

MILITARY ADVICE TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

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The problem of military advice to the Security Council is as old as that of peacekeeping operations and is very close to both the question of civilian-military relations and the definition of success. Both topics have been extensively discussed during this project. But still up to date military advice remains one of the most difficult and unresolved problems of peacekeeping. For years this question has attracted the attention of the Security Council, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. But it was obvious that for some reasons Member States were not satisfied with the quality of military advice and the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping paid quite a lot of time to the consideration of the problem.

The problem has two sides: military advice to the Security Council from the Secretariat and military expertise inside the Council. Let us consider the first one. The Brahimi report dwelt quite substantially on the subject and as a result of its implementation the quality of military advice from the Secretariat has improved significantly. But there are some obstacles that are difficult to overcome.

Until quite recently the system of strategic planning was very vague and ambiguous in the Secretariat where many departments, not just DPKO, were involved in the process of development of the strategic concept of peacekeeping operations without taking responsibility for its implementation. Even in DPKO itself it was sometimes difficult to determine who was in charge of military planning: the Military Division, the Office of Mission Support or the Office of Operations.

Recently there has been a steady trend to establish a more or less simple and understandable procedure of military planning inside DPKO – the so-called system of integrated mission planning. And with the introduction of a new post of Director Change Management, headed by a two star general, there is hope that the situation can be improved.

Another problem is more political than managerial: military planning in any joint or general staff starts from threat assessment and the assessment of one's own resources. Neither can be done in DPKO. First, because there is no intelligence division and no intelligence mechanism at all in the UNHQ and, secondly, no one in the Secretariat is aware how many and what kind of troops Member States are going to provide for any particular mission. How have these obstacles been overcome up to date? The best answer is -- by muddling through. Information is provided by Member States that have intelligence resources in the area of a future peacekeeping mission and, of course, there is a risk of a biased approach. Can this risk be minimized? It can, through organizing an information (the word "intelligence" is not acceptable in the UNHQ) service for the purpose of planning and running peacekeeping operations. There are timid voices from Secretariat officials in favour of such an initiative, at least on the tactical level, but many Member States still have reservations. No doubt, sooner or later such kind of service will be established and it will have the most positive effect on the whole process of conducting peacekeeping operations. The problem of resources availability is very close to the question of Stand-by Arrangement System modernization and beyond the framework of this topic.

There is another question concerning DPKO that should be mentioned. Three divisions of DPKO are directly involved in the process of strategic planning, two of them – the Office of Mission Support and the Office of Operations - are headed by officials in the rank of Assistant Secretary General, while the chief of the Military Division is only a D2 position. By making him "equal among equals" and upgrading his(her) post to the level of Military Adviser to the Secretary General (at the rank of ASG), this would normalize their relations and smooth the process of

military planning. There is of course another option - to downgrade the position of two ASGs to D2 level.

Another side of the quality of military advice depends on the efficiency of the personnel who are working in DPKO, especially in its Military Division. As a result of Brahimi report implementation practically everything has been done in this sphere and we can hardly expect further improvements. It is obvious that Member States send their best officers to the UN, but they all have different experience and educational backgrounds, belong to different military cultures, speak different native languages and as a result it takes time to make them into a team, especially in military planning. The system of the selection of candidates - secondment officers - for working in DPKO has improved, but like any bureaucratic system it has its drawbacks and the major one is that it is not a competition of skills and experience but of papers. When we take into consideration other requirements imposed on the selection process - like geographical and gender representation and others, what Americans call "affirmative action" - then it is unlikely that the quality of personnel selected for DPKO can be improved further. But there is one chance - to change the system of selection for one or two sections of DPKO, most crucial for the military planning service, and to appoint people there not after their arrival to the UNHQ, but to pick them up from other units after several months of practical work.

We have just considered different ways of improving the military advice from the Secretariat. There is another side to this subject - advice from inside the Security Council. This problem was discussed during several meetings of its Working Group for peacekeeping last year. Two main proposals were presented by the British and Russian delegations. The substance of the British proposal was to make better use of available military expertise of Member States and for this purpose all parties participating in meetings of the Security Council, when peacekeeping questions are discussed, would be encouraged to include their Military Advisers in their representation. The Russian proposal went even further - to make better use of the expertise of not just military advisors available in New York, but the general (joint, defence) staffs they represent, and for this

purpose activate the Military Staff Committee of the UN which has been in service since 1946 but has not produced much because it has not been given any serious mission from the Security Council for obvious political reasons. After long discussions neither proposal was recommended by the Working Group.

Summing up I would like to say the following: there are a number of ways to improve military advice to the Security Council. A lot has been done by the Secretariat under the guidance of the Council. The question now is whether further improvements are necessary or whether the Security Council is happy with the level of military advice that has been achieved. Or in other words, perhaps advice that is "too good" would limit the space for political and diplomatic manoeuvre and compromise that are a substantial part of Security Council activities.