

Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations: *Integrated Missions Revisited*

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The final and concluding conference of the Project on Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations, which was held in Oslo from 29 to 30 October 2007, was the culmination of a series of six regional seminars conducted throughout 2007 (in Beijing, Addis Ababa, Geneva, New York, Johannesburg and Brussels).ⁱ The regional seminars constituted a substantial and serious effort by Norway and partner governments such as China and South Africa to ensure that regional perspectives were fully incorporated in the process. Although each seminar had a slightly different focus, the reflections, analysis and recommendations offered by the participants at the different seminars were broadly similar.ⁱⁱ

The conference was opened by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre. Mr Støre set the stage by underlining the urgency for improving the effectiveness and impact of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in the field, and the importance of bringing coherence to the current situation, in which the demand for UN peacekeeping is greater than the supply. He pointed out that the UN has come a long way in strengthening its capacity to manage complex peacekeeping operations, while noting that there are still many challenges to be met and improvements to be made.

The two-day conference had an ambitious agenda. Actors from a wide range of political, operational and organizational areas provided significant input with their experience and expertise. Discussions were both theoretical and results-oriented. The proceedings from the regional seminars and a preliminary synthesis of findings from the full series of seminars had been distributed to the participants in advance in order to focus the conference discussions. As a result, discussions were largely guided by the underlying question of how to improve and implement an integrated approach, rather than the question of why and whether integration was desirable. The participants primarily focused on identifying lessons learned and barriers and enablers to increasing integration.ⁱⁱⁱ

The participants at the Oslo conference discussed a number of challenges and dilemmas facing integrated missions today. The conference drew heavily on the operational experience of participants and the many lessons learnt from their attempts to implement multidimensional mandates. Building on the previous seminars, participants at the conference seemed to mutually understand that when a peacekeeping or peacebuilding mission has been given a multidimensional mandate by the Security Council, an integrated approach to implementation is an operational imperative. However, while there has been some progress in achieving integration, there is still a significant divide between integration as a policy ideal and integration as a reality on the ground. One explanation for this, which was pointed out repeatedly during the series of seminars and again reiterated in Oslo, is the ever-shifting state and nature of peace operations. This makes them a “moving target” that continues to grow in size and complexity, and means that it is difficult to assess precisely how implementation can and should take place. This dilemma also confirms the need for better and more integrated approaches, to address the challenges of constant change. It was felt that an integrated approach is a means to a more effective and efficient UN operation both in the field and at headquarters. However, better integration cannot be achieved without inter-departmental, inter-institutional and inter-governmental support.

Despite the diversity of experience, several common themes emerged:

The absence of a methodical attempt to build the senior leadership group as a cohesive unit was raised as an obstacle to effective coherence. Building a solid leadership team is crucial. Certain personalities undoubtedly have an immense impact on the overall performance of the integration process. It is important to look beyond individual personalities, and focus on strengthening the system as a whole, by building a team with strong leadership skills, as well as specific abilities and competencies, able to grasp the larger goal of an integrated process. It is thus important to consider the team as a whole, and its strengths as an integrated unit, when recruiting leaders. This approach should also apply to mission recruitment and planning, with emphasis on profiling during the selection process and training for senior mission staff.

The importance of ensuring that the senior UN representative in the field has at her or his disposal a clear and robust mandate, leverage^{iv} and resources to direct the UN's effort on the ground in a way that informs, generates and underpins political solutions, was stressed repeatedly by participants. It was also suggested that many of the central decision-making responsibilities should be transferred or delegated from headquarters to the field. This would enhance the integration of actors in the field, enabling them to focus on their collective impact in the field rather than on how to work around time-consuming bureaucratic UN rules and regulations.

Moreover, to sufficiently equip the leadership team to meet the multidimensional demands set out by the Security Council mandate, Member States need to also adapt and change the current frameworks that guide both the administrative and budgeting processes. Today, success often depends on the personal capabilities of senior UN mission leaders to find ways of manoeuvring around the system, rather than as a result of it.

Participants also discussed the increasingly complex relationship between the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), the “multi-hatted” Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) (who also acts as Resident Coordinator (RC) and Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)), and the Director of Administration (who now reports directly to the newly established Department of Field Support). It was agreed that these roles need to be looked into and clarified.

The role of the DSRSG/RC/HC was discussed in great depth. The position has become increasingly complex, and it was suggested that it should be strengthened by establishing a dedicated support team or office that reflects the range of tasks. The need for more and better planning and support structures in general to improve management in the field was also discussed at length. It was pointed out that this would reduce the mission's dependence on personalities for its success. The participants also discussed the negative impact of the slowness of the general UN recruitment process and the absence of system-wide training systems geared towards enabling better integration in the field.

The discussion on the peacebuilding continuum revealed a general agreement that there is a clear need to improve both the theoretical and the practical approach to the three main elements of the continuum (peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding). Moreover, a much stronger focus is needed on understanding each as part of a “coherent whole”. The concept of the sequential development of peace, which has been widely identified as problematic, is still a strong influence in strategic planning, which in turn has consequences for practical implementation in the field. It was agreed that a more coherent analysis of how

peace develops, which should result in improved guidelines, will increase the interconnectedness of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The UN, its Member States and other international actors need to change their modes of operation in order to address the special needs of countries emerging from or affected by conflict.

Participants also stressed that failure is inevitable if and when peacekeeping becomes a substitute for necessary political efforts and compromises to achieve sustainable peace. Member States carry a great responsibility on both accounts, if recovery and peacebuilding efforts are to succeed in the long-term in a constantly shifting political climate. The importance of “bringing politics back” was echoed in all circles, including humanitarian circles. The latter group highlighted that getting a clearer view of what needs to be achieved politically could also assist in making the necessary distinction between humanitarian assistance in emergencies, and the need for long-term recovery efforts.

It was recommended that one should examine the potential that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) could have in taking on a more proactive and convening role in promoting better system coherence and integration. While the PBC has made a great deal of progress in the last year, it still has not shown the ability to ensure effective coordination within the UN and with other partners. This is in part due to the fragmented aid architecture and tendencies to earmark funds, instead of creating a flexible structure able to integrate the mission on the basis of functions rather than supply of funds. This is further complicated by the fact that Member States often do not engage with the UN with one coherent, unambiguous voice.

Moreover, participants highlighted the importance of moving forward with ongoing processes to adopt a common planning and assessment framework; based on the assumption that peacebuilding is not a sequential process, but a highly interlinked series of simultaneous activities. Participants at the conference focused on several aspects of planning, including the ongoing development of the UN Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), which is intended to provide guidelines to all the UN entities involved in the planning and preparation of multidimensional peace operations. Participants stressed, however, that while much progress has been made in this regard, more work is needed on improving the coordination of planning and planning frameworks with other UN partners, including donors. In line with this, participants pointed out the importance of improving coordination and communication between the various parallel planning processes (the UN, national governments, bilateral donors, the World Bank, the IMF). Partnerships in multidimensional peace operations are essential because NGOs and other relevant actors are playing an increasingly central role in post-conflict settings. Participants stressed that partnerships should be complementary and result-oriented, to make sure that all are aware of what is to be expected, delivered, how and by whom. As one participant put it, “You have to ask what you are responsible for and how you are accountable. We are all for coordination as long as it is reality-based.” But if not, it was pointed out, more harm than good could be done. Not all assistance is necessarily helpful. This has proven time and again to be a difficult lesson for the international community to learn.

The benefits and challenges of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), which involve rapidly disbursable funding arrangements, were also covered. Participants underlined that although QIPs can provide an immediate peace dividend to the population, they can also add stress to an already tense situation if they are poorly planned and designed.

The participants at the conference discussed how to balance the need to strengthen the protection of civilians in compliance with humanitarian principles, in particular in situations of active conflict. The discussion suggested that debate on this issue has now matured and there was strong agreement on the essential principles that should be adopted. In particular, there was wide agreement on applying an asymmetric approach to integration and in so doing acknowledging that humanitarian sensitivities are likely to be helpful to the successful implementation of a UN Security Council protection mandate. It was also recognized that humanitarian principles were not, and should not, be seen as incentives not to integrate.

On the contrary, humanitarian principles should guide the overall process of integration by setting standards, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and providing checks and balances, according to the needs and situation on the ground. The participants generally agreed, however, that significant dilemmas remain with regard to humanitarian assistance, and the occurrences of unintended consequences are not well understood. Participants stressed the need for more research and discourse on how to operationalize the current understanding of humanitarian space, rather than speaking of it as a stand-alone concept and focusing on limitations.

The importance of increasing focus on human rights within an integrated mission context was also one of the central issues discussed. Considerable progress has been made, but much work still needs to be done.

Another critical issue raised both in the plenary session and in breakaway sessions was the need for better alignment of peace operation mandates with the resources provided. This is not a novel conclusion or recommendation. However, it has proven difficult to implement, as it requires the full support and engagement of all actors, including the intergovernmental processes at UN headquarters (including the financial committees and advisory entities of the UN General Assembly), donors (including the governing boards of funds and programmes) and other key actors such as the World Bank, the EU and others. Participants stressed that without improved alignment of these variables, a more integrated (i.e. efficient and effective) mission in the field is not feasible.

The need for a more incentive-based culture of integration was frequently raised. This is beginning to be seen in the UN, but much work remains before rules and procedures for integration are fully implemented. It was agreed that a higher level of accountability regarding integration – in terms of greater impact on the ground – within and between the various actors and institutions, both in the field and at headquarters, is essential.

A significant barrier to coherence in the field is the lack of integrated accountability under Security Council mandates. Certain parts of these mandates entail no accountability to the Security Council, only to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the governing board of the agency, fund or programme involved. Participants did not argue in favour of broadening the Security Council's authority, but rather stressed the importance of integrated and detailed mechanisms for contact and dialogue between the Council and the other parts of the UN system to better meet the demands of a multidimensional mandate.

Participants stressed that closer consultations and dialogue between the various UN bodies and the Security Council could improve the Council's working methods (and thus its ability to

develop more effective mission mandates), and could increase collaboration and interaction throughout the UN system in the implementation of peace operation mandates.

The potentially negative role of bilateral donors and other arrangements for undermining coherence in the field were also identified as a potential problem, especially the earmarking of funds and specific donor priorities. This can undermine the UN's efforts to channel resources in a way that ensures greatest impact, and makes it harder for the UN to focus its efforts on a common set of priorities, if these priorities are not matched by the donor profiles.

The need for predictable and manageable funding was discussed. The fact that some parts of a mission mandate are covered by assessed contributions, while other parts are covered by voluntary contributions, leads to a strain on the mission leadership in the field. Precious time is spent working through policies and procedures that are not suited to the urgency of the situation in the field, that is, the urgency to secure the necessary funding to fulfil the mandate in question. Participants stressed that Member States need to be aware of the paradoxical restrictions that the inter-governmental system places on the mission, and that ultimately impede integration in the field. In this regard, Member States can play an important role in facilitating the integration of the UN system. The current system for financing multidimensional peace operations does not allow for adequate resourcing of multidimensional mandates with strong peacebuilding and/or recovery components.

Thus it was agreed that more needs to be done to align mandates and resources. There is a need to think about how to improve the link between assessed and voluntary funding sources. This in turn will also require closer contact and dialogue between the UN Security Council, the UN system at large, and other multilateral partners, donors and stakeholders.

Another recurring theme during the conference was the issue of national and local ownership and capacity-building. Securing ownership by the host state, and building capacity is vital for the success of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Usually, it was noted, in countries emerging from war and/or in a post-conflict reconstruction situation, there is a clear tension between speed and ownership. At the same time as it is important to deliver peace dividends quickly to the local population, it is also essential that the (re-)building of local capacity takes place right from the planning stage. The question of how to better link internal and system-wide planning frameworks with concurrent national processes was also addressed. New ways of linking the process of defining and implementing nationally-owned programmes for peace and development with the programmes of the UN system, and other partners and donors, should be explored. The UN's efforts to develop country-specific *compacts* or, in other words, country-specific frameworks or strategies that bring on board all stakeholders, including national partners, to set out priorities, make implementation plans and define responsibilities in line with both national and international programming objectives, were referred to as a very positive development that should be further explored.

It was also agreed that in all of the issues discussed above, the Secretary General should take on a stronger role, in guiding not only efforts inside the UN system, but also helping to forge incentives for better coherence and integration both within and outside the UN system, to promote better effectiveness, efficiency and impact on the ground.

Participants also agreed that if we are to effectively address the challenges facing the UN, where the demand is greater than the supply, the geopolitical situation tenser than ever and the resources scarce and fragmented, we must revise our key implementing arrangements,

including those at the intergovernmental level. As one participant noted, “It is not only a question of doing more, we must do things differently. Otherwise we will not be able to get the job done.”

1. Introduction

The strategic aims of peace operations have changed fundamentally in the period since the end of the last millennium. An increase in the number and complexity of operations has made it necessary not only to re-think but also to reorganize the many different elements that make up multidimensional and integrated missions today. It has become increasingly clear that the vast array of approaches and instruments employed in peace operations, both within and outside the UN system, calls for some form of integration, the degree of which should be determined by the situation in question, in order to adequately address the political realities.

There was general agreement that the “integrated missions” concept has come a long way since it was first launched. To begin with, it often caused a sense of frustration, and still does to some extent, but as it is developed and promulgated, it is increasingly being embraced and attempts are moreover being made to make the necessary changes to convert the concept into action. It was also made clear that the UN has made great progress in implementing a more integrated approach on the ground, much more than it is given credit for. Nevertheless, a clear weakness is the lack of connection between policy and practice, with the result that integration takes place *despite* UN policies and procedures, rather than *because* of them. Success has largely depended on the creativity, courage and management skills of a few individuals, not sufficiently reflected in the structure of the organization as a whole. In other words, there is still considerable room for improvement in terms of achieving our common goals on the ground. An essential and significant part of this process is to continuously revisit the many challenges and barriers facing multidimensional and integrated peace operations. The Oslo conference along with the preceding regional seminars has sought to do just this. It has focused on the ever-changing dynamics of the challenges that face our efforts to bring lasting peace to countries affected by conflict, and it has attempted to provide useful recommendations for the measures needed to accomplish this.

1.1 Structure

This conference report summarizes two intense days of in-depth discussions covering a broad range of topics from the definition of the concept of integration itself to the many implications and challenges for effective implementation on the ground. The report is organized thematically, roughly following the order of the final conference agenda. Chapter 1 discusses the concept of integration, and reflects on some of the conceptual discourses. Chapter 2 examines the many challenges that face the management and leadership of UN multidimensional and integrated peace operations, as seen and experienced by the participants. Chapter 3 covers the links between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Chapter 4 sums up the discussion of the humanitarian dilemmas, the importance of human rights and the relationship between the integrated mission concept and the protection of civilians. Chapter 5 addresses the complex issue of realigning mandates, programmes and resources. Chapter 6 covers planning and evaluation. Chapter 7 summarizes the discussion on partnerships in multidimensional peace operations. Chapter 8 discusses the very important topic of local ownership. Chapter 9 addresses the suggestion to establish a dedicated Contact Group for Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations. Finally, chapter 10 provides a few concluding remarks.

1.2 Defining integration

Before discussing the complex challenges facing multidimensional and integrated peace operations today, it is necessary to have a discussion on what exactly the concept of integration entails.

Participants emphasized that there is no single common definition of integrated missions, but they agreed that the working definition that is often used within the UN system was useful. Integration is understood as a tool aimed at improving both management and impact on the ground. It is an evolving concept and should be “...understood as an institutional reform process that includes the development of initiatives that aim to increase the performance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of UN peace operations by enabling the coherent (simultaneous and sequential) allocation of resources towards common strategic ends”^v. In other words, integration is not seen or perceived to be a goal in itself, but rather a tool that can help to make the most effective use of efforts, not only those of the UN system itself, but also of other national and international partners.

While there is broad agreement on the need for integrated approaches, new ideas about the form and function of integrated missions continue to evolve. Multidimensionality and integration are terms that are generally used rather loosely and interchangeably in UN reform debates and literature. Neither term is clearly defined in UN documents. This lack of a clear definition of integration was a concern to a number of participants. Nonetheless, the working definition^{vi} used within the UN system was found to be useful. It refers to integrated missions as complex peace operations whose guiding principle is to link different organizations into coherent support structures.

The participants also stressed that in the case of integration, one size does not fit all. On the contrary, the appropriate degree of integration will depend on the situation in question. In other words, “form should follow function”. Given the different phases of a mission, and its changing needs and capacities, the form of integration will have to evolve and adapt accordingly. It was also agreed that the integrated mission concept is not a structural outfit, which is the view in some parts of the UN system. Neither is it an organigram or a structural flowchart. Neither can an integrated mission be defined as a “mission with a triple-hatted DSRSG”, even though this may be an important aspect.

It is important to stress that all the current UN multidimensional and integrated peace operations represent different levels of policy coherence (policy/strategic, operational/programmatic and administrative), and therefore involve the investment of varying levels of institutional and political capital.

In some cases, integration may merely involve networking or co-existence: a situation where actors simply aim to keep out of each other’s way, and that requires minimal investment and incentives. At the other end of the scale, it can entail full policy integration and coherence with major investments in the pursuit of agreed objectives. In the latter case, collaboration is necessary not only at the lower levels of organisations, but also at the higher or highest levels, in order to ensure that these objectives are in fact compatible, shared and implementable.

1.3 Integration is not an end in itself

At the same time, caution was voiced about the expectations attached to integration, as there is a risk that integration and even coordination can become an end in themselves. This was raised as a serious concern, noting that if not well-focused, energy and resources spent on

coordination could detract attention from achieving other priorities for the UN presence in a country. Integration and coordination in and of themselves, even when backed by a coherent plan of action, are not enough. They cannot ensure responsibility, authority and accountability, and an unbalanced focus on integration may even exacerbate infighting, for example over scarce resources. This can lead to an inward-looking organization that devotes far too much time and energy to coordination meetings and inter-agency processes. Nor is it the case, it was stressed, that a hierarchical structure, with one clear figure of authority at the top, will necessarily resolve all the inherent tensions of the system as a whole. It was noted on several occasions that an important step in this regard would be to systematically identify the comparative advantages and competencies of participating actors.

Furthermore it was underlined that integration should not become a bureaucratic exercise in aligning structures, but rather an exercise in developing closer coordination of the resources and deliverables necessary for each mission. This means that the barriers and enablers for integration must be addressed in a more structured and systematic fashion. The long-term and overall purpose of integration, it was agreed, is to strengthen internal and external partnerships, to enable UN entities to work more closely together, and to enable the UN system as a whole to work more efficiently and effectively with national and international partners, with clear benchmarks for both accountability and results.

To sum up, the essential purpose of the integrated mission concept is to direct UN country-level efforts in a country that is in conflict, or emerging from conflict, towards the achievement of a common strategic purpose, and to build a solid and sustainable foundation for peace and development.

ⁱ Individual seminar proceedings can be downloaded from www.regjeringen.no/integratedmissions

FOOTNOTES

ⁱⁱ These conference proceedings have been prepared by Anja T. Kaspersen and Kristina L. Revheim. The views expressed in this introduction and throughout the volume should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of, or being endorsed by, the Norwegian government, the United Nations or other institutions with which contributors are associated. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the authors.

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^{iv} Leverage is used here to describe the nature and level of influence or power to act effectively.

^v Campbell, Kaspersen and Weir *Integrated Missions Revisited* Conference Background Note, Synthesis of Finding. October 2007.

^{vi} “Integration is the guiding principle for the design and implementation of complex UN operations in post-conflict situations and for linking the different dimension of peacebuilding

(political, development, humanitarian, human rights, rule of law, social and security aspects) into a coherent support strategy”. UNSG *Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions*, paragraph 4.