



**Statement by Mr. V. K. Nambiar, Permanent Representative, on United Nations
Peacekeeping Operations at the Security Council on May 17, 2004.**

Mr. President,

India welcomes this opportunity to participate in an open debate of the Security Council on “*United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*”. We were happy to see the Hon’ble Foreign Minister of Pakistan preside over this morning’s segment of the meeting.

The first question we ask concerns the appositeness of the present debate and the Council’s precise *locus standi* in it. While the role of the Council is indubitable in the setting up and running of individual peacekeeping operations, we are not convinced it is the most appropriate forum to discuss policy or even general operational issues related to peacekeeping. These have traditionally vested with the General Assembly and specifically with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Even as member states consider the question of UN reform and delegations bemoan the erosion of the role and activities of the General Assembly, my delegation notices a strange inability on the part of the Assembly to withstand the steady acquisitiveness by the Council in areas including this one. This is all the more disturbing when combined by the tendency, in some quarters, to view the whole process of coping with complex emergencies from a ‘pro-consular’ or even a ‘*mission civilisatrice*’ perspective. Such an approach needs to be eschewed, equally from the Council as elsewhere. It should clearly not infect the attitude of the Secretariat. We strongly urge that the constitutional ‘separation of powers’ between the Council and the Assembly be respected.

Mr. President,

Peacekeeping operations are mandated to perform specific tasks. They are not meant to be missions in perpetuity. Upon the completion of these tasks they must be drawn down and eventually wound up. The missions in Rwanda and Angola provide important and useful examples where the governments concerned decided at a certain point of time that the peacekeeping operation had served its purpose. They welcomed a continued UN presence but not in the form of peacekeepers. Admittedly, the exit of peacekeepers cannot be allowed to take place in a hasty or injudicious manner as that could jeopardize the very gains achieved. We are all aware of the case of Haiti in the mid-1990’s. Missions could face premature termination when a cease-fire unravels, the pre-existing political will disappears, or the Council refuses to recognise changed realities on the ground. At the same time, *rebus sic stantibus* cannot be characterised as a failure of the UN or its mission.

Mr. President,

As more and more demands are made for UN intervention in complex situations, diverse sets of actors are increasingly seen in the theatres of conflict. Some demarcation of functions and responsibilities would, therefore, be useful for clarity. We should be conscious that there are limitations of the capacity of the UN in terms of material, personnel or financial resources. The UN cannot be everywhere.

When considering the *scope* of peacekeeping, there is often a tendency to confuse peacekeeping with post-conflict peace building. Approaches that involve an understanding of local ground realities and that are evolved with the participation of the governments involved are likely to be more successful than those seen as imposed from outside. Post-conflict peace building cannot be

achieved through peacekeepers, the majority of which are groups of observers or formed contingents with no knowledge, experience or mandate to take on economic, social or other tasks associated with post-conflict reconstruction. While, perhaps, peace-building elements need to be integrated into the overall approach from the outset, peacekeeping can only lay the ground for post-conflict reconciliation, reconstruction and development. This further responsibility is best left to other Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the UN system and, in the final analysis, must be locally-owned. Indeed, as long as major contributors remain unwilling to pay for such activities through assessed contributions, such examples of 'mission creep' would continue to be viewed with suspicion.

Nor do we believe that peacekeepers have any intrinsic role in conflict resolution or in addressing the underlying causes of conflict, especially where these are largely socio-economic in nature such as poverty and deprivation. A peacekeeping operation is an interim measure and of limited duration. It is part of a broader international engagement. It is not a substitute for the task of nation-building, economic development or of international co-operation. It cannot be a stand-in for a negotiated political settlement. Peacekeeping mandates cannot and should not be intrusive or interventionist.

Mr. President,

There has been a predilection, of late, to lean towards regional solutions in peacekeeping, particularly in the context of Africa. While recognizing this reality, we must guard against such operations becoming franchised or sub-contracted to a degree where the Security Council is perceived as using regionalization as a device to shirk the exercise of its global responsibility for peace and security. Further there are those who advocate the "transfer" of specialized assets and even troops of a contributing country from one mission in the region to another. We regard such solutions as self-serving and contrary to the practices and provisions allowed under the Charter. Every mission is unique, established as it is in pursuance of a specific Security Council mandate. We see a risk, sometimes, in regionalization in the peacekeeping context and feel there can be no 'confederacy' of peacekeeping missions.

For similar reasons we see limited utility and a degree of risk in "encouraging" coordination among Special Representatives of the Secretary General [SRSG] in a region. While some sharing of experiences, lessons learned and resources in a regional context might be useful, it must be remembered that SRSGs are not "free agents." Each is appointed for a specific mission, for a specific purpose and must operate within mission-specific mandates. Too much cross-feed can cause diffusion and even distortion of focus. Sharing of experiences must be done, where necessary, at UN Headquarters, Heads of Mission Conferences, or when senior officers of the DPKO visit the region.

Mr. President,

On increasing the effectiveness of Headquarters' support, we stress the need for greater synergy in effective utilization of capacities already existing within the UN system. Where this does not happen, the systemic problems involved need to be addressed. Mere infusion of extra personnel or the creation of new divisions will not work.

Other important issues include the continuing commitment gaps in the contribution of personnel and equipment to UN peacekeeping operations, the strengthening of existing mechanisms of cooperation with troop contributing countries and problems concerning the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. On the issue of commitment gaps, we need only recall the fact that almost 80 per cent of the troops deployed in UN- PKOs are contributed by developing countries. There is also a perceived imbalance in the assumption of roles and responsibilities by the UN in different regions as distinct from non-UN operations.

The recent activation of the mechanism of joint meetings between the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and troop contributing countries is a welcome step. We look forward to more such meetings concerning individual operations in the future and to *a greater interaction* in these meetings with *Council members* in a manner that takes cognizance of the views of the TCCs and contributes to the outcome of decisions in the Council.

India's performance in the field of peacekeeping under the UN flag is well recognized around the world and I shall not dwell upon it in detail. We fully subscribe to concerns about safety and security of peacekeepers and associated UN personnel. This must, in all instances, receive the very high priority

it deserves. Ultimately, however, the best guarantee for safety and security of peacekeepers is a properly planned and mandated mission, comprising well trained, equipped and disciplined contingents, and one where troops are not deployed in a void or where the political process is either non-existent or compromised. It must express the priorities of the larger community of member states and not those of a select few.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we trust that today's deliberations in the Council will help in improving the quality and content of decision-making in the General Assembly on policy and operational aspects of UN peacekeeping operations.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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