

Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
23 February 2011
Ambassador Maneev Singh Puri, Deputy Permanent Representative of India

Madam Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating you and members of the bureau on your reelection. My delegation attaches the greatest importance to the work of C-34 Committee and will cooperate with you fully in conducting the business of this session. My delegation also aligns itself broadly with the statement made by the Delegation of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We thank Under Secretary Generals Alain Le Roy and Susana Malcorra for their briefings yesterday.

Madam Chair,

Peacekeeping is a flagship activity of the UN. The number of debates on peacekeeping in the Security Council in the first two months of this year indicates the enduring relevance of this activity. Peacekeepers on the ground are at an all time high and Peacekeeping budget has increased five folds over the last decade. Peacekeeping continues to be a critical tool with the UN to effect international peace and security. Our peacekeepers have carried out their duties in a commendable fashion given the severity of tasks, expanding mandates, shrinking resources, and complex political challenges. Past one year has been demanding for the peacekeepers and the time is to evaluate the approaches and strategies in all spheres of peacekeeping enterprise.

Madam Chair,

Peacekeeping has continued to deliver despite of imperfections induced by ambitious mandates, resource overstretch, challenges to integration & coherence, and the distances between the field and the headquarters. Disconnect between the mandates and their implementation compounds the Peacekeeping enterprise. Challenges of oversight, command & control, and human resource management do not make it any easier. Voices from the field continue to get drowned among the initiatives that we attempt at the Headquarters. My delegation recommends strong field orientation in everything we do and to leverage the expertise available with the TCCs and field experts in peacekeeping. In order to address the issue of personnel overstretch it is incumbent that we expand the catchment of troop contributing countries. Those on the margins need to be encouraged to join the mainstream in order to ensure disbursed burden sharing and diversified capacity development. The Permanent members of the Security Council must lead by example by making their troops available under UN command and control. During the past year we continued our engagements with various peacekeeping initiatives such as the New Horizon Non Paper, Global Field Support Strategy, Protection of Civilians, Robust Peacekeeping, Peacekeeping Peacebuilding Nexus, and lately the Civilian Capacity Review mandated by the Secretary General.

Madam Chair,

My delegation, however, would 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. We must not mislead ourselves to believe that the shifting of mandates to another chapter will distinguish success from failure. Peacekeeping today stands on the firm foundations built over decades on the building blocks of neutrality, impartiality, consent and non-use of force. Alterations in the established rules of the game should not be undertaken with undue haste and without evidences from the ground. Our convictions must

emanate from our own belief systems but also from what we observe and learn on the grounds. Madam President, only extraordinary situations demand extraordinary measures. While we learn from the extremes we should desist practicing these in the routine. The peacekeeping missions today need abundant caution while treading amid state sovereignty and international human right regimes. Armed militias that peacekeepers are faced with can hardly be described as helpless and victimized citizens. Principles of consent by host government, neutrality, and use of force in self-defence acquire different connotations in that context.

Madam Chair,

The protection of civilians is primarily the responsibility of the host country. This is an umbrella mandate that requires long-term strategies and engagements to protect women, children and civilians populations. Being the legitimate force on the ground, peacekeepers do bear an important responsibility in this regard. However, we must remember that peacekeepers cannot protect all the civilians, everywhere and at all times. The implementation of PoC mandate is inextricably linked with the success of the political process and its outcomes. In this context our strategies and guidelines in this regard should be realistic and informed of the ground realities.

Madam Chair,

Today, the bulk of peacekeeping presence is in protracted conflict. However, the peacekeeping missions have continued on the ground due to the political non-settlement of the conflicts. Protracted presence also complicates the operational challenges that peacekeeper is expected to surmount. Lasting, durable and sustainable peace requires that we at the UN think through the challenges before launching the missions. Not only do we need to manage the expectations of host populations but also those of ours. The practice of acting first and thinking later with hindsight needs to be abandoned. Peacekeeping is a long haul process and peacebuilding even more.

Madam Chair,

Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are processes that are complementary and not mutually exclusive. Early peacebuilding dividends enhance mission credibility among the to the host populations. Attempts to make these sequential or compartmentalized will be counterproductive. Success depends on the coherence, harmony, and synergy among peacekeeping and peacebuilding tasks. We are hopeful of the beginnings made by PBC in recent times and we look forward to greater complementarity and synergy between PBC and PBF in this regard. We must remain mindful that the self-sustaining institutions of basic governance will only allow successful drawdown of peacekeeping missions. Thus, the military component of peacekeeping missions will have to be supplemented, and not supplanted, by police and rule of law, and a capacity for development administration. The approach of segregating peacebuilding from peacekeeping tasks is counterproductive. We believe that theoretic compartmentalizations along thematic lines make implementation of integrated mission strategies difficult on the ground. To that extent the PBC and PBF projects must not be evaluated on a stand-alone basis but rather in tandem with the overall mission strategy, momentum, directions, and mission objectives. It is also imperative that the mission priorities are aligned firmly with national needs and priorities and are not transplanted from elsewhere.

We believe that the support to the national authorities in security sector reforms, rule of law, transitional justice and corrections is of critical importance. Restoration of national institutions of governance should be our top priority in the immediate aftermath of peace-restoration. We believe that the strategies of development and economic revitalization will not take roots unless grounded upon institutions of state administration. In these times of financial austerity we should also plan to do what we can afford to do.

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. Troops on the ground find these mandates unrealistic and confusing. Secretariat reforms have also languished considerably. Enhanced coordination and cooperation among secretariat departments is desirable. HQ functions need to be harmonized better. Integrated mission models will remain mere paper strategies so long we do not make progress on this front. Critical elements of mission execution such as leadership, mediation expertise, reporting efficiency, planning, oversight, information sharing, and political analysis both in real time and long term need further attention.

Madam Chair,

My delegation has been attentive to the briefings by DFS on the evolving global field support strategy. We are keen to witness its positive outcomes in day to day functioning of a peacekeeper's life. We would also encourage DFS to engage the membership in substantive aspects of discussions and deliberation. We must not lose sight of its objectives that are about bringing efficiency to mission operations. My delegation also notes SG's efforts with regard to the Civilian Capacity Review. While we wait to hear its findings, my delegation would like to reiterate the importance of making this process consultative, inclusive and membership driven. We must also exercise vigilance in not prejudging the efficacy of any of its recommendations. Our thoughts and actions must be situated more in the fields and less in capitals taking due cognizance of existing expertise. Building upon the existing partnerships is far more critical for mission success than launching fresh beginnings. My delegation appreciates and welcomes DPKO's initiative towards gender mainstreaming in all Peacekeeping Missions. The performance of India's female formed-police-unit in Liberia stands testimony to the value that women peacekeepers bring to this endeavor. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our stand with regard to zero tolerance in respect of disciplinary and conduct issues. My delegation would also like to point out that we contribute troops for 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 partnered UN peacekeeping since its inception in the 1950s. I salute the 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 the DRC. India today has the expertise, willingness and means to support peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. With about 100,000 personnel and eminent force commanders having served in over 40 missions, India remains committed to the furtherance of international peace and security as partner of the UN. I Thank You
Madam Chair.