



Statement by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, in the UN Security Council on Peacekeeping in New York on August 5, 2009



Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking you for organizing this debate on Peacekeeping. India attaches the greatest importance to the issue of Peacekeeping. This is the second time within a space of six weeks that I am speaking in this chamber on this topic. This is indicative of the importance that my delegation attaches to engaging in the ongoing deliberations on this subject in the Council and in other fora.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to align itself broadly with the statement made by the Delegation of Morocco on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

A number of initiatives, including the initiative by the delegations of the United Kingdom and France, are presently underway to take stock of the current state of peacekeeping.

Their efforts are being supplemented or complemented by those of the Security Council Working Group and the Secretariat's New Horizon project.

A number of common themes run through these parallel efforts. The draft Presidential Statement circulated amongst Member States, which we have studied carefully, attempts to come to grips with some of these issues. Without going into the merits of whether a Presidential Statement is the appropriate format for addressing these issues, we would like to express our appreciation for the work that has gone into the document. We find some of the ideas and recommendations useful and timely.

Mr. President,

As a nation that has provided and continues to provide the United Nations thousands of soldiers and policemen, in addition to a large proportion of operating air assets, we feel that the nature of the Security Council's mandates and the manner in which they are generated is an area of major concern. Mandates are too broad and have very little correlation with the ability of the organization to deliver.

We reiterate the importance of the Brahimi committee recommendation that mandates be clear and achievable. We also reiterate that this will not be possible without substantively involving countries who contribute manpower and resources to Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. President,

India is not unfamiliar with the concept of "robust" peacekeeping. In December 1962, an Indian officer, General Dewan Prem Chand, led an acclaimed UN military operation, largely with Indian troops deployed in ONUC, which ended the Katangese secession and restored authority to the Congo government. ONUC, where India lost 39 peacekeepers, was the first UN "robust" peacekeeping operation.

This operation was conducted in response to a clear mandate arrived at after consultations. Today we receive feedback from our personnel on the ground that questions of substantive interpretation of the mandates - with repercussions beyond the immediate - are often left to the judgment of mission personnel in the ground. This is a difficult situation, particularly for military officers, who operate best when there are unambiguous instructions and objectives. Unrealistic mandates have led to situations where mission personnel are forced to ask national contingents to undertake tasks and utilize COE in a manner that is inconsistent with the legal framework under which they are deployed.

Mr. President,

We take note, with appreciation of the thrust of the Statement on the question of triangular consultations. We would here once again draw your attention to our most recent experience in respect of MONUC where changes in the Rules of Engagement and

Concept of Operations were communicated to the TCCs *after* they had been notified. I will reiterate that being informed is not the same as being consulted.

Mr. President,

We also take note of the Council's intention to increase interaction with the Secretariat during drafting of a mandate on the rule of law and peacebuilding dimensions of an operation. We believe that the future effectiveness of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security in the context of peacekeeping lies in its ability to harness national governance capacities in affected countries. These national capacities, as the post-colonial experience in many societies reveal, usually exist in ample measure. The challenge lies in applying the capacities and knowledge of countries that have undergone successful post-colonial nation-building exercises to these situations. The Council therefore needs to expand the ambit of its consultations to include these countries.

The UN Secretariat has a predilection for codification. Doctrines and benchmarks are constantly being written and updated. While we have no argument with the need to set standards, we need to remind ourselves that standards should be set in a manner which is realistic and relevant to the operating environment in which UN peacekeepers deploy. Doctrines and standards must not become like mandates – statements rather than a blueprint for action.

Mr. President,

Field Support needs far greater attention. It is our view, based on the experience of supporting the large contingents that we currently have under deployment, that the Department of Field Support needs far greater internal coordination and client-orientation. It has also been our view that the Department of Field Support needs to function as a military support operation with a lean command structure. We feel that there is a need for far greater engagement of Member States on functioning of the DFS.

Mr. President,

In concluding, I would salute the peacekeepers from India and from other nations who laid down their lives while serving in UN missions.

I would also like to reiterate India's commitment to work with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security including through the mechanism of Peacekeeping.

Thank You

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