

Lessons from consent-based UN operations:

1. Large presence of outside military troops is useless if parties are intent on breaching the accord and there is no political will to establish peace.
2. The peace agreement must be extremely *specific* (i.e., dates, times, location and other data must be included for each step), *authoritative* (i.e., the agreement should reflect the views of those who count, raising questions such as who can deliver, who should be included, and who should be excluded) and *controlling* (i.e., the agreement should spell out the consequences of non-compliance).
3. The operation can not be dominated by the concerns and interests of only one party (i.e., as was the case in Somalia where U.S. interests clearly dominated). Otherwise, legitimacy is undermined. This could be a problem for a Western dominated operation in Afghanistan. The way an operation is conducted will reveal whether the Western-led coalition cares about democracy in Afghanistan or only cares about combatting terrorism. Since the legitimacy of outside actors in affairs of relatively weaker states is continually criticised by the developing world, the Security Council (four European, Atlantic and Christian permanent veto members) will have to consult the General Assembly.
4. The depth of UN involvement over each issue must be based on a realistic assessment of the country's capacity, the centrality of an issue for the overall mandate, the willingness of local leaders to turn the issue over, and the ability of outsiders to perform. The UN does a good job in administering elections and assisting/running civil administration, in cases where there is no resistance.
5. Creating operational partnerships among local agencies and the UN is very complex, expensive and long to prepare.
6. Training civilian police takes a long time and results are not always satisfactory.
7. The development component is critical and should be central to any operation.

Lessons from operations without an agreement:

1. In the absence of an accord, outsiders must either work with respected local leaders who have wide-spread support, or be prepared to govern alone. The latter option is almost always very challenging.
2. Having a clear sense of likely outcomes is very important for a successful operation. (For instance, it was clear East Timor was on the road to independence.)
3. While there is a general sense that such operations can only be sustained for a short period of time, there is invariably a need to stay longer. This reality makes the operation very expensive.