Rethinking Peacebuilding: Transforming the UN Approach

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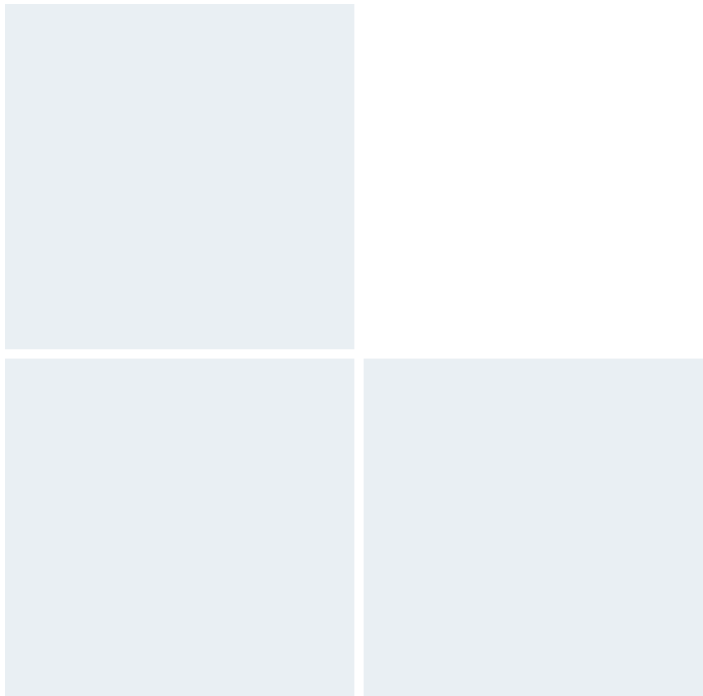
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Executive Summary

Since the end of the Cold War, the UN has found itself intervening directly within its member states to help them end intrastate conflicts and rebuild their war-torn countries. Peacekeeping missions that were originally designed to keep opposing national armies apart and that had the consent of the host state are now expected to secure a much more comprehensive peace, intervene much more deeply in states' internal affairs—with tenuous legitimacy—and resolve active conflicts where there is no "peace" to keep.

At the same time, the UN has placed the goal of a robust, well-functioning nation-state at the heart of its peace operations without fully examining its assumptions about what a nation-state comprises and how it contributes to building peace. And while the UN focuses primarily on rebuilding the institutions of the state, divided loyalties within the nation often go unaddressed. UN missions still struggle to deal with secessionist claims within states and with the tension between the "Western" principles of a liberal peace and local values, cultures, and experiences. Indeed, the oft-cited concept of national ownership is rarely realized in practice.

The UN can address these challenges by putting peacebuilding at the center of its operations. In 2005, the General Assembly and Security Council recognized peacebuilding as a main component of UN peace operations and created what is now called the UN peacebuilding architecture: the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office, and Peacebuilding Fund. However, despite twenty-five years intervening in fragile countries afflicted by conflict and ten years with a peacebuilding architecture, the organization has never taken a decisive step to effectively adjust its conceptual, organizational, and operational approaches to peacebuilding.

The world body has not been able to develop a clear understanding of what peacebuilding is, nor a vision for its peacebuilding approach. Its institutional framework remains incoherent and has led to fragmented approaches to peacebuilding, with each UN department and agency wanting to preserve its own conceptual and operational independence.

At the same time, peacebuilding has become a niche activity instead of being the umbrella that unites UN operations. While the UN Peacebuilding Support Office has been too weak to effectively impact UN policies and operations, the UN Peacebuilding Commission—designed as an advisory body to the General Assembly and Security Council—has not realized many member states' hopes that it could give peacebuilding a more prominent place in the UN system.

Yet the concept of peacebuilding can serve as a bridge between concerns over international security and the need to establish national peace and stability, between the UN as an international body and the nation-state as a national, social organization. By developing a wider vision for peacebuilding that draws on the whole range of peacekeeping, policing, humanitarian, and development activities needed to end intrastate conflicts and rebuild stable, peaceful, and sovereign nation-states, the UN could more effectively respond to the challenges posed by today's threats to peace and security.

Ten years after the creation of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, it's time for the organization to develop a comprehensive understanding of what it means to build peace and turn peacebuilding into its core operational tool. The forthcoming tenth-anniversary review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture and the planned review of peace operations both provide an opportunity to initiate reform and get peacebuilding right. The following five proposals could serve as a starting point.

1. **Empower the Peacebuilding Commission.** UN member states should strengthen the PBC so that it can formulate policies and operational options for peacebuilding interventions; take responsibility for all countries with peacebuilding agendas; ensure a coherent and integrated UN approach to peacebuilding; and act as member states' central governing council for all peacebuilding missions.

2. **Clarify the relationship between the Security Council and PBC.** Member states should make clear that the UN Security Council remains the guardian of national sovereignty with the exclusive right to authorize a peacebuilding mission, whereas the PBC could monitor

missions' operational activities, support national ownership, and provide a forum for host states and UN actors to work collaboratively on building peace.

3. **Make peacebuilding a principal tool for the UN system.** Through the PBC, member states should formulate a more comprehensive and operationally oriented definition for peacebuilding, while the secretary-general should help to clarify the core values and principles that guide peacebuilding missions. The secretary-general should also develop a new operational doctrine for peacebuilding that covers all aspects of UN interventions, including peacekeeping.

4. **Align internal organizational structures for peacebuilding.** The UN Secretariat should improve organizational alignment in the field and at headquarters, and consider implementing a policy of *one office—one strategy—one leadership* for peacebuilding operations.

5. **Consolidate financing for peacebuilding.** The secretary-general and member states should establish more rational and predictable funding arrangements, which will in turn help to ensure the success of all other peacebuilding reforms.

Introduction

This report asserts that peacebuilding, even more so than peacekeeping before it, constitutes a profound change in the way the United Nations is pursuing its core mandate of maintaining global peace and security. However, unlike peacekeeping, the UN has never been able to turn peacebuilding into a core concept and operational tool for the organization, reducing the impact of its interventions in fragile countries afflicted by armed conflicts.

Under the general notion of peacebuilding, the UN has moved beyond its original mandate of helping prevent and end wars between member states and begun to intervene directly within member states to help them end armed intrastate conflicts and to rebuild their war-torn countries and collapsed institutions. While the UN had

developed "traditional" peacekeeping[1] as a tool to separate belligerent national armies after the Second World War, this changed dramatically after the end of the Cold War when the world body began to intervene within fragile countries with armed conflicts, among communities and rebel forces. The UN was forced to take a far more comprehensive approach—an approach that this paper will call *peacebuilding*. This change in approach from traditional peacekeeping to peacebuilding reflected the deep changes taking place in the global political security environment, as wars between nation-states virtually ceased to exist and as fragile states with internal armed conflicts became the main threats to global peace and security.

It appears that the UN has never fully recognized the fundamental differences that exist between its traditional interventions in interstate conflicts and its interventions in intrastate conflicts, nor has it drawn the necessary conclusions for reorganizing its peace operations accordingly. Peacebuilding never became a central operational doctrine for the organization. In fact, it seems that UN peacebuilding, instead of becoming the more dominant doctrine, has lost traction within the UN and has become increasingly marginalized—and this although intrastate conflicts around the world are on the increase and grow in complexity.

Now, ten years after the creation of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, the UN must reverse this trend and put UN peacebuilding at the center of its considerations. If the UN wants to respond more effectively to threats from fragile countries afflicted by armed conflicts, it must develop peacebuilding into its core operational tool. This requires the organization to rethink what peacebuilding is—or better yet, what peacebuilding should be.

This should start with developing a wider vision and new definition for peacebuilding that not only includes ending an intrastate armed conflict but also the whole range of peacekeeping, policing, humanitarian, and development activities needed for rebuilding fragile conflict-afflicted countries into stable, peaceful, and sovereign nation-states.[2]

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1 To prevent confusion, the term "traditional" is used here to describe early peacekeeping interventions in interstate conflicts and to distinguish these from peacekeeping that is part of peacebuilding interventions in fragile countries afflicted by armed conflict.

2 A more detailed definition for peacebuilding is proposed at the end of this report.

A wider and more comprehensive understanding of peacebuilding would require greater clarity about (i) the UN as the "provider" of peacebuilding, (ii) the nation-state as the "object" of peacebuilding, and (iii) how these two elements influence each other. Peacebuilding is hence the bridge between concerns over international peace and security and the need to establish national peace and stability, between the UN as an international body and the nation-state as a national, social organization. This would require a departure from some of today's practices in the UN.[3]

To be more successful in intervening in intrastate conflicts, the UN would need to find the political will and courage to reform its governance practices, its internal command and control structures, and its operational concepts for peacebuilding. This paper tries to make a contribution by analyzing some of the extraordinary challenges UN peacebuilding faces and by presenting a number of reform proposals for overcoming them.

The report consists of four sections, each reviewing a different facet of UN peacebuilding. The first section looks at how the increase in intrastate armed conflicts has made a more comprehensive peacebuilding approach necessary; how the change in the political post–Cold War climate made UN peacebuilding possible; and how this affects peacebuilding operations. The second section examines the paradoxes of the "nation-state" as the object and target of peacebuilding and how this impacts UN interventions in fragile countries. The third section analyses some of the UN's failures; explores why the UN has so many problems in creating more integrated, effective, and credible peacebuilding operations; and identifies what can be done about this. The fourth section argues that weaknesses in UN peacebuilding operations are the result of member states' conflicting governance structures and a fragmentation of leadership among UN departments, agencies, funds, and programs at headquarters. The proposals for reforming peacebuilding that follow are therefore not primarily directed at the UN's field operations but at member states and the

secretary-general, with a focus on the Peacebuilding Commission.

Peacebuilding involves many stakeholders—international and national, public and private. However, this paper will focus on the challenges of peacebuilding for the UN. With this, the report hopes to make a strategic contribution to the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and the forthcoming review of UN peace operations.

The UN and Changing Threats to Peace and Security

In 1992, when the concept of peacebuilding was first introduced to the UN through the *Agenda for Peace,* the organization found itself in the middle of an upsurge in the number of fragile member states with civil wars. This was largely a consequence of the end of the Cold War, which brought many intrastate conflicts into the open that had previously been suppressed or shielded by East-West hostilities. With belligerents now bereft of their former protectors, many of these violent intrastate conflicts became a responsibility for the UN.

Today, traditional interstate wars have virtually disappeared. According to the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), of the thirty-three active armed conflicts in 2013, none was classified as an interstate war. All were fought within states (though nine of these conflicts were "internationalized," in the sense that one or both sides received troop support from external governments).[4] The UN's original raison d'être was "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,"[5] but the UN Charter aimed at interstate wars. With the "scourge of war" shifting within states, the UN has had to change its approach to maintaining global peace and security.

Since the end of the Cold War one can make out three successive waves of intrastate armed conflicts.[6] The first wave was dominated by conflicts inherited from former East-West

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3   The tensions between statebuilding and peacebuilding were highlighted by Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens in "Ending Wars and Building Peace," Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series, International Peace Institute, March 2007.

4   Lotta Themnér and Peter Wallenstein, "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2013," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, No. 4 (July 2014): 542.

5   *Charter of the United Nations,* 1945, Preamble.

6   This list of intrastate conflicts is by no means exhaustive.

confrontations such as Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia, Angola, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Afghanistan, as well as conflicts that resulted from the break-up of Yugoslavia. A second, partly overlapping, wave was marked more by intercommunal violence, independence movements, and the emergence of predatory rebel forces. It started with East Timor's bid for independence and the genocide in Rwanda, and was followed by Burundi, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire, to name only a few. The Arab Spring brought a third wave of quite different intrastate conflicts in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, and now Iraq. It is not ending here; intrastate conflicts are again coming closer to Europe, as shown in the examples of Moldova, Ukraine, and possibly Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The end of the Cold War not only brought intrastate conflicts onto the UN peace agenda, it also created a new atmosphere of international cooperation in the Security Council that made it possible for the UN to respond. In the twenty-five years since the end of the Cold War, the Security Council has approved a total of seventy peace operations, as compared to only sixteen during the organization's first forty-four years of existence (1945–1989).[7] Even more significant is that of the seventy peace missions,[8] fifty-one missions (or 73 percent) were interventions in intrastate conflicts with various forms of peacebuilding mandates. By contrast, the Security Council approved only one mission to deal with an intrastate conflict during its first forty-four years: the ill-fated UN operation in the Congo, ONUC, in the 1960s.[9]

Unprepared for the new situation, the UN found itself drawn into intrastate conflicts with a tool it

had developed for resolving interstate conflicts: UN peacekeeping.[10] As intrastate conflicts were often exceptionally violent, it seemed more appropriate to send military personnel—in other words, peacekeepers. Peacekeeping allowed the UN to mobilize large numbers of personnel quickly and at relatively low costs. But peacekeeping was a limited tool that could not deal with the wider political, social, and economic roots of intrastate conflicts. Not surprisingly, many of the first generation of UN peacekeeping missions in intrastate conflicts were highly problematic, if not outright failures.[11] The UN stumbled into these intrastate conflicts without fully considering all the consequences this would have for its peacekeepers.

The tasks of UN peacekeepers were no longer only monitoring the withdrawal of armed forces or separating hostile armies along cease-fire lines. Peacekeepers faced far more dangerous security situations with unclear territorial controls. They were confronted with undisciplined government military units, irregular militias, rebel forces, terrorist groups, foreign fighters, and even armed forces from other countries. In such violent and muddy situations, they had to regain control over contested territories, hold these territories, disarm regular and irregular combatants, and train and rebuild new national security forces.[12]

This was not all. By intervening in a fragile country afflicted by conflict, UN peacekeeping also inherited its "civilian" problems—irrespective of whether it had a mandate or the resources to deal with them. It was suddenly responsible for protecting civilians, delivering food and basic services, promoting human rights, organizing social services, rebuilding new institutions, and initiating economic recovery. Peacekeepers had to perform the political tasks of promoting national

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7   During the 1950s and 1960s, the UN conducted a number of political missions to support countries' moves toward independence; the most important of them was the UN commissioner in Libya. Although these efforts included elements of statebuilding, their aim was not to end intrastate conflicts but to end foreign colonial rule.

8   This includes Operation Salam, a mission to Afghanistan following the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989. It had many elements of what we would today call peacebuilding.

9   ONUC was originally planned as a traditional peacekeeping mission to oversee the withdrawal of Belgium and mercenary troops from the Congo, but it became increasingly drawn into the country's internal conflicts. ONUC was generally seen as a failure, and its role raised angry protests among many African countries and the Soviet Union. The time for UN peacebuilding missions had not yet come.

10 Cyprus is an interesting example of pre–Cold War peacekeeping. Although this was essentially an intrastate conflict between Cyprus's Greek and Turkish communities, the UN reacted—in part because of Turkey's military intervention—in typical peacekeeping fashion by separating Greek and Turkish forces along a cease-fire line. No peace agreement was ever reached.

11 The greatest failures of the first generation of UN peacekeeping missions in intrastate conflicts were probably Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

12 Against this backdrop, the term peacekeeping became increasingly misleading. In the 2000 "Brahimi Report," the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations stated that peacekeeping is not possible in situations where there is no peace was to keep. The report referred to a number of failed UN peacekeeping operations in intrastate conflicts in which peacekeepers were ill-prepared for taking on roles as peace-enforcers.

reconciliation, facilitating transitional justice, supporting civil society, supporting constitutional reviews, and organizing elections. The list of tasks for UN interventions in intrastate conflicts seemed endless, and most of these tasks had been unknown in traditional peacekeeping.

UN peacekeeping missions, in addition to peacekeepers, began to rely increasingly on UN police officers, political advisors, human rights and justice experts, humanitarian workers, and development and institution-building specialists. And they had to collaborate more with other parts of the UN system. In the process, UN peace-keeping missions had become peacebuilding missions in all but name. This new type of peacekeeping mission—hereafter called peace-building missions—had little in common with traditional peacekeeping.[13]

The change from interstate to intrastate conflicts and from traditional peacekeeping to peacebuilding had profound consequences for the UN and its operations, not least in the following five areas.

SECURING A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE

With UN interventions in intrastate conflicts, the notion of peace started to become more compre-hensive.[14] Peace was no longer only about ending wars and withdrawing belligerent armies to cease-fire lines.[15] Now, peace incorporated all aspects of human life from the right to security to democratic rights; access to justice; protection of human rights; the delivery of health, education, and other basic services; and the provision of social and economic opportunities.[16] Peace meant helping overcome old ethnic, religious, and social divisions. UN peacebuilding missions now had to deal primarily with civilians and irregular forces and no longer only with regular armies. Security was still an essential aspect, but it was no longer the only important aspect. With peace becoming an all-inclusive concept, UN interventions had to become comprehensive and multidimensional.

INTERVENING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS

UN peacebuilding interventions in intrastate conflicts are, to different degrees, deliberate interferences in the internal affairs of another member state. The UN has always been uncomfort-able with this and argues that it can only be deployed with the consent of a host government.[17] However, in most cases consent is somewhat artifi-cial and invitations to the UN are mostly extended after the fact by governments that are not legiti-mate or have lost control over the country, or by unelected interim governments that have just been installed by an international intervention—hardly expressions of national sovereignty.[18]

Most peacebuilding missions' interventions are overpowering. They often arrive with thousands of peacekeepers and are followed by a flood of police officers, international experts, advisers, aid workers, and others. In many of these missions, the UN takes over core sovereign functions, such as internal security, border security, or the running of ministries. UN peacebuilding missions and international donors provide the bulk of funding and services, which tends to further sideline national authorities. And peacebuilding missions bring the blueprint of a liberal order with them—outlining how to reorganize the state, its institu-tions, and its economy. This leaves very little room for alternative national choices. This approach provokes resentment. As such, international

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13 The fundamental difference between the two is exemplified in the contrast between the UN's involvement in ending the Iran-Iraq war (UNIIMOG 1988–2001) and the UN's intervention in Sierra Leone to end its civil war (UNAMSIL 1998–2014). While in Iran and Iraq only about 400 UN military observers were fielded to monitor a cease-fire that separated Iraqi and Iranian forces, the UN mission to enforce Sierra Leone's peace agreement numbered 17,500 peacekeepers and had to take charge not only of a cease-fire line but of an entire country. While UNIIMOG included only a handful of political and legal advisers for the mission itself, UNAMSIL was supported by at least twenty-six UN agencies, funds, programs, commissions, and departments that provided assistance to national institutions and the government. UNIIMOG's role in ending a war that killed more than 500,000 people cost around $800 million, whereas UNAMSIL and its successor missions cost well over $5.5 billion, helping to end a civil war that may have killed around 70,000 people.

14 Many cultures and religions recognize peace as all-inclusive. For example, the Hebrew and Arabic words for peace, *shalom* and *salaam*, mean togetherness or wholeness as well as peace. In the academic realm, the term "positive" peace (as opposed to "negative" peace) is often used to describe the idea of a comprehensive peace. Here, however, the argument is made that the need to pursue a more comprehensive peace is the result of intervening in intrastate conflicts and less related to academic or cultural considerations.

15 The success of traditional peacekeeping lay in keeping cease-fire agreements; peacekeepers never contributed to a final peace agreement.

16 The UN Charter had already suggested a much wider concept of peace in its preamble, incorporating equality of all people, human rights, justice, greater personal freedom, and social and economic development.

17 The UN Charter states that "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (Chapter I, Article 2, paragraph 7). To find a way around this, the Security Council considers intrastate conflicts as threats to global peace and security.

18 Arguably, the UN organizes local elections not only to put a more legitimate government in place but also to legitimize its own intervention.

interventions carry the seeds for their own failures.

RESOLVING ACTIVE CONFLICTS

UN peacebuilding missions are sent to help end active intrastate conflicts; without conflicts there would be no need for peacebuilding. To speak of "postconflict" peacebuilding therefore makes little sense.[19] Unlike some interstate conflicts, intrastate conflicts rarely end decisively. Even if a peace agreement manages to stop the fighting, the conflict will not have disappeared.[20] Peacebuilding is also not a sequential step that follows peacekeeping, as the UN's Capstone Doctrine appears to suggest.[21] UN interventions in intrastate conflicts require that peacekeeping, political facilitation, and humanitarian and development assistance work in tandem from the very beginning. The idea is to help a country get out of its (armed) conflict, not to arrive when the conflict is over. As such, instead of using the term postconflict, this report refers instead to "fragile" countries afflicted by intrastate armed conflicts.

ADVANCING POLITICAL AGENDAS

Although UN interventions are mostly triggered by security concerns, the solutions to these concerns are ultimately political. Local communities, even those who disagree with a peacebuilding process, must ultimately be brought into the peace process; one day they will have to live together again. This requires political solutions that aim to create some level of national unity among conflicting parties. Military operations, including peacekeeping operations, must be limited to a support role in finding such political solutions. If not, military actions, driven by their own logic, risk adding to human suffering and deepening already existing divides in countries afflicted by conflict. Recent examples of NATO-led "peacebuilding" efforts have shown that, instead of bringing security, military operations can further destabilize a country.[22]

LOSING INNOCENCE

Traditional peacekeeping had developed three principles to help the UN to stay above local conflicts by insisting on (i) the consent of the main parties to the conflict for UN deployment; (ii) strict UN impartiality regarding political positions taken by any party to the conflict; and (iii) a minimum use of force by UN peacekeepers. Although these principles worked well for traditional peacekeeping, they no longer make sense for peacebuilding operations.[23]

With its interventions in failing countries with armed internal conflicts, the UN can no longer count on the mutual consent of all parties, remain impartial to political developments on the ground, or act only in self-defense.[24] It cannot merely monitor troop movements—it has to take control of territory, with all the attendant consequences.

The UN now has to adopt political positions, and it loses its innocence in the process. The organization is becoming a player in the conflict, and its role may become increasingly controversial in the eyes of local conflict parties.[25] Such suspicions often lead to resentment or even hatred, and the UN is likely to find itself increasingly under attack.

For peacebuilding to work, the UN must find solutions that enable it to respond to local conflicts, implement a more comprehensive peace, deal with negative fallout from its interventions, and develop more realistic principles for its peacebuilding operations.

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19 The UN now speaks more often of countries "emerging from conflict" rather than "postconflict" countries.

20 Many UN peacebuilding missions arrive in a country when fighting is still widespread.

21 The so-called Capstone Doctrine offered guidelines for UN peacekeeping in 2008. See United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines,* 2008.

22 These examples include Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, in which large areas are controlled by rebel movements despite—or because of—previous foreign military interventions.

23 The 2008 Capstone Doctrine listed all three principles as guidelines for peacekeeping operations, and DPKO has made no effort to replace them with more realistic principles for its interventions in intrastate conflicts. United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *Principles and Guidelines,* pp. 31–35.

24 In 2013, the Security Council decided to send an intervention brigade to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with more offensive rules of engagement for fighting rebel forces.

25 This also explains why so many special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) have been asked to leave their host countries.

The Re-Emergence of Nation-States

The core assumption behind peacebuilding is that strong and functioning nation-states[26] are not only essential for ensuring internal peace, justice, and the well-being of citizens, they also form the basic elements for maintaining global—or, rather, international—peace, security, and prosperity. Peacebuilding therefore implicitly reaffirms a global order based on individual sovereign nation-states.[27] Territories that fall outside of governmental control are considered threats to this global order of nation-states and no longer acceptable.[28]

But what is the "nation-state" that the UN wants to rebuild? What is its role in today's globalized world, in providing services to its peoples, and in helping preserve international peace? Is a nation-state simply a collection of functioning institutions? Or, are nation-states built on more elusive factors such as common values, a shared culture, and a feeling of national unity? Which communities are part of a nation-state, and what happens if a community wants to break away? Are existing national borders sacrosanct, or do we have to accept that they will continue to shift?[29] What does history teach us about nation-states, and what is still relevant today? What do different societies teach us about nation-states?[30] And what does this mean for UN peacebuilding?

Although the nation-state is what peacebuilding missions are all about, the UN has produced very little in the form of conceptual and intellectual thinking on this subject, and it appears quite immune to the wealth of academic research in this field. This may be because of fears that a debate over these questions could trigger unwanted controversies among member states, for which answers are difficult to find.

Nonetheless, for those involved in peacebuilding these issues are real, and they must be considered when planning and conducting peacebuilding missions. There are many issues to consider, but here are seven important elements to bear in mind.

THE HISTORICAL PARADOX

An underlying assumption of peacebuilding is that it is possible, with international assistance, to rebuild nation-states through peaceful and democratic means, and that this can be done in a relatively short time-span.[31] However, history does not support such an assumption. Quite to the contrary, throughout history nationbuilding has been an exceptionally bloody affair. National borders, the communities that are part of a nation-state, the language and culture that dominates, and the political systems created are virtually all the result of wars, civil wars, annexations, genocides, forced evictions, revolutions, and other violent actions.

The building of nation-states was never a democratic process either. Historically, nation-states emerged from emperors, kings, conquerors, and other forms of autocratic regimes. Even the creation of the United States with its democratic Constitution and Bill of Rights would not have fulfilled today's ideas of democracy: then, only a small group of white men could vote; women, American Indians, blacks, slaves, Catholics, and even most of the poor were excluded from the democratic process,[32] and it took a bloody civil war to keep the country together.[33]

Many of today's success stories started out with dictatorships, military governments, one-party

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26 Today, the notion of "nations" may appear antiquated and burdened by history. However, this paper suggests that there is a need to revisit this concept and accept that peace needs more than functioning state institutions; people want to belong to a wider community.

27 This is by no means self-evident. Most scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries considered nation-states as the root cause of wars (and social suppression) and advocated their abolition. But they had trouble identifying credible alternatives. See also Mark Mazower, *Governing the World* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

28 Action taken in response to this dilemma draws on a variety of justifications, including humanitarian concerns, the protection of civilians, or the need to counter terrorism or transnational crime.

29 It is ironic that the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that aimed to fix existing borders and preserve the national integrity of existing states resulted in one of the greatest peacetime changes of national borders, the demise of states, and the creation of new states.

30 Already the term nation-state is heavily influenced by Western thinking. The UN, being a global organization, should be far more open to what other continents have to offer as their historical and cultural experiences.

31 Security Council mandates usually only last for one year. Although they are regularly extended, few peacebuilding missions last more than fifteen years—an extremely short period in historical terms.

32 The US Constitution of 1789 and Bill of Rights of 1791 are good examples of the importance of national constitutions for peacebuilding; they also serve as a lesson that social transformation requires time and patience.

33 During the American Civil War, the percentage of the population killed was much higher than the corresponding proportion of American losses in both World Wars—an example of the brutality that is so often involved in building nation-states.

rule, or other forms of authoritarianism, as in the cases of South Korea, Taiwan, Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Singapore, and Indonesia, not to mention China or Vietnam. And it took centuries for nation-states to mature, settle their internal conflicts, and develop political systems that all their citizens could live with. What makes us believe that we can escape centuries of historical experiences and cheat history?

THE GLOBALIZATION ENIGMA

In an increasingly globalized world, nation-states appear to be enigmas of the past. What role can national governments have in a world in which private capital is many times the size of most national levels of gross domestic product and moves unhindered across borders, in which international private investments exceed public donor assistance manifold, in which international air travel allows tens of millions of people to cross national borders, in which the exponential rise of the World Wide Web connects billions of people, and in which news travels with the speed of light?[34] In a globalized world, how much sovereignty can peacebuilding hope to re-establish in weak and mostly small nation-states?

Globalization has created another problem: national elites have become increasingly international, whereas suffering populations and their problems remain local. What motivation do internationalized elites have to re-build a strong nation-state if their families live abroad and if they see their futures in London, Toronto, or Atlanta? What interest do they have in building local clinics if they can reach a modern hospital by plane in only a few hours? Why would they reform local universities if their own children go to Western universities? This is a particular problem for the many expatriates that are embraced by the West but rarely trusted by their local compatriots.

NATION-STATES' DUAL CHARACTER

Peacebuilding must recognize that countries have a dual character: they are both nations and states.[35] Although the reasons for violent intrastate conflicts are manifold, they appear to thrive when divided national identities are compounded by years of bad governance.

Peacebuilding is generally equated with statebuilding: rebuilding national institutions, reforming the security sector and the justice system, organizing elections, providing social services, etc. This ignores important questions: Do the affected people and communities want to live together? Do they share common values or national loyalties? What could bring belligerent communities together and rebuild their trust in each other? Would this require some sort of nationbuilding? Compared to building the institutions of a state, nationbuilding is more elusive, but it is just as important.[36] Statebuilding without considering these nationbuilding aspects may not be possible. Interventions focused exclusively on statebuilding could not have held Yugoslavia together nor kept Kosovo as part of Serbia while its communities wanted to go separate ways.[37]

FADING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTIES

Security Council–mandated peacebuilding interventions have established a de facto right to intervene in fragile member states afflicted by conflict to restore internal peace and justice—something the national government is considered unable to provide.[38] Even if one could argue that peacebuilding's ultimate aim is to restore a country's full sovereignty, this touches on the most sensitive issue for the UN: national sovereignty. Is peacebuilding in conflict with the UN Charter, which precludes interventions in the internal affairs of states?[39] Or has the reality of peacebuilding missions already established new norms?

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34 One could also argue the opposite—namely, that it is globalization that makes nation-states more necessary as the fallout of a collapsed state could have a global impact.

35 There is no agreement on the use of these terms. In this paper, a "state" is understood as the sum of all its institutions, laws, and infrastructure, while "nation" consists of national identity, national solidarity, a common value system, and a shared history and culture. While the state could represent the body of a country, the term nation would represent its soul.

36 Belonging to a social group is even more important for people in fragile states and those experiencing civil wars, as they are more likely to be protected and assisted by their families or their ethnic and religious community than by the state.

37 This is also the question for Bosnia-Herzegovina's future: can a high representative with authoritarian powers and an EU military force keep a country together if its different communities do not want this?

38 The recent Security Council decision to open humanitarian access to areas in Syria despite the opposition of its government is an example of the degree to which national sovereignties have eroded.

39 Canada sponsored the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty that issued its report in 2001 and came up with the "responsibility to protect" principle. This principle was later adopted at the 2005 World Summit. It remained controversial, however, especially after the unauthorized Western air campaign to remove Qaddafi in Libya.

Peacebuilding interventions may also be at odds with the UN principle of equality among member states by implicitly creating several levels of national sovereignties.[40] Realistically, peacebuilding is only possible in weak and smaller countries. For larger nation-states (and particularly for the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and countries with nuclear weapons) peacebuilding missions could hardly be considered.

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Peacebuilding missions will often be faced with local separatist movements. But when is secession a legitimate demand? Which of the UN principles has precedence, territorial integrity or the right to self-determination?[41] Presently, there are several patterns of dealing with territorial integrity and self-determination, none of which would be appropriate for UN peacebuilding: Eritrea got its independence as an outcome of a long civil war; Sri Lanka "resolved" Tamil secessionist claims the traditional way by crushing them militarily; Kosovo got its independence through unauthorized NATO bombing; and Ukraine's Crimea was annexed by Russia following a rushed plebiscite. Peacebuilding must find clearer answers to the question of how to deal with self-determination.[42]

THE LIBERAL ORDER OF GOVERNANCE

All peacebuilding missions promote a Western, liberal concept of governance that involves representative democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy. However, liberal principles often clash with local values, cultures, and experiences. Instead of providing solutions, they can contribute to new conflicts. "Imported" democratic systems are too often seen to benefit only a small local elite, which takes its victory at the ballot box as a free pass to rob the state's treasures. Free and fair elections, so crucial for the liberal order, are suspected of being a way to hand victory to a party in the conflict that could not win on the battlefield.[43] In many countries, the formal judiciary is seen as serving only the powerful, and international support to a formal legal system may only make this worse.[44] Fears can also arise that a market economy will benefit local oligarchs instead of serving the interests of a largely poor population. Peacebuilding must find ways to better adapt its liberal policies to local traditions and cultural realities. Instead of trying to imitate an exclusively Western liberal model, the UN should be more open to other state models—for example, from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

THE CHALLENGE OF NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

Everybody agrees that greater national ownership is a precondition for successful peacebuilding missions, but in reality this ownership rarely materializes. An international community that arrives with thousands of soldiers, billions of dollars, and a clear agenda of what kind of nation-state they want to build is simply too dominant to leave space for true national ownership. Given insufficient administrative structures, the implementation of most international assistance bypasses national authorities, undermining the credibility of new national authorities and making them look weak in the eyes of their citizens. Peacebuilding actors must therefore make more concerted efforts to develop systems that would facilitate greater national ownership.

The UN's Inadequate Response

The United Nations has continually been engaged in fragile countries that are afflicted by conflict for twenty-five years. After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the UN's first peacebuilding-like operation was Operation Salaam, followed by many more such missions. However, it took the General Assembly and the Security Council another fifteen years, until 2005, to recognize peacebuilding as a main component of

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40 The veto right for the five permanent members of the Security Council already limited the UN's equality principle.

41 The European Union, despite its integration, faces a number of secession movements including in the Basque region, Catalonia, Flanders, Northern Ireland, Northern Italy, Scotland, and recently even Venice.

42 Many experts in international law claim a number of limits to self-determination. As the examples show, however, in practice such expert views often carry little weight.

43 In 2005, Iraqis voted three times in free and fair elections for the first time in their history. What should have been a cause for national celebration quickly turned into a nightmare, with Iraq descending into a full-fledged civil war. The elections arguably deepened intercommunal differences, mistrust, and hatred.

44 The judiciary in Afghanistan, despite billions of dollars in foreign support, has not gained the confidence of the local population that considers it as corrupt and serving only the rich and powerful.

UN peace operations and create what is now called the UN's peacebuilding architecture: the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office, and Peacebuilding Fund (a voluntary fund managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office).

Despite twenty-five years of intervening in fragile countries afflicted by conflict and ten years with a peacebuilding architecture, the UN has never taken a decisive step to adjust its own conceptual, organizational, and operational approaches to peacebuilding.

There are four important areas in which the UN has failed to adequately develop its approach to peacebuilding: in its vision, institutional framework, advisory body, and field operations.

A LACK OF VISION

The UN has not been able to develop a clear vision for, or even a definition of, peacebuilding that would do justice to the important changes in the global security environment.[45]

In his 1992 *Agenda for Peace,* Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali called peacebuilding "actions to solidify peace and avoid relapse into conflict," while Lakhdar Brahimi and the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations referred to it in their 2000 report on peacekeeping as "a hybrid of political and development activities targeted at the source of the conflict."[46] The 2005 General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that created the peacebuilding architecture made no attempt to define peacebuilding.[47] In 2007, the UN

Policy Committee approved a definition that calls peacebuilding "a range of measures to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels of conflict management."[48] It failed, however, to clarify what is meant by "the risk of lapsing…into conflict" or by "levels of conflict management." Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, in his intervention at a special session of the Security Council on peacebuilding in March 2014, made peacebuilding sound even more elusive when he described it simply as "a variety of political and development actions by United Nations peacekeeping operations, special political missions, country teams, and other actors."[49] Why should only political and development activities be part of peacebuilding, and why not also security, human rights, justice, humanitarian actions, and economic rehabilitation? If peace is a holistic concept, peacebuilding should be too![50]

The 2009 Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict is probably the best in-house effort to develop a new understanding for peacebuilding and to draw the right conclusions for translating this into a reform of the UN's operational activities.[51] Although this report also does not suggest a definition, in part because of fears that member states would not agree, it defined a comprehensive set of five peacebuilding objectives. Most importantly, these objectives included security as part of peacebuilding. Unfortunately, this report has seen little follow up.[52]

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45 There is no internationally agreed definition of peacebuilding. The Alliance for Peacebuilding has collected a number different definitions in its report "Mapping Boundaries of an Expanded Field," published in Fall 2012. The term peacebuilding goes back to Johan Galtung, a Norwegian academic and peace activist. He believed that conflict resolution would include a sequence of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.

46 United Nations Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping,* UN Doc. A/47/277–S/24111, June 17, 1992; Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,* UN Doc. A/55/305–S/2000/809, August 21, 2000.

47 The two resolutions contain the same text: UN General Assembly Resolution 60/180 (December 20, 2005), UN Doc. A/RES/60/180; UN Security Council Resolution 1645 (December 20, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1645. Although the resolution makes no explicit attempt to define peacebuilding, it speaks of "supporting national efforts to establish, redevelop or reform institutions for the effective administration of countries emerging from conflict, including capacity-building efforts."

48 UN Policy Committee Decision, May 22, 2007.

49 "Deputy Secretary-General's remarks to Security Council on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," March 19, 2104, available at www.un.org/sg/dsg/statements/index.asp?nid=502 .

50 For UN field operations, any distinction between the different aspects of UN assistance makes little sense. The UN's work in Kono in Sierra Leone provides a valuable example of this. Because of its wealth in surface diamonds (the infamous blood diamonds), this province was savagely fought over during the civil war and most of its inhabitants were either killed or fled the province. When, in 2003, the UN started bringing the internally displaced back to Kono, all parts of the UN were challenged: UN *peacekeepers* had to secure the area; *humanitarian* assistance had to be provided to those returning to their devastated villages; *political* reconciliation had to be facilitated among the conflicting communities and returning rebels; some kind of transitional *justice* had to be established and *human rights* promoted; *development* assistance had to help people to get some basic health and education services; roads had to be repaired and agricultural production started. Against such a background, discussions in New York of what is part of peacebuilding and what is not becomes irrelevant—peacebuilding is all of this!

51 United Nations Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,* UN Doc. A/67/499–S/2012/746, October 8, 2012.

52 DPKO included these objectives in its New Horizon document and thus effectively turned peacebuilding into a component of its peacekeeping operations. It should have been the other way around. See UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, "A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping," New York, July 2009.

AN INCOHERENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The opportunity to develop peacebuilding into a core UN concept was compromised at an early stage, when the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was created in 1992. By this time, the UN was no longer intervening in major interstate wars, and its new peacekeeping missions were in intrastate conflicts. The UN should have recognized the changing requirements for these interventions and instead created a department for peacebuilding operations responsible for bringing together the multiple aspects of UN interventions in intrastate conflicts.

As important as the creation of DPKO was to put peacekeeping on a more professional footing, it nonetheless adversely affected discussions about peacebuilding: peacekeeping (military) considerations dominated "civilian" ones, and peacebuilding became a subfunction of peacekeeping. While peacekeeping was developed into a coherent operational concept, peacebuilding was not. The preference for peacekeeping over peacebuilding may also be due to the fact that the UN secretary-general controls peacekeeping but relatively few of the other components that make up peacebuilding, such as human rights, humanitarian aid, and development assistance.[53]

From 2005 on, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) increasingly took over those UN interventions that had no peacekeeping component. But this did not mean that political approaches would now take precedent over military actions in trying to resolve intrastate conflicts. Quite the contrary! In the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, two countries with large DPA missions, it was NATO and a US-led military coalition that literally called the shots. The UN role in these cases was, as a result, marginal at best.

The UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)—squeezed between the much larger and more powerful DPKO, DPA, UN Development Programme (UNDP), and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)—is a compromise solution and too weak to have any tangible impact on UN policies and operations. This has led to fragmented peacebuilding approaches, with each UN department and agency wanting to preserve its own conceptual and operational independence. DPKO developed its concept of multidimensional peacekeeping; DPA abandoned the concept of integrated peacebuilding missions and reverted to its special political missions;[54] UNDP came up with its own concept of a social contract. OCHA never even considered being part of a peacebuilding operation, claiming the need for "humanitarian space." Even the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which once spearheaded UN integration by incorporating its human rights officers into UN peacebuilding missions, now insists on their own country representatives. The PBSO, in order not to offend its bigger sister organizations, started pretending that peacebuilding was something different from security, development, or humanitarian assistance. Peacebuilding, instead of being the umbrella that unites UN operations, had become a niche activity that only further fragmented field operations.[55]

MEMBER STATES' WEAK GOVERNANCE

The core part of the new peacebuilding architecture was a separate intergovernmental entity, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). As an advisory body to the General Assembly and the Security Council, the PBC was designed to deal exclusively with peacebuilding matters. This, together with the fact that the PBC was a more representative body, should have helped give peacebuilding a more prominent place in the UN. Now, ten years later, such hopes have not been realized.[56]

Today, the PBC has six "peacebuilding" countries on its agenda: Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, and Guinea. Except for the Central African Republic, none of these countries are high on the political agenda anymore. While concentrating on a few

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53 Almost all humanitarian and development assistance is implemented by relatively independently operating UN agencies, programs, and funds, and all depend on uncertain voluntary contributions. By contrast, all peacekeeping falls under the UN Secretariat and is funded by assessed contributions.

54 The UN's missions in Burundi and Sierra Leone were examples of integrated peacebuilding missions; both have been closed.

55 Interestingly, in the 2012 guidelines for strategic planning issued by the secretary-general, peacebuilding was not mentioned.

56 Despite this rather bleak assessment of the PBC, there are also more positive voices. See Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, "Facts, Fictions, and Frustrations with the Functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission and Some Issues for the Future," to be published in 2014 in Adekeye Adebajo (ed.) *Towards a New Pax Africa: Making, Keeping, and Building Peace in Africa* (Cape Town: Center for Conflict Resolution).

marginal conflicts, the PBC has failed to contribute to resolving any of the more significant intrastate conflicts in which the UN has intervened (e.g., the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan, Afghanistan, etc.) or in which the UN should play a more constructive role (e.g., Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and even Ukraine). Since February 2011, no additional country has joined the PBC—a testimony to its loss of credibility in the eyes of most member states.

The PBC's "country-specific configurations" have made things only more difficult. Chairpersons tend to remain in their position for years (sometimes chairs are "inherited" by succeeding ambassadors of the same country), turning them into a kind of special envoy. This undermines the intergovernmental character and the overall policy advisory functions of the PBC. And it weakens the authority of special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) on the ground. Special configurations—or, rather, their chairs—negotiate and sign cooperation agreements with counterpart governments in parallel with integrated UN peacebuilding strategies. But the PBC does not have the funding, the technical know-how, or the operational capacity to ever deliver what it has promised in these agreements.

It is therefore not surprising that, over the last ten years, the PBC has proven unable to promote a new vision for peacebuilding, to provide intellectual leadership, to formulate adequate policy options, to develop workable operational approaches, or to unite the fragmented UN system behind peacebuilding. Instead, the PBC tends to compete with UN peacebuilding/peacekeeping missions and adds to the confusion over respective responsibilities.

FRAGMENTED FIELD OPERATIONS

Despite repeated calls for a more coherent and integrated approach to peacebuilding, it seems that the UN has gone backwards. In the Babylonian world of international donors, the UN beats all in being the most fragmented player. For an organiza-tion that calls itself "united," this is not only mindboggling but also a serious challenge to its credibility. In parallel with UN Secretariat–managed peacebuilding missions, as many as twenty-six separate representative offices of UN agencies, programs, and funds can operate in the same country. This leads to at least as many separate management cultures, separate adminis-trative processes, and separate information and communication technology systems. And each of these twenty-six country offices will receive policy guidance from twenty-six different governing councils and be overseen by twenty-six different headquarters. The effort to better integrate UN agencies through a "One UN" approach has descended into time-consuming processes with little to show. Framing UN leadership around deputy SRSGs is more often an expression of division than of a united command structure.[57]

Donors, despite all the lip service to the contrary, only add to the confusion by pulling individual UN agencies in all directions with offers of funding according to their own funding strategies and national interests. Despite all their good intentions to work together, UN agency representatives are bound by this anarchic international funding system that turns them into competitors for financial resources and international recognition. The joint integrated UN strategies, which the secretary-general has now proposed, are simply not working in such a divisive environment.[58]

Reforming UN Peacebuilding

Threats from fragile nation-states afflicted by internal armed conflicts will continue to dominate the UN's peace agenda. In 2014, the OECD lists 51 countries as fragile and the Fund for Peace places 61 percent of the 178 countries examined in its Fragile States Index on a scale ranging from "high warning" to "very high alert."[59] And the number of dysfunctional and fragile nation-states appears to be on the rise. Today, large areas in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are controlled by politically

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57 Both deputy SRSGs report to different headquarters, have different financial resources at their disposal, and are often at odds over priorities and how to approach the government.

58 For a review of the joint UN strategies, see Arthur Boutellis, "Driving the UN System Apart? A Study of UN Integration and Integrated Strategic Planning," International Peace Institute, August 2013.

59 OECD-DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility, "Fragile States 2014: Domestic Revenue Mobilisation in Fragile States," Paris: OECD, 2014; Fund for Peace, "Fragile States Index 2014," available at http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2014 .

radical (or criminal) nonstate actors. The Islamic State, which has declared a caliphate in large parts of Syria and Iraq, is only the most recent example of a development that we see in many parts of the world.[60]

To enable the UN to respond to such challenges, help end intrastate conflicts, and re-erect nation-states, its peacebuilding tool needs to be reformed and sharpened. The UN's forthcoming tenth-anniversary review of its peacebuilding architecture and the secretary-general's planned review of peace operations both present a new opportunity to get peacebuilding right. This report aims to make a contribution to this by proposing five overarching reforms, outlined below.

These proposals are based on two underlying considerations.

First, the success or failure of peacebuilding missions is decided in the field, but the managerial and operational problems that hamper the work of these missions have virtually all their origins at headquarters. As such, change requires greater political will among member states and stronger leadership within UN headquarters. The reform proposals are therefore all directed at member states, the secretary-general, or both.

Second, these proposals do not envision or require UN-wide reforms. In other words, the proposed reforms are time-limited and focused on the exceptional but crucial UN interventions in fragile conflict-afflicted countries. This should make these reforms more acceptable to member states and the UN leadership, as well as to UN agencies, programs, and funds.

1. Empower the Peacebuilding Commission.

The legitimacy of UN peacebuilding missions stems from the notion that these missions act on behalf of UN member states. For this reason, member states' reform of the Peacebuilding Commission is central to any reform of UN peacebuilding. The PBC must be enabled to debate all peacebuilding issues and advise the General Assembly and the Security Council on these issues, including on the shape, direction, and performance of specific UN peacebuilding interventions.

The PBC, due to its broader and more representative membership, has the potential to play a much more important role in solving intrastate conflicts—but, to do so, member states must clarify its responsibilities further.[61]

(i) The PBC should be made responsible for formulating *policies and operational options for peacebuilding interventions* and advising the Security Council accordingly. As such, the PBC should serve as a forum for member states to debate sensitive issues related to peacebuilding, such as national sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination, liberal governance, and globalization. It should also be empowered to discuss more operationally relevant issues, such as the dual character of nation-states, national ownership, exit strategies, transition of UN missions, and interagency cooperation. As an advisory body, the PBC could deal with these controversial issues in a more constructive atmosphere than other UN bodies.

(ii) The PBC must be made responsible for *all countries with peacebuilding agendas* and not only for those who voluntarily join the commission. This should automatically include all countries for which the Security Council has set up a UN peacebuilding intervention but also countries with intrastate conflicts without a UN mission that the Security Council would refer to the PBC for consideration. This would help to treat all countries with a peacebuilding intervention equally and to better prepare for eventual UN peacebuilding interventions elsewhere.

(iii) The PBC should be made responsible for ensuring a *coherent and integrated UN approach* to peacebuilding throughout the UN system and regularly debate failures and best

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60 Other examples are large areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan controlled by the Taliban, large areas in Colombia controlled by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and National Liberation Army (ELN), much of Somalia and Libya being controlled by various militia and tribal groups, much of the islands of Sulu and Mindanao in the Philippines being under the control of Islamic fighters, large stretches of Yemen that are under the control of Islamic and tribal fighters, or areas in Mali and Algeria that are controlled by the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Tuareg fighters. This problem also includes areas in large cities that are controlled by criminal gangs.

61 Resource mobilization is not suggested here as a task for the PBC. This has not worked in the past and is not likely to work in the future. The greatest contribution the PBC could make is to ensure more coherent, effective, and ultimately more credible UN peacebuilding interventions. This, in turn, would help resource mobilization.

practices. This would include urging members to align their voluntary contributions to an overall UN strategy on peacebuilding. The PBC should also set standards for the smooth transition of peacebuilding missions from one phase to the next. In this context, the PBC should seek the support of other international and national players.

(iv) The PBC should act as member states' central *governing council* for all (integrated) peacebuilding missions and, as such, review and approve their peacebuilding strategies and resource mobilization plans. It should receive regular (annual) reports on the progress made in peacebuilding operations as a whole. All UN departments, agencies, funds, and programs working in countries with peacebuilding missions would have to jointly report to the PBC. Member states would have to agree that all other UN governing councils and executive boards recognize decisions made by the PBC with regard to policy and operational aspects of UN peacebuilding missions—though not technical aspects.[62]

The PBC should stop acting as a separate operational arm of the UN and instead accept what it is: an intergovernmental body that provides policy advice and guidance on one of today's most important peace and security issues. In this spirit, the PBC should abandon its policy of voluntary membership, its country-specific configurations, its country-specific common frameworks for peacebuilding, and the practice of multiyear chairs.

2. Clarify the relationship between the Security Council and PBC.

For reforms of the Peacebuilding Commission to be successful, member states need to further clarify the relationship between the PBC and the Security Council. Otherwise, the fear that a strengthened and more representative PBC could, in the long term, undermine the authority of the Security Council may block progress.

One way to achieve this could be to distinguish between member states' national sovereignty and national ownership. The Security Council would remain the guardian of national sovereignty. As such, the Security Council would maintain the exclusive right to authorize a peacebuilding mission in a member state (an interference in this member's internal affairs), determine the actual mandate of a peacebuilding mission (the degree of such interference), and decide when to end a peacebuilding mission (the return to full national sovereignty).

The PBC, on the other hand, could be the advocate for national ownership. As such, the PBC would monitor the operational activities of integrated peacebuilding missions and ensure greater national ownership. The PBC should be the forum in which a member state receiving peacebuilding assistance and the respective UN peacebuilding mission (including all UN agencies) can discuss concerns about the way forward. The PBC should also take a wider view of national ownership and include various national nonstate actors, such as community, religious, and tribal leaders; political parties; independent commissions; the media; and even representatives of the arts and sports of a country—all essential players for creating greater national unity and inclusiveness.

3. Make peacebuilding a principal tool for the UN system.

The PBC and secretary-general should work together to turn peacebuilding into a principal tool for the United Nations that would apply to the entire UN system. This would include three components.

(i) One of the key tasks of a reformed PBC must be to *develop a new and more comprehensive vision for peacebuilding* and clarify what peacebuilding is—or what it should be. This would have to include member states' formulation of a more comprehensive and operationally oriented definition for peacebuilding, which could help direct the UN system in planning, conducting, and completing its operational peacebuilding activities.

A possible definition could be the following: *UN peacebuilding is a country-specific and problem-focused combination of political,*

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62 UN development and humanitarian agencies' operational activities are subject to greater scrutiny by their respective governing councils or executive boards than the often much larger operations of DPKO, DPA, and OCHA.

peacekeeping, police, legal, human rights, humanitarian, and development interventions in a fragile country afflicted by internal armed conflicts. It aims to re-establish full national sovereignty and national ownership by helping restoring internal security, overcoming human suffering, reconciling divided societies, fostering national unity, promoting human rights and equal access to justice, encouraging inclusive democratic government, rebuilding national institutions, and stimulating social and economic development.

(ii) To guide peacebuilding missions, the secretary-general must *clarify the core values of UN peacebuilding missions* and get the PBC to debate and approve them. In the 2000 report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, Lakhdar Brahimi and his colleagues pointed out that "No failure did more damage to UN peacekeeping in the 1990s than its reluctance to distinguish between victim and aggressor."[63] But what should the criteria be for making such distinction? Brahimi suggested the principles of the UN Charter. There are also other universal principles, such as human rights, the rule of law, or representational government. None of these principles were ever spelled out—which leaves SRSGs to make them up as they go along. Clear core values and principles, together with a new definition of peacebuilding and a Security Council mandate, would ultimately determine what a UN peacebuilding mission is about.

(iii) The secretary-general should *develop a new operational doctrine for peacebuilding.* In 2008, DPKO published its Capstone Doctrine, a name suggesting that this was the ultimate wisdom for UN peacekeeping.[64] But it was not. What would be required is a new operational doctrine for peacebuilding that covers all aspects of UN interventions, including peacekeeping. Such an operational doctrine would have the mammoth task of bringing some coherence among the very different operational modalities that peacekeepers, human rights advocates, humanitarian

workers, and development specialists have developed in line with their special mandates. This operational doctrine would have to abandon the three basic principles of traditional peacekeeping and replace them with more realistic guiding principles for integrated peacebuilding operations in fragile countries afflicted by conflict.[65]

4. **Align internal organizational structures for peacebuilding.**

In addition to developing a new operational peacebuilding doctrine and turning the PBC into the governing council for all integrated peace-building missions, the UN Secretariat would have to review its own organizational support structures. If the UN wants to achieve greater efficiency through integration, it cannot continue to maintain missions with up to twenty-six field representatives and just as many separate reporting lines. For the special purpose of peacebuilding operations, the UN may therefore consider implementing a strict policy of *one office—one strategy—one leadership.* For this to work, reporting lines to various headquarters would also have to be clarified. One possibility would be that all policy and operational decisions are guided by the UN Secretariat (partly because of its proximity to the General Assembly, Security Council, and PBC), while all special technical issues remain the responsibility of the respective technical UN departments, agencies, funds, and programs.

It makes no sense to decide respective responsibilities for field missions between DPKO and DPA on the basis of whether or not they include military staff. Such an arrangement suggests that some intrastate conflicts need military (DPKO) while others political (DPA) solutions. But peacebuilding includes other important aspects, such as humanitarian and development assistance. The Secretariat must therefore come up with a more rational way to organize its support to peacebuilding missions that includes not only DPKO and DPA but also OCHA, UNDP, and PBSO.

Any organizational alignment in the field and headquarters would raise considerable administra-

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63 Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, *Report of the Panel.*

64 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *Principles and Guidelines.*

65 The forthcoming book *Rethinking Peacebuilding* will suggest a number of operating principles for integrated peacebuilding missions.

tive and organizational (and emotional) opposition. But wouldn't it be more reasonable to adjust the organization to enable it to better deal with today's challenges than to continue protecting separate institutional interests? To remain credible, the UN must prevent overlap and become more effective—and in the process save overhead costs.

5. Consolidate financing for peacebuilding.

The success and failure of reform often depends on finances, and peacebuilding reforms are likely to stumble over financial issues. Member states, and in particular the UN's main donors, must realize that existing funding arrangements for peacebuilding are highly irrational, inefficient, and even counterproductive. UN peacebuilding missions are presently funded through several hundred different funding arrangements. Peacekeeping and special political missions are funded using assessed contributions, but these have different assessment scales and follow different budgetary, reporting, and governance systems. Legal, humanitarian, and development activities that form part of a peacebuilding initiative depend entirely on unpredictable voluntary contributions. These voluntary contributions are channeled through a myriad of trust funds, special purpose funds, various agencies' core funding windows, cost-sharing agreements, and direct program funding—each with its own administrative and reporting requirements.

This pulls the UN system apart, turns UN agencies into competitors for funding, and drowns initiatives in endless bureaucratic processes. Member states and the secretary-general must find a better way to finance peacebuilding. This would not necessarily require more funding but more rational and predictable funding arrangements.

Conclusion

The suggested definition of peacebuilding will, no doubt, be controversial. But the definition is not the foremost issue. The real issue is how the UN can best adjust its peace interventions to respond more effectively to threats to global peace and security emanating from collapsing member states

with internal armed conflicts, and how it can best reduce the associated human suffering.

For the UN to remain credible, it will not be enough to point to the special role of the Security Council in authorizing peacebuilding interventions—it must also have the capabilities to effectively implement Security Council decisions. For this to happen, the UN would have to recognize the special requirements for intervening in intrastate conflicts and develop its peacebuilding concept into an integrated, coherent, and multidimensional tool for the entire organization. If not, the UN could find itself becoming a second-choice organization, whose only comparative advantage is to organize low-cost "peacekeeping plus" operations for politically less important conflicts. This would only further increase a trend of bypassing the UN on important global security issues and favoring unilateral solutions.[66]

The reviews of the peacebuilding architecture and of UN peace operations come at a difficult time for the UN. Disagreements over Libya, Syria, and now Ukraine are testing cooperation in the Security Council. Of particular concern is the fact that all these disagreements are about countries with intrastate conflicts, divided national loyalties, and dysfunctional governments that are so typical for peacebuilding interventions. Member states' may therefore be reluctant to agree to any reform.

However, the opposite scenario may also come to pass. The recent crises in many parts of the world may bring member states to renew their commitments to the collective security system of the UN. Recent Security Council decisions on Mali and Syria seem to support the idea that nobody wants to go back to a time when the council was blocked. Despite all the tough rhetoric, major powers are today more reluctant to be drawn directly into intrastate conflicts, especially militarily. Massive military interventions have failed to provide durable solutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, and this may create space for more careful approaches. This could make the UN a more attractive player once again, with its more comprehensive peacebuilding approach that would include less intrusive

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66 In addition to the United States, the European Union under its Common Defense and Security Policy increasingly intervenes in fragile countries outside its own region. NATO has also adopted a role as a global "peacekeeper." If this becomes a model for other major global and regional powers, the world could go back to a time of more intense competition over spheres of influence.

peacekeeping as part of a package of multidimensional interventions. But for this to happen, the UN has to first improve its peacebuilding approach and sharpen its peacebuilding tools. The UN's operations must become more credible.
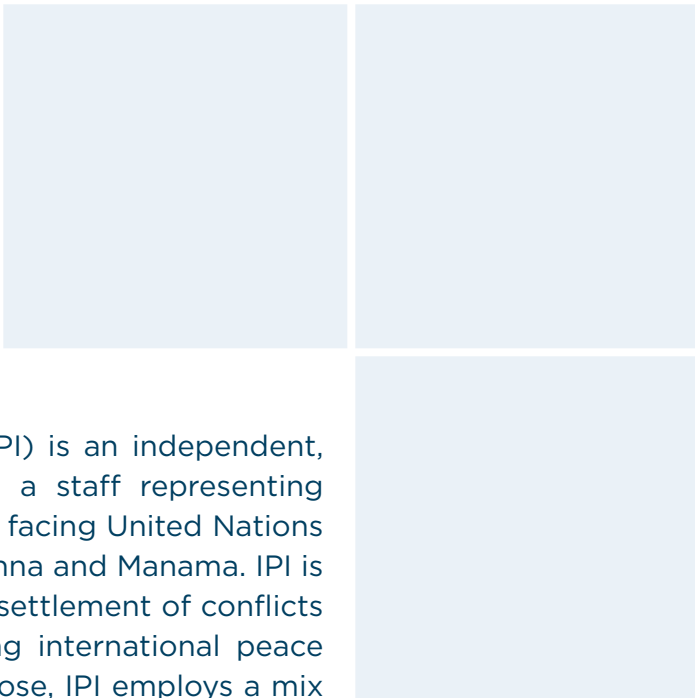
In June 2014, French President François Hollande marked the seventieth anniversary of Allied troops' landing in Normandy to free Europe from Nazi rule with a speech to the heads of state and government of some of the most influential members of the UN, in which he repeatedly stressed the need to support the role of the United Nations as the principal actor for maintaining global peace and security. In no other area would this support be more important than in improving the UN's capability to mount and conduct effective and credible peacebuilding operations to help fragile countries afflicted by conflict.

Crises are often critical for accepting reform. So why could this not also work for reforming peacebuilding? There is much that needs to be done, and there is no time to lose. The forthcoming UN reviews of the peacebuilding architecture and of peace operations could provide a valuable starting point.

The **INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE** (IPI) is an independent, international not-for-profit think tank with a staff representing more than twenty nationalities. It has offices facing United Nations Headquarters in New York and offices in Vienna and Manama. IPI is dedicated to promoting the prevention and settlement of conflicts between and within states by strengthening international peace and security institutions. To achieve its purpose, IPI employs a mix of policy research, convening, publishing, and outreach.

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