

Contemporary and Future Challenges in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Summary:

Anthony Craig, Office of the Military Advisor, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Mr. Craig's presentation outlined the following 4 areas where UN peacekeeping operations face challenges:

- 1) Revitalizing support from Northern countries
- 2) Overcoming the perception that the UN cannot handle robust operations
- 3) Obtaining the right capabilities in a timely fashion
- 4) Establishing effective communication systems within UN bodies, between the UN and military officials and between the UN and national capitals.

Mr. Craig indicated that a key priority of the UN Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO) is to restore the support and participation of Northern member states. It is evident that there are active efforts to push missions onto regional groups with insufficient capabilities. This is viewed as a dangerous trend as it is essential to have the continued presence of strong and well-organized forces to ensure that peace is indeed kept.

The Under-Secretary General is particularly interested in hearing the concerns of the Northern member states. The DPKO is also interested in the focus of this workshop, including a discussion of the SHIRBRIG's potential for the protection of civilians.

There is a perception in certain quarters, that the UN cannot handle 'heavy lifting' or what some refer to as 'robust operations'. While there are limits to the UN's capacity, the UN can deploy peacekeeping operations in areas where there are what Ambassador Brahimi termed "spoilers". In some cases, UN missions include the use of attack helicopters.

Clearly, there are problems, which often stem from the military contributions provided by member states, or the lack thereof. Nevertheless, it is resulting in a movement by some countries to operate under the auspices of organizations outside the UN with regard to these types of operations. This trend is unwarranted. In identifying the limits, he suggested the UN was capable of dealing with these "spoilers"; the UN was incapable of handling large, organized belligerents. While conceding that the UN would still encounter difficulties with something like the JNA (Yugoslavian Army), he