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**THEMATIC SERIES**

BUILDING MORE EFFECTIVE  
UN PEACE OPERATIONS

Canada 

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INTERNATIONAL  
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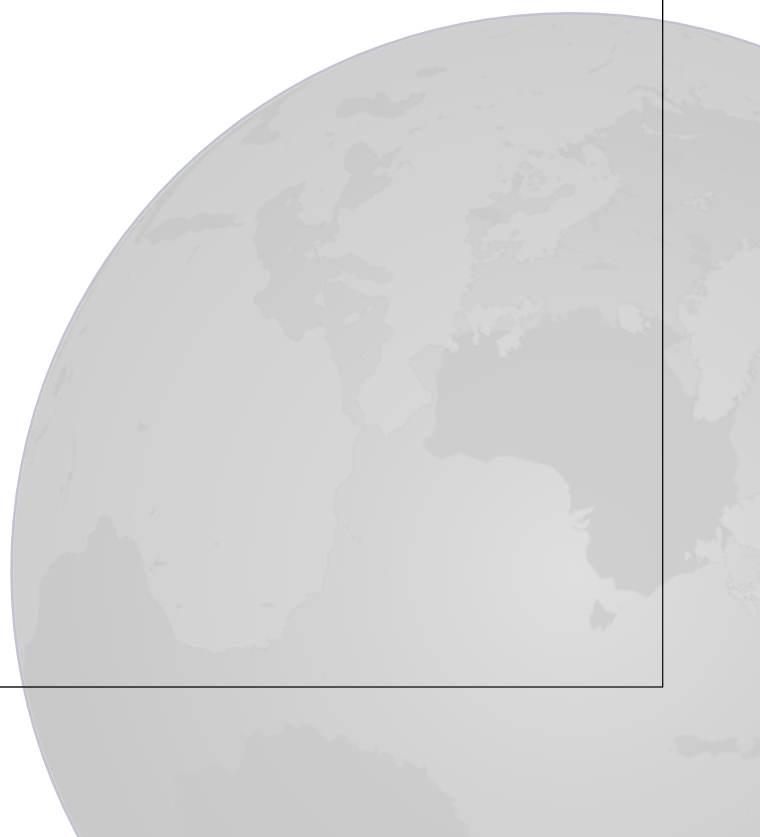
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## Foreword

The last eighteen months have seen an increased attention to peacekeeping issues at the UN, as both the Secretariat and Member States have grappled with the challenges related to a decade of unprecedented growth. Canada has been proud to contribute to these reflections through our series “Building More Effective UN Peace Operations.”

When we first considered putting this series together with the Center on International Cooperation, we knew that the UN was approaching a critical moment on peacekeeping. Our view was that if the UN was going to adapt to meet the challenges of modern peace operations, then it would need the contribution and buy-in of all Member States. As I said in my opening remarks to the first session – ‘Successfully implementing changes to the way peacekeeping is carried out will require the membership coming to a common diagnosis of the challenges, as well as a shared understanding on the way forward’.

The goal of this series has been to engage in a substantive dialogue with all Member States, bringing in the expertise of leading practitioners to explore the many complex and inter-related issues surrounding peacekeeping. Through these discussions, we hoped to build this shared understanding to allow for better collective decision-making.

Since the series started, a number of important decisions have been made, including the endorsement of the Global Field Support Strategy and improvements in the consultations between the Security Council and Troop Contributing Countries. Much work remains to be done, however, ranging from the politically challenging to the highly technical, and it is our hope that this publication will help further advance this agenda.

The Permanent Mission of Canada is very grateful for the support of our partners in this venture, New York University's Centre on International Cooperation, as well as to the participants who were able to share their expertise in our panel discussions. Finally, we are grateful to the colleagues whose participation helped to make this series a success.



**John McNee**  
**Ambassador and Permanent Representative**  
**Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations**

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## Foreword

When I assumed my responsibilities as head of UN peacekeeping in mid-2008, the peacekeeping system had already reached a point of serious strain. A decade of surge had brought peacekeeping deployments to a historic high and missions had become increasingly complex with multidimensional mandates, challenging logistical environments and diminished political consensus on the role of peacekeeping and overall political strategy in many areas. As a result, there was a general consensus among stakeholders on the need to address these challenges and to strengthen peacekeeping.

In July 2009, DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) set out some of the steps we believed were required to meet emerging challenges in peacekeeping in the non-paper "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for United Nation's Peacekeeping." At the same time the Permanent Mission of Canada planned its initiative to bring together stakeholders for an informal exchange to generate both a 'shared diagnosis' of the problems as well as 'shared solutions'. The thematic series, "Building More Effective UN Peace Operations", drew together distinguished panelists and provided a dynamic forum for discussions on many of the key issues, ranging from the importance of the overarching political context of peacekeeping to logistical challenges in theatre, and spanning the life-cycle of peacekeeping operations, from the crafting of mandates to transitions and exit strategies -- and all the vagaries in between impacted by the constantly evolving realities on the ground.

The series coincided with the 2010 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34) and two Security Council debates and presidential statements on peacekeeping issues, one in August 2009 on strengthening consultations with other stakeholders and improving Security Council practices in support of peacekeeping operations, and one in February 2010 on transition planning and the links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In hosting the thematic series on peacekeeping, the Canadian Permanent Mission and the Center on International Cooperation brought together many stakeholders, including troop and police contributing countries, members of the Security Council and the Secretariat, and created a space to explore ideas informally and have frank exchanges, something that can be difficult to achieve in more traditional diplomatic exchanges. The scope and diversity of the challenges discussed and the ideas generated are captured in this publication which contributes to our collective efforts to strengthen peacekeeping.



**Alain LeRoy**  
**Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations**

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## Executive Summary: Building More Effective UN Peace Operations

Bruce D. Jones

UN peace operations have entered a period of strategic uncertainty. This follows considerable growth in size and complexity over the past decade. Record high deployment levels, coupled with demands for new or expanded missions, alongside mounting financial constraints, present a strategic challenge for the UN and its Member States.

Navigating this shifting terrain requires cooperation from all peacekeeping stakeholders. As the Secretariat, the Security Council, troop contributors, and the broader UN membership began in 2009 to examine ways forward, the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN, in cooperation with the Center on International Cooperation, convened a series of thematic panels on building more effective UN peace operations. The five installments of the series brought together member state representatives, UN Secretariat staff, Security Council members, and leading academic and NGO practitioners to explore the challenges facing UN peace operations and potential ways to confront them. This publication, in bringing together the issue papers from the series, provides an overview of the key strategic issues facing UN and non-UN peace operations today.

A shared diagnosis of the problems is an essential starting point for seeking solutions. To this end, observable symptoms of overstretch were distinguished from its causes. The increasingly familiar symptoms of overstretch (strains on troop contributors, rising financial costs, and headquarters strains) are consequences of two sets of underlying challenges, one operational, the other political: first, the scale of missions in logistically constrained environments, the proliferation of tasks mandated to them, and the frequent absence of exit strategies; second, the failure to place UN peacekeeping in the context of political processes, limited consent from the host country and parties to a conflict, and the stalling and/or reversal of previous reform initiatives.

That a peacekeeping operation can never substitute for an effective political process was a central lesson of the 2000 Brahimi Report. Indeed, striking the appropriate balance between the two is a crucial determinant for a successful peace operation and its ultimate withdrawal. Nevertheless, this concept appears to have fallen from focus in recent years, to the detriment of several deployed UN peacekeeping operations. To perform their political functions effectively, UN peacekeeping operations need: strong political teams and leadership; substantive and logistical support from not only the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS), but also the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and other parts of the UN system; more flexible mechanisms for using budgeted funds for political and other early peacebuilding activities, especially in capacity building; and, appropriately equipped and capable forces. Most centrally, they need political support from Member States.

A central political challenge for UN peacekeeping emerges from the principle of consent and how it is applied. Despite reaffirming that consent by the host government, warring parties, and international community is a core principle of UN peacekeeping doctrine, Council mandates have grown increasingly ambitious and peacekeepers have been deployed in theaters where there is often 'no peace to keep.' Full consent need not be a determinant of success of an operation – but its absence adds to the challenge and heightens the likelihood of failure.

The process mentioned above amplifies the importance of political support to mandates. And the absence of full consent as it pertains to an operation deepens the risks posed when UN peace operation mandates are perceived as exclusive. Perceived exclusion from the crafting of mandates for complex operations has contributed to a crisis in confidence and amplified tensions about the purposes of UN peacekeeping and the political consensus needed to support it.

When this process started, the coalition of Member States needed to support peacekeeping (those on the



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Council, those who contribute troops and police, and those who pay for the bulk of the assessed budget) has become increasingly fractured. Insufficient consultation has yielded slow personnel deployment and had a dissuasive impact on potential contributors of valuable specialized assets. At the conclusion of this process, the Security Council had taken steps to deepen “triangular” consultations between the Council, the Secretariat, and TCCs. It had also begun considering ways to maintain this dynamic throughout the mission term – options include mission specific “Friends Groups”; and, agreement among peacekeeping stakeholders on key issues like protection of civilians and the implications of “robust” peacekeeping. The outcomes from 2010’s C-34 discussions are important steps forward in this regard.

Meanwhile, the demands on the Department of Field Support (DFS) – the backbone of UN peace operations – have increased with not only the growing size and complexity of UN peacekeeping, but also the burgeoning number of DPA-led special political missions that it supports. Yet, despite its increasing responsibilities, DFS’s support activities have been governed largely by financial and procurement rules and procedures that were not designed for peace operations, let alone for today’s multifaceted mandates. The consequences have often been slow deployment, operational underperformance, and inefficient use of available resources. In response to these challenges, DFS released the Global Field Support Strategy. The adoption of critical components of that strategy by the General Assembly in June 2010 constitutes a further step forward.

UN peacekeepers are now also expected to implement a range of institution- and capacity-building functions, such as promoting rule of law through reform of the judicial and security sectors. But despite considerable attention and resources, the UN’s track record in implementing these activities has been uneven. This is because the understanding of rule of law support activities remains underdeveloped, and also because of recurrent political, operational, and institutional challenges. Political challenges to building the rule of law stem from the inter-related issues of consent

and sovereignty. Governments may be unwilling to acquiesce to international intervention; justice and security sector reform (SSR) operations may be rebuffed as an infringement on sovereignty. However, the challenge that SSR presents to state sovereignty should not be overstated. Quite deliberately, the majority of UN peace operations are designed to extend, rather than limit, the authority of states.

A related point is that the time-bound character of UN peace operations is in direct tension with the time required to reestablish the rule of law. Recent rule of law-focused missions have demonstrated the importance of initiating security and justice reform as early as possible during the immediate post-conflict phase, but this period does not last long and missions must prioritize handing over elements of their work to more specialized groups or to host governments. These activities have been historically underfunded and their mechanisms for delivery are outdated. One potential solution would be to fund mission-critical tasks from assessed funds, and noncritical tasks from voluntary funds. Defining what is critical depends on an agreed definition of success – still lacking at the UN. The issue of effective rule of law support to Member States – within and beyond peacekeeping – is one requiring further discussion and elaboration at the UN.

Since the thematic series commenced, the strategic environment for UN peace operations has continued to evolve, potentially altering the way the UN and its Member States utilize peace operations for crisis management. The global financial crisis has had a significant impact on national budgets, leading many Member States to seek improved efficiency in peacekeeping and a few to press for drawdown in missions where stability appears to have been achieved. Future decisions on whether to launch large, multidimensional operations will be weighed against their large financial cost. Nonetheless, situations like the upcoming referendum in south Sudan and the ongoing tensions in the Middle East may yet call for heightened deployments in the future. Peacekeeping remains vital to the maintenance of international peace and security.



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# Peacekeeping Overstretch: Symptoms, Causes, and Consequences

## Background Paper for the May 26th, 2010 Launch Event for the Thematic Series “Building More Effective UN Peace Operations”

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United Nations peace operations face an extended and dangerous period of strategic uncertainty. A series of setbacks have coincided with military overstretch and the financial crisis, raising the risk that UN peacekeeping may contract, despite high continuing needs.

An excessive contraction in peacekeeping would have serious consequences for international peace and stability. UN peacekeeping has proved to be a versatile tool for deterring or reversing inter-state conflict, ending civil wars, mitigating humanitarian crises, and extending state authority in areas where state capacity is weak or contested. Not all operations succeed, or succeed in full. But collectively, according to rigorous research, international mediation and peacekeeping have contributed to an 80% decline in total armed conflict since the early 1990s. Although this has not been the work of the UN alone – individual Member States, regional organizations, and non-governmental actors have played vital roles – the UN has been an indispensable contributor.

Research also suggests that demand for peacekeeping – and specifically for UN peacekeeping – will rise, not fall, in the coming years. To overcome current strains and meet future challenges, both individual operations and the peacekeeping system as a whole require continued political, military, and financial commitment by states and institutions.

The good news is that although there are divergent perceptions of the nature and scale of current difficulties, a broad majority of UN Member States share a sense of the importance of making peace-keeping work – and work better.

This paper takes as its starting point the notion that a shared diagnosis of the problem is the prerequisite of

shared solutions. To this end, it is necessary to distinguish between the observable *symptoms* of peacekeeping's current malaise – various forms of overstretch – and its causes. This paper argues that the increasingly familiar symptoms of overstretch – strains on troop contributors, rising financial costs and headquarters strains – are consequences of two sets of underlying challenges: operational and political. Strains are also caused by incomplete (or reversed) reforms – again, both operational (the Secretariat) and political (UNSC).

Shared diagnosis and shared solutions are critical, because peacekeeping is a shared responsibility – the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the PBC all have roles to play. Troop and financial contributors, both in and outside of the Security Council, are essential actors. The Secretariat and Member States both have vital responsibilities. Restoring confidence, improving performance, and enhancing the capacity of UN peacekeeping will take renewed effort by all concerned actors. If unity of effort is a critical determinant of success on the ground, unity of purpose at headquarters is an essential pre-condition.

The overall number of UN peacekeeping personnel in the field has grown nearly ten fold over the last seven years. The result is an overstretched system. The principal symptoms of peacekeeping overstretch are three: strain on troop contributors; rapidly rising financial costs; and diffused attention at headquarters, by both the Secretariat and the Security Council.

**Troop contributor overstretch.** There are over 82,000 military personnel and some 10,300 police currently serving in 18 UN missions worldwide. Deployments of UN peacekeepers slowed significantly in 2008 as it became increasingly difficult to find and deploy personnel for new missions. Traditional large-scale contributors

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This background paper is the independent work of the NYU Center on International Cooperation. It draws in part on the recent CIC report to the DPKO/DFS 'New Horizons' process. The views expressed herein do not necessarily coincide with those of the Government of Canada or of the United Nations Secretariat.

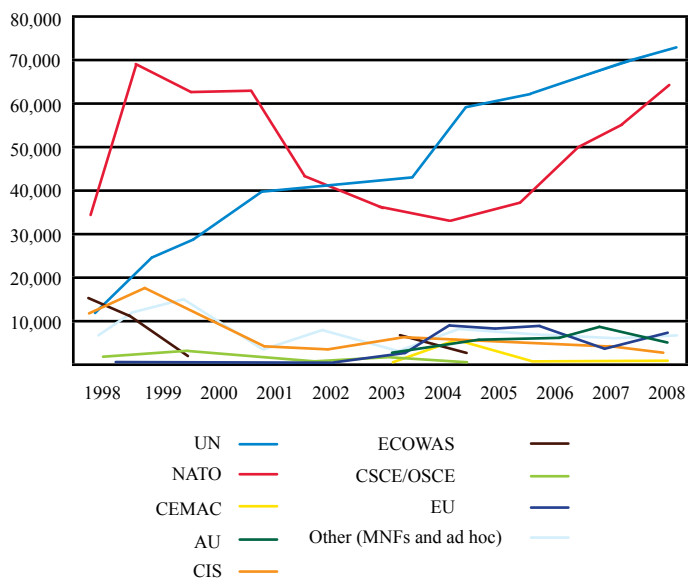
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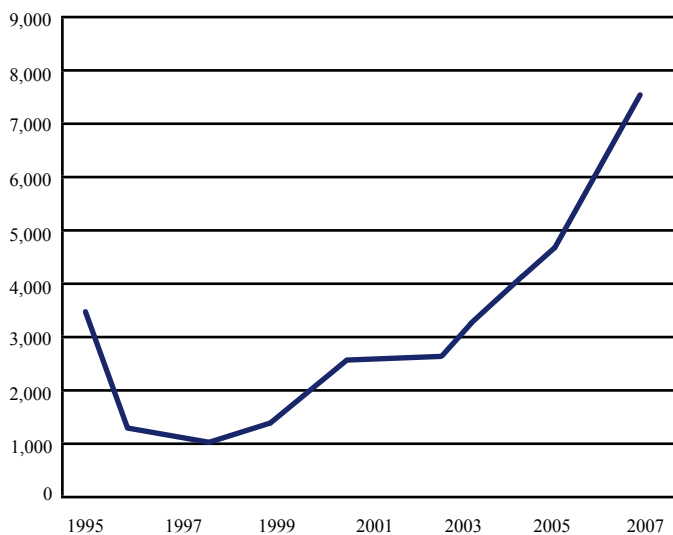


face new constraints on their ability to deploy into UN missions. Even where UN peacekeeping operations have sufficient levels of infantry to meet deployment requirements, it faces a shortage of force enablers, like airlift and field hospitals, and of force multipliers, including helicopters and armored personnel carriers. Without this equipment, UN troops can neither rapidly respond to protect civilians in vast territories like Darfur and Congo, nor adequately protect themselves from attack, resulting in caveats on what operations troop contributors are willing to undertake.

**Military Deployments in Global Peace Operations**



**UN Peacekeeping Expenditures (In \$US millions)**



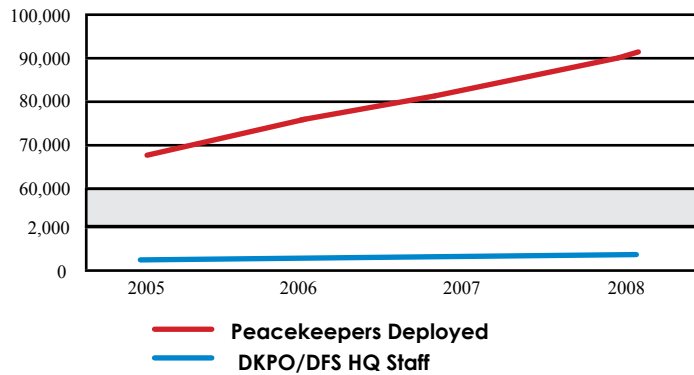
**Headquarters Overstretch.** The United Nations is the biggest institutional provider of peacekeepers worldwide, accounting for some 50 percent of global deployments. It manages those peacekeepers with a fraction of the headquarters resources employed by Member States or better resourced organizations like NATO. Despite increases in staffing to both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, the ratio of headquarters staff to field personnel is nearly 1:100. By comparison, NATO has a ratio of 1:18, or 4000 headquarters staff to over 74,000 troops. This matters, because it reduces the options available to DPKO for more sustained headquarters engagement in command and control. Although the UN's decentralized command and control arrangement has served it well in many instances, it does have limitations: in its ability to sustain political support for high-risk operations; and in its ability to manage regional dynamics. These are likely to be growing, not receding, challenges for future UN operations.

Strain on mission oversight is not limited to the Secretariat. The crisis in eastern DRC generated tensions among the Security Council, troop contributors, and the Secretariat over timely and adequate reporting. But political attention in the Security Council was also strained. Whereas in the past, the Security Council has had to oversee a handful of peacekeeping operations, only a small number of them in complex or risky environments, now the Security Council has to oversee 18 peacekeeping operations, many of them in highly complex environments, as well as several political missions – to say nothing of managing critical strategic files on its agenda that demand sustained political attention.

**Financial Overstretch.** The budget for UN peacekeeping reached a record US\$7.3 billion in 2008-2009, a ten percent increase over the previous year and a five-fold increase in just under a decade. This figure significantly understates the financial strain, however, at the same time, many of the UN's largest donors have experienced rapidly rising costs for their participation in UN-mandated NATO and European Union missions, as well as their



### Growth of UN Peacekeeping Deployments and Headquarters Staff: 2005-2008



voluntary contributions for African Union operations. Globally, the net budget for peace operations likely exceeds US\$30 billion.

The impact of the financial crisis will exacerbate these strains as Member States look to reduce national budgets. Their ability and willingness to underwrite UN costs will be measured against competing priorities. There may be several impacts.

*First*, although UN operations continue to be relatively cheap, Member States are likely to question the expense of long-running missions, creating pressure to draw them down. In some cases, the timing may be right; elsewhere, premature downsizing or withdrawal can have disastrous effects, as seen in Timor-Leste in 2006.

*Second*, as the cost of the military component of peacekeeping missions is relatively fixed (reimbursement scales for troops, police, equipment, prices for fuel and rations), cuts may be made to more “flexible” aspects of budgets, like civilians – but these have significant impacts on performance.

*Third*, reductions in assessments and voluntary funds risk undermining efforts to secure more predictable, sustainable, and flexible financing for strengthening the capacity of regional organizations, above all the African Union. As the willingness of countries outside the continent to field troops for African missions has declined, African countries have themselves shouldered the

burden – including in the most insecure environments, like Somalia and Darfur. Mounting these missions places a greater strain in terms of financing and capabilities on the AU relative to other organizations.

### Causes of Overstretch

If there is increasing awareness of the symptoms of overstretch, there is as yet inadequate shared understanding of its causes. Some of these cases are operational – UN peacekeepers are deploying in large and logistically constrained environments; and they are doing so for longer, in part because of lags in early recovery.

**Scale: Big missions in big places.** Successfully implementing mission mandates is complicated by the nature of the environments into which they deploy. High levels of troops are unable to compensate for the size and logistical difficulty of the environments in DRC, Sudan, and Chad in which they are deployed. There are frequent references to the ‘large’ mission the UN has deployed in the DR Congo – now has nearly 17,000 troops. But by comparison, the UN had 17,500 troops deployed in Sierra Leone with a similar mandate in 1999. And whereas in Sierra Leone that translated into a troop-land ratio of 1:1.6, (one soldier for every 1.6 square kilometres of territory), in DRC the equivalent ratio was 1:48. Even taking into account that fact that MONUC concentrates its presence in the east of the country, the difference in density is still striking.

The lack of infrastructure exacerbates the problem of scale. Implementing complex mandates in such environments often leads to an excessive dispersion of forces, reducing the chances of effective responses to military challenges. This is a constant risk in large theaters; one that the UN cannot remedy without greater agility and mobility brought by equipment like helicopters. (At the same time, sophisticated capabilities are not a panacea, as NATO difficulties in Afghanistan demonstrates.)



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**Exit Strategies: Transitioning to peacebuilding and development.** A viable political framework and security presence are preconditions for the resumption of economic recovery and other development activities. These, in turn, are vital to creating sustainable peace and therefore to the eventual drawdown of UN peacekeepers. The ability of the international community to organize around early support to economic recovery, livelihoods, and essential services, as well as core state-building tasks has proven a significant challenge. The Peacebuilding Commission has begun to address some of these problems – but so far only in late recovery contexts.

Gaps in strategy, financing, and capacity weaken international efforts to support early economic, social, and political recovery from conflict. Consequently, early efforts to build a functioning government and to jump-start economic activity are often not launched. As a result, local confidence in the political process and in international commitment is not maintained. All this contributes to poor outcomes. International actors have been compelled to stay longer than expected, as in Bosnia, their recovery efforts have faltered, as in Afghanistan, or both, as in Timor Leste.

The forthcoming SG report on early recovery is intended to address these gaps. Also warranted is a hard look at the success to date of the integrated mission model used by the UN to link its political/security and developmental/humanitarian efforts. While this model has at times and in places served as an effective building block for broader integration of strategy, it has not done so reliably or in an adequately inclusive manner.

**Political Process Failures.** Scale, duration, strain – all of these matter. But in the end, the performance of peacekeeping has to be judged in the context of wider political engagement. As the Brahimi report emphatically established, peacekeeping cannot substitute for an effective political process.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Political process” has a variety of meanings: it may include ongoing contacts between parties to a peace agreement; a democratic process involving elections or the approval of a constitution; or regional and international contacts on the status of a contested territory.

In recent years, though, it has been tasked to do so. During 2008, political processes in central Africa, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad, and Haiti suffered collapse or failure, placing peacekeeping operations in these theatres under severe strain. Credible political process and credible military presence should reinforce one another. But these cases demonstrate that the obverse is also true: a large deployment of UN peacekeepers is alone an insufficient guarantee of generating or maintaining a credible political process.

Political issues not only underpin peacekeeping, but are key to determining the overarching strategy for – and most appropriate form of – UN engagement. Peacekeeping may not always be the best response from the Security Council. In the absence of viable political frameworks, UN peacekeeping missions have been deployed with high expectations, but without real chances of success.

The Security Council has paid insufficient attention to the political dimensions of prevention and to stabilization. Earlier, more robust political engagement by the Security Council, or on its behalf, might prevent tensions from escalating into full-blown crises warranting more robust engagement and investment. Similarly, more sustained engagement once a crisis has reached the Council's agenda would help ensure that settlements are not derailed by local political disputes, or regional complications.

**Limited Consent.** A more tricky question is that of consent. The Brahimi report made clear while consent was a bedrock principle of UN peacekeeping, it would not always be present in full. UN peacekeeping operations – sometimes with support from other actors – have shown that they can overcome limited consent from non-state actors, including through robust operations (Haiti, Sierra Leone, eastern DRC in 2006.) Indeed, these missions have performed an under-examined but critical function – that of extending state authority, both through civilian and military means. This is a tough challenge, though, and one that most UN operations are neither mandated nor equipped to handle.



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Far more complicated is the question of non-consent, or limited consent from the state. Where peacekeeping operations have been deployed without strong consent of the state, their ability to make a positive impact on the ground has been sharply constrained. Such operations may perform roles in helping to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of conflict – but even this function can be frustrated.

The distinction between state and non-state consent is important because, some recent debates notwithstanding, the majority of large-scale UN operations are deliberately designed to extend rather than limit the authority of states. Put differently: the Security Council is normally in the business of *strengthening governments* rather than changing regimes. This fact, often overlooked, is essential to explaining some recent successes and failures of peacekeeping – and may help guide future deployments.

**Incomplete Reforms.** To say that UN peacekeeping is facing logistical/management strains as a function of operational overstretch, and that it is facing political/conceptual strains as a function of a mismatch between peacekeeping per se and the underlying political processes it is designed to support, is simply to say that the process of implementing the Brahimi reforms has stalled, or even reversed. Significant elements of the Brahimi agenda were adopted by Member States and the Secretariat between 2000 and 2005, but reform slowed after the start of the Iraq war.

In the Secretariat, efforts to enhance personnel quality, logistics, and command and control all suffered. More recent reform efforts, like the establishment of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) and expansion of the Office of Military Affairs, both in DPKO, have yielded cautious optimism. But much work remains to be done in such areas as command and control, rapid deployment, civilian deployment, procurement, and human resources.

The problems are compounded by the perception that the Security Council has also forgotten to observe

the “rules” of Brahimi: the need to match politics to peacekeeping, and resources to mandates. Moreover, as the Security Council has authorized of missions where the political framework is absent or weak, where consent is in question, and risks are therefore high, it has not commensurately expanded its consultation with non-Council troop contributors and financial contributors – i.e. with other risk takers. The gap between decision-making and risk-taking has widened, eroding the sense of shared responsibility, and shared commitment.

### **Conclusion**

Shared commitment to UN peacekeeping is important because an assessment of future conflict trends suggests rising not falling demand, and increased not decreased complexity. New operations will likely face opposition from hardened and sophisticated ‘spoilers’, sometimes with international backers, and be called upon to play a primary or supporting role in extending the authority of weak or contested governments. Capacity and political factors ensure that much of the upcoming demand will land on the shoulders of the UN.

The challenge ahead, then, is both to manage current strains but also to do so in a way that helps to jump-start necessary and stalled reforms – both operational and political. This paper, and the seminar into which it is designed to feed, aim to contribute to that by providing research and information that can – hopefully – help forge a shared diagnosis of the problem. (The next two seminars and accompanying research papers will delve more deeply into two critical issues touched on but not elaborated here: matching political strategy to peacekeeping operations; and partnership with regional organizations, including on the question of financing.) As argued at the outset, shared analysis is a prerequisite for shared responsibility; and shared responsibility is the *sine qua non* for more effective, more efficient and more equitable action by UN peacekeeping.



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## Peacekeeping Overstretch: Symptoms, Causes and Consequences

### Summary of the May 26th, 2009 Launch Event for the Thematic Series on “Building More Effective UN Peace Operations”

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On 26 May 2009, the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, in cooperation with the Center on International Cooperation (CIC), hosted the first of a series of thematic roundtable discussions aimed at building more effective UN Peacekeeping operations. The launch event gathered a comprehensive grouping of Permanent Representatives and peacekeeping practitioners for briefings on the current causes and symptoms of peacekeeping overstretch and the various ongoing initiatives aimed at overcoming these challenges. The roundtable panel consisted of: Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John McNee; UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy; UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Ms. Susanna Malcorra; and CIC's Director, Dr. Bruce Jones. The meeting's proceedings were governed by Chatham House Rule.

UN peacekeeping operations have grown considerably in size and complexity over the course of the past decade, but are showing signs of increasing strain. The symptoms include shortages of troops and other essential personnel, burgeoning costs amid the global economic downturn, limits on force enablers and multipliers, and flagging mission management at UN Headquarters. The causes are both operational and political: large, but geographically dispersed deployments and inadequate strategies for sustainable exit, on one hand; the absence of a viable political settlement, limited consent, and stalled reforms on the other. There is a risk that UN peacekeeping operations will contract unless these challenges are addressed. To do so, the panelists agreed that what is necessary is not only a shared understanding of the causes and symptoms of the current crisis of confidence affecting peacekeeping, but also a harmonization of the efforts aimed at surmounting them.

The panelists outlined the joint Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support's "New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping" initiative, which aims to provide a foundation for discussions among the UN Secretariat and Member States on reforms necessary to better meet the complexities of contemporary peacekeeping operations. While still preliminary, the initiative is considering: (i) establishing broader political consensus on priorities for UN peacekeeping operations, their sequencing, and limits; (ii) improving strategic guidance and planning for peacekeeping operations and their transition to peacebuilding; (iii) assessing the balance between headquarters- and regionally-based support systems capable of servicing multiple missions; (iv) modernizing procurement procedures, information management, and recruitment rules and procedures to reflect current operational needs; and (v) exploring mechanisms that would allow the UN to deploy more quickly and efficiently during the mission start up, as well as to more flexibly transfer assets and personnel between missions.

During the question and answer period, Member State representatives stressed the need for UN peacekeeping structures to be updated to reflect contemporary operational demands and recommended the following additional lines of inquiry: (i) the budgeting procedures of UN peacekeeping, including the potential for a singular UN budgetary process; (ii) better planning to safely draw-down peacekeeping operations and transition to peacebuilding once stability has been achieved; and (iii) the need to revisit principles put forward in the "Brahimi Report," especially the implications of deploying peacekeeping operations into contexts where there is no peace agreement. Overall, Member State representatives emphasized that any potential reform of UN peacekeeping must be guided by clearly articulated goals based on solid political consensus from key constituencies, including the Security Council, Troop/Police Contributing Countries, and major financial contributors.



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# The Political Dimensions of Peace Operations

## Background Paper for the September 11th, 2009 Meeting

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From the signing of a peace agreement and the decision for a Security Council mandate, to planning and implementation, UN peacekeeping operations are simultaneously reliant on and support a series of political processes to facilitate long-term peace. A credible military presence and political processes reinforce each other operationally and ultimately the utility of UN peacekeeping operations correlates to the political progress they contribute to. Striking the adequate balance between stability activities and enabling political reconciliation in a post conflict situation is no easy task and always context specific, but is a crucial determinant for a successful operation and its ultimate withdrawal.

That military peacekeeping is never a substitute for an effective political process was a central lesson of the Brahimi Report, but this principle has fallen from focus in several large-scale UN peacekeeping contexts. Recently, the failure or suspension of political processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Georgia and Somalia have had detrimental impact on security situations on the ground and the resultant strategic uncertainty has placed strain on headquarters and contributing country resources. Further, the failure to engender domestic political processes has delayed the transfer of responsibilities from costly military peacekeeping to other, 'lighter' peacebuilding presences.

### ***The Relationship Between Peacekeeping and Politics***

Conflicts are triggered by political factors, and short of outright victory for one side, political processes must always be the means to solve them. In the context of peacekeeping operations, a 'political process' evolves over time and can come in a number of different forms: it may include ongoing contacts between parties to a peace agreement; a democratic process involving elections or the approval of a constitution; or

regional and international contacts on the status of a contested territory. Across the range of circumstances it is important that the ultimate goal an intervention be aimed at building the domestic ability to lead and manage sustainable political processes after war's end. However, rogue actors, spoilers and sudden shocks can test even the strongest political settlement.

Insulating and sustaining one or more political processes are the key functions of UN peacekeeping operations. The UN's field presences serve this role by: providing transitional security for the consolidation of peace agreements and national political process; supporting those political processes through facilitation and substantive support, and; reducing the risk of recourse to arms by demobilizing forces and helping national authorities articulate the rule of law.

To perform their political functions effectively, UN peacekeeping operations need a variety of resources: First, they need strong political teams backstopping the political functions of mission leadership; Second, they need effective substantive support from headquarters from not only DPKO, but also the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and other parts of the UN system; Third, because all politics is local, a peacekeeping operation needs effective political presence outside of capitals and in the surrounding region; Fourth, missions need to be equipped with a mechanism that allows for using budgeted funds toward political activities, especially as regards capacity building, and; Fifth, they need appropriately equipped force contingents able to interpret and adapt to local political conditions with a mandate to protect the political process. This is most difficult – even well-led force contingents are frequently deployed without adequate situation awareness or local political knowledge.

In many cases, peacekeeping 'success' depends heavily on the ability of a mission's civilian leadership (in most situations the Special Representatives of the



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Secretary General.) to alter the goals of warring parties and stimulate political progress. Indeed, from Namibia to Cambodia and Timor Leste, SRSGs with a strong grasp of the conflict dynamics were able to employ political mediation tactics to capitalize on the communication space provided by military peacekeeping, taking the 'force out of politics.' Unfortunately, finding the right person for the job tends to be quite difficult.

Most of all, UN field presences need to be linked to and supported by broader political mechanisms, at the Security Council and beyond, that reinforce their political role and bring weight and authority to bear on UN messages. Consolidating national political stability also often means corraling regional political actors – a task not often suitable for heads of missions, but one that must be closely coordinated with them. Further, when considering whether to deploy at all, the Security Council should keep in mind that the most effective political strategies for concluding conflicts may be implemented through mechanisms other than a peace operation.

### **Consent - The central political challenge**

The political challenges for UN peacekeeping largely emerge from the principle of consent and how it is applied in modern operations. Consent by the host, warring parties and the international community, along with impartiality and non-use of force, is a long standing core principle of UN peacekeeping doctrine, derived from Cold War operations and reaffirmed in DPKO's 2008 "principles and guidelines". Yet recent Security Council mandates have grown increasingly ambitious, especially around the use of force, and peacekeepers are deployed in theaters where they cannot expect the consent of all parties, and where there is often 'no peace to keep.'

This has, in some circumstances, such as in the DRC and potentially Somalia, set UN missions on collision courses with rebel/splinter groups with substantial external backing who are left out of political processes. To deal with such spoilers, a UN peacekeeping mission

need not only be equipped with the military credibility to protect the peace process, but also must have sufficient resources to properly respond politically to these pressures.

The lack of consent by host states themselves presents an even larger problem. Some UN missions have had to operate in the face of explicit withdrawals of consent by governments, as recently in Ethiopia/Eritrea. Others have had to contend with constraints on their actions as a price for continued consent, as in Darfur and Chad. In such cases where a lack of consent yields the absence of viable political frameworks, UN peacekeeping missions have been deployed with high expectations but with little prospect of supporting long-term settlement of the conflict. Full consent need not be a determinant of success of an operation - but its absence certainly adds to the challenge, the complexity and the likelihood of failure.

This is a political problem that goes to the heart of UN peacekeeping. It highlights divisions between states that emphasize the importance of sovereignty (including major troop contributors) and those that tend to give humanitarian concerns and human rights precedence. The consequence of consent-less peacekeeping is that the UN has recently found itself in a strategic muddle, operating neither in an enforcement mode nor with a political basis for consent-based peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

### **Conclusion**

As demand for UN peacekeeping operations is likely to rise, political challenges will then continue to represent the central obstacle to establishing long-term peace. To ensure that peace operations continue to serve their intended role and bring relief to conflict-ridden states, it is important that UN peacekeeping rest on a solid political consensus around both the aims and means to achieve its ambitious goals.



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## The Political Dimensions of Peacekeeping Operations

### Summary of the September 11th, 2009 Panel Discussion

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The second installment of the thematic series, "Building More Effective UN Peace Operations," hosted by the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) was held on 11 September 2009. Building upon the series launch, which surveyed the current causes and symptoms of peacekeeping overstretch, the second roundtable explored the intersection between politics and peace operations – and the tensions therein. Following introductory remarks from Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John McNee and CIC's Director, Dr. Bruce Jones, panelists Jean-Marie Guéhenno (formerly the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, 2000-2008) and Mr. Michael von der Shulenberg (Executive Representative for the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone [UNIPSIL]), drew on their extensive operational experience for a frank discussion with attendees on the centrality of political processes in the success of any peace operation. The meeting's proceedings were governed by Chatham House Rule.

The panel emphasized that the goal of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions is first and foremost a political one; wielding a range of available means in support of a political process that will facilitate long-term peace. Consent of the parties to the conflict and the host nation is therefore an overarching political concern for the UN; peacekeeping missions cannot impose peace. Current practice has demonstrated an over-emphasis on the military component of UN peace operations at the expense of securing and maintaining consent, tailoring military operations to political goals, and supporting the evolution of the political processes necessary to engender long-term stability and development. This has been detrimental in UN peacekeeping operations from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Darfur to Georgia and Ethiopia/Eritrea, where complacency and a failure to pursue genuine political settlements have served

to marginalize the UN's efforts and create strategic uncertainty within peace operations – resulting, in the latter cases, in mission closure.

The panel agreed that political processes must be adaptive to the operational environment. There is a significant change in the means by which the UN supports consolidation of the political process during the handover from peacekeeping to longer-term peacebuilding activities – from the strategic use of security, to the strategic use of development. This progression must be matched with adequate and appropriate human and financial resources from the UN as well as Member States. The case of Sierra Leone serves as a prime example: with the establishment of UNIPSIL, a peacekeeping force comprised of 20,000 military and civilian troops was succeeded by a team of 70 highly specialized personnel. However, sufficiently skilled personnel; who are able to maintain political processes in peace operations, are a finite resource. Thus, harnessing the full range of political resources among the UN and its Member States is a central challenge.

During the open discussion with audience members, Member State representatives reinforced the centrality of the evolution of political processes throughout the lifespan of a UN peace operation intervention and the need for better engagement with local actors for any political strategy to achieve its goals. The discussion also reinforced the difficulties in matching political, financial, and material resources at the inception of a mission, especially during the creation of its mandate – a subject that will be the focus of the next installment of the thematic series on 4 December 2009, where distinguished panelists, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and Major General (ret.) Patrick Cammert (former Force Commander, UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo), will discuss the process of negotiating and implementing mandates for UN peace operations.





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## **Towards More Inclusive Mandate-Making, More Effective Mandate Implementation**

### **Background Paper for the December 4th, 2009 Meeting**

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The combined burden of record high deployment levels, an increasingly complex range of tasks and the ongoing global financial crisis have brought into sharp focus how the UN authorizes and maintains its peacekeeping operations. Despite having over 100,000 uniformed personnel in the field, UN peacekeeping is failing to deliver fully in the most high profile peacekeeping venues – including Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo – due to an inability to field troops and resources, absence of clarity on political goals for mandated tasks, and disagreement on the means necessary to achieve them. Meanwhile, where the UN has helped establish stability, as in Haiti and Liberia, it must also determine how to efficiently and responsibly transition from heavy and costly peacekeeping operations to lighter, alternative presences in an international atmosphere where financial austerity is of primary concern.

Ideally, UN peacekeeping mandates are strategic documents – the informed outcome of detailed consultations between the Security Council, troop/police contributing countries (T/PCC), and the Secretariat. But, in practice, negotiation of mandates has been a less inclusive process. This has contributed to a crisis in confidence in UN peacekeeping. The perceived lack of adequate consultation has amplified deeper questions about the purposes of UN peacekeeping and the political consensus needed to support it, and has spurred recent activity both within and outside of the Security Council aimed at strengthening the relationship among the stakeholders in UN peacekeeping operations.

This is not the first time peacekeeping stakeholders have attempted to mend the UN's mandating process. Since the outset of the multidimensional era of UN peacekeeping in the early 1990s, better interaction between T/PCCs, the Secretariat, and the Security Council has been the subject of both formal and informal initiatives that culminated in the

development of consultative structures. Used either inconsistently or disregarded, past structures have failed to cultivate a mandating process that actually builds confidence between the Security Council and those who implement operations. This is most evident in the stalled implementation of recommendations for more consultative and informed mandating processes put forward in the “Brahimi” Report in 2000.

#### ***Current Dysfunction***

The coalition of Member States needed to support multidimensional peacekeeping operations – those who sit on the Security Council, those who contribute troops/police, and those who pay the bulk of the assessed budget – has become increasingly fractured, threatening the performance of UN peacekeeping. Meetings held between the Security Council, T/PCCs, and the UN Secretariat on drafting mission mandates are often perfunctory, without sufficient discussion of the substance of mandates – e.g., clearly defined goals, agreement on strategy, and acknowledgement of resource implications. Although there are indications that this process recently has begun to change, engagement has historically been timed when Security Council deliberations on a mandate have essentially concluded. The result has been a relationship where T/PCCs have limited opportunity to influence the overall design of an operation, but are expected to carry the bulk of the operational risks associated with the Security Council's decisions. In particular, conducting tactical operations that go beyond a purely defensive posture. Tactical operations may be undertaken, for example, to protect civilians or to extend state authority—but they subject contingents to risks that some Member States are unwilling to bear. Lack of sustained consultation also frequently results in a situation of mandates being ill-adapted to realities on the ground.



The Brahimi Report stressed that authorization of a mission mandate should be tied to securing the requisite resources prior to approval – an issue that DPKO has re-introduced in its 'New Horizons' report.<sup>1</sup> Insufficient consultation has yielded slow personnel deployment timelines and has also had a dissuasive impact on potential contributors of valuable specialized assets necessary to support contemporary multidimensional operations. This was most recently seen in generating both personnel and helicopters for UNAMID in Darfur. In the absence of such consultations, the Secretariat has tended to recommend large forces, conscious of the fact that numbers may be required to mitigate the lack of mobility and capacity to employ tactical use of force. The consequence of this, however, has been increased cost, and a Security Council that is wary of DPKO's military estimates.

Further complicating matters are divisions within the Security Council itself. Here, disputes among the P5 regarding mandated tasks, especially in relation to the use of force, yield ambiguity on how they should be implemented in the field and what the ultimate goals should be. UN operations have been increasingly mandated to deploy to conflict zones where there is no accepted peace agreement, or where tasks such as the protection of civilians and providing support to government forces is central to the mandate. But when overall direction comes from a divided Security Council the result is operations that have a poorly defined role and are insufficiently resourced. From Kosovo to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the failure of the Council to clearly delineate its stance and provide clear direction on sensitive issues has placed a tremendous strain on the entire UN political/peacekeeping enterprise. While resolving the political differences amongst members of the Security Council is by no means the ultimate goal that should drive strategy on the ground, clarity on these issues gleaned through consultations could alleviate some of the risks associated with them.

<sup>1</sup>Note that CIC, in its background paper to the DPKO New Horizon's process ('Building on Brahimi'), took issue with this recommendation, arguing that the act of passing the mandate was an necessary pre-cursor to the political effort to mobilize forces.

## **Potential for a More Inclusive Mandating Process**

There is growing consensus on the need to revisit the manner in which the Security Council negotiates and drafts peacekeeping mandates. In the first half of 2009, the issue has been taken up under the auspices of several reform initiatives within and outside the Security Council. This is a potentially positive development, but it risks duplication of efforts and competing outcomes or repeating the failures of previous initiatives. It is thus important to consider the variety of options being discussed.

The Security Council has begun considering ways in which it could improve the quality of military advice it receives in order to better assess Secretariat proposals. Some Security Council members have proposed reactivating the moribund Military Staff Committee (and expanding it beyond the P5) for regular, if informal, meetings of Council members' military advisors to pre-vet Secretariat military plans, and/or meetings of political directors to review political strategy with the Secretariat. While this initiative may work toward an enhanced relationship between the Secretariat and Security Council, its effectiveness in creating better informed mandates may be limited if it fails to simultaneously engage with T/PCCs.<sup>2</sup>

Heightened, informal strategic engagement prior to the authorization of mandates could also serve to validate Secretariat plans for more robust operations where warranted. Sound technical advice from military advisors of the Security Council and T/PCCs could reaffirm the case for robust, mobile, and technologically advanced capabilities for missions deployed to challenging environments, logistically or politically (or both). T/PCC engagement at this stage, while currently an anomaly, could provide a constructive forum for joint planning with those involved and give national contingents in theatre (and their capitals) more ownership over mission objectives and their rules of engagement.

<sup>2</sup>In 'Building on Brahimi' CIC recommended that major TCCs be incorporated into any new MSC function.



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Further, more informal strategic engagement throughout the mission lifespan in the form of mission specific “Friends Groups” could also serve a crucial function of assessing progress toward mandated tasks, while also providing a venue for inclusive consultations on mission drawdown and appropriate exit/handover strategies. Here, one option being considered for better communication on mission management and performance is the enhanced use of benchmarks in mandates and the requirement of periodic reporting against them throughout a mission's life span – though work on this issue suffers from a continuing tendency to substitute quantifiable measures from more dynamic political analysis.

Finally, and as important as collaboration on the technical mandating process, is the need to achieve strategic agreement among peacekeeping stakeholders on key issues that have recently proven divisive. In particular, reaching consensus on issues like the protection of civilian and the implications of robust peacekeeping would be useful in providing clearer mandates and potentially illustrate the limitations of UN peacekeeping in relation to both capabilities and ultimate objectives. Here, the current initiative started by the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, engaging Secretariat and T/PCC and Security Council on generic issues as they relate to specific mission contexts in an effort to achieve more clarity on roles and mandated tasks is a step in the right direction. However, it must be noted that previous experience in the Working Group has not been effective in cultivating inclusiveness and any progress will come only with heightened substantive engagement by all parties.

### **Conclusion**

Previous initiatives suggest two basic ground rules if present efforts are to succeed. First, it is essential that inclusiveness and collaboration on mandates do not come at the expense of the unique relationship between the Security Council, Secretariat and T/PCC. The Secretariat's right to make independent recommendations to the Security Council and non-

Security Council personnel contributors, are a crucial characteristic of UN peacekeeping operations. Second, and potentially more importantly, creating a more collaborative mandating process does not require the creation of new bureaucratic structures, but can be effected by a shift in the manner in which stakeholders approach the process of creating a mandate.



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## **Towards More Inclusive Mandate-Making, More Effective Mandate Implementation**

### **Summary of the December 4th, 2009 Panel Discussion**

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The third roundtable discussion of the series, "Building More Effective UN Peace Operations," hosted by the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) was held on 4 December 2009. The discussion investigated the process of mandate-making for contemporary peacekeeping operations and the operational impact of those political negotiations. Following introductory remarks from Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John McNee and CIC Senior Fellow, Teresa Whitfield, panelists Lakhdar Brahimi (formerly the Foreign Minister of Algeria and former UN SRSG and international mediator in multiple conflict theaters) and Lieutenant General Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor (UN Military Advisor), discussed the challenges to peacekeeping operations that emanate from the mandate making process. The meeting's proceedings were governed by Chatham House Rule.

As a point of departure, the panel agreed that the coalition of Member States needed to support multidimensional peacekeeping operations – those who sit on the Security Council, those who contribute troops/police, and those who pay the bulk of the assessed budget – has become increasingly fractured. It is this division of labor, however, that allowed for the dramatic growth of UN peacekeeping in terms of deployment levels and complexity over the course of the last decade. Yet the current dysfunction among these stakeholders in making and renewing peacekeeping mandates has had implications for the performance of UN operations. Further, a perceived lack of adequate consultation has amplified deeper questions about the purposes of UN peacekeeping and the political consensus needed to support it, and has spurred recent activity both within and outside of the Security Council aimed at restoring and strengthening the relationship among the stakeholders in UN peacekeeping operations.

Beyond stressing the central need of creating a more inclusive mandate-making process, the panelists identified a number of substantive improvements that could ensure that Security Council mandates reflect the political and operational realities of a given peacekeeping context. Chief among these recommendations was the need for the mandate-making process to reflect constantly evolving realities in the operational theater. Often the originating mandate conferred to an operation is ill suited to address the situation on the ground once the peacekeeping operation is deployed. It was suggested that originating mandates should remain provisional during the first year of an operation and be subject to frequent review and alterations if deemed necessary.

A frank open discussion period with Member States followed the panel's presentations. Member State representatives reinforced the centrality of improving the way that peace operations are mandated and reinvigorating the partnership needed for implementation, especially in the face of anticipated growing demand for UN peacekeeping. This sentiment emerged from a shared recognition that the UN is the best placed actor for rebuilding states ravaged by war, but to serve this role its operating methods need to be updated and made more efficient to ensure that it can continue to deliver. Directly related to the creation of peacekeeping mandates is the availability and deployment of resources necessary to implement these tasks. With this in mind, the crucial role of the Department of Field Support in the performance of UN peacekeeping operations will be the focus of the next installment of the thematic series on 12 February 2010, where panelists, Under Secretary-General for Field Support, Susan Malcorra and Major General Patrick Cammert (ret.) will discuss the challenges facing the UN's critical support structures and the implications of DFS's forthcoming Global Support Strategy.



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## Field Support for Peace Operations

### Background Paper for the February 12th, 2010 Meeting

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UN peacekeeping deployments have changed significantly over the last decade. The diversity of mandates, the operational complexity, and increased risks borne by peacekeepers underscore both the changes in the nature of insecurity and the continued importance of UN operations to the maintenance of international peace.

Field support, to paraphrase an old adage, is the lifeblood of UN peace operations. The Department of Field Support (DFS) backstops over 120,000 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers in 17 field missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). This marks a 20 percent increase since DFS was established in June 2007, and a three-fold increase since 2000. Contemporary UN peacekeeping missions are responsible for an array of tasks, from establishing security and protecting of civilians to laying the foundation for rule of law and long-term peacebuilding. Missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Chad, highlight a growing trend in deployment to expeditionary theaters lacking developed infrastructure or local contracting providers. There, and elsewhere, the UN has faced operational challenges warranting faster deployment, enhanced mobility, improved safety and security, and, once mandates are achieved, more flexible transition to peacebuilding. In fact, despite fielding the same number of peacekeeping missions today as in 2003-2004, the cost of these operations has tripled to some USD 7.75 billion.<sup>1</sup>

The demands on DFS have not been limited to UN peacekeeping, either. Since its establishment, DFS has been called upon to provide support to a burgeoning number of Department of Political Affairs (DPA)-led "special political missions" financed from the regular UN budget – from stand-alone peacebuilding offices like the UN Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, to those established upon the withdrawal of peacekeeping

mission (e.g., the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone) – and to *ad hoc* partnership arrangements, like those established for the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Research on global conflict trends suggests that the demand for complex UN peacekeeping operations will continue to rise in the near- to medium-term. Yet, without reform, delivering the full range of support requirements demanded by UN field operations poses a challenge for DFS. Its support activities are governed largely by financial and procurement rules and procedures that were not designed for peace operations, let alone for today's multifaceted mandates. The consequence has often been slow deployment, operational under-performance, and inefficient use of available resources. That the UN's logistical and financial support structures have been ill-suited to the demands posed by complex peacekeeping operations was the focus of several unimplemented recommendations in the Brahimi Report of 2000 and features centrally in the peacekeeping reform efforts initiated in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The persistence of this issue attests to the importance of updating DFS's support structures and the high degree of sensitivity – due to political and financial concerns both among Member States and within the Secretariat itself – surrounding reform of the means through which DFS deploys, maintains, and draws down UN peace operations.

Moreover, DFS remains better structured to meet the needs of peacekeeping than of non-peacekeeping missions. This is due, in part, to the sheer size and cost of peacekeeping operations relative to other deployments – the 2008-2009 budget for peacekeeping was eight times larger than that for SPMs<sup>3</sup> – and, related, to DFS's origin in DPKO's Office of Mission Support. This suggests a need not only to update DFS support capabilities

<sup>2</sup>See: The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting the New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping* July 2009; Bruce Jones, Richard Gowan, and Jake Sherman, *Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty*, April 2009.

<sup>3</sup>DPKO figures from <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/bnote.htm>; DPA figures from A/64/349.

<sup>1</sup>DPKO figures from <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/bnote.htm>;



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for improved effectiveness, efficiency, and flexibility in peacekeeping missions with thousands of personnel, while at the same time adapting them to meet the niche requirements of missions with as few as five.

In response to the emerging support challenges faced by contemporary peacekeeping, DFS is developing a new "Global Support Strategy," which will be presented to Member States in a Report of the Secretary-General in early 2010. The new support strategy builds on prior innovations like the Strategic Deployment Stocks and pre-mandate commitment authority – the rapid financial and logistical facilities made available to start-up peacekeeping missions as part of the Brahimi Report – and proposes new reforms to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DFS service delivery for DPKO and DPA field missions.

The Global Support Strategy proposes a package of reforms, to be introduced over a five-year window, focused on four broad areas: (i) streamlining budgetary and financial management systems, particularly for mission start-up; (ii) improving human resource management, including conditions of service for staff; (iii) enhancing logistics and communication capabilities, including introduction of pre-defined "service packages" to more rapidly and safely support the activities of military, police, and civilian field personnel; and (iv) establishing global and regional service centers supporting multiple missions. Within each of these areas, DFS is seeking to better calibrate its support whether missions are starting up, are fully operational, or are drawing down.

While the development of a new DFS strategy is a necessity, the far-reaching political, financial, and operational implications of changing the way the UN supports peace operations has yet to be fully explored. Consequently, many Member States help strategic reform by providing support for long term goals, but remain circumspect over the details. Member States must also approve legislative reforms and commit finances required for implementation of the new strategy, as well as utilize DFS services as troop and police contributing

countries. These specific and varying responsibilities performed by DFS, Member States, and the UN require clear delegation if the new reforms are to become successful. Providing clarity on these issues in advance of the upcoming discussions on DFS's new support strategy in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping (the C-34) in February 2010, and in the Fifth Committee later in 2010, will be essential to ensuring that the UN continues to deliver stability and peace to conflict afflicted areas. Its proposed launch during the 2010-2011 UN budget cycle, in the context of the global financial crisis, only adds to the challenges – and importance – of early efforts to build consensus among Member States.



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## Field Support for Peace Operations Summary of the February 12th, 2010 Panel Discussion

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The fourth panel discussion of the series, "Building More Effective UN Peace Operations," hosted by the Canadian Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) was held on 12 February 2010. The event focused on the current state of field support and explored how reforms proposed under the broader Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support's "New Horizons Initiative" could better ensure delivery of services. Following introductory remarks from Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John McNee and CIC non-Resident Fellow, Ian Johnstone, panelists Ms. Susanna Malcorra (Under-Secretary-General for Field Support) and Major General (ret'd) Patrick Cammaert (former Division Commander, MONUC in Eastern DRC), discussed the challenges facing the UN's support structures and the implications of DFS's forthcoming Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS). The meeting's proceedings were governed by Chatham House Rule.

The panel agreed that the effective and efficient support to field operations is imperative for the fulfillment of mandates and ensuring global peace and security, while the inability to provide this support would have disastrous implications for the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping. Attention was drawn to the fact that UN peacekeeping has faced dramatic growth in deployments and in the complexity of theatres in the last decade, a common theme throughout the thematic series. However, the panelists pointed to the fact that few of the reforms proposed in the "Brahimi Report" reforms of 2000 to enhance the delivery of services have been implemented. Ten years on, the demands on DFS – not only to support peacekeeping, but the African Union in Somalia and a growing number of DPA-led "special political missions" – threaten to exceed its capacity. In response, the DFS GFSS proposes a paradigm shift from mission-centric planning, financial arrangements, and assets to a global resource-management approach. This would include the promotion of family-friendly duty stations to encourage career development, a more

environmentally friendly and sustainable presence on the ground, consolidation of human and equipment resources regionally to provide more time- and cost-effective delivery of services based on geographic location and economies of scale.

The call for reform was echoed by panelists citing first-hand experience with the practical constraints of the current support system, particularly procuring resources—both human and equipment, and emphasizing the need to curtail the protracted timeline between when a mission is mandated and when personnel, equipment, and services are fully deployed. Additionally panelists noted that the breadth of missions drawing on DFS support vary greatly in terms of operational needs. Constant across all types of missions, however, is the need for rapid if not immediate supply delivery and improved safety and security. The issue of mission start-up and mission surge were highlighted as particular concerns given that the timeliness of deployment not only affects the security of civilians and staff in any given context, but also plays a vital role in ensuring the legitimacy of the UN and maintenance of political leverage.

Following the panel presentations, discussion among Member State representatives reinforced the importance of DFS's role in peace operations. The lively dialogue centered mainly on the details of how inefficiencies have been identified by DFS and what their proper solutions should be. The primary concerns raised included the financial and human resources implications of implementing the GFSS and what effect, if any, there would be on the function of existing missions. The proposed five-year time line of the GFSS also spurred questions regarding what realistically could be achieved in the short- to medium-term. The discussion highlighted both a consensus supporting the overall aims of the GFSS and a very keen interest on the part of peacekeeping stakeholders to engage in the process of developing and shaping exactly how these reforms will evolve from theory into practice.



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## Building the Rule of Law

### Background Paper for the May 6th, 2010 Meeting

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One of the central recommendations of the 2000 “Brahimi Report” called for a doctrinal shift in the use of police and civilian peacekeepers toward focusing on the strengthening of post-conflict rule of law institutions. Since then, promoting the rule of law through the reform of the judicial and security sectors has emerged as a core function of UN peace operations. Every UN-mandated peacekeeping operation deployed since 2001 has been authorized to support—if not directly implement—such reforms, whether to extend state authority, bring to heel abusive security agencies, or reestablish law and order. Further, the performance and ultimate withdrawal of six current UN missions<sup>1</sup> is contingent upon meeting benchmarks related to building the rule of law.

These activities—presently conducted by some 14,000 police and civilian peacekeepers under the UN flag—include restructuring security agencies; vetting, training, and mentoring security and justice sector personnel; modernizing corrections systems; revising legal frameworks; rebuilding courthouses, police stations, barracks, and other infrastructure; reestablishing human resource, financial, and procurement systems; and strengthening civilian oversight mechanisms.

Despite considerable attention and contribution of resources to building the rule of law through peace operations, the UN’s track record in implementing these activities has been uneven. In part, this is because these activities are still in their infancy, having only become commonly mandated tasks over the course of the last decade and a half. Yet there are also recurrent political, operational, and institutional challenges that must be redressed if UN peace operations are to effectively deliver on what has become a central goal, if not requisite of peace.

#### **Political Challenges**

Political challenges to building the rule of law stem from the interrelated issues of consent and sovereignty. Acquiring the consent of the host country to operate is one of the founding principles of peacekeeping. In missions where building the rule of law is the stated goal, there are two potential contextual extremes: weak states with dysfunctional—or nonexistent—formal justice and security sectors; and on the other hand, strong states where governments have been unwilling to acquiesce to international intervention and rule of law operations have been rebuffed as an infringement of sovereignty. Across this spectrum, security and justice sector reform (SSR and JSR, respectively) are resisted by—or manipulated to serve the needs of—relevant national elites where they are perceived to threaten core interests.

Even where consent is granted, there is no guarantee that it will endure through the lifespan of a peace operation. Declining consent, combined with the weariness of local authorities that have experienced lengthy or repeated international intervention in the form of UN operations, has resulted in a gradual erosion of the influence and legitimacy of UN peace operations.

The protection of sovereignty is a contentious political issue at UN headquarters, as well. As the 2008 debates by the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations demonstrated, many states remain wary of what is perceived as external, predominantly Western involvement in security and justice reform. The UN Secretary-General’s report on SSR, which provided a framework for UN missions, identified local ownership as a core tenet, but also underscored these political sensitivities.<sup>2</sup> The challenge that SSR presents to state sovereignty should not be overstated, however. Quite deliberately, the majority of UN peace operations are designed to extend, rather than limit, the authority of states.

<sup>1</sup>MINURCAT, MINUSTAH, MONUC, UNMIL, UNMIT, UNOCI.

<sup>2</sup>A/62/659-S/2008/39





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Strengthening customary or non-statutory institutions can often provide accessible, predictable, fair justice where states have historically had a weak hold over their territory. International support for such security and justice systems may be a step toward rectifying weak state legitimacy by explicitly enabling citizens to choose their own forms of security, but some governments are resistant to efforts that may appear to undermine consolidation of state authority. Whether and how to approach non-statutory systems—particularly in the context of statebuilding—is a major challenge for the UN and other actors.

### **Operational Challenges**

Reestablishing the rule of law is not a quick process and it exists in direct tension with the time-bound character of UN peace operations. It is improbable that a comprehensive rule of law system will be developed within the duration of a peacekeeping operation. Recent rule of law-focused missions have nonetheless demonstrated the importance of initiating security and justice reform as early as possible during the immediate post-conflict phase in order to gain the confidence and trust of the population and elites, to mitigate the emergence of organized crime, and to capitalize on donor attention, financing, and political will, which are greatest immediately after the signing of a peace agreement and deployment of a peace operation. This period does not last long, however, and uncertain sustained funding requires missions to prioritize handing over elements of their work to more specialized groups or to host governments, which will ostensibly carry on reform after a mission departs.

### **Institutional Challenges**

Since the establishment of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) in 2007, DPKO has been the UN lead for building the rule of law in the field. The extent to which OROLSI is able to provide direct support to fifteen UN peacekeeping missions (let alone a growing number of peacebuilding and special political missions) is also constrained. In the field, the extent of

actual integration both within the UN, and among itself, international financial institutions, and lead donors, remains inadequate, as neither DPKO nor any other UN entity has sufficient bureaucratic leverage—or control of financial resources—to coherently orchestrate the various actors within the UN and beyond.

There are two issues regarding the financing of security and justice sector reform in UN peace operations. First, such reform is historically underfunded, posing a challenge to the operational impact of building the rule of law. Second, the mechanisms for delivery of funds are outdated. In DPKO operations, justice and security sector assistance is funded through the assessed budget for peacekeeping—but without the flexible funds needed to deliver field-level programs. As a result, mission staff cannot quickly launch capacity-building exercises or build infrastructure without depending on unpredictable voluntary contributions. One potential solution would be to fund mission-critical tasks from assessed funds, and noncritical tasks from voluntary funds. Defining what is critical depends on an agreed definition of success—something that is still lacking.

### **Conclusion**

As existing large, expensive, predominantly military peacekeeping deployments achieve greater stability – or come under increasing political and financial pressure for drawdown – sustainable handover to national authorities is acquiring increased saliency. Effective support to strengthen rule of law will be essential for consolidating peace. Indeed, this issue is of critical importance to the Peacebuilding Commission as it undertakes its Review. Meanwhile, assisting countries in the area of rule of law has taken on a new urgency where drug trafficking and organized crime threaten to overwhelm state institutions and undermine stability, or where terrorist groups operate in lawless areas. All point to the urgency of the task and of the need for improved effectiveness.



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## Building the Rule of Law

### Summary of the May 6th, 2010 Thematic Series Panel Discussion

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The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations and the Center on International Cooperation held their fifth panel discussion of the thematic series, "Building More Effective UN Peace Operations," on 6 May 2010. The event focused on the proliferation of mandates tasking UN peace operations to support the rule of law in post-conflict environments. Following introductory remarks from Canada's Deputy Permanent Representative, Ambassador Henri-Paul Normandin, CIC's Director Dr. Bruce D. Jones moderated panelists H.E. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Ambassador of Jordan to the United States) and William G. O'Neill (Program Director, Conflict Prevention Peace Forum) in a discussion of the strategic, operational, and institutional issues driving the evolution of rule of law activities in peace operations and the challenges that they face. The meeting's proceedings were governed by Chatham House Rule.

Owing to the experiences of the 1990s, where war profiteers exploited the lack of capable structures to address corruption in Bosnia and East Timor, as well as a recognition that these issues are directly related to the sustainable drawdown of a peacekeeping mission, building the rule of law has emerged as a central task for UN peace operations. Indeed, nearly all of the missions mandated by the Security Council since 2000 have included supporting the rule of law as a prominent, if not central goal. Nevertheless, the panel agreed that despite its prevalence, implementing rule of law activities in the field remains an underdeveloped policy area; one that suffers from a lack of clarity on definitions, as well as roles among the multitude of institutional, regional and bilateral actors involved in these tasks. Recognizing these deficiencies and drawing on their extensive field experience, the panelists identified several areas that, if better addressed, may help streamline rule of law programming and ensure that achieving these goals is a more realistic prospect.

First, and most importantly, an overly technical approach to strengthening rule of law – a defining characteristic of these activities over the course of the past decade – ignores the fundamental reality of the task at hand: it is an inherently political exercise that aims to alter power relationships in a given post-conflict society, and which directly touches on state sovereignty. Approaches that concentrate exclusively on the mechanics of training judges and police, building jails and writing legal codes, while necessary, are likely to be ineffectual in the long term if underlying political issues are not simultaneously dealt with. In the same vein, for rule of law programs to attain positive gains, they need be supported by solid political frameworks, both at the headquarters level and, more importantly, in the host country.

Second, accountability across actors and institutions must be the foundation of any rule of law programming. On one hand, it is crucial that international actors themselves remain accountable and avoid transgressions that could tarnish the implementing body's reputation and call into question the legitimacy of its intervention. The conduct of UN personnel in operations has been detrimental to building the rule of law in several cases. On the other hand, local rule of law institutions need to demonstrate that they, too, are accountable to the law; something that often necessitates breaking from a past where rule of law institutions have contributed to or have been employed as actors in conflict.

Finally, without local ownership, rule of law activities are unlikely to achieve their goals. While difficult, ensuring that programs are tailored to the realities of the situation and involve broader civil society is cornerstone to the longevity of rule of law programming. Each case is unique and devising strategies for building rule of law must be tailored along the spectrum of scenarios from post-conflict settings with strong governments still in power to those where the state has been decimated or where national capacity is low. Further,



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establishing local ownership in many contemporary cases often entails engaging traditional and non-state actors, requiring a good deal of familiarity on the part of international presence and a departure from conventional approaches.

The lively open discussion that followed the presentations featured comments from member state representatives and UN Secretariat officials. The theme of local ownership figured largely in the discussion, with particular focus on the importance of striking an appropriate balance between support for different local actors and international intervention. It was widely acknowledged that building the rule of law is not a quick endeavor – one that certainly will not be completed during the lifespan of a UN peace operation. This highlighted the potential added value of the Peacebuilding Commission in ongoing peacekeeping operations. But it also emphasized how the absence of both an appropriate, agreed division of labor among the wider set of actors in the international system and clarity on the sequencing of activities have hindered efforts to consolidate the rule of law. These issues deserve more attention moving forward.



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## Appendix I: Dates, Venues and Speakers for Panel Discussions

### Peacekeeping Overstretch: Symptoms, Causes and Consequences

Dining Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Tuesday May 26th, 2009

**Introduction:** **Ambassador John McNee**  
Permanent Representative of  
Canada

**Chair:** **Dr. Bruce Jones**  
Director, New York University Center  
on International Cooperation

**Panellists:** **Alain Le Roy**  
Undersecretary-General for  
Peacekeeping Operations

**Susanna Malcorra**  
Undersecretary-General for Field  
Support

### The Political Dimensions of Peace Operations

Millennium Plaza Hotel, New York  
Friday, September 11th, 2009

**Introduction:** **Ambassador John McNee**  
Permanent Representative of  
Canada

**Chair:** **Dr. Bruce Jones**  
Director, New York University Center  
on International Cooperation

**Panellists:** **Jean-Marie Guéhenno**  
Fellow, New York University Center on  
International Cooperation

**Michael von der Schulenberg**  
Executive Representative for the  
United Nations Integrated  
Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone  
(UNIPSIL)

### Towards More Inclusive Mandate-Making, More Effective Mandate Implementation

Dining Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Friday, December 4th, 2009

**Introduction:** **Ambassador John McNee**  
Permanent Representative of Canada

**Chair:** **Teresa Whitfield**  
Senior Fellow, New York University  
Center on International Cooperation

**Panellists:** **Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi**  
Chair, Panel on UN Peace Operations

**Lieutenant General Chikadabia Isaac  
Obiakor**  
United Nations Military Advisor

### Field Support for Peace Operations

Dining Room 6, United Nations Headquarters, New York  
Friday, February 12th, 2010

**Introduction:** **Ambassador John McNee**  
Permanent Representative of Canada

**Chair:** **Ian Johnstone**  
Fellow, New York University Center on  
International Cooperation

**Panellists:** **Susanna Malcorra**  
Undersecretary-General for Field  
Support

**Major-General (ret'd)  
Patrick Cammaert**  
Former Force Commander, MONUC



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## **Building the Rule of Law**

Delegates Dining Room, United Nations Headquarters,  
New York  
Thursday, May 6th, 2010

**Introduction:**     **Ambassador Henri-Paul Normandin**  
Deputy Permanent Representative of  
Canada

**Chair:**             **Dr. Bruce Jones**  
Director, New York University Center  
on International Cooperation

**Panellists:**       **H.E. Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein**  
Ambassador of Jordan to the United  
States of America

**William G. O'Neill**  
Program Director, Conflict Prevention  
Peace Forum





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