

Policy or Process?

The Politics of International Peace Implementation

**Report of a forum on International Co-operation
in Peace Implementation: The policies and
practices of peacemaking and peacebuilding**

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Report of the Peace Implementation Network (PIN) forum on *International Co-operation in Peace Implementation: The policies and practices of peacemaking and peacebuilding*, held at the Holmekollen Park Hotel, Oslo. January 29–30. 2004.

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Preface

This report of the sixth forum of the Peace Implementation Network (PIN) addresses an obvious but oft-neglected lesson of recent peace operations: when member states or donor countries get together and agree to support a peace process, this does not automatically translate into results on the ground. Between a policy decision and impact on the ground there is an intermediary set of activities and events, involving a complex set of relationships. It is called policy implementation.

Implementation is at the heart of the challenge in several areas, be it re-launching development, targeting humanitarian assistance, or addressing sources of insecurity and promoting conflict prevention. The evidence from the cases discussed at this PIN forum indicates that results of implementation on the ground have been mixed. In fact, the discussion challenges the notion that peace implementation has involved policy decisions at all: in a number of cases, the international politics involved in supporting the peace agreement has engendered a kind of willful neglect of tough issues. The effect is to force states to channel energy into the politics of the diplomatic process rather than making and implementing strategies for peace.

It should be no surprise, then, that the frameworks we bring to the question of peacemaking and peacebuilding are under great stress. Most recently that stress has manifested itself over what role the UN may take on in Iraq. But that debate is linked to a deeper tension within international responses to conflict: operational effectiveness in specific missions - in the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans or Central Asia - is crucial to the legitimacy of the multilateral system as a whole.

PIN in general, and this forum in particular, is an attempt to respond to this tension. We started from the assumption that operational effectiveness depends upon the ability of international coordination to match political will, with material resources and organisational capacity, and to sustain this over time. The forum asked practitioners to discuss how this did or did not happen in several case studies: What mechanisms were put in place to manage the relationships necessary for conflict resolution or the implementation of peacebuilding assistance? Were these new? Innovative? Of what were they comprised? Did they work? What were the rules of the game, either formal or informal? How have these, explicitly or implicitly, sought to integrate political strategies to aid delivery? Whose views have been included and why? Were they effective? According to what measure?

Forum participants were chosen according to their experience in managing the political and diplomatic processes of peace implementation in different places. Through the use of a roundtable format, we tried to create a neutral space for the exchange of learning across different case or country experiences. In short, we have attempted a kind of “lessons learned” approach – to use a much-abused term – on a comparative case-study basis, with field practitioners as the focus and key resource.

I am grateful to all of the participants for their participation and frank and open approach to the discussion. I would also like to thank the Government of Norway and the MacArthur Foundation, both of which have provided financial assistance for the PIN forums and reports, including this forum. My thanks also to Teresa Whitfield of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University for her role in organising the forum and drafting this excellent report.

Finally, a word about one of the participants who was missing from this Forum. My former colleague at Fafo and the United Nations, Rick Hooper, was a co-founder of PIN during his time at Fafo, and a supporter of it in his subsequent work. His death in the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003 was a tremendous loss to the United Nations and multilateral efforts at peace-making in general, and a great personal loss to a number of the participants in this Forum. His razor sharp intellect and intuitive understanding of the system, particularly its potential relevance to those most affected by war, is sorely missed. It was his sense that the politics of implementation are crucial for the effectiveness and legitimacy of our responses to conflict which lay behind the agenda for this meeting. If it is possible to dedicate such work, then it is to Rick’s memory that this Forum and the Peace Implementation Network as a whole is dedicated.

Mark Taylor

Deputy Managing Director
Series Editor, *Peace Implementation Network*
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Summary

This forum was the sixth to be sponsored by Fafo AIS as part of its Peace Implementation Network (PIN) project.¹ Its principal participants were present or former officials of multilateral and bilateral institutions with experience of peacemaking and peacebuilding in a range of conflicts: Guatemala, the Middle East, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Over a day and half of informal discussions, they were asked to consider the international management of the peacemaking and peacebuilding operations with which they had been involved and, in particular, how and to what extent political will had been matched with resources over time to achieve the goals of implementation. They were asked to reflect on the efficacy of the coordination mechanisms employed, including their capacity to integrate political strategies and developments, and to suggest concrete recommendations for the future.

The cases ranged greatly with respect to the scope of international involvement: consideration of Norwegian facilitation of the halting peace process in Sri Lanka, for example, raises quite different issues from that of peacebuilding in Bosnia, some nine years after the Dayton Accords. However, in the course of the meeting participants returned to two central themes across the several cases.

One of these acknowledged that the extent to which the cases were in the political interest of the United States and other powerful states determined both the complexity of the coordination mechanisms employed, and the degree to which the United Nations (or other lead actors) was entrusted with a clear and accountable role. As a general rule, the political interest of powerful states and the autonomy of action of the UN or bilateral peacemaker functioned in inverse proportion to one another. Conflict resolution processes invested with high levels of great power interests, such as Iraq or the Middle East – dubbed “high politics” by one participant – were contrasted with conflicts in which international engagement, although no less important to the outcome, was characterized by low levels of great power interest, or “low politics”. Guatemala and Sri Lanka were cited as examples of the latter. Coordination in “high politics” environments has been complex and the UN role significantly constrained.

¹ For information on PIN and additional Forums, see www.fafonsp/

The meeting addressed neither the situation in Iraq, nor the issues before the High Level Panel appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General to examine current threats and future challenges to international peace and security. However, it was acknowledged that the current international context – one in which the power, influence, and assertive proclivities of the United States is often a deciding factor in determining the relevance and legitimacy of multilateral frameworks – necessarily affected international efforts to seek a coordinated response to conflict across the world. Citing a previous comment by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, one participant noted that what constituted the “international community” engaged in conflict management in any given context was consistently composed of all of those states with a particular interest in the conflict, plus the United States.

The effect of the international political environment was a recurring factor in the case discussions. A key theme in this regard was the lack of clear peacemaking or peacebuilding strategy or policy specific to each case and a concomitant over-reliance on process. The origins of the problem were seen as partly a result of a lack of institutionalized capacity to deal with strategy. In many instances of both “high” and “low” political interest, explicit consideration of strategy did not take place in multilateral settings in part because of a lack of multilateral strategic planning capacity that could prompt discussion of the political implications of peacemaking or peacebuilding policy. In each case discussed, strategy tended to be a non-issue in multilateral discussions.

There were, as one participant put it, both good and bad reasons for the emphasis on process. At the United Nations, discussions of strategy and policy are limited by concerns about member state sovereignty, as well as more mundane bureaucratic infighting. Other institutions, such as the World Bank, find themselves in a situation in which a lack of policymaking by the diplomatic or political leadership creates a vacuum in which their policies on, for example, re-launching development become the *de facto* peacemaking or peacebuilding strategies. Most important, differences over strategy between states pushed officials towards the diplomacies of process in order to circumvent policy squabbles or deadlocks. In “high politics” situations in particular, the effect on peace implementation has been to prioritize process over the peacemaking strategy or policy.

The discussion identified several factors that affect the efficacy of international engagement in peace implementation. These included:

- The nature of the agreement reached between contending parties, the peacemaking strategy implicit in it, and the clarity of the international mandate derived from it;
- The extent to which national actors and international implementers possessed the requisite political will to move forward in implementation;

- The establishment of adequate monitoring mechanisms, both with respect to actions taken by national actors and to ensure accountability of international implementation structures;
- The effectiveness of knowledge gathering and analysis and the flexibility to act upon findings, particularly when a process hits unforeseen problems;
- Effective communication strategies.

During the course of the forum, participants suggested several steps that might be taken to address the issues they had discussed. The suggestions were made in recognition of the difficulties that the UN has encountered with respect to learning lessons – a process that, in the absence of a central strategic planning capacity, had been highly conditioned by personnel movement across sub-regional responsibilities within the bureaucracy. Participants felt that peacemaking and peacebuilding practices, including the coordination mechanisms adopted within them, have been under-examined for the lessons that could be derived from them, as indeed the richness of the discussion during this forum had demonstrated.

Possible actions recommended by participants included:

- The commissioning of research to establish comparative data on what happens – and what to look for – when peace agreements or processes go wrong;
- The development of clearly articulated criteria, based on comparative analysis, as to when and how to hand administrative capacities back to local actors;
- The preparation of a short manual outlining coordination mechanisms used for peacemaking and peacebuilding, with attention to the extent to which they were context-specific and conditioned by “high” or “low” levels of international political interest;
- Consideration of the proposal made by one participant to recommend the creation of a “legacy ombudsman” function within international missions. The functions of such a position were described as involving both research and communications tasks. Some felt that monitoring and oversight functions involved should in fact be separated, with an audit function conducted from outside the mission and an ombudsman/monitoring role conducted from within the mission. A monitoring function would ask such questions as: What is the impact of the mission? What will it leave behind? How can it communicate to local actors more effectively what the mission is trying to do?
- Further thought on how to engage with the United States more creatively on these issues;

- Given that the majority of military and non-military peace operations are not conducted by the UN, it was suggested that a meeting to follow up on this forum should involve, for example, representatives of the European Union (EU), Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

“Low” and “High” Politics: Guatemala and the Middle East

Guatemala and the Middle East represent strikingly different examples of multi-lateral involvement in the management of “low” and “high” political processes towards ending conflicts. Guatemala’s peace process, which depended from its earliest days on the proactive involvement of Norway, developed into negotiations mediated by the United Nations with the active support of a group of Friends. These culminated in late 1996 with a comprehensive set of peace agreements whose implementation has been monitored by a UN mission.

The “high politics” of the Middle East peace process, by contrast, initially resulted in a less clear-cut engagement by the United Nations, in which the UN’s informal relationships were key. As the peace process relapsed into conflict, the role of the United Nations has evolved through three distinct phases of the peace process: implementation, negotiation, and crisis mitigation. Since 1994, UN relationships with the United States, Norway, and the World Bank have been central to its work, with other actors such as the European Union (EU), the Security Council, and regional states also important at different periods.

Norway’s role in the Guatemalan peace process, like that it has played in other conflicts (including the Middle East), was initially developed outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by nongovernmental actors. It dates back to the Guatemalan earthquake of 1976 and the strong involvement of Norwegian Church Aid in reconstruction efforts. In the late 1980s, Norway emerged as an independent facilitator with the trust of the Guatemalan parties, a role that was consolidated by the signing of an agreement establishing the format of dialogue in Oslo in 1990. From 1993 on, it worked within a group of Friends whose three other active members included the United States, Spain, and Mexico. In addition to lending its weight to the UN-led process, Norway’s priorities were to support civil society – ensuring that it had a voice in determining the substance of peace agreements reached between the Guatemalan government and the guerrillas of the URNG – and to promote dialogue amongst all sectors of Guatemalan society, including the military. To this end, Norway brought delegations of Guatemalan military officers to Oslo for confidence-building exercises and supported the Lutheran World Federation’s organization of four “consultations” between a broad range of Guatemalan actors. Norway also hosted the negotiation sessions of several important agreements.

The characteristics of the Guatemalan peace process – which comprised negotiations between a succession of governments and a largely defeated guerrilla force – lent particular structural importance to the international coordination relationships. The group of Friends was described as assisting the United Nations in three distinct ways: it helped build confidence in the process amongst the general population, put pressure on the parties, and leveled the playing field between them. The Friends, under the lead of the UN moderator, were able to maintain unity in their support of the negotiations.

However, the Friends' utility rapidly eroded during implementation of the agreements, when the national priorities of international actors with respect to issues such as public security and Guatemala's economic development took precedence over coordination around a UN lead. Consequently, opportunities to work with key national constituencies on some of the serious problems that developed – for example, on issues related to fiscal reform and redistribution – were lost. Although a “dialogue group” of donors attempted to exert “positive conditionality” to encourage compliance with the peace agreements, during the period 2000-2003 it made little headway with a government that was widely viewed as corrupt and lacking commitment to implement the peace agenda.²

The Guatemalan case challenges actors to examine, in the words of one participant, “how we do implementation.” It is a striking example of a case in which the international coordination worked in support of national actors and the United Nations to achieve a good agreement. Yet despite the positive beginnings, the success of implementation was eroded by opposition from internal forces in Guatemala that had been masked by the process of peacemaking. International implementers seemed unable to counter those forces.

In the Middle East, the UN's involvement in the political process from 1994 involved participation in a peacemaking environment that devolved from “relatively good to spectacularly bad,” as the Oslo process unraveled in response to rising violence and then, in 1996, the election of Benjamin Netanyahu. Criticism that the Oslo accords did not have a monitoring mechanism to allow them to adapt to changing realities on the ground were described as valid; however, it was noted that, in contrast to Guatemala, elaborate coordination mechanisms were established on the ground, in reflection of the fact that, in the Middle East, “everyone wants to be in the game.” These mechanisms provided fora within which the UN and interested states and organizations – including the World Bank and the EU – could engage with (and dilute the power of) the United States, the central international actor in the region.

² It was hoped that the government that took office in early 2004 would work to revive the goals of the peace process.

Although the UN has long been engaged in the Middle East, it only gained a direct role in the latest peace process with the Secretary-General's appointment of Norwegian diplomat Terje Rød-Larsen as Special Representative (SRSG) in 1994.³ This allowed the UN to draw on both Rød-Larsen's personal standing with the parties to the conflict and on Norway's resources. During the implementation period, Rød-Larsen spurred the development of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in an attempt to match aid coordination to the political process. Norway, the United States, and the UN worked closely together in this phase, and UN and World Bank representatives developed an effective relationship.

Although the UN's political role diminished with Rød-Larsen's departure after late 1996 and the election of Netanyahu, it underwent a marked change following Kofi Annan's appointment as Secretary-General in 1997. Annan made a priority of repairing relationships with the Jewish community in the United States, worked with western states to bring Israel into the Western European Union (WEU), and ensured close cooperation with the United States. Rød-Larsen returned to the Middle East in mid-1999, this time with an overt political role and an expanded mandate that included the peace process and sub-region as a whole. On the basis of an effective relationship between Rød-Larsen and Prime Minister Barak, as well as the Secretary-General's personal involvement, the UN was asked to monitor and verify Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon (a state-to-state issue on which the Permanent Five and the Security Council became directly engaged) and to play a role in negotiations over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif issue.

The political situation began to deteriorate in September 2000 with the eruption of the second *Intifada* in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. During the period of crisis management that followed, the UN sought not to play a leading role but to work with the US to bring the parties together and build a coalition – initially involving the UN, the United States, EU, Egypt and Jordan – around efforts to sustain the peace process. In fact, Israel and the Palestinians came tantalizingly close to an agreement at the end of 2000.

The decision to create the Quartet – comprising the UN, the United States, EU and Russia – was taken after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which had a profound impact on developments in the region. The Quartet (sometimes meeting “plus three”, with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) matches the power of the United States, the economic significance to the region of the EU and the legitimacy of the UN. Although the appearance of a the United States lead is important, in practice the Quartet's actions are coordinated by the UN, allowing it to fulfill the necessary role of broker between the United States and the EU, two actors whose positions on the Middle East have at times been divergent.

³ Before this point, the UN's last involvement in an Israeli-Palestinian peace process was in 1960.

It was noted that, at every stage, the UN had been effective to the extent that it was not in the lead but worked through its formal and informal partnerships. In this respect, one participant commented that the role for the UN was as “process instrument rather than policy lead”. During the Oslo process this process management function was analogous to that of the organization in other “high politics” conflicts – with Iraq the furthest extreme of a situation in which a UN “process” has been called upon to provide cover for the cooperation of otherwise differing P5 Member States. This was in obvious contrast to situations – such as that represented by Guatemala – in which the UN could be said to be in some way accountable for policies elaborated as part of the internationally managed process. The differences, it was argued, have enormous implications for the expectations of what the multilateral system might deliver. That the UN has been able to elevate its relevance beyond “process” in the Middle East, as in Afghanistan, was attributable to personal relationships between the SRSGs (Rød-Larsen and Brahim) and the parties in each instance. Combined with their close personal ties to the Secretary-General, the totality of these relationships was recognized as “a critical instrument [for UN diplomats] when great powers have high stakes,” and difficult to replicate in other situations.

Building Peace Nationally and Regionally: Liberia

The deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which at full strength will be the UN's largest and most comprehensive peacekeeping operation, was described as a response to a number of lessons learned in recent years from the UN's experience in West Africa and elsewhere. Current efforts represent an unprecedented attempt by national and international actors to organize themselves so as to strengthen the prospect of internal peace. But with Liberia's history as the epicenter of regional instability and 14 broken peace agreements already, current activities are being undertaken with a realistic assessment of the difficulty of the task ahead. Consequently, although UNMIL was established on the basis of a consensual peace agreement, it has a robust, Chapter VII mandate that incorporates lessons learned from Kosovo, East Timor, and elsewhere, including neighboring Sierra Leone.

One of the clearest lessons from Sierra Leone is the need for the sustained commitment of a powerful sub-regional or international actor to a locally driven process: the United Kingdom has been widely credited with turning around the fortunes of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Consequently, the Secretary-General and others at the United Nations labored during 2003 to ensure the full support of the United States for the UN's efforts in Liberia. Although this was forthcoming, one participant noted the view of some Security Council member states that the United States support for UNMIL's extensive mandate had been obtained, in part, because Washington had not put the United States troops on the ground, as the Secretary-General and others had encouraged it to do earlier in the year. The UN also sought to harmonize the different policies of powerful international actors – including the United States, the UK and France – through the creation of an International Contact Group on the Mano River Union. However, competing interests towards different countries in the region, coupled with the concern of Guinea (on the Security Council at the time and backed by the United States on this issue) for the group not to have a mandate that would encroach upon its internal affairs, led the states concerned to favor the creation of an International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) instead. The ICGL, which is co-chaired by ECOWAS and the EU, has been given an integral role within Liberia's International Monitoring Commission. It is hoped that the members of the ICGL see the group as a forum within which their interests will be served and their national

strategies may be coordinated to strengthen a fragile process. However, it was observed that the efficacy of a mechanism of this kind largely depends on the ability of the SRSG to make “clashing interests look palatable for peace and security.”

The UN’s preference for a group to address the entire Mano River Union reflected the recognition that, in West Africa, sustainable peace can only be achieved on a regional level. With peacekeeping operations in place in Sierra Leone and Liberia, a forthcoming operation in Cote d’Ivoire, a political office in Guinea Bissau, and the UN’s sub-regional office in Dakar, the organization is better placed to address regional issues than ever before. Force commanders meet regularly, joint border patrols are conducted, information is shared, and the SRSGs of the region meet quarterly under the chairmanship of the SRSG for West Africa. However, as one participant pointed out, even with this massive UN deployment, there is little capacity for the UN to approach peacebuilding “upstream” of a conflict in preventive terms. “Everyone knows Guinea is in trouble,” one participant commented, “but for various reasons no one is going in.”

Beyond sub-regional concerns, UNMIL’s mandate outlines provisions for peacebuilding that include, unusually, the specification that funds for initial disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) should be provided under the UN’s regular budget rather than through voluntary contributions. But the challenges ahead remain considerable. The UN’s capacity to deploy civilian experts still lags considerably behind deployment of peacekeepers; at a moment when UNMIL had over 10,000 troops in the mission area, it still had no political unit. Moreover, the design of a peacebuilding strategy is seriously hindered by the fact that not much is known about Liberia outside Monrovia. As in other cases discussed at the forum, it was emphasized that a lack of grounded understanding of a society seriously hinders or skews international responses to conflicts, and, in the long term, can hinder or damage the capacity of a society to rehabilitate itself. Effective peacebuilding needs to assure coherence between security, political, and development objectives in the field, and the measure of success for those activities will be the extent to which it has been possible to equip a government and state with the capacity to sustain peace. The UN’s prior experience with peacebuilding in Africa, particularly in the small peacebuilding offices previously established in Liberia and Guinea Bissau, has demonstrated how difficult this can be once the period of “sovereignty in parenthesis” represented by a large peacekeeping operation such as UNMIL is over.

The Importance of Effective International Coalitions: Sri Lanka and Sudan

There are extensive differences between the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Sudan, and between the international processes being attempted to resolve them. However, in each case effective international coalitions in support of peace are essential to the achievement of positive outcomes. Long-held suspicions of the United Nations, and the role of the United States within it, have precluded a formal peace-making role for the organization in both countries. In the case of Sri Lanka, the UN faced a double veto. The government of Sri Lanka has been openly averse to a UN role: one participant described a former foreign minister as expressing the view that the UN's work in the country should be apolitical, restricted to "plasters and malaria." Additionally, the prospect of UN intervention was unacceptable to the key regional power, India. Rather, both sides sought third-party involvement by a government. Norway – geographically distant, with no economic interest in Sri Lanka and with a reputation as an "honest broker" from the Middle East – had established ties to the Tigers through non-governmental actors in the past and was deemed suitable.

Negotiations between the parties, facilitated by Norway, resulted in a ceasefire agreement and the establishment of a range of confidence-building measures, including a small (60 person) Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission consisting of representatives from all five Nordic countries. The ceasefire has held for two years, lowering the casualties from political violence exponentially (one participant cited 100-150 killed under the ceasefire, while the war had claimed an equivalent number per week). The parties have agreed to explore a solution based on the principle of self-determination within a united, federal Sri Lanka, but remain far apart on exactly how this will be achieved. Moreover, the Tamil Tigers suspended formal talks in April 2003, in part to protest the inability of the process to advance in light of the longstanding political standoff between Sri Lanka's prime minister and president.

While the internal obstacles to peace remain considerable, Norway's efforts have met with unanimous support from other interested states. In order to ensure that this remains the case, Norway has made a priority of keeping India fully informed of its activities, in the awareness that no other major country would engage in Sri Lanka if it risked damaging its relationship with India. The United States, which officially considers the Tamil Tigers to be terrorists, has supported Norway's lead

in this instance and is also well briefed on developments. Japan, which provides 50% of international assistance to Sri Lanka, took the lead in organizing a donor conference for Sri Lanka in June 2003, while the EU (with the active participation of the United Kingdom, the former colonial power) is also directly engaged. Together Japan, the United States, EU, and Norway co-chair a group that operates in support of Sri Lanka's peace process; India is not involved in any multilateral framework.

All international actors agree that there must be tangible benefits from peace in Sri Lanka: towards this end, donors pledged \$4.5 billion at the Tokyo donors' conference. However, as disbursement of these funds was linked to benchmarks and milestones in the peace process, little has happened since then. Funding issues and domestic political turmoil apart, the obstacles to achieving lasting peace in Sri Lanka will remain considerable. A central challenge will be the transformation of the disciplined military movement that the Tamil Tigers represent into a civilian body. Their military capacity to stand up to the government for twenty years won the Tigers their place at the negotiating table. They were consequently viewed as unlikely to disarm and submit to reintegration of their forces until a late stage in the peace process, particularly in the absence of firm international guarantees that, it is assumed, could only be provided by India, the United States, or the UN.

Within the spectrum of "high/low" politics that emerged during the forum discussion, the case of Sudan represents something of a crossover. Africa's largest country, as one participant put it, "has always been in conflict with itself." Although Sudan's conflict has been internal, centered on the identity of the South and the right of its people to self-determination, it has had far-reaching effects on the countries of the region – Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Kenya, and Uganda in particular. These countries have variously been involved in efforts to find peace through the sub-regional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). However, for many years Sudan's international standing – it was the subject of UN sanctions imposed to protest its support of terrorist activities – as well as entrenched opposition to the authorities in Khartoum from Washington, precluded both a formal UN role and the direct engagement of the United States. However, the Bush administration, spurred on by vocal lobbies in support of Christians in southern Sudan, made peace in the country a priority, particularly once the door to its engagement was opened by rapid assurances of Khartoum's support for the United States efforts against international terrorism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

The engagement of the United States, which has been active within an informal troika alongside Norway and the UK, has positively impacted the peace process, which began in earnest in May 2002. In contrast to efforts of the past, which were

beset by multiple and sometimes contradictory peace initiatives, the strong leadership provided by the IGAD mediator, General Sumbeiywo (Special Envoy of the Kenyan President), and the pragmatic stance taken by the troika, have created the possibility for high-level negotiations between the parties to follow a single track. Within this track, which builds upon the Declaration of Principles crafted by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea in 1993, Sudanese priorities are directly represented, carried forward by IGAD, and supported by international structures. Beyond the troika and other observers of the peace talks (Italy, the UN, and the African Union), these include the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF), co-chaired by Norway and Italy. The IPF has held a series of meetings involving the UN, the European Commission, the World Bank, and some twenty countries, and will lead financial support for the peace process. In reflecting on Sudan's "crossover" status between "high" and "low" political interest in the conflict's resolution, one participant observed that this was the one conflict in sub-Saharan Africa to which western states would be "lining up" to contribute peacekeeping forces. By doing so, states would be responding to competing pressures from their foreign ministries to participate in UN peace operations and from their defense ministries to participate in operations sanctioned by the United States.

Negotiations have as their foundation the Machakos Protocol agreed to by the parties in July 2002. The protocol recognizes the unity of Sudan as "the priority of the parties" while acknowledging the right of the people of the South to self-determination; these two principles were reconciled by agreement to a six-year interim period, at the end of which the people of the South can vote to remain within a united Sudan or secede. Agreements on the cessation of hostilities, unimpeded humanitarian access, security arrangements, and wealth sharing have been reached since then, with the latter specifying that the South (where most of Sudan's oil production is located) will have a right to 50% of all national revenues generated.

In the meantime, there has been an evident shift in the stance of the Khartoum government regarding international and UN participation; specifically, the government has agreed to the deployment of three monitoring mechanisms in Sudan.⁴ These developments, and the extent to which implementation is being actively planned by national and international actors – including within the United Nations – have encouraged a sense that peace in Sudan is, for the first time, within reach.

⁴ The Joint Monitoring Commission in the Nuba Mountains; the Civilian Protection Monitoring Team, a body led, financed, and operated by the United States, which deals with issues related to slavery; and an international Verification and Monitoring Team established after the cessation of hostilities agreements.

The discussion made it clear that a number of obstacles remain, including some integral to the negotiation process. Agreement on the three contested areas on the borders of the north and south, on power sharing, and on the final ceasefire negotiations will all be difficult to obtain. Furthermore, despite its achievements, the process was described as “very fragile... with very strong counterforces on each side”. Discussion of the power sharing agreements has returned repeatedly to the issue of spoilers and the need for the agreements to be as inclusive as possible. Meanwhile, a serious threat to the north-south process is presented by armed conflicts developing in other regions of the country, particularly in the western region of Darfur, where conflict has already had a huge and growing humanitarian emergency. The conflict in Darfur is apparently fuelled in part by perceptions of progress in the IGAD-led process, which has sparked demands for the kind of benefits resulting from decentralization – including increased self-rule and resources – that appear to some to be going only to the South. If not contained, this conflict’s potential to destabilize the north-south process is considerable.

Problems of Coordination: Bosnia and Kosovo

The discussion about the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia highlighted the extent to which international missions fielded in Europe are different from those deployed elsewhere – although with important similarities to the Middle East, particularly in terms of how differences between the United States and EU play out. Although the operations in both Bosnia and Kosovo were resource- and capacity- rich, the missions have been plagued by problems of coordination and coherence that do not reflect well on the organizations and member states involved. The oversight of both processes was also questioned by the forum’s participants.

The structure of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), led by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), consisted originally of four pillars headed by the UN, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the EU (the UNHCR pillar has since been disbanded). The NATO military force is a pillar apart. The structure was specifically designed to counter the coordination problems encountered in Bosnia. In that case, there had been no UN mission in a central coordinating role; rather, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) was established, as part of an effort to create a capacity in Europe for “doing a UN peace implementation mission without the UN.” While the Bosnia set-up has produced decidedly mixed results, the UN’s experiment in Kosovo – termed as “bringing in subcontractors” in the form of the EU and OSCE – has not yet fulfilled the hopes held out for it either. Indeed, many of the problems identified in Bosnia – where the complex coordination environment hindered strategic planning and accountability, and failed to establish clear criteria for the transition of the administration back to local actors – have been replicated in Kosovo.

In Bosnia, the implementation of the security aspects of the Dayton agreement (Annex 1A) has been fully successful. However, implementation of the non-military aspects of the agreement – relating to the development of the economy, democratic governance, refugee return, and the rule of law – is so riddled with problems as to undermine the sustainability of the process, and even threaten a return to conflict. The Bosnian state is bankrupt, aid-dependent, and mired in a debt repayment process, a situation for which international actors must bear a large part of the responsibility. As one participant stated, “Bankruptcy occurred not just under

our noses, we have done it ourselves.” From the beginning, the international actors in Bosnia had a substantial mandate; over the years, they have accrued even more power, while the development of local institutional capacity has been undermined. Indeed, the country was described as having suffered a “deprofessionalization,” in part because of the economic distortions involved in such a large and sustained international presence.

During the discussion, the ineffective implementation of the Dayton agreement (other than the military-security aspect) was attributed to three factors. First is the partiality of the implementers, both local and external actors. The High Representative and other actors made (and continue to make) overtly political and partial decisions, such as firing nationalist or anti-western (but duly elected) politicians. Regardless of the relative appropriateness of these actions, they have created implementation problems by generating resistance, and lack of cooperation in building capacity and sustainability. Second is the problematic coordination structures put into place by the implementers. For example, many functions that the UN had experience doing – such as monitoring and training police and organizing elections – were assigned to other organizations, which then had to spend time and money learning how to do them. Problems with civil-military coordination, a lack of donor coordination, and the ill-defined role of, and lack of resources to, the OHR, also undermined mission success. Finally, fundamental errors were made in the economic strategy adopted by the World Bank.

The implementation process in Bosnia had been run by the annual meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), which set policy and was supplemented by a monthly meeting of its steering board. But the PIC, which represented some 63 actors, soon became a stage upon which differences between the United States and the Europeans – as well as amongst competing the United States agencies – were played out. This political and diplomatic jostling manifested itself throughout the implementing institutions as well. Meanwhile, four successive High Representatives have gradually extended their authority over the other international actors, as well as the Bosnians. This process was described by one participant as allowing “absolute power” to be accumulated by the High Representative, a development with serious implications for the accountability of his actions.

The discussion of Kosovo suggested that, although UNMIK – in deliberate contrast to the Bosnian operation – was established as a UN mission, in many ways it bore little resemblance to other UN operations. The mission was designed to bring the complex mix of players present in Bosnia (including the United States, the EU and the OSCE) under a UN umbrella. However, over time the elaborate coordination structures put in place by the UN’s small advance planning team have eroded. With all the various actors in play, the coordination role of the SRSG can be aptly described as “herding cats.” The fact that some of the SRSGs who served

in Kosovo have not seemed to particularly identify with the UN has only complicated matters further.

In short, UNMIK was (and is) beset by serious problems of coordination. From the outside, it appears as “multi-headed,” projecting confusing and/or conflicting messages about some key policy issues and about overall strategy. This sense of confusion has been compounded by a lack of strategic planning capacity: although significant effort was put into planning the emergency phase of the operation, movement and progress since then have stalled. The absence of strategy has also worked against the mission’s chances of building broader alliances around the political process; for example, opportunities for effective donor/funding engagement in support of “political milestones” have been missed repeatedly.

The problems of planning and coordination stemmed at least in part from two central problems that affected the mission from its inception. The first of these is found in the limitations of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, the 1999 founding document for the UN Mission in Kosovo. The resolution does not define an endgame, but instead encourages a political process to look at a “final status” for Kosovo whilst, at the same time, reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the (then) FRY.⁵ The tension between these two key parameters of 1244 has perhaps contributed to a tendency in the mission to project itself as more of a “caretaker” operation, which can defer the “big questions” to its successor, whoever/whatever that may be.

Secondly, the launch of UNMIK represented an extreme example of what practitioners will recognize as a classic UN problem: the imposition of vast responsibilities on the UN with the provision of minimal capacities to meet them. As a result, early on, the mission’s leadership struggled to find interlocutors within Kosovar society, but was quickly overwhelmed by the demands of the combatant Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The Mission was described as having spent “the first year and a half trying to get back to where it should have started.” This was to have a profound effect on attitudes towards the return of responsibilities to the local population in the later period of UNMIK’s existence.

Today, Kosovo is, in many respects, stagnant. The first steps towards a political dialogue between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, taken in meetings in Vienna in October 2003, went badly. The economy is depressed, with levels of unemployment

⁵ The majority of Kosovo’s population wants it to become an independent state, an outcome that the Serb minority vociferously opposes. Between the two ends of the spectrum—full independence versus some measure of autonomy within Serbia and Montenegro—there are a range of options that have been floated: for example, the Goldstone Commission’s formulation of “conditional independence” proposed making Kosovo essentially self-governing outside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia and Montenegro), but within an international framework that includes an initial security guarantee, protections for minority rights, and an external stability pact.

between 40–75 percent, and much of the local (K-Albanian and K-Serb) capacity within Kosovo either displaced or demoralized. There is widespread public disenchantment and apathy, which extends to attitudes towards the UN and UNMIK – which has been increasingly “on the defensive” over recent years. On the other hand, the process to achieve benchmarks in the policy of Standards before Status – which was launched in July 2002 and energized in December 2003 – was described hopefully. UNMIK has created a number of joint working groups with the government to develop the details for the implementation of these standards, and the Contact Group has established mid-2005 as the time at which discussions on Kosovo’s final status will be opened, subject to progress on these standards.⁶

⁶ Although intended to energize the process further, this action may arguably have contributed to the most recent spate of violence in March 2004.

Conclusions

The forum provided an opportunity for the comparison of different efforts at conflict resolution and peace implementation, in widely divergent contexts. It generated agreement amongst the participants on a number of issues reflected in this report.

All, for example, agreed that their respective field experience served to illustrate the distinct roles played by the United Nations or some other lead agent for peace (e.g. Norway in the case of Sri Lanka) in contexts of “high” versus “low” political interest. In the former, the autonomy of the United Nations is likely to be lower, and the coordination mechanisms correspondingly more complex. However, even in these cases, reliance on process should not be a substitute for strategy and policy. Future missions must avoid, as one participant described it, being provided with “a framework of whom you needed to work with, but not a policy framework”. Participants repeatedly cited the need for the development of strategic planning capacities both within and between their respective organizations in order to address the complexity of multilateral engagement in peace operations.

Participants recognized significant improvements in the UN’s capacity to field and manage peacekeeping operations, but it was argued that, in the broader field of peacebuilding or implementation, expertise was still sorely lacking. This was true both in cases where peacebuilding was designed to take place in the context of a peacekeeping operation with a broadly encompassing mandate, and in cases where peacebuilding efforts were continuing after the peacekeeping operation – and the temporary suspension of sovereignty it sometimes represented – was withdrawn.

The cases examined variously illustrated the importance of the position taken by the United States. This was as evident in the “high politics” cases of the Middle East and the Balkans, both marred by persistent differences between the United States and the countries of the European Union, as it was in the “low politics” cases such as Guatemala and Sri Lanka. In Guatemala, the United States had participated as a stalwart “Friend” within a negotiation process led by the United Nations; in Sri Lanka, its support of Norway’s peacemaking represented essential underpinning to the credibility of Norway as a peacemaker. The two African cases discussed – Liberia and Sudan – illustrated the difference made to longstanding

conflicts in which peacemaking had been led by regional actors with the engagement of the United States. Without such engagement, a mission of the size and scope of UNMIL would not have been established, nor progress in the Sudanese peace process achieved.

For many participants, the post-conflict confusion in Iraq served as a stark reminder of, as one participant put it, “how big a lag there is in the United States” in this area. There was a sense that policy makers in the United States believed it possible to pursue peace implementation while avoiding the responsibilities of nation building. It was agreed that, on the basis of past experience, senior management at the UN could effectively engage the United States policy makers on issues of importance to the UN, while recognizing that UN influence would face real and identifiable political constraints. As one participant put it, “If we want to salvage any remaining relevance of multilateral institutions, we need to find different ways of coexist[ing] with [the] superpower or we will constantly be in reactive mode.”

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Policy or Process?

The frameworks we bring to the question of peace operations are under great stress, as evidenced most recently by the debate over what role the UN may take on in Iraq. But that debate is linked to a deeper tension within international responses to conflict: operational effectiveness in specific missions is crucial to the legitimacy of the multilateral system as a whole.

The Peace Implementation Network forum summarised by this report was an attempt to respond to this reality. The forum asked a select group of practitioners with experience of a number of peace implementation situations to discuss how implementation did or did not work. Based on input from the participants, the report makes a number of practical suggestions for improving the management of peace implementation.

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