

Security Council Open Debate on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
Friday, 6th August 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

I should like to thank you, Sir, for having organized this very important discussion. I am very glad to see the Under-Secretary-General and the Force Commanders here in our midst.

As one of the most active participants in United Nations peacekeeping operations, India attaches very great significance to United Nations peacekeeping and its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The context of United Nations peacekeeping is changing, and this changing scenario demands changes in our response. It is therefore good that we are having across-the-board discussions on United Nations peacekeeping in different forums. Our delegation has engaged constructively and made meaningful contributions to the evolution of the policy discourse on United Nations peacekeeping.

India's experience in United Nations peacekeeping is unparalleled and our credentials can be matched by few others. We have been present in virtually every United Nations peacekeeping operation. Today, we are present in significant numbers in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste. Recently, in response to a request from the United Nations, we have tripled our police contribution to MINUSTAH.

Indeed, as I speak here, more than 8,000 Indian soldiers and police personnel are deployed in United Nations peacekeeping. It is they who are converting the Council's words into action, and they do so in exceedingly challenging circumstances and situations. I am happy that in the long tradition of supporting United Nations peacekeeping by providing senior leadership, we have just seconded Lieutenant General Chander Prakash Wadhwa of the Indian Army to be the Force Commander of MONUSCO. I am happy that he is here in the Council today.

The role of **women** in peacekeeping has been a key focus for the Security Council. We have endeavoured to meet the Council's aspirations in this regard, too. I have the honour to draw the attention of the Council here to the **Indian female formed police unit in Liberia**, which has not only brought credit to United Nations peacekeeping but has also added possible new and very much required dimensions to the scope of the efforts of United Nations peacekeeping. We are also working on the possibility of **increasing the number of such female peacekeepers**.

The nature of the Security Council's mandates and the manner in which they are generated is an area that needs to be looked at carefully. In today's context, mandates have been found to be too broad and detached from realities on the ground. It is important that mandates be clear, achievable and in keeping with the available capabilities and resources. This is particularly true for uniformed personnel, who, by virtue of their organizational culture, are used to clear instructions and objectives. Unrealistic mandates also lead to situations in which missions start asking contingents to undertake tasks and utilize contingent owned equipment in a manner that is inconsistent with the framework of their deployment agreed between the contributing countries and the United Nations.

This, of course, demands the substantive engagement of the countries that contribute manpower and resources to the peacekeeping operations, and we can only reiterate the absolutely critical imperative that such consultations be substantive, meaningful and result in views of troop contributors providing the bedrock of the mandate decision. There have been improvements in this regard, but much more needs to be done. For example, we have yet to be briefed in detail about recent developments in the UNIFIL operational area despite our troops being there. We have also had occasions in recent times, in terms of specific events in a United Nations operation in West Africa where we have

peacekeepers, when we have been concerned by command and control issues on the ground and have had concerns in terms of keeping us in the loop in New York.

Peacekeeping, for a long time, was essentially about Blue Helmets and establishing a measure of security. In the type of crises that we face today we need a much broader array of responses than the pure security one. Today's peacekeepers have come to play a critical role in humanitarian emergencies and are often thrust into the midst of civil wars. Frequently they are called upon to protect civilian populations when they have been uprooted from their homes. Law and order challenges have added the civilian dimension to peacekeeping operations. Disarming combatants and reforming the security sector have also become essential to a peacekeeping strategy.

In such circumstances we need to be particularly concerned about ensuring a high degree of operational support. Lack of equipment and spares and inadequate living conditions are critical areas that rarely receive attention. Forces are not given sufficient time to prepare for operations on the ground. Hence, I think it is very important that there be a clear recognition that better peacekeeping requires more resources, human and material, including command.

In closing, I salute peacekeepers from my country and fellow nations who have laid down their lives for United Nations missions. India reiterates its commitment to working with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.