The United Nations Year 2006/2007: A New Beginning in Difficult Times

Joachim W. Müller
Karl P. Sauvant, Columbia University
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by

Joachim Müller and Karl P. Sauvant[1]

On 13 October 2006, and on the recommendation of the Security Council, the General Assembly elected Ban Ki-moon, a former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, as the Organization's next Secretary-General. The new Secretary-General had campaigned on the slogan “promise less and deliver more”.

Ban Ki-moon took over on 1 January 2007 from Kofi Annan, who left after a ten-year term. Despite the controversies during the last part of his mandate, Annan was widely admired and was considered a difficult act to follow.[2] Moreover, Ban inherited a number of difficult challenges. The internal political dynamics among member states had become more complex during 2006. The bloc of developing countries, organized in the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77), considered the ongoing reform process as biased towards reducing their influence. The United States, the most powerful member of the Organization, was unhappy with the pace and direction of the reforms as, in this country’s views, they did not address demands in such key areas as human rights, oversight, mandate review, and management reform. Finally, the failure of Security Council reform led to major disappointment among a number of member states hopeful to elevate their position in the Organization.

Ban scored early political points from the developing world with the appointment of a fresh group of senior managers: a Deputy Secretary-General from Tanzania, a Chief of Staff from India, an Under-Secretary-General for Management from Mexico, and a spokesperson from Haiti. Three of those four appointees are women. The Secretary-General was sending a clear signal to developing countries that he would seek to give them a larger voice in the workings of the Secretariat. In parallel, he set out to strengthen relations with the Bush Administration and to establish a less confrontational atmosphere. John R. Bolton, the United States Ambassador to the UN, resigned at the end of 2006 and was replaced by Zalmay Khalilzad. Khalilzad took over in April 2007; his previous diplomatic experience included service as the US Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan.
New initiatives

One of the first major initiatives introduced by Ban focused on restructuring the UN Secretariat, covering peacekeeping operations and disarmament.[3] With the surge in UN peacekeeping which had reached an unprecedented 100,000 peacekeeping personnel in the field and the expectation that the number could reach 150,000 by the end of 2007, Ban proposed to augment the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) with the new Department of Field Support. The new entity would serve as the coordinator for field support needs, including the administration and management of personnel, communication, and information technology, finance, procurement, and logistics in UN peacekeeping operations. DPKO would therefore concentrate on policy planning and implementation, as well as on providing strategic direction for UN peacekeeping activities.

With regard to disarmament, Ban initially proposed to integrate the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) into the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and to downgrade the head of DOA to the level of Assistant Secretary-General. Both initiatives were met with resistance from member states. Concern was expressed regarding potential overlap and problems in coordination and communication between the two departments responsible for peacekeeping operations. The developing countries, in particular, were strongly opposed to a downgrading of DDA, stressing that any structural change should lead to a strengthening, not weakening, of the UN’s work in the field of disarmament, arms control and nonproliferation. Following a round of extensive consultations with member states, the Secretary-General revised his proposals, demonstrating his ability to be flexible and responsive in the face of resistance. This quality has not gone unnoticed by member states, and they reacted more favorably to his ideas.

The General Assembly has hence supported, on 15 March 2007, the proposals for restructuring DPKO and DDA, in Resolutions 61/256 and 61/257, respectively. Yet the General Assembly still requested that the Secretary-General present comprehensive details on the functions and financial, administrative, and budgetary implications of these initiatives. Accordingly, DDA was reconstituted as a separate office in the Secretariat, headed by a “high representative” at the Under-Secretary-General level, reporting directly to the Secretary-General. By maintaining budgetary autonomy and the integrity of the existing structures and functions, the new Office of Disarmament was not too different from the previous department, except that more emphasis was now placed on a strengthened advocacy role of the head of the Office to help mobilize political will to overcome the current stalemate in the field of disarmament.

The Secretary-General also provided new impetus to the reform of the sclerotic personnel system. He stated his intention to institute policies to foster competition for jobs and to eliminate certain employment guarantees. This plan also
includes improved annual performance reviews, term limits for new hires of senior officials, and reform of the administration of justice, with the aim of codifying a single standard for disciplinary actions regarding UN staff. Ban publicly made a full disclosure of his personal financial situation and urged his top officials to do the same to demonstrate greater transparency of financial dealings. He also made a quick decision to order an external audit of UNO?, following reports that hard currency transactions in North Korea could have enabled the regime to use such funds for illicit purposes.

**Reform efforts carried over to 2007**

Ban had inherited a number of ongoing reform initiatives which had seen mixed progress. Progress had been limited on reaching agreement on the terms of reference for the proposed Independent Audit Advisory Committee to strengthen independent oversight. Moreover, the review of over 5,000 mandates approved by the General Assembly, one of the most contentious parts of the 2005 World Summit reform package, was proceeding slowly. Through 2006, the General Assembly's informal consultations on mandate review were marked by intense divisions over the scope and purpose of the exercise. The United States strongly supported the review and, by implication, the potential elimination of mandates, resulting in fearful reactions from states with a vested interest in vulnerable mandates. As a first step, it was decided to examine mandates that were older than five years and had not been renewed; these accounted for only 7 per cent of mandates. The review of those that had been renewed was more contentious, and the process stalled in early 2007. Only in late April 2007 was the review formally re-launched, with reviews taking place according to thematic clusters. At the urging of the NAM and the G77 and China, the review started with the cluster involving drug-control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism -- UN activities that are strongly supported by the United States.

The replacement of the Human Rights Commission by the new Human Rights Council in March 2006 had been one of the most visible reform outcomes of the 2005 Millennium Summit.[4] The United States had voted against the establishment of the Council, citing the Council’s inadequate mechanisms to ensure credible membership. Subsequently, the United States decided not to run for a seat on the Council, but stated that it would do so in 2007, provided the Council had proven its effectiveness. In March 2007, however, and for the second consecutive year, the Bush Administration did not seek election to the Human Rights Council, alleging that it had an ineffective track record.

The reform of the Security Council, a major preoccupation during the past eight years, was kept under review during 2006, but without coming closer to an
agreement. The 2005 World Summit had not managed to resolve this issue. That failure represented a major disappointment in particular for those member states that had hoped to become permanent members, especially Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan. While the issues of expansion and veto privileges were most controversial, even the proposals on the Council’s working methods did not garner consensus.

In January 2007, the General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa appointed a group of five facilitators to consult with member states on Security Council reform. After extensive closed-door consultations, the facilitators issued two reports in April and June 2007, both of which provided an interesting snapshot of the broad spectrum of concerns of member states. The facilitators concluded that, while support for Security Council reform is widespread, deep divisions among countries on how such reform should look is preventing agreement on any permanent changes. There was considerable interest, however, in an intermediary approach that would entail creating a new category of membership in the Security Council, to be reviewed after a given number of years. The main issue, however, was the lack of readiness of member states to move from consultations to negotiations and to agree on a framework for negotiations. In July 2007, Brazil, India, and South Africa announced that they had agreed to work together for permanent seats on the Council under the auspices of the Trilateral Commission of the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA). The two reports of the facilitators were submitted to the incoming President of the General Assembly, Srgjan Kerim, who is responsible for guiding the ongoing consultations and the negotiation process throughout the 62nd General Assembly session.

Programme focus of the new Secretary-General

During his first months in office, Ban Ki-moon has been quick to formulate his position on a number of key issues, including Darfur, the situation in the Middle East, the Millennium Development Goals, and climate change. He has taken an early stand on addressing the crisis in Darfur, gradually taking on the role of the “world’s conscience”. On the situation in the Middle East, the new Secretary-General emphasized turning the Quartet -- the US, the European Union, Russia, the UN -- into a more effective mechanism for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and he pledged support for Lebanon’s reconstruction following the war in 2006. Ban identified the Millennium Development Goals as one of his major priorities throughout his campaign for the post, and has continued to do so since taking office. In support of that claim, he assembled a working group on Africa and the Millennium Development Goals to serve as “a coalition of the willing” to speed up progress on the goals.
Climate change

Already in early 2007, Ban Ki-moon declared climate change to be a top priority, describing global warming as a threat to the world “as great as modern warfare” and a likely “major driver of war and conflict” in the coming decades. Indeed, subsequent developments indicate that climate change may well become the defining issue of his tenure as Secretary-General. Initial efforts focused on bringing together member states in the negotiations for a successor arrangement to the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at addressing global warming by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The Protocol and its follow-up are negotiated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), which seeks to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in order to combat global warming. UNFCC was established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

UNFCC establishes limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual nations and contains enforcement provisions through treaty updates called Protocols. The Kyoto Protocol requires 36 industrialized countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5 per cent below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. It allows industrialized countries to meet their targets by trading emission allowances on a newly-created carbon market. The trading system is set to begin in 2008; funds flowing from North to South could reach up to $100 billion over the coming years. The Kyoto Protocol is due to expire at the end of 2012. Post-Kyoto negotiations began in early 2007, with the aim of reaching fundamental agreement by 2009 to allow time for ratification prior to 2012. A series of UNFCCC meetings was planned for the negotiation process, including a major conference in Bali, Indonesia, during December 2007.

Unprecedented interest in climate change by policy makers and the general public was triggered by a report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)[5] issued on 2 February 2007. IPCC was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to assess scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information relevant to the understanding of climate change, its potential impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation. For the preparation of the report, IPCC brought together more than 2,000 scientists and experts. They put an end to any doubts about the science side of the debate and about seriousness of the situation. More specifically, the Panel concluded that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal” and that most of the observed increases in temperature are “very likely” due to the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases due to human activities, mostly the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation. It was argued that, without particular emission reduction policies, global temperature may rise by up to 6.4°C (11.5°F) before the end of the century. As a result, the sea level might increase by up to 7 meters (23
feet), accompanied by heavy precipitation events and floods, heat waves, and increased tropical cyclone activities. The impact would be felt everywhere, including cities, with most damage in developing countries. In order to stabilize the atmosphere, emissions would need to be cut by 60 to 80 per cent, implying the need for major investments and fundamental lifestyle changes. This reduction was to be achieved through a new global cap-and-trade system agreed upon among governments in the post-Kyoto negotiations. Essential to success is not only the participation of the United States -- which is not a member of the Kyoto Protocol, but is the most important emitter of greenhouse gases -- but also the participation of key developing countries, in particular China and India. In October 2007, IPCC and Al Gore Jr., former Vice-President of the United States, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change”.[6]

In order to pave the way for the UNFCC to reach an agreement on a post-Kyoto framework during its meeting in Bali in December 2007, the Secretary-General appointed three Special Envoys in May 2007 to facilitate progress in the multilateral climate change negotiations within the UN framework and to prepare a UN high-level meeting on the post-Kyoto treaty on 24 September 2007 at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly. The Special Envoys were Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and former Chair of the World Commission of Environment and Development; Han Seung-soo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and former President of the 56th session of the UN General Assembly; and Ricardo Lagos Escobar, former President of Chile. As part of the schedule leading to the September 2007 UN high-level meeting, the General Assembly held its first plenary session devoted exclusively to climate change on 31 July 2007. Whereas the United Nations had been the central global platform for international cooperation on climate change, a number of preparatory and parallel initiatives emerged. In March, the European Union committed itself to a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and up to 30 per cent if others follow suit. In June 2007, leaders at the Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, announced the aim to at least halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In August 2007, the United States invited members of the G8 and a selected group of countries to a conference on climate change scheduled to be held at the end of September, shortly after the high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

The UN, and in particular the UNFCCC, was widely considered to remain the appropriate forum for negotiating future global action on climate change. In August 2007, a UNFCC meeting in Vienna brought together one thousand representatives from governments, commerce, environmental organizations, and research institutes to set the stage for the major UN conference in Bali during December 2007.
Global issues, development and delivery

Conferences and meetings to foster global norms remain one of the key functions of the UN.[7] Steps towards protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms included the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[8], the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,[9] and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[10]. In the development area, the General Assembly approved[11] a strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to improve policy and programme coordination. This step included the new mandate of holding an Annual Ministerial Review of progress on the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The bi-annual Development Cooperation Forum was launched in July 2007 at the ECOSOC meeting and provided a global platform where all stakeholders are able to engage in high-level dialogue on new trends and key policy issues affecting development cooperation. These changes are intended to establish the Council as a central forum for intergovernmental oversight and to provide an assessment of the implementation of the United Nations development agenda. Other milestones in the development area are the midterm review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, and the emergence of new issues, including international migration and development, aid-for-trade, and coherence of the UN system. The operational arm for development and humanitarian relief includes such UN funds and programmes as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the World Food Programme (WFP).[12] Coordination of activities between the United Nations system organizations, including the specialized agencies, was done in the United Nations System Chief Executive Board (CEB).[13]

Following the 2005 World Summit, the Secretary-General created (in February 2006) a High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment. The IS-member panel carried out a study of the UN’s operational activities and assessed how the UN system works, its comparative advantages, and any areas of overlap among UN agencies. The Panel submitted its report, “Delivering as One”,[14] to Secretary-General Kofi Annan in November 2006. Recommendations covered the consolidation of operations at the country level, with one leader, programme, budget, and office. It was further suggested to establish a UN Sustainable Development Board to oversee the One UN Country Programme and a Millennium Development Goal Funding Mechanism to provide multi-year funding for the One UN Country
Programme. Other proposals included a Global Leaders’ Forum within ECOSOC to upgrade its policy coordination, the strengthening of international environmental governance, and a UN common evaluation system. Finally, the Panel proposed a new UN entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Member states gave a ringing endorsement of the Panel’s recommendations and offered widespread support for implementing the “One UN” programme. The report was not taken up for formal consideration by the General Assembly, however, until April 2007, when the new Secretary-General issued his own response to the Panel’s findings. Ban Ki-moon gave broad support to the recommendations put forth and echoed the Panel’s call to overcome the current fragmentation. Rather than “one United Nations”, the Secretary-General emphasized “delivering as one” since it was not intended to merge mandates, but to deliver together. This involved the creation of a single Resident Coordinator and integrated programme management and budget control for UN activities at the country level, covering development, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection. A pilot phase programme was established, involving eight countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam). Consultation about the recommendations of the High-level Panel started in mid-June 2007, including the establishment of a new organizational entity for gender equality and empowerment of women through the consolidation of three existing entities, to be headed by a new Under-Secretary-General.

Political missions, peace-building and peacekeeping

During the current UN year, the Organization responded to regional crises through an expansion of political missions, peace-building, and peacekeeping. Following a dramatic rise during recent years, the number of peace-keepers had increased to over 80,000 by mid 2006. By mid-2007, this figure had grown further to over 100,000 peace-keepers (see box). Major political and peace-building missions include the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMJ), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (NAMA) and the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMJN). Other efforts include the United Nations assistance for the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in connection with the killing of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Peacekeeping operations as of 31 July 2007</th>
<th>Peacekeeper*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>MINURSO (Western Sahara)</td>
<td>487</td>
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</table>
**MONUC (Congo)** | 21,898
---|---
**UNMIL (Liberia)** | 16,995
**UNMIS (Sudan)** | 13,755
**UNOCI (Cote d'Ivoire)** | 10,379
**UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea)** | 2,109

**Americas**

**MINUSTAH (Haiti)** | 10,389

**Asia and the Pacific**

**UNMIT (East Timor)** | 3,134

**UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan)** | 109

**Europe**

**UNFICYP (Cyprus)** | 1,058
**UNMJK (Kosovo)** | 4,770
**UNOMIG (Georgia)** | 423

**Middle East**

**UNDOF (Golan Heights)** | 1,172
**UNIFIL (Lebanon)** | 14,194
**UNTSO (Middle East)** | 375

**Total** | 101,247


*Including troops, military observers, police, international civilians, local civilians and UN volunteers.

**Democratic Republic of Congo**

Since 1994, the Congo has experienced ethnic strife and civil war, triggered by a massive inflow of refugees fleeing the Rwandan genocide. This period of conflict was the bloodiest since World War II. Almost three million people died as a result of the fighting. Troops from Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan intervened to support the regime in Kinshasa. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was established by the Security Council in November 1999 to help implement a ceasefire and bring about an agreed process for a political settlement. MONUC is the largest peacekeeping force deployed by the UN, with 21,898 peace-keepers by mid-2007 (as compared to 21,279 in mid-2006).[16]

In July 2006, the Congo held its first multi-party elections since independence in 1960, with no candidate reaching an absolute majority. Joseph Kabila, the young president, secured most votes, with his main opponent, Jean-Pierre Bemba, reaching second place. People died in subsequent fighting between the two factions in the streets of the capital, Kinshasa, before police and MONUC took control of the
city. A second round of voting between the two leading candidates was held in October 2006. Rioters destroyed polling stations in Congo’s eastern section, and electoral officials organized a revolt over burned ballots in the north. Nevertheless, the presidential vote was called a success. Kabila was declared by the Supreme Court as the legitimate winner. Despite an overall increase in the level of stability, over one million people remained internally displaced in the east of the country. In July 2007, a report by Yakin Erturk, special rapporteur for the UN Human Rights Council, found that extreme sexual violence against women is pervasive in the Congo.

**Haiti**

Following the collapse of government and widespread violence, the Security Council established the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (French: *Mission des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Haiti*), also known as MINUSTAH. In operation since 2004, MINUSTAH supported the holding of elections and the new Government in establishing strong and sustainable state institutions for governance and the rule of law. The Mission also supported the enhancement of human rights capacity and the coordination of development and humanitarian activities. MINUSTAH included 10,389 peace-keepers in mid-2007, an increase as compared to 9,153 in mid-2006.[17]

By the end of 2006, MINUSTAH continued to struggle for control over the armed gangs, in light of more frequent lynchings and other mob attacks. It maintains an armed checkpoint at the entrance to the shanty town of Cite Soleil. In October of 2006, a group of heavily armed Haitian police were able to enter Cite Soleil for the first time in three years and were able to remain one hour as armored UN troops patrolled the area. The ability of the Haitian police to penetrate the area even for such a short time was seen as a sign of progress. The situation of continuing violence was similar in Port-au-Prince. Ex-soldiers, supporters of the ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, occupied his home against the wishes of the Haitian government.

The mandate of MINUSTAH was extended in early 2007[18] since continued deployment was considered essential at a time when the security capacity of Haiti was still at an early stage of development. MINUSTAH had announced that it would take a tougher stance against gang members. In February 2007, 700 UN troops flooded Cite Soleil, resulting in a major gun battle. On 2 August 2007, Ban Ki-moon arrived in Haiti to assess the role of the UN forces. He visited Cite Soleil, stating that Haiti’s largest slum was the most important target for UN peace-keepers in gaining control over the armed gangs. The Haitian president Rene Preval has expressed
ambivalent feelings about the UN security presence, stating “if the Haitian people were asked if they wanted the UN forces to leave they would say yes.”

**Iraq**

Sectarian violence and insurgency continue to take a daily toll in lives. Large numbers of people are displaced, both within Iraq and beyond the country’s borders. Following the invasion in March 2003 by coalition forces, government authority was transferred to the Iraqi Interim Government in June 2004; a permanent government was elected in October 2005. On 30 December 2006, Saddam Hussein was hanged. More than 140,000 coalition troops remained in Iraq during 2007.

The UN focus in Iraq is on political facilitation and humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) was tasked with promoting national reconciliation, reducing sectarian tension, strengthening national unity, assisting in the holding of elections, supporting the drafting of the Iraqi constitution, and promoting the protection of human rights. Initially set-up by the Security Council in August 2003, the mandate of UNAMI was updated in June 2004[19] with the establishment of the Iraqi Interim Government. In mid-2007, there were nearly 300 UN international staff and 400 national staff serving in Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan.[20] In addition to UNAMI, there are some 16 UN agencies, funds, and offices that constitute the UN Country Team, covering agriculture, food security, environment and natural resources management, education and culture, health and nutrition, infrastructure rehabilitation, refugees, and internally displaced persons. Security represents the greatest implementation constraint, limiting access to many areas. Most international officials working for UN agencies left Baghdad after the UN headquarters were bombed in 2003; UN work now relies mainly on local staff. The suicide bomb attack killed 22 UN staff members, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was replaced Ashraf Qazi.

In May 2007, an international conference on Iraq was held in the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh, The meeting was co-chaired by Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki of Iraq and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and launched the International Compact on Iraq following a year-long preparatory process. The Compact is supported by the World Bank and members of the Compact Preparatory Group. It represents a road map for the next five years with regard to economic and social reforms with the support of the international community, including commitments to promote national dialogue and reconciliation. At the conference, more than 70 nations pledged a total of about US$30 billion towards the recovery of Iraq over the next five years. In order to provide funding for reconstruction and development initiatives, the UN, together with the World Bank, established the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for
Iraq (IRFFI). By mid 2007, US$1.2 billion were received, and a total of 152 projects approved. Members of the Paris Club have forgiven 80 per cent of Iraq’s debts.

In July 2007, the UN hosted a meeting on the International Compact with Iraq. The meeting in New York noted progress towards establishing unified security forces, legislative actions, and the UN-supported constitutional review process, but also stressed the need for continued support from the international community. In August 2007, the Security Council[21] updated and strengthened the UN mandate in Iraq, establishing responsibilities to advise and assist in areas such as political facilitation, national reconciliation, and the promotion of regional cooperation between Iraq and the other countries of the region. The approval of the International Compact and the Security Council decision on the UN mandate for Iraq indicate that the Organization is edging back into engagement with Iraq. In May 2007, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees announced that international staff would be sent back to Baghdad from Jordan, signaling a willingness to build a bigger support base in Iraq.

Kosovo

The Kosovo conflict ended in 1999 with the UN Security Council placing Kosovo under a transitional UN administration pending a determination of Kosovo’s future status. The Council entrusted the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) with sweeping powers to govern Kosovo, whilst Serbia’s continued sovereignty over Kosovo was recognized by the international community. NATO has a separate mandate to provide for a safe and secure environment. In May 2001, UNMIK promulgated the Constitutional Framework, which established Kosovo’s Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). Since 2001, UNMIK has been gradually transferring increased governing competencies to the PISG, while reserving for itself some powers that are normally carried out by sovereign states, such as foreign affairs. Kosovo has also established municipal government and an internationally-supervised Kosovo Police Service. In November 2001, the OSCE supervised the first elections for the Kosovo Assembly. UNMIK consisted of 4,770 peace-keepers in mid-2007, as compared to 4,858 in mid-2006.[22]

In February 2006, UN-backed talks began to determine the final status of Kosovo, led by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. Kosovo’s Albanians, the majority of the province’s population, prefer independence, whereas the minority of Kosovo’s Serbs is diametrically opposed to independence. In February 2007, Ahtisaari delivered a draft status settlement proposal to leaders in Belgrade and Pristina, as a basis for a draft UN Security Council Resolution which proposes “supervised independence” for the province. As of early July 2007, a draft resolution, backed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European members of the Security
Council had been rewritten four times to try to accommodate Russian concerns that such a resolution would undermine the principle of state sovereignty. Russia, which holds a veto in the Security Council as one of its five permanent members, had stated that it would not support any resolution that was not acceptable to both Belgrade and Kosovo’s Albanians. After many weeks of discussions at the UN, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other members of the Security Council formally discarded the draft resolution based on Ahtisaari’s proposal on 20 July 2007, having failed to secure Russian backing. Kosovo’s Albanian leaders have reacted by proposing unilateral independence, Violence is feared in the province should the demand for independence not be met.

**Rafiq Hariri: Special Tribunal for Lebanon**

The Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafiq Hariri was assassinated on 14 February 2005 when explosives were detonated in the Lebanese capital, Beirut. At the request of the Government of Lebanon, the Security Council[23] established an international independent investigation Commission to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of the Hariri assassination. This is the first time that an international court will try individuals for a terrorist crime committed against a specific person.

In October 2005, the Commission issued its initial findings to the Security Council, implicating Syrian and Lebanese officials, with special focus on Syria's military intelligence chief, Assef Shawkat, Syrian President Basharal-Assad’s brother-in-law. The Head of the Commission asked for more time to investigate all leads, and Lebanese politicians have asked to extend the investigative team's duration and charter to include assassinations of other prominent anti-Syrian Lebanese. On 11 January 2006, the Belgian Serge Brammertz, former deputy prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, took over as Commissioner. Since January 2006, talks between UN and Lebanese officials covered the establishment of a tribunal with Lebanese and international involvement to bring suspects in the assassination case to trial. In June 2006, the Commission indicated a definite connection between the Beirut bomb that killed Hariri and 14 other attacks on anti-Syrian Lebanese leaders. The Security Council provided for further review of those related cases by strengthening the mandate of the Commission.[24]

The Middle East conflict of July 2006 halted the Commission’s work as the security situation in Lebanon deteriorated.[25] On 6 September 2006, an assassination attempt was made on Samir Shehade, deputy head of the intelligence department in Lebanon’s national police force. Shehade had played a key role in a Lebanese probe into the killing of Hariri over the preceeding 18 months. On 13 June 2007, Walid Eido, a lawmaker and a vocal supporter of the tribunal, was also killed.
In February 2007, the UN and Lebanon signed an agreement setting up a Special Tribunal to prosecute the suspected killers of Hariri,[26] and the Security Council extended the mandate of the Commission until 15 June 2008.[27] Ratification of the agreement by the Lebanese parliament was strongly opposed by Syria and its allies in Lebanon. As a result of this deadlock, no vote on the tribunal agreement was taken. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and the opposition had been in dispute for some months over the current composition of the Government. The opposition considered a resolution of that issue to be a precondition for ending the deadlock on the Special Tribunal.

In May 2007, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora requested the Security Council to put the Special Tribunal into effect under Chapter 7 as a matter of urgency because all domestic options for ratification had been exhausted. In response, the Security Council[28] stated that the agreement setting up the Tribunal would take effect if the Lebanese Parliament would not ratify the establishment of the Tribunal by 10 June 2007. In June 2007, the UN begun formally to establish a Special Tribunal after Lebanon missed the deadline.[29]

In August 2007, the Netherlands offered to host the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. It is likely to take at least one year for the Tribunal to begin operations, as funds have to be raised, judges and other officials have to be appointed and security arrangement for staff, victims, and witnesses have to be determined. In September 2007, Brammertz told the Security Council that evidence obtained so far suggests that a young, male suicide bomber, probably non-Lebanese, detonated up to 1,800 kilograms of explosives inside a van to assassinate Mr. Hariri.[30]

**Middle East**

In July 2006, war broke out between Israel and the paramilitary forces of Hezbollah, mainly located in southern Lebanon. More than 1,000 people were killed in both countries, and a quarter of Lebanon’s population and many Israelis were forced to flee their homes. A UN cease-fire resolution ended the 34-day war on 14 August 2006. The Security Council approved one of the largest peacekeeping missions in the history of the UN[31]. At that time, the UN had two missions in the Middle East, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The new UN involvement includes an expanded and enhanced UNIFIL, which was increased from 2,395 peace-keepers in mid-2006 to 14,194 in mid-2007.[32] Along with the UN troops, an equal number of Lebanese army troops were deployed in the south, in the area that borders Israel.

The main task of UNIFIL was to ensure that southern Lebanon could not be used as a base for attacks on Israel. Specifically, the Security Council mandated the
cessation of hostilities, the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the disarmament of Hezbollah, the full control of Lebanon by the Lebanese government, and the removal of Hezbollah south of the Litani River, with their replacement by UNIFIL. As of December 2007, hostilities have largely ceased, Israel has withdrawn from Lebanon, and UNIFIL forces are in place. The disarmament of Hezbollah, however, has not been carried out.

Sudan

The decade-long civil war in the south of Sudan ended in January 2005 with the conclusion of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Sudan/National Congress Party in Northern Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Southern Sudan. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was established to support the implementation of the Agreement, expected to continue through 2011. By mid-2007, UNMIS in southern Sudan consisted of 13,755 peace-keepers, an increase compared to 12,273 by mid-2006.

Just as the civil war in the south of Sudan was reaching a resolution, a new rebellion in the western region of Darfur began in early 2003. In response, the Security Council[33] deployed human rights monitors to report monthly on the situation in Darfur. In addition, a Commission of Inquiry was established. It reported in January 2005 that Sudan forces and allied Janjaweed militias had carried out indiscriminate attacks and committed crimes. Rebel forces in Darfur were considered responsible for possible war crimes. In May 2007, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted for crimes against humanity and war crimes former Minister of State for the Interior of the Government of Sudan and current Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Ahmad Haroun, and Janjaweed commander Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman.

In May 2006, the Sudanese government and Darfur’s largest rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), signed the Darfur Peace Agreement, which aimed at ending the three-year long conflict. More than 200,000 people had been killed, while another two million have been forced to flee their homes. The agreement specified the disarmament of the Janjaweed and the disbandment of the rebel forces, and aimed at establishing a temporal government in which the rebels could take part. The agreement, however, has not been signed by all of the rebel groups.

The Darfur Peace Agreement had been brokered by the African Union with the support of the UN and other partners. It was supervised by the 7,000-strong African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). UN humanitarian agencies and their partners, with more than 12,000 humanitarian workers, were leading the largest relief effort in the world in Darfur, in refugee camps in Chad, and in the Central African
Republic, aimed at assisting the approximately 4.2 million conflict-affected people in the Darfur crisis. This campaign includes staff from 13 UN agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, and more than 80 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Wide-spread violence, however, continued through the region, forcing aid agencies to consider pulling out. Both the Sudanese government and government-sponsored militias launched large offensives against the rebel groups; clashes among the rebel groups also contributed to the violence.

In August 2006, the UN raised the alarm over the crisis in Darfur, and the Secretary General requested the dispatch of UN troops.[34] In November 2006, high-level consultations were held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, attended by the Secretary-General, the five Permanent Members of the Security Council, and representatives of the Government of Sudan and the African Union. The Human Rights Council set up in early 2007 a human rights expert group to work with the Sudanese government and the African Union to ensure implementation of the resolutions on Darfur related to human rights. In early June 2007, the Special Envoys on Sudan of the UN and the African Union presented a road map towards peace in Darfur to the Security Council. The roadmap foresees the consolidation of all ongoing peace initiatives, shuttle diplomacy with the non-signatories of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, and, finally, peace negotiations.

In parallel to the increased involvement of the UN, the Organization developed a three phase approach to augment the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and deploy an unprecedented AU/UN hybrid peacekeeping operation known as United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Sudan had long resisted the entry of UN peace-keepers in Darfur. Following an intensive diplomacy effort, representatives of the Security Council visited Khartoum in June 2007 to meet with President al-Bashir, securing explicit acceptance of all elements of the hybrid force. Its establishment was approved by the Security Council in July 2007.[35] It has the protection of civilians at its core mandate, as well as contributing to security for humanitarian assistance, monitoring and verifying the implementation of agreements, and assisting an inclusive political process.

This is one of the largest and most complex field operations the UN has ever undertaken. The deployment of the new hybrid force will require a massive logistical effort, especially in providing adequate communications, water, food, supplies, and infrastructure for the mission. In addition to its mission headquarters in El Fasher, UNAMID will have up to 55 deployment locations throughout the three Darfur states. The force, incorporating AMIS, will have some 26,000 peace-keepers at full deployment, including almost 20,000 troops, more than 6,000 police and a significant civilian component. At full strength, UNAMID will become the largest UN peacekeeping mission in history and cost more than $2 billion a year.
UNAMID was to begin deployment in October 2007, to be completed at the beginning of 2008. However, deployment had to be delayed. Anticipated support by the Government of Sudan was not forthcoming. Darfur experienced an escalation of violence, including several attacks and bombardments that have led to the deaths of hundreds of people. The situation became protracted. The United Kingdom and France suggested sanctions against the Sudanese government for the continuing violence in Darfur. The Secretary-General made it clear that the deployment of UNAMID would depend on the Government of Sudan keeping its commitments to provide unconditional support. Moreover, the Secretary-General emphasized that peacekeeping must be accompanied by a political solution to the crisis, a call for the holding of a full-fledged peace conference on Darfur.

West Africa

Liberia had experienced civil war since the early 1990s; 200,000 people were killed and millions others displaced into refugee camps in neighboring countries. The country went through peace negotiations between Liberia’s factions, presidential elections, and continuous unrest. In September 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to help set up a transitional government. UNMIL supported the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the peace process, humanitarian and human rights activities, and national security reform, including national police training and the formation of a new, restructured military. By mid-2007, the mission included 16,995 peacekeepers, a decrease compared to 17,371 by mid-2006.

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has made great strides in consolidating peace and promoting economic recovery in the country. Her work includes efforts towards lifting timber and diamond sanctions, bolstering public revenues and implementing a poverty reduction strategy. Positive steps were also taken to foster national reconciliation and political inclusiveness in the country. As a result, the Security Council approved measures to draw down UNMIL. The draw-down will take place in multiple stages, resulting in a reduction to 9,750 peacekeepers at the end of 2010. At the request of the Liberian government, former president Charles Taylor was finally extradited by Nigeria to the UN’s Sierra Leone tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, with the trial starting in June 2007. He is the first head of state in Africa to stand trial for war crimes.

In parallel to the fighting in Liberia, a civil war had broken out in Cote d’Ivoire in 2002. Since then, the country has been divided between the government-controlled south and the rebel-held north, the Forces Nouvelles. All Ivorian political forces signed a peace agreement (Linas-Marcoussis Agreement) in January 2003. It provided for the creation of a Government of National Reconciliation and a timetable
for new presidential elections, restructuring the defense and security forces, and organizing the regrouping and disarmament of all armed groups. In early 2004, the Security Council established the United Nations Operation in Cote d’Ivoire (UNOCI)[38] to observe and monitor the implementation of the ceasefire agreement of May 3, 2003. By mid-2007, the mission included 10,379 peace-keepers, an increase as compared to 8,659 as of mid-2006.[39]

The mandate of President Laurent Gbagbo had been extended from October 2005 to October 2007. This step became necessary due to the slow progress in the preparation for the presidential elections, which included a new voter-identification scheme and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of militia members. The Ouagadougou Political Agreement, a peace deal between the government and the rebels, was signed in March 2007. Subsequently, Guillaume Soro, leader of the Forces Nouvelles, became Prime Minister. The agreement calls for the creation of a new transitional government, the organization of free and fair presidential elections, the merging of the Forces Nouvelles and the national defense and security forces, the dismantling of the militias and disarming ex-combatants, and the replacement of the “zone of confidence” separating north and south with a green line to be monitored by UNOCI. In August 2007, President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro held the first “flame of peace” ceremony at which they set fire to stockpiled weapons to launch officially the disarmament process.

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The UN and its Secretary-General continue to face a wide range of political, economic, and humanitarian challenges as they enter into the 2007-2008 UN year. Many of them have been on the international agenda for years, defying resolution. In 2006-2007, a new challenge was added which is likely to dominate, if not overshadow, a number of the existing agenda items, namely the challenge to address climate change effectively. The members of the UN will need all their foresight, goodwill, and diplomatic competence to address this threat to the world community.

[1] The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated. They wish to thank Hannelore Hoppe, Olga Sucovic and Tim Wall for comments on an earlier draft.


[5] See Chapter VII.A.2 for ‘Climate change 2007: the physical science basis, summary for policymakers, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’, 2007.


