

Seminar on the Safety of UN Peacekeepers and Associated Personnel Working in Conflict Zones

Tokyo, 15-16 March 2001

On 15 and 16 March 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan hosted a seminar in Tokyo to consider issues arising from the increased incidence in recent years of threats to the safety of UN peacekeepers and associated personnel working in conflict zones. Forty-six participants, including the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and Jordan to the United Nations and a cross section of military and civilian attendees from troop contributors, operational departments and agencies of the United Nations, and institutes with peacekeeping experience, contributed their first-hand knowledge to the discussions. A list of participants is attached.

The seminar was the seventh meeting in a project of international seminars being coordinated by the Swedish National Defence College under the title 'Challenges of Peacekeeping and Peace Support: Into the 21st Century'.

Welcoming Address

The opening address was given by Mr. Kiyohiro Araki, Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. In welcoming participants on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, he expressed the hope that the discussion would make a meaningful contribution to the series of seminars being coordinated by the Swedish National Defence College. He noted, as did several subsequent speakers, that 1677 peacekeepers had lost their lives since 1948. Although the situation had seen recent improvements, the safety of peacekeepers demanded constant attention and Japan had been making great efforts to that end. In 1995 Japan had been the second State party to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and encouraged those countries not yet parties to the Convention to join. Japan also wished to support a Protocol that would further strengthen that Convention by extending legal protection to all UN staff engaged in humanitarian operations. In addition, Japan had contributed \$1 million to the Trust Fund for the Security of United Nations personnel and urged more members of the international community to contribute to that Fund. Mr. Araki concluded his remarks by hoping that the seminar would be thought-provoking, insightful and productive.

Session 1 - Opening Substantive Statements

Following a brief presentation on the seminar series project as a whole, given by the Project Director Ms. Annika Hilding-Norberg, the keynote substantive address was given by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNTAC and UNPROFOR. He observed that the circumstances of peacekeeping missions had become more complex and more volatile in recent years and it was now increasingly difficult to plan and implement them. The safety and security of personnel

had become a major preoccupation among member States but, despite casualties, many countries had not wavered in their support of peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations reflected the best efforts of the international community in a less-than-perfect world.

More than 80% of modern conflicts were intra-state and over the years there had been a gradual erosion of respect for the United Nations. In addition, the composition of armed parties had diversified to include criminal elements, and even child soldiers, most of whom had scant awareness of the Geneva Conventions or international law. Peacekeeping operations were often deployed in areas where government authority did not extend.

Security Council resolutions and Presidential statements had often papered over differences of opinion with elegant words but the differences remained visible and these had contributed to the diminishing respect. This situation, he said, obviously contributed to the scepticism towards peacekeeping operations on the ground by detractors such as factions taking part in a conflict which partially accounted for the casualties and hostage-taking incidents. Mr. Akashi recalled that on at least three occasions during his time in the Balkans, more than 100 peacekeepers had been taken hostage. He also noted that some two-thirds of the deaths of peacekeepers since 1948 had occurred in non-hostile actions and therefore the UN needed to exercise vigilance more widely than just in combat situations.

Mr. Akashi observed that among the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel Report there had been a recommendation in favour of a more robust use of force. He cautioned that in considering such a step the time-honoured principles of UN peacekeeping, such as impartiality, the use of force only in self-defence and working with the consent of the parties, needed to be preserved.

In conclusion, Mr. Akashi emphasized the importance of minimizing the loss of human lives, military or civilian, of the UN and non-UN workers involved in conflict situations. He warned that the international community would continue to face fierce ethnic and other violent conflicts as well as massive humanitarian tragedies. He affirmed that, in such events, there was no alternative for the international community but to intervene: standing still with hands folded in the face of genocide, such as in 1994 in Rwanda, would not be acceptable. He called for realism, pragmatism and vigilance - and that every effort be made to ensure the safety of peacekeepers in the field - but asked also that the idealism that motivated the soldiers and civilians who had fallen for peace should never be forgotten.

Mr. Benon Sevan, UN Security Coordinator, gave a frank and forthright description of the difficulties he faced in discharging his coordinating responsibilities for security. For the past seven years, he had been serving as the UN Security Coordinator over and above other regular and highly demanding assignments such as his present responsibilities as the Executive director of the Iraq Programme. The establishment of a full time UN Security Coordinator was long overdue. He expressed regret that while

Member States spoke of their support of safety and security measures for United Nations personnel, very few of them were forthcoming with the necessary funds. Too often United Nations personnel were sent to the field without minimum security. They are sent to far out and dangerous missions with no communications equipment. They are expected to perform miracles without the essential tools at their disposal. It was time for a major wake-up call – a “sunrise” clause – on the security of United Nations personnel.

It was not sufficient for the UN to say the host government had the primary responsibility for security. It was a fact that the UN often had to send people to places where there was no host government, or where the government could not even provide for its own security. The UN was just lucky, Mr. Sevan continued, that more people had not been lost as UN personnel had become soft and easy targets and often helpless in such situations. In addition to casualties, he pointed out the need to recognize the validity of the need for trauma and stress counselors for peacekeepers and associated personnel. In fact, he emphasized, it was time to minimize the distinction between military peacekeepers and associated civilian personnel.

In the past two years, efforts had been made to sensitize Member States to the fact that there was a need for a coherent security management plan for the United Nations system as a whole. At present, some UN agencies and programmes had their own security arrangements and followed UN security arrangements whenever they so wished. There was neither a clear line of authority nor accountability in the management of security within the United Nations system. It was essential to establish full accountability in security matters. It was also time, he added, to move away from the current approach that the Designated Official for Security in the field should be the most senior UN official present in the field. Instead, that responsibility should be carried by a properly trained and qualified professional, well versed in security matters.

In his report to the General Assembly (A/55/494), the Secretary-General had addressed the many concerns regarding the security and safety of UN personnel and had made concrete proposals to professionalize the management of security within the UN system, including the establishment of a full time Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level. Mr. Sevan expressed disappointment at the positions taken both by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and in the Fifth Committee. The positions taken in those bodies were not encouraging to United Nations personnel who were asked to serve in difficult and often dangerous posts, without the necessary financial support for measures to enhance the safety and security of staff.

Most of the funding requirements presented in the report of the Secretary-General involved consolidation of expenditures which were in fact being spent under different accounts. The UN Security Coordinator's Office (UNSECOORD) was responsible for the security of about 70,000 persons, including the dependants of staff. His Office must be the least funded per capita in terms of security of any organization or establishment. Repeating an illustration that he had presented to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly in December 2000, Mr. Sevan said that the cost of his understaffed Office was about \$600,000 per year - the equivalent of approximately four security dog

teams. He asked Member States to be pragmatic about funding the essential measures for the security and safety of UN personnel.

He paid tribute to the steadfast support of the Government of Japan for the security and safety of UN personnel, in particular to its generous contribution to the Trust Fund with the help of which more than 6,000 staff members, including those on four peacekeeping missions, had received security training. Four training workshops had also been organized for 120 security officers.

Mr. Sevan ended his remarks by asking the seminar participants to consider in their discussions not only the intellectual perspectives on safety and security of peacekeepers and associated personnel, but also the pragmatic day-to-day issues of how to fund them.

The third substantive speaker was Mr. Hedi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. He addressed the question of how there could be a collective enhancement of the safety and security of the men and women who worked in peacekeeping operations throughout the world. First, he briefly reviewed the threats faced by peacekeeping personnel, and then he discussed the existing security management system.

Of the 1677 deaths incurred by peacekeepers since 1948, some 570 had been from hostile actions. In addition to the moral unacceptability of violence directed against peacekeepers, such fatalities could rapidly undermine the political will of troop-contributors to continue providing personnel. As Mr. Sevan had already stated, the primary responsibility for security lay with the host government but, as stressed by Mr. Sevan, in reality parties were often unable or unwilling to live up to their responsibilities.

DPKO was responsible for the safety of all peacekeepers, whether military or civilian. The staff of the UN Security Coordinator provided technical advice and there was close cooperation in the field once a peacekeeping operation began.

Mr. Annabi suggested a number of steps that could be taken to address the threat of hostile action. The mandates given by the Security Council were of prime importance, in that proper mandates with proper forces and equipment could help to deter hostile threats in the first place. Moreover, the inclusion in the mandate of arrangements for disarmament and demobilization could be of much help. Financial resources were necessary to support training, appropriate staffing of DPKO and UNSECOORD, and also for stockpiling security equipment. Troop contributors should also provide their troops with proper flak jackets and similar protective equipment.

It was important to have the closest possible coordination among different elements in the UN, to ensure that the security plan for a mission also covered non-military personnel. The cooperation of Member States was needed in the form of appropriate national resources during the planning phase of an operation and coordination was also required with organizations and peacekeeping efforts outside the UN. Finally,

Mr. Annabi emphasized that cooperative relationships between personnel in the field from different organizations were vital to ensure that security plans worked well in practice.

Promotion of security awareness demanded better training efforts. The goal should be to encourage a forward-looking approach in both pre-mission and in-the-field training for all personnel. Another important aspect was the overall legal framework and, in this context, the Secretary General had called upon Member States to take legal action against those who committed violence against peacekeepers.

In sum, there was now an opportunity to develop a sound security management system and the closest possible coordination at all levels continued to be needed to work out the necessary arrangements.

Session 2 – General Exchange and Discussion

The session began with Mr. Derek Boothby, Seminar Consultant, recalling the aims of the seminar that had been set out in a paper provided to participants beforehand. The seminar's focus was on the security system and arrangements applicable in a peacekeeping mission, containing military, police and civilian personnel and reporting to DPKO.

It was hoped that the discussion would focus on:

- the present security system in a PKO and its management structure;
- the security relationship between a PKO and UN and other entities on the ground;
- the relationship between military, civilian police and civilian personnel in terms of security within a PKO mission;
- the differences in security systems between those that have armed military personnel and those that do not;
- the decision-making mechanisms on the ground related to evacuation, to deployment into new areas of high risk, to safe living arrangements for personnel, and to the location of mission facilities;
- the extent to which personnel in HQ and in the field are familiar with the security system, and the arrangements for pre-mission training;
- the nature of HQ procedures and the links to the PKO to support crisis situations.

By looking at case studies of PKOs in Sierra Leone, Somalia and East Timor it was intended to explore and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current security system for PKOs, including the management of crises. Out of these considerations, it was hoped to offer some recommendations for improvement, indicating what the UN Secretariat might do, what would be required of legislative bodies, and what would be required of Member States.

As a former staff member of the UN for more than 20 years, Mr. Boothby noted that UN personnel, and those working with them, were finding themselves increasingly asked to serve in situations where security and safety were at best unreliable and sometimes virtually non-existent. People were the UN's biggest asset, and yet among the UN staff at large there was a wide and growing concern that staff safety and security always came a poor second to politics, finance and cumbersome and even conflicting procedures. People could not be expected to risk life and limb and do their jobs conscientiously and effectively if they had little confidence in the system's ability to look after their security and safety.

Ms. Margaret Carey, Special Assistant to the ASG for Peacekeeping Operations, expanded on some of the points made by Mr. Annabi. She noted that PKOs were political operations and the Secretary General had stressed that planning had to be for the worst-case scenario and the operation had to be ready to meet it if it so developed. The mandates given to PKOs must be practicable and reflect the realities on the ground. The soldiers provided by troop contributors must have the posture and equipment necessary to deal with situations that may arise. Cooperation and coordination in the field was essential and in that respect CMOCs (Civil-Military Operations Centres) could help. Security training was needed before and during the PKO and she suggested that each PKO should have a training cell. Many of these suggestions were contained in the recent Brahimi Panel Report.

In sum, Ms. Carey said, there was a need to identify and develop best practices. DPKO was about to embark on a study on security management and its objectives would be similar to those she had outlined. She invited further suggestions from the seminar participants.

Covering some of the aims of the seminar, Mr. Richard White Manlove, staff of UNSECOORD, gave a powerpoint presentation describing the current security management system with particular reference to security in peacekeeping operations.

These opening remarks were followed by a general exchange. Questions were asked about the extent to which a unified security system could, in practice, be applied across the UN; did security officers have an exchange with national intelligence sources; were there clear policies regarding dependants, and what about unofficial dependants; and were members of the media included in PKO security arrangements.

Responding to some of the points, Mr. Sevan stated that it was time to establish a proper system of accountability. It should not be possible for persons to be identified as Designated Officials for Security, and then not be accountable. Also, different officials and different departments should speak with one voice on security matters.

Regarding dependants, Mr. Annabi said that there was indeed a policy but it was not always implemented strictly and DPKO did not have the necessary authority. Ms. Carey and Mr. Manlove said that in the event of evacuations care was taken of dependants, but added that they should not be present in non-family duty stations. There

was also the sensitive issue of local staff: there had been a policy decision that they would not be evacuated but they may be re-located to a more secure place. However, they too did not always cooperate and some did not wish to appoint security wardens. Regarding the media, the UN could not accept responsibility for them and they were expected to sign liability waivers when using UN transport.

Continuing in the afternoon, comments ranged widely. Drawing on his diplomatic experience in New York, one participant referred to the political pressures in New York and the concern among troop contributors that sometimes the Security Council appeared to be taking decisions, without consulting the troop contributors, which would endanger their troops. Moreover, in the particular case he was referring to, the mandate seemed to be evolving in a quite reckless way. His delegation had had almost daily discussions with one of the major countries but they did not seem to be listening. Capitals of such countries needed to treat troop contributors more seriously. In his view, until the Security Council members themselves had their own troops in the PKOs, there would probably continue to be mandates that were not well thought out. Ms. Carey noted that the Security Council had established a sub-group to address the aspect of relations with troop contributors.

Another participant drew attention to the wide span of challenges presented to PKOs. There was a need not only for better military forces but also better coordinated, better trained and more credible civilians. Civil-military cooperation and coordination needed more energetic work and this would promote better safety and security. Separately, one participant observed that the number of personnel working in New York on mission security issues was insufficient and should be increased. Among other suggestions, he proposed that the security office should be a subsidiary of DPKO, that there should be a 24-hour security watch system in New York, and that in the field it would be better to give the responsibility for security and protection to the military and focus efforts on training civilians. (It should be noted that there already is a 24-hour security watch system in New York.)

A survey of the legal aspects concluded with the view that the speaker could not avoid a rather pessimistic view on the effectiveness of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Convention had only 50 State Parties, almost all from developed or contributing States and resistance was developing among some of the developing States. Moreover, few operations could actually be covered by the terms of the Convention.

The topics of public information and the uses of information technology gave rise to a number of comments. The need to develop and maintain good relations with local communities was stressed and the example of UNTAC was given. In UNTAC a network of radio stations had been established in order to give authoritative information to the Cambodian public and improve UNTAC's relations with the local communities; in turn, this had helped to improve the security of UNTAC peacekeepers. It was pointed out that information technology could be of great assistance in sharing information within a PKO and it could also be useful in distance learning. Ms. Carey said that in following up the

Brahimi Report, DPKO was working with the Department of Public Information to strengthen public information as a core component of PKOs. The support of the General Assembly was needed to improve the modernity of information technology equipment.

It was noted that the subject of gathering information was itself a sensitive issue among some delegations in New York. It was suggested that the Secretariat needed to explain such matters more clearly to delegations and this might help to dispel the resistance that existed.

One participant felt that the UN was not taking training seriously and needed to pay more attention to developing better practices and procedures. Ms. Carey commented that the DPKO unit responsible for training was one that had recently been strengthened. Regarding the latter point DPKO was pursuing means to strengthen its capacity in this area; at present, it did not have enough staff and the problem was further exacerbated by the loss of institutional memory that arose when police and military secondments returned to their parent countries after two years of UN service.

A question was raised regarding casualties that occurred from accidents rather than hostile action and the cumbersome procedures that then ensued. Ms. Carey responded that the UN had an investigation procedure that looked into cases of accident. In response to a further question, she said that the reports were not made generally available but relevant sections were released to countries concerned.

Responding to a question regarding the policy on hostage-taking, Mr. Sevan said that the UN had a clear policy not to make substantial concessions: such a practice would simply result in the ransom costs escalating.

Session 3 – Case Studies

Sierra Leone - UNAMSIL

The first case study was a presentation by Major Ganase Jaganathan (Malaysia) who served as an unarmed Military Observer in Sierra Leone from July 1999 to July 2000, during which time he was held as a hostage for 21 days in May 2000. Major Jaganathan described what happened on the day he was taken hostage, the circumstances of his subsequent detention together with other UN detainees, the hardships and lack of food and medical attention, the absence of information about efforts being made by the UN to secure his recovery, and the circumstances of his eventual release.

Among the lessons learned in his view were the following: the peacekeeping troops took no action to stop the abduction, either because they wished to avoid a firefight or they were not prepared to risk casualties; the peacekeeping troops failed to implement the Lome Peace Agreement which had provided for freedom of movement; there were delays in the deployment of peacekeeping troops and when they arrived they were neither properly trained nor prepared; there was a lack of sufficient logistic support in the PKO.

His recommendations were: the Rules of Engagement needed to be strictly enforced (i.e. the use of force in self-defence); peacekeeping troops should be inducted and deployed on schedule; the troops concerned must be properly assigned and trained to be effective; there must be a commitment to the peace process; and Military Observer team sites should be properly and sufficiently supported.

His presentation was received with much interest and aroused a number of questions and comments. In response he said that there had been no interrogation during his abduction; he and his fellow detainees had been kept totally ignorant of any news and even their release was a complete surprise; following release there had been some stress counseling; the Revolutionary United Front rebels had little respect for the UN emblems, but would have had more respect if the UNAMSIL troops had taken more robust action. The counter view by one participant was that in fact no detainees had lost their lives, whereas if there had been a firefight there would certainly have been casualties. Another participant also pointed out that the release of the detainees had been achieved primarily by the efforts of ECOWAS leaders, not by the UN at all.

Somalia – UNOSOM and UNOSOM II

Brigadier Javed Zia (Pakistan) gave a presentation on the security aspects of UN operations in Somalia. During its service in Somalia from September 1992 to March 1995 the Pakistani contingent suffered 32 fatalities and 89 non-fatal injuries, including 11 who were crippled for life. He recounted the details of two of the most critical incidents, in June and October 1993, and other occasions when hostile acts were committed against peacekeepers. He followed these accounts by describing some of the coercive disarmament and other precautionary measures taken to provide some protection against further similar incidents. These included the deployment of a Cobra aviation squadron, better protective vehicles, the identification of vehicle routes that provided better prospects of protection, higher quality flak jackets, the establishment of certain strategic checkpoints, the introduction of extensive mobile patrolling, the confiscation of weapons and ammunition, and efforts to train Somali police and judiciary.

In the third part of his presentation, Brigadier Zia offered some lessons learned and recommendations. These included: the need for a clear and practical mandate without “numerous mission creeps”; the importance of timely action, particularly concerning the transition between preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping; the necessity of uniform application of Rules of Engagement; the harmful effects of intervention by governments in the chain of command in the field; the need for a clear delineation of command and control to the Force Commander without detailed operational management from UN Headquarters; the need for training in urban warfare and appropriate equipment for peacekeeping units deployed to such circumstances; the importance of compatible communications equipment between units; the importance of consistent and timely logistic support; the pressing need for an intelligence cell in DPKO; the significant value that can be obtained from managing media more constructively and building a more positive image among the local population.

Brigadier Zia considered that each PKO Force Headquarters should have a dedicated 'Force Safety Branch' working under the control of the Chief of Staff. It should be responsible for formulating, monitoring and supporting the implementation of integrated security plans and it should exercise delegated powers for defusing crisis situations by quick decisions and actions. Finally, he urged the formulation of joint strategy on security issues by coordination of action by the SRSG, the Force Commander and the civil political and humanitarian representatives.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant enquired whether Brigadier Zia had given his revealing briefing to anyone in DPKO, and if so had he received any feedback. He replied that while his presentation had been specifically prepared for the seminar, other briefings given to DPKO had included the information and had covered wider areas. Ms. Carey confirmed that DPKO had received such briefings and, as before, the issues raised had embraced the need for clear and practical mandates, for improved training, for clarity of command and control and for compatibility of equipment. As for Somalia, she recalled the comment often made in UN circles to the effect that the UN "cannot keep peace where there is no peace to keep". She expressed interest in the idea of a Force Safety Branch and asked Brigadier Zia for further details.

One participant made the point that there were specific circumstances in Somalia where some of the troops were operating entirely under national control and where there had been several changes of SRSG, all of which must have complicated the peacekeepers' tasks. Another participant called for more attention to be paid to the requirements for commonsense, judgement and nimble thinking, underlining the importance of human qualities and the need for the best possible leadership in such circumstances.

East Timor – UNAMET, INTERFET and UNTAET

There were several presentations on various aspects and experiences gained from operations in East Timor, and also some comments by a participant from UNHCR.

Major Bruce Oswald (Australia) gave an account of the legal regime used to protect UN peacekeepers and associated personnel in East Timor. In particular, he addressed the application of the UN Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, the efficacy of status of mission and status of forces agreements, and the effects of Security Council resolutions. He pointed out that as Indonesia was not a party to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations And Associated Personnel, it was under no legal obligation to apply its provisions. In the circumstances, in August 1999, the government of Indonesia and the United nations had entered into a Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA) by which, and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1246 (1999), the Indonesian government undertook to ensure the safety and security of UNAMET and its members. Subsequently the relationship between Indonesia and the international force (INTERFET) led by Australia was clarified by a Status of

Forces Agreement that came into effect in September 1999.

Major Oswald concluded that the legal regime providing protection to United Nations peacekeepers and associated personnel does have an important role to play in reminding host nations of their obligations and duties, and in providing legitimization for actions that might be taken by the UN and States if they have to take steps to ensure the protection and safety of their personnel. He believed that all States should be encouraged to ratify the Convention as soon as possible and that peacekeepers and associated personnel should be given training on their legal rights and obligations.

Mr. Kenji Isezaki commented from his personal experience as a District Administrator of UNTAET. After describing some of his difficulties, particularly with slow and cumbersome procedures for recruiting staff, he felt that there was a need to ensure a better quality of security personnel and that logistic support badly needed improvement (it had taken 8 months for flak jackets and small arms to arrive). He also recounted some of his problems with NGOs when they wanted protection or evacuation, but often would not accept UN security control.

Mr. Sevan and Ms. Carey, in response to Mr. Isezaki, acknowledged his criticisms but drew attention to the fact that the UN had certain limitations. In this regard, DPKO was seeking to make recommendations on stockpiling equipment in order to reduce logistic delays, but yet again this needed support from governments.

Another participant, speaking on behalf of UN Volunteers, noted that in East Timor about half the civilians present were UN volunteers. They were doing an admirable job serving in remote areas yet they were often last in line for communications equipment, vehicles and other items. Mr. Sevan confirmed that the UNVs were included in the local UN safety plan. Mr. Werner Van den Berg, UNHCR Field Safety Advisor in Indonesia, also confirmed that the UNVs working in Timor – outside the area of the peacekeeping operation – were in the local UNHCR safety plan. Mr. Van den Berg described the situation and violence that had taken place in Timor and the evacuations of personnel that had then become necessary.

Session 4 - Conclusion

In the concluding session the two Chairmen, Mr. Yasushi Akashi and Major-General Karlis Neretnieks, summarized and commented on the statements, presentations and discussions that had taken place. It was reiterated that modern peacekeeping missions are more complex, and the situations more volatile, than the classical peacekeeping of earlier years. At the same time, there has been a gradual erosion of respect for the UN and increasingly peacekeepers - whether military or civilian - had found themselves confronted with hostile acts and dangerous situations. DPKO participants had underlined the vital importance of sensible and practical mandates that reflected the realities on the ground, and the need for them to be supported by the provision of proper forces and equipment, thus echoing concerns also expressed in the Brahimi Panel Report. DPKO had also stressed the need for proper security training, not

only pre-mission training but also continuation training during a mission to maintain security awareness and alertness, and the development of 'best practices'.

Mr. Akashi reminded participants of the pointed remarks of Mr. Sevan regarding the need for more resources so that people could be sent to the field with appropriate security training, and communications and other equipment, and Mr. Sevan's statement that it was time to establish proper accountability ("people cannot be Designated Officials and then not be accountable"). Mr. Akashi also repeated Mr. Sevan's calls for Member States to be more generous and forthcoming in making resources available for security, for the core costs of security to come out of the regular UN budget, and for the stumbling block on cost-sharing that existed in the General Assembly to be resolved.

Several interesting points had emerged in the discussions, including the inconsistency of policy over dependants; the extent of the UN's responsibility in a peacekeeping mission for the safety and security of locally employed staff, the media personnel and NGOs working with the mission; the need for better coordination between the military and civilians, including UN Volunteers; and the tendency of some of the UN civilian agencies to take independent action regarding security. One of the participants had suggested transferring all security responsibilities from civilians to the military, although Mr. Akashi said that from his own experience he did not believe that such a measure would be either accepted by the civilian side or workable in practice. Another important aspect was the handling of public information and improving relations with local communities. Mr. Akashi stressed the need in a peacekeeping operation to keep local people informed with authoritative information on what the UN was doing and why, as it created a much more supportive attitude at the local level and, in turn, improved the security of UN peacekeepers.

Mr. Akashi underlined the value of the insights of the participants who were ambassadors in New York into some of the problems and pressures at UN headquarters, with too few ambassadors having a really deep knowledge of peacekeeping, and with troop contributing countries feeling unhappy with some of the actions of the Security Council. In that context, sovereign governments did not like being taken for granted, preached at, or not being properly consulted particularly when it was the lives of their peacekeepers that may be at risk.

General Neretnieks noted that during the case study presentations and the ensuing discussions, a number of suggestions had been made that could enhance security in a mission area. The most important points had been as follows: intelligence gathering was vital; Rules of Engagement that were clear and known by all were essential; there had to be a clear chain of command; SRSGs, Force Commanders and other leading personalities in a PKO should be appointed early and take part in the mission planning; in order to avoid interoperability problems, the total force should not consist of contingents from too many countries; there should be some sort of centralized stress management or counseling capability in every mission, particularly in missions in which there was a significant civilian component.

General Neretnieks drew attention to several comments regarding the need for security training. There continued to be a large discrepancy between military and civilian personnel in that respect. Although there was a need to develop the training procedures for the military in order to achieve greater interoperability and a better understanding of UN security procedures, the greater need for security training lay on the civilian side. All personnel should be given thorough pre-mission training: in this regard he noted that most military units received several weeks of mission-oriented training before deployment, whereas civilians received little or no pre-mission training. The UN should have a training organization with the capability to run its own courses on a large scale.

In the discussion that followed, a number of additional points were made. It was noted that the Brahimi Panel Report did not contain any proposal concerning the safety of personnel working in conflict zones, but that the seminar had raised several issues that were related to aspects of the Brahimi Report. It was suggested that, without prejudice to the outcome of discussions on that report, there may be a need to establish within the Secretariat a coordination body handling information on the safety of personnel working in conflict zones, with the participation of all concerned. At the same time, each field mission should have a corresponding body with representatives of all components. Secondly, it was suggested that security training should be a compulsory element of pre-mission training. Thirdly, recognizing that promoting the understanding of local people was an important factor in enhancing safety, it was suggested that the Trust Fund for the Promotion of Public Relations Activities in Peacekeeping should be more effectively utilized.

Separately, it was pointed out that in response to growing concerns about safety from governments and from staff personnel themselves, in October 2000 the Secretary-general had made a comprehensive report to the General Assembly including a number of recommendations for action. The ACABQ (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) had accepted some, but refused others. If governments really wanted action taken on safety and security, it was suggested that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should take the matter up directly with the ACABQ.

In addition, there needed to be unity of command and control, and proper accountability, in security and safety issues. The essential philosophy that DPKO should be responsible for the safety and security of all peacekeepers and associated personnel in a PKO should be maintained, but until the Security Coordinator was given full and system-wide authority for the security of civilian staff in other situations, difficulties in determining a clearer, better security management system for peacekeeping operations would remain. Moreover, there needed to be better arrangements and more attention paid to threat assessment. In turn, the very fact of paying more attention to threat assessment would raise the profile of the danger and thereby improve safety and security. One aspect of this was that security needed to be 'sold' to UN staff as something that was in their interest and to their benefit. This meant there should be more attention paid by management, and improved selection and training of security staff themselves.

Responding to one senior participant who felt that there should be a closer interaction between members of the Secretariat and Member States, Ms. Carey asked if it would be useful for some of the Secretariat to give briefings to members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. This suggestion was welcomed by the participant concerned.

Another participant, returning to the training issue, suggested that there should also be a website on training. This idea was supported by yet another participant who pointed out that it would be very useful to promulgate security lesson plans, lecture courses and other details on the website in order to encourage and promote wider and common knowledge.

In a final comment on behalf of DPKO, Ms. Carey noted that a number of aspects and useful ideas had been raised. DPKO was already looking at safety and security issues more closely and was about to embark on a study the general conclusions of which would be available in late May.

In closing the seminar, Mr. Akashi said that it had been a very stimulating and thought-provoking two days. Some of the thoughts and ideas expressed had not been new but it certainly did no harm to repeat them as it showed how much action was still needed. He informed participants that a report reflecting the nature of views expressed and the issues raised would be sent to all and it was hoped that perhaps the Chairman of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, His Excellency Chief Arthur Mbanefo, would find it useful in the further work of that committee.

List of Participants

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Major BRUCE OSWALD
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