



Taking Leadership to the Next Level: UN Peace Operations 2020

Challenges Forum Workshop

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Presentation by Capt. (N) Hervé Auffret, Officer in Charge, Chief of Staff, Chief
of Policy and Doctrine, Office of Military Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping
Operations, United Nations

Stock-take of United Nations current policy, guidance, reviews, capacity-building, pre-
deployment preparations and evaluation tools for mission leadership
– The How

Check Against Delivery

I would like to first thank Annika and the Challenges Forum. When it comes to discussing critical issues for peacekeeping, the Challenges Forum is absolutely instrumental and a critical enabler offering this broad and diverse peacekeeping family represented here, and in providing important opportunities to think broad and out of the box. Thank you also to all organizers Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Center for Creative Leadership (CLL) for inviting me to share some of the work we are doing to get the right military leaders that peacekeeping missions need.

I am very honored to be here today to speak about military leadership in peacekeeping operations. I am a Naval Aviator and many naval officers have spoken already here. To be fair I would like remind you of Sun Zi and his Art of War, emphasizing centuries ago some key qualities required for commanding positions: vision, insight, impartiality, humanity, strong resolve, ability to decide. I would like add another quality, provided by Napoleon Bonaparte: luck. Or to mention Henri Bergson: In complex human being projects, success depends on personality and circumstances.

How is military leadership of UN peace operations understood, instructed, prepared, trained and evaluated?

- What are we doing well that we should continue?
- What are we not doing that we should start doing?
- What are we doing we should stop doing?

General Comments: why?

- As already mentioned several times yesterday, peacekeeping operations have never been as complex as today in terms of mandates, operational reality, expectations from populations and the international community, scarce resources, and cumbersome UN administration processes. It seems that all is done to make mission leadership's life an actual nightmare.
- Often placed in the "front line", or as I would say, sometimes "the last fence", are military components. They are placed at the intersection of many rocky roads, one of the most difficult jobs for a soldier. In most situations there is not one good obvious answer to the tactical challenges they face. Whatever their answers, there are imperfect by nature in the complex environment. They are tasked to secure huge areas where the Host State has often given-up. They are sometimes requested to use force, the right level of force, when required, but not too much. They are not supposed to have any "enemies", but at the same time have Armed Groups attacking them.
- Leading military components in this kind of environment requires excellent military leaders, starting with the Force Commander, of course, but also the entire chain of command: sector commanders, unit commanders, all this "band of brothers" as Read Admiral Horacio Nelson used to call his captains. It is first and foremost a question of mindset, a question of a complex mix of fundamental skills and experiences.

How to get good military leaders for peacekeeping?

- In the UN, we do not have our own military, we do not manage their career. We do not observe them in different functions with growing responsibilities and over a long

period of time. We do not select them, step by step, keeping the best ones to fulfil higher responsibilities. We draw our military leaders from a broad variety of Member States who are doing all these tasks for us.

- Commanding sometimes over 10,000 personnel coming from different countries, with different mindset, different language, different military culture, different training is another challenge.
- We rely on Member States' judgement. Member States are seeking for the best ones to lead their own armed forces, at all levels. The complexity mentioned before requires that we had the best military leaders for peacekeeping, but the competition is difficult, and selecting the best of the best ones is a challenge.
- Member States have a primary responsibility to present candidates with necessary experience and skills in terms of leadership and operational experience.

What are we doing well that we should continue?

A lot is already in place and I will now quickly go through the process and documents already available to enable the selection of the officers we need in peacekeeping. Over the past years, the UN Office of Military Affairs (OMA) puts the accent on enhancing performance. In terms of leadership, this has practical implications on how we select, prepare and train key military leaders.

Selection (already mentioned yesterday by Ms Gabriella Seymour)

- Clear terms of reference especially in terms of qualifications, core values and core competencies but also in terms of expected mindset;
- OMA has developed a specific procedure for the selection and extension of mission military seniors. The process includes call for candidates (female candidates are encouraged), interviews, and consultation with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for screening (application of the Human Rights Screening of UN personnel dated December 2012: we have recently stopped the selection of a general officer on this basis). The process takes at least six months.
- During the interview, the experience, the personality and the skills of the potential candidates, are evaluated by officers with knowledge about current peacekeeping operations.
- Force Commander nominations are proposed by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) but approved by the Secretary-General who informs the Security Council. Nominating key leaders for UN peacekeeping.

Preparation

- This preparation is first and foremost a Member State responsibility and should start far before the person is in a peacekeeping operation. The UN military Senior Mission Leadership (SML) course (next being organized in New Delhi 28-31 March) is the kind of opportunity Member State should use to propose their best officers.
- All officers have to acquire and master some prerequisite skills detailed in the Force Headquarters (HQ) handbook, the Operational Readiness Preparation (ORP) guidelines approved on 6 January 2017, deriving from the Operational Readiness

Assurance and performance Improvement Policy approved in December 2015.

- The ORP provides details on necessary knowledges and skills, in addition to what the senior leader should be able to ask his/her staff and his/her units in the field.

Training

- The importance of training applies to senior military leaders, not only to lieutenants.
- When a Force Commanders is selected, he/she has to come to the UN HQ to receive detailed and comprehensive in-briefing sessions. These sessions include meetings with OMA leadership (and beyond – USG, key leaders in the UN HQ, NGOs, Agencies), and a presentation by desk officers about the UN processes and the operational situation of the missions.
- The Force Commanders participate also in a mandatory Intensive Orientation Course, held twice a year at the UN HQ. They participate once a year in the Head of Military Component Conference, also at the UN HQ.
- The Sector Commanders are not subject to in-briefing at the UN HQ. Instead, they have a Sector Commander's Course (SCC), held twice a year in the Training of Trainer Centre in Entebbe, Uganda. Feedback from the Sector Commanders after the SCC: why did not we have this earlier?

Evaluation in the field

- A series of military standards, United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual, the Force Headquarters (FHQ) manual and the 11 United Nations Military Units Manuals have been produced. Even before deployment, they provide useful standards on what are the tasks senior military leaders' commanders are expected to deliver.
- Force Commanders have been granted the obligation to perform an Evaluation Process of his/her subordinate units. He/she may also request the UN HQ for some help to assess and improve the quality of his/her FHQ/SHQ.
- Finally, the evaluations carried out by the Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership give the USG detailed information about the performance of contingents including the Military Leadership.

Learning: finally there is learning

- At the end of their tours, Force Commanders are requested to produce an *End of Assignment Report* and they are debriefed in the UN HQ.

What are we not doing that we should or could?

- Scenario based competition/interviews during the selection phase. Putting people in situations.
- Selecting “military leadership teams” but also “senior mission teams” instead of focusing too much on individuals. We need “integrated band of brothers”. In this context we need to better prepare Special/Deputy Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG/DSRSG) in their ability to evaluate military officers.
- More professionally verify the ability to communicate with culturally diverse

individuals, and contingents should be taken into account early in the officers' training (the importance of language skills).

- Mentoring leadership teams, the need for good mentors still up to date.
- Invite Member States to keep track of their young officers with a successful UN experience, in order to propose them for higher positions in the UN.
- Emphasize the importance of approved UN military literature (UN Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM), FHQ Manual, Protection of Civilian guidelines, UNMUMs, Operational Readiness Assurance (ORA) Policy etc.). Knowledge should become compulsory for military leaders but also for all officers (regional seminars, e.g. Ghana next week). We promote this knowledge through regional seminars for practitioners. The Assessment and Advisory visit organized in the context of the Strategic Force Generation are also important opportunities to promote this important policy and doctrine work. The annual meeting of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC) is finally a given opportunity to engage with peacekeeping training centers. No officer should join a UN mission without some knowledge about these documents. We must continue this effort. It should be one criteria for selection in the future.

What are we doing that we should stop perhaps doing?

- Stovepipe approach in the selection of mission leadership