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SUPPLEMENT TO AN AGENDA FOR PEACE: POSITION PAPER OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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Nations help. This is as true of inter-state conflicts as it is of internal ones, even though United Nations action on the former is fully within the Charter, whereas in the latter case it must be reconciled with Article 2, paragraph 7.

28. Collectively Member States encourage the Secretary-General to play an active role in this field; individually they are often reluctant that he should do so when they are a party to the conflict. It is difficult to know how to overcome this reluctance. Clearly the United Nations cannot impose its preventive and peacemaking services on Member States who do not want them. Legally and politically their request for, or at least acquiescence in, United Nations action is a sine qua non. The solution can only be long-term. It may lie in creating a climate of opinion, or ethos, within the international community in which the norm would be for Member States to accept an offer of United Nations good offices.

29. There are also two practical problems that have emerged in this field. Given Member States' frequently expressed support for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking, I take this opportunity to recommend that early action be taken to resolve them.

30. The first is the difficulty of finding senior persons who have the diplomatic skills and who are willing to serve for a while as special representative or special envoy of the Secretary-General. As a result of the streamlining of the senior levels of the Secretariat, the extra capacity that was there in earlier years no longer exists.

31. The second problem relates to the establishment and financing of small field missions for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Accepted and well-tried procedures exist for such action in the case of peace-keeping operations. The same is required in the preventive and peacemaking field. Although special envoys can achieve much on a visiting basis, their capacity is greatly enhanced if continuity can be assured by the presence on the ground of a small support mission on a full-time basis. There is no clear view amongst Member States about whether legislative authority for such matters rests with the Security Council or the General Assembly, nor are existing budgetary procedures well-geared to meet this need.

32. Two solutions are possible. The first is to include in the regular budget a contingency provision, which might be in the range of $25 million per biennium, for such activities. The second would be to enlarge the existing provision for unforeseen and extraordinary activities and to make it available for all preventive and peacemaking activities, not just those related to international peace and security strictly defined.

B. Peace-keeping

33. The United Nations can be proud of the speed with which peace-keeping has evolved in response to the new political environment resulting from the end of the cold war, but the last few years have confirmed that respect for certain basic principles of peace-keeping are essential to its success. Three

particularly important principles are the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. Analysis of recent successes and failures shows that in all the successes those principles were respected and in most of the less successful operations one or other of them was not.

34. There are three aspects of recent mandates that, in particular, have led peace-keeping operations to forfeit the consent of the parties, to behave in a way that was perceived to be partial and/or to use force other than in self-defence. These have been the tasks of protecting humanitarian operations during continuing warfare, protecting civilian populations in designated safe areas and pressing the parties to achieve national reconciliation at a pace faster than they were ready to accept. The cases of Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are instructive in this respect.

35. In both cases, existing peace-keeping operations were given additional mandates that required the use of force and therefore could not be combined with existing mandates requiring the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force. It was also not possible for them to be executed without much stronger military capabilities than had been made available, as is the case in the former Yugoslavia. In reality, nothing is more dangerous for a peace-keeping operation than to ask it to use force when its existing composition, armament, logistic support and deployment deny it the capacity to do so. The logic of peace-keeping flows from political and military premises that are quite distinct from those of enforcement; and the dynamics of the latter are incompatible with the political process that peace-keeping is intended to facilitate. To blur the distinction between the two can undermine the viability of the peace-keeping operation and endanger its personnel.

36. International problems cannot be solved quickly or within a limited time. Conflicts the United Nations is asked to resolve usually have deep roots and have defied the peacemaking efforts of others. Their resolution requires patient diplomacy and the establishment of a political process that permits, over a period of time, the building of confidence and negotiated solutions to long-standing differences. Such processes often encounter frustrations and set-backs and almost invariably take longer than hoped. It is necessary to resist the temptation to use military power to speed them up. Peace-keeping and the use of force (other than in self-defence) should be seen as alternative techniques and not as adjacent points on a continuum, permitting easy transition from one to the other.

37. In peace-keeping, too, a number of practical difficulties have arisen during the last three years, especially relating to command and control, to the availability of troops and equipment, and to the information capacity of peace-keeping operations.

38. As regards command and control, it is useful to distinguish three levels of authority:

(a) Overall political direction, which belongs to the Security Council;

(b) Executive direction and command, for which the Secretary-General is responsible;

(c) Command in the field, which is entrusted by the Secretary-General to the chief of mission (special representative or force commander/chief military observer).

The distinctions between these three levels must be kept constantly in mind in order to avoid any confusion of functions and responsibilities. It is as inappropriate for a chief of mission to take upon himself the formulation of his/her mission's overall political objectives as it is for the Security Council or the Secretary-General in New York to decide on matters that require a detailed understanding of operational conditions in the field.

39. There has been an increasing tendency in recent years for the Security Council to micro-manage peace-keeping operations. Given the importance of the issues at stake and the volume of resources provided for peace-keeping operations, it is right and proper that the Council should wish to be closely consulted and informed. Procedures for ensuring this have been greatly improved. To assist the Security Council in being informed about the latest developments I have appointed one of my Special Advisers as my personal representative to the Council. As regards information, however, it has to be recognized that, in the inevitable fog and confusion of the near-war conditions in which peace-keepers often find themselves, as for example in Angola, Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, time is required to verify the accuracy of initial reports. Understandably, chiefs of mission have to be more restrained than the media in broadcasting facts that have not been fully substantiated.

40. Troop-contributing Governments, who are responsible to their parliaments and electorates for the safety of their troops, are also understandably anxious to be kept fully informed, especially when the operation concerned is in difficulty. I have endeavoured to meet their concerns by providing them with regular briefings and by engaging them in dialogue about the conduct of the operation in question. Members of the Security Council have been included in such meetings and the Council has recently decided to formalize them. It is important that this should not lead to any blurring of the distinct levels of authority referred to above.

41. Another important principle is unity of command. The experience in Somalia has underlined again the necessity for a peace-keeping operation to function as an integrated whole. That necessity is all the more imperative when the mission is operating in dangerous conditions. There must be no opening for the parties to undermine its cohesion by singling out some contingents for favourable and others for unfavourable treatment. Nor must there be any attempt by troop-contributing Governments to provide guidance, let alone give orders, to their contingents on operational matters. To do so creates division within the force, adds to the difficulties already inherent in a multinational operation and increases the risk of casualties. It can also create the impression amongst the parties that the operation is serving the policy objectives of the contributing Governments rather than the collective will of the United Nations as formulated by the Security Council. Such impressions inevitably undermine an operation's legitimacy and effectiveness.

42. That said, commanders in the field are, as a matter of course, instructed to consult the commanders of national contingents and make sure that they understand the Security Council's overall approach, as well as the role assigned to their contingents. However, such consultations cannot be allowed to develop into negotiations between the commander in the field and the troop-contributing Governments, whose negotiating partner must always be the Secretariat in New York.

43. As regards the availability of troops and equipment, problems have become steadily more serious. Availability has palpably declined as measured against the Organization's requirements. A considerable effort has been made to expand and refine stand-by arrangements, but these provide no guarantee that troops will be provided for a specific operation. For example, when in May 1994 the Security Council decided to expand the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), not one of the 19 Governments that at that time had undertaken to have troops on stand-by agreed to contribute.

44. In these circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that the United Nations does need to give serious thought to the idea of a rapid reaction force. Such a force would be the Security Council's strategic reserve for deployment when there was an emergency need for peace-keeping troops. It might comprise battalion-sized units from a number of countries. These units would be trained to the same standards, use the same operating procedures, be equipped with integrated communications equipment and take part in joint exercises at regular intervals. They would be stationed in their home countries but maintained at a high state of readiness. The value of this arrangement would of course depend on how far the Security Council could be sure that the force would actually be available in an emergency. This will be a complicated and expensive arrangement, but I believe that the time has come to undertake it.

45. Equipment and adequate training is another area of growing concern. The principle is that contributing Governments are to ensure that their troops arrive with all the equipment needed to be fully operational. Increasingly, however, Member States offer troops without the necessary equipment and training. In the absence of alternatives, the United Nations, under pressure, has to procure equipment on the market or through voluntary contributions from other Member States. Further time is required for the troops concerned to learn to operate the equipment, which they are often encountering for the first time. A number of measures can be envisaged to address this problem, for example, the establishment by the United Nations of a reserve stock of standard peace-keeping equipment, as has been frequently proposed, and partnerships between Governments that need equipment and those ready to provide it.

46. An additional lesson from recent experience is that peace-keeping operations, especially those operating in difficult circumstances, need an effective information capacity. This is to enable them to explain their mandate to the population and, by providing a credible and impartial source of information, to counter misinformation disseminated about them, even by the parties themselves. Radio is the most effective medium for this purpose. In all operations where an information capacity, including radio, has been provided, even if late in the day, it has been recognized to have made an invaluable contribution to the operation's success. I have instructed that in

the planning of future operations the possible need for an information capacity should be examined at an early stage and the necessary resources included in the proposed budget.

C. Post-conflict peace-building

47. The validity of the concept of post-conflict peace-building has received wide recognition. The measures it can use - and they are many - can also support preventive diplomacy. Demilitarization, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development can be as valuable in preventing conflict as in healing the wounds after conflict has occurred.

48. The implementation of post-conflict peace-building can, however, be complicated. It requires integrated action and delicate dealings between the United Nations and the parties to the conflict in respect of which peace-building activities are to be undertaken.

49. Two kinds of situation deserve examination. The first is when a comprehensive settlement has been negotiated, with long-term political, economic and social provisions to address the root causes of the conflict, and verification of its implementation is entrusted to a multifunctional peace-keeping operation. The second is when peace-building, whether preventive or post-conflict, is undertaken in relation to a potential or past conflict without any peace-keeping operation being deployed. In both situations the essential goal is the creation of structures for the institutionalization of peace.

50. The first situation is the easier to manage. The United Nations already has an entrée. The parties have accepted its peacemaking and peace-keeping role. The peace-keeping operation will already be mandated to launch various peace-building activities, especially the all-important reintegration of former combatants into productive civilian activities.

51. Even so, political elements who dislike the peace agreement concluded by their Government (and the United Nations verification provided for therein) may resent the United Nations presence and be waiting impatiently for it to leave. Their concerns may find an echo among Member States who fear that the United Nations is in danger of slipping into a role prejudicial to the sovereignty of the country in question and among others who may be uneasy about the resource implications of a long-term peace-building commitment.

52. The timing and modalities of the departure of the peace-keeping operation and the transfer of its peace-building functions to others must therefore be carefully managed in the fullest possible consultation with the Government concerned. The latter’s wishes must be paramount; but the United Nations, having invested much effort in helping to end the conflict, can legitimately express views and offer advice about actions the Government could take to reduce the danger of losing what has been achieved. The timing and modalities also