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**Leadership in Multinational Interventions –
The SRSG perspective**

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June 2015

I have been asked to discuss the organization of peacekeeping in the field, and in particular the role of the SRSG in conflict resolution.

Lets start with the role of the SRSG and then move on to a little about where we are in Peacekeeping at this time and then some personal reflections and experiences of the diplomatic role of the SRSG.

The SRSG, Special Representative of the Secretary General, is selected by the Secretary General, and his/her appointment is confirmed by the Security Council.

For the military amongst you it is a two or three star appointment.

As the scope of peacekeeping mandates has grown, the responsibilities of the SRSG, the Head of the Mission, have grown likewise. In order to accomplish his or her tasks, today's Head of Mission must possess an unlikely blend of political/diplomatic expertise; technical expertise (or at least managerial skills); and a capacity to frame a vision, and to convey that vision to others. The presence of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the field is the expression of the political will of the international community to solve the problem

An SRSG must have diplomatic skills. These skills are indispensable in the case of today's more typical multi-dimensional operations, the roles of which are often highly sensitive and intrusive, and have little chance of success unless their leadership can read a situation accurately, and can speak with political nuance to a number of interlocutors.

The SRSG must convey to the host country or countries that he or she is a conduit to power outside of the conflict, and make their viewpoint somehow comprehensible in a productive way.

He must make it clear to local politicians that he understands their concerns; even if these may appear unconstructive He must foster respect, without evoking antipathy.

He must be able to describe the situation to those in New York – within the senior leadership of DPKO and to the Security Council and representatives of other key States. It is necessary to bear in mind the fact that New York's leadership may be suffering from an overdose of crises, and what may seem a vital point in the field may be arriving on a very full desk.

In such a situation, diplomatic skills may be essential for internal communications too.

Second, as head of a field operation, an SRSG must be an effective manager. Listen, encourage, motivate delegate.....

The SRSG must be able to work in the nuanced environment of the United Nations where – even more than most other institutions -- power is not determined by an organigram, but by personal relationships. To ‘manage’, in the UN is very challenging task indeed. It is essentially an organisation with no management culture. Those of you in the military, whether Swedish, Swiss, or Pakistani, or Argentinean, live and work in organizational cultures that you understand and accept. Those of you in Civil Services or in other organizations very largely accept and understand the cultures within which you work.

Now take an organisation with staff from 193 Nations. An organisation where in certain areas of recruitment and work there is a quota system for nationalities. An organisation which does very little formal management training, and an organisation where disciplinary measures are very hard to take and where the boards which look into misconduct can take an age to report and rarely apply sensible sanctions.....

Shouldn't work at all should it. But it does. And the UN and its Agencies and Funds deliver every day help to millions around the world.

In a Mission the SRSG's power comes from persuasion and influence and only then the authority of his position.

In today's operations, an SRSG must be able to work with and harmonize the efforts of an enormously varied number of actors on the ground.

Military, police, political and human rights experts, logisticians and

administrators will all expect to have a sympathetic hearing from him or her – and, in the case of some operations, which have assumed the role of a transitional administration, the SRSG may have to deal with the breadth of issues that confront any modern State, ranging from port authorities, to waste disposal, to electricity grids.

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Third, the SRSG must to some degree be a visionary.

There is a great deal of latitude in the guidance provided by the Security Council, and the Security Council mandate is a starting point, not a finished picture. An SRSG may influence the Council's way of seeing things; but, at the same time, even once the Council has spoken, the SRSG may and indeed must interpret how this is to be done on the ground. An SRSG should have the capacity to translate a piece of dry, diplomatic prose crafted through painstaking negotiations in New York into a living document that guides daily reality for those on the ground. Alongside a fine political nose and intuition for what the political traffic will bear, the SRSG must have histrionic gifts and a reserve of self-confidence so that he or she can make this something real, clearly conveying conviction as to the importance of the international values that this resolution should advance.

The SRSG must also be able to speak to the wider public. Increasingly, there is a need to convey to the world's media what is happening. Likewise in the field, depending on the operation, it may be useful and

even indispensable for the SRSG to be a public figure. An extreme version of this is those exceptional cases where the SRSG has been asked to serve as a transitional administrator; in such instances, the SRSG must be willing, to some degree, to be ready to “embody” the will of the people in the Mission area, like any other Head of State.

For an SRSG this new dynamic situation in the field translates into a particularly demanding and multi-faceted role, which can only be discharged effectively with a keen awareness of the views of all key players in this enterprise, including, in particular, the military. Although these demands can be daunting at times, and officers need to be both resourceful and resilient to cope well, there is tremendous satisfaction when analysis and action come together successfully to bring stability to war-torn States and communities. It is, I believe one of the best jobs in the world.!

Explaining the role of the SRSG in conflict resolution is the part of what I am dealing with today, and I have given you an indication of what and who the SRSG is in a UN operation.

I hope that it has also become clear that the SRSG is, at the end of the day, responsible to the Secretary General and the Security Council for the whole process that the UN is involved in a Peace Support context.

One of the key weapons in the arsenal of the SRSG in a Mission is the Secretary General's Report to the Security Council. These reports are of enormous importance and influence. They are drafted in the office of the SRSG in the Mission, and a good SRSG can ensure that his point of view reaches the Council in recognisable form. Honesty, intellectual honesty is vitally important, and alas sometimes in short supply in these reports. When I was an SRSG I firmly believed in telling the Council what it needed to know not what it wanted to hear

From my experience there are six key challenges which must be addressed nearly simultaneously, since each of these challenges feeds into the others. These challenges are to restore State and human security, to build a responsive political framework, to kick-start the economy, to balance national reconciliation and the need for accountability, to promote civil society, and to address the regional context. I would like to discuss each of these challenges briefly.

On the security front, international peacekeepers can provide a buffer, but credible local security forces – both defense forces and police – must

quickly take over to provide stability, normalcy and rule of law to everyday life. There must be effective programs to disarm, demobilise, and reintegrate.

The second challenge is to restore a legitimate political framework. We must help build credible governance at national and local levels; transform armed movements into political parties; and ensure that effective legislatures and judiciaries counter-balance the power of the executive, which grows during conflict periods. My experience suggests that the premature holding of elections can create a winner-take-all power solution that is itself a prelude to new conflict. Decentralization and local empowerment must be balanced against need for strong central authority in fragile states.

Economic renewal is often defined in strictly physical terms as the rebuilding of roads, clinics, schools, power grids, and houses. But it must also mean reviving agriculture, creating conditions needed to attract local and foreign investment, ensuring greater equality in income distribution, and creating jobs. In societies facing massive youth unemployment disaffected young people will form a radicalized base which will undo progress.

The fourth challenge is coming to grips with past abuses and atrocities. Nations and individuals who have suffered from grievous treatment must balance accountability and national reconciliation, but too often, peace agreement provide blanket amnesties in which men with guns forgive other men with guns for crimes committed against women and children. There is no easy solution to this, but it must be done.

A fifth challenge, often ignored, is re-creating of civil society. Academics, lawyers, teachers, unions, and women are the glue that holds society together and serve as safety valves to permit the peaceful redress of grievances.

The final challenge is getting regional context right. Comprehensive peace-building must recognize the roles to be played and interests to be pursued by neighboring countries, each with its special relationships and contacts with key actors. Regional groupings can help identify common interests and work on common goals.

These days Peace building forms a large part of the work of an SRSG in multi dimensional Missions such as the DRC. In these cases the primary function of the SRSG is to facilitate a process that can generate and maintain strategic direction and bring together the political, governance, development, economic, and security dimensions of the peacebuilding process.

The SRSG has power and influence, not because of the resources that he or she can directly bring to bear on a specific situation, but because of his/her ability to muster and align the resources of a large number of agencies, donors, and countries to support the whole peacebuilding effort.

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In the case of UN Integrated multi dimensional Missions, the SRSG is a the overall coordinator of the UN system in a given country, and is further expected to play a leading role in coordinating the overall international effort on the ground.

The UN Secretary-General's report, *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*, describes peacebuilding as a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of a (re)lapse into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and by laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

The UN missions typically headed by an SRSG can be described as *peacebuilding missions*, because they tend to be post-settlement missions focused on peace consolidation.

The SRSGs heading such missions are responsible not only for the peacekeeping or political mission, but also for the wider UN and international effort, and for bringing together the various stakeholders, and coordinating the overall peacebuilding process.

Peacebuilding requires the engagement of a wide range of internal and external agents, including governments, civil society, the private sector and international agencies. These actors should be working together in a coherent and coordinated effort, but in reality they often compete with each other for resources and opportunities.

The SRSG is ultimately responsible for pursuing overall coherence, and can thus be deeply engaged in these negotiated transactions.

Coherence is a goal, not an end-state.

In UN peacekeeping, a mission becomes an 'Integrated

Mission’ when the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) function is integrated with the peacekeeping operation through the appointment of a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) responsible for the RC/HC function.

‘Integrated Mission’ refers to integration across the UN system: through the DSRSG RC/HC function, the peace and security responsibilities of a UN peacekeeping operation are linked with the development and humanitarian functions represented by the various UN agencies present in the UN Country Team.

It is immensely difficult for an SRSG to keep all the Agencies funds Governments facing in the same direction.

Each organization independently undertakes activities that address specific facets of the problem, but a collective and cumulative effect is needed to achieve the overall peacebuilding goal. The core role of the SRSG is to facilitate the processes that manage these interdependencies within the peacebuilding system. As the only person with system-wide responsibility, the SRSG is uniquely positioned to play this role.

It is important to recognize that the SRSG has no real direct authority over the UN agencies. Even when it comes to peacekeeping or political missions, the SRSG’s authority is extremely limited and subject to negotiations with others in the system, including UN headquarters in New York and ultimately with the member states. In these areas, the authority of the SRSG and the authority of the UN Secretary-General are similarly constrained.

Hence, the power of the SRSG lies not in control over resources or agencies, but in the ability to mobilize and align the resources of a large

number of agencies, donors and countries to support the peacebuilding effort in a given context. The SRSG has the authority and credibility to convene, and can use that opportunity to facilitate a coordination process. The overall effect of this process can result in a much more comprehensive and all-encompassing effort than what any one organization could otherwise have achieved on its own.

The role of the SRSG is to *facilitate* the process that generates strategic direction and operational coherence in the system, not to control it. The SRSG can influence the process, but cannot direct it.

It might help you to understand the challenges faced by the SRSG in a pursuing personally the objectives of the Security Council and the Secretary-General if I take the last few minutes of my address to describe some personal experiences.

Starting with the last point mentioned above let me talk about Haiti. I ran a Police Mission there. A challenge in itself. But more of a challenge and in a way more satisfying was really involving myself in the politics of Haiti and using the ‘good offices of the Secretary General’, to move the Government and politicians in ways that they were reluctant to go as Haiti prepared for its first UN organized, elections since the fall of Papa Doc and his son and President Aristide who followed them. I allowed politicians who would never have agreed a venue for talks to meet in my Residence under the UN flag. I met with the President and his advisors on a regular basis, sometimes every day, to present to them a neutral view of how their actions were perceived by their friends outside Haiti. I chaired the Group of Friends (ambassadors of US, France, Argentina,

Venezuela, Canada) which brought together those countries who were steering the process in NY and in the Organisation of American States. I addressed the Security Council in NY on three occasions. I was accepted by everyone as a neutral, but critical friend of Haiti. An *iterlocuteur valable*. Tell me, in your job, do you come away from a meeting from time to time, once a week once a month with a little bit of adrenalin flowing, saying to yourself that woman, that man, really wants to make a difference. I have to tell you that that so very rarely happened to me in Haiti. Haiti's real tragedy is that there is no responsible political class.....no one who really feels responsible for the people of Haiti, who are living in a failed State.

In Belgrade where I was Representative of the Secretary General, I was deeply involved with the Governments in Belgrade. Largely on the issue of Kosovo. As rep of the SG and again charged with using his 'good offices', I was deeply involved sometimes on a daily basis at the highest levels in Belgrade. I was again the friendly but critical voice from outside, who because of my reputation and the trust I was given, and because I represented no one but the SG, was privy to some of the most confidential discussions that took place in Belgrade at that time. I also attended all the meetings in Vienna during the ill founded and ill fated Ahtissaari process, and was used by Marti Ahtissari to pass messages to the Serbs. In conjunction with the Department in NY we, in Belgrade, produced a policy for the UN on Kosovo which the SecGen identified with and adopted which left the UN in a much better and stronger position than the Governments of US, France, UK and Germany were happy with.

Western Sahara, where I was SRSG, there was a simple old fashioned intervention Mission, but while I was there I visited visited and spoke to the Presidents and Prime Ministers of Mauritania, Algeria, and the Foreign Minister and Royal Advisers in Morocco.....and I was acting on behalf of the SG with the benefit of local knowledge, I also participated in four rounds of talks in Manhasset New York, with senior officials from Morocco Mauretania and Algeria. Of course I also had close links with the Polisario movement in Algeria and in New York. Western Sahara is a so called frozen conflict, but I continue my contacts and hope sincerely in the not too distant future to help in unfreezing it.

What the UN has is the experience of committed people, and the moral stance that people and States are better served pursuing their interests through peaceful means rather than by violence. The strength of the UN is derived from a basic faith in the superiority of dialogue, that this is the only road to balance and to ensure the real future interests of all are met.

But, in order for this strength to be expressed, a deep understanding of the positions of both sides must be built up.

The SRSG is very much in the lead in all this.....and as I have already said.....when it works it is one of the best jobs in the world

