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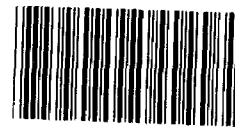
Before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and
International Operations, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S.
Senate

For Release
On Delivery
Expected at
9:30 a.m., EDT
Wednesday
June 9, 1993

U.N. PEACEKEEPING

Observations on Mandates and
Operational Capability

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here today to discuss our observations on carrying out effective U.N. peacekeeping missions. My testimony is based on a report¹ we issued last year and our ongoing reviews of the Cambodia and Somalia missions. We have completed fieldwork in Cambodia; our work on Somalia is in the early stages and based largely on interviews with U.N. and U.S. officials. We focus on Cambodia and Somalia because they are the largest "peacebuilding" missions--that is, the new type of missions which undertake activities not only to deter conflict but also to build an environment within which peace can be sustained. Today, as you requested, I will discuss three issues: (1) peacekeeping mandates, (2) limits on the U.N.'s capacity to undertake and support peacekeeping missions, and (3) the status of command and coordination in the field.

It is important to put our observations in perspective. The number, cost, and complexity of peacekeeping missions have increased dramatically in recent years. In the 40 years from 1948 through 1987, the U.N. deployed 13 peacekeeping missions; in the 5 years from 1988 through 1992, the U.N. deployed 14. Expenditures for peacekeeping have ballooned from \$364 million in 1986-1987 to an estimated \$3.6 billion in 1992-1993. The number of U.N. troops and police serving as peacekeepers has risen from about 20,000 in 1990 to over 50,000 in early 1993. At the same time, the whole concept of peacekeeping is evolving from situations where peacekeepers essentially monitored cease-fire agreements to situations like we see in Cambodia, Somalia, and other areas where the missions entail a much wider range of activities.

PEACEKEEPING MANDATES

An essential ingredient for a successful peacekeeping mission is that it be both operationally and politically feasible. This concept is embodied in the Secretary General's June 1992 report, "An Agenda for Peace," in which he acknowledges that mandates for peacekeeping missions must be practical. That is, to be successful, mandates must be within the U.N.'s operational capability and supported politically by all parties to the dispute.

While the results of last month's election in Cambodia were certainly impressive and successful, our work shows that the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) has labored under a peacekeeping mandate that was ambiguous and that stretched the mission both operationally and politically. I will discuss the U.N.'s operational limitations later, but first I will describe the situations as they evolved in Cambodia and Somalia as a way of looking at the political feasibility of the respective mandates.

¹United Nations: U.S. Participation in Peacekeeping Operations (GAO/NSIAD-92-247, Sep. 9, 1992).

In October 1991, after 3 years of difficult negotiation, sponsored by the five permanent members of the Security Council, Cambodia's four warring factions signed a peace agreement. This agreement called for a U.N. peacekeeping mission to ensure the implementation of a comprehensive settlement of the war. According to U.N. officials, including a U.N. legal counsellor, the mandate was authorized under chapter 6 of the U.N. charter, which provides for the peaceful resolution of disputes.² A mandate under chapter 6 has been the traditional approach to peacekeeping, and for the mandate to be implemented, the consent of all parties to the dispute was needed. In reality, this was probably the only type of mandate that all Cambodian factions and the permanent members of the Security Council would have agreed to.

It is important to note, however, that the mandate itself does not refer to any specific U.N. chapter under which the peacekeeping mission was to operate, and the mandate, as well as the rules of engagement, imply that action could be taken to enforce the agreement in certain situations. U.N. and other officials with whom we spoke often referred to UNTAC's mandate as operating under chapter "6 and a half," indicating the ambiguity with regard to how far UNTAC might go to ensure that provisions of the agreement were carried out. For instance, UNTAC's mandate authorized it to undertake a broad range of activities, such as locating and confiscating weapons, supervising the cease-fire, relocating all forces to cantonment areas, and investigating and acting upon human rights violations. Yet some factions, particularly the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (formerly the Khmer Rouge) and the Cambodian People's Party, did not disarm their troops, violated human rights, and violated the cease-fire on numerous occasions. Some UNTAC officials said that UNTAC's broad mandate allowed it to more forcefully implement certain provisions of the peace agreement. But others, including some UNTAC officials in Cambodia, believed that UNTAC's mandate was much more restrictive with regard to actions that could be taken to ensure that the peace settlement was implemented. Nevertheless, there was near unanimity among those with whom we spoke that the failure of the parties to abide by the terms of the peace agreement and the subsequent refusal of the Khmer Rouge to participate in the election process put the success of the mission in jeopardy. The ultimate success of the mission remains to be seen

The current peacekeeping mandate with regard to Somalia is quite different. The first mission, now referred to as UNOSOM I, was also based on the traditional approach to peacekeeping. Efforts

²In addition to the peaceful resolution of disputes under chapter 6 of the U.N. Charter, chapter 7 provides for a range of enforcement actions with respect to threats to peace, including action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.

were made to obtain the consent of key factional leaders, and the Security Council authorized a small force of (1) observers to monitor cease-fire agreements and (2) security personnel to deter attacks on relief convoys. Their presence was intended to deter violence, and as such, they were not permitted to use force, except in self-defense. As is well known, this first peacekeeping mission failed largely because the factional leaders refused to cooperate. Conditions in the country continued to deteriorate and violence escalated.

The United States then led a coalition force (UNITAF) under a U.N. mandate authorizing all measures necessary to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations. Recognizing that a secure environment would also be needed following the U.S.-led intervention, the Security Council established UNOSOM II giving it a clearer mandate under chapter 7 to take whatever action necessary to carry out its mission. Although it is too early to tell if UNOSOM II will ultimately succeed, the enforcement mandate in Somalia gives the U.N. mission in Somalia a less ambiguous and more forceful means of providing a secure environment so that the peacebuilding process can take place.

CURRENT LIMITS OF U.N. CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT PEACEKEEPING

Now let me turn to the U.N.'s operational limitations. The small number of staff at U.N. headquarters dedicated to peacekeeping activities has clearly limited the U.N.'s ability to implement the growing number of missions. The U.N. has limited resources to plan missions; it must rely on member states to volunteer troops and police for missions; and it has a limited capacity to provide logistical support to field missions. In Cambodia, these limitations caused significant operational problems on the ground and delays in implementation. One observation we heard frequently in Cambodia was that if a mission is to succeed, it must "hit the ground running" and begin immediately to take control before countervailing forces can solidify and neutralize the impact of the peacekeeping mission. The U.N. Secretariat has recognized its operational limitations and is beginning to plan for ways to improve the situation. Nevertheless, it seems to us that if the Security Council is going to continue to charter peacekeeping missions, and it seems clear that it will, then it should ensure that the planned improvements by the Secretariat do indeed strengthen operational capabilities in this area.

Staff and Organizational Limits at Headquarters

At U.N. headquarters in New York, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Field Operations Division have primary responsibility for planning and reporting on missions, arranging for military and civilian staff, and providing missions with headquarters logistical support. Until just recently, the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations had 14 political officers, 9 military planners, and 15 general service staff. The Field Operations Division had 33 professionals and 83 general service staff to support both peacekeeping missions and field operations of the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Political Affairs. Together, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Field Operations Division support 13 peacekeeping missions with over 50,000 troops and thousands of civilian peacekeepers. U.N. officials told us that the small number of staff has stretched both units very thin and makes it difficult to expand peacekeeping without more support.

Adding to these difficulties, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations reports directly to the Secretary General, whereas the Field Operations Division reports to the Undersecretary General for Administration and Management. This has caused some difficulties. For example, a U.N. official stated that the peacekeeping department developed the overall requirements for UNTAC, and once the broad implementation plan was completed, turned the logistical planning and support over to the Field Operations Division. When plans had to be revised based on experience in Cambodia, the preparation of budgets and schedules was delayed because the two units could not agree on priorities, and there was no single authority short of the Secretary General to set the priorities for both units. As to the suggestion that the Field Operations Division be placed under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, some U.N. officials said that this would be inappropriate because the field division provides logistical support to other U.N. departments.

U.N. Planning Resources Are Meager

With its small headquarters staff, the U.N. has the resources to complete only a general implementation plan before a peacekeeping mission is deployed. Detailed operational planning is done in the field after deployment. Several UNTAC field personnel said the lack of detailed plans prior to deployment forced them to spend valuable time planning their activities rather than initiating the first phase of the operation. For example, UNTAC civilians who were mandated to control the State of Cambodia's defense establishment to ensure its neutrality spent the initial months in country mapping out the organization of the defense ministry and understanding its relationship with the provincial forces. These officials lost critical time drawing up operational plans when they should have been establishing their control. UNTAC control of Cambodia's military was never fully established, and some have argued that this was at least one reason why the Khmer Rouge refused to abide by the peace agreement.

The U.N. also lacked sufficient resources to plan the operation in Somalia. According to a U.S. official working on UNOSOM II, the U.N. could not plan on the scale needed for an expeditious

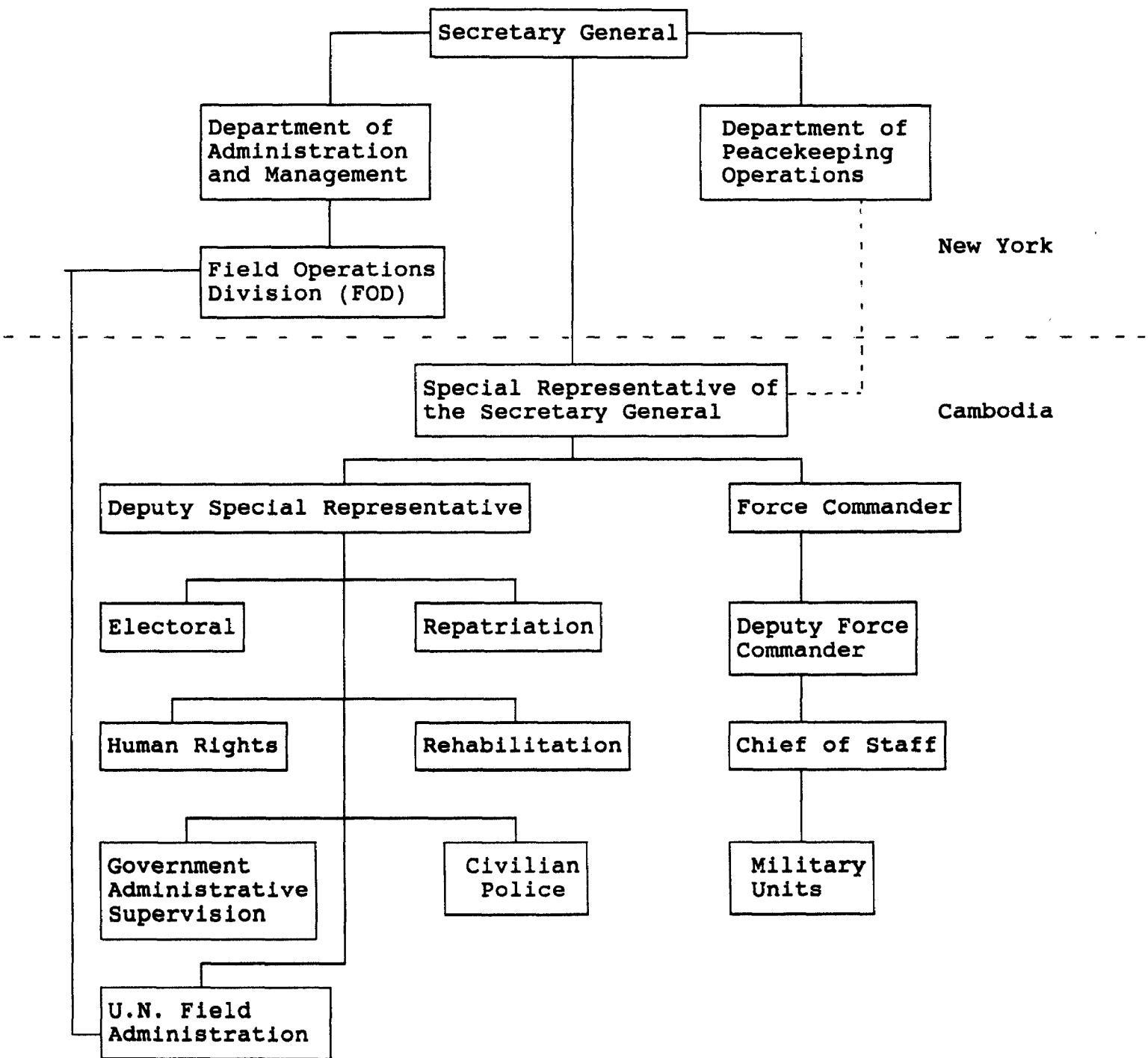
transition from the U.S.-led mission to UNOSOM II, much less plan the start-up of U.N. civilian activities, such as police and civil administration. For example, when 12 U.S. military planners attended the joint U.S.-U.N. transition planning meeting in New York in January 1993, only 5 stayed to continue planning because of the limited number of U.N. staff available for them to work with.

The U.N. also lacks the intelligence resources needed to plan operations like Cambodia and Somalia. For UNTAC, U.N. survey teams visited Cambodia to collect information ranging from infrastructure conditions to Cambodia's governmental structure. However, they had to rely on information the warring factions were willing to provide them. U.N. headquarters officials indicated that some information was outdated or incomplete. UNTAC officials in Cambodia echoed this view, noting that the information was weak. For example, the infrastructure report was published in 1990; much of that information was outdated by the time UNTAC began operations in 1992. The military survey mission did not obtain information on the factions' troop locations.

Assembling Multinational Force Is Time-Consuming and Yields Uneven Quality Personnel

Peacekeeping missions with broad nation-building mandates have both military and civilian functions. In Cambodia, UNTAC's civilian function is composed of several components, including a civilian police component, as shown in figure 1. For both the military function and the civilian police components, the U.N. attempted to recruit a representative multinational force. Other staff for the civilian components were drawn largely from within the U.N. system.

Figure 1: UNTAC Organizational Chart



Note: UNTAC's field administration reports to both FOD and the Deputy Special Representative.
 Source: United Nations.

Assembling a large multinational contingent involves several time-consuming steps. For Cambodia, U.N. officials informally contacted over 50 member states to see if they would contribute troops. In April 1992, just 2 months before full troop deployment, the U.N. held a formal troop contributors meeting. Fifty-four countries attended, and 32 countries eventually sent troops to Cambodia. After the contributors meeting, the U.N. decided to recruit more troops from French-speaking countries, thus adding to the recruiting time. Partly as a result of this process, four infantry battalions, which were intended to begin disarming combatants in June, were not deployed in the field until mid-July.

Adding to the difficulties in recruiting troops from several countries, some countries did not have the equipment necessary to deploy in Cambodia. For example, some units did not deploy with equipment to purify water from surface sources, even though the U.N. had asked them to bring this equipment. At least one battalion arrived without necessary equipment such as tents and field rations to sustain them for 60 days, as required for the mission. Consequently, UNTAC had to supply the battalion with these basic field necessities.

The quality of UNTAC military and police personnel varied. Although most military contingents were held in high regard by State Department and Department of Defense officials we spoke with, others were not. One country contributed troops with little or no military experience, resulting in numerous disciplinary problems. As of December 1992, 56 members of this country's infantry battalion, including 8 officers, had been sent back to their home country for disciplinary reasons. Similarly, some police did not have a driver's license or could not speak English or French--basic requirements for UNTAC police. Some countries sent personnel with little or no police experience. One country contributed a medical doctor as a police monitor.

To provide the missions with civilians to organize elections, monitor human rights, and provide oversight of designated government ministries, the United Nations draws largely from the Secretariat and other parts of the U.N. system. According to U.N. officials, it was difficult to recruit U.N. workers for Somalia and Cambodia. Release dates had to be negotiated with the U.N. home agency, and sometimes top candidates were not available. Delays in deploying these staff and their mixed quality have hindered operations in both Somalia missions and in Cambodia. U.S. officials told us the U.N. was essentially dysfunctional on the ground in Somalia under UNOSOM I because it did not have enough qualified personnel and resources. There was a lack of capable administrative staff; consequently, U.S. military and disaster relief personnel had to take the lead in coordinating activities. In Cambodia, a director said that some of his civilian staff could not deal with problems in the provinces. Some were seen as not having the competence to carry out their assigned duties, and thus

could not command the respect needed to lead operations and take the initiative in dealing with Cambodian nationals.

However, State Department and UNTAC officials had high regard for many U.N. workers, including the U.N. volunteers³ who were the primary field staff organizing the election in Cambodia. The U.N. volunteers are not U.N. civil servants. They are similar to Peace Corps volunteers and receive a basic stipend plus living expenses. We observed these volunteers working directly with Cambodians in rural areas.

Weaknesses in Logistical Support for Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping missions can be carried out only if they receive logistical support. However, missions sometimes begin without the basic supplies and equipment to do the work. In Somalia, for example, U.S. officials told us that civilian staff lacked water, computers, and basic office supplies. Similarly, civilian personnel in Cambodia initially had no supplies, equipment, or furniture at headquarters. Telephones, if available at all, were often not working. In one province, the civil administration component received its first shipment of basic supplies, such as desks, generators, and computers, and moved into its offices in mid-December 1992, about 9 months after the operation began.

Several factors contribute to the logistical problems. First, the U.N. has difficulty recruiting sufficient administrative and logistical specialists. For example, according to a U.S. official, UNTAC's military logistics support group should have consisted of at least 1,400 to 1,500 personnel rather than its actual level of 830 personnel. This official compared the size of UNTAC's military component to that of a light infantry division, saying that a light division is usually supported by 2,000 to 2,200 logistics personnel. Logistical specialists, however, are in high demand, and U.N. officials said it was difficult to recruit them for UNTAC because the peacekeeping mission in Yugoslavia was being implemented at the same time. Similarly, it was difficult to obtain specialists for UNOSOM because member states had already provided logisticians to the missions in Cambodia and Yugoslavia.

Another problem was the delay in integrating the civilian and military logistical units in the field. In this respect, organization of logistics for peacekeeping consists of three units: (1) the Field Operations Division, which provides headquarters support and guidance; (2) each mission's civilian administrative

³The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program began operations in 1971 to assist in international development. Operating under the United Nations Development Program, UNV recruits international volunteers, who have an average of 10 years professional experience, to work on U.N. operations.

unit, which handles field procurement, personnel, budgeting, payroll, and inventory control; and (3) the military logistics and support unit, which moves supplies and equipment to military and civilian units and provides engineering and communications services. Although an integrated support service was mentioned in the implementation plan for UNTAC, civilian administration and military logistical support had not been integrated when we visited Cambodia in December 1992.

According to U.N. officials in the field, the U.N. procurement process was also a problem and contributed to delays in receiving such items as general stores and communications equipment. We did not investigate the root causes for these problems, but according to both U.N. and U.S. officials the system was overloaded and not designed to handle the large volume of supplies needed for an operation the size of UNTAC. U.N. officials cited the lengthy procedures involved in soliciting bids, evaluating proposals, awarding contracts, and delivering the items to Cambodia.

Steps the U.N. Is Planning to Improve the Situation

The U.N. is planning to improve its ability to implement larger and more complex operations. To more effectively plan missions, the U.N. has proposed an increase in the number of permanent staff in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. These staff are slotted for specific positions in the Department, under an ongoing reorganization which creates specific geographic units responsible for overseeing operations in their respective regions, a military division with a permanent planning unit, and an operations center. The operations center should improve communication and operational oversight between New York headquarters and the field, and is intended to operate on a 24-hour basis. This should help some of the operational problems we previously discussed.

In December 1992, the Field Operations Division developed its first mission statement, thus clarifying the roles and responsibilities of its various units, including the logistics and communications unit. Based on interviews with each division, we believe that coordination is improving between the field division and the peacekeeping department. The Field Operations Division has also requested that the General Assembly increase its number of permanent staff positions. We have not assessed whether these changes will resolve the logistics support problems we observed in the field.

Some of the operations and logistics problems are beyond the capabilities of the U.N. Secretariat to solve. In his report, "An Agenda for Peace," the Secretary General recognized the crucial role that the U.N.'s member states play in providing troops, civilian personnel, supplies, and timely budgetary support for peacekeeping operations. In this connection, the United States has

provided some staff for UNOSOM II, but the process has been complicated and many staffing gaps remain.

STATUS OF COMMAND AND COORDINATION IN THE FIELD

Now let me turn to our observations on field command and coordination, which are based primarily on our work in Cambodia. When we visited Cambodia in late 1992, we found that UNTAC's military and civilian components reported through different chains of command to the head of UNTAC operations in the field, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, who is located in Phnom Penh. The military and civilian components had just established formal coordination units to coordinate security for the election. Such formal coordination at the outset of operations would seem to be important for missions that combine military and civilian functions.

Military and Civilian Components Not Fully Integrated

UNTAC has two principal chains of command, one for civilian units and one for the military component. As shown earlier in figure 1, the military component reports to the Force Commander, and the civilian components report to the Deputy Special Representative. Both the Force Commander and the Deputy Special Representative report to the Special Representative of the Secretary General, who is located in Phnom Penh.⁴ Some military officials said that a joint military-civilian coordination staff should have been established at UNTAC headquarters in Phnom Penh. According to these officials, such a staff would have facilitated the planning and implementation of UNTAC operations. For example, UNTAC's civilian rehabilitation component planned several projects, such as road building and water sanitation, with other groups working in Cambodia. Due to the lack of coordination, some of these projects, which were intended to provide income and skills to the local population, were preempted and completed by the military as part of its civic action campaign.

Some UNTAC officials noted that a coordination unit would also have improved cooperation between military and civilian activities in the provinces. In one province we visited, the U.N. civilian director complained about the lack of cooperation he was getting from the military component in protecting electoral and other U.N. workers. For example, some electoral workers had requested protection, from the local U.N. military unit to complete voter registration. When they did not receive protection they withdrew. An UNTAC military observer told us that the electoral workers had not given their request to someone who knew the security situation and could authorize military assistance. UNTAC officials in other

⁴UNTAC's administrative unit formally reported to the Field Operations Division in New York.

provinces, however, noted that cooperation between military and civilian components was good despite the lack of a formal coordinating mechanism. This was largely because the civilian administrators and the military commanders respected each other's professional competence.

Military Command

The UNTAC Force Commander has overall authority for military operations, and his orders and directives are carried out by each battalion's national commander, who has responsibility for military activities in designated provinces. Each national commander has discretion in how to carry out the orders. For example, the UNTAC Force Commander issued the same rules of engagement for all troops, but their interpretation of the rules varied. According to an UNTAC military observer, troops from certain nations returned fire when fired upon, and generally responded aggressively when there was an immediate threat to U.N. personnel. Troops from other nations acted less aggressively and did not use their weapons when fired upon in similar situations. U.N. and other officials said some discretion in interpreting directives and commands is the only practical way to carry out a mission composed of forces from so many nations with different training, operating procedures, and approaches.

The Force Commander has limited authority over the discipline of infantry battalions. Instead, each battalion or national contingent commander has the authority to discipline troops and is responsible for ensuring that troops meet his country's military code of conduct. The Force Commander can recommend, but not order, that a battalion commander or a soldier be repatriated for disciplinary reasons. For example, the Force Commander requested that a high-ranking officer be replaced. His request was being considered by the officer's host country when we were in Cambodia.

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The U.N. is going through growing pains in implementing the recent proliferation of peacekeeping missions and coping with their increased complexity. Similarly, the United States is grappling with questions of how to make peacekeeping become an effective instrument to bring peace and democracy to war-torn countries. New approaches such as peacebuilding and clearer peacekeeping enforcement mandates may prove effective. But these approaches are new and have yet to be completely tested. Moreover the new approaches must be balanced against a realistic assessment of the U.N.'s capability to implement them. We will continue to examine the U.N.'s changing capability as part of our ongoing work on U.N. peacekeeping and management issues. This concludes my statement. I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

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