

**Remarks of Mr. Alain Le Roy,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations Association of the United Kingdom
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I wish to thank the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom for inviting me to address your membership on the role of United Nations peacekeeping, and the challenges it faces today. As a Permanent Member of the Security Council, the United Kingdom is a key player in setting the United Nations' peacekeeping agenda, and in directing its stance on international peace and security. In this role, and as part of the European Union, the United Kingdom is a critical partner in helping us deliver on our responsibilities in the field, and in facing current and future global challenges. We rely on your support of our efforts, and on your continued national contributions to peacekeeping around the world.

Let me begin by noting that UN peacekeeping has certain unique attributes. Its bedrock lies in the legitimacy of the UN Charter and in the wide range of contributing countries that participate and provide precious resources. It provides a system for global burden-sharing as all UN Member States contribute financially to UN peacekeeping. It brings together military, police and civilian capabilities in an integrated system that is flexible and adaptable and can respond to evolving political and security demands on the ground.

The role of the Security Council in articulating and guiding these actions and responses is however paramount. Peacekeeping is implemented to achieve political goals, to ensure we overcome threats to international peace and security, and to restore conditions of stability and safety for conflict affected populations. There must be a coherent, sustained and clear mandate, matched by the appropriate resources, and continued and unified political support given by the members of the Council.

Without such support, and the demonstration of ongoing attention and focus, we have seen missions falter, failing to overcome the myriad challenges faced in the field, including, critically, those presented by withdrawal of consent for our operations by host governments. This has occurred in Ethiopia and Eritrea with UNMEE in 2008, and most recently in Chad where MINURCAT closed at the end of 2010. It is also ongoing today in Darfur, where UNAMID is constantly faced with restrictions and complications put in place by the Government of Sudan.

In contrast, where the Security Council demonstrates unity of purpose and political resolve we have seen success. Missions in Liberia and Timor Leste have stayed the course, providing the necessary external assistance and security guarantees to enable civilian peacekeepers and their partners in the international community to develop and build sustainable and durable peace.

This linkage should not be underestimated. Consistent political support from the Security Council and coherent political and diplomatic pressure to keep the parties on the path to peace has proven to be a fundamental factor for the success or failure of operations in the field. The role of the United Kingdom, as a Permanent Member in maintaining such

support and focus is critical, playing a key role in ensuring our missions have both the tools and the positive political environment to achieve our mandates.

Admittedly, peacekeeping was not always as complex as it often is now. It has its roots in ceasefire monitoring. Early missions were mainly deployments of military observers and troops between two parties to maintain ceasefires and build confidence, until a wider political peace could be found. Modern multi-dimensional missions, on the other hand, are deployed with a mandate to help, directly, to achieve that peace, and to help to build the institutions and processes with which to sustain it.

To this end, civilian and military peacekeepers currently operate in a wide array of post conflict environments, working amidst the parties to conflict and among the population, assisting them to make the difficult transition from conflict to peace, and in many cases taking direct action to ensure their physical protection from violence.

Led by civilian political leadership, peacekeeping operations must disarm militias and help reform security institutions, train police, assist in elections, advise on constitutional reform, carry out political mediation to help keep the parties on the path to peace, and provide early warning where threats to civilians may exist.

United Nations peacekeeping operations also help to integrate the security, political and development dimensions of post conflict engagement. Working with United Nations Country Teams made up of the Organisations Agencies, Funds and Programmes, this can have a powerful multiplying effect by providing an overarching management and coordination structure for United Nations engagement. The blue helmeted troops – the emblems of UN peacekeeping – in effect provide a security guarantee as the rest of the mission supports a complex transition to peace integrating political, security, humanitarian, human rights and early economic recovery efforts..

In response to this challenge, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has had to adapt and evolve to execute a broad array of missions globally, each unique in terms of scale and scope, and each with different political, security and socio-economic environments.

Globally, we currently manage or support 15 missions across Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe, the Pacific, and in the Caribbean. After a decade of un-remitting surge in demand in these regions, UN peacekeeping hit a high-water mark in March 2010 with 101, 939 troops, police and observers deployed globally. Currently we have over 99,000 uniformed personnel, including close to 15,000 police. The number of UN civilians serving is now over 20,000, and they are taking on more and more diverse rolls, something we can expect to continue.

This consolidation in numbers of personnel however, does not however reflect the continued complexity of our mandates. Our missions today typically have dozens of tasks to accomplish, ranging from providing assistance to institution building and security sector reform through to direct roles in protecting civilians from violence, including violence perpetrated by elements of the same Governments that host our missions. To

respond effectively, peacekeeping must be flexible, agile and operationally capable of overcoming this increasing complexity, to remain relevant and to meet the needs and expectations of embattled populations and communities.

Today, we face many trials around the world. In Haiti we must solidify a volatile political context and assist the Haitians maintain stability after the 2010 earthquake and the recent successful elections. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo we must help protect civilians, including from sometimes extreme sexual and gender based violence, and extend the authority of the state across vast territory plagued by armed militias and a conflict fuelled by natural resources. In Southern Sudan we must help a new state emerge and assist in generating the necessary systems and structures for good governance and effective security in the aftermath of war. In Liberia and Timor Leste, we seek to secure and sustain gains made and steadily draw down, empowering the national authorities, transitioning to our partners, without leaving behind a security vacuum.

In all of these missions, and in those we deploy in the future, we must be ready to respond to a range of crises that can unfold unexpectedly. This was amply demonstrated over the last few months in the situation faced by our peacekeeping forces in Côte d'Ivoire. There, in response to direct threats against the mission and population, we rapidly reinforced the troop levels deployed, and UN forces took firm and decisive action, using all necessary means, to mitigate threats posed by heavy weapons targeting our facilities and personnel. This approach had a clear, direct and positive impact on the quick restoration of peace and security, and played a key role in helping re-establish the conditions for a peaceful transition of power and responsibility after the contested election process.

As you can imagine, the United Nations is also working to assess how it could best prepare for any form of engagement and assistance it may be called upon to provide within Libya. Whilst the situation there remains unclear in terms of any potential roles and responsibilities at this time, the range of possible needs may draw upon the widest and most varied capacities at the disposal of the organisation, civilian and military, as appropriate.

Indeed, with regard to civilian capacities, a recently released report of a Senior Advisory Group appointed by the Secretary-General to examine Civilian Capacities in the Aftermath of Conflict, shows that we need to work even more closely with our partners in the international community to draw upon the most appropriate, timely and effective civilian assets. We see this as a critical and growing element of our role in the field, with 20,000 civilian peacekeepers now operating globally executing tasks ranging from engaging with local political actors, supporting local governance, advising on gender and child protection issues, supporting donor assistance coordination, and responding to and mitigating human rights violations. We recognise that we need more assistance in this regard, and partnership with countries like the United Kingdom who have a deep pool of experienced professionals with skills in these areas will be a vital building block for improving how we operate in the field as a united international presence working to common objectives.

UN peacekeeping is however not designed for any and all crisis situations. Rather, it is an instrument built around the principle that there should be a peace to keep and basic consent of the parties. And, UN peacekeeping is also a political instrument to address the needs in the immediate aftermath of conflict. Despite the presence in its ranks of military, UN peacekeeping is not designed – or resourced – to enforce peace by military means where none exists. UN peacekeeping doctrine relies heavily on the concept of deterrence, especially regarding the physical protection of civilians, and the use of force is confined to very specific cases. This does put limits on the types of situations that UN peacekeeping can address.

However it also means that UN peacekeeping is an activity that we can plan for, and can prepare for effectively. Even as demands have increased on UN peacekeeping, we can and should develop models and approaches that will improve the instrument of peacekeeping - if supported and directed appropriately.

This means we must continually improve our performance. While there are success stories we can be proud of, we are also acutely conscious of where we peacekeeping has not met expectations, and where we need to strengthen peacekeeping. Over the past three years we have embarked again, on a reform effort which we have called the New Horizon for peacekeeping. We seek to identify the right models of peacekeeping to apply in a given circumstance, to maximise the effectiveness of peacekeepers available to implement it, to ensure their sustainable resourcing, couple them with sound leadership, to work in partnership with others effectively, and match them with the commitment of Member States.

Such a strategy requires a wide a variety of high quality resources, drawn from a diverse pool. It requires that we link military, police and civilian capabilities in command systems able to work seamlessly together to meet the 'in extremis' circumstance in a timely fashion, using agreed and tested models.

Increasing complexity requires higher capability and deeper commitment. We need well trained and highly motivated troops, police and civilians. They must be supported by aviation, logistics, and information resources. They must be managed and led effectively. To have significant impact in the field, all these aspects must come together to form capable missions.

Where capability and commitment exists we can expect increased success. I will point to two examples. In 2006-8 MINUSTAH – our mission in Haiti – conducted operations to restore order in around Port-au-Prince. This required moving into the slum areas of Cité Soleil, where criminal gangs ruled and the government had little control. Indeed, the operations sought to extend the authority of the government over Port-au-Prince. The Brazilian contingents and others supporting them relied on effective local level intelligence gathering which then effectively shaped troop deployments and configurations. The operations were then carried out with appropriately equipped, trained and led personnel. This points to the importance of tactical level intelligence to inform modern peacekeeping, to effective command systems able to operate in high-tempo environments, and to the need for well prepared and equipped troops.

In Haiti, these combined conditions were effectively brought to bear, enabling the peacekeepers to re-establish control over its capital, effectively extending the reach of the host government, then solidifying and consolidating the gains achieved. This created the conditions for fledgling economic recovery, whereupon, at the political level the Secretary-General appointed former United States President Bill Clinton to lead global efforts to rebuild infrastructure, systems and processes to sustain the progress made. Sadly, in early 2010, much of these achievements were destroyed in the massive earthquake that took an enormous toll on the country, and indeed on our peacekeepers. However, the successes of this approach prior to the quake demonstrate that capable, flexible and well led peacekeeping troops, combined with appropriately coordinated and targeted recovery assistance can produce the conditions for a transition from conflict to stability.

A second example could be drawn from Eastern Congo, where our mission faces real challenges in protecting civilians as conflict continues to swirl around a vast territory with little communications infrastructure and few roads. As one innovative response, the mission established Joint Protection Teams with appropriate mobility, communications and command and control systems. These joint teams comprise military personnel, and civil affairs, political affairs and human rights officers. Bringing these assets together means the teams are able to draw on wider sources of information and analysis and can interact with the local community in a more coherent and comprehensive way. This improves early warning systems before crisis occurs, and afterwards, increases the effectiveness of the mission's response and the prospects for longer term stabilisation.

The long term success of such initiatives will however depend on the continued attention of the Security Council, and most importantly, the efforts of the state itself. In the complex environment of post conflict recovery, it is not enough for United Nations peacekeepers to be delivering on their mandate. This must be combined with the sustained support of the international community, and the motivation and encouragement of the host government to meet its responsibilities to protect its population and deliver on their needs for peace and security. Without these combined efforts, bringing capable and effective peacekeepers together with coherent and sustainable recovery initiatives, along with the critical ingredient of international and national political will, the work of our peacekeepers cannot be as successful.

Without such capacity and commitment, we have seen much less successful situations, where our peacekeepers have been disarmed, our freedom of movement is restricted or we are otherwise blocked from implementing mandates.

Improving our ability to meet the current and future needs for peacekeeping. This means working with Member States to build peacekeeping capacity globally. It means defining standards for performance and providing training and guidance to enhance performance in the field. This also means ensuring critical resources are in place. We are identifying the key resource gaps and reaching out to Member States, including the United Kingdom, to fill them. Among these, helicopters continue to be a major gap area, as are other niche capabilities such as logistics, field hospitals and highly capable reserve forces.

With this in mind we are also looking to expand the list of those that regularly contribute to peacekeeping. This includes potential new contributors who often need assistance from supportive donors to prepare their troops. We also need to bring back to peacekeeping those that have previously contributed, but who are no longer leading troop or police contributors.

The United Kingdom is obviously one of those countries. In mid 1995, the United Kingdom had over 10,000 blue helmets deployed as part of UN peacekeeping missions globally. Indeed, at one point (August 1995) the UK was in fact our largest troop contributor. Since that time however, often due to commitments to UN-mandated missions, but not UN commanded missions, this contribution has been reduced to below 300 uniformed personnel as of today.

As some of those other commitments reduce over time (the UK announced a reduction of 400 troops to ISAF on 18 May 2011), it is however hoped that attention can again be placed on provision of support to UN peacekeeping operations globally. I should stress, I am not speaking of large, formed military units. Rather, the UK and other European countries have specialist capacities UN peacekeeping currently lacks, and which are critical to operating in today's high-tempo, high risk environments.

The UK is also not alone in this situation. When looking at the top twenty troop contributors to the UN, only two European countries are on the list, those being Italy and France, coming in at 16 and 19 respectively. In mid 1995 eight of those top twenty nations were from Western Europe, including the top two. From this highpoint the decline is enormous, and as such, the increased cooperation and engagement of all of Europe as a source of troops and police is critical to strengthening and maintaining United Nations peacekeeping as an effective and diverse tool for international peace.

We should however recognise that numbers are not the only metric by which we judge contributions. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, critical niche capacities are required in areas such as helicopters, medical support and engineering, assets which whilst not large in numbers, can have an enormous force multiplying effect when combined with other troops. It is in these areas that countries such as the United Kingdom, and wider Europe, can play a critical role.

Such deployments are also not just a practical and operational step. We should not underestimate the political impact of a re-engagement by European countries in United Nations peacekeeping. It sends a clear signal of intent and support for peace not only to the parties to any given conflict, but also to other member states and partners in the international community. Such a demonstration of international will and commitment is sometimes a critical element of ensuring warring parties stay on the path to peace, and that the global community keeps its attention focused on their progress.

I might add that since the difficult missions of the mid-1990s – such as those in the Balkans, Rwanda and Somalia where we have identified that significant mistakes were made, some member states have shied away from contributing troops because they have

professed a lack of confidence in the command and control systems which the United Nations has in place to manage and support their troops in the field. Since then, we as an organisation have evolved, developed and improved, learning from our mistakes, and developing new, better, and often cutting edge processes to ensure we perform effectively in the field. By way of example, the UN's ability to plan, field and manage complex, multidimensional and *integrated* civilian and military missions in some of the most difficult environments in the world is in fact at the forefront of international practice.

So, if the UN is to succeed in delivering the now required higher tempo operations, and performing successfully in the challenging environments the Security Council is sending it into, it must be able to draw on the capabilities available in the full range of its Membership. The members must also be prepared to contribute effectively, and identify options for how they can assist. This can be through direct contributions of troops, police or other specialists, or through working together with nations that require capability development assistance in order for them to be able to deploy effective physical resources.

The UN Charter after all, is underpinned by a core burden sharing principle - that there should be a collective response to a common threat to international peace and security. We must work together to be innovative and creative in finding ways we can do this, and ensure that measures put in place are proactive, sustainable and effective in generating the resources we need to operate effectively.

Since the first UN peacekeeping mission was established in 1948, 64 peacekeeping operations have been deployed by the UN, 51 of them since 1988 when the end of the Cold War opened unprecedented opportunities for international engagement in conflict resolution. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of military personnel, as well as tens of thousands of UN police and other civilians from more than 120 countries, including the UK, have participated in UN peacekeeping operations. More than 2,900 UN peacekeepers have died while serving under the UN flag. At present, the UN manages 15 peacekeeping operations, comprising more than 100,000 personnel, on four different continents. While UN peacekeeping is not the appropriate tool for every post-conflict situation, it is my conviction that the need and demand for it will continue. Although not explicitly envisaged in the United Nations Charter, UN peacekeeping has indeed become a permanent feature of international relations and our collective security system.

Our task is not only a matter of ensuring the best equipment, training and leadership of our peacekeepers. It also requires that all peacekeeping actors have a common vision regarding the mandates set for peacekeeping by the Security Council and that, at all levels, a strong partnership exists between Member States that provide resources, the UN Secretariat that manages them, and the Security Council that sets the mandate.

All those with a stake in the success of a mission should have a common vision as to its goals. This involves working in partnership with the host nation, often with countries from the region, with the wider international community and civil society, and along with our colleagues in the broader United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes, many of

whom have will continue to work in a country long after a United Nations peacekeeping mission has withdrawn.

For this reason, we have been working hard with Member States to better define, in policy terms, what missions can do, and what their limits are – with respect to our most challenging mandate tasks. Through these efforts we can try to ensure we work to capitalise on issues and activities where we provide the best comparative advantage, and bring the right skills and capacities to deliver on our mandates.

There are three key areas in which we see this as most necessary within the current environment: the protection of civilians by peacekeepers, the question of deterrence and the use of force in peacekeeping, and the question of how – and how much – peacekeeping missions can contribute to building institutions that can sustain peace. Each of these is the focus of considerable and ongoing work to establish how we can improve our delivery and coherence in the field, and clarify and then meet the expectations of the international community, and critically, those populations in the post conflict areas where we deploy. We will need to work closely with member states such as the United Kingdom to achieve this in a way that has the agreement and support of all.

Ultimately, our strategic goal is to ensure that we can deploy more effective peacekeepers, able to deliver optimal performance, and to strengthen a global peacekeeping system that has increased preparedness and agility so as to respond to future needs. Having such effective tools and processes will create the conditions for success in peacekeeping – and for concurrent and follow on humanitarian, peacebuilding and development activities in the fragile countries where we operate.

This is an ambitious agenda, but it is one we have no choice but to succeed in. Every day millions of people look to the UN and our peacekeeping operations as their best hope for peace. We rely on our partnership with the United Kingdom and other member states to achieve this.