

Strategy for a Successful Completion of UN PKO Missions : @PKO Now! No.40

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In previous articles, UN PKO activities were examined from different angles such as "human security" (No.2), "Responsibility to Protect" (No.5), and "Protection of Civilians" (No.14andNo.30). Because so many perspectives need to be addressed, UN PKO missions are becoming multi-dimensional, comprising various activities, and so called "integrated mission" (refer to No.4, "Expansion of UN Peacekeeping") is becoming favored. In such multi-dimensional integrated PKO missions, it is vitally important to draw up a strategy by which the outcome of the mission is assessed and to decide when to conclude the mission.

This article will introduce a strategy to complete UN PKO missions based on the UN Secretary General's report "No Exit Without Strategy" (S/2001/394) submitted to the UN Security Council in 2001.¹

Three Key Objectives of Peace-building

The ultimate purpose of the UN peace operation is the achievement of a sustainable peace. It does not only mean the removal of all conflicts from society, but it does also mean that the natural conflicts of society, when they recur, can be resolved peacefully through the exercise of state sovereignty and participatory governance. To facilitate such a transition, a multi-dimensional UN PKO mission's mandate includes assisting the development of legitimate institutions, and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law. Therefore, the aim of peace-building is to build the social, economic, and political institutions and

attitudes that will prevent the inevitable conflicts that every society generates from turning into violent conflicts. This can only be achieved by the local population itself, and the role of the UN is merely to facilitate the process that seeks to create the conditions conducive to durable peace and sustainable development.

Clearly recognizing such a concept of peace-building, the UN has identified three key objectives that could bring about comprehensive peace-building:²

(1) Consolidating internal and external security: this involves the deployment of peacekeepers and/or military observers to ensure security to promote security-sector reform (e.g. creation of a neutral police force, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), judicial and penal reform, and mine clearance).

(2) Strengthening political institutions and good governance: This requires the creation or strengthening of national democratic institutions (e.g. capacity-building for government and civil society, technical assistance in human rights, and electoral assistance).

(3) Promoting economic and social rehabilitation and transformation: This includes fostering conditions for resumed economic and social development sustainable return and reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, confidence-building measures conducive to national reconciliation; stimulation of maximum involvement of civil society (including women, NGO), providing social services (health education, water, and sanitation), job creation, reconstructing roads, bridges and railways etc.

Activities toward peace-building are wide-ranging. Among the above three key objectives, the main role for UN PKO is (1) consolidating internal and external security.

Key to Completing Missions: Some Challenges

For UN PKO to play a part of peace-building efforts and to complete its tasks and withdraw, it is required to integrate (or to harmonize³) the above (1), (2), and (3) activities. To this end, a collaborative and inclusive UN system and the effectiveness of other international actors, including the international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations that are not part of the operation is one cornerstone for the successful peacekeeping exit.

In most countries, where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed, the UN agencies that constitute the overall UN system have been operating programs in the fields (refer to No.17 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) and United Nations Country Team (UNCT). When UN PKO, which is relatively large in scale and short in duration, and UNCT are maintaining good relations, a smooth handover from the peace operation personnel to the UNCT is possible, and the process of peace-building could continue long after the peacekeeping operation is withdrawn.

On the other hand, it is unfortunately not always the case that UN PKO missions could successfully be completed even when UN PKO and UNCT establish good relationships. There are situations in which transition to post-conflict peace-building does not materialize due to various reasons, including when the parties concerned adamantly refuse to cooperate or to abide by their own commitments. In such cases, other tools might prove preferable, and the Security Council might decide the withdrawal of the PKO mission. Mission closure in such cases, however, does not mean an end to the responsibility of either the UN system or the Security Council; it signals its continuing interest and seeks alternative thinking and strategies about possible necessary next steps.

Based on a clear vision that the ultimate goal of UN PKO is to assist the transition to peace-building, establishing a strategy of the UN system as a whole and deciding UN PKO mandates are the keys to success of the UN PKO missions.

End Notes

¹ Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, "No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-making and the Closure or Transition of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations" (S/2001/394, 20 April 2001).

² *ibid.*, paragraph 20

³ Keynote lecture by Prof. Toshiya Hoshino on the occasion of the 4th International Peace Cooperation Symposium. 24 January 2013.