizations. For the time being, it is unlikely that regional organizations in Asia would assert a role in peacekeeping operations comparable to that of ECOWAS in West Africa or NATO in Europe. Nevertheless, it was recognized that the experience of ECOWAS and the European Union (EU) showed that economic integration might lead to greater political integration. Such integration may lay the foundations for lasting and durable peace in the region.

In addition to the importance of UN cooperation with regional actors, there was broad agreement that collaboration between the UN and local partners is essential for success, particularly in complex operations. Such operations need the trust and expertise of local actors. The UN cannot substitute for this sort of engagement. Having a sense of ownership over developments is essential in order for local actors to cooperate with UN staff and to play their part constructively. This will in turn add legitimacy to an operation. This was seen as a relatively successful element of the later stages of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

Peacekeeping, Peace-Building, and Conflict Prevention

There was broad support for maintaining what the Brahimi Report refers to as the "bedrock principles of peacekeeping": consent of the local parties,

impartiality, and the use of force only in self-defense. These were seen as particularly important in the context of “traditional” peacekeeping operations, but there was a diversity of views on whether they should apply to other operations authorized by the Security Council.

The question of impartiality gave rise to discussion over the extent to which United Nations forces should remain impartial in the face of a deteriorating security situation, particularly if one group is acting as a “spoiler.” On the one hand, it was argued that the need for impartial peacekeeping should not translate into moral equivalence on the ground. A peacekeeping force should see impartiality as applying to the implementation of the force’s mandate – if one group is acting contrary to an agreement that provides the basis of that mandate, it is not a violation of impartiality to take action to ensure that such a group is brought into line. On the other hand, one participant suggested that the UN’s involvement in Somalia was compromised precisely because of its departure from the traditional principles of impartiality, leading it to fight battles for which it was neither authorized nor prepared.

If the UN does not deal with spoilers by force, how should it deal with them? Here, there was some consideration of the use of economic sanctions, and of selective amnesties – particularly in light of the Cambodian experience of dealing with the Khmer Rouge during and after the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). Participants were pragmatic in their assessment of the value of trading such amnesties for peace.

There was broad support for the argument made in the Brahimi Report that the proper aim of a UN peace operation should be the creation of a lasting foundation for peace, rather than the absence of war. The UN has been relatively successful in traditional peacekeeping operations but needs to do far more in the area of peace-building.

In order to fulfill the increased expectations of the UN in peace and security, it was accepted that greater resources are required. In particular, there was much sympathy for the Brahimi Report’s recommendations

on strengthening the quantity and quality of Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) personnel.

Some frustration was expressed concerning the slow speed and, on occasion, low quality of recruitment for UNTAET. Participants criticized the internal conflicts between the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and DPKO that led to experienced personnel from the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) not being recruited for the following UNTAET operation. There was also concern that the failure of the UN to consult with outside experts when starting a complex operation such as UNTAET unnecessarily delayed the effective use of the substantial resources devoted to the problem. In addition, where it is necessary to train staff on the job, it makes more sense to train people from the region who will remain there than to train international staff who will leave.

The UN faces understandable difficulties when attempting to start up complex operations. One reason is that the politicized nature of Security Council decision-making may lead to only a few days’ notice of such operations. Nevertheless, at least some of these difficulties might be avoided if the UN provided greater resources in reserve and established closer partnerships and networks with groups that might provide expertise to facilitate planning complex operations. At the same time, it was suggested that having an entire police force standing by was neither an efficient nor a realistic way to use limited UN resources.

The failure of the Brahimi Report to deal with conflict prevention was duly noted. Two reasons were given for this: (i) the view that preventive diplomacy is better undertaken by member states rather than the UN; (ii) the fact that the UN has been relatively unsuccessful in prevention, in contrast to its relative success in peacekeeping operations (particularly in the Asian region).

As indicated above, there was some reluctance to accept a formal role for the UN in conflict prevention, though the informal use of the Secretary-General’s good offices was seen as both important and appropriate. Heads of state often play the most effective role in prevention in the Asian region and to

some extent, the Secretary-General's role mimics this. The benefits of such an approach is that it is flexible and discreet; the downside is that it is entirely dependent on personal characteristics of the individual concerned and may not establish institutional knowledge that can be used by future office-holders.

Reform of UN Peace Operations

In discussions on the details of the Brahimi Report, one preliminary question was whether it was appropriate to call its many recommendations "technical." Some participants suggested that the Report should have gone further than mere technical recommendations; others suggested that it disguises fundamental challenges to the UN Charter as "technical" changes.

Technical and political changes may go hand in hand, however. The recommendations concerning the Secretary-General's relations with the Security Council, for example, might be seen as technical but have highly political consequences for relations between these two institutions. In addition, some of the technical problems in planning and coordination exacerbate political tensions and create barriers to effective deployment of UN resources.

The formation of Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs) was seen as a promising step in overcoming these problems. Concern was expressed, however, as to whether an IMTF would have the authority to

challenge the Security Council over a mandate that was regarded as uncertain or unworkable.

There was broad recognition that the Brahimi Report focused primarily on one aspect of the United Nations' role in peace and security: peacekeeping. One participant likened this to a report on improving surgical techniques, which did not address in detail preventive medicine or post-operative care.

In discussion of the case studies of East Timor and Cambodia, the UN was given a broadly positive assessment of its overall performance. Nevertheless, it was suggested that these conflicts exhibited some of the problems that the Brahimi Report seeks to rectify. East Timor, for example, was a clear case of the UN operating on "best-case" scenarios in the lead-up to the August 1999 popular consultation, when the Indonesian military was entrusted with providing security.

Conclusion

A news report in the *Straits Times* the day after the meeting reflected the overriding concern of the meeting that there should be a greater connection among those who plan peace operations, those who implement them, and those who are the intended beneficiaries. Countries that provide troops for peacekeeping operations should have a greater say in the formation of mandates if they are to be carried out effectively; local actors should be engaged from the outset if such operations are to have any chance of lasting success.

EUROPE Meeting

London, 6 March 2001

Executive Summary

- **Europe** – Europe can and does have an important role to play in enhancing military, civilian, and police capacity in UN peacekeeping operations and in moving forward the process instigated by the Brahimi Report.
- **Conflict prevention** – While there is a wealth of early-warning information and indicators, strategic analysis is still a problem, as is the will and ability to engage.
- **Rule of law** – It is crucial that the initial phase of a peace support operation be managed properly and the security vacuum filled at the outset. Planning should include all elements essential to strengthen the rule of law and enforce compliance. Experience has shown that international tribunals need to be engaged from an early stage, a more robust approach needs to be taken to past atrocities, and an interim international criminal code should be developed.
- The **human rights dimension** has not been fully integrated into international operations in the institutional sense. Human rights are not static and need to be factored into the process from the beginning.
- **Police** - peace support operations need civilian police (CIVPOL) trained specifically for such operations. A form of gendarmerie should be utilized, when appropriate. CIVPOL should also be involved in training and initial deployment.
- **Military** – Missions need to have a clear and robust mandate, backed by unambiguous political will. The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) initiative should be viewed more as a menu of rapid reaction capabilities than a cohesive force. It consists of existing forces, repackaged to European priorities, not new military forces.

- **Personnel** - In the pre-mission planning stage, there is a need for well-prepared human resources. The ability to hire and fire needs to be more flexible.
- **Intelligence and information** - The synergy between intelligence and information analysis needs to be carefully defined and managed. Communication and information flow with the local population needs to be improved.
- **NGOs** - NGOs should be part of the planning process from the initial stages and should form part of the operation throughout.
- **Regional capacity** - The importance of regional involvement at all stages of an operation was underlined as was the need to strengthen regional institutions.
- **Developing countries** have expressed real fears related to some of the Report's recommendations. This needs to be explored and there is a need to build consensus.

Report

Introduction

The purpose of the London conference was to develop concrete recommendations, from a European perspective, for the implementation of the Brahimi Report. High-level military and civilian experts from European institutions, organizations, and UN member states addressed issues of public security and the rule of law, and how these can contribute to conflict prevention and peace-building by the United Nations. The conference was organized in four chronological sessions in order to incorporate the multiplicity of actors involved at each state of a conflict. The first session focused on conflict prevention efforts in the "outbreak of conflict" stage. The second examined the critical components necessary for establishing a mission. The third underlined key issues that need to be addressed during the various, complex, and overlapping transitions that occur throughout peace operations: from military to police and from international to national. The fourth and final session

incorporated the human rights dimension and summarized recommendations.

There was a strong general consensus that the momentum for the implementation of the Brahimi Report must not be lost and follow-up to this and other regional meetings was essential. For those who had attended seminars and conferences about the UN and UN reform, however, there was a strong sense of *déjà vu* about many of the principal conclusions arrived at in the course of the day. This does not, of course, invalidate them, but it demonstrates how hard it is in the UN context to make changes that, on paper at least, often appear straightforward and self-evident.

Summary of Proceedings

Europe

Europe and its main institutions have an important role to play in moving forward the process instigated by the Brahimi Report. The European Union, along with organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and NATO, need closer coordination. Europe needs to demonstrate that it has political coherence in order to improve peace operations. At the same time, Europe should also show humility – it is not the only actor and is not considered by all member states to be at the forefront of peace operations. Moreover, the UN should remain the focal point and lead for peace operations in order to avoid charges of colonialism. Europe can and does play a role in enhancing military, civilian, and police capacity in developing countries. The focus of European involvement, however, will continue to be the Balkans, as Europe will not be able to act on the world stage of peacemaking and peacekeeping unless it achieves results in its own backyard.

Conflict Prevention

While there is a wealth of information, early warning indicators, and various forms of analyses, centralized strategic analysis is still a problem, as is the will and ability for engagement. Conflict prevention efforts have improved, with the focus now on the prevention of recurrent violent conflict. There should be a seamless transition to peace-building, with the desired

end-state a different one than that encountered before the conflict. Issues of political reconstruction need to be addressed in order to prevent the situation on the ground returning to the status quo ante. Clarity of the end-state is therefore important (as in East Timor), although obtaining such clarity may not always be possible for political reasons (as in Kosovo).

Rule of Law

The first few days of a peace support operation can set the stage for the rest of the mission. It is crucial that this initial phase be managed properly, and that the security vacuum be filled to avoid criminal elements taking over. Planning should include all elements essential to rebuild a democratic and accountable society, in particular, elements necessary to strengthen the rule of law and enforce compliance:

- An *international criminal code* should be developed as a base line. Past experience shows that competing national models for judicial reform, legal drafting, or penal reform have to be avoided. A vital contribution of the Brahimi Report is the call for the application of elements of criminal procedures from countries rather than a wholesale model of law. Lessons learned, for example from Cambodia, are that the early and speedy drafting of a constitution and criminal code provides an essential base for the development of future legislation and judicial processes. Also, it is critical to address atrocities of the past, war crimes, and crimes against humanity at an early stage.
- *International tribunals* need to be engaged at the outset of international involvement. This is underlined by the initial difficulties faced by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). It is vital that the international community not tolerate certain crimes, respond robustly, and not allow for an amnesty (as was the case in Sierra Leone). However, a fine political balance needs to be struck, as a focus on justice and the introduction of a basic law can be a blunt instrument, used for revenge as well as justice. Applied at the wrong time, it can intensify fear and distrust. Legal prosecutions can have profound political ramifications.

- *Financial resources* need to be increased, and procedures within the UN need to be simplified to facilitate faster, more flexible, and more efficient access to resources. This would enable missions to fulfill an increasing range of unorthodox tasks, such as rebuilding prisons and police stations. For example, the UN General Assembly should allow for easy access to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
- *International security forces* must fill the power vacuum, and the military may have to take on certain policing functions. The military should be trained to perform certain essential policing roles, while international police should improve their capacity to deploy with the military in order to deal with law and order issues from the beginning. Joint training of police and military should be encouraged, while the UN and Europe could enhance the readiness of the police by making available start-up kits and personnel.
- The *human rights dimension* has not been fully integrated into international operations. There is a distinct gap between rhetoric and reality. Thought should be given to the development of an interim justice package, while at the same time being aware of the risk in past operations of imposing sometimes conflicting country models. In addition, the Secretary-General himself should be less prone to lobbying from governments when dealing with issues of serious human rights abuses.

Police

Missions need police personnel trained specifically for the various functions required in peace support operations.

- The possibility of creating a standing international police force, though expensive, should be explored.

- A form of *gendarmerie* should be utilized, when appropriate, while recognizing that they such police need to be deployed in full units and can perform only certain functions.

Military

Differences exist between European and US troops in respect to policing and military roles.

- Missions need to have a clear and robust mandate, backed by unambiguous political will. Indeed, the absence of proper mandates and political will should automatically trigger questions about the viability of a mission. Security arrangements need to be made for the period following the withdrawal of the UN.
- To date, the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) initiative is struggling with institutions and the political authority under which forces might be deployed. The ESDP consists of existing forces, repackaged to European priorities, not new military forces. The European Rapid Reaction Force aims to have key elements in place towards the end of the Belgian presidency of the European Union, to assume full capability by 2003. It should be viewed more as a menu of rapid reaction capabilities than a cohesive force. While civilian aspects will be established quickly, the military aspect is in need of further development. The headquarters staff will remain small (half the size of NATO's) and it will not be involved in operational level planning. The European unit could become part of the rapid response unit in the UN in those situations defined under the Petersberg tasks¹, which are seen as having worldwide applicability. It will be limited operationally to the lower end of the spectrum of Petersberg tasks for the next five to ten years unless NATO planning is involved through SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), or through the national planning headquarters in the UK and France. Once established it should provide support to operational capacity in other parts of the world.

¹The Petersberg tasks (agreed to at the West European Union Council of Ministers on 19 June 1992), incorporated in Article 17-2 of the Amsterdam (consolidated) Treaty of the European Union, are the three types of missions in which military forces of WEU member countries could be engaged: humanitarian intervention and evacuation programmes; peacekeeping; and the use of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

Personnel

UN forces and civilian personnel should be expected to perform to the highest standards of the Charter. The quality of staff has a profound impact on the relationship with the local population.

- In the pre-mission planning stage, there is a need for well-prepared human resources. Poor quality of staff in operations reflects negatively on the integrity of the system. Standby arrangements need to be made with member states. Specific personnel requirements need to target a plethora of tasks, including clearly defined civil administration skills, such as banking regulations, immigration, customs, and correctional services. These administrative and police personnel should be ready to be deployed to a mission, similar to the military, and need not be prohibitively expensive.
- The Secretary-General's Special Representatives and other mission staff should be chosen on merit and not according to national quotas. The ability to hire and fire needs to be more flexible. It has been evident for some time now that UN recruitment practices are outdated and in serious need of radical rethinking.

Intelligence and Information

The synergy between intelligence and information analysis and dissemination needs to be defined.

- When fighting organized crime, support should be given to indigenous organizations that have an understanding of the problem but may be unable or afraid to approach the problem on their own.
- Former peacekeeping operations lacked an intelligence capability. One way to address this is through a clearly defined and managed intelligence capacity, developing a means of coordinating and drawing together available information and sources of information, and developing proper legitimate means of guiding information.
- Communication and information flow with the local population needs to be improved. The

message concerning the purpose of the mission has to be clear and unambiguous. Local information services should be kept simple and effective and be produced in formats compatible with local electronic and print media.

- Public information is distinct from a media and information operation. There is an underlying problem of quality and orientation of spokespeople and information staff. Greater journalistic skill is required to communicate to a wide and varied public. The UN tendency to manage from New York, using the "long screwdriver" is counterproductive. Public information must be kept separate from any military based propaganda.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In complex emergencies eighty percent of humanitarian activities are undertaken by some eight NGOs. One participant pled not to confuse the "froth with substance." NGOs should be part of the planning process from the initial stages and should form part of the operation throughout. Mechanisms could then be introduced to ensure high standards for all humanitarian actors. At the same time donors should exercise responsibility over funding NGO involvement. Criteria must be developed for joining NGOs, IGOs, and the civilian and security elements of an operation. Furthermore, any donor strategy needs to pay more attention to local NGOs and the empowerment of civil society.

Regional Capacity

The importance of regional involvement at all stages of an operation was underlined, as is the need to strengthen regional institutions. This has diplomatic and strategic ramifications.

Training

There is a need to impose a stronger sense of institutional memory within the UN system by developing comprehensive manuals, codes of conduct, rosters, training, approaches to organized crime, and a common language.

Respect for UN Charter

Recognizing that no two operations are alike, and that it is not possible to have a generic blueprint for operations, it is nevertheless important to develop generic guidelines, based on the UN Charter.

Concerns of Developing Countries

The Brahimi Report inspired a variety of forums and discussions around the world. The momentum for the Report's recommendations must not be lost. But there is a need to build more consensus by exploring and focusing on the concerns of the developing countries who have expressed very real fears and disagreements related to some of the Report's recommendations.

- The wealthy industrial countries must recognize the real fears that exist in the third world. Four important issues were identified for consideration addressing these concerns:
 - **Selectivity.** There is a perception in many parts of the world that the first world is partial in its selection of countries in which to become involved. Many developing countries argue that the richer countries apply double standards. There should therefore be consistency. When Africans argue that the US and Europe take human rights violations more seriously in other parts of the world than in Africa, they have a point. The definition of human rights should be that of the UN and not that of the US; it should incorporate not only civil and political rights, but also social, economic, and cultural rights, with an emphasis on the right to development.
 - **Europe.** Concerning European support for the Brahimi recommendations, resources and efforts invested in active engagement abroad could be done in isolation if Europe does not

attempt to include other countries. European efforts should therefore cohere with UN efforts. Preferably they should be subsumed within the UN to ensure international acceptance.

- **Overlap and waste of resources.** European institutions and governments should monitor their involvement, commitments and resources invested in UN operations and other activities related to peacekeeping. There is no need for any operation to start from scratch since there is a wealth of experience. Rosters of potential experienced personnel could be made available, codes of conduct have been used in other operations, and training programs could easily be adapted. Again, there is ample knowledge and experience in Europe. Member states should also trust their representatives to carry out the job that they have been tasked to do, and not micro-manage the process. The Secretary-General and his representatives should have autonomy to act on behalf of member states without interference.

- **Quality personnel.** Increased emphasis should be placed on competence and experience. A more transparent system of hiring experienced representatives would inspire greater trust among member states concerning activities in the field. A vigorous selection process should include all international staff, not just the top layer.

Conclusion

The conference engendered a high-level discussion on many issues contained in the Brahimi Report, as well as others that went beyond the Report's recommendations. Participants expressed the desire to continue discussions on this topic and were invited by DFID to submit suggestions for future activities in order to keep discussions of the Brahimi Report and its recommendations alive.

APPENDIX: Participants in Regional Meetings

Johannesburg, 21-22 February 2001

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