Managing Global Insecurity MGI

Managing Civil Violence & Regional Conflict
A Managing Global Insecurity Brief

MAY 2008

"America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."

<div align="right">The National Security Strategy, 2003, p. 1</div>

The Threat of Violent Conflict and Failed States

Fragile states are both cause and manifestation of a breakdown in international order. States that cannot maintain the rule-of-law or provide for the well-being of their citizens are closely associated with civil violence and amplify the risk of transnational threats such as terrorism and deadly infectious disease. Civil violence often crosses borders and draws regional and international actors into its vortex. Today's cases – Afghanistan, Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, and Lebanon – demonstrate the consequences: lives lost, many more futures diminished, regional rivalries inflamed, and the credibility of international institutions in doubt. Moreover, the failure of the international system to manage violent conflict is only magnified by the apparent weaknesses in halting large-scale human rights abuses or even mass killings – as we have been witnessing in Darfur.

The indicators about what lies ahead are worrying. A number of large, populous countries face risks of serious political instability (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia) or institutional collapse (Nigeria), with enormous economic, humanitarian and security implications spreading beyond their own borders. The international system lacks an effective mechanism either for promptly addressing the underlying sources of such instability, or for identifying and proactively responding to potential triggers. Similarly, several conflicts in the Middle East are increasingly linked to one another – sectarian and terrorist violence in Iraq, Iran's perceived rise in the region, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the internal Palestinian conflict, and Lebanon's struggle against Syrian influence – posing new challenges to regional and international security.

At the same time, the growth of peacekeeping over the last decade has stretched it to the breaking point, and has not been accompanied by effective peacebuilding, creating the risk that this investment will be squandered. The current demand for peacekeepers has reached an all time high; 180,000 of them serve in more than 20 conflicts. Serious failures in Lebanon or Darfur could result in a loss of credibility and retreat. A major setback in Afghanistan would signal that even the UN and NATO together cannot sustain a major operation in support of a fragile state seeking help to establish a fragile democracy – potentially doing more sustained damage than the Iraq rift.

Responsible Sovereignty. MGI proposes a vision for international cooperation based on the principle of responsible sovereignty. The United States must be seen as acting responsibly to create both confidence in the United States and the willingness on the part of others to reciprocate. It derives from the understanding that it is in adhering to a rule-based international system that the United States gains legitimacy and the ability to seek reciprocal behavior by others. No country will gain more from the protection that derives from a strong international legal regime than the United States.

The rules of conflict between sovereign states are well developed. The responsibility to avoid inter-state war is embedded in the UN Charter itself, calling on states to use peaceful means including adjudication, to resolve disputes, and to avoid the use of force except in self-defense. While the normative responsibility of the international community in internal war is more complex, standards are evolving as encapsulated in the 2005 UN World Summit's *Outcome Document*. UN member states acknowledged that "Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it." The *Responsibility to Protect* further underscored that external actors must bear specific responsibilities: to help States to exercise their responsibilities, build state capacity, and take diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful efforts to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

State-of-Play

Prevention. Stopping governments and potential rebels from starting a war is difficult at the best of times, even for peacemakers more powerful than the UN. Yet, this is one area where regional organizations appear to have a better track record. There are several examples: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe had a role in preventing an outbreak of conflict between Serb and Albanian groups in Macedonia; the European Union helped prevent a conflict in Ukraine; the Commonwealth helped cool off all sides after two coups in Fiji; the Organization of American States helped reverse coups in Latin America; and most recently the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States had a role in reversing coups and preventing conflicts in Guinea and Togo.

<u>Mediation</u>. The UN has been somewhat more successful in mediating civil wars. It is now commonplace for governments, regional organizations, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to rush to resolve a conflict once violence has erupted. As a result, more civil wars have ended through negotiated settlements since the end of the Cold War than in the previous two hundred years. A major compilation of data on such efforts, the Human Security Brief 2006, points to increased international peacekeeping and diplomacy as a reason violent conflicts are on the decline, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This is a greater achievement when recognizing the modest investment in mediation. The UN has been continuously under-resourced to perform its peacemaking function. An illustration: at the 2005 World Summit, 192 member states agreed to the importance of enhancing the Secretary-General's capacity to engage in mediation. That led to the creation of a Mediation Support Unit – with a grand total of 2 staff and 6 consultants.

<u>Peacekeeping</u>. Peacekeeping operations have become an increasingly important tool in the last decade. Not merely a military tool; correctly understood, peacekeeping is an essential platform for broader post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization, or peacebuilding – which has at its core the extension of state authority within an agreed legal framework. Efforts to broker or enforce peace in a number of volatile regions (including the Western Balkans, the West African littoral, the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and the broader Middle East) have resulted in a new generation of peace operations. From January 2000 to January 2007, the number of UN military and police personnel deployed around the world jumped from 18,600 to 82,000, and is set to rise to over 100,000 in 2008. Deployments by regional organizations including NATO, the European Union and the African Union are on an upward trend after a period of gradual decline. In 2006 alone, the number of troops deployed by these organizations leapt from 53,000 to over 70,000.

UN peacekeeping mandates now contain references to the protection of civilians almost as a matter of course. For example, UN forces acted assertively against armed groups in both Haiti and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo with significant successes. However, difficulties arise where peacekeepers are required to act against opponents with a greater potential to fight back. Faced with operating in proximity to Hezbollah, UN member states negotiated hard in the Security Council on their precise rules of engagement before agreeing to deploy. The NATO operation in Afghanistan and the EU force sent to reinforce the UN in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were both hampered by caveats on the use of force and by fear of casualties.

Peacebuilding. UN and broader international peacebuilding operations have recorded some significant successes. But far more frequently they have underperformed. There are policy reasons for this, but more important are the diffuse and ill-coordinated structures, often redundant, used to implement such operations. Until the formal creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, no UN body was formally tasked with coordinating peacebuilding activities across the UN Secretariat, agencies and departments.[1] The Peacebuilding Commission, despite the promise of its name, has at best a soft mandate and limited capacity for its purported function. As of mid 2008, it had engaged only in two pilot countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone.[2]

In large peacekeeping missions, the overall capacity to deliver is often strained – particularly the UN's ability to provide civilian personnel to assist in statebuilding. Out of 4,967 civilian personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations worldwide [year?], only a small number were employed in civilian or governance functions, and only a small fraction of these were recruited explicitly for these skills. The absence of a core capacity to provide rule of law and state-building support to countries emerging from conflict is a critical weakness of the overall conflict management system.

An Effective Response

The growing scale and complexity of peace operations underscore the need for multilateral engagement to sustain an international role for years. Yet to be effective, that role cannot be *ad hoc.* The United States and other international actors face a strategic choice. They can stretch the current operational system past the point of viability by placing new demands on the UN, NATO and other organizations without increasing their resources, or they can seize the moment of opportunity to achieve greater operational coherence and cooperation.

Across the spectrum of action, we believe that the UN has a central role to play in a core planning and coordination capacity. The bulk of resources, be they troops, funds or diplomatic heavyweights, will always reside with member states. But the UN can play a catalytic role – as it did for example in Lebanon – in forging effective joint action by member states. We believe that the UN can serve as a

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[1] The UN Security Council has responsibility for the use of force and peacekeeping, but no oversight of the agencies central to building a sustainable peace.

[2] As of mid-2008, the Peace Building Support Office, which staffs the PBC, is authorized at about 20 positions – or 2% of the personnel dedicated to peacekeeping. Even if it operated as a coordinating staff office that drew on capabilities across the UN system, the Peace Building Support Office would be overwhelmed if tasked to manage strategy for multiple concurrent operations.

catalyst for crisis response; that NATO can be strengthened in its peacekeeping functions; that major donors can act more purposefully to help prevent state failure and galvanize recovery; and that stand-by capacities will be necessary if there is to be a capacity to protect.

The UN must have a standby peacekeeping force of 50,000, or five operational brigades, to have the capacity to respond effectively and with adequate speed in peacebuilding operations. Several standby forces have been established in Africa for AU purposes; and the EU has developed a joint stand-by battalion for rapid deployment to UN missions, used for the first time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2007. To deepen this capacity, individual countries or regional organizations would designate their contributions to a UN force and guarantee the availability of such forces. The UN would be responsible for designating performance standards and qualifying training programs that would be run at national or regional level.

Specific priority should be given to creating a new standing fund for African operations and capacity-building, based on current US, EU and other donor initiatives but with clarified funding release and reporting procedures. Particular attention should be given to functions that are currently the worst funded, such as mission planning and niche capacity-building.

The United States, UK, Canada, Germany, India, South Africa, the EU and the UN itself through the Peacebuilding Commission have all taken steps toward creating some capacity for peacebuilding, a complicated endeavor that requires the integration of traditional military peacekeeping and peace enforcement capabilities with civilian initiatives to address humanitarian needs, build capacity to administer the rule of law, promote reconciliation among previously warring parties, and help build the physical, human and institutional infrastructure necessary to create a positive peace that is self-sustaining long after peacekeepers leave a conflict. We support the establishment of a $2 billion dollar peacebuilding fund under the UN to support rapid deployment of operations. Such a fund is needed to allow peacebuilding operations to mobilize rapidly once authorized by the UN Security Council. By shaping dynamics early on, rapid deployments will shorten operations and save funds.

While peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the areas requiring concentrated investment, minor investments in joint analysis and mediation capacity, among the major donors and at the UN, can reap substantial rewards in prevention of state failure and conflict.

The G16 & Political Momentum Towards Robust Peace Operations

Action is needed immediately to amplify and standardize the international capacity in peace operations. The G16 should call on all its constituents to designate a part of its armed forces for international peacekeeping. These standby reserves would exist in practice and not just on paper. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be given the resources for advancing training and development of a common doctrine. NATO can help build the capacity of the wider set of contributing states.

The second step is the creation of a pool of international civilians to undertake key peacebuilding tasks, rather than relying on ad hoc deployment through contracts and multiple agencies and departments. Integration of capacity across sectors works when personnel have common training and share institutional incentives. The UK Prime Minister has set a goal of 1000 civilians on stand-by, and other countries such as Denmark have committed themselves to action to make this happen. The US and other members of the G16 can get behind such initiatives to bring them to early fruition.