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SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF PEACEKEEPING IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

“The broad and complex mandates of today’s multidimensional peace operations reflect the varied civilian, military and police capabilities required to provide support to political transitions and assisting in the development of political structures, helping to restore State authority and promote public security, strengthening rule of law institutions and supporting judicial and legal system reform, ensuring humanitarian assistance, protecting civilians, supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform and the holding of elections, and putting in place the beginnings of economic recovery.”¹

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was created to prevent war as well as to assist in rebuilding societies torn apart by violent conflict. This most high-profile of roles for the UN is complicated by the fact that the UN commands no military forces of its own but must rather depend on its member states to supply them for peacekeeping missions. The demands for peacekeeping missions and troops have increased greatly over the 60+-year life span of the UN; in 2007, over 100,000 soldiers and related personnel were deployed all over the world in 18 separate UN peacekeeping missions. While there have been important successes, as well as several high-profile controversies, casualties on peacekeeping missions have risen and the UN System must do all it can to reduce casualties. As the international community confronts both old and new peacekeeping challenges, the UN and its partners, including national governments and regional organizations, must correct previous mistakes, build upon past successes, and embrace new roles.

As the UN System and its international partners seek to improve the logistical and operational aspects of peacekeeping operations, they must ensure that special attention is focused on several key areas. The cumbersome and time-consuming process of authorizing missions, establishing appropriate mandates, appealing for personnel and equipment, and actually deploying personnel and equipment in the field, has consistently hampered UN peacekeeping operations. Once peacekeeping personnel are deployed, the UN must ensure that the mandates are appropriate for the missions and this particular question is increasingly important as several UN peacekeeping missions have had their mandates expanded to include more robust peace enforcement dimensions. The UN System must also devise a more effective system for working together with regional organizations engaged in peacekeeping as this hybridization of missions is likely to become increasingly common and important. More fully engendering peacekeeping missions will be critical as well; to do this properly, however, the UN must prevent and

¹ Ban Ki-moon, “Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Secretary-General” A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 19.

appropriately punish misconduct by peacekeeping personnel, especially acts of sexual exploitation and misconduct.

Peacekeeping Then and Now

UN peacekeeping missions were originally envisioned as being temporary, interpositional missions with mostly unarmed observers patrolling safe areas between parties that had recently stopped fighting and begun negotiating. During the Cold War from 1945-1991, relatively few UN peacekeeping operations were authorized but after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the Security Council authorized a comparatively greater number of missions, often with larger personnel complements. Originally, “the UN’s founding fathers envisioned some kind of international army, but all proposals for a standing UN force have foundered – partly because of political objections to giving the UN too much power, partly because of the political difficulties of recruiting, training and paying for such a force.”² Realizing that a permanent UN military force was not likely to gain the necessary support of the Permanent Members of the Security Council, the UN eventually devised the current system of authorizing peacekeeping missions and then requesting that countries volunteer their forces. *The Economist* argues that “this system has created a two-tier structure: powerful countries decide the missions (and pay for them) while poor countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Jordan supply the soldiers.”³ By March 2007, the contributions from the first four countries on the list accounted for approximately 40% of all UN peacekeeping personnel on the ground.⁴

In 2006, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno “noted that it was time to acknowledge that peacekeeping was not an exceptional emergency measure, but a flagship of the United Nations Organization, and that it required a sustained and comprehensive approach.”⁵ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently echoed the calls of his predecessors as well as millions of people around the world for greater peacekeeping participation by the wealthier Western countries, including the United States and many of its European NATO allies. The Secretary-General welcomed the crucial 7,000 soldiers that European countries pledged to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) following the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.⁶ The contributions of these European countries must also be counted alongside the critical NATO mission in Afghanistan; the General Assembly must consider, though, the fact that developing countries contribute the overwhelming majority of peacekeeping personnel and that distributing these responsibilities more equitably is critical for increasing political support for these missions. The operational effectiveness may also be impacted; better-financed militaries typically are able to provide better

² *The Economist*, “Call the blue helmets” January 4, 2007.

³ *The Economist*, “Call the blue helmets” January 4, 2007.

⁴ Patrick Jackson, “The UN’s South Asian workhorse” *BBC News* April 19, 2007.

⁵ A/60/19, “Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2006 substantive session” New York March 22, 2006 p. 4.

⁶ Ban Ki-moon, “Overview: Excerpts from the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization” A/62/1 September 2007 Paragraph 54.

equipment for their soldiers, including more sophisticated communications technologies and vehicles.

As UN peacekeeping has become institutionalized, the need for more effective systems of procurement and mobilization has become increasingly apparent. Peacekeeping missions were originally envisioned to last for relatively short periods of time but many peacekeeping missions have lasted for many more years than originally planned. The peacekeeping mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP) has lasted over 40 years and is unlikely to be ended soon. The duration of peacekeeping missions is not the only consideration for the UN System; mandates are becoming increasingly assertive as well. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted that “the expansion of peacekeeping mandates has made it more important than ever to clearly define and articulate what peacekeeping can do, and, equally important, what it cannot do.”⁷ In 2006, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations stressed “the need to ensure, in the formulation and implementation of mandates, adequate resources, congruity between mandates, resources and realizable objectives.” Furthermore, “when changes are made to an existing mandate, commensurate changes should be made to the resources available to a peacekeeping mission to carry out its new mandate.”⁸ The peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) received a more robust mandate, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, in response to increasing violence in the eastern provinces of that country, including the targeted killing of UN peacekeepers.⁹ Providing peacekeeping soldiers with more assertive mandates may improve their operational effectiveness but the local people may see these mandates as compromising the peacekeepers’ impartiality. And in the most tragic irony of all, peacekeepers may accidentally end up harming and even killing the very civilians they were sent to protect.

Peacekeeping missions are becoming more complex as the UN’s member states demand more of the organization. “Since 1991, peacekeeping operations have had the task of assisting national authorities in establishing new policing institutions or in building the capacity and integrity of existing structures in 25 countries.”¹⁰ There are currently at least 11,000 UN peacekeeping personnel deployed in police capacities and the UN is frequently charged with training and reconstituting police forces as well as improving the training of corrections officers in various host countries. In addition to this increased emphasis on assisting in the reconstitution of police and correctional staff, civilian peacekeeping staff is increasingly involved in post-conflict planning and administration of conflict and post-conflict situations as in Namibia and Kosovo. The UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) mission in Namibia from April 1989 through March 1990 is frequently considered one of the most important successes in UN history

⁷ Kofi Annan, “‘Peace operations 2010’ reform strategy: excerpts from the report of the Secretary-General” A/60/696 February 24, 2006 Paragraph 11.

⁸ A/60/19, “Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2006 substantive session” New York March 22, 2006 p. 9.

⁹ Patrick Jackson, “When the gloves of peace come off” *BBC News* April 18, 2007.

¹⁰ Ban Ki-moon, “Securing peace and development: the role of the United Nations in supporting security sector reform: Report of the Secretary-General” A/62/659-S/2008/39 January 23, 2008 p. 8.

and delegates may wish to examine this particular peacekeeping mission to determine if similar successes may be possible for current and future missions.¹¹

Improving protection of UN peacekeepers and related staff from harm is an essential component of any comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations. At least 67 peacekeepers and related staff members were killed in 2007 and casualties have escalated in recent years. Protecting peacekeepers and related staff is essential to the success of any UN peacekeeping mission; in 1994, after 10 Belgian peacekeepers were murdered at the beginning of the Rwandan genocide, the Belgian government removed all of its remaining peacekeeping forces, dramatically reducing the size and effectiveness of UNAMIR at the very time that these peacekeepers were most needed.

Authorizing, Financing, Staffing and Deploying Peacekeeping Missions

The process for authorizing peacekeeping missions is straightforward: the Security Council authorizes a peacekeeping mission, typically for 6 months at a time, with a projected maximum number of soldiers and related personnel and a mandate for what the peacekeepers are supposed to achieve. The crucial difficulties come in financing and then actually deploying these peacekeeping missions; in fact, the first UN peacekeepers typically do not arrive for at least 6 months after the mission has been authorized. The General Assembly Fifth Committee decides the annual peacekeeping budgets as well as the individual budgets for each peacekeeping mission. While peacekeeping costs have certainly escalated in recent years, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted in September 2007 that “the current annual budget for United Nations peacekeeping is approximately \$5.6 billion, which represents one half of 1 per cent of global military spending.”¹² Even though the entire annual costs for all of the UN peacekeeping missions represent only a tiny fraction of global military spending, many member states delay sending their peacekeeping contributions for months, thereby hamstringing the UN at crucial junctures. In its 2006 report, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations reiterated “that all Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.” The Special Committee also reaffirmed “the obligation of Member States, under Article 17 of the Charter, to bear the expenses of the Organization as apportioned by the General Assembly, bearing in mind the special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 1874 (S-IV) of 27 June 1963.”¹³ During the 61st session of the General Assembly, September 2006-August 2007, the delegates of the General Assembly approved the revised structure of assessments for peacekeeping operations by requiring Serbia and Montenegro to pay at the lowest level of current assessments. The General Assembly also approved the Secretary-General’s recommendation that the GA

¹¹ Please see: http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/untag.htm

¹² Ban Ki-moon, A/62/1 September 2007 Paragraph 51.

¹³ A/60/19, “Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group at the 2006 substantive session” New York March 22, 2006 p. 31.

update the contributions during the 64th session, September 2009-August 2010, “in light of the decision of the Assembly to review the structure of levels.”¹⁴

Staffing peacekeeping missions can also be a logistical nightmare. While there are six official languages for the UN, English and French are the two working languages of the UN, especially in field offices and operations. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations recently urged the Secretary-General “to ensure a fair representation of troop-contributing countries when selecting personnel for such staff positions. At the same time, troop-contributing countries need to ensure that prospective staff have the required professional background and experience.”¹⁵ Troop-contributing countries need to further ensure that the proposed staff members for any peacekeeping mission have not committed serious crimes or human rights violations. While the UN System is striving to improve its operational capacities to evaluate its employees and related staff, it still primarily depends on its member states to recommend appropriate staff.

Developing a Rapid Response Capacity

One of the most disturbing criticisms of UN peacekeeping missions is that in grave humanitarian crises, peacekeepers only arrive in the crisis zones after many civilians have been killed. In the worst instance, the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the UN had approximately 2,500 peacekeepers in Rwanda when the genocide began but the size of UNAMIR was pared down to less than 300 within 6 weeks of the genocide beginning. Further compounding the disaster was the fact that most analyses of the genocide in Rwanda point out that some 300,000 people were killed in the first weeks. Providing the UN with a rapid response capability, particularly including vehicles and communications technologies, as well as a more robust mandate allowing the peacekeepers to protect Rwandan civilians may have saved several hundred thousand of the more than 800,000 victims of the Rwandan genocide. Ensuring that the UN has the equipment it needs is vital in these situations. General Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian force commander of UNAMIR, noted that rapid response capabilities as well as logistical capacities are necessary for effective crises responses. When discussing the troop-contributing countries for UNAMIR 2, Dallaire argues that their lack of logistical capacity weakened the operational effectiveness and credibility of UNAMIR. “None of the nations that eventually stepped forward had the capacity for the massive reinforcement that might have brought the UN credibility in the eyes of the belligerents.”¹⁶

As the UN System explores different options for improving its rapid response capabilities, it must seek to maintain and stockpile appropriate equipment as well as to improve cooperation with troop-contributing countries that are willing to send

¹⁴ A/RES/61/243 “Scale of Assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations” March 7, 2007.

¹⁵ Ban Ki-moon, “Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Secretary-General” A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 30.

¹⁶ Romeo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* Random House Canada Toronto 2003 p. 375.

peacekeepers in with relatively little advance notice. In recent years, the UN, working in close consultation with member states, established the United Nations Standby Arrangements System to improve the UN's rapid response capability. Cooperating member states agree to train and maintain specific military, police, and support units and related equipment, and to lend them to the UN for crisis response missions. These peacekeeping units and their equipment are available to the UN within either 30 or 90 days of the approval of a peacekeeping mission by the Security Council. As of April 2005, 83 UN member states had joined the United Nations Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS).¹⁷ Effective preplanning is absolutely essential for the UN's rapid response capabilities to provide the desired results.

Recruitment and Retention of Personnel

The UN has become increasingly concerned with the need to recruit and retain expert personnel to work in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Over the past 60 years, crucial lessons have been learned and it is essential that this knowledge and expertise be institutionalized and effectively implemented. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has established a Peacekeeping Best Practices Section to retain and implement the accrued knowledge. This Best Practices Section is funded almost exclusively through voluntary contributions from donor states; encouraging Member States to begin, continue, and/or increase contributing to the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section will be another priority for this Special Session of the General Assembly. An earlier proposal for 2,500 career civilian peacekeepers was not recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions because "the streamlining of contractual arrangements would eliminate the mission-specific appointment and allow international staff to become part of the global workforce, with the same mobility requirements and career development prospects as the rest of the Secretariat."¹⁸ Even without these proposed career civilian peacekeepers, it is evident that institutionalizing essential knowledge and best practices gleaned from years of experience is absolutely vital for future peacekeeping successes.

Forging Partnerships with Regional Organizations

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that "a central dilemma facing the Integrated Training Service is the problem of scale: it cannot provide training for the more than 100,000 personnel in the field. Thus, the Service collaborates closely with Member States and other partners who also engage in United Nations peacekeeping training."¹⁹ The Secretary-General continued by stating that "enhancing strategic partnerships with multilateral and regional organizations has become a high priority for

¹⁷ Please see:

http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/milad/fgs2/unsas_files/status_report/statusreport15april05.pdf

¹⁸ Ban Ki-moon, "Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Secretary-General" A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 12.

¹⁹ Ban Ki-moon "Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Secretary-General" A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 12.

the burden-sharing of peacekeeping.”²⁰ Hybridization of peacekeeping missions in the Darfur region of Western Sudan through the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and with the European Union (EU) in the new United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) call for “intensive collaboration” and will prove “especially challenging”, according to Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno.²¹

The necessity of creating hybrid peacekeeping missions has become clearer the longer that the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan has lasted. The African Union (AU) authorized a peacekeeping mission of almost entirely unarmed observers several years ago and since then has had to rely almost exclusively on Nigeria and Rwanda to supply the 7,000 AU peacekeepers deployed in a region roughly the size of France. On July 31, 2007, the UN Security Council authorized the creation of a hybrid force of up to 26,000 AU and UN peacekeepers but as of January 2008, only 9,000 peacekeepers were deployed in Darfur.²² The hybrid mission (UNAMID) was authorized, at least in part, because of continuing attacks on the AU peacekeepers by the Sudanese government, its proxy, the Janjaweed militia, and several of the estimated 13 different rebel groups operating in Darfur. At the end of September 2007, 10 Nigerian peacekeeping soldiers were killed in another large-scale attack and at least another 40 wounded.²³ As a part of this hybrid mission, China, Sudan’s most important customer and ally on the Security Council, has sent 135 peacekeepers to assist this mission, although not in any frontline capacities.²⁴ Given the refugee exoduses into Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR), along with continuing cross-border raids and violence, and the logistical and financial hurdles that the African Union (AU) is facing in Darfur as well as in its prospective peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the UN Security Council has had to seek out other partners for the new peacekeeping mission in Chad and the CAR. This new mission, the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), will be comprised primarily of European Union troops, especially French Special Forces and support troops operating from French bases in Chad. Given France’s alliance with President Idriss Deby of Chad and its continuing involvement in both the CAR and Chad, “the humanitarian intent and neutrality of the EU force is being queried.”²⁵ Obtaining the financial, logistical, and operational advantages of 3,700 well-equipped EU peacekeepers is vital for the UN but the long-term costs of possibly compromising the impartiality of peacekeeping missions may be incalculable.

Engendering Peacekeeping

As the UN has made gender equality a centerpiece of reform efforts systemwide, it is not surprising that these efforts must include peacekeeping. Secretary-General Ban

²⁰ Ban Ki-moon A/62/1/ September 2007 Paragraph 60.

²¹ Department of Public Information (DPI), “Momentous Year for United Nations Peacekeeping as it Mounts Two Unique Operations in Africa, Sustains 18 More, Restructures Department, Fourth Committee Told” GA/SPD/382 New York October 31, 2007 p. 2.

²² *BBC News*, “Peacekeepers attacked in Darfur” January 8, 2008.

²³ *The Economist*, “The worsening violence in Darfur” October 10, 2007.

²⁴ Michael Bristow, “China’s dilemma over Darfur” *BBC News* February 13, 2008.

²⁵ *The Economist*, “A peacekeeping puzzle for Europe” December 13, 2007.

Ki-moon recently asserted that “women peacekeepers also serve as role models and catalysts to increase the participation of local women in post-conflict processes. Moreover, the increased participation of senior women peacekeepers strengthens the credibility of the United Nations to more effectively advocate for democratic and inclusive governance in post-conflict countries, by serving as a standard-setter, including through the composition of its own personnel.”²⁶ As concrete evidence of the implementation of these reforms, the Secretary-General noted that the percentage of women serving in senior civilian positions in peacekeeping operations increased by more than 40% in 2007 and that women were appointed to either lead or serve as deputy heads of mission for peacekeeping missions in Burundi, Liberia, and Sudan.²⁷ Women peacekeepers are essential to reassuring local civilian populations, especially women and children, that the UN is serious about preventing some of the sexual misconduct recently perpetrated by UN peacekeeping soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Preventing and Punishing Misconduct by UN Peacekeepers

The UN’s reputation is always damaged when personnel either directly employed by the organization or associated with it are accused of corruption, human rights violations, or sexual exploitation and abuse. In late November 2006, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jane Holl Lute acknowledged to the BBC that “exploitation of vulnerable populations” had been a problem “since the inception of peacekeeping.”²⁸ In 2004, 105 allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, assault, or rape were leveled against UN peacekeepers and at least 53 peacekeepers were sent home after specific allegations were substantiated.²⁹ While these types of abuses and misconduct may occur on most or all UN peacekeeping missions, the larger peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, and Liberia, where peacekeepers interacted with local populations on a daily basis, generated a comparatively large number of the most serious complaints, including rape of an 11-year old girl in Haiti and routine demands for sexual favors from women and girls in return for protection and/or food. As part of the systemwide reform efforts to reduce and/or eliminate corruption and criminal behavior, the UN has strengthened its internal systems for reviewing allegations, established stronger rules against fraternization by peacekeepers with local populations, and established systems to provide counseling and assistance to the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers and related personnel.³⁰ In December 2006,

²⁶ Ban Ki-moon, “Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations: Report of the Secretary-General” A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 10.

²⁷ Ban Ki-moon, A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 10.

²⁸ *BBC News*, “Press Release: Evidence of sexual abuse by peacekeepers uncovered” November 30, 2006. Found at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/11_november/30/un.shtml

²⁹ *BBC News*, “UN sexual allegations double” May 6, 2005.

³⁰ Delegates may wish to review the following resolutions: A/RES/61/267 “Comprehensive Review of a Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Operations” June 15, 2007; & A/RES/62/214 “United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel” December 21, 2007.

many UN entities endorsed the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations and non-United Nations Personnel, which designates 10 priority actions for the UN System, including using background checks whenever possible and preventing the rehiring and/or redeployment of peacekeepers who have committed acts of sexual exploitation or abuse.³¹

Integrated Planning and Anticipating Future Needs

As the demand for peacekeeping continues to escalate, and as the complexities of the missions and their accompanying mandates increase, it becomes ever more important for the UN to plan more effectively for each peacekeeping mission as well as to anticipate future needs. The UN System's emphasis on collaboration is exemplified by the contemporary approach to peacekeeping planning. The Security Council, General Assembly, Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), national governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) all collaborate in the planning of peacekeeping operations. The UN is now seeking to incorporate the perspectives of international financial institutions (IFI's), including the World Bank Group, in planning peacekeeping operations as well as post-conflict transitions.

Conclusion

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions is critical to the UN and the international community's obligations to prevent and resolve conflicts as well as to protect civilians from harm. Reforming the UN's processes and procedures for recruiting and retaining qualified personnel, financing and equipping peacekeeping missions, improving the UN's rapid response capabilities, forging lasting partnerships with regional organizations, engendering peacekeeping, and preventing and punishing misconduct by peacekeepers and related personnel are all necessary elements of peacekeeping reform. Improving the image of peacekeeping operations and the UN System in general is a further vital step in peacekeeping reform. "Effective public relations and communications is a vital part of supporting operations, protecting the investment of the international community in peacekeeping and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel."³²

Guiding Questions:

Does your country contribute to UN peacekeeping missions? If so, in what capacities? If not, why not?

³¹ "Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations and non-United Nations Personnel" December 4, 2006.

Found at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/CDT/statement.pdf>

³² Ban Ki-moon, A/62/627 December 28, 2007 p. 5.

Is your country a member of the UN Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS)? If not, why not?

How can the UN System more effectively engender peacekeeping missions and post-conflict transition planning?

What further steps does the UN System need to take to ensure that peacekeepers maintain their impartiality and also do not commit acts of abuse against civilian populations, including sexual exploitation and abuse?