
THE PATH OF PEACE-KEEPING

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Let me begin by telling you how happy I am to be in Portugal again. My last visit was in 1969, when I came to see some close friends and we had a wonderful time.

Normally, I have the impression that may work follows me everywhere. Long after I have left my office, it stares at me out of a newspaper. It flashes before my eyes on a television screen. In the last two days, however, my eyes have been filled with the beauty of your country. I have seen the Palace of the Marquis of Fronteira, I have visited the Museum of Ancient Art, and I have experienced the Jeronimos Monastery. These visits have restored in me a sense of beauty and balance, a sense of energy and inspiration, a sense of perspective.

With that renewed perspective, that energy and balance, I want to examine peace-keeping with you. At the moment, three very fundamental questions surround it: «What are we doing?»; «When should we become involved?»; and «When must we end our involvement?».

BACKGROUND

So that we may examine the first of these, let me begin by quantifying briefly some of the changes which peace-keeping has experienced.

For over 40 of peace-keeping's 46 years, the mandates of DPKO's missions were defined very clearly. Peace-keeping, through most of the UN's history, meant:

«the use of multinational military personnel, armed or unarmed, under international command and with the consent of the parties, to help control and resolve conflict between hostile states and between hostile communities within a state».

In the last five years, however, hardly a single one of these parameters has been left untouched. The need for consent of the parties was overridden by humanitarian imperatives. Volatile situations in the field made it necessary to expand the definitions of both self-defence and the justified use of force. Even the range and nature of international command has become hotly debated. Mandates have far exceeded the traditional supervision of truces and separation of antagonists; they now comprise duties as diverse as monitoring free and fair elections, guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian aid in war zones, overseeing land reform and human rights, reintegrating armed combatants into productive civilian roles, intervening in situations of civil war, establishing safe and secure environments, and remaining in towns and villages under attack to prevent loss of life.

With expansion of duties has come growth in demand. Only two operations were created in peace-keeping's first five years; 17 have been mounted in the last five. To respond to this proliferation, the number of UN peace-keepers deployed has increased from 11 500 in 1992 to 73 200 today. In monetary terms, the costs of sustaining these missions has risen from \$626 million in 1986 to \$1.2 billion in 1992, and it is expected to reach \$3.8 billion this year.

These figures, however, leave out some of the most significant parts of the story: the shortfalls in authorized troop levels, the sometimes sudden withdrawal of contingents before the expiry of their mandates, the large arrearages in payment of assessed peace-keeping contributions, and, most important, the uncertain global political will to pursue and persist in the challenges before us.

What sort of future do these challenges foretell?

I believe that peace-keeping today is at a crossroads. Some nations have decided to restrict their participation in peace-keeping to «areas of vital national interest». And when such interests are identified, they are increasingly being pursued unilaterally, with or without the approval of the Security Council. It is becoming ever more difficult to obtain additional well-trained and-equipped troops for peace-keeping missions.

The situation on the ground augurs no better. Peace-keepers have been kidnapped, killed, and dragged through the streets. Even NGO's are finding their offices sacked and burned. In Somalia, peace enforcement nearly made us a party to the conflict. In Croatia, civilians have blocked convoys carrying

humanitarian aid. In many areas, our presence has been used not to end conflict, but merely to prolong it to advantage. We have been asked more than once to keep peace where there is no peace to keep.

In spite of all of this, we have been able to secure a number of important successes together: Cambodia, El Salvador, the Aouzou Strip. UNTAG, the United Nations mission in Namibia, to which Portugal sent electoral observers, is counted one of our greatest successes. ONUMUZ, our mission in Mozambique, to which you have contributed a signal company, military observers, and civilian police, might soon be another. That success, I must stress, is still far from certain, but our progress in Mozambique has given us hope.

Even in missions where success has so far eluded us, we have made (and sometimes left) the situation far better than we found it.

Bosnia now has areas of peace, and Somalia is no longer starving. But this is not enough. The huge problems of the last months demand not only that we re-examine what we are doing; they insist that we look at how we are doing it. One situation exposes them better than any other: Rwanda.

RWANDA

Rwanda, more than any other operation, will be remembered for demonstrating what a lack of will can do. The costs to be borne in the years ahead will remind us all too often that inaction is also a form of action, indecision a kind of decision — which, in some situations, could have powerful, even tragic, consequences.

Within weeks of the assassination of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi on 6 April, hundreds of thousands were dead. We were aware of this; media coverage of the crisis was both instant and constant. Yet, on 21 April, following the Belgian Government's decision to withdraw its contingent (which was the best equipped of all) and the Bangladeshi contingent's decision that it would be able only to protect itself, the Security Council reacted by reducing UNAMIR from the 2000 all ranks previously mandated to a mere 444. As the magnitude of the tragedy expanded, our response contracted. The Secretary-General persisted, however, urging that UNAMIR be strengthened to 5500. But this was authorized only on 17 May,

nearly six weeks after the onset of the crisis, and after an estimated 500 000 had already died.

On 12 May, five days before the expansion of the mission to 5500 was confirmed, DPKO had already approached 30 governments with requests for troops and equipment. In the day following the mission's expansion, two further calls were made by the Security Council to member states to respond to that appeal. They were further followed by a range of informal contacts on our part. The silence that followed was deafening. Ten weeks later, at the end of July, a mere 550 soldiers were on the ground. By that point, the greatest part of the damage had been done.

Many countries were in a position to help avoid this. Interestingly, the majority of those who did help were those least in a position to do so. However, among the 5 permanent members of the Security Council, all of whom voted for the resolution and any of whom could have supplied swift and substantial support for this mission, the earliest response came more than a month after the appeals I just mentioned. More significantly, the first two members of the P-5 to respond did not contribute forces to UNAMIR, but took unilateral action instead.

I do not wish to belittle the good those unilateral missions did. The French created the Humanitarian Protection Zone, which safeguarded the lives of countless people. The Americans joined in the delivery of humanitarian aid at a moment when it was still desperately needed. I do, however, wish to strike a note of concern regarding the precedent they have set and the message they have given. Both of the P-5 members who acted unilaterally and late voted for resolutions which called for action multilaterally and early. What does this difference between word and deed signify?

ISSUES

Does it indicate a lack of faith in the multinational command and control which is an essential component of peace-keeping? Does it imply misgivings regarding peace-keeping's traditional rules of engagement? Or does it insinuate a fear of being bogged down in along term mission even after domestic interest in it has dwindled? We should explore these possibilities.

The interesting aspect of the command and control debate is that it is far from universal. The large majority of the UN's member states who participate in these operations accept as a given that an international mission should have international command and control. Their contingents do not take orders from their capitals, confer with their capitals before accepting orders from us, or withdraw prematurely.

The command and control obstacle, ironically, has proven most insurmountable for those whom it should worry least. Their place in the Security Council and the proportion that they could assume in any operation would guarantee them more than adequate representation. What their resistance says, in essence, is that they will not act multilaterally. At best, they will act unilaterally in a multilateral context.

This is unfortunate. Further, it is arguably unviable, both in practice and in principle. If we look carefully at the lessons of Somalia, we will not see that international command and control can't work; we will see that it *must*. We will feel instinctively the danger created for those in the field when conflicting instructions are given and orders are either referred or rejected. Looking again at Somalia, we hear today that it has taught us how low our tolerance to fatalities is. If this is true, as I believe it to be, then it makes resistance to unified command and control on the part of concerned governments all the more incomprehensible. For nothing can lower this risk like working together, and nothing can increase it like the failure to do so.

The urgency of unified command and control is most evident where contingents or entire missions must be withdrawn under hostile circumstances. Today, two of our missions face this prospect: UNOSOM II and UNPROFOR. UNPROFOR is preparing for a worst case scenario in which close co-ordination with and support from NATO's AFSOUTH will be essential. UNOSOM II is faced with a different threat, but one which could prove equally fatal: a rapid withdrawal under hostile circumstances in which no assured sea or air support has so far been provided by any member state. Any of you who have seen the port and airport facilities in Mogadishu can understand the difficulties and dangers which such a withdrawal would entail.

In both these instances, should they occur, unified command and control will prove the vital factor. Nations might be tempted to take unilateral

action to protect or extricate their troops, but such action would more likely deepen the problem than resolve it. In these delicate situations, a breakdown in command and control could well prove catastrophic.

Beyond command and control, however, lies another possible concern: the Rules of Engagement which have traditionally accompanied the UN's peace-keeping operations. Member states have complained that these are too confining. National armies, we are reminded, are not limited to firing merely in self defence. Their convoys would not necessarily turn back if blockaded. This fundamental difference between peace-keeping and national action has its *pros and cons*.

One of the more painful lessons that we have learned during the last two years is how fine a line there is between being part of the solution and part of the problem. We must remain careful not to cross it and mindful of the price or doing so. Within that restriction, however, there is a great deal that we can do to expand our range of action and influence.

In my mind, our rules of engagement matter far less to those on the ground than the strength we have to enforce them. Rules of engagement must be applied with common sense. Force too easily reverted to by peace-keepers who are quickly outnumbered will prove only counterproductive. The invasion recently planned for Haïti was to have involved 20 000. It would have outweighed the local Haïtian forces by 3:1. We can therefore assume that its ability to complete its given tasks would be rather high. In Rwanda, on the other hand, the RGF and RPF forces combined totalled over 50 000. At its maximum, UNAMIR would comprise 5500, just over 10% of the local Rwandan forces. And we should remember that, at the height of the crisis, UNAMIR was reduced to lesse than 500, or less than 1% of the strength of the local forces. In a state of chaos, whatever our rules of engagement, what kind of impact can a force of this proportion hope to have?

There is, however, another side to this point. A larger force means not only that it is more likely that we can act forcefully. It also means that it is less likely that we will have to do so. The factor of deterrence should not be underestimated. Civilians will block a small convoy whose untrained members have not yet mastered the machines they have just been given. The same civilians face different prospects if presented with a sizeable convoy which is well trained and equipped.

It is crucial that our means and mandates be commensurate with the magnitude of the challenge we accept. I do not wish to imply that DPKO subscribes to a doctrine of overwhelming force. But I do insist that our tools and our tasks be proportionate. We cannot undermine our response and our responsiveness as we did in the early stages of the Rwanda conflict.

Perhaps at the heart of the problem lies neither the issue of command and control nor the question of the limited nature of the rules of engagement. Perhaps we should look instead at the question of being bogged down by too long a time commitment, or the lack of what some governments refer to as an exit strategy.

This is a grave problem. Collective security must support the world community, not drain it. In our worst nightmares, we have all seen visions of operations with mandates like UNPROFOR, costs like UNOSOM, and durations like UNFICYP. To prevent that nightmare from becoming a reality, a number of steps are necessary.

If our intervention is to be cost-effective, it must be swift and substantial. If governments are to be persuaded to support this kind of intervention, they will need to be assured that the length of their presence, the costs to their citizens, and the threat to their troops are acceptable to them. Among the many possible reforms which we are pursuing at DPKO, there is one innovation to peace-keeping which can help to bring this about.

Traditionally, peace-keeping contingents have been replaced by other contingents of the same nationality. If, instead, we replaced contingents of one nationality, at the end of their tour of duty, with contingents of another nationality, I believe that we could address a number of problems. First, the costs and demands of the missions would be distributed more fairly and evenly among the member states. Second, those states would be more likely to participate if their engagement were not open-ended. Third, «rotation» within a nationality has too often meant an extended tour of duty, and this has made unreasonable demands upon those who are serving on the ground.

Of course, rotation is not a panacea. Sometimes it will not work. And it does not, in itself, address the larger question of how and when to end a mission. But it will help individual governments to measure the extent of their commitment. It will let them measure the breadth and depth of their political support for a peace-keeping operation.

Command and control, rules of engagement, lack of rotation: perhaps all of these, none of them, some combination, or some other factor is responsible for the difficulties we are facing at the moment. But, whatever the reason for the emerging pattern in which action is taken unilaterally and reactively instead of collectively and pro-actively, that pattern must be broken. Problems, if and where they exist, should be addressed, not avoided. And our chances of correcting them in the long term are better if we work together.

CONCLUSION

So many unknowns face us at the moment, so many problems. Yet, as the Chinese character would remind us, in every problem there lies possibility. The search for those possibilities is what animates peace-keeping to-day. In the last five years, we have embarked on a great exploration together. My hope and conviction is that, if our exploration is whole-hearted, it could lead to great discoveries.

Portugal is no stranger to exploration and discovery. Your history is rich with names like Prince Henry the Navigator and Vasco da Gama. You have long been one of the world's most admired maritime powers. Five hundred years ago, you travelled half the planet, endured great hardship, and discovered a whole new world. Today, as a small ship called peace-keeping heads out into rough waters toward an uncertain destination, we look forward to your guidance, your energy, and your support. Together with you, we look forward to exploring the possibilities of the new world now before us.

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