

Driving the System Apart? A Study of United Nations Integration and Integrated Strategic Planning

ARTHUR BOUTELLIS



Cover Image: An image of shattered glass superimposed over a photograph of a street sign in front of the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York City. UN Photo/M. Design by Thong Nguyen.

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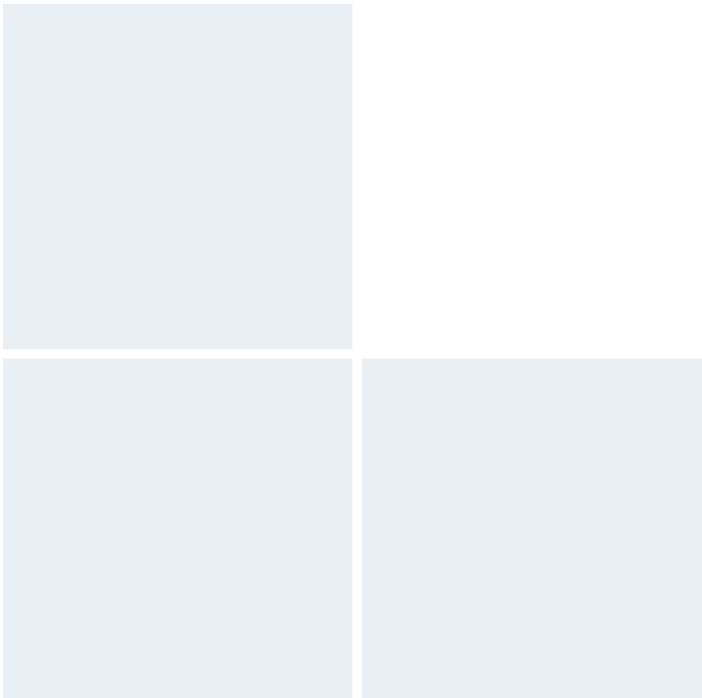
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Abbreviations

AFPs	Agencies, Funds, and Programs
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
CIVCAP	Civilian Capacities
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DFS	Department of Field Support
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary-General
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IAP	Integrated Assessment and Planning
IMPP	Integrated Mission Planning Process
IMTF	Integrated Mission Task Force
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
ITAPT	Integrated Technical Assessment and Planning Team
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
JOC	Joint Operations Command
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OROLSI	Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
RC	Resident Coordinator
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform

UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

Over the last two decades, the United Nations (UN) has undertaken a series of institutional innovations to promote greater coherence in the organization's conflict and postconflict engagements across its political, security, development, and humanitarian pillars. The UN has taken the integration agenda further than many other organizations and "whole-of-government" approaches. It has developed a comprehensive body of integration-related policies and planning tools, and draws from a wide range of experiences with many forms and levels of integration. Earlier this year, the UN secretary-general reaffirmed the UN's commitment to integration through the endorsement of a new policy on integrated assessment and planning (IAP).

Yet, this report argues that the UN integration agenda faces a number of obstacles that threaten to erase some of the hard-won gains. There are signs of integration fatigue from various corners of the organization, due in part to higher-than-expected transaction costs, the lack of incentives and rewards for integration, the difficulty of demonstrating and communicating the outcomes and impacts of integrated planning processes, and continuing structural impediments to fully realizing the "integration promise."

Despite a shift away from a focus on structures to an increasing emphasis on strategy, some nominally integrated UN field operations continue to experience institutional and funding turf battles. This is rendered all the more complex in countries such as Mali, Somalia, and Syria, and in regions like the Sahel, where UN engagement has taken on multiple forms. In such contexts, peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and agencies, funds, and programs (AFPs) plan and operate alongside one another, requiring significant efforts to maintain coherence. It also remains unclear how changes in the broader international landscape and in some of the paradigms that initially set the context for UN integration will affect the agenda today.

As a result, the sentiment that efforts at integration are in fact driving the UN system apart is gaining currency. If integration is confirmed as the way forward at the policy level, how can the UN overcome these obstacles, incorporate these paradigm shifts, and revive momentum for integra-

tion in practice? This report seeks to capture the evolution of integrated planning efforts at the UN and to identify the next steps for a realistic integration agenda. It is based on a review of progress made, an assessment of the current state of integrated planning efforts, and an analysis of related policy developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report argues that future UN action on integration should combine small but painstaking internal efforts to strengthen planning capacities ("quick fixes") with more systemic improvements designed to sustain these by bringing greater coherence to the UN response in the field of peace and security (the "missing whole"). Among the main recommendations are the following:

Quick Fixes

Integrate Where It Matters

- Jointly identify areas where it makes sense for UN missions and AFPs to come together and agree on the right form and depth of integration required in each area.
- Do not restrict integration to programmatic interventions. In certain contexts, a UN mission and the UN country team may increase their impact by creating more coherence in areas such as public information and messaging, fundraising, stakeholder engagement, and operations.

Analyze as One

- Systematically carry out joint analytical exercises (now common practice across the UN system) throughout the mission life cycle, even if they do not lead to integrated responses.
- Establish joint analysis units (bringing together mission and AFP staff) to assess country trends and risks, and leverage the mission's political access while drawing on the AFPs' field networks.
- Continue to develop system-wide policies across a range of postconflict areas.
- Encourage and reward staff mobility across the UN Secretariat and AFPs throughout employees' careers (rather than only at high levels), as well as staff collocation in field missions in some cases.

Upgrade the Capacity of System-Wide Planners

- Promote joint training for staff in the UN Development Group and Department of

Peacekeeping Operations and capacity development for UN planners.

- Establish dedicated integrated planning capacities at headquarters.

Remove Managerial and Administrative Impediments

- Develop standard approaches, templates, and procedures for sharing of assets, staff interoperability, and transfer of resources, and delegate authority to missions and agencies in the field when choosing the right integration modus and tools.
- Increase awareness of both the “delivering-as-one” and the integration agendas, as well as other UN processes, such as the civilian capacity initiative and trust fund operations.

Provide Incentives and Leadership

- Create incentives for integration as part of staff performance evaluations and through greater recognition of the value of integration in senior leadership messaging and discourse.
- Develop a more robust body of evidence regarding the value of integration as it relates to UN performance in the field, and explain why it matters—clearly and credibly.

The “Missing Whole”

Peacebuilding: One UN Definition, Different Approaches

- The UN Secretariat should lead the way with some of the below systemic reforms, to ensure that different parts of the UN system complement rather than compete with one another in post-conflict peacebuilding.
- Donors should support and demand integrated approaches and joint UN initiatives and projects, and create incentives for different UN entities to further cooperate in a country or a region.

A Client-Oriented UN Headquarters

- Bring teams from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs together in the same regional groupings, with a unified interface to the “clients”—the host countries and the UN field missions (whether a peacekeeping or special political mission, or a UN country team).
- Adopt a client-oriented or service provider approach consisting of peace and security

“products,” which could be based on the existing models for electoral assistance or mediation support, and “enablers,” such as system-wide lessons learned, policies, and planning.

- Encourage “learning as one” through frequent cross-cutting lessons learned to build a common repository of institutional knowledge about integration across UN entities.
- All field missions should operate under one budget, and allow more flexibility and interoperability between the regular (assessed) budget and voluntary contributions.

Building on Partnerships

- Partner with the World Bank and the private sector for stronger integration of economic analysis into UN postconflict assessments—as was done in Libya and Yemen, for instance.
- For parallel deployments of a UN field mission and a non-UN force, develop effective coordination mechanisms and interoperability “where it matters” early during the planning processes.
- Develop more formal guidance for joint strategic assessments (UN-AU, UN-EU, UN–World Bank, etc.) to allow for a clearer division of labor from the outset while maintaining flexibility, as each organization may end up planning its own mode of engagement.

The Need for a New Integration Consensus?

- Rethink UN integration in light of the changing nature of crises, some of which go beyond traditional UN peace and security expertise and challenge state-centric paradigms.
- A second integration movement should put greater emphasis on building a political consensus that includes host countries and a broader member state constituency, and that extends to regional organizations and countries from the Global South. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and the post-2015 development agenda could serve as catalysts.

The report concludes that if the integration agenda is to reclaim adherents, it is important for the UN to combine a series of practical fixes to its integrated planning practices with broader, systemic changes. At the same time, the UN also needs to build a more compelling narrative concerning the value of integration, reduce costs for its implementation, and clearly demonstrate its

relevance to the evolving parameters of international engagement in crisis settings and to shifting operational requirements. To support and sustain these efforts, a rekindling of the UN leadership's enthusiasm for integration and a renewed and broader member state consensus will be required.

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) has come a long way since Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* in 1992, introduced as one of the first attempts to instill greater unity of purpose in the organization's conflict and postconflict engagement.¹ Over the last two decades, despite strong countercurrents, the UN has undertaken a series of institutional innovations to promote greater coherence across its political, security, development, and humanitarian pillars.

Efforts to better integrate different elements of the UN's work first began within the UN Secretariat, to get the various departments administering and coordinating the UN's activities to combine efforts in support of multidimensional field operations. "Integration" would thus bring together civilian, military, and police components under one senior UN official on the ground, supported by one budget. Integration then extended beyond the Secretariat to strengthen the partnership between peacekeeping and political missions on the one hand and UN agencies, funds, and programs on the other. It sought to ensure that, at the very least, the various UN entities deployed in conflict and postconflict contexts would not work at cross-purposes. Throughout, significant investments have also been made to strengthen the planning culture and capacities of various UN entities, with a focus on interdepartmental and interagency processes.

While these efforts have been developed through trial and error, and have at times been forced by failures in the field, it is evident that the UN has taken the integration agenda further than many other multilateral and bilateral organizations, and has achieved greater coherence than many "whole-of-government" approaches. The organization can now boast of a fairly comprehensive body of

integration-related policies, a range of technical planning tools, and a wide compilation of accumulated experiences with many forms and depths of integration.

Yet, the integration agenda seems to be facing a number of obstacles that threaten its momentum and even threaten to erase some of the hard-won gains. There are signs of integration fatigue from various corners of the organization, due in part to higher-than-expected transaction costs, the lack of incentives and rewards for integration, and continuing structural impediments to fully realizing the "integration promise." Efforts to measure the results of integration have been discussed but have so far been restricted to achievements in processes rather than outcomes or impact, further undermining efforts to calibrate expectations and communicate the costs and benefits of integration effectively.

With obstacles and costs often more visible than benefits, it is not surprising that the principle of integration—which should underpin UN responses in all crisis situations—continues to trigger unease and fatigue. Despite a shift away from an exclusive focus on structures to an increasing emphasis on strategy, some nominally integrated UN field operations also continue to experience institutional and funding turf battles, and resistance from humanitarian agencies. These divisions have at times been exploited by various external actors to their advantage. In addition, UN engagement in countries such as Mali, Somalia, and Syria, and in regions like the Sahel, has taken on multiple forms: peacekeeping operations, special political missions (including regional offices and special envoys), and agencies, funds, and programs all plan and operate alongside one another, requiring significant efforts to maintain coherence.

Moreover, beyond the organization itself, the broader international landscape and some of the paradigms that set the context for UN integration and informed its parameters have changed. Integration now needs to be pursued in a political and financial climate in which the UN is being asked to do more with less, increasing emphasis is placed on flexibility, and the trend toward hybrid and parallel operations with other organizations is multiplying coordination challenges.

1 United Nations Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping*, UN Doc. A/47/277-S/24111, June 17, 1992.

At the same time, demands on the UN have increased and shifted in nature. Host countries are asserting themselves and resisting the presence of foreign uniformed personnel while calling for greater UN support for economic development. The Arab Spring and subsequent transitions have challenged traditional UN state-centric paradigms, and the UN integration model—with its in-built assumptions about capacity building and other modes of intervention—remains designed for postconflict and low-income countries rather than middle-income, fragile contexts. Some of these changes have been captured, in part, at the policy level and in strategic documents such as the *World Development Report 2011*, *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict*, or the “New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,” and they have been part of the global debate surrounding the post-2015 development agenda.² Yet, it remains unclear what they mean for the future of UN integration and how integrated planning approaches reflect and account for some of their implications.

Finally, the promise of integration and support for it are further constrained by a perceived disconnect between the results of integrated assessment and planning processes, and the decisions on mission mandates and resources that are ultimately made by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Security Council, and General Assembly, which often use a different set of considerations.

As a result, the sentiment that efforts at integration are driving the UN system apart rather than bringing it together is gaining currency at the same time that the secretary-general has re-affirmed the organization’s commitment to integration through the endorsement of a new policy on integrated assessment and planning.³ If integration is confirmed as the way forward at the policy level, how can the UN overcome these obstacles, incorporate these paradigm shifts, and revive momentum for integration in practice?

This report seeks to capture the evolution of integrated planning efforts at the UN and to identify the next steps for a realistic integration agenda. It is based on a review of progress made

and an assessment of the current state of integrated planning efforts, and includes an analysis of related policy developments. It argues that future action should combine small, painstaking internal efforts to strengthen planning capacities with more systemic improvements designed to demonstrate value for transaction costs and efforts. This will require rekindling the UN leadership’s enthusiasm for integration and ensuring that integrated mission planning processes strengthen the UN’s response to shifting operational requirements. A renewed consensus on integration, within and beyond the UN, will also be needed to support and sustain these efforts.

UN Integration and Integrated Strategic Planning: Evolution and Current Status

Over the past two decades, the UN has undertaken a series of institutional innovations to promote greater coherence across its political, security, development, and humanitarian pillars. While the terms “integration” and “integrated strategic planning” are frequently discussed and used as guiding principles throughout the UN community, they encompass both different processes (intra-Secretariat versus Secretariat together with UN agencies, funds, and programs) and outcomes at different levels (structural, strategic, operational, etc.).

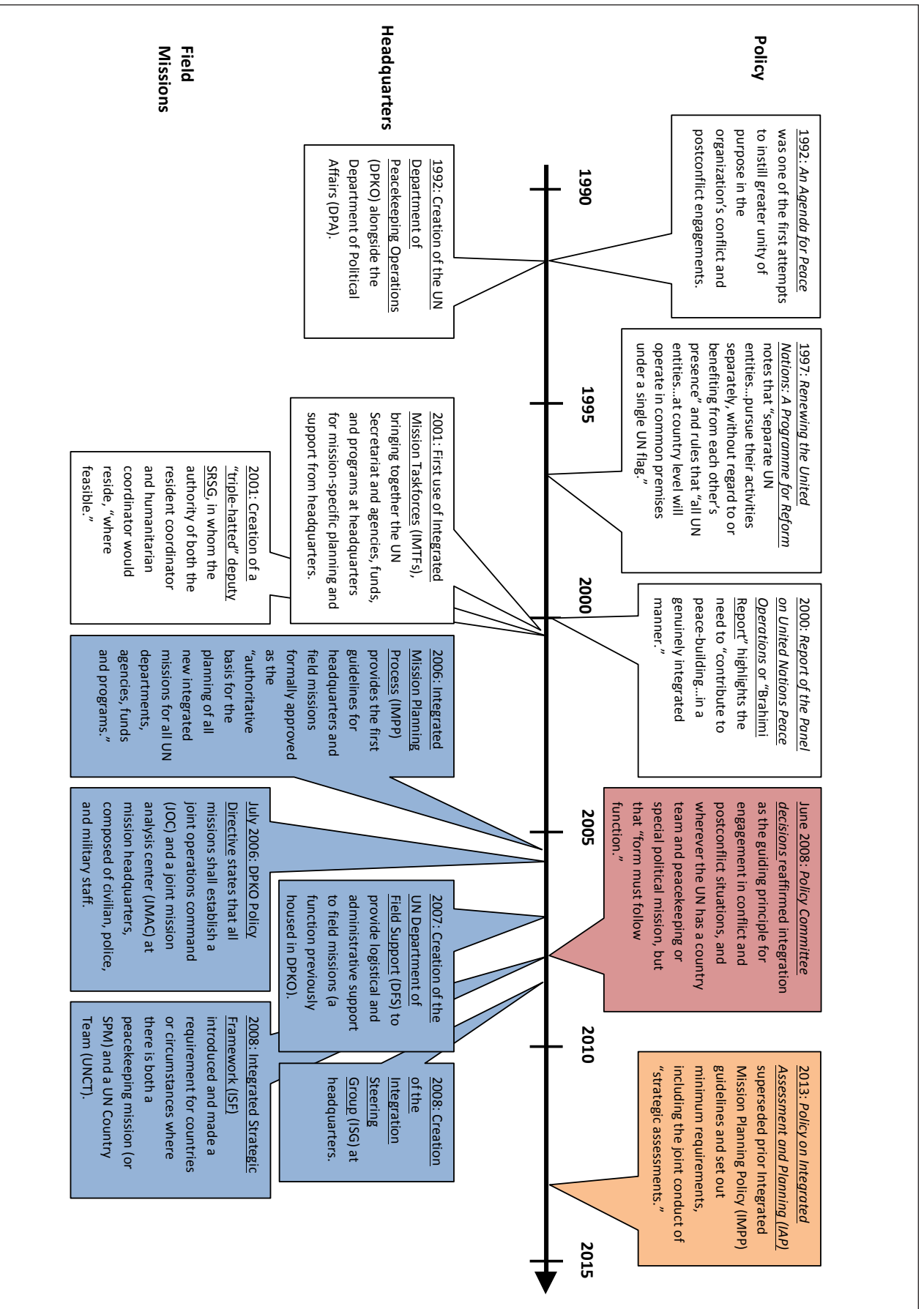
DPKO LEADS INTEGRATION WITHIN THE UN SECRETARIAT

Integration first began as an intra-UN Secretariat affair, with the creation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in 1992. DPKO was created in response to the need to run increasingly large and complex multidimensional peace operations mandated by the Security Council. These brought together civilian, military, and police components under the single leadership of the special representative of the secretary-general

² World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington, DC, 2011); UN Secretary-General, *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/67/312-S/2012/645, August 15, 2012; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, “A New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States,” 2011.

³ The UN “Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning” (IAP) was approved by the secretary-general on April 9, 2013, following endorsement by the Integration Steering Group on March 15, 2013, and by the UN Development Group on March 13th.

Figure 1: Chronology of UN integration.



(SRS) and under one budget (the “peacekeeping assessed budget”). This merger, and the fact that the individual heading the field operation carries an equivalent level of seniority as the under-secretary-general that leads DPKO at headquarters (or one level below), are unique features of UN missions.

At field level, the establishment of a joint operations command (JOC) and a joint mission analysis center (JMAC) composed of civilian, police, and military in missions further contributed to greater information sharing and joint analysis between the civilian and uniformed components of missions.⁴ The need for such integrated structures to support planning and decision making by a mission’s civilian and military leadership grew out of increasingly multidimensional missions and crises, such as the failure of UN peacekeepers to protect the city of Bukavu in eastern Congo in 2004.⁵

At headquarters level, the Department of Field Support (DFS) was created in 2007 to provide a more integrated logistical and administrative support system to peacekeeping missions, a function previously housed under DPKO. However, this also produced coordination challenges. The “integrated operational teams” (IOTs), envisaged as a single point of contact at headquarters for field missions and partners, therefore became the tool to bring the various civil and uniformed components of DPKO in UN headquarters together with their DFS counterparts.⁶ Headed by a director, integrated operational teams serve as information and liaison hubs in New York and provide integrated support for each peace operation managed by DPKO.

BEYOND THE SECRETARIAT: FROM STRUCTURAL TO STRATEGIC INTEGRATION

In parallel with these intra-Secretariat integration efforts, a broader integration drive incorporating UN agencies, funds, and programs operating in a given country started in the late 1990s and early

2000s under the leadership of then UN secretary-general Kofi Annan. As the researchers Kathleen Jennings and Anja Kaspersen put it, “The impulse to integrate grew out of a conviction that the peacekeeping failures of the 1990s were at least partly attributable to the various elements of the UN acting separately, and occasionally at cross-purposes.”⁷ This integration drive had the support of several heads of agencies, including Mark Malloch Brown (administrator of the United Nations Development Programme from 1999 to 2005) and later Jan Egeland (emergency relief coordinator from 2003 to 2006).

Two seminal reports also provided impetus for these efforts. The 1997 report *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform* commissioned by Kofi Annan noted that “separate UN entities...pursue their activities separately, without regard to or benefiting from each other’s presence,” and it promoted the idea that “all UN entities...at country level...operate in common premises under a single UN flag.”⁸ The 2000 *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, known as the Brahimi Report, emphasized the need to “contribute to peace-building...in a genuinely integrated manner.”⁹

Initial steps toward UN integration were focused on field missions and included both structural and strategic dimensions. Notably, this included the creation of a “triple-hatted” deputy SRS (DSRS), in whom the authority of both the resident coordinator (RC) and humanitarian coordinator (HC) would reside, where feasible. The DSRS/RC/HC is tasked with ensuring coordination across mission activities set by the mandate and the UN country team’s long-term development and humanitarian initiatives. A further “Note of Guidance” in 2006 specified that the DSRS reports primarily to the SRS, and through him or her to the under-secretary-general of DPKO or DPA (in the case of special political missions). However, there would also be a secondary reporting line to the chair of the

4 The first DPKO policy directive on JOC and JMAC was released in 2006 and states that all missions shall establish a JOC and JMAC at mission headquarters. See UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “DPKO Policy Directive: Joint Operations Centres and Joint Mission Analysis Centres,” July 1, 2006.

5 See Thorsten Benner, Stephan Mergenthaler, and Philipp Rotmann, *The New World of UN Peace Operations: Learning to Build Peace?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 197–208.

6 See United Nations Secretary-General, “Overview of the Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Budget Performance for the Period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 and Budget for the Period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007,” Part II, UN Doc. A/60/696, February 24, 2006.

7 Kathleen M. Jennings and Anja T. Kaspersen, “Introduction: Integration Revisited,” *International Peacekeeping* 15, No.4, August 2008, p. 445.

8 United Nations Secretary-General, *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*, UN Doc. A/51/950, July 14, 1997.

9 Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, August 21, 2000, UN Doc. A/55/305-S/2000/809.

UN Development Group (as RC) and to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (as HC), where applicable.¹⁰

The first major independent study on integration in 2005 found that there was little specific agreement about what an integrated mission comprised or what integration meant in practice, and it argued for “strategic integration” over “structural integration.”¹¹ It recognized that overly formal structural tools could be counterproductive, arguing instead that “form must follow function” and that integration should only be pursued in areas where the approach adds value. This recommendation was largely captured in subsequent guidance and led to the emergence of a variety of organizational structures in the field, including several explicitly designed to be more conscious of the need to preserve the “humanitarian space.” Indeed, the discussions on the integration of UN conflict and postconflict presences were consistent with a broader push for system coherence, expressed in the “Delivery as One” initiative in the development arena and the cluster approach in the humanitarian field.¹² However, these initiatives have proceeded mostly in parallel, with attempts at convergence emerging only very recently.

The shift toward strategic integration was confirmed by a June 2008 decision by the UN secretary-general’s Policy Committee, the highest decision-making body within the UN Secretariat.¹³ Following wide-ranging consultations with the main parts of the UN, the committee reaffirmed integration as the guiding principle for engagement in conflict and postconflict situations. The decision clearly stated that the principle of integration should be applied wherever the UN has a country team and a multidimensional peacekeeping operation or a special political mission or office. It also clarified that integration does not only apply to missions that are “structurally integrated” (with a

triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC) and that it can take different structural forms reflecting needs and circumstances. The discourse on integration thus began to focus more on the need for an effective strategic partnership and shared vision between the UN mission or office and the country team, under the overall leadership of the SRSG.

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING: FROM HEADQUARTERS TO FIELD MISSIONS

Throughout this process, significant investments have been made to strengthen the planning culture and capacities of various UN entities, with a focus on interdepartmental and interagency processes. One of the recommendations of the independent “Report on Integrated Missions” in 2005 was that planning for integrated missions should be an interorganizational process, both at headquarters and in the field, and should involve UN country teams and other relevant actors present in the area.

The Brahimi Report had already recommended the creation of “integrated mission taskforces” bringing together the Secretariat and agencies, funds, and programs at headquarters for mission-specific planning and support. But written guidance on integrated planning only appeared much later. Building on member states’ support for integrated and strategic planning following the 2001 secretary-general’s report *No Exit Without Strategy*, DPKO head Jean-Marie Guéhenno launched a review of DPKO’s planning process.¹⁴ In 2004, this resulted in an initial doctrine known as the 2004 Integrated Mission Planning Process, which incorporated inputs from UN agencies into DPKO’s internal planning procedures.

In their initial forms, both the integrated mission taskforces (IMTFs) and Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) faced strong opposition from agencies, funds, and programs, largely because “unlike day-to-day management in the field, planning is tightly controlled in every UN

10 United Nations Secretary-General, “Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions,” January 17, 2006, available at www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/missions/sgnote.pdf.

11 Espen Barth Eide et al., “Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations,” Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group, May 2005.

12 The governments of eight countries—Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam—volunteered to take part in the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative in 2007.

13 United Nations Secretary-General, “Decision No. 2008/24 – Integration,” in Decision of the Secretary-General – 25 June Meeting of the Policy Committee, June 26, 2008, available at www.undg.org/docs/9898/Integration-decision-SG-25-jun-08.pdf.

14 United Nations Secretary-General, *No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-Making and the Closure or Transition of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. S/2001/394, April 20, 2001.

agency by strict procedures that reflect the politics among member states in oversight bodies rather than the needs of the mandate or people on the ground.”¹⁵ Nonetheless, the guidelines for the Integrated Mission Planning Process—for headquarters and field missions—were formally approved by Secretary-General Annan in 2006 as the “authoritative basis for the planning of all new integrated missions, as well as the revision of existing integration mission plans for all UN departments, agencies, funds and programs.” They also kept the idea of integrated mission taskforces.

In practice, it was not until the June 2008 Policy Committee decision, which reaffirmed that “form must follow function,” that the integrated mission planning guidelines started getting some traction on the ground, and much of it followed existing practice and innovations in the field. By that time, various UN field offices—such as those in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Burundi—had already experimented with a variety of integration models while struggling with support issues (including asset sharing and different cost recovery rates between DPKO and agencies), and an “integration steering group” had been created to start looking into these issues. Meanwhile, what had started as a top-down headquarters/DPKO-led effort toward UN integrated strategic planning evolved into different country-specific planning processes and experiments.

To further strengthen the strategic focus of integrated approaches, the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) was introduced and made into a requirement in 2008 for countries or circumstances where there was a multidimensional peacekeeping operation or special political mission or office, and a UN country team. The purpose of the framework was to bring together the mandates and resources of the mission and country team, and to reflect “a shared vision of the UN’s strategic objectives” and “a set of agreed results, timelines, and responsibilities for the delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace.”¹⁶

The Integrated Strategic Framework was thus designed to capture the context-specific nature and

depth of the partnership between a mission and a country team in support of peace-consolidation objectives. As such, it was not meant to replace or duplicate entity-specific planning tools, such as the Results-Based Budgeting tool for missions or the UN Development Assistance Framework, country program documents, and common humanitarian action plans for UN agencies. However, despite real evidence of its value in a number of integrated settings, lingering confusion regarding the Integrated Strategic Framework’s purpose has also contributed to integration fatigue.

Special Political Missions¹⁷

In a context of financial austerity and renewed focus on conflict prevention and mediation, the UN and member states have often presented special political missions as a cost-effective alternative to larger peacekeeping missions. Their value also comes from their comparatively “light footprint,” at a time when many host governments resist the presence of foreign troops on their territory, and from their adaptability to circumstances. The recent trend of special political missions taking up more operational mandates has led DPA to develop its own guidance on planning—namely, the *Special Political Missions Start-Up Guide 2012*.

However, special political missions have also created new challenges—not just for DPA but for the UN system as a whole. Special political missions have been linked to parallel and competing DPA and DPKO planning processes in several cases (Libya, Syria, Central African Republic, and Mali being the most recent examples), in which each UN entity attempts to dictate how peace should be supported through its own norms and departments rather than a dispassionate, historically anchored assessment or conflict analysis.

The UN’s ability to plan for and deploy such special political missions in a timely manner is limited by the fact that DPA-led missions are currently funded through the regular budget

15 See Benner, Mergenthaler, and Rotmann, *The New World*, pp. 190–191.

16 United Nations Secretary-General, “Decision No. 2008/24.”

17 Special political missions include regional political missions, special envoys/advisers of the secretary-general, and country-specific political and peacebuilding offices.

(rather than the peacekeeping budget, which funds DPKO-led missions), and to a lesser degree by the absence of dedicated DPA strategic planning capacity (with only a modest planning capacity within the Guidance and Learning Unit of DPA's Policy and Mediation Division). Although initially developed by DPKO, the same integrated strategic planning instruments (the Integrated Mission Planning Process and Integrated Strategic Framework) also apply to DPA-led special political missions, which have integrated task forces at headquarters that are similar to the integrated mission task forces.

In spite of controversies, failures, and confusion, the integration agenda has steadily evolved over the last two decades, sometimes driven by headquarters and other times by experiments in the field, with one source of innovation informing the other. In this respect, the UN has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for perseverance, course correction, and self-reflection, even if such qualities may trigger derision and evoke unpleasant memories for those mired in the day-to-day workings of integrated planning, whether at the policy level or in the field. The most significant evolution relates to the shift from a narrow focus on structure to an emphasis on strategy.

This shift is now clearly articulated in the 2013 Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP),¹⁸ which supersedes the prior Integrated Mission Planning Policy and sets out minimum requirements for joint analysis (through the joint

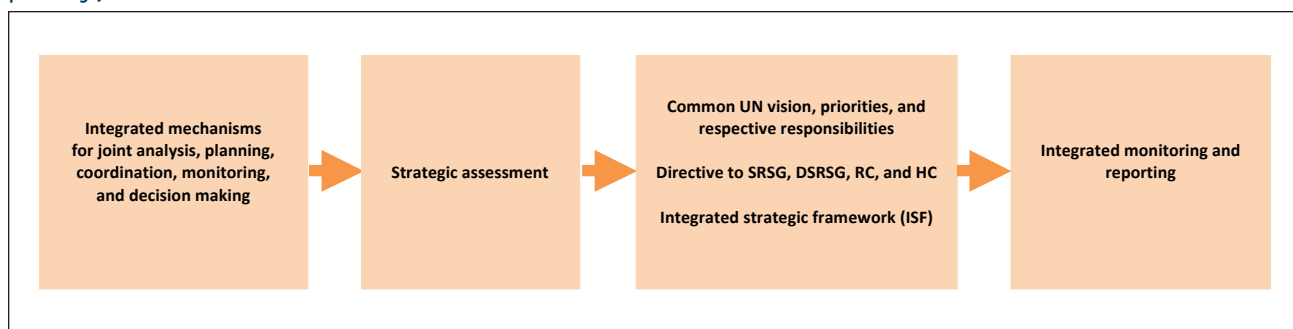
conduct of strategic assessments), common priorities, integrated mechanisms, and integrated monitoring. The objective of integrated strategic planning is to agree on where it makes sense to work jointly and to define the depth and structural form of such work together, on the basis of a common understanding of the situation and the most appropriate UN responses. The integrated assessment and planning policy therefore introduces nuance and diversity where past policy had been (mis)interpreted, and at times applied, in monolithic terms. It is hoped that it will help the system overcome the wall into which the UN integrated strategic planning agenda seems to have run.

Hitting the Wall? Current Obstacles to Integrated Strategic Planning in the UN

THE GAP BETWEEN ACTUAL COSTS AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS

After all these efforts, many within and beyond the UN have now begun to ask, "So what has all this led to?" Unfortunately, the institution has not so far been able to demonstrate a consistent causal link between integrated planning approaches and meaningful impact on the ground. As with other functions and interventions, it is technically difficult to establish attribution, and the counterfactual ("what if the UN had not planned together?") is subject to claims that belong more in the realm of philosophy than science. Furthermore,

Figure 2: Minimum requirements for integrated assessment and planning (based on 2013 policy).



¹⁸ The UN "Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning" (IAP) was approved by the secretary-general on April 9, 2013, following endorsement by the Integration Steering Group on March 15, 2013, and by the UN Development Group on March 13th. It was also referred to in Security Council Resolution 2086 (2013) on multidimensional peacekeeping (para 4).

concrete examples of integration's added value in areas such as electoral assistance may be either too few or insufficiently commensurate with the associated transaction costs to counter suspicion that, ultimately, there may be less than meets the eye to the integration agenda.

However, if real results on the ground—beyond changes in process—are difficult to measure, few would disagree that the more visible transaction costs are now undermining support for integration. These costs, and the absence of consistent and reliable answers to the “so what?” question, have spawned a sense of integration fatigue across the UN system, with complaints about the time spent on coordination processes, information-sharing processes, and consensus-building efforts to agree on analytical findings, recommendations to senior leadership, or even entity-specific staffing tables.

Although the facilitation over formalization approach would suggest that this interaction and periodic feedback between elements of the mission is essential to system-level coordination and effective outcomes, many bemoan the delays in decision making and the dilution of authority and content that result from “integrated processes” that seek to placate everyone without fully satisfying anyone. These burdens were vividly illustrated in the integrated peacebuilding frameworks used in the early days of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. This period spawned serious reform of the commission's engagement strategies, but internal UN planning processes, such as the Integrated Strategic Framework or Development Assistance Framework, continue to be plagued by high-level coordination requirements.

Peacebuilding as a Driver for Integration: UN Offices in Burundi and Sierra Leone¹⁹

The UN's integrated peacebuilding offices in Burundi (BINUB) and Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) were both conceived as follow-on presences to peacekeeping operations, to coordinate the response of the UN to the peace-consolidation priorities identified with the host government. This arrangement allowed for a smooth transition from peacekeeping to a more development-

focused engagement by the UN country team. BINUB was replaced by a small political office in January 2011, whereas the Security Council decided that UNIPSIL will close and hand over to the country team in March 2014.

After they were set up, BINUB and UNIPSIL became the most advanced examples of both strategic and structural integration of the UN system at the time. Both were led by an executive representative of the secretary-general (ERSG), who also wore the hats of resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator, and who was assisted by a deputy ERSG. This allowed development-oriented funds to be used for peacebuilding, despite initial resistance from UN agencies, funds, and programs that had been on the ground prior to the peacebuilding offices. The Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF) \$35 million envelope for each country (with additional funding granted later) played a catalytic role for integration, since the ERSG could leverage it via the agencies, funds, and programs that would implement the PBF projects jointly with the UN peacebuilding mission in-country and combine overheads. These projects also promoted integration within the host government as their implementation often involved various ministries.

In Burundi, the ERSG co-chaired a weekly UN Integrated Management Team meeting with heads of agencies, funds, and programs, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The UN Integrated Management Team served as a structure for joint decision making and for reducing the compartmentalization of the UN's work in Burundi. It further allowed the head of mission to provide strategic guidance on all critical aspects of peace consolidation and define a joint UN position with the government and international development partners.

UNIPSIL and the UN agencies, funds, and programs in Sierra Leone agreed to combine their efforts and resources behind a “joint vision” in support of the government of Sierra Leone and its people, which was adopted in December 2008 to cover the initial period from

¹⁹ The paragraphs on the peacebuilding office in Burundi are adapted from Adam C. Smith and Arthur Boutellis, eds., *The Management Handbook for UN Field Missions* (New York: International Peace Institute, June 2012).

2009 to 2012. The joint vision replaced the mission-wide Integrated Strategic Framework, a separate UNIPSIL strategic plan, the Development Assistance Framework, and the Peacebuilding Commission and PBF plans. However, agencies, funds, and programs still had to produce their own internal plans, and UNIPSIL still had to produce its results-based budget. UNIPSIL and the country team also established common facilities and services, such as joint regional offices, a multidonor fund, a joint strategic unit, a medical facility, security services, and a vehicle repair shop in order to enable the UN to deliver as one.

In Burundi, observers indicated that certain factors proved crucial to making integration effective, including the leadership and vision of the ERSG, Youssef Mahmoud (who had previously held senior positions in DPA and the United Nations Development Programme), and the creation of integrated teams within sections (with staff from DPKO/DPA and agencies, funds, and programs colocating). Despite administrative challenges, these elements helped bring overall coherence to the UN's support to the government of Burundi.

Despite significant progress in certain areas—namely, the integration of efforts at the strategic, programmatic, and operational levels—integration ultimately proved a difficult task. Representatives of agencies, funds, and programs in-country tended to be more beholden to their respective central and regional structures than to the lead official on the ground, who was mandated by the UN secretary-general to coordinate UN responses. A related impediment was the concern that integration could lead to the loss of the visibility of individual agencies, which is essential for resource mobilization and individual career advancement. The Burundian government, which initially supported having an integrated UN as interlocutor, also started seeing BINUB as a source of political interference in the development-focused support they began to seek.

TOO MUCH COORDINATION, TOO FEW PLANNING SKILLS

Each new crisis sends the UN system scrambling to mobilize resources to lead integrated responses. In the absence of system-wide, standby planning capacity to provide surge support,²⁰ this responsibility usually falls back to a lead entity, whose “leadership” is at times disputed and whose staff are usually already under severe strain. Individuals with full time jobs are asked to take on additional, heavy coordination and analytical tasks. Lacking time and specific planning skills, their ability to design efficient integrated processes and avoid the growing pains of new coordination efforts remains limited.

This obstacle also brings into focus the still underdeveloped nature of the UN's planning culture, knowledge, and skills, despite real investment and progress in recent years. Progress has been seen in particular in applying results-based management approaches and techniques, albeit perhaps to an unwieldy extreme in some cases and with glaring gaps in others. What many planners now lack is an awareness of the various strands of UN reform that can be brought together efficiently, in support of integrated responses. In recent years, the UN has moved forward on several significant institutional changes, such as the launch of the civilian capacity initiative (CIVCAP), the roll out of the Global Field Support Strategy, the expansion of trust-fund mechanisms, and new opportunities created by the PBF. Greater flexibility and operational innovations can be generated in support of integrated responses when combining several of these elements. Unfortunately, a panoramic understanding of all of them is needed to realize the potential benefits, as well as knowledge of how to use them in ways that can reduce the transaction costs of integrated responses. Such versatility is difficult to achieve, given the scattered bits of knowledge and expertise throughout the UN system.

Much time is also still spent, even in the thick of crisis response planning, on lingering debates over mandates and “humanitarian space.”²¹ While the UN has made significant progress in bridging

20 A suggestion to create such capacity was made as part of the civilian capacity review. Ironically, it died a quick death partly due to the high transaction costs associated with its set up.

21 There is no commonly accepted definition of “humanitarian space”; it can refer both to the physical access that international aid agencies and their partners have

divides, in particular between its peacekeeping, political, and humanitarian pillars, no amount of policy development can fully eliminate the tensions associated with integrated responses outlined above. A recent independent study on the topic of UN integration and humanitarian space found that, despite reforms to the policy of integration over the last decade, the debate remains polarized. It suggested that stakeholders—including UN departments, funds, agencies, and programs—should redouble their efforts to promote greater awareness of integration policies and procedures and ways to translate them into practice.²² Such efforts are also needed to build confidence across the political, peacekeeping, and humanitarian communities, so that the potential benefits of UN integration for humanitarian operations can be maximized and the risks minimized.²³ Yet, even if the revised integrated assessment and planning process incorporates these recommendations and provides the space and mechanisms for such tensions to be managed, they are unlikely to dissolve completely, meaning that weariness with common approaches will likely persist. This is particularly true in a context where more robust rules of engagement are being given to UN peacekeeping missions, particularly the Intervention Brigade recently authorized as part of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITED INCENTIVES

Ongoing efforts to deepen and widen a UN planning cadre that is able to support integrated processes and manage conflicts of principles may constitute a Sisyphean endeavor if agreements on joint responses continue to face structural obstacles in practice. One of these obstacles is the difficulty of allocating mission resources flexibly, according to situational changes. This shortcoming has also limited the impact of recent innovations, such as expanded opportunities to combine assessed and extrabudgetary resources, and missions' access to United Nations Development Group (UNDG) trust funds and the Peacebuilding Fund. The operational applicability of integrated planning processes has

also been undermined by differing administrative and financial systems among the UN's departments, agencies, funds, and programs. In fact, many aspects of integration policy have moved forward faster than the nuts and bolts of administration, personnel, finances, and support (including administrative fees, air services, communication and information technology, safety and security, joint premises, etc.). The Integration Steering Group, a standing body at the level of under-secretary-general and assistant-secretary-general, meets quarterly to review UN system-wide work on integration and has been discussing these complex issues, some of which are being addressed by the Department of Field Support (DFS) in coordination with UN agencies, funds, and programs. But the slow progress on many of these issues remains a serious impediment to joint efforts on the ground, and an additional irritant within the system.

Beyond outstanding operational and funding constraints, integrated approaches also continue to face decentralized governance structures, with responsibilities and accountability mechanisms spread and separated across the system. The ability of an SRSG and her or his deputies to translate integrated plans into effective responses suffers from a lack of institutional incentives. While the 2006 secretary-general's "Note of Guidance" positions the SRSG (or equivalent head of mission) at the apex of the UN pyramid in-country, this does not change the fact that many entities nominally positioned within this pyramid have their own reporting mechanisms and governing boards. As a result, all of the actors involved in integrated planning approaches have their own goals and visions, which may carry equal legitimacy but are not always aligned with the Security Council mandate that an SRSG has to implement.

In this context, effective integration in the field often comes down to leadership and personalities within the UN mission and agencies, funds, and programs present, and to effective communication skills and systems. Even when such factors are in place, integrated plans and decisions lie in an institutional no-man's-land. They require consensus

to populations in need; and to the nature of the "operating environment," including the security conditions, and whether aid agencies are able to adhere to the core principles of neutrality and impartiality. See Sarah Collinson and Samir Elhawary, "Humanitarian Space: A Review of Trends and Issues," Humanitarian Policy Group Report 32, April 2012.

22 See Victoria Metcalfe, Alison Giffen, and Samir Elhawary, "UN Integration and Humanitarian Space," an independent study commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group, Humanitarian Policy Group, and Stimson Center, December 2011.

23 Ibid.

that can often be achieved by settling for general principles and broadly framed results, with little relevance on the ground. Integrated approaches are often characterized by a mismatch between responsibility, capacity, and authority. Without unified governance and decision-making structures, functions and entities with significant responsibility see their authority contested by functions and entities with little responsibility. In the absence of structural reforms, the UN's integration agenda will continue its struggle to square the accountability circle.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Another source of frustration with integrated efforts lies in the perceived disconnect between the content and results of the technical-level planning and the political decisions that ultimately inform the mandate and size of missions. While alignment between the two levels is not infrequent, there are many examples of laborious integrated planning processes ultimately being ignored by the UN's political leadership (within the Secretariat and among member states). At no other time does the "so what?" question acquire more legitimacy. UN planners and programmatic staff involved in the design of the mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) harbor vivid memories of this dichotomy. Such doubts also resonate with those engaged in discussions over the UN presence in Mali.

A final challenge to the relevance of integrated planning processes is the extent to which they can incorporate policy developments and contextual realities. For example, the commitment to undertake joint assessment and planning efforts in conformity with the spirit, if not the letter, of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, constitutes a key principle. But without clarity and unity of purpose between various parts of the UN system on how to translate this principle into practice, particularly when it comes to national ownership and tensions with a Chapter VII mandate, this commitment remains a dead letter and the word "integrated" rings hollow. Yet, processes that enable the UN to work more effectively with host governments and civil society, established through agreements like the New Deal, could and should have major consequences for how the UN's work in the field is organized and integrated in the coming years.

In addition, the current global economic context

has led UN member states to increase pressure on UN planners to do more with less. For example, there appear to be increasing requests for (sometimes unrealistic) quantitative rather than qualitative monitoring and evaluation and benchmarks. Security Council resolutions are also setting inflexible troop ceilings informed less by mission exigencies than by financial constraints (e.g., UNMISS), calling for smaller but multidimensional (special political) missions than those the UN has traditionally deployed in the immediate aftermath of a conflict (e.g., UN Support Mission in Libya), and at times requiring the UN to plan and implement mandates in partnership with other organizations. The combination of mandates that include peacebuilding and statebuilding tasks with assertive host governments provide further incentive to rethink the way the UN plans its interventions. And given the high level of volatility in some of today's conflict areas where the UN may soon be asked to deploy missions, the integrated planning process needs to ensure that the UN can be flexible and responsive, and that it is not locked into rigid plans, structures, and programs. This is a lot to ask for any process, but the reality is that the UN's integrated planning approach must address all of these challenges, if the momentum for integration is to be revived, from within and without.

Planning the UN Mission in South Sudan: Juggling Technical and Political Considerations

The planning for the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) highlights some of the recurring constraints and challenges faced by the UN. These challenges arose both internally in "planning as one" (among DPKO, DPA, and agencies, funds, and programs) and externally in managing member states' influence (budgetary constraints and troop ceilings) and in communicating and planning with a host state partner that had a different set of motivations and expectations.

First, UN Secretariat staff faced restrictions on starting the planning process for a future mission in South Sudan prior to the outcome of the referendum on the south's independence, despite the near certainty of the result. After the referendum result was issued on February 7,

2011, a UN integrated technical assessment and planning team (ITAPT) visited and employed a scenario-based approach to mission planning. DPA favored a special political mission that would not be mandated to deal with intertribal violence (which it considered national authorities should address instead), whereas DPKO, humanitarian organizations, and the UN country team favored a more traditional peacekeeping operation with troops and a mandate to protect civilians. While the final ITAPT report opted for a peacekeeping mission (presenting three possible troop levels), the competing visions within the UN Secretariat continued to cause some friction. This was characterized by some as a constructive and natural component of the integrated planning process.

In his June report however, the secretary-general presented only one option to the council, recommending a force of 7,000 peacekeepers and 900 individual police. It was felt that was the result of pressure by member states (the United States, France, and the United Kingdom in particular), which had made it clear from the start that any force in South Sudan (whether UNMISS or the interim security force for the Abyei region) could not be larger or costlier than the existing Khartoum-based UN mission in Sudan, known as UNMIS. However, council members remained divided over whether or not the mission should be charged with countering intercommunal violence.

One day before the formal declaration of South Sudan's independence on July 9, 2011, the Security Council issued Resolution 1996 mandating UNMISS. A three-month technical rollover of UNMIS was recommended as UNMISS was being set up, and UNMIS closed down. Although the UN had been consulting with South Sudanese figures since February 2011, different views existed among them as to what UNMISS should look like and do. When the resolution was ultimately passed, the newly formed government of South Sudan expressed disappointment with the Chapter VII nature of the mandate, that UN troops would not be posted along the border with Sudan, and that the UN would not support the South Sudanese government logistically (e.g., via airlift), as it had hoped.

Advancing the Integrated Planning Agenda

The range and breadth of challenges that the UN's integrated planning ambitions face call for a combination of smaller "quick fixes" and larger systemic reforms. Small but painstaking internal efforts are needed to upgrade planning capacities, demonstrate value, reduce transaction costs and efforts, and rekindle the UN leadership's enthusiasm for integration. More systemic improvements designed to strengthen the UN's response to shifting operational requirements need to be based on a renewed integration consensus within and beyond the UN.

QUICK FIXES

The "quick fixes" outlined here aren't necessarily easy to achieve, but they are fixes that do not require systemic or even structural changes within the UN. Nor do they necessitate a lengthy process of broad-based consensus building and consultation. Instead, they may require a substantial cultural shift, led by a few champions at the top political level and supported by a few good ideas and investments from below.

Focusing Planning on Integration Where It Matters

To begin with, the UN's integration agenda should benefit from a renewed emphasis on integration "where it matters," as articulated in the integrated assessment and planning policy. Instead of exerting a blanket pressure to manufacture "joint-ness" across the board, the policy builds on pragmatic approaches in the field that focus on jointly identifying the areas where it makes sense for the missions and UN agencies to come together and on agreeing on the right form and depth of integration required in each area. For example, depending on the context, the UN may decide to create an integrated structure to implement its disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) strategy while keeping human rights interventions by mission and country team separate. What matters, therefore, is that the system has come together to assess what is needed and has agreed on the right integration option, which may range from very loose to very tight.

This approach is not new, and there are multiple examples of such flexibility and diversity across the

range of UN presences around the world—much more, in fact, than the UN is usually given credit for. Integrated rule of law structures in Burundi and Somalia; joint mission and country team planning in Haiti; policy-focused integrated strategic frameworks in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories; joint integrated strategic frameworks and development assistance frameworks in Liberia—all of these examples show that the UN’s planning and structural translation of integration principles takes on many context-specific forms. But if the integration agenda is to reclaim adherents, such examples must be better known and better reflected in the overall UN discourse on integration.

Furthermore, areas where integration may be required, whatever its form and depth, should not be restricted to programmatic interventions. In certain contexts, a UN mission and its UN country team counterparts may also increase their impact by creating more coherence in areas such as public information and messaging, fundraising, stakeholder engagement, and operations. UN leadership and planners should be encouraged to pay greater attention to these non-programmatic opportunities.

Analyzing as One

Joint analytical exercises are now common practice across the UN system, either as part of the initial mission design process or in the area of UN transitions and handovers.²⁴ The need for a shared understanding of context, challenges, and priorities is firmly anchored as one of the critical requirements of the integrated assessment and planning policy, even if such a process does not lead to integrated responses (in fact, one of the purposes of the common assessment is to determine whether and how integrated responses are required). There has also been a significant increase in system-wide policies across a range of postconflict areas, including the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces²⁵ and the UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration.

Likewise, the establishment of peace and development adviser positions providing policy-level advice and political guidance to UN resident coordinators and country teams constitutes a real advance in joining up the system in the field (while also reporting to DPA headquarters). This is particularly true in the context of peace operations that are drawing down and handing over to UN country teams, such as those in Nepal, Timor-Leste, and Sierra Leone. The positioning of political advisers within the resident coordinator’s office in Egypt follows the same commendable logic.

The fact that the UN has started drawing resident coordinators from different parts of the system (including DPA and DPKO) could also have a positive impact on integration efforts. In general, greater staff mobility within the UN Secretariat and agencies, funds, and programs throughout a career (rather than at the top only) could also bring benefits, provided such mobility is encouraged and rewarded in practice. Colocating staff in field missions (as in the BINUB/UNIPSIL case above) or headquarters, although a second-best option, can further contribute to improving information sharing, cooperation, and coherence in some contexts.

Yet, the practice of joint analysis remains incomplete, and its potential has not yet been fully realized. The willingness and incentives to assess a situation together, across silos, often recede following the establishment of a mission or if formal requirements—such as mandated handover of tasks or planning reviews—are absent. The establishment of joint analysis units, which bring together mission and agency capacities to assess country trends and risks, serves to leverage the mission’s political access while drawing on the agencies’ field networks. This should become standard practice across all integrated presences.

Furthermore, with a few exceptions, there is also continued reluctance, for missions in particular, to expand their indicator base and produce political analysis that interprets socioeconomic factors, including financial data, and incorporates perspectives from a wider range of local actors, including

²⁴ See “UN Transitions: Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal,” New York: International Peace Institute, August 2012.

²⁵ United Nations Secretary-General, *Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces*, UN Doc. A/67/775-S/2013/110, March 5, 2013.

the diaspora and the private sector.²⁶ The substance of integrated strategic planning efforts would greatly benefit from systematic joined-up analysis between the mission and the UN country team, looking at and analyzing together a broader set of information than what is traditionally perceived as relevant or “within the mandate” of one or another UN organization, as such factors will likely impact the implementation of their mandate down the road.

Upgrading the Capacity of System-Wide UN Planners

Integrated strategic planning requires that UN planners in particular be equipped with sufficient knowledge of these various processes and that they possess the creativity and skills to utilize them strategically. Evidence of such ingenuity exists, as demonstrated by the UN in Timor Leste, Lebanon, or Sierra Leone, but its application is still few and far between. Ongoing training and capacity development support to planners, now undertaken jointly by UNDG, DPKO, and DPA, should continue, but this will remain limited in its effectiveness if it does not receive greater backing from the respective leaderships.

Furthermore, efforts to continuously upgrade planning capacities in the field would acquire greater and more lasting impact with the establishment of dedicated integrated planning capacities at headquarters. Such capacities, to be used for the development of UN system-wide responses to conflict or postconflict challenges, would remedy the usual scramble for coordination and planning manpower each time a crisis erupts and mitigate the turf war syndrome that has plagued the lead-agency approach. In addition, by providing a panoramic understanding of various UN processes, such UN system-wide planning capacities could systematically mobilize all relevant instruments in supporting a coherent response.

Removing Managerial and Administrative Impediments

Broadening the analysis and being more familiar with the UN system as a whole to design innovative options for joint work in turn requires that the UN

accelerate progress on removing managerial and administrative impediments to integration. This requires the development of standard approaches, templates, and procedures for sharing of assets, staff interoperability, and transfer of resources. The effectiveness of such measures would then be greatly enhanced if their implementation were supported by greater delegation of authority to the field, offering mission and agency leadership greater leeway in choosing the right integration modus and tools.

In this regard, the approaches presented in the 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the recently adopted UNDG Standard Operating Procedures for implementing the “delivering as one” approach offer political momentum and technical guidance, respectively, on how greater “joint-ness” can be achieved through enhanced delegation of planning and programmatic and operational authority.²⁷ The delivering-as-one agenda and the integration agenda are in many ways related, and would benefit from greater mutual awareness and learning. The path to lower transaction costs requires greater linkages between the integration agenda and not only delivering-as-one efforts but a range of other UN processes, such as the civilian capacity initiative and the trust fund operations. While the idea of linking these various streams seems fraught with coordination challenges, there are considerable economies of scale to be achieved over time by thinking through how each stream benefits the other and by exploiting their complementarities.

Providing Incentives and Leadership

These recommendations stand little chance of success, however, unless three conditions are in place. First, the UN must significantly increase incentives for integration. This can be done as part of staff performance evaluations and other formal systems, but it can also be achieved through greater recognition of the value of integration in senior leadership messaging and discourse, in donor support, and in demand for integrated approaches at headquarters and—more significantly—in the field. This in turn requires the presence of, and visible actions by, integration champions at the top.

26 DFID was one of the first donor agency to develop a tool for analyzing political economy and how power and resources are distributed and contested in different contexts, see “Political Economy Analysis: How To Note,” DFID, 2009.

27 UN General Assembly Resolution 67/226 (January 22, 2013), UN Doc. A/RES/67/226; UNDG High Level Group, “Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Wishing to Adopt the ‘Delivering as One’ Approach,” March 22, 2013.

After the great integration push in the first half of the previous decade, led by Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahimi in particular, the integration agenda has experienced a certain leadership lull, which the regular production of integration material since 2006 cannot hide.

The recent convergence of people with field experience of integration in senior leadership positions at the UN may prompt renewed political support for integrated planning processes, despite the challenges recently exhibited in several mission planning processes, such as the one in Mali. Yet, even within the realm of “quick fixes” that remain within the power of the UN, no amount of enthusiasm for integration on the part of UN leadership will be fully convincing unless and until the UN can develop a more robust body of evidence regarding the value of integration as it relates to UN performance in the field. The UN must therefore craft a more compelling and credible argument for integrated planning, causally linking coordination, information sharing, joint matrices, and all relevant forms of integrated approaches with real impact on the ground. Impact can be defined in many legitimate ways, from efficiency to host partner perceptions to services to populations in need, as long as it is about what matters to the various stakeholders to which the UN answers. Before arguing for systemic changes and taking the case to member states, the UN internally must be able to credibly answer the “so what?” question and clearly establish why integration is worthwhile.

Planning a “Designer” Special Political Mission: The UN Support Mission in Libya

The most salient features of the design, launch, and implementation of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) included (1) early and system-wide conflict analysis, which brought together planning capacity from various UN entities at headquarters level, and (2) a phased deployment based on an initial three-month mandate, which offered the UN system the opportunity to develop longer-term plans on the basis of engagement with Libyan counterparts and a better understanding of the country. There was also an emphasis on defining not just the mandate areas but also the modes of engagement with Libyan actors and institutions, and

their implications for staff profiles. Furthermore, an effort was made to link various recent institutional developments in support of joint responses (e.g., trust funds, PBF, secondments from agencies, and CIVCAP deployments).

The impact of such an approach remains to be determined, but the experience to date illustrates several of the current challenges to integrated strategic planning. While the analytical process and the establishment of UNSMIL were, by and large, perceived as fully integrated and reflective of a wide UN consensus, the transaction costs remained significant, imposing severe strains on an operation that needed to proceed quickly and include the inputs of a wide range of actors at the same time. Efforts to reduce the time spent on coordination, notably between the field and headquarters, generated a certain level of resentment in several parts of the system, the management of which then required additional energies. In some areas, the identification of the right civilian capacity brought into sharp focus the paucity of existing rosters and networks, particularly the supply of Arabic-speaking experts.

While the pre-assessment combined elements of political and security analysis with socioeconomic data, once the mission deployed, the UN continued to struggle to develop analytical tools and capacities to ensure adequate representation of economic developments in its analysis of the country’s stability and longer-term prospects.

Finally, despite a clear mandate from the Security Council to coordinate international assistance, the UN’s integrated planning approach did not yield coherent programmatic responses with other multilateral and bilateral institutions, particularly in the area of security sector reform. Nor did these actors always demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for their engagement to come under an integrated UN planning framework.

THE “MISSING WHOLE”

Despite the significant integration achievements described earlier in this paper, these could be easily reversed if they are not supported and sustained by larger systemic reforms. These reforms need to bring greater coherence to the UN response in the

field of peace and security but also renewed relevance in the face of evolving peacebuilding paradigms. Such efforts should include structural reforms for a more integrated and client-oriented UN headquarters. The term “reform” is not meant to indicate seemingly insoluble issues, such as changes to the Security Council, but these reforms will challenge established powers structures, behaviors, and mindsets of individuals, departments, and member states. As such, they should be supported by building a new political consensus among member states around integration, also in light of the changing realities on the ground. This is the “missing whole.”

Peacebuilding: One UN Definition, Different Approaches

While the UN system has been operating under a common definition of peacebuilding since 2009, it has yet to yet to deliver a coherent and effective response in the field.²⁸ Each UN entity currently approaches peacebuilding according to its mandate, experience, and institutional constraints. Without a clear division of labor, there is an unwieldy competition for peacebuilding resources.

Peacebuilding has become both a buzzword and an industry since the creation of the UN peacebuilding architecture in 2005.²⁹ Some had hoped that the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) would act as a governing body for UN peacebuilding missions—one that could take over from the Security Council, for instance, once a given situation was no longer considered a threat to peace and security. Many also hoped the PBC would help shore up member states’ political support behind integrating UN engagement in postconflict situations. However, neither of these things happened.³⁰ Instead, the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) were superimposed onto existing structures.

Peacekeepers have now become “early peacebuilders,”³¹ and DPKO and DFS finalized their own Early Peacebuilding Strategy in June 2011. The strategy is meant to provide guidance to UN peacekeepers on prioritizing, sequencing, and planning critical early peacebuilding tasks, broadly defined as “those that advance the peace process or political objectives of a mission, ensure security, and/or lay the foundation for longer-term institution-building.”³² In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) each developed their own peacebuilding vision papers. However, these strategic documents do not necessarily reflect a coherent UN response. Instead, they often unwittingly contribute to creating institutional silos and turfs, with each UN entity carving out a slice of the peacebuilding pie.

Member states themselves differ over whether to stick to a minimalistic “negative” definition of peace as the absence of war and military conflicts or to broaden the spectrum of peacebuilding to deal with the sources of instability—in the economic, social, humanitarian, and environmental fields. They also differ over who should be responsible for different kinds of peacebuilding. While several member states argue that peacebuilding should be the objective from the outset of the peacekeeping mission, others argue peacekeepers should only be given initial recovery duties while UN specialized agencies, regional and subregional organizations, and the donor community should be more actively involved in peacebuilding processes and interventions of a purely socioeconomic nature. In order to reconcile these differing views, the UN Secretariat should show the way by initiating systemic reforms, such as those described below, that would allow the different parts of the UN system to complement rather than compete with one another. Donors could also play a part in encouraging and

28 For the common UN understanding of peacebuilding, see United Nations Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, UN Doc. A/63/881-S/2009/304, June 11, 2009.

29 The cornerstone of the peacebuilding architecture is the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). The peacebuilding architecture is intended to help postconflict countries avoid slipping back into war by providing strategic advice and harnessing expertise and financing. See the secretary-general’s 2009 report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (op. cit.) and the 2010 “Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture” (see UN Doc. A/64/868-S/2010/393).

30 Michael von der Schulenburg, “Why is UN Integration so Difficult to Achieve?” unpublished report in the author’s possession.

31 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.

32 UN DPKO/DFS, “The Contribution of United Nations Peacekeeping to Early Peacebuilding: A DPKO/DFS Strategy for Peacekeepers,” June 27, 2011, available at www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6797~v~The_Contribution_of_United_Nations_Peacekeeping_to_Early_Peacebuilding___a_DPKO_DFS_Strategy_for_Peacekeepers.pdf.

supporting joint UN initiatives and projects by creating incentives for different UN entities to further cooperate in a country or a region rather than compete. Some PBF projects jointly managed and implemented by staff from the mission and from agencies, funds, and programs in Burundi have, in some cases, served to promote such integration at the programmatic level, but on a limited scale.³³

A Client-Oriented UN Headquarters

Recognizing that past reform efforts aimed at designating UN “global leads” by sector have been difficult (other than in the humanitarian field), such difficulties do not render the underlying idea invalid.³⁴ Much of the past integration and “delivering as one” innovations have taken place in the field, and institutional adaptation to improved integrated strategic planning also needs to happen at headquarters.

There have been many institutional innovations to respond to certain capacity gaps since *An Agenda for Peace*³⁵—the creation of DPKO and DPA in 1992, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in 2005, and DFS and the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI) in 2007. In practice, these innovations have led to the compartmentalization of the UN’s responses in the field of peace and security and the creation of institutional silos. As an attempt to overcome these silos, various coordination mechanisms have been set up within and beyond the Secretariat, including interagency taskforces and working groups.³⁶ More recent

initiatives to integrate include the secretary-general’s September 2012 decision to appoint DPKO and UNDP as the “global focal point for police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations”³⁷ and the establishment of a United Nations Crisis and Operations Center (UNOCC)³⁸ in February 2013 as a central venue at UN headquarters for responding to crises in the field.

Bringing the pieces of the UN Secretariat back together will take more than these innovative but largely ad hoc initiatives, and more than colocating a few staff from different UN entities. It also remains unclear whether and how these initiatives will impact the coherence and quality of the UN response in the field. While in the past some have called for the merger of the two departments running field operations, namely DPKO and DPA, into a single peace and security department along with PBSO,³⁹ such reform may not be feasible politically.⁴⁰

A workable alternative would bring together DPKO and DPA teams in the same regional groupings⁴¹ with individual regional directors providing a unified interface to the “clients” of both departments—the host countries and the UN field missions (whether a peacekeeping operation, special political mission, or UN country team). DPKO’s integrated operational teams would, de facto, be replaced by these unified regional groupings, which would benefit from the consolidation of their staffs into stronger units with across-the-board expertise

33 See Susanna P. Campbell with Leonard Kayobera and Justine Nkurunziza, “Independent External Evaluation of Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi,” March 2010, p. 74.

34 The original *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict* (CIVCAP) report, conducted by an independent team of experts, which consulted widely with member states, actually recommended that the whole UN system build a “cluster” model (as used in the humanitarian sphere) to clarify “who does what” (who has “the lead”) in the UN and that it should adopt a global service provider model. This could have far reaching implications for UN integrated strategic planning, but it remains unclear whether the UN will be acting on this specific recommendation of the report.

35 United Nations Secretary-General, *An Agenda for Peace*.

36 For instance, the UN Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force (IASSRTF) has contributed to developing UN guidance, standards, and practice on a number of areas in security sector reform (SSR), and manages a roster of SSR experts. It was established in 2007 to develop and promote an integrated, holistic, and coherent UN approach to SSR. Initially it was composed of seven UN entities, including DPA, DPKO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), PBSO, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women). It has since increased to fourteen entities and is co chaired by DPKO and UNDP, while the SSR Unit, located within the DPKO Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI), provides its secretariat.

37 DPKO/OROLSI and UNDP have agreed to colocate a portion of their respective teams from early 2013 in a single location at UN Headquarters.

38 The UNOCC brings together the former DPKO Situation Center (Sitcen) as well as other parts of the system, which are now represented in the UNOCC, including DPA, UNDP, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The center has three core functions: situational awareness, crisis response, and executive communications.

39 Ian Martin, “All Peace Operations Are Political: A Case for Designer Missions and the Next UN Reform,” in *Review of Political Missions 2010* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2010), available at http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/political_missions_2010_martin_allpeace2.pdf.

40 A single head for a merged DPKO-DPA would effectively have more powers than the secretary-general but would also imply that some powerful Security Council members (in the case of DPKO and DPA, France and the US, respectively) relinquish key senior positions traditionally “reserved” for their nationals.

41 Currently, DPKO’s Office of Operations regions and integrated operational teams (Africa I and Africa II Divisions, Asia and Middle East Division, Europe and Latin America Division) do not even match DPA’s regions (Africa I and II Divisions, Americas Division, Asia and the Pacific Division, Europe Division, and Middle East and West Asia Division).

and knowledge of conflict management tools. This would prevent duplication of work and confusion in planning processes and would help prevent the kind of departmental rivalries observed during the planning for the missions in South Sudan and, most recently, Mali. It could further help achieve greater coherence in messaging and actions between various SRSGs and special envoys, which currently have different reporting lines to the Security Council: via DPKO for peacekeeping missions and DPA for special political missions and special envoys.⁴²

As part of moving toward a client-oriented headquarters, these unified DPKO-DPA desks could then be the point of entry to system-wide “service providers” supporting them (see figure 3). A “service provider” institutional setting that is oriented toward its clients could be modeled after the Electoral Assistance Division (anchored in DPA but servicing all DPKO and DPA field missions and UN country teams) and after DFS, which already developed the system-wide Global Field Support Strategy.⁴³ The UN change management initiative, which is still a work in progress, called for such a “common service” model in the December 2011 UN Change Plan but has so far primarily focused on administrative, policy, and evaluation functions only.⁴⁴

This paper instead broadens the concept of “common services” to peace and security “products,” which could include the likes of political analysis, rule of law support, human rights, etc., and “enablers,” such as system-wide lessons learned policy and planning (each of DPKO, DPA, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs currently has its own policy and knowledge management unit). As clients, “host” countries may also at times directly request

assistance from UN headquarters when there is no in-country UN field presence.

A second-best option for the UN system to better “learn as one” would be for different entities to engage in frequent cross-cutting research on lessons learned that would break out of these stovepipes and build a common repository of institutional knowledge about integration across these entities. Like the adjustments to the incentive structures in the discourse on integration (see the Providing Incentives and Leadership subsection above), such changes in the organizational learning process at headquarters and in the field can have a disproportionately positive effect in this space.

This would ultimately require that all field missions operate under one budget and may require more flexibility and interoperability between the regular (assessed) budget and voluntary contributions.⁴⁵ This would likely lead to some rationalizations and savings in the medium term, and it would further render the system more coherent and flexible in terms of being able to respond to and engage effectively with the needs and demands of its primary clients: host countries (via UN field presences where applicable) and member states.

Building on Partnerships

Due to financial constraints and ever more complex peace and security challenges, the UN will increasingly not be able to do it all by itself—it will have to rely even more on partnerships. On the civilian side, the CIVCAP project team’s focus has been on developing better models and mechanisms for partnerships with member states and regional organizations to enable fast and effective deployment of civilian capacities. The team seeks to promote

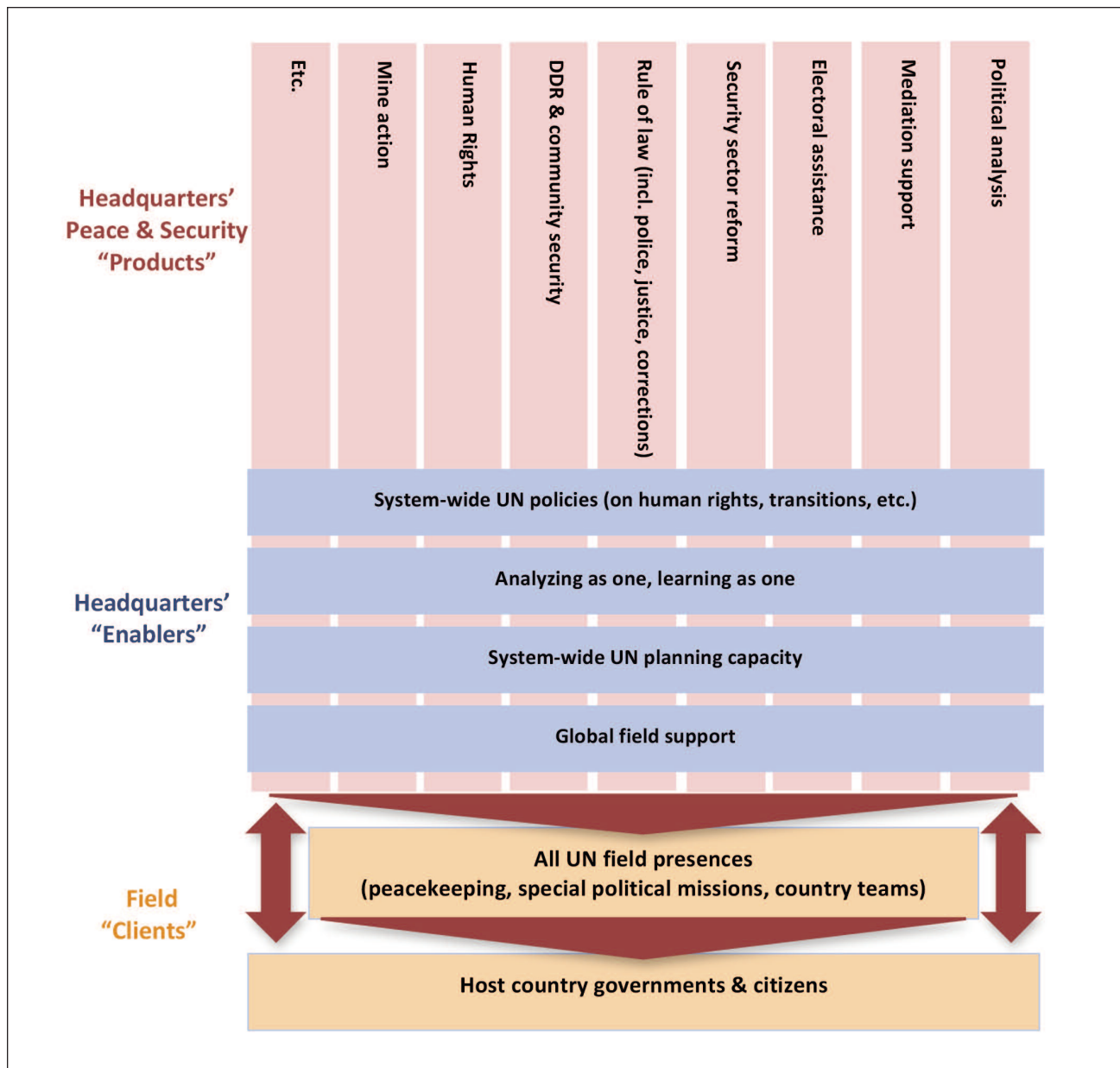
42 Mali provides a recent example of a situation in which there was potential for duplication and confusion in roles and responsibilities, given the overlapping mandates of the UN Office in West Africa (which was not given the mandate for regional coordination although it has a regional purview), the UN political office in Mali (replaced by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel. Similarly, in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), there is overlap between the regional mandate of the new UN Special Envoy Mary Robinson and the head of the peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO), and in Syria between the supervision mission (UNSMIS) and the Office of the Special Envoy.

43 United Nations Secretary-General, *Global Field Support Strategy*, UN Doc. A/64/633, January 26, 2010. The strategy is a DFS-led initiative aimed at transforming and rationalizing service delivery to all UN field missions (peacekeeping and special political missions) and at strengthening resource stewardship and accountability while achieving greater efficiencies and economies of scale. This includes the sharing of civilian air assets across different missions and pooling mission support functions at regional hubs, such as the Regional Service Center in Entebbe.

44 The December 2011 UN Change Plan included sixty-one recommendations or proposals for the secretary-general. Recommendation 56 is the most relevant in terms of UN integration: “Expand the DPKO/DFS ‘common service’ model to all Departments of the Secretariat dealing with field operations, including DPA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) to ensure maximum coordination and minimum overlap in such areas as policy development and planning, administration of field offices, evaluation and other such areas as deemed relevant.” See United Nations, “The Change Plan: Proposals by the Change Management Team to the Secretary-General,” New York, December 2011, available at www.un.org/sg/pdf/the-change-plan.pdf.

45 Similar recommendations for enabling UN agencies, funds, and programs to access the UN peacekeeping budget have already been made in the past, including in the original CIVCAP report, which suggested channeling mission funds based on the principle of comparative advantage (to national or local actors, UN country teams, or external partners).

Figure 3: Visualizing a UN client-oriented approach.



South-South cooperation and include experts the UN may not have readily available or who may only be needed for a short length of time. Partnerships with actors like the World Bank and the private sector also provide an opportunity for stronger integration of economic analysis into UN postconflict assessments, with encouraging precedents set in countries such as Libya and Yemen.

On the peacekeeping and military side, a number of different partnerships have already been tried,

but the general trend has been toward parallel deployments of UN and non-UN forces, with the latter coming from national and multinational entities. The most integrated forms of partnerships attempted to date have been with the African Union (AU). The AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the UN logistical support package to the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM) both resulted from joint UN-AU assessments and planning processes.⁴⁶ While these partnerships have

⁴⁶ See Arthur Boutellis and Paul D. Williams, "Peace Operations, the African Union, and the United Nations: Toward More Effective Partnerships," New York: International Peace Institute, April 2013.

been based on a tacit recognition of the comparative advantage of one organization over the other (non-UN forces being able to carry out peace enforcement, for instance), they have also been largely ad hoc rather than a result of joint strategic assessments.

The reality of a parallel deployment of a UN peacekeeping force and a non-UN fighting force is again apparent in Mali and the UN is likely to rely on similar partnerships in the future, so more focus will need to go on developing effective coordination mechanisms and interoperability “where it matters” between the UN and these other entities early in the planning processes. The fact that these non-UN entities have different structures and decision-making processes and may not be as integrated as the UN creates additional challenges.⁴⁷ While flexibility will always be required, the development of some more formal guidance for joint strategic assessments (UN-AU, UN-EU, UN–World Bank, etc.) may allow for a clearer division of labor from the outset, even if each organization ends up planning its own mode of engagement. Such guidance should also address ad hoc processes in situations where different partners have different constraints, as in Syria today.

The Need for a New Integration Consensus?

To date, the UN integration agenda has been limited to UN engagements in certain types of conflict and postconflict settings. Yet, the nature of the crises the UN faces and changes in the global order have led the organization to deal with new types of “clients,” beyond traditional postconflict countries. Host country governments are increasingly asserting themselves, asking for “light footprints” and resisting the presence of foreign uniformed personnel while calling for greater UN focus on supporting economic development and capacity building, including through South-South cooperation. The nature of crises has also changed, and the UN is now facing new challenges that go

beyond its traditional peace and security expertise, some of which were captured in the *World Development Report 2011*.⁴⁸ The Arab Spring and subsequent transitions (which involve post-authoritarian settings rather than postconflict contexts) have challenged traditional UN state-centric paradigms. They have also challenged the UN integration model, with its in-built assumptions about capacity building and other modes of intervention, designed for low-income countries rather than middle-income fragile contexts.

The UN peacekeeping principles are equally challenged by more assertive African states and organizations that are ready to take on peace enforcement missions. They are further confronted by new and emerging threats, such as those posed by transnational organized crime and the effects of climate change.⁴⁹ More than ever, multifaceted crises like the one affecting the Sahel require coordinated, holistic regional and multisector approaches. Increased emphasis on regional responses (particularly to transnational threats) may lead to the creation of regional structures (e.g., offices) or country-specific missions with a regional purview. These make the integration challenge “cross border,” with integrated planning efforts requiring the participation of multiple UN country teams and/or regional mechanisms, also from the development and humanitarian sides. This trend will only compound transaction costs and put further stress on the integration promise.

These paradigm shifts and the integration fatigue described in this paper call for a revisiting of the foundations of UN integration as captured in the June 2008 Policy Committee decisions. While this major integration push was initially driven by the UN Secretariat itself and then by traditional donors wanting to see greater UN coherence, sometimes as part of a “stabilization” strategy,⁵⁰ a “second integration” movement should put greater emphasis on building a political consensus that includes host countries and a broader member state constituency

47 For instance, the EU has a separate security pillar (different from its political and development pillars), while the UN has a single peace and security pillar with its most senior official, the secretary-general, at its head.

48 The World Bank’s 2011 *World Development Report* called for a new approach to international engagement on conflict-affected and fragile states, focused on strengthening legitimate institutions that provide citizen security, justice, and jobs.

49 For more on the threat that transnational organized crime poses to peace operations, see Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw, and Arthur Boutellis, “The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organized Crime,” New York: International Peace Institute, June 2013.

50 While in the past mission structures were largely determined by the UN Secretariat, the United States successfully pushed for the new mission in Somalia to be “structurally integrated” (Security Council Resolution 2093 of March 13, 2013) in line with the Somali government’s request to have a single “door to knock on.” This was in spite of strong advocacy by a number of humanitarian NGOs against it, fearing such integration would subsume humanitarian action into broader political and stabilization objectives.

that extends to regional organizations and countries from the Global South now occupying a greater presence in the political and security landscape. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which focuses on new ways of engaging in conflict-affected and fragile states that support inclusive country-led transitions, can serve as a catalyst in two ways.⁵¹ On the one hand, the implementation of the New Deal at country and global level could be the opportunity for the UN to start planning differently with host country authorities.⁵² It could move forward some of the above-suggested reforms, helping the UN to become more client-oriented and, most importantly, to demonstrate results. On the other hand, the New Deal is also the opportunity for member states—Security Council members, troop- and police-contributing countries, traditional and emerging donors, and host countries—to launch a broader conversation on integrated approaches in conflict-affected and fragile states, and to build a new and broader circle of integration supporters. Finally, the global and inclusive debate on the post-2015 development agenda, although it is just the start of a process, could contribute to creating a new momentum and consolidating a political consensus around the necessity of approaching conflict, fragility, and development together and in an integrated manner.⁵³

Conclusion

Over the years, the UN has made remarkable strides in increasing the coherence of its multifaceted responses in conflict and postconflict settings. Out of necessity and out of vision, based on field experiments and through headquarters policies, the organization has in fact gone further than many other international actors in developing its own version of a “whole of government” approach. The level of system-wide collaboration has risen

exponentially in just a few years, a fact all the more remarkable in light of decades of pressure to decentralize and the absence of any fundamental structural changes.

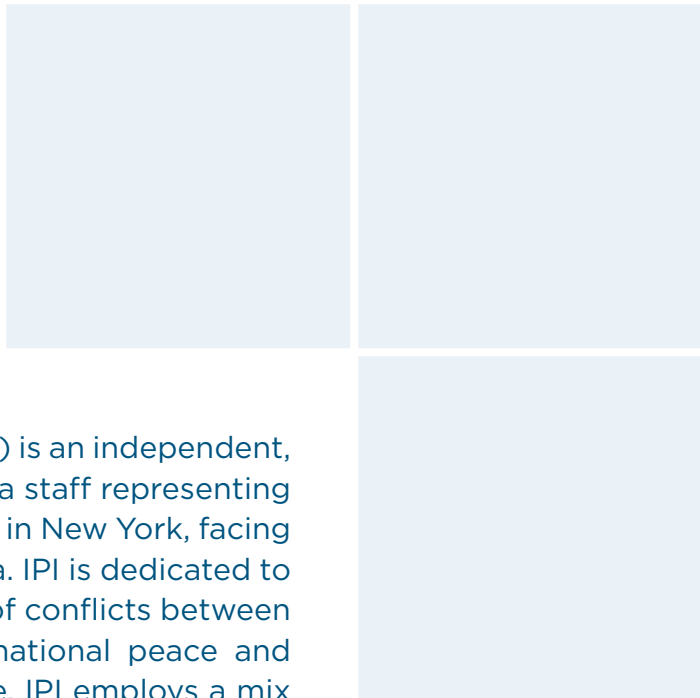
However, this reality may be of little comfort to those who experience, or endure, integration on a daily basis, and whose frustrations with transaction costs and unclear benefits are now fueling increased doubts about the value proposition of integrated planning requirements. Such fatigue is further compounded by a shifting operational and funding environment, which the integration agenda has not clearly addressed. In response to the constraints and costs that integrated efforts have faced, integration practice and policy has gradually moved away from monolithic, structure-driven approaches to a greater focus on strategy and joint assessments. It has started to focus on facilitation rather than formalization, thereby recognizing and allowing for greater diversity in what integration can look like in the field, depending on the context.

The shift of emphasis does not, however, make integration easier to apply or to sell. When integration was approached solely as a triple-hatted deputy-head-of-mission function, many questions were left unaddressed. The spotlight on integrated assessment and planning has brought many of these questions into sharp focus, and there are few simple answers. As such, if the integration agenda is to reclaim adherents, it is important for the UN to combine a series of practical fixes to its integrated planning practices with reflections on systemic changes. Such a process may provide the bottom-up re-emergence of a broad consensus for the UN integration agenda, built on a more compelling narrative of its value, reduced costs for its implementation, and greater demonstration of its relevance to the evolving parameters of international engagement in crisis settings.

51 For more on the New Deal, see Rachel Locke and Vanessa Wyeth, “Busan and Beyond: Implementing the ‘New Deal’ for Fragile States,” New York: International Peace Institute, July 2012.

52 The UN has a field presence in all seven of the New Deal pilot countries (Afghanistan, DRC, Liberia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone), and it strongly supported the process as a whole (it was supported by UNDP/UNDG, OCHA, DPKO/DFS, and DPA). In addition, DPKO, as chair of the UN integration steering group, started convening special meetings of the integrated mission task forces in pilot countries with DPKO-led missions to discuss implications. In June 2012, the secretary-general’s Policy Committee formally decided that the UN would strongly support follow-up to and implementation of the New Deal.

53 See the report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development,” New York: United Nations, 2013, particularly under “Goal 10: Ensure Good Governance and Effective Institutions” and “Goal 11: Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies.” The report is available at www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf.



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