



In & Around the UN

An Update from the Quaker United Nations Office

September 2009

UN Peacekeeping at a Crossroads

United Nations peacekeeping has reached one of the most important junctures in its 60-year history. Over the past 60 years it has become the most visible emblem of the UN for many people around the world: there are at present a record 114,000 troops, police and civilians deployed in 16 missions on all five continents, at an annual cost of about \$7.1 billion. Yet just as it reaches the peak of its activities, its future viability is in question. The nature of the armed conflicts in which the UN is today called to play a role has evolved greatly since the days when it deployed military observers to monitor a truce between sovereign states. The wars of recent times, occurring within states more often than between them, tend to create highly complex scenarios with non-state actors as protagonists and increasing numbers of civilians in need of protection.

Yet instead of investing more in political engagement and tools for conflict prevention, the international community has continued to rely on UN peacekeeping as its fix-all solution, with the result that missions increasingly find themselves deployed with ever more complex mandates into hostile environments where they are expected to create a peace, rather than keep one. Add to this the massive overstretch now imposed on the personnel and assets available for participation in UN missions, coupled with threats to funding posed by the global financial crisis, and it is no wonder that people are now talking of a crisis in UN peacekeeping too.

This is not the first time that UN peacekeeping has found itself in such straits. A series of stunning failures in the 1990s, including in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda, prompted the drafting of a fundamental review in 2000 that came to be known as the Brahimi Report, after the chair of the panel that produced it. In addition to making many clear-sighted recommendations for reform of UN peacekeeping, the Brahimi Report was at pains to underline that it is but one tool available to the United Nations in its endeavor to uphold the Charter. The Report stressed the need for the international community to adopt a more effective conflict prevention strategy as

a starting point, and to see peacekeeping as part of a broader peacebuilding agenda.

Though some of the reforms recommended by the Brahimi Report were implemented in subsequent years, others were not, or not consistently, and over all, the call to take a broader strategic approach to peace-

keeping was largely ignored. The crisis it faces now, however, exemplified by recent challenges to the credibility of missions to Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has this year prompted the launch of another fundamental peacekeeping review. This review is currently being pursued in two strands: one, led by the UK, US and France, is focusing on the particular role and responsibilities of the Security Council in mandating and overseeing UN peacekeeping operations; the other, led by *(continued on page 2)*

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Security Council considers post-conflict peacebuilding. Photo #404677, UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

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Letter from the Director

Recent months have been marked by two significant developments for QUNO. Together with our engaged and knowledgeable committee and the support and advice of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends World Committee for Consultation, QUNO Geneva and other stakeholders, we have completed a new strategic planning process, reaffirming our focus on the UN's role in peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. At the same time, the financial crisis has severely impacted the operations of the AFSC, which is our primary source of funding and administrative support. This is expected to result in cutbacks in QUNO's budget in the coming year.

Under the new strategic plan, our work will proceed in three primary program areas—peacebuilding, the responsibility to protect, and peacemaking and preventive diplomacy—alongside our ongoing work in Quaker liaison and outreach. It has been exciting to see over the last several months the extent to which these themes, rooted in Friends' insights, have put us squarely in the middle of current debates on the future direction of the UN. Traditional UN peacekeeping is

in crisis, with soaring costs and ever more challenging mandates. Partly as a result, the international community is refocusing its attention on prevention and post-conflict rebuilding. In the last few months we have seen groundbreaking reports from the Secretary General on "Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict," "Enhancing Mediation and its Support Activities" and "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect" and our new program focuses leave us well placed to bring Friends' perspectives to the associated discussions.

The current financial crisis is having a severe impact on the non-profit sector, and Friends' organizations are not immune. The AFSC, our largest source of funding, is in the process of finalizing very substantial budget cuts for the coming year, which begins October 1, and this will inevitably affect QUNO. We are in the process of reducing our operating costs where we can, and are looking for ways to save money across the board in order to maintain the momentum of our program work. We are also stepping up our development activities, particularly in the area of institutional grants. We value all the support we get from

individuals and organizations around the world. Please hold us in the light as we strive to sustain Friends' historical witness at the UN.

Andrew Tomlinson

How to support QUNO

QUNO welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work. We are happy to accept contributions towards two areas of our work: *The Fund for Quaker House: the endowment supports the maintenance and operation of Quaker House. QUNO Operating and Program Expenses: contributions can be made towards the cost of our annual budget.*

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UN Peacekeeping

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the UN Secretariat, is building on the Brahimi Report and subsequent initiatives. These two strands will begin to merge over the course of this summer, following circulation later this month by the Secretariat of a non-paper that will suggest improvements in the design, tasking, manning and support of missions, in time for discussion during a debate in the Security Council in August. The aim is for all concerned — Security Council members, troop, police and financial contributors



UN Peacekeeping Forces mark the transfer of control of Timor-Leste to East Timorese forces, July 23, 2002.
Antonio Dasiparu/AFP/Getty Image

and the UN Secretariat—to reach a renewed consensus by the end of this year on the direction future UN peacekeeping should take.

Times of crisis can also create opportunities, of course. For QUNO, the promising side of this particular crisis is its convergence with two other important developments that appear to signal, finally, a shift by the UN towards greater emphasis on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Renewed vigor has been given to the UN's preventive diplomacy and mediation capacities by the General Assembly's decision in December
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Peacebuilding and Early Recovery Update

January's lead newsletter article described UN peacebuilding mechanisms in countries just emerging from violent conflict and the process known as early recovery. Previous issues have also described our work in support of the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts to consolidate peace in the four countries on its agenda, as well as to promote best practices and push forward a growing expertise on peacebuilding. This work is at the core of QUNO's mission and we increasingly find ourselves well placed to supply input and even guide some of the conversations around peacebuilding at the UN.

The report of the Secretary General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict was released in June (see January newsletter for details on its inception, available at <http://www.quno.org/publications/pubNewsletters.htm>). As hoped, there is much emphasis in it on national ownership of peacebuilding processes, and there are numerous recommendations on how to strengthen UN processes and structures in order to improve the UN's response, as well as on facilitating the response of others in the international community. The report, however, leaves many questions unanswered: how might the understanding of an affected state's national capacity be broadened to include non-state actors and civil society? How can appropriate leadership be fostered? What are the practical recommendations for organizing and working with internal actors? How does the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) fit in? More broadly, what is it about peacebuilding that makes it more than just humanitarian and development work translated into post-conflict situations? What



QUNO Director Andrew Tomlinson (left) addresses roundtable participants at an event hosted by the International Peace Institute. Seated on the right is the Secretary General's Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Mr. Ed Luck.

about transitional justice and other human rights issues, which are hardly mentioned?

Even before the report's official release, director and Quaker UN Representative Andrew Tomlinson joined the Peacebuilding Support Office's coordinator on the report for a video-conference link to a consultation in Geneva, hosted by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, that brought together UN representatives and NGO experts (including David Atwood, director of the QUNO Geneva office) to share initial reactions to the text. Then on June 30, at the invitation of the International Peace Institute, Andrew was one of two speakers at a lunchtime roundtable in New York aimed at providing civil society perspectives on the report. That event was attended by members of the Security Council, the PBC, other key delegations and UN officials, as well as NGO colleagues.

Andrew's talk focused broadly on two recommendations for the UN

discussion that will flow from the report: first, that national capacity must not be equated with government capacity and must be upheld and supported by the UN as needed. It is important to acknowledge and engage the whole of society in post-conflict recovery, recognizing how robust community networks may be in the midst of violence. Secondly, that peacebuilding is not just development and humanitarian work by another name. The legacy of conflict makes it by nature different; it is also about reconciliation and the restoration of human relationships. Thus, the peacebuilding response even in the earliest phase must also include space for recognizing victims, healing trauma, dispensing justice and rebuilding dispute resolution mechanisms, facilitating reconciliation and providing education as a tool for peace.

Despite the lack of attention given to certain aspects of peacebuilding in the Secretary General's report, QUNO is glad to see the conversation on early recovery pushed forward within the halls of the UN. Building sustainable peace hinges on positive steps being taken in the immediate aftermath of conflict, and QUNO is participating actively in the development of the relevant norms by promoting synergies amongst all appropriate actors and drawing attention to issues like civil society participation and thematic concerns such as reconciliation. QUNO will continue to engage early recovery, through the lens of collaborative learning, building our peacebuilding expertise step by step alongside our UN and NGO colleagues by bringing the community here in New York together for dialogue and exchange on this critical issue. ❖

Responsibility to Protect: Local Action for Prevention

In our January newsletter, we discussed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in terms of the challenges this new norm presents to Friends around the world. Since then, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon released his report on R2P, emphasizing a “three pillar” approach to the concept:

- The First Pillar—the responsibility of the state to protect its populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity, four crimes known collectively as mass atrocity crimes;
- The Second Pillar—the responsibility of the international community to support the state in fulfilling that responsibility; and
- The Third Pillar—the responsibility of the international community to respond in a timely and decisive manner, should a state be unable or unwilling to protect its own people.

The report also noted the importance of preventative action by all involved actors, and the wide range of nonviolent options available to states and the international community.

As the concept of R2P continues to be discussed within the UN community, fault lines between member states have emerged. First and foremost, the possibility for military intervention under the Third Pillar has been a trigger issue for many member states who feel that R2P provides cover for outside forces to intervene in the domestic affairs of sovereign nations. Further divisions have emerged over questions relating to competing roles between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Additionally, controversy exists around the issue of labeling a situation as an R2P situation – who determines that mass atrocity crimes are taking place? And given the highly politicized nature of the debate, is it useful to use the R2P label, or will do-

ing so simply guarantee international grid-lock and paralysis?

In navigating these sensitive divisions, QUNO’s evolving work has sought to identify the particular niche where Quakers can make a contribution. First and foremost, Quakers stand firmly alongside all members of the UN community who agree that mass atrocity crimes cannot be tolerated. In addition, while the R2P debate has continually focused on the use of military intervention by nation states, QUNO’s recent work has striven to showcase the invaluable and often unrecognized role of local organizations and communities in addressing conflict and tensions before these terrible crimes are ever committed, thereby preventing the need for outside military intervention.

During the first half of 2009, QUNO hosted two events that addressed the unique role of local organizations and communities in preventing mass atrocities. Our aim has been to encourage the international community to recognize the capacity of local organizations and individuals to prevent, respond to and de-escalate violent conflict themselves. Both events took the form of informal, off-the-record conversations at Quaker House, attended by diplomats, UN staff, NGO partners and academics.

The first event focused on civil society efforts following the ethnically charged election violence in Kenya in late 2007. Dekha Ibrahim Abdi of Concerned Citizens for Peace shared stories of how, in response to escalating violence, local organizations used public forums, mass media, text messaging and mass mobile phone communications to bring community groups together, helping to de-escalate tension and averting further bloodshed.

The second event focused on the role of local community initiatives in

addressing communal tensions and preventing mass atrocity crimes in Aceh, Indonesia following the 2005 Helsinki Peace Accords. Rina Wijaya, from SHEEP Foundation, Indonesia, told stories of grassroots efforts to build bridges between community members and former combatants. She also shared how exchanges with communities recovering from conflict in Cambodia and Sri Lanka helped to empower local communities to find their own solutions.

Participants at these two events were impressed by the creativity exercised by local organizations and the far-reaching impact of their initiatives despite their grassroots nature.

For the diplomats, who time and again hear the conversation on R2P framed in terms of the fault lines of military intervention and the role of nation states, QUNO’s emphasis on prevention and local response offers an alternative way to engage around the evolution of this international norm. With the General Assembly debate on R2P taking place in July, there is concern that the fault lines around this conversation have deepened and skeptical member states will seek to renegotiate and weaken language that was agreed to by member states during the 2005 World Summit. Others, more optimistically, see the debate as an opportunity to consolidate commitments to implement measures in cases where mass atrocity crimes are being, or are about to be, committed. Regardless of the outcome of the debate, QUNO will continue to engage by underscoring the value of collective prevention efforts and nonviolent response by all actors, from the level of the community up to that of member states.

See box on page 5 for an update on R2P. ❖

R2P Update: The General Assembly Debate

The General Assembly debate of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) took place during the last two weeks of July, and was by far the most extensive and in depth debate of the concept to date. Ninety-four member states took the floor to express the position of their government on the concept. As the member state interventions ranged from strong support to cautious concern to tough skepticism, it was clear that the discussion around R2P must continue. QUNO was delighted to observe that a majority of states emphasized the role of prevention in their comments, as they noted that this is one area of R2P where we can all come together as a global community to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There was no immediate outcome from this debate, but some feel that no outcome is a good outcome in this case, as it means that support for the concept has not eroded since the 2005 World Summit endorsed the principle. As one representative noted early on in the debate, the best way to move the concept of R2P forward is to keep listening to all voices—the supporters and the skeptics—and that only by continuing to openly debate will the concept remain relevant as we decide how best to implement it. ❖

President-Elect of the General Assembly's 64th Session, Libyan Diplomat Ali Treki, Will Prioritize Poverty, Human Rights

On September 15th, the General Assembly, at its 64th assembly, will welcome a new President, Ali Abdussalam Treki, Special Adviser to Libya's head of state Muammar Qaddafi, who was elected by acclamation this June. The office of the President of the General Assembly (PGA) rotates every year on a regional basis; the PGA for 2008-2009 was from Latin America, this year he is from Africa, and in 2010-2011 Western Europe will nominate a candidate.

Treki is not new to the United Nations; he is currently Libya's Minister of the African Union but he spent several years as Libya's ambassador to the UN. He has also served as Foreign Minister, ambassador to France, Secretary for African Affairs and Qaddafi's special envoy for resolving conflicts and disputes within Africa. Libya has been recently reaching out to repair relationships and carving out a larger role for itself in international affairs; it is currently a non-permanent member of the Security Council and its leader, Colonel Qaddafi, is chairing the African Union. In his role of the

PGA, however, Treki has sworn to "depend on the assistance of every member of the UN, and will not align with any party or group. My only alignment will be for justice, security, peace and the common interests of the entire international community."

In his ambitious acceptance speech, Treki outlined his priorities for the agenda of the GA's 64th session: UN reform – particularly for the Security Council, poverty, climate change, the global financial and economic crisis, and the promotion of human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. He stressed that respect for these, as well as the fight against poverty, are essential for global peace and security: "We have a world of rich people and poor people and the gap between them is forever widening, and that places a great responsibility on all of us, particularly if we truly want to avoid further wars. We should allocate enough efforts and enough



64th General Assembly President-elect Ali Treki.
UN Photo #399210/Jenny Rockett,

resources to fight poverty, disease, and to provide for good education and healthcare... Freedom and human rights in social, economic and cultural terms—rights to food, to housing, to education and health care—these are all extremely important issues that have to do with our peace and security." The details of how the President of the General Assembly will carry out his mandate remain to be seen. ❖

Strengthening UN Efforts in the Area of Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy

Since the creation of the United Nations, Quakers have stood behind its vision. Much of our support and enthusiasm is prompted by the original goals of the organization as enshrined in the UN Charter. For a faith community with a strong pacifist tradition, Article 1 of the Charter, with its objective “to maintain international peace and security,” resonates deeply with our own practices and beliefs. Renewed commitment and support for the backbone of UN efforts in the area of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention will be welcome news to many Friends and to proponents of the UN in general.

UN member states work through various UN organs and intergovernmental bodies to carry out their commitments under the UN Charter in the area of peace and security. This includes the work of the UN General Assembly and Security Council; the International Court of Justice; and regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As the world’s top ranking diplomat, the UN Secretary General plays a key role in UN efforts around the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention through his mediation efforts, or his “good offices” role.

All of this work relies on offices and staff within the UN Secretariat – these individuals and offices undergird and support this key area of UN work. Chief among them is the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA). This past year has seen a significant increase in resources allocated to DPA. Observers point to this development as a renewed recognition of the importance of UN efforts around these core Charter responsibilities.

Efforts to strengthen support for DPA were launched by the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in October 2007. In presenting his budget for



Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe addresses the Security Council on mediation and dispute settlement.

UN photo #386375, /Jenny Rockett

2008-2009 to the General Assembly’s budgetary committee, the Secretary General highlighted the importance of this work, pointing out that “Strengthening the UN’s capacity to step in – to resolve conflicts earlier rather than later – is among the smartest investments we can make.”

Original proposals from the Secretary General requested an increase of over \$20 million to DPA’s biannual budget of approximately \$64 million. In December of 2008, the UN General Assembly approved resolution A/63/261 on the Strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs with an increase in the 2008-2009 budget of around \$14 million, bringing DPA’s biannual budget to close to \$78 million. This expanded budget lies well below that of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where spending for the same period came to over \$7 billion. It also represents a fraction of US military spending, which, for the period of 2008, came to over \$600 billion.

B. Lynn Pascoe, the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs,

warmly welcomed the increase in spending: “We take this as a recognition of the importance of prevention, and an acknowledgement of the needs expressed by DPA for a very long time.” Budgetary increases included hiring for new staff with the addition of 50 new positions.

Budgetary increases also included support to the newly formed Mediation Support Unit and its Mediation Support Standby Team. As part of this overall effort to increase the UN’s capacity in the areas of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) was established in 2006. The MSU provides an institutional home for experience and lessons learned in the field of peacemaking, and provides training and advice for mediators. Also, the MSU manages the newly launched Mediation Support Standby Team. Established in March 2008, the Standby Team consists of a small number of experts who can address the complex issues that frequently arise through the course of mediation efforts. During

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Strengthening UN Efforts (continued from page 6)

its first year of operation, the team included experts in fields such as power sharing, constitutional issues, security arrangements, human rights and transitional justice. The team began its work in early 2008 by assisting in mediation efforts that followed post-election violence in Kenya. Since their establishment, the team has also been deployed to provide mediation support in the Central African Republic, Comoros, Cyprus, Iraq, Madagascar, Nepal and Somalia.

As QUNO's program focuses on lending support to the work of the

UN in the area of peacebuilding and prevention of violent conflict, we are delighted by this renewed emphasis on peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. Like many in the UN community, we see that efforts to prevent violence through mediation and dialogue offer a much wiser investment in resources – simply put, it is much cheaper to resolve a conflict through peaceful means than to rely on a military solution. Beyond the economic arguments, we strongly favor this approach as it offers the surest protection for individuals and communities – the people who ultimately pay the highest price when violence erupts.

Work in the area of peacemaking and mediation often involves quiet, behind the scenes dialogue that requires trust and safe spaces. QUNO continues to use the methods that Friends have employed since our early days at the UN, hosting quiet conversations at Quaker House and building trusting relationships. Working in this manner on conflict areas such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar and Somalia, we look for openings where Quakers can lend support to these important efforts for the benefit of many communities who otherwise face the threat of terrible violence. ❖

“Developing Leadership for a Troubled World”: An AFSC and QUNO Event at the NYC Harvard Club

On June 10, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Quaker UN Office and the Stephen G. Cary Leadership Fund co-hosted a reception entitled “Developing Leadership for a Troubled World” at the Harvard Club in midtown Manhattan. The event celebrated the inaugural year of the Cary Fund (which supported an internship position at QUNO this year) and the 60th anniversary of Quaker work at the United Nations in New York. The principal guest speaker was Ambassador Rosemary A. DiCarlo of the United States.

John C. Whitehead, former US Deputy Secretary of State and former co-chairman of Goldman Sachs & Co., and William T. Coleman, Jr., Esq., former US Secretary of Transportation co-chaired the Host Committee. Other committee members were representatives of the AFSC and the Quaker UN Office in different capacities, including a former Congressman, a former US Ambassador to the UN, a former President of Haverford College, the Executive Director of NOW on PBS and many others who have served Friends' organizations

with dedication and distinction.

The reception was preceded by an “open house” event at Quaker House, where guests were able to meet the staff and take in the atmosphere in this quiet brownstone on 48th Street, the home of Quaker activity at the UN since 1953, when it was purchased through the generosity of a small group of donors.

The approximately 100 attendees at the reception included several high-level representatives from the US Mission to the UN, an Ambassador from Japan, the director of the UN Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, many Host Committee members and family and strong representation from Haverford College, the American Friends Service Committee, the Quaker UN Office and the New York legal and financial communities.

The reception opened with brief comments from Norval Reece, chairman of the Cary Fund and former Secretary of Commerce. Norval served as Master of Ceremonies throughout the evening. John Whitehead shared lively and touching stories of Steve Cary from their Haverford College
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Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo addresses the gathering at the Harvard Club of New York City.

Photo/AFSC

Leadership for a Troubled World
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days. Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary of AFSC, talked about the Stephen G. Cary Leadership Fund and its importance to developing future leadership by providing practical, vital opportunities for young men and women at AFSC offices around the globe. Andrew Tomlinson, Representative and Director of QUNO, began with powerful words from the UN Charter and described the Quaker approach to supporting the work of the UN. Emily Higgs, the first Stephen G. Cary Intern and QUNO Program Assistant, shared lessons learned in her experiences of service and expressed gratitude to the organizations gathered for the kind of leadership they nurture today for the world of tomorrow. Finally, Bill Coleman shared some personal stories of the Cary Family

and Steve before introducing the guest speaker for the evening, Rosemary DiCarlo, US Alternative Representative to the UN for Special Political Affairs.

Ambassador DiCarlo kindly mentioned the contributions of Quaker work at the UN over many years, and spoke eloquently about the renewed emphasis on the role of the UN under the Obama administration, highlighting the priorities of the US/UN relationship in several key areas. Following her presentation, the Ambassador responded to a range of comments and inquiries from the audience.

The formal program of the evening concluded with Steve Cary's granddaughter, Elizabeth Sampson, who spoke beautifully in honor of her grandfather's memory, and thanked everyone for supporting his passion for peace and justice by developing young leaders dedicated to service at a time when it is sorely needed. ❖

Strengthening UN Efforts
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2008 to inject significant resources into the UN's special political missions and the Department of Political Affairs, which supports the Secretary-General's goodoffices function. Meanwhile, as mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, a major discussion is now underway on how to improve the international community's efforts in peacebuilding and early recovery, which includes the role of today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations that implement many early peacebuilding tasks. QUNO's program work on conflict prevention, political engagement and peacebuilding makes it well placed to engage with this welcome trend. ❖

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