

STATEMENT BY MR PAVAN KAPOOR, JOINT SECRETARY AT UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S BRIEFING ON UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS - INTER-MISSION COOPERATION ON DECEMBER 12, 2012

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me at the outset thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Morocco for organizing this briefing today on UN peacekeeping operations, a subject that is of great interest to my country. My thanks are due also to Under Secretaries General Mr. Herve Ladsous and Ms. Ameerah Haq for their detailed briefings.



Mr. President,

Today's debate reflects the enduring relevance of UN peacekeeping operations in fulfilling the Charter obligations towards the maintenance of international peace and security. Peacekeeping has not only withstood the test of time for over six decades now, but has, in fact, expanded its mandate and reach.

India has partnered with the United Nations in peacekeeping operations since its very inception in the 1950s. Over 100,000 Indian soldiers have served in over 40 peacekeeping missions with distinction. Even today India is one of the largest contributors to these missions, and we remain committed to this global enterprise.

Mr. President,

The nature of conflict has changed significantly over the past few decades, and so has the mandate of peacekeeping missions. It is no longer restricted to keeping peace between warring parties, but includes peacebuilding and nation building tasks.

Unfortunately, resource allocation has failed to keep pace with the mandate expansion, and peacekeeping missions are called upon to do more and more with less and less. It is, therefore, not surprising that the past few years have been operationally challenging for peacekeeping. An unusually large number of peacekeepers have lost their lives in the service of peace mandates, and the missions are overstretched due to shortage of personnel and equipment. Our briefers have mentioned some of these challenges.

Mr. President,

During our two years on the Security Council, we have seen incessant efforts to expand mandates of peacekeeping missions without any concrete measure to bridge the mandate-resource gap that should be the real cause of concern to us. The concept of inter-mission cooperation is promoted not to increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, but to cut down the resources available to individual peacekeeping missions. Cross borrowing of equipment across missions in recent times is a part of this trend.

Mr. President,

My delegation agrees that if there are several missions deployed in a region, cooperation among neighbouring missions, including through exchange of information, coordinated strategies for cross-border illicit trafficking of weapons, drugs and combatants, integrated approaches to disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation etc. can enhance their effectiveness. Similarly, the adoption of regional and sub-regional strategies can help in the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Mr. President,

As the Council has already been doing, resource management strategies with a cross-border perspective in crisis situations can be continued. Management of weapons collected from demobilized combatants could also be conducted better in regional settings. These measures, however, need to be crafted in consultation with the mission leaderships and host countries; they cannot be imposed from headquarters.

However, an overly resource-centric orientation of inter-mission cooperation will diminish its usefulness. Headquarters-driven sharing of critical mission assets will also compromise the ability of field commanders for mandate delivery. Moreover, the implementation of intermission cooperation is faced with substantial legal, political, and financial challenges.

First, the collective consent of host-nations in a disturbed neighborhood is a challenging prospect with implications for the overall peace process. Second, the transfer of troops and equipment across missions would need to address financial issues since budgetary allocations are mission-specific. Third, such transfers would involve legal complexities pertaining to immunity, privileges, and safeguards. And fourth, troop-contributing countries will have to calibrate their positions on a case-by-case basis. Amending the MoU templates may not resolve this matter to the satisfaction of one and all.

In conclusion, Mr. President, as a long-standing troop contributor, India is ever ready to shoulder peacekeeping initiatives. We do support the potential of inter-mission cooperation as a mechanism to enhance information exchange and integrated strategies in a regional context.

I thank you.

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