

UN Peacekeeping Challenges and Opportunities
Testimony of Ambassador Nancy Soderberg
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First, let me thank Chairman Nelson for holding this important hearing and for the honor of appearing before you today. The role of peacekeeping is key to keeping America secure. We cannot do it alone. The UN needs us -- and we need the UN.

A lot has changed in peacekeeping over the last 60 years. During the Cold War, the UN managed 13 peacekeeping operations -- back when that was the most boring job in the world for the UN soldiers -- sitting on a border where nothing ever happened.

Well, a lot has changed since the end of the Cold War -- over 50 missions, most extremely complex and today the UN manages nearly 90,000 troops -- the second largest military deployment in the world. With civilian personnel, the number is close to 110,000. And it does it lean -- although not mean. About \$7 billion a year.

But today, peacekeeping is at risk and it is up to the international community to help. Far too often, UNDPKO does its job - but the UNSC and the international community do not do theirs. If the international community is going to keep putting missions on the UN's back -- it has a responsibility to give it the support it needs to do the job right.

I commend the subcommittee for convening this important hearing. I hope you will take away a plan of action to provide the UN the support it needs. Simply put, the UN needs a much stronger international support system -- where capable countries partner with UN troops that need training, doctrine, equipping, and sustaining. This committee can play an important role in bringing such a network to fruition.

The test going ahead is not to look for the UN to deploy in areas as a band-aid solution -- that risks disaster. When the UNSC has authorized deployment of troops where there is no peace to keep -- Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia in the 1990s through to Darfur today -- the UN fails. But when there is a peace to keep and the UN mission is well trained, equipped and sustained -- UN peacekeeping works. Look at Liberia, Sierra Leone, East Timor, and of course the Cadillac of PKO- the reinforced mission in Lebanon.

The world has already made great strides in conflict prevention and the UN deserves high praise for its role in that task. Today, however, the international community has not done its fair share in building up African capabilities to keep and maintain the peace. Of 17 peace operations in world, 11 are in Africa, with more on the horizon such as Somalia. But far too many of us are opting out. Of the 90,000 peacekeepers out there, the P-5 contributes only about 6,000. China and France are close to 2,000. Russia, the US, and UK -- between 300 and 350 each. Japan provides only 36. Those numbers may not change -- but the level of engagement of the P-5 and other capable countries must.

Intervention GAP

The West is often accused of a double standard in where it will intervene – meaning never in Africa. The truth is there is an intervention gap in Africa, but one that is largely driven by a capability gap. Africa does not have a mechanism for enforcement -- nor does it have adequate peacekeeping capabilities.

Enforcement operations as well are unevenly undertaken. With a few notable exceptions, such as the recent interventions by former colonial powers, Britain and France, in Africa and NATO's deployment to Afghanistan, American and European leaders share a core principle of sending troops into harms way only in one's own back yard.

For instance, the United States intervened in Haiti in 1994 and 2004 and the Balkans in 1995 and 1999; Australia led the intervention into East Timor in 1999; and Nigeria intervened in 1998 in Sierra Leone. Only South Africa answered the Secretary General's 1999 call for troops in Burundi. The West will on occasion intervene in areas of direct impact on their national security, such as the recent deployment of Europeans to Lebanon and NATO's deployment in Afghanistan. And of course, there is the unique situation in Iraq (or at least hope will be unique).

Yet, for the most part, Africa lacks capable troops to deploy quickly to stem violence in its own sphere of influence. To be sure, they are making great progress. ECOWAS has deployed in many conflicts and the AU has deployed in Darfur, although it lacked sufficient capabilities for the mission. But the Darfur deployment -- even after the UN stepped in last summer --

underscores the difficulties in Africa's ability to deploy peacekeeping missions – the forces lacks key capabilities of lift, equipment, communications, doctrine, and training. And those are the very capabilities the other regions of the world have – especially the US, NATO, and the EU – but also Latin Americans and increasingly Asia.

To address that gap, nations with capable forces should build up such a capability in Africa that might prevent future genocides. But the programs to date are wholly inadequate. Both the US and the G-8 have endorsed the goal of training and equipping 75,000 peacekeeping troops by 2010, mostly in Africa. But the initiative is not sufficiently funded or supported. Troops often go through training, but there is insufficient equipping or ongoing training. What good is a battalion that has been trained, but then disbands or lacks ongoing training? There is some good news. On our side, the US DOD has recently made peacekeeping a priority – in fact a core mission of its purpose.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) states that “The Department stands ready to increase its assistance to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in areas of the Department's expertise such as doctrine, training, strategic planning and management.” Over the last decade, and particularly following the attacks of September 11, the Pentagon has increasingly viewed failed states, also referred to as “under- or ungoverned spaces,” as a threat to U.S. national security. With that has come recognition of the importance of peacekeeping for U.S. interests.

Yet, with our forces bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, significant new support will not be forthcoming in the short term. NATO is uniquely situated to help train and equip Africa – but it too is bogged down in Afghanistan. In discussing the issue with our own Pentagon – they do not believe NATO has the capacity to do another mission at the time. So, who is left?

The EU, China, the Latins, and Asia must all do more – but we also can't let the US and NATO off the hook. We all need to do more.

The G-8 has put the African Action Plan on its agenda – that is a good sign. The US has made the decision to establish a new combatant command in Africa – and to make it operational by October 08. While the location has yet to be decided, it will provide new opportunities to work closely with the AU and its regional hubs to develop its own capabilities.

The AU needs are vast. The AU plan involves contingents on standby in five regions of Africa (Eastern, Central, Southern, Western and Northern) which would be available for deployment for missions ranging from observation to intervention against genocide. Current planning is for the Force to be ready by 2010. Each brigade would have approximately 3,000 to 4,000 troops giving the AU a standby capacity of approximately 15,000 – 20,000 peacekeepers.

That is an ambitious goal. The five regions vary greatly in capabilities. The Central and Northern Brigades exist only on paper. The Eastern brigade, to be handled by IGAD, is not yet ready to be deployed, nor

is the Southern one, to be handled by SADC. The most advanced is the Western Brigade, run by the most capable regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), made up of 15 nations formed in 1975. ECOWAS, based in Abuja, Nigeria, has deployed to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia.

The establishment of the new US COCOM in Africa, AFRICOM, will help focus the US on the peacekeeping needs in Africa. Hope it can serve to galvanize the US and others to meet the needs of African peacekeepers. Would be an area that Japan can explore -- ways to promote new partnerships.

The African Union still has many unresolved issues, including where to find the resources and the political will to establish the standby force and how the body will relate to the many regional organizations on the continent, as well as the EU, NATO, and the UN. The African Union recognizes it needs help and is refreshingly willing to seek it.

To address some of these needs, the UN should establish a world-wide support group of peacekeepers – a Friends Group or Core Group – to coordinate peacekeepers needs and to make sure they are met. It is up to the international community to help the AU succeed. Japan is certainly well placed to play a leadership role.

It is also important to recognize that in the wake of the crises in the 90s in the Balkans and Rwanda, the world also recognized that responsibility to respect those at risk when the government cannot or will not do so. In

2005, the UNGA endorsed the R2P concept -- but it has failed to follow through with action.

That fact is sadly evident in Darfur where the world has failed to protect the population at risk. The Sudanese have refused to permit a more forceful peacekeeping presence than the one provided by the AU – precisely because it is not yet ready to stop the killing. The UNSC caved into Sudan’s insistence on a “predominantly” African force -- which the Sudanese have turned into an exclusively African force. Only one third of the authorized troops are on the ground. Good offers for assistance have been rejected by Sudan, and today Sudan is holding up the deployment of Thai troops and Nepalese support for the nonsensical reason that some African troops must deploy first.

None of this is the fault of UNDPKO. It is time the UNSC stand up to those hindering peacekeeping. There are some useful lessons in Darfur that provide lessons on how to meet the new challenges of peacekeeping.

There are four key steps:

First, the UN Security Council must no longer let countries dictate the terms of the peacekeeping missions when civilians are at risk. It is time to move beyond the absolute right of sovereignty. In Darfur, it is time to stand up to Sudan. Khartoum should not be able to object to capable troops and engineers nor to insist on a particular deployment sequencing. Khartoum’s preconditions on which troops can participate in the mission rule out some of the most capable forces.

Second, Africa’s forces must be trained, equipped, deployed, and sustained. The United States and others have partnered with some troops and those relationships must be expanded and sustained throughout the course of the

mission. Here the US should play a critical role in setting up a worldwide Core Group of partners who will support African battalions and sustain them over a multi-year effort. The goal would be self-sufficiency within 10 years.

Third, the members must put a higher priority on deploying the mission's critical infrastructure so the force can function once on the ground. For instance, in Sudan, even if the troops are deployed, there is no infrastructure to support it. The world must provide the twenty four helicopters, two transport units and one logistical unit it urgently needs. Without such support, the UN mission cannot function. UNDPKO has repeatedly asked for better stockpiling of equipment. A worldwide effort is needed to provide this critical infrastructure. Again, Japan can play a critical role.

Fourth, we must all be conscious of the risk of deploying peacekeepers into areas where there is no peace to keep. Today, UNDPKO officials are very blunt about the risks of Sudan and Somalia -- no one wants another Black Hawk Down crisis. But that is exactly what we are risking today in Darfur - - and certainly in Somalia if that mission goes through. The UNSC has a responsibility to press for peace harder -- before and during any peacekeeping mission.

Certainly in Darfur -- there is no peace to keep and the UN and AU have already lost close to a dozen soldiers. Their weapons have been stolen.

There must be a renewed effort to reach peace in Sudan's three crises -- in the South, East, and Western area of Darfur. Any successful peace process will require the engagement of the full spectrum of actors, including all rebel movements and, of course, the government of Sudan.

I hope the Subcommittee will take up these tasks. The United States will be safer and more secure if we do.

Thank you.