United Nations Police Evolution, Present Capacity and Future Tasks

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ABSTRACT:
United Nations policing in the context of peace operations evolved rapidly during the 1990s after three decades of serving as a minor adjunct to the principal, military, purposes of UN peacekeeping. After the end of the Cold War, UN policing became a recognized component of operations, but lacked doctrine, administrative structure, quality assurance in recruitment or adequate training. Each is being addressed with some urgency at present, as UN police deployments head toward 15,000 officers. Although Headquarters police support capacity has grown, the United Nations still has proportionately far fewer people at Headquarters supporting deployed personnel than do developed states, such as Australia, that deploy international police contingents. The objectives of UN police operations meanwhile remain a matter of debate: to stabilize post-conflict public security while others rebuild local police capacity or to engage actively in capacity-building and associated institutional reform. UN police support programs need to partner with development institutions that can offer the budget support for local infrastructure, equipment, and salaries that UN peacekeeping budgets cannot fund. UN programs also may need to take more account of extensive “informal” justice and security institutions in many of the post-conflict states where they work.

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AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN POLICE IN PEACEKEEPING

2. CONTEMPORARY UN POLICING

3. THE WAY FORWARD?
INTRODUCTION

This paper sketches the operational evolution and the current operational engagements and issues of United Nations police peacekeeping. It divides its historical review into three sections: through 1988, from 1989 to 1998, and since 1999. The paper provides data on numbers of UN police deployed over time, and their percentage of total uniformed personnel in UN operations. Police tasks are characterized in two dimensions, one stressing institutional support for local forces and the other stressing direct operational contributions to local public security. It looks at structures of demand for and supply of international police, and how the sources of UN police have changed over the past decade. And it reviews the rising importance of “formed police units” (FPUs) in UN operations, efforts to improve the speed at which UN police deploy to new operations, and efforts to develop doctrine for international policing that may have the potential to make global constables equally comfortable deploying in UN or non-UN mission settings. Finally, the paper closes by looking at the way ahead for UN policing, its potential and limits, and whether the model of security support and institution building applied heretofore has been adequate to task, or missing a few key pieces.

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN POLICE IN PEACEKEEPING

As of late 2009, nearly 12,800 UN police (UNPOL) were deployed in 11 peacekeeping operations led by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), 2 special political missions led by DPKO in Burundi and Afghanistan, and 2 political missions led by the UN Department of Political Affairs in Guinea-Bissau and in Central African Republic (see Table 1). The largest police contingent deployed 4,575 officers and the smallest deployed 1.

Table 1: United Nations Police Deployment as of December 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission (Location)</th>
<th>Begun</th>
<th>Led By</th>
<th>UNPOL Deployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNFICYP (Cyprus)</td>
<td>Mar. 1964</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINURSO (Western Sahara)</td>
<td>Apr. 1991</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIK (Kosovo)</td>
<td>Jun. 1999</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONUC (Democratic Rep. of Congo)</td>
<td>Nov. 1999</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>1,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL (Liberia)</td>
<td>Sep. 2003</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>1,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOCI (Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
<td>Apr. 2004</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>1,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINUSTAH (Haiti)</td>
<td>Jun. 2004</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>2,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIS (Sudan, primarily Southern)</td>
<td>Mar. 2005</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIT (Timor-Leste)</td>
<td>Aug. 2006</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>1,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMID (Sudan, Darfur region)</td>
<td>Jul. 2007</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>4,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINURCAT (Chad, Central African Rep.)</td>
<td>Sep. 2007</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BINUB (Burundi, political mission)*</td>
<td>Jan. 2007</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMA (Afghanistan, political mission)</td>
<td>Mar. 2002</td>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOGBIS (Guinea-Bissau)**</td>
<td>Apr. 1999</td>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BONUCA (Central African Rep.)**</td>
<td>Feb. 2000</td>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12,791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ended 31 December 2009.
**Became UN integrated missions led by DPA at end of 2009.
Early Policing in UN Peacekeeping (1960-1988)

Use of police in UN field missions of any kind was quite modest until the end of the Cold War. As carefully documented by Erwin Schmidl, civilian (as opposed to military) police first appeared in a UN operation in Congo-Kinshasa (ONUC) in August 1960. Who ordered the deployment of 30-some Ghanaian officers to assist Congolese police is unclear and they were buffeted by Congolese politics and withdrawn some time in the fall. They were replaced by a 400-strong Nigerian police contingent that deployed in parallel with the UN mission under “a tripartite agreement between the UN, the Congo, and Nigeria.” It remained in Congo until the end of 1965, more than a year after ONUC had withdrawn.1

West Papua, 1962–63

A British police adviser joined the UN Temporary Executive Authority in West Papua, New Guinea, in the fall of 1962, to command the 1,600-strong Papuan Police Force during the UN-managed transition between Dutch colonial and de facto Indonesian rule. Officers were volunteered by the Philippines to fill mid-level police command ranks, but encountered language problems—a perennial issue with UN police but especially when UN officers are involved in direct management of local police. (The police in ONUC also would have encountered language issues, having come from states that had been British colonies, whereas, after nearly a century of Belgian colonial rule, the common language in Congo was French.)2

Cyprus, 1964 to present

The United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was the operation that coined the term “Civpol” in 1964, to distinguish its UN police contingent from military police (who are normally responsible only for conduct and discipline within the larger military units to which they are attached). UNFICYP deployed nearly 200 officers in its first 10 years of existence, when the island had intermingled settlements of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, helping to smooth over relations and keep small incidents from growing to crisis proportions, and monitoring the Cypriot police. After the events of 1974, which culminated in the self-separation of the Greek and Turkish communities, police ranks diminished to as few as two dozen, but numbered 66 at the end of 2009 (partly compensating for the drawdown of UN military forces over the same period from several thousand to 855).3 Primarily tasked with monitoring the green zone that separates the communities, UN police in Cyprus also foster cooperation between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot police, facilitating a Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters. The Committee meets roughly twice a month and has a joint communications room, with representatives from both sides, that “facilitates the exchange of information between the two sides on matters relating to crime and intelligence. This is [the UN notes] the first formal arrangement of this type between the two sides.”4

2 Ibid., pp. 24–25.
UN Policing in the First Decade after the Cold War (1989-1998)

When the United Nations Security Council resumed authorizing new peacekeeping missions in 1988 after a lull of ten years, its initial forays were small military observer missions (Afghanistan, Angola, Central America). This section touches briefly on several of the more significant operations involving UN police in this period, in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Haiti, and Bosnia after the Dayton Agreement. Each taught important lessons about the roles, the potential, and the continuing shortcomings of UN police and the systems that support them.

**Namibia, 1989–90**
The UN’s first complex or multidimensional operation since ONUC was deployed to Namibia in 1989, to oversee its separation from South African control and the election of a constituent assembly. As Fortna notes, the UN deployment plan, drawn up in 1978 but held in abeyance pending appropriate political conditions for its use, was “stale” by the time it was needed. The number of UN police involved was successively increased, from the initial 360 to an eventual 1,500, as leaders of the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) realized that the primary threat to a free and fair vote was the (then apartheid-ruled) South Africa-controlled Southwest African Police (SWAPOL) and their hulking mine-resistant patrol vehicles. UNTAG police, mandated to monitor the activities of SWAPOL, acquired comparable vehicles and followed SWAPOL patrols, operating out of 49 district and sub-district stations and helping to reduce police intimidation of the population. SWAPOL intimidation was a kind of “spoiler” activity that continued despite the nominal high-level commitment of all parties to a peaceful transition of Namibia to independence and that may have prevented the Southwest Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) from winning a controlling two-thirds majority of the seats in the constituent assembly in the 11 November 1989 vote. Over 1,000 UN police monitors were assigned to join election observation teams.5

**El Salvador, 1991–95**
In El Salvador, UN police monitors were part of an unarmed operation (ONUSAL) tasked with the implementation of the 1991 human rights agreement and 1992 cease-fire and peace accords (the Chapultapec Agreement) between the government and the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Authorized numbers of UN police rose from 16 to 631 with the entry into force of the 1992 agreement, although recruitment difficulties kept numbers from rising above 314. This shortfall hampered their ability to carry out what was, in turn, a rather vague mandate to help ensure a “smooth transition” from wartime Salvadoran police institutions to a new National Civil Police (PNC) as well as “accompanying officers

5 Virginia Page Fortna, “United Nations Transition Assistance Group,” in W. Durch (ed.), *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), pp. 360, 364, 367–371. UN DPKO, “Namibia – UNTAG – Background,” http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untagFT.htm, pp. 29–31. On the long-recognized failure of “UN planners” to update UNTAG operational plans, it is useful to recall that at that time, peacemaking in the UN system was divorced from and often did not consult operational offices before making or accepting proposals with operational consequences; DPKO had not as yet been created; the existing Office of Special Political Affairs relied on a handful of UN staff and seconded military officers for mission planning and management; and formal police was almost altogether absent. William J. Durch, “Running the Show: Planning and Implementation,” in Durch, *Evolution of UN Peacekeeping*, pp. 59–60.
and members of the [existing] National Police in the performance of their duties." Aside from difficulties in recruitment, ONUSAL exhibited many of the quirks and frictions that would affect later UN police components as well, including the UN’s penchant for “rank-free” missions, the better to use seconded officers as needed rather than as ranked back home; stovepiped command and control arrangements; high post-war rates of indigenous criminal activity that UN police were not mandated to confront; and individual actions to fill bits of the post-conflict public security vacuum that went beyond the official watch-and-report mandate.7

Cambodia, 1992–93

In Cambodia, UN policing took a significant leap forward in terms of mandated authority and operations, although quality control and discipline were serious problems and the police component’s nominal powers were never matched by its actual power on the ground or actual influence on those, especially in the Cambodian government, whose activities it was supposed to help “control.” The 1991 Paris Accords that led to deployment of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) were intended to end over two decades of conflict that dated from the late 1960s, included a three-year period of genocidal violence perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge (KR), toppling of its regime by the invading Vietnamese army, and a dozen years of war waged against the Vietnam-appointed ruling regime by a rainbow coalition of opponents. UNTAC’s Head of Mission, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Yasushi Akashi, was given ultimate authority by the UN Security Council to overrule, if necessary, the Supreme National Council (SNC) set up by the Paris Accords to “embody Cambodian sovereignty” while UNTAC facilitated political conditions conducive to free and fair elections of a constituent assembly—without a Chapter VII mandate.8 UNTAC had a very large (3,600-strong) police component that took 9 months to deploy 95 percent of its people and proved to be a mix of community-based and constabulary officers many of whom could not speak either mission language (French or English), never mind Khmer.9

UNTAC police were mandated to “supervise and control” Cambodian police forces of up to 50,000 personnel in 1,500 locations. The UN at this time still lacked a serious police headquarters element capable either of drafting doctrine and operating procedures or of giving guidance to the field, so “[p]lanning and preparation for Civpol’s deployment was virtually non-existent.” The ability of the police component to monitor, let alone control, local police was further diminished by the urgent requirement to provide security to mobile voter

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7 Ibid., pp. 112, 114, 118.
8 Chapter VII is the enforcement chapter of the United Nations Charter.
registration teams and 800 registration sites. In response to rising politically-motivated violence, however, SRSG Akashi issued a directive giving UNTAC police and military “powers to arrest and detain suspects in cases involving serious human rights violations” and established a Special Prosecutor’s Office to which 45 UN police officers were assigned as criminal investigators. Its effectiveness was hampered by the lack of impartial and effective judicial venues in which to try suspects—a lesson in the need for complementarity in police, judicial, and corrections capacity and reform that had been seen in El Salvador and would soon be seen again in Haiti, but not really implemented until much later, and then sporadically. UNTAC was, moreover, working against the determined resistance not only of the KR but of the government, the State of Cambodia, which, working on its home turf, proved far more resilient and agile than the UN mission in getting what it wanted, which was, ultimately, to remain in power, where it remains to this day albeit not embroiled in civil war.

Haiti I, 1995–2000

Haiti did not have a long, destructive civil war or even a short war, before US armed forces and then UN peacekeepers came to its shores in 1994–95. Instead, it had a long history of political isolation, external occupation (by US Marines, from World War I until 1934), a preservation-oriented elite, dysfunctional and autocratic politics supported by private armies of thugs, and long-term poverty that ultimately took a highly-destructive toll on the country’s very ecology. A nearly archetypal failed state, Haiti nonetheless held elections in 1990 but less than a year later its elected president, the mercurial populist Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was overthrown in a military coup. Coup leaders then pursued Aristide’s followers with lethal force. Regional and international sanctions clamped down on the country’s economy for two years, leading to the ruling junta’s willingness to negotiate a withdrawal from politics, in the Governor’s Island agreement of July 1993, an agreement on which it soon reneged. A UN-authorized, US-led military coalition was poised to overthrow the junta in 1994 when it agreed to step down. A six-month US military presence segued into the UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) in March 1995, which retained a substantial (and for its first year majority American) military component but whose primary task was to help rebuild the Haitian National Police (HNP)—the first time that a UN mission was so directly engaged in such a complex and demanding task.

The UNMIH police component (initially 644, then 870 officers) was preceded by a force of 821 armed International Police Monitors established by the US coalition. The IPMs’ tasks included mentoring an Interim Public Security Force (IPSF) built by the coalition from 3,000 former members of Haiti’s demobilized (and quickly vetted but not so much disarmed) old security forces. IPSF members were given six days of police training by the US Justice Department’s International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) but not given any hope of joining the new, permanent HNP. At the same time, a six-month

11 Ibid., p. 120.
curriculum for classroom training of the HNP was being developed by a collaborative of bilateral donors (US, Canadian, French), Haitian attorneys, and human rights monitors. Mentoring of the new Haitian police was the job of UN Field Training Officers (FTOs) who accompanied HNP officers on patrol, carried weapons, and had powers of arrest but insufficient numbers of interpreters. Supplementing UN police capacity during the first year of deployment were roughly 400 military police (US, Indian, and Guatemalan) working under command of a US MP battalion. UN police also “took charge of administering 27 of the 28 jails” in Haiti, although this task was not in UNPOL’s mandate, and “created a partnership with a Haitian NGO [non-governmental organization] to supply food” for prisoners. The HNP and the UN mission both started well, but eventually the patchwork nature of the UN police contingent and donor support led to dwindling institutional memory and effectiveness. The HNP in turn wilted due to continuing lack of adequate supporting legal framework, functioning courts, or adequate prisons. As Haitian politics stalled as well, corruption and vigilantism returned to the police force, the best people left, and the police service was worn down like the land of Haiti itself.

**Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1995–2002**

In late 1995, as UNMIH was completing its first year of operation, the United States and its NATO allies wrung the Dayton Agreement out of the leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. Agreed to after three years of brutal internecine fighting, even-more-brutal treatment of detainees by the warring parties, aid-oriented peacekeeping on the part of the UN, and a genocidal massacre in and around the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica, Dayton launched a major new exercise in peacekeeping and statebuilding that continues, in reduced size and intensity, at the present writing. The UN’s role in that multinational enterprise, from 1996 through the end of 2002, was focused on human rights and civil police. The UN International Police Task Force (IPTF) was an operational arm of the UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNMIBH). IPTF was to have up to 1,800 police monitors, initially assigned to watch, advise, train, “accompany” and facilitate the law enforcement activities of 47,500 local and paramilitary police in the Croat-Bosniac Federation and the Republika Srpska (RS) (Bosnia’s two “entities” as defined by Dayton). IPTF was also supposed to advise local authorities on “the organization of effective civilian law enforcement agencies.” Given that many of these Federation and, especially, RS police had been complicit in arbitrary detention, torture, and killing of civilians during the recent war, this mandate was not a recipe for success, and after two years it had evolved significantly, first when IPTF acquired the authority to reduce the size of local police forces by two-thirds, and later when it received the

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14 Ibid., pp. 232–233, 241. Bailey, et al. tend to use “prison” and “jail” interchangeably, but since 75 percent of Haiti’s “prisoners” were in pretrial detention when they wrote, the usage seems appropriate.
authority to “de-certify” or “de-authorize” individual officers for wartime activities or human rights abuses. (Since this authority applied to law enforcement activities and not administrative jobs, an uncertain number of “de-certified” officers likely remained on police payrolls.) IPTF found it more difficult to merge entity police forces than to create specialized multi-ethnic services from the ground up, which eventually it did with the State Border Service and State Investigative and Protection Agency.

IPTF was unarmed, lacked law enforcement powers, and was directed by Dayton to train local police according to “internationally accepted standards of law enforcement,” which, at the time, were either not adequately compiled or not adequately understood. UNMIBH and IPTF thus established standards by dint of their own practice. In the first 18 months of the mission, the UN also could not rely on the large NATO military peacekeeping force in Bosnia for assistance in public security matters. The 60,000-troop Implementation Force (IFOR) and its smaller successor, the Stabilization Force (SFOR) proved reluctant to be involved in any activities removed from patrolling the inter-entity boundary—in traditional peacekeeper fashion—or that entailed risk of involvement in law enforcement or politics. Hence, when seven suburbs of Sarajevo were to be transferred from RS to the Federation in February–March 1996 (to give the city a buffer zone against the sort of artillery fire that pummeled it for three years during the war), there was no effective security for the transfer and Serb police and paramilitaries “facilitated” the evacuation of up to 100,000 Serb civilians from those areas and stripped and gutted their buildings. After national elections in the United States and United Kingdom and a change of military commanders at NATO, SFOR began to collaborate both with IPTF and the UN’s war crimes tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, seizing arms caches and “persons indicted for war crimes.” By the time UNMIBH ended, entity police forces had been demilitarized and trimmed to about 16,000 officers altogether, while the integrated State Border Service was deployed at all major border crossing points. Still, the entity police structures continued to function in costly and inefficient parallel fashion as the UN left. M. H. Doyle considers that “the original mistake” of post-war reconstruction in Bosnia was “the failure to recognize that nationalist political establishments lived off of networks of patronage founded on the absence of the rule of law and on control over the police and judiciary” and that the administrative division blessed by the Dayton Agreement gave those patronage networks the ability to dig themselves in, including through the respective police services.

Summary: The 1990s
Summarizing the 1990s record in UN “Policekeeping,” one might say that great ambitions

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19 Ibid., 242–243.
22 Dziedzic and Bair, pp. 281–283.
23 Cousens and Harland, pp. 102–104, 112.
24 Doyle, “Too Little, Too Late?” p. 263.
were not matched by great strategies, great competence, or great success. Mandate drafters
seemed to assume that the presence or moral authority of UN police would be adequate to
stabilize post-war public security or to tame war-tainted police forces; these presumptions
were invalidated nearly every time they were put to the test. Unfortunately, the first time they
were tested, in Namibia, they seemed to work, mostly because all parties to the country’s
transition wanted the transition to work and differed only on the margin of control they were
willing to concede the dominant nationalist party, SWAPO. Thus the first case in which the
new model was tested also happened to be its easiest.

UN "Policekeeping" Since 1999

As UNMIBH struggled to make progress in Bosnia, UN peacekeeping in general tailed off
from the large operations of the mid-1990s to a rather modest, nearly Cold War-like status quo of traditional missions. Then, in 1999, things started to get complicated. In relatively
rapid succession, the Security Council gave the UN Secretariat responsibility for running
Kosovo, then East Timor (Timor-Leste). To all of the reformist content of 1990s mandates
was added responsibility for law enforcement, and not just the police aspects but the entire
criminal justice apparatus and public administration, from banking to trash collection and
highway maintenance. The professional UN was not prepared for this and has since resisted
the thought of taking on any other “transitional administrations.” A year after 4,500 UN
police had been authorized for the Kosovo operation (and 1,260 for East Timor), DPKO still
had only 9 professional staff responsible for police matters, and they were tucked into its
military division.

Although no other missions authorized in the past decade have had full executive authority,
some, such as MINUSTAH—peacekeeping’s revisitation of Haiti—have had a relatively
muscular police presence. UN police, especially formed units, worked with the HNP in 2006–07, for example, to roust the worst of the criminal gangs from the slums of Cite Soleil
in the capital, Port au Prince.25 Virtually every mission authorized by the Security Council
since 1999 has included a policing component; most have involved some form of judicial
advice, support, or reform; and a growing proportion have had corrections support/reform
elements. Most of these responsibilities replicated activities pioneered by one or another
mission in the 1990s, but in the new decade there was a greater tendency on the part of the
Council—reflecting, perhaps, a learning of the lesson that police reform cannot stand
alone—to build more elements of reform into a given mandate, and this tendency grew more
pronounced as the decade unfolded. The 2000s represented, in other words, a kind of coming
together of the various earlier reform initiatives. A number of more recent international efforts
to reform or reconstruct police services—some by UN missions, others by multilateral
coalitions or bilateral programs—are ably detailed elsewhere in this volume and will not
therefore be the focus here. Rather, the analysis of contemporary UN policing efforts will
shift focus from cases to functional issues and the UN system’s efforts and ability to manage
them, and cases will be used to illustrate system capacities and shortcomings.

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25 A. Walter Dorn, “Intelligence-led Peacekeeping: The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti,
2. **Contemporary UN Policing**

By mid-decade, the UN Police Division was beginning to reconceptualize the fundamental objectives of UN policing, concluding that traditional monitoring and reporting functions were essentially without operational merit. With a slight nod in the direction of potential future “interim law enforcement” missions, most focus shifted to transformational activities and their requirements: mentoring, training, and reform, restructuring and rebuilding of post-conflict police services, while providing interim operational security support to national police and other law enforcement agencies (border security agencies, for example). UNPOL working in a security assistance role are not considered law enforcement officials under the legislation of the host country or under their mandates. Mission-specific rules for use of force and firearms may allow for temporary detention of host state nationals in the interests of immediate public order, for example, but persons detained must be turned over to national authorities at the earliest opportunity.

*Fig. 1: UN Police, Two-dimensional Role Structure*
These functions, together with the earlier, traditional monitoring tasks performed by UN police, can be portrayed as two task continuums, one for the institutional support roles that they have played over the years, from monitoring to rebuilding host state services, and the other for their direct operational contributions to public security, up to and including law enforcement. Figure 1 juxtaposes these two dimensions in a single chart, placing the various UN missions that have had policing components in their proper locations with respect to each task continuum.

Many missions have entailed fairly passive roles for UNPOL on both dimensions – and not only early missions. I interpret the role of UNPOL in UNMIS, for example, in Southern Sudan, as largely passive on both dimensions and it has only been deployed since 2005. Kosovo and Timor-Leste rank highest on direct roles, but Kosovo is somewhat passive in support as major training and equipping responsibilities for the Kosovo Police Service belonged to other entities than UNMIK. It is also possible for a mission to have a fairly forward-leaning institutional support role, as did UNPOL in Sierra Leone, without having a comparably forward direct role.

Top Contributing Countries

As has been the case with military contingents for UN peacekeeping over the last decade, police contributions have come increasingly from the world’s developing countries. Table two illustrates the change, at four-year intervals, since 2001. At the end of 2001, five of the top ten Police Contributing Countries (PCCs) were developed states. The United States, Germany, the UK, Portugal and Spain together contributed 1,862 of the UN’s 7,642 deployed police (nearly 25 percent). By the end of 2005, only the United States and Germany remained in the top ten, and their respective numbers of officers were each down by about half, so that developed states in the top 10 PCCs now contributed less than 9 percent of total UN police. By the end of 2009, no developed states remained in the top ten. Portugal kept its contribution relatively steady over time (with police in Timor-Leste), but others that had been in the 2001 UN top ten had by 2009 cut their police contributions to UN operations by 90 percent, on average. Meanwhile, total UN police deployments had roughly doubled. What happened? The United States, which uniquely among UN member states contributed to UN policing with personnel hired by private sector contractors, needed those contractors for security and training programs in Iraq and Afghanistan; Germany became deeply involved in police training in Afghanistan; the UK became similarly involved in Sierra Leone; and Spain hauled back on its overseas commitments after the Madrid subway bombings of spring 2004 and subsequent ouster of the party in power. Jordan, India, Pakistan, and Ghana have remained top police contributors throughout the decade, joined in mid-decade by Bangladesh, Nigeria, Nepal, and Senegal. China briefly appeared in the top ten owing to its contribution of a formed police unit (FPU) to MINUSTAH but fell out again as total UN deployments rose and China’s remained steady.

27 For purposes of this paper, “developed” refers to members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC)—countries with enough wealth that they can afford to donate a percentage of it to other states.
Table 2: Top Ten Police Contributing Countries, 2001, 2005, and 2009

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Jordan</td>
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<td>1614</td>
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<td>707</td>
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<td>1607</td>
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<td>3 India</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>431</td>
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<td>5 Pakistan</td>
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<td>6 Ghana</td>
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<td>7 United Kingdom</td>
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<td>8 Ukraine</td>
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<td>359</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Portugal</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Spain</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Gray shaded rankings indicate members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or “developed” states.


The Structures of Demand and Supply of Police

As the demand for UN police increased, the structure of UN deployments changed. FPUs rose from 15 percent of deployments in December 2001 to 47 percent in December 2009, as illustrated in Figure 2. This figure shows actual deployments of individual police and officers in FPUs—nearly 13,000 by the end of 2009—but total numbers authorized are higher—roughly 15,000. The “vacancy rate” reflects in large part the difficulty that the UN has had in reaching full deployment of the large (6,423-officer) police component in Darfur, and especially its 16 authorized FPUs, partly due to the riskiness of the mandate but also due to the obstructionist policies of the Sudanese government, which rejected some nationalities and held up customs clearance or transit of other units’ equipment.

The shape of the curves in Fig. 2 show the urgent and rapid buildup of police in Kosovo and East Timor to staff their law enforcement mandates in 1999–2000. Totals eased off in 2002–2004 as respective national capacities were built up those locales and UN missions drew down, only to rise again as UN missions deployed in rapid succession to Liberia, Haiti, and Côte d’Ivoire, UN police presence in DR Congo was given a boost, and police were sent to both Southern Sudan and, of course, Darfur. The deep nick in the curve at the end of 2008 reflects the transfer of policing responsibility in Kosovo to the European Union and the withdrawal of nearly 2,000 remaining UN police.
Figure 3 shows the two categories of UN police as percentages of uniformed UN peacekeepers deployed (a category that includes troops in contingents, individual military observers, individual police, and police in FPUs). These percentages are plotted against the left-hand vertical axis of the chart. A third line represents the total number of uniformed peacekeepers deployed, and is read against the right-hand axis of the chart. As total numbers of peacekeepers declined in the latter half of the 1990s, the percentage of police in remaining operations rose to 20 percent by 1998 (the UN-led International Police Task Force in Bosnia helped to sustain police deployments through this period at roughly 3,000 officers). The police percentage spiked briefly in 1999 with the deployment of the mission in Kosovo, for which the UN deployed no troops (relying on NATO instead). The UN’s East Timor operation did have a substantial military component, however, so UN troop numbers began to climb again in 2000. UN military deployments further accelerated from 2003 onward, and the combined percentage of individual police and FPUs in UN missions settled into a roughly 13 percent share of the growing number of UN uniformed personnel deployed.
Fig. 3: UN Police as Percentage of UN Peacekeepers, 1995–2009, with Total UN Deployments

Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the FPU

As noted, in the new decade, UN operations increased their use of FPUs rather dramatically. FPUs, used for crowd control and close protection of UN personnel and facilities, especially in less stable mission environments, are always armed. It is thus critical that they be well-trained in their duties. This has not always been the case.

Although all police resources are scarce, FPUs have been relatively easier for the UN to acquire than individual officers, for a number of reasons: states receive fixed cash per capita reimbursements for officers deployed in FPUs (the same rates as for military troops in formed contingents), as well as payments to defray wear and tear on equipment. However, until February 2010, when new requirements were signed into effect by the head of DPKO, experience and performance certifications for the personnel of FPUs, and indeed proof that an FPU had any prior history as a functioning unit doing FPU things, or any demonstrated capability to do them (crowd control, for example, or effective use of weapons), before it showed up in the field had essentially been waived in the interest of rapid deployment.28 So, for states, pulling together and sending an “FPU” to a UN operation was a very good deal, as

28 Author interviews, UN DPKO.
states are not reimbursed by the UN for the individual officers that they loan to the UN and, until the new policy entered into effect, FPU personnel were not required to meet even the basic UN requirements for police experience, ability to drive a vehicle, or ability to speak the mission language (usually French or English).

With offers of FPUs, the United Nations received abundant numbers of bodies to fill police slots in its burgeoning missions, in groups of 125–140 (whereas individual officers were more often recruited one at a time or at best in small groups). While the UN did have to reimburse PCCs for the loan of their FPUs, the nominal $1,200–$1,400 monthly per capita reimbursements for an FPU officer cost the UN far less than “mission subsistence allowance,” ranging from $100 to $300 per day, that is paid to individual officers. MSA was a good deal for the individual police officers, as they received it directly, each month. For officers from developing countries, in particular, MSA alone was a significant incentive to serve.

A somewhat perverse incentive cycle resulted in which states or police services had little incentive to part with their best individual officers for UN service, while the officers themselves had far more economic than professional incentive to volunteer. MSA is not performance-based; it is just part of the deployment package and what is not spent can be saved. States had great incentive, on the other hand, to send formed units to UN operations but no particular incentive to see that they were proficient at their jobs or even had much history as an operational unit, were well-equipped for their mandate, or pre-trained in the tasks called for by that mandate. In 2008, the UN Police Division decided to check out FPU proficiency in firearms, public order management, operability of equipment, and command and control. It dispatched field teams to test all 38 deployed FPUs. The results showed roughly 14 units to be adequate to good in all categories; 14 to have “significant” operational deficiencies; 9 to be “seriously” deficient; and 1 to have “unrecoverable” deficiencies—its members being a danger to those around them and to themselves. Police Division set up mobile training teams, with volunteered help from member states, to bring each deployed FPU up to minimum standards; devised a set of pre-deployment training modules; and devised a concept for “mobile assistance teams” to help bring potential UN FPUs up to performance standards before they deployed to any UN operation. This program required voluntary funds from member states because, as DPKO is presently funded, it has one assessed budget (the Peacekeeping Support Account) to pay for Headquarters peacekeeping support costs (primarily staff) and other assessed budgets for the missions. There is no budget for in-between activities like basic proficiency training for prospective FPUs.

In addition to training, the Division set about developing new and tighter doctrine for FPUs, with the participation of more than a dozen PCCs. That doctrine specifies proficiencies, proficiency testing before and during deployment, armament and equipment standards, and

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29 For further discussion of economic factors in peacekeeping operations, see Michael Carnahan, Scott Gilmore, and William Durch, The Economic Impact of Peacekeeping, report prepared by the Peace Dividend Trust, Ottawa, for the UN DPKO Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, 2006.
31 “Assessed” budgets are those to which Member States are obligated to contribute as “legitimate expenses of the Organization,” according to an agreed scale of assessments. See UN General Assembly, “Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations,” A/RES/64/249, 5 February 2010.
number of years that an FPU must have existed as a unit before being eligible for UN deployment.  

Rapid and Effective Deployment: Doctrine, Equipment, and Training

The title of this section derives from the Brahimi Report, which called not only for quicker deployment of UN operations into post-conflict settings once peace agreements had been signed, but deployment of competent and capable troops (and, by extension, police and other mission personnel) who were well-equipped, well-trained in their basic skill-sets, and well-informed about the mission environment, with good mission guidance.  

Historically, UN police deployments have been neither rapid nor especially effective, taking an average of 6 months to deploy at least half of the authorized officers (see Fig. 4), with no consistent pre-deployment training, and spotty logistical support. Member states largely failed to respond to a post-Brahimi UN DPKO attempt to build an on-call roster of police personnel; a handful of states offered to fill certain specialties but none was willing to advance-commit individuals.

As a result, UN deployment rates for individual UNPOL in the past decade have been not much better than in the 1990s. Although Police Division has several times more people on hand at Headquarters to manage deployments than it did in 2000, it also has a much larger body of police to manage. The ratio of UN police deployed to UN Police Division personnel is roughly 400:1. Even if one takes into account the staff in the Department of Field Support who provide personnel, financial, and logistics support to the Police Division, as well as police component personnel in field operations who serve primarily administrative roles, the support ratio remains about 100:1. By contrast, the International Deployment Group of the Australian National Police, as it grows to a projected total of 1,200 personnel, aims to maintain a field-to-Headquarters ratio of not more than 3:1. The stark difference between support resources available to the United Nations, even including support functions delegated to the field, is apparent.

It has proven especially difficult to find female officers for UNPOL ranks. Women police are fewer in number in national forces generally, and as of late 2009, just 8 percent of UN individual police officers and 4 percent of FPU members were female, the latter more likely to be found in all-female units than in mixed-gender units.

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32 Author interviews.
33 “To be effective, the missions’ personnel need materiel (equipment and logistics support), finance (cash in hand to procure goods and services) information assets (training and briefing), an operational strategy and, for operations deploying into uncertain circumstances, a military and political “centre of gravity” sufficient to enable it to anticipate and overcome one or more of the parties’ second thoughts about taking a peace process forward.” United Nations, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000, para. 87.
Training issues have begun to be addressed by materials developed in the Darfur police component and subsequently promulgated more broadly; whereas only 10 percent of incoming police for Darfur had received pre-deployment training prior to this effort, about 70 percent received training once it was implemented.\(^{37}\) Such training also needs to incorporate UN and PCC expectations of what UN police do in the field through higher-level doctrine or principles and guidelines. This has been done, as noted, for FPUs and is in the process of being done for individual officers. In October 2009, the United Nations and the International Police Organization (Interpol) signed a memorandum of understanding at the latter organization’s annual ministerial meeting in Singapore to develop jointly an action plan for development of doctrine for international policing. This effort is part of a UN Police Division-coordinated Strategic Doctrinal Framework project designed to develop common international police peacekeeping doctrine by mid-2012. This doctrine could serve as the basis for training curricula for police to be deployed into any international operation, as well as detailed job descriptions for operational specialties, and the fundamentals of a more broadly standardized pre-deployment training policy. Officers trained to these standards could in principle serve in a UN, NATO, EU, AU, or coalition operation with common expectations and understandings of police roles and competencies.\(^{38}\) What police can or should be expected to achieve on the ground would of course continue to vary by mission—a subject we return to in the concluding section.

\(^{37}\) UNPD, “UN Police Peacekeeping.”

\(^{38}\) UN Police Division, Strategic Policy and Development Section, “UN Police Peacekeeping: Developing a Strategic Doctrinal Framework,” briefing, January 2010.
Figure 4: Deployment Rates, Individual Police Officers, UN Missions, First Year after New/Upgraded Mandate

- UNMIL (Liberia, 635, 2003-04)
- MINUSTAH (Haiti, 747, 2004-05)
- MONUC (DR Congo, 216, 2004-05)
- ONUB (Burundi, 120, 2004-05)
- UNOCI (Cote d'Ivoire, 350, 2004-05)
- UNMIS (Sudan, 715, 2005-06)
- UNMIT (Timor-Leste, 1108, 2006-07)
- UNAMID (Darfur, 3772, 2007-08)
- MINURCAT (Chad/CAR, 300, 2007-08)
Integrity and Accountability

In addition to being able to do their jobs effectively, police in international missions need to be held accountable for their conduct and professional integrity. At the moment, systems of police accountability are weak, especially in UN peacekeeping. Several reports of the Secretary-General issued since 2008 regarding criminal accountability of UN mission personnel have stressed that the Secretariat considers police conduct on mission, whether of individual officers or FPU members, to be within the sole jurisdiction of the state that seconds them to UN service—whether or not the sending state has extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction over the officers that it sends, that is, jurisdiction over crimes that they commit while overseas. Police are also considered “UN experts on mission” and as such are entitled to functional immunity from local criminal jurisdiction in the course of their duties. The definition of that immunity in the original 1946 Convention on Privileges and Immunities appears to extend it end-to-end, over the entire period of an expert’s deployment—a feature that may have been intended to deter interference with experts in transit, but could not have not anticipated that such experts in UN peacekeeping operations (which had not been conceived of in 1946) might be “on mission” for a year or more and potentially covered by functional immunity that whole time, on or off duty. This may account for some inconsistencies in the UN’s decisions on whether or not the UN Secretary-General needed to waive immunity—which is the S-G’s sole pre-rogative—in cases where preliminary field investigations establish that a serious crime (what the UN calls Category I misconduct) may have been committed. At present, the UN has no authority even to require that persons under investigation for misconduct remain in the mission area, and when they leave, investigations terminate. Needless to say, persons under investigation tend to be recalled home, where the record of sending state investigation, let alone prosecution, is decidedly mixed. To date, the General Assembly has recommended that UN member states draft and ratify a convention pledging to extend their criminal laws to cover police and other nationals serving in UN peacekeeping missions.  

3. The Way Forward?

With very few exceptions, until the late 1980s and the operation in Namibia, United Nations police were mission adjuncts. There are still those who stress that the military in peacekeeping have been and will remain its dominant component. Quantitatively and in terms of potential firepower, that will almost certainly be true. It is also true, however, that UN military contingents make relatively small contributions to mission exit strategies because they do not normally take an active part in building their own local replacements. And until such replacements exist, it is difficult for a peacekeeping operation to draw down and leave. Post-conflict states—whose security problems are largely internal and whose cross-border issues involve crime more than threats of military invasion—really need effective police and border services more than they need new armies. This argues for strong international consensus and division of labor on the rebuilding of post-conflict police and border services.

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and less emphasis on the military. Unfortunately, the international system and its members have much more and deeper experience in building all kinds of militaries than they do in building any kinds of police services.

UN policing is thus facing an identity crisis as well as a crisis of strategy and resources. The identity crisis has to do the UNPOL’s direct roles in post-conflict settings. The crisis of strategy and resources has to do with its support activities.

Regarding the direct action dimension of their role structure, a question for UN police is whether they wish to be more like the military, holding things in place at the level of public safety and security as military contingents do at the level of national security. That is one implication of the United Nations developing and deploying a more “robust” form of policing that is up-gunned, up-armored, more mobile, and ready to rock. That level of engagement can absorb a lot of forces and the UN is rather short on good high-end police. The quantities implied seem also to fly in the face of desires to cut the number of UNPOL deployed and to emphasize quality over quantity. Thus, how high up on the direct action continuum do UNPOL normally wish to function, how many missions (or FPUs) can they sustain at that level of direct action, and what defines the end game for such deployment?

The question on the support activities continuum has to do with how deeply and regularly UNPOL can become involved in the transformation of host state police services and their associated ministries of the interior or justice, because ‘fixing’ a police service does not accomplish that much without also fixing its management and governance structures, and comparably intense efforts to transform judiciaries and prisons. Judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, court clerks, and corrections officers don’t patrol the streets or respond to crime scenes but are the elements of criminal justice that police action feeds. If they do not function as well as the police, the system sludges up. As difficult as a police service is to reform or rebuild, these latter components are generally harder, either because it takes time to educate and train them or because they need a lot of infrastructural support and—in the case of prisons—sustained funds to meet the basic needs of thousands of incarcerated human beings.

What are the prospects that the cacophonous admixture of police traditions that fill out the police component of any one UN operation can create, in the mission area, a new force that is more unified and effective than itself? If it really can do that, what can the other criminal justice elements of a UN operation support in turn? If they cannot produce equally effective courts and prisons, what are the alternatives? Discussion of these alternatives is beyond the scope of the present paper, but they seem to be (a) single-donor training programs; (b) multi-donor programs; (c) multilateral programs; or (d) standing UN capacity.

One final observation concerns whether the international community, and by extension the United Nations, are taking the right strategic approach to post-conflict reconstruction of justice and security systems, which is to say, focusing on the reconstruction of formal justice and security systems. Bruce Baker relates elsewhere in this volume both the practical and normative reasons for attending to the needs and capacities of informal systems. It is, however, very difficult for the professional UN, as an agent of and collaborator with states and other intergovernmental organizations, to reinforce or replicate a “hybrid state” solution to
problems of state weakness given the limited scalability of informal systems—they are, by
definition, of very localized legitimacy and reach, useful in rural or village settings but
probably less so in larger towns and cities. Informal self-governance may require both
personal relationships and stable rural communities that urban settings and their displaced and
mixed populations cannot replicate.

The formal-informal issue adds another dimension to the current debate about whether UN
peacekeeping operations should be involved in justice and security sector rebuilding at all, or
should just help stabilize the patient until real help arrives. The hybrid state argument says
that the debate only partially engages the problem of public security and may not engage it
very well at all. If the pre-war internal security apparatus of war-torn states never really
reached the local level, neither will its UN-supported successor, at least in the immediate
post-war period. Mentoring and training a security sector that is better-performing but still
superficial in its reach may not produce the needed public security, and doing more may make
it fiscally unsustainable by national revenues. If locally unaffordable, it will either remain an
international ward or self-finance in unpredictable ways that will undermine both the rule of
law and professional integrity as donors and the UN define them.

Just doing a lot better at executing current models of peace and state-building will not suffice
if this image of the hybrid state and of the limited or contested reach of formal institutions of
government is valid, at least outside major urban areas. Perhaps international support
programs, especially in policing and the other elements of criminal justice, should indeed be
urban-focused, but also informal-rural-structure-reinforcing (with incentives to end the least
savory practices of some informal justice institutions). Given the levels of violence that can
erupt in rural settings, the quietly deliberative processes of informal rural justice could
probably use some formal help.