The UN and Regional Organisations

Expected Council Action
On 6 November, the Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on the role of regional and subregional organisations in maintaining peace and security. The debate, which will be chaired by Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda, will be held at the country's initiative in its capacity as Council president for November.

The debate is likely to examine the issue without focusing exclusively on a particular region. In addition to non-Council member states, it seems that a geographically diverse group of regional organisations (including ASEAN, the AU, the EU and ECOWAS, among others) have been invited to participate.

The Council is expected to adopt a presidential statement that summarises recent developments relating to the capacity of regional organisations to address conflict as well as its views on the need for regional organisations to strengthen contributions to the Council's work.

Background
On 29 October, Indonesia circulated a concept paper on the relationship between the UN and regional and subregional organisations with respect to issues of peace and security (S/2007/640). The paper outlines two primary objectives for the debate:

- to enhance understanding of the potential and actual capabilities of regional and subregional organisations to address peace and security issues (including their role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding and the development of norms); and
- to help identify and develop mechanisms of regional organisations to strengthen their ability to contribute to the Council's efforts to promote peace and security.

Within this context the debate may focus on some of the following areas:

- disseminating and developing best practices and lessons learned in order to enhance the effectiveness of regional and subregional organisations in addressing local conflicts;
- distinguishing between approaches with general applicability to regional organisations and approaches that need to be adapted to geographically specific circumstances;

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- stimulating broader engagement of regional organisations in the UN's work on peace and security issues;
- broadening understanding of the challenges and opportunities of improved communication between the Security Council and regional organisations; and
- exploring whether or not a hybrid-peacekeeping model is relevant to all regions and situations, and the benefits and shortcomings of such a model.

Key Facts

In the 1990s, the UN began to focus increased attention on the need to involve regional organisations in matters of peace and security. Meeting at the level of heads of state or government for the first time in January 1992, the Security Council asked the Secretary-General to recommend ways to make the UN more efficient in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. In response, the Secretary-General issued *An Agenda for Peace* in June 1992, highlighting the potential role of the Council in crisis prevention, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding and giving birth to the concept of "regional-global security partnership."

In April 1998, the Secretary-General issued a report on peace and security in Africa. Many of the report's recommendations on peacekeeping focused on cooperation between the UN and regional organisations. Based on the findings of an ad-hoc working group formed by the Council to review its findings, in September 1998 the Council adopted resolution 1197, which advocated strategies for enhancing cooperation between the UN and the Organisation of African Unity in preventing conflict and maintaining peace.

The issue of cooperation between the UN and regional organisations gained increased momentum following the Millennium Summit in 2000. Romania, and subsequently Greece, took on responsibility for promoting the thematic issue during their time as elected members of the Council. The subject became an important feature of the September 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. In addition to calling for a ten year capacity-building programme for the AU, the Outcome Document resolved to expand cooperation through:

- formalised agreements between respective secretariats;
- involving regional organisations in the Council's work;
- ensuring that regional organisations have the capacity for conflict prevention or peacekeeping and consider placing such capacities in the framework of the UN Standby Arrangements System; and
- strengthening the framework for cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields.

Since 2003, there have been four thematic debates on the issue (S/PV.4739 and Corr. 1 on 11 April 2003; S/PV.5007 and Resumption 1 on 20 July 2004; S/PV.5282 and Resumption 1 on 17 October 2005 and S/PV.5529 on 20 September 2006). The last of these focused on Africa and was held on 28 March 2007, with South Africa presiding. That debate resulted in a presidential statement that stressed the view that collaboration between the UN and regional organisations "should be based on their complimentary capacities and comparative advantages," while recognising the "Peacebuilding Commission as a forum for coordination between the United Nations system and regional and sub-regional organizations" (S/PRST/2007/7). Foreshadowing (and perhaps informing) an important theme of the Indonesian concept paper, the Council expressed encouragement for an "increased exchange of information and sharing of experience, best practices and lessons learned between the Security Council and the African Union as well as other relevant regional organizations."

The March presidential statement also requested a report from the Secretary-General on ways in which the UN can support mechanisms for enhanced cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, particularly the AU. This report has yet to be issued. A likely timeframe for its publication is early 2008. (For more details, please refer to our 18 September 2006 and 23 March 2007 *Update Reports.*)

Key issues
The Council faces the following issues.

- A key issue relates to the regional scope of the debate. While the bulk of the Council's work is in Africa, discussion of the Council's relationship with regional organisations in Asia, particularly ASEAN, given Indonesia's role as Council president and the situation in Myanmar, is possible.
- A related issue will be what form the debate will take with respect to the contributions that regional organisations can make to the Council's work, considering that this is a major theme of the Indonesian concept paper.
- Another issue is the lack of formal arrangements for collaboration between the UN and regional organisations, as current agreements are developed on an ad hoc basis. The Secretary-General's March 2005 report *In Larger Freedom* recommended Memoranda of Understanding to govern such relationships. This approach could lead to establishing clear areas of responsibility and more efficient collaborations.
- A related issue is the more controversial issue of funding mechanisms for peacekeeping operations undertaken by regional organisations. There continues to be resistance to financing such operations through assessed UN contributions. Other options include voluntary contributions to a special fund, or greater emphasis on bilateral arrangements whereby member states fund regional organisations or regional organisations assist one another. Discussion of the full dimensions of this issue seems likely.
- Another issue is the fact that many regional organisations lack technical resources such as equipment and logistical capacity. Since regionally-led peacekeeping operations are not eligible for UN supplies, the burdens that they often do not have the capacity to overcome are also likely to be discussed.
- Another possible issue for the debate is the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration between the UN and regional organisations based on experience to date in the context of the implementation of the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

Council Dynamics
Although the Council supports the general idea of stronger cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, it has not traditionally shown much inclination to consider this issue other than at the abstract level. The Council reiterated its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in its March presidential statement following the last open debate on collaboration between the UN and regional organisations. Nonetheless, all Council members are aware of the practical value if the capacity of regional and subregional organisations can be strengthened. However, the Council has tended to focus its energy on concrete cases in an ad hoc manner rather than proceeding from the general to the specific.

UN Documents

Selected Security Council Resolutions
- S/RES/1769 (31 July 2007) established UNAMID.   - S/RES/1706 (31 August 2006) was the resolution on the situation in Sudan mandating UN assistance to AMIS.   - S/RES/1631 (17 October 2005) was the first resolution adopted by the Security Council on regional organisations.   - S/RES/1625 (14 September 2005) was a declaration on the effectiveness of the Security Council's role in conflict prevention, calling for the strengthening of cooperation and communication between the UN and regional and subregional organisations in accordance with Chapter VIII.   - S/RES/1497 (1 August 2003) recognised the role ECOWAS played in implementing the June 2003 ceasefire in Liberia and cited Chapter VIII.   - S/RES/1464 (4 February 2003) welcomed the actions of ECOWAS in response to the violence in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 with reference to Chapter VII and Chapter VIII.

- S/RES/1197 (18 September 1998) was on the need for the UN to provide support to regional and subregional organisations and to strengthen coordination between the UN and those organisations.

Selected Presidential Statements

- S/PRST/2007/7 (28 March 2007) was a presidential statement on relations between the UN and regional organisations, particularly the African Union.
- S/PRST/2006/55 (19 December 2006) endorsed the phased approach towards a hybrid AU-UN force agreed upon by the AU Peace and Security Council.
- S/PRST/2006/39 (20 September 2006) welcomed the progress made in realising the goals of resolution 1631 and urged contributions to the capacity building of regional organisations and subregional organisations, particularly of the AU and African subregional organisations.
- S/PRST/2004/44 (19 November 2004) recognised the importance of strengthening cooperation with the African Union in order to help build its capacity to deal with collective security challenges.
- S/PRST/2004/27 (20 July 2004) was the statement after the Council's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations in stabilisation processes.
- S/PRST/1998/35 (30 November 1998) reaffirmed the increasingly important role of regional arrangements in maintaining peace and security.
- S/PRST/1998/28 (16 September 1998) set general standards for peacekeeping and stressed the need to be fully informed of peacekeeping activities carried out by regional or subregional organisations.
- S/PRST/1994/22 (3 May 1994) said that regional and subregional organisations should be taken into account when setting up new peacekeeping operations.

Selected Letters

- S/2007/640 (29 October 2007) was the letter from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia forwarding the concept paper on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- S/2007/148 (14 March 2007) was the letter from the Permanent Representative of South Africa forwarding the concept paper on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organisations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- S/2005/567 (8 September 2005) was the conclusions of the sixth high-level meeting between the Secretary-General and regional organisations.

Selected Secretary-General's Reports

- S/2006/590 (28 July 2006) *A regional-global security partnership: challenges and opportunities*
- A/59/2005 (21 March 2005) *In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*
- A/59/565 (2 December 2004) and Corr. 1 (6 December 2004) was the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.
- S/1998/318 (13 April 1998) was the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Selected General Assembly Resolutions

- A/RES/60/1 (24 October 2005) was the World Summit Outcome Document.
- A/RES/49/57 (9 December 1994) was the Declaration on Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security.

Selected Security Council Debates

- S/PV.5649 (28 March 2007) was a Council debate on relations between the UN and regional organisations, particularly the African Union.
- S/PV.5529 (20 September 2006) was an open debate on cooperation between the UN and international organisations in maintaining international peace and security.
- S/PV.5282 and Resumption 1 (17 October 2005) were the records of the open debate and the adoption of resolution 1631.

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- S/PV.5261 (14 September 2005) were the records of the Council summit meeting and the adoption of resolution 1625.
- S/PV.5007 and Resumption 1 (20 July 2004) were the records of the open debate on cooperation between the UN and regional organisations in stabilisation processes.
- S/PV.4739 and Corr.1 (11 April 2003) were the records of the Council open debate with the AU, ECOWAS, EU, League of Arab States, OSCE and OAS.

Other
- S/2006/961 (6 December 2006) contained the 30 November AU Peace and Security Council communiqué on the phased approach towards a hybrid AU-UN force in Darfur.

Useful Additional Sources

Building Partnerships for Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding between the United Nations and Regional Organizations, International Peace Academy, 2006.

Felicio, Tania; Graham, Kennedy, *Regional Security and Global Governance: A Proposal for a 'Regional-Global Security Mechanism,'* Royal Institute for International Relations, January 2005.

Foreman, Shepard; Grene, Andrew, "Collaborating with Regional Organizations" in *The UN Security Council,* Malone, David (ed.), Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004.

Holt, Victoria; Shanahan, Moira, *African Capacity-Building for Peace Operations: UN Collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS*, The Henry L. Stimson Center, February 2005.

Cooperation between the UN and Regional Organizations/Arrangements in a Peacekeeping Environment: Suggested Principles and Mechanisms, Lessons Learned Unit, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, March 1999.