

Building Sustainable Peace: Post-Conflict Stabilisation

Expected Council Action

On 20 May, the Council will take up a new British initiative on securing peace in post-conflict situations, which was launched by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the Security Council on 16 April 2008.

The meeting will be chaired at the ministerial level by Foreign Secretary David Miliband, and it is expected that the Council will be addressed by a number of countries which have recently emerged from conflict. Moreover, in recognition of the fact that the issues raised in the UK initiative include aspects which are clearly within the province of other parts of the UN system, a briefing from the World Bank is also expected.

At the time of writing, members were expecting to begin negotiations on a possible statement to be adopted by the Council. It was unclear whether this would be adopted at the debate or whether the debate would set up an ongoing process of discussion and negotiation.

Background

Prime Minister Brown said in the Security Council on 16 April:

History tells us that fragile and conflict States need not only humanitarian aid and peacekeeping, they need to combine that with help for stabilization and reconstruction. For countries where breakdown has occurred, it is now right to agree major changes in the way the international order responds, so that we can systematically combine humanitarian aid and peacekeeping with help for reconstruction and development.

Therefore, during our presidency of the Security Council next month in May, Britain will propose that

- *when Security Council resolutions authorize peacekeeping missions, the whole United Nations system also is able to authorize action on stabilization and reconstruction*
- *a single envoy is given authority for coordinating international efforts on peacekeeping and recovery in post-conflict zones, and*
- *a United Nations fund is created to provide immediate support for reconstruction, to which Britain will contribute.*

In the same way that we have military forces ready to respond to conflicts, we should agree to have civilian experts ready on standby to deploy quickly to help rebuild countries emerging from instability. For that purpose, Britain will lead the way by making available a thousand-strong United Kingdom standby civilian force including police, emergency services, professionals, judges and trainers. (S/PV.5868)

On 2 May, the UK circulated a concept paper (S/2008/291) which elaborated the reasons for the initiative. It identified three critical gaps which the UK believes are currently hampering international efforts to help countries emerging from conflict to stabilise and build sustainable peace:

1. a failure to ensure that the wide network of international actors is working effectively in a coherent and integrated way;
2. a growing deficit in civilian capacity which can be quickly and effectively deployed; and
3. the lack of mechanisms for rapid and flexible funding for the necessary resources for economic recovery, governance, reintegration, jobs and key support activities.

The paper suggests a number of possible topics for the debate, including diagnosis of the factors hampering the international community's current ability to meet these needs, producing a "fully integrated" international effort from day one, development of better systems for recruiting and maintaining cadres of civilian experts, new approaches to police capacity and better empowering the special representatives of the Secretary-General in the field.

Some of the issues raised by the UK initiative were also addressed in September 2005 at the 2005 World Summit where global leaders emphasised:

...the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace,... the need for a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for sustainable development, and ... the vital role of the United Nations in that regard... (A/RES/60/1 para 97)

As a result of the World Summit decision, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in December 2005 by concurrent resolutions of the Security Council (S/RES/1645) and the General Assembly (A/RES/60/180). It is an inter-governmental advisory body reporting to both the Security Council and the General Assembly. (For detailed background please see the SCR *Special Research Reports* of 23 June 2006 and 5 October 2007.)

The Security Council had on its agenda for more than 15 years various items under which it has addressed, both thematically and in country-specific contexts, the issues of post-conflict stabilisation and peacebuilding. This *Update Report* contains a listing—and links to—many of these debates, resolutions, presidential statements and other relevant documents.

Procedural Aspects

The debate on 20 May will take place under the existing Council agenda item "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding." This agenda item is the one under which the Council normally considers issues relating to the PBC.

It is possible that there may be some concern—at least in a procedural sense—to ensure that the new initiative does not overshadow the work of the PBC, which is generally recognised as having made a good start in this area of work.

However, there is a growing recognition, both inside the Council and in the wider UN membership, that the PBC will only succeed if it is not swamped at the outset by too many cases and too large peacebuilding challenges. As a result of this concern, there has been reluctance both on the part of Council members and the governments with large post conflict problems about expanding the PBC agenda too quickly. As a result, the PBC agenda is limited to three cases:

- Burundi;
- Sierra Leone; and
- Guinea Bissau.

This means that the hardest post-conflict peacebuilding challenges on the Council agenda have not yet gone to the PBC. They include:

- Haiti;
- DRC;
- Liberia;
- Timor-Leste; and
- Côte d'Ivoire.

There seems to be a growing concern that the Council, due to its working methods, procedures and historical practice, is currently not well adapted to manage stabilisation and peacebuilding needs in these countries in a detailed and sustained way.

A challenge for the Council in the context of the coming debate will be to ensure that the substantive issue of how to improve responses to the peacebuilding needs of these countries does not become divisive in a procedural sense. The need to nurture the long term role and capacity of the PBC seems to be very widely shared, but the need not to undermine it is an equally important issue for many. In this regard, the UK paper acknowledges in paragraph 14 the roles of the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission. For some Council members, however, this will seem inadequate because of the importance to them of the roles of the Fifth Committee and the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34).

Other Related Initiatives

In 2006, Norway began a major initiative approaching the same problem from a different perspective. Their “Project on Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations” was a bottom up approach starting with a series of regional seminars in Africa (Addis Ababa and Johannesburg), Asia (Beijing), Europe (Brussels), as well as in Geneva and New York. Details are available at: www.regjeringen.no/integratedmissions.

The project culminated with a conference in Oslo in October 2007. Major themes emerging from the seminars and the conference were that it is critical in the post-conflict situation to improve the UN contribution to peacebuilding and sustainable peace, but in order to achieve this it will be necessary to:

- enhance the UN's capacity to integrate the various dimensions of its delivery in the field;
- better integrate development activity and quick impact projects at a much earlier stage;
- better integrate with host governments to secure local ownership and sustainability;
- employ more civilian assets rather than just rely on the military components of an operation (and the associated recruitment issues); and
- reduce the silo effects associated with many separate agencies and donors in the field.

It should also be noted that the Secretariat's ambitious peacekeeping reform project "Peace Operations 2010" has begun to address many of these issues as well as practical questions dealing with doctrine, personnel, partnerships and organisational structures (A/60/696).

Analysis

The issues raised in the UK paper seem to fall into three distinct but overlapping categories:

1. those that call for a new approach on the part of UN member states in the way that they think, in their own capitals, about their overall contribution to peacebuilding and new ways to reorganise their systems and processes accordingly;
2. those that call for change in the way that the international machinery for collective action can be more coherent, better integrated and more effective; and
3. those that need new approaches both in capitals and in the international machinery.

The implicit recognition in the UK paper that traditional approaches in many western donor countries may be a part of the problem will be a welcome glimmer of hope for many in the G77. The suggestion that some changed approaches may help to deliver international assistance more quickly and more effectively is therefore worthy of analysis.

Domestic structures in most donor countries do indeed seem to be a problem. For instance, there is a growing recognition that reliance exclusively on peacekeepers—in the form of military contingents—is a problem. By contrast, in post-conflict situations the demand for UN civilian police—often in significant numbers—has grown rapidly. But the reality is that internationally police structures have been simply unable to respond to that demand. Large formed police units trained and held in reserve for civil unrest have become much rarer. In many countries, the police are structured around a criminal investigation model. Police assets are prioritised to address crime rates, and there are few countries where there is surplus capacity for overseas deployment. And often retired police officers recruited for UN missions have proved to have neither the necessary skills nor capacities.

The problem is even more acute in the area of skilled civilian capacity—where typically no governments have in their public services a surplus of specialised civilians who can be quickly

deployed on a bilateral basis or offered to international institutions. Such people do exist in the private sector, but at present the only way of accessing that pool is when individuals take a personal initiative to apply for service as a UN Volunteer or to join the United Nations system as an employee. However, neither of these frameworks is currently encouraging or facilitating anything like the number of personnel required. And the delays in the recruitment system—typically over six months or more—mean that most UN missions have huge vacancy lists, especially in the critical start up phase.

It seems unlikely that the Council can easily resolve either of the above problems. The roots of some of the problems seem to be intrinsically domestic, although the Norwegian seminars did draw attention to an urgent need to cure the problems in the UN recruitment system. It is possible however that the Council could play an important role not only in drawing attention to the issues but also actively encouraging member states to take steps to address them.

The issues of better and more flexible funding arrangements seem to have dimensions which belong in both categories—solutions required in capitals and solutions at the intergovernmental level. Better coherence seems unlikely to be achieved unless donor governments shift the thinking in their capitals away from unilateral activity in the field and give a much higher priority to collective activity. In a similar way, the prevailing fascination with trust funds for aggregating voluntary contributions does indeed seem to result in the perverse consequences identified in the UK paper and often to result in only an illusion of coherence and integration. It would be politically naïve to imagine that the impulse for bilateral and voluntary donor roles will disappear. It seems likely that it will always be a part of the mix. But the challenge for donor capitals is to find ways to channel more funding collectively and subordinate as much as possible their national requirements to common approaches.

But the international machinery also has an important role to play in renovating its capacity to be fast, flexible and coherent—not least on the financing issues. And this is an area where organs other than the Council will need to take a lead.

In terms of coherence and integration of effort at the practical level, it is noteworthy that the PBC has already made some very important progress in this regard. In particular, it has developed innovative working methods which enable participation of key actors involved in peacebuilding in a specific country. These “country-specific configurations” seem to be making progress in building local ownership and integrating the inputs of all stakeholders. But, as indicated above, it seems unlikely that the PBC could quickly expand its umbrella to take responsibility for coherence and integration of all of the operations on the Council agenda with significant post-conflict peacebuilding dimensions.

It seems that one of the most significant ways that the PBC adds value—over and above what the Council has been able to offer—is an informal, low key, non-politicised and generally participatory process that works through the practical issues in a sustained way. This involves multiple country visits when needed, video conferencing with local stakeholders and real dialogue with and between development agencies, NGOs and donor governments. It is

precisely this sustained participatory focus which seems to be producing good prospects for better outcomes in securing the integration of effort and local ownership which are seen as so important for sustaining the peace.

An important question for the Council therefore is whether it is ready to contemplate some practical steps to improve its own outcomes in this area, especially in respect of the difficult cases still on its agenda which the PBC is not yet ready to take on. Clearly, any such approach would need to be on a temporary basis—until the PBC is able to contribute to all of the peacebuilding situations.

In the interim, however, continuing with the status quo seems likely to mean that for five very significant post-conflict peacebuilding cases (DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia and Timor Leste) a key conclusion of the 2005 Summit will not be met, i.e. that there should be a:

...a dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction and to assist them in laying the foundation for sustainable development.

Options

There are a number of possible options for Council members in the lead up to the debate and in discussions about possible action. These include the following—some of which could also be combined:

1. Adopt a statement welcoming the contributions to the debate on 20 May and calling on the member states, the UN and the donor agencies within their respective spheres, to come up with practical solutions and decide to schedule a further high level debate on the issues in September (during the high-level segment of the General Assembly) to hear specific proposals.
2. Take no concrete action—on the basis that the debate itself will have provided a sufficient framework for more effective action by member states in the future country specific work of both the Council and the PBC and for the UN and the agencies and on the basis that a more detailed thematic approach would not add value.
3. Request the PBC to provide advice and recommendations on the issues raised in the debate and schedule a further high-level debate in September to discuss them.
4. Adopt a thematic statement:
 - emphasising the ongoing importance of post-conflict peacebuilding in many of the issues on its agenda;
 - affirming Council members' determination to increase their efforts to address the peacebuilding gaps in situations not being addressed by the PBC;
 - stressing the need for a more coherent and integrated approach to multidimensional operations;
 - welcoming the proposals made during the debate; and
 - requesting the Secretary-General to provide to the Council within three months an action-focused set of recommendations which he could undertake—with the authority of the Council—which could help to achieve these objectives.

5. Decide to act on the 2005 World Summit decision that there should be a “dedicated institutional mechanism to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict” and, since the PBC is not yet fully able to meet that need in a number of important cases, to establish a mechanism on an interim and temporary basis. This might involve:
- utilising one of its own existing mechanisms to fill the gap in post-conflict cases where there are multidimensional peacekeeping operations, but the country in question is not on the PBC agenda;
 - tasking its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations with an additional mandate of a temporary nature;
 - authorising the Group to take up for a defined period country-specific peacebuilding situations referred to it by the Council after consultations with and agreement of the host countries;
 - requesting the Working Group initially to report back to the Council within three months after consultation with the Secretariat (including the Peacebuilding Support Office), host countries of relevant operations and other stakeholders including PBC members, relevant UN agencies and donors. (A series of Arria-style meetings might be a useful format for such consultations and also provide an opportunity for input from NGOs.); and
 - requesting the Working Group to include in its report specific recommendations for appropriate innovations in working methods—bearing in mind the experience of the PBC and the importance of securing cooperation with and participation by key members of the C34 and the Fifth Committee.

Council Dynamics

At the time of writing, most Council members were generally supportive of the UK initiative and welcoming that an important systematic problem would get a high-level airing. As to any specific outcome or follow up, many Council members seem to be waiting to react to concrete UK proposals.

There will be sensitivity that the debate could trigger a further round of criticism in the General Assembly that the Council is usurping the role of the Assembly. The UK seems to recognise this element, and it is being careful not to overreach. However, a number of Council members will want to ensure that General Assembly competences are properly recognised in any outcome document.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Resolutions

- S/RES/1645-A/RES/60/180 (20 December 2005) created the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.
- S/RES/1318 (7 September 2000) and S/RES/1327 (13 November 2000) contained annexes discussing measures to strengthen peacekeeping operations.

Selected Presidential Statements

- S/PRST/2007/3 (21 February 2007) requested the PBC to include consideration of

security sector reform programmes in integrated peacebuilding strategies.

- S/PRST/2007/1 (8 January 2007) on the Council debate on Threats to International Peace and Security underlined the importance of close interaction between the Council and the PBC.
- S/PRST/2006/42 (8 November 2006) on Women, Peace and Security welcomed the role the PBC can play in mainstreaming gender perspectives into the peace consolidation process .
- S/PRST/2006/39 (20 September 2006) on the Council debate on Cooperation between the United Nation and Regional Organisations in Maintaining International Peace and Security welcomed the intent of regional organisations to be closely associated with the work of the PBC and expressed the Council's commitment to facilitate their participation in the PBC's country-specific activities.
- S/PRST/2006/38 (9 August 2006) on Peace Consolidation in West Africa underscored the importance and role of the PBC in assisting countries emerging from conflict to achieve sustainable peace and security.
- S/PRST/2006/28 (22 June 2006) on the Council debate on Strengthening International Law: Rule of Law and Maintenance of International Peace and Security emphasised the role of the PBC with respect to the promotion of justice and the rule of law.
- S/PRST/2004/33 (22 September 2004) recognised the important civilian role in conflict management and peacebuilding.
- S/PRST/2004/16 (17 May 2004) emphasised the need for enhanced resources, personnel and planning to strengthen peacekeeping operations.
- S/PRST/2001/31 (31 October 2001) emphasised the importance of gender perspectives in policies and programmes addressing armed conflict, especially peacekeeping operations.
- S/PRST/2001/5 (20 February 2001) reiterated the value of including peace-building elements in mandates of peacekeeping operations.
- S/PRST/2001/3 (31 January 2001) established a Working Group of the Whole on UN peacekeeping operations.
- S/PRST/2000/10 (23 March 2000) was a presidential statement on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

Selected Security Council Debates

- S/PV.5868 (16 April 2008) was a Council debate on peace and security in Africa.
- S/PV.5627 and resumption 1 (31 January 2007) was the Security Council open debate on peacebuilding including a statement by Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support.
- S/PV.5041 (22 September 2004) was a Council debate on civilian aspects of conflict management and peacebuilding.
- S/PV.5007 and resumption 1 (20 July 2004) was on cooperation between the UN and regional organisations in stabilisation processes.
- S/PV.4993 and resumption 1 (22 June 2004) was on the role of civil society in post-conflict peacebuilding.
- S/PV.4943 (15 April 2004) was a Council debate on the role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding.
- S/PV.4903 and resumption 1 (26 January 2004) was a Council debate on the UN role

in post-conflict national reconciliation.

- S/PV.4852 and resumption 1 (29 October 2003) was a debate on women, peace and security recognising that gender inequalities are heightened in conflict zones.
- S/PV.4835 (30 September 2003) was a Council debate on the UN's role in promoting justice and the rule of law in post-conflict situations.
- S/PV.4326 (13 June 2001) was a Council debate on strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries.
- S/PV.4272 and resumption 1 (5 February 2001) was a Council debate on comprehensive approaches to peace-building.
- S/PV.4223 and resumption 1 (15 November 2000) was a Council debate on transitioning from peacekeeping to peace-building in post-conflict situations.
- S/PV.4208 (24 October 2000), resumption 1 (24 October 2000) and resumption 2 (25 October 2000) was a Council debate on women, peace and security.

Selected Letters

- S/2008/291 (2 May 2008) contained the British concept paper on securing peace in post-conflict situations.
- S/2007/744 (14 December 2007) was the letter in which the Council conveyed the Council's acceptance of the request from the government of Guinea-Bissau to be placed on the PBC's agenda and invited the Commission to provide advice on the situation in the country.

Selected PBC Documents

- PBC/2/INF/1 (13 February 2008) indicated the membership of the PBC Organisational Committee and membership of the country-specific configurations.
- PBC/2/OC/9 (1 February 2008) was the letter from the Chairperson of the PBC listing the UN members states, organisations and entities constituting the PBC Guinea-Bissau country specific configuration.
- PBC/1/OC/2 (21 June 2006) was a document in which the president of the Council requested the PBC, via a letter to the Secretary-General, to advise on the situation in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Selected General Assembly Resolutions

- A/RES/60/287 (21 September 2006) was the resolution on the Peacebuilding Fund.
- A/RES/60/180 (20 December 2005) established the PBC, concurrent with Council resolution 1645.
- A/RES/60/1 (16 September 2005) was the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

Selected Reports

- A/60/696 (24 February 2006) was a report on the Secretariat's reform project "Peace Operations 2010."
- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) was the report of the Secretary-General, In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights.
- A/59/565 (2 December 2004) was the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility).
- S/2004/616 (23 August 2004) was the Secretary-General's report on the rule of law in conflict and post-conflict societies.

- E/2004/86 (25 June 2004) was an assessment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups of the ECOSOC on African Countries Emerging from Conflict.
- A/55/305-S/2000/809 (21 August 2000) was the report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report).
- S/2000/101 (11 February 2000) was the report of the Secretary-General on the role of UN peacekeeping in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.
- A/47/277-S/24111 (17 June 1992) was the report of the Secretary-General, An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping.