

Security Council Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping: A Multidimensional Approach, January 21st 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. DeLaurentis, Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations.

I would like to thank you, Foreign Secretary Jilani, for presiding over today's important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his presentation. Pakistan has been one of the top contributors of uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era. The United States is grateful for its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping, and we are honoured to participate in this discussion under its leadership.

Peacekeeping is one of the most important activities undertaken by the United Nations. It has reduced the incidence of inter- and intra-State conflict around the globe. Many countries, from Namibia to El Salvador and from Mozambique to Timor-Leste, have transitioned from war to peace, thanks in no small measure to the assistance they received from multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations. Multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping has achieved many successes since the Security Council established the first such operation, more than 50 years ago, in the Congo. But United Nations peacekeeping must continue to evolve to remain relevant in the years to come. I would like to focus today on some features that the United States would like to see in new multidimensional peacekeeping operations, wherever they may be.

First is a diverse mix of troop and police contributors, drawn certainly from the regions concerned and from other regions as well. The universal character of United Nations peacekeeping missions is very important to its legitimacy. United Nations troops must have the right training and capabilities to be operationally effective. To those ends, the Council should be more engaged early on with the leadership of the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations and the Secretary-General on the force-generation strategy. Force generation is a political, not a technical, exercise, and must be treated as such.

Second, mission staffing strategies should rely on quality over quantity, especially with respect to leadership and civilian experts. To win a host population's confidence, a United Nations mission must quickly deploy real expertise and skills that the host country does not itself possess. Ten world-class experts arriving at the outset of a mission are far better than 100 mediocre generalists trickling in over time. As multidimensional peacekeeping evolves, the Secretary-General's initiative on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict should be fully embraced. Improved staffing also means accelerating gender balance in missions and the broader inclusion of women in all mission tasks and units. We welcome the positive impact that all-female units have had in Liberia and Haiti, and now in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire, and we want to see women playing a greater role, in greater numbers, in activities and leadership across the spectrum of peacekeeping activities.

Third, more military police and civilian personnel should receive relevant guidance and training before arriving at theatres. The Secretariat has made strides in developing standards, training materials, specialized guidance and policies on issues ranging from the protection of civilians to gender and health. Those resources must be put to good use.

Fourth, mission leadership should prioritize cooperation throughout the mission. Peacekeeping operations have grown increasingly complex as they have been asked to tackle a host of interrelated challenges in order to address conflict. One of the strengths of the United Nations is that it can

deploy a truly multidisciplinary response in a way that other actors cannot; but that is an asset only if the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, which requires deep and sustained intra-mission cooperation. Mission management should design orientation and training programmes together, and devise truly mission-wide strategies for key mandated tasks, such as the protection of civilians. Jointness must become routine and prioritized, from mission planning to tabletop exercises to staffing operations and mission analysis centres. United Nations peacekeeping missions and country teams, moreover, must work hand in hand, including in the design of quick-impact projects and other initiatives to help generate local goodwill.

Fifth, we would like to see the entire mission leadership — special representatives of the Secretary-General and their deputies, force commanders, police commissioners and directors of mission support — taking action to ensure adherence to the zero-tolerance policy for misconduct. That includes swiftly investigating allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse and repatriating offending units.

Sixth, we hope that troops, police and civilian personnel in United Nations missions will begin to receive world-class logistics and administrative support, while the support component's physical footprint is light and cost-effective. That is the promise of the global field support strategy, and it must be realized for the sake of the operational effectiveness and fiscal responsibility of the United Nations.

Seventh, the special representatives of the Secretary-General should promote multidisciplinary cooperation, not only within the United Nations system but also among multilateral and bilateral assistance providers. We hope she — and I say “she” deliberately — will foster information-sharing among those actors and help forge a division of labour that builds on their comparative strengths.

Eighth, peacekeeping can succeed only if there is genuine peace to support. Peacekeeping missions can help stabilize and catalyse recovery in countries emerging from conflict, but the Security Council must do its part to ensure that the political settlement underlying the deployment of peacekeepers stays on track. The commitment of the political leaders of the host country to work with a mission is indispensable.

Last but not least, multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping missions need the respect and gratitude of the host nation. The steps I have just outlined can help in that regard, as would efforts by mission personnel to familiarize themselves with local language and culture and empathize with the local population. But sometimes respect can be won only when peacekeepers refuse to turn a blind eye to flagrant transgressions; when they demonstrate the will and wherewithal to use force to defend themselves and enforce their mandate; and when they tell the Security Council plainly what we need to know, even if it is difficult.

Fortunately, the next operation will not start from scratch. We have learned much in 50 years of multidimensional peacekeeping, and we have the progress hard-earned by past and current operations to build upon.