

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE AT THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS  
[C-34] ON FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Madam Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating you and other members of the bureau on your election. My delegation attaches the greatest importance to the work of C-34 and will cooperate with you fully in conducting the business of this session.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to align itself broadly with the statement made by the Delegation of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We thank Under Secretaries-General Alain Le Roy and Susan Malcorra for their remarks. We take note of the report of the Secretary General on the recommendations of this Committee.

Madam Chair,

Peacekeeping is a flagship activity of the UN. The mere fact that the Security Council has organized four debates under four different Presidencies during the last seven months is an indication of the enduring relevance of this activity.

In the last two decades, Peacekeeping budgets have increased twenty-seven times; the number of peacekeepers has grown about ten-fold and the number of peacekeeping operations is at an all time high.

With no new mandates having been accorded in the past few years, this is a good time to take stock.

Madam Chair,

It is evident that despite severe problems, many induced by the decision-making process itself, peacekeeping has delivered results. There are serious shortcomings. Imperfections abound, but none of these, however, detract from the achievements of the peacekeepers.

Since the last meeting of the C-34, holding of meetings with the TCC at least a week prior to renewal of mandates is a welcome development. This new practice needs to be strengthened further. Meetings have to be predictable and structured, with pre-determined agendas. This would enable TCCs, with their often considerable presence and experience on the ground, to provide meaningful inputs. The system of consultations must also be extended to cover all stages of the mission cycle.

The base of TCCs needs to be expanded further. Enhanced efforts must be made to encourage more countries to engage with the UN peacekeeping as troop and police contributors. The permanent members of the UNSC must also demonstrate their political commitment to this endeavour by contributing troops under UN command and control.

The DPKO must also integrate the gender dimensions in all Peacekeeping missions. The effectiveness of the female Indian Formed Police Unit in Liberia provides testimony.

The Secretariat has been reaching out to Member States in relation to their ongoing work of drafting the New Horizons report and in relation to the development of operational concepts in the area of Protection of Civilians and Robust Peacekeeping. There have been a large number of developments in this area. DPKO and OCHA have commissioned a study on the Protection of Civilians led by my distinguished colleague from Tanzania. DPKO organized a conference on Robust Peacekeeping for practitioners in Wilton Park last year. Draft operational concepts have been circulated. We have contributed to these processes and continue to remain engaged with them.

We would, however, like to strike a note of caution. The work that is currently being undertaken has serious implications on international law and on state sovereignty. A key issue in this context is the distinction between the actions of the Council under Chapters VI and VII. There is a time and a place for both and there should be no back-door method to obliterate the Council's responsibility to attempt peaceful settlement of disputes. The temptation to augment the theory and practice of intervention as a convenient short-cut must be avoided at all costs. On protection of civilians we must remember that this is primarily the responsibility of the host country.

The application of international humanitarian law and human rights law to UN peacekeepers is also an area where we need to tread with caution. This is because the paradigms of IHL have largely evolved without taking into account UN peacekeeping, which is based on the guiding principles of consent of the parties, non-use of force except in self-defence and impartiality. Human rights law is predicated on the

paradigm of a repressive state and a helpless individual in Western political theory. The armed militias whom the peacekeepers face today can hardly be described as helpless individuals even if the label of non-state actor applies to them.

Madam Chair,

Today, the bulk of peacekeeping presence is in operations that have undergone protracted conflict. Peacekeepers find that their presence, while leading to an improvement in the situation, does not contribute to a lasting peace. This situation has arisen due to the tendency of the Security Council to move into certain conflict areas without adequate deliberation. The Council, as the DPKO-OCHA study on Protection of Civilians says, was confused. It acted first and thought later.

We must, at this juncture, avoid the temptation to add further to the repertoire of "quick-fixes." There cannot be any short cuts in such operations. Where effective and durable peace agreements cannot be arrived at, peacekeeping operations need to be prepared for the long-haul.

In this context, we must remember that peacekeeping and peacebuilding are not mutually exclusive. Both may be required to continue simultaneously over extended period of time. As a peacekeeping operation gathers momentum, it requires more resources - not less. The success of a Peacekeeping Mission depends on its capacity to shoulder the implementation of early peacebuilding activities. Thus, the military component will have to be supplemented, and not supplanted, by police and rule of law, and a capacity for development administration.

There is no substitute for national capacities. The UN's role must be to serve national priorities and to create an enabling environment where these capacities can be developed in local and national authorities as quickly as possible.

We believe that support for national authorities is especially key in two areas. One is security sector reform and other is in provisions of primary inputs for socio-economic developments. Security Sector reform, is an area where greater concentration is required across most operations. It has been our experience that Security Sector Reform, unless driven by national priorities, as against donor priorities, will not produce good results.

Madam Chair,

The discourse over peacebuilding should not drown out the fact that much is left to be done in peacekeeping. A decade after the landmark Brahimi report, it is interesting to note which of its recommendations have been adopted and which ignored.

The recommendation that mandates should be clear, credible and achievable is one of the areas where there has been virtually no movement. The need for clear and

achievable mandates has also found mention in the draft New Horizons report. There is a steady stream of complaints from troops on the ground about unrealistic and confusing mandates and rules of engagement. It is also obvious that the resources that were provided were completely inadequate.

Should the Council not mandate responsibly? Does the responsibility of the Security Council end with the generation of a mandate? Should there not be accountability for those who mandate on the grounds of expediency and do not provide adequate guidance and resources?

These are difficult questions. But they require answers because a continuation of the current situation is likely to impact adversely on the credibility of the Council and the United Nations.

Madam Chair,

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our position that we follow a policy of zero tolerance in respect of disciplinary and conduct issues.

My delegation would also like to point out that troops are contributed by contributing countries to a larger cause: that of peace in far off lands. The safety and security of UN peacekeepers must be of paramount concern to this organization, in whose name they serve.

Madam Chair,

India has a proud history of UN peacekeeping dating back to its inception in the 1950s. As I speak today I salute the 118 Indian peacekeepers, as well as those from other countries, who have made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives while serving in UN Missions, most recently in Haiti.

After over sixty years of nation-building in one of the most diverse circumstances, India today has the experience and expertise that could be most useful for the UN in its peacekeeping and its peacebuilding efforts.

While we have contributed nearly 100,000 troops, eminent Force Commanders and participated in more than 40 missions, we stand ready to do more in furtherance of international peace and security as a partner of the UN.

Thank You.

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