CHAPTER THREE
NEW REFORM INITIATIVES: THE CHALLENGE OF WORKING TOGETHER, 2006 TO 2009
A. THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON

Ban Ki-moon took over on 1 January 2007 from Kofi Annan, who left after a ten-year term. The bitter climate of suspicion and mistrust between member states during most of 2006 gave way to a more conciliatory style during 2007, with improved chances for agreement on much-needed decisions. Ban was confronted with a number of difficult challenges. The developing countries considered the ongoing reform process as intended to reduce their influence. The United States was unhappy with the pace and direction of the reforms, which were considered not to address key demands in such areas as human rights, oversight, mandate review, and management reform. Finally, the failure of Security Council reform had strongly disappointed a number of member states that had hoped to elevate their position in the Organization.

Ban inherited a number of ongoing reform initiatives for which the results had been mixed. Overall progress had been slow. The newly appointed managers took considerable time to provide the requested details on reform proposals initially formulated by the previous UN management. Moreover, the new Secretary-General had taken over a large project to renovate the New York Headquarters facilities which was at the early stages. This project was managed under the Capital Master Plan and had an estimated cost of USD 1.8 billion. It was plagued by cost increases and funding problems and was finally approved in April 2008. One of the first major reform initiatives launched by Ban focused on the restructuring of the disarmament and peacekeeping operations in early 2007.

1. Disarmament Reform

Ban initially proposed to integrate the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) into the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and to downgrade the head of DDA to the level of Assistant Secretary-General. Both proposals met with resistance from member states. The developing countries, in particular, were strongly opposed to a downgrading of the DDA, stressing that any structural change should lead to a strengthening, not weakening, of the UN’s work in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Following a round of extensive consultations with member states, the Secretary-General revised his proposal, which was approved by the General Assembly in March 2007.1 The DDA was reconstituted as a separate office in the secretariat, headed by a ‘high representative’ at the Under-Secretary-General level,

reporting directly to the Secretary-General. By maintaining budgetary autonomy and the integrity of the existing structures and functions, the new Office of Disarmament was not too different from the previous department, except that more emphasis was now placed on a strengthened advocacy role of the head of the Office to overcome the current stalemate in the field of disarmament.

2. Peacekeeping Reform

The number and size of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) had increased considerably during recent years. UN peacekeeping operations had an unprecedented 100,000 peacekeepers in the field, including some 80,000 military personnel, and it was expected that the number could reach 150,000 by the end of 2007.

Efforts to strengthen the UN’s overall peacekeeping work began in 2000, following the ‘Brahimi Report’. In 2005, the General Assembly adopted a five-year reform agenda, ‘Peace Operations 2010’, which aimed to increase the professionalism, management, and efficiency of the UN’s peacekeeping. Follow-up actions included an increase in personnel, the harmonization of the conditions of service of field and headquarters staff, the development of guidelines and standard operating procedures, and improving the partnership arrangements between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the UNDP, African Union and European Union).

Ban proposed to further enhance UN peacekeeping capacities by augmenting the DPKO with the new Department of Field Support (DFS). The new entity would serve as the co-ordinator for field support needs, including the administration and management of personnel, communication and information technology, finance, procurement, and logistics in UN peacekeeping operations. DPKO would therefore concentrate on policy planning and implementation, as well as on providing strategic direction for UN peacekeeping activities. DFS was taking on the role of a key enabler.

Although member states expressed concerns regarding potential overlap and problems in co-ordination and communication between the two departments, the restructuring was approved in principle by the General Assembly in March 2007. The Assembly still requested comprehensive details on the functions and financial, administrative, and budgetary implications of the initiative. This was done and final approval of the peacekeeping restructuring was granted in June 2007. The new organizational set-up put an additional strain on UN-internal co-ordination. In order to enhance the integration between DPKO and DFS, seven Integrated Operational Teams (IOTs) were established, combining political, military, police, support and administrative specialist officers. IOTs provide operational guidance and support to field officers and serve as the entry point at UN Headquarters for troop-contributing countries. Additional co-

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2 PKOs are established by decision of the Security Council and the planning and monitoring process is entrusted to the UN secretariat. The operation itself is directed in the field by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Force Commander, using the resources provided by troop-contributing countries.
