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My current interest in the question of governance in multi-ethnic societies stems from a longstanding interest in how the international community attempts to deal with conflict. While my work has dealt with a wide variety of issues relating to this theme, much of my attention has been on the role of the UN Security Council and its evolving efforts to deal with international peace and security issues. In the post-Cold War period the UN Security Council has taken advantage of the latitude provided to it under the UN Charter to articulate, and act on, an expanding conception of what constitutes international peace and security. The Security Council has accepted that this expansion brings with it a commensurate expansion in the multi-dimensional nature of the operations it has authorized and it has accompanied all of this with an increased willingness to change the way in which it carries out these operations. As a result, the Security Council has been innovative in contracting out operations to regional organizations and coalitions but also in its willingness to authorize the use of force beyond self-defence. Much of my work in recent years has been directed at examining the implications of these three trends for the international community in general and for the UN in particular.

The Use of Force

In exploring the role of the international community in dealing with conflict, one of my early areas of focus was the use of force by international actors. My first book, *Peace Enforcement*, explored the use of force by the UN in situations where the Security Council authorized the use of force beyond self defence, but at a level less than full-scale enforcement: as seen in Korea in 1950, and in the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. The primary question I addressed was whether or not this kind of use of force worked. Does the authorization of force beyond self defence (in other words beyond the traditional confines of peacekeeping) help the UN achieve its goals?

The case studies examined included the UN operation in the Congo in the early 1960s, and Somalia and Bosnia. This work revealed that, in these instances, the Security Council authorized the use of force as a way of dealing with a difficult and changing situation on the ground, essentially as an ad hoc add-on element of the operation. As a consequence, little thought was given to how the actual use of force would alter the situation on the ground and also alter the perception of the UN as a legitimate and impartial actor. Because the Council tended to go this route when the situation on the ground became difficult, the result was often further complications for UN troops on the ground, and a revision of the perceptions of warring groups about the UN as an actor. Ultimately, regardless of the intent of the mission mandate, the impact was to make the UN an actor whose every action was read as influencing the situation of the parties in one way or another. The overall result meant that, while the Security Council continued to maintain the mission mandate as an impartial one, the net effect of the actions of UN troops on the ground, working only to fulfill that mandate, were not at all impartial. This disjuncture created a fundamental tension that was unsustainable.

The UN, Regional Organizations and Conflict in Africa

My work on the use of force by the UN fed into a project that examined the reasons for, and impact of, greater cooperation between the UN and regional organizations in dealing with conflict in Africa. Much of the Security Council's activity in the early post-Cold War period focused on Africa. And it was in Africa that the UN experienced some of its most significant failures. If the use of force in the grey zone between



peacekeeping and enforcement created fundamental contradictions, did the greater involvement of regional organizations in carrying out the Council's work have the same effect?

At its outset, the push towards greater participation by regional organizations was portrayed as an attempt to share the burden of what was a rapidly expanding number of UN operations. In practice, however, the new role for regional organizations in Africa became a way for non-African states to avoid taking the significant risks involved and also to avoid committing their own resources to dealing with the problem. "African solutions for African problems", while an important goal, became a cover for shifting the burden of international peace and security work rather than sharing it. Devolution of responsibility covered for disengagement.

Aside from the politics this represents (some portray it bluntly as western states being unwilling to risk white lives for black Africans), this trend played into a number of other new trends in conflict management at the international level. In particular, as part of its increased willingness to involve the UN in intra-state or internal conflicts, the Security Council was also expanding the scope of its involvement. In agreeing to oversee the implementation of ceasefires and peace agreements, the UN was drawing itself into election and human rights monitoring, transitional justice arrangements, the re-training and constitution of new police forces, and, in some cases, the design of new government structures. The UN, in other words, rapidly found itself engaging in state-building.

In this respect, by depending on greater regional organization involvement, the UN was drawing in actors who, either as an entity or in the form of their member states, had their own political goals. Thus, for example, ECOWAS involvement in responding to the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire raised questions about the political objectives of its most powerful and most active member state, Nigeria, in the outcome of those conflicts.

The question of how things are done, and by whom, features here. Contracting out to regional organizations enables some operations that might not otherwise occur, but the fact that these operations are being carried out by poorly resourced actors, some of which have their own political agendas, raises concern about the impact of this process. The conclusion of this study raised further questions about the three trends in Security Council behaviour outlined earlier.

Democracy and Democratization

The expansion in the scope of UN operations, that was a product of their greater involvement in overseeing peace agreements resulting from intra-state conflicts, brought the UN directly into the realm of state-building and, by extension, the process of democratization. As it found itself increasingly dealing with ethnically-driven conflict, the UN focused more attention on the importance of democratization, how it is undertaken and to what end. In a recent paper, I examined the extent to which the Security Council and the UN Secretary-General, separately and together, have become advocates of democratization as part of the establishment of peace. In the case of the Secretary-General, this advocacy has extended to discussing the impact of specific types of democratic systems in ethnic conflict situations. Peace, in other words, is not just the absence of war, but involves a wide-ranging set of political and social institutions and processes, of which democracy is a key part. Little attention has been paid to the extent to which the UN has become an advocate of democratization, especially in the context of peace and security situations. This development is part of the larger trend towards multi-dimensionality in UN peace and security operations,

The UN and Terrorism

In response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, I undertook a research project on the UN response to terrorism. The UN's initial response to 9/11 built on immediate previous efforts to respond to terrorism but also broke new ground in the way in which the Security Council deals with peace and security issues. The Council's response has three elements that can be broadly categorized as punitive and preventative. First, beginning in the 1990s, the Council imposed sanctions against states as a way of pressuring them



to hand over terrorist suspects, or to cease support of terrorist groups. After 9/11 the Council continued on this tack, expanding their use of sanctions. To ensure that the sanctions regime is effective, the Council established a monitoring mechanism to track the implementation of the sanctions regime by member states. The Council also moved beyond states to include named individuals as targets of the sanctions regime.

Second, after 9/11, the Security Council established minimum requirements for state action against terrorism. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks in the US, this effort focused on requiring states to, inter alia, change and develop national legislation relating to financial transactions. In a new departure, the language of the resolution setting out these requirements made clear the binding nature of the measures, announcing that the Council had “decided that states shall” take the specified measures, rather than the more usual Council language that “calls upon” states to take action. The Council built upon this foundation when it passed a resolution seeking to ensure that states have sufficient measures in place to ensure that terrorists are unable to acquire material and/or weapons of mass destruction. This approach has prompted some analysts to argue that the Security Council has taken on legislative roles. Whether or not that is the case, this shift marks an even greater level of attention to domestic activity within states by the Council. In order to ensure that the terms of the resolutions were being carried out, the Council established a Counter Terrorism Committee to monitor state action but also to provide support in preparing reports and, on request, assistance in developing the legislative and other mechanisms needed to meet the terms of the resolutions.

In contrast to the very “hands on” approach of these two elements of the Council’s response, the Council has taken a hands-off approach to the question of using force to deal with terrorism. This is most clearly indicated in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 when, the day after the attacks, the Council reaffirmed – though it had no legal need to do so – the right of the United States to use force in self defence in response to the terrorist attacks. The impact has been to give the US an effective *carte blanche* with respect to the use of force.

Why does this matter, and how does it relate to my previous research? The starting point of this research was the assumption that the advent of a non-state actor, in the form of al-Qaeda type terrorists, represented a significant challenge, not just to international peace and security, but to the UN itself as a state-based organization. I was also interested in exploring the apparently contradictory impulses of the international community to terrorism, especially post-9/11, which re-emphasized the importance of territory and borders as a response to a threat that seemed to suggest they were immaterial.

Current Areas of Work

The Security Council’s response to terrorism reveals an emphasis on the state as the lens through which it deals with non-state actors. But now, not only is the Council using the state as a lens but it is also working to shape the lens itself by requiring (not recommending) a minimum standard of state action at the domestic level. Read together with the conclusions of my earlier work on Security Council activity, we can see the Council not just as a legislator at the international level but also as a norm setter.

This conclusion has informed two of my current research projects. If the Council uses and shapes the state, as a lens through which it deals with international peace and security, does it matter who the shapers are? In that context, I am currently working on a book examining the role of non-permanent members of the Security Council. The idea is to explore what role, if any, the non-permanent members play in bringing a level of legitimacy to the Council and/or what else they bring to the table in terms of the Council’s role.

The second project is an examination of the concept of impartiality at the United Nations. Is it possible to claim that the UN is an impartial actor in any but the most limited and circumscribed peacekeeping operations? Is it even possible to speak of impartiality in an organization with clear political goals where decisions are subject to a veto by five permanent members?



Together these two areas of work focus on the question of who is doing the shaping of the state as a lens. The way in which the Council pursues peace and security issues, and its expansive conception of what constitutes international peace and security, have led it to give significantly greater emphasis to the state and what goes on within the state, as opposed to an exclusive focus on what is happening between states. My hope is that the MCRI project will give me the opportunity to build on my previous work, to explore further the question of what shape the Security Council, and the UN more generally, is envisaging for the state lens. Is the Security Council, in fact, a norm setter? If yes, what exactly are those norms? What is the effect of these norms being developed, in the context of questions of peace and security, as conceived of by the Council?