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THE FUTURE OF U.N. PEACEKEEPING: A CONVERSATION WITH HERVÉ LADSOUS

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PICCONE: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Ted Piccone, and I'm the Acting Director of the Foreign Policy Program here at Brookings Institution. Thanks for coming out on this sweltering day to hear some words about, I think, a pretty hot topic.

Even though it may not be all that sexy to some people, I think U.N. peacekeeping actually is one of the remarkable success stories of the international order of the last several decades.

And we have with us today to hear more about it the Undersecretary General of the United Nations for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous.

U.N. peacekeeping is facing dramatic new challenges. We're seeing increasing demands from the U.N. Security Council for their involvement in a number of very complex cases.

Support from the traditional troop-contributing countries is under stress. I'm thinking of India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and others that are feeling the effects of their many, many years of contributions and the costs associated with those.

And then you have traditional donors, who are increasingly balking at the price tag involved in these kinds of operations, even though when you compare it to the cost of, say, U.S. military operations, it's really a fraction of the cost. We're talking now around $8 billion a year in the annual peacekeeping budget. If anyone is following this issue closely, you'll know that this is a major topic of discussion and debate right now on Capitol Hill, as the appropriations bills wind their way through Congress and a number of markups that dramatically cut the U.S. contribution to U.N. peacekeeping operations.

These operations are enmeshed in intractable conflicts -- in places like Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somalia. And these mandates have expanded over time, in terms of their role, to include protection of civilians -- which,

as important and laudable as that goal is, raises a whole set of complicated doctrinal questions and how to put that into effect.

Just to remind you, we're now talking about 98,000 personnel from over 120 countries from around the world; 17 missions, mostly in Africa. So, that gives you a sense of the scope of activity we're going to be talking about this afternoon.

Let me say a word. You have our bios in front of you, but let me just mention that Hervé Ladsous has a longstanding, impressive career in the French Foreign Service -- a number of positions, including in Haiti as the Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. in New York, and he was the French Ambassador in Vienna at the OSCE, and France's Ambassador to both Indonesia and then later to Beijing. He also served as the Chief of Staff for the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs.

The Undersecretary General will make some remarks from the podium, and then our Senior Fellow and Director of Research, Mike O'Hanlon, will join him here for a discussion and time for question and answers.

So, thank you for coming, and please welcome Hervé Ladsous to the podium.

MR. LADSOUS: Thank you, Mr. Piccone, for your kind words. And ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I would like to first thank the Brookings Institution for giving me this opportunity to share with you some thoughts and some views, and discuss them maybe later.

Let me say by stating the obvious: that United Nations peacekeeping is a collective effort. And as the world changes around us, it is essential that the diverse stakeholders who authorize, who finance, who contribute personnel to peacekeeping operations reflect collectively on the role of peacekeeping in that global, changing landscape.

The Secretary General has called for a major review as recently as last week -- a major review of United Nations peacekeeping -- and we are currently embarking on this very important, very necessary, and very timely process. And I would like today to highlight to you some of the issues which I feel need to be at the center of the exercise, based on my almost three years now experience as the head of that department of United Nations.

Over recent decades, the number and the level of conflicts in the world has declined. And I think despite very visible, very spiky situations, we can still say that, today, they remain at a historically low level globally. And, indeed, United Nations peacekeeping operations have played a role in helping to resolve several of these conflicts after the period of the Cold War, often by monitoring and supporting the mandation of peace agreements. Remember El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia -- and that counts.

Of course there are no guarantees, and peacekeeping remains a high-risk endeavor. But I think many people agree that a country probably has a better change of emerging from conflict and maintaining the peace once a peace operation has been deployed. Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cambodia -- just a few of those countries which are now -- have been now for some years -- on the path to peace -- in good measure thanks to the peacekeepers of United Nations.

Yet the conflicts that are in front of us today -- fewer in number, but they are some of the most intractable. Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan -- some of them are already confronting, you know, a second -- or sometimes a third -- wave of conflict. And these conflicts, which are essentially intrastate, become increasingly regionalized -- not to say internationalized -- certainly more prolonged, more deadly.

And the net result is that nine out of ten peacekeepers today are serving

in Africa throughout that arc of crisis that stretches across the continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean -- and, in some respects, beyond. They are driven by a very complex mixture of factors: failing or incapable states, ethnic strife, transnational crime, terrorist threats, and -- unfortunately, even worse -- serious humanitarian and public health crisis -- so fewer but more complex, more entrenched conflicts. And in all these situations, the Security Council has continued to turn to peacekeeping.

Today, if I may, Mr. Piccone, the actual number of our people on the ground across 17 missions -- military, police, civilian -- amounts to almost 120,000 people all together. And this will yet further increase in coming months because of the new mandate we have been given in Central African Republic, and the surge we are facing in South Sudan.

So, we have, more than ever, to strive, to provide a dynamic response in some of those most difficult and complicated places on the earth. And, increasingly, we are asked to intervene earlier, when there may be an opening in the midst of ongoing conflicts so as to buttress a fragile peace, to protect civilians, and, of course, we have had, in all these contexts, to adapt and to respond.

A few examples: Darfur, where we are serving in an increasingly hostile environment -- 400,000 more displaced persons this year -- where, let's face it, there is little peace to keep. So, what do we do to keep women and children caught between these warfarin groups to yet retain a better chance for a better life?

South Sudan, where, you know, the cycle of violence has erupted violently six months ago -- where we are taking care of 90,000 IDPs in our camps, and trying to help towards securing a peaceful process. I think we have shown in that particular case to be able to respond quickly, but it is classically a case of overstretch for us and immense challenge.

In Mali, where we face asymmetric threats -- a few days ago, another four Chadian peacekeepers were killed by an IED explosion -- and that happens, unfortunately, regularly -- too many dangers lurking just around the corner -- and, of course, again, a peaceful political process that needs to be pushed.

In the Democratic Congo, I think we are going after armed groups in the hills of the North Kivu, with added determination, added vigor -- I am pleased to say, last year, added success, which had not been the case in previous years. And, of course, we are helped in protecting the most vulnerable who suffered so much over two decades, in terms of people killed, displaced, women raped, children absconded and recruited forcefully. Now we are using, also, the latest technology, with surveillance UAVs, to actually do a better job. And it does make a tremendous difference.

So, this illustrates the fact that we continue to seek creative solutions. But, clearly, to continue strengthening U.N. peacekeeping further, I think we have to continue on a more systemic -- and always collective -- effort.

Last week, 60 member states of the U.N. came together in the Security Council to discuss the current trends of U.N. peacekeeping. That was an initiative of the Russian Presidency for the month. And this was an opportunity for the Secretary General, as he launched the concept of this review I mentioned earlier, to draw out some of the implications of the trends that we have noticed recently for what we are today, and what we should become later.

First, it is clear that we're operating in a very dangerous environment. More than 2/3 of our personnel all over are operating in context with very significant levels of ongoing violence, mostly in Africa. This, of course, impacts our ability, both to start up new missions and, once we are deployed, to operate effectively and safely.

And, as I will discuss, we need to modernize our capabilities to ensure

that we can, indeed, achieve our tasks while taking care of our personnel, ensuring their safety and security. And this, of course, is somewhere where the member states can help us with capabilities to step ahead.

Second, several of our peacekeeping operations are mandated to advance national reconciliation, national dialogue, in the absence, let's face it, of a peace agreement -- and, sometimes, in the absence of even clear indication of the parties to the conflict.

Clearly, the Security Council sometimes wishes us not to stand by while civilians are killed in the middle of conflict. That is the case in Darfur. In some cases, the Council decided to deploy a peacekeeping operation because they want to either create some space or buttress an opening, however incomplete. And the idea is to use the peacekeeping operation as a wedge to build some momentum. And this what we're mandated to try and do in Central African Republic and in Mali.

In South Sudan, it is mainly about protection of the civilians against absolutely shocking violence -- but, at the same time, never forgetting that what is really necessary at the end of the day is a political solution.

The third element, contemporarily, is that we work in partnership with others to address all these transnational threats, like organized crime, terrorism, IEDs, rockets, kidnapping -- and let's not forget, also, drug trafficking.

So, we need to beef up capabilities to operate effectively and more safely in those very difficult environments. We need specialized expertise. Precisely in Mali, we are just about -- and will open next month a novelty in our system, a specialized cell dedicated to counternarcotics and transnational organized crime, to assist the Malian police and other agencies in addressing all those networks who have been one of the drivers of the conflict in Northern Mali.

These transnational actors also present political challenges. Often, they have little stake in the countries where they operate, and they can hardly, if at all, be brought into a political process. Let's face it: Security Council does not have either much leverage on some of those people that compares, of course, to other armed groups that depend upon external support, and which can access and impact through sanctions with a number of tools.

Fourth element is that, in the face of these challenges, the Council has begun to approve, in some cases, robust -- even very robust -- mandates. The creation, the authorization last year of a force intervention brigade in the DRC with a mandate to -- and I quote -- "neutralize the armed groups -- prevent their growth, neutralize and disarm them." That is the exact quote. I think this is really a very significant factor.

There have been very robust capabilities in the past -- UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the mid '90s was one. But -- and it's not so different. But I think it illustrates that there are cycles, maybe, and that at various stages, we are asked to respond very forcefully to very significant threats to civilians and to constitutional order.

So, now looking forward, what does this all mean? First, we see that some of the biggest challenges we face are, essentially, political. Many of those environments to which we deploy do not have a clear political framework to guide either the government or the other parties towards an inclusive political order post conflict that should not be violent.

Without an agreed roadmap, the central political role can be challenged by all parties. It can be challenged, including by the government. And it is a matter of striking the proper balance between the two principals of the consent of the host government and the impartiality of the U.N., and that can be a challenge, as we have experienced recently in South Sudan or in Mali.

In the contrast, in the DRC, the fact that we have now a regional political framework, bringing in the countries of the region, I think, is a better guarantee that we will continue to make progress.

So, it is essential that, in all these situations, we assist the parties to put together a basic roadmap for peace, to bring in there our good office's role, our impartiality. We must insist on political inclusivity, and, of course, establish a degree of the legitimacy for the interim political structure. We must build confidence among the population, and where there are political openings, we must be prepared with the required plans, the required expertise to assist in strengthening the rule of law, the disseverment and demobilization processes, the security sector reform, democratic processes -- not to mention mine action, core government functions to restart.

So, it's a very wide -- we call them mighty disciplinary missions. And all these pieces, to a degree, are essential in the picture.

But, clearly, the Security Council makes it repeatedly clear that the protection of civilians is, at the center, the core of our responsibilities. And this is acknowledged by contributors of troops and police. But to do it, actually, it demands the willingness to be proactive, a decisive attitude in those very high-risk environments.

And I am proud, I have to say, about our response during the recent crisis in South Sudan. I said it -- we open our bases. I think that saved tens of thousands of lives. It is, of course, not sufficient, because a lot of atrocities are happening in other places. So, as we are bringing in more troops to South Sudan, we will be able to project more proactively, and go and actually act on those situations as outside the cities or places where we have the -- it's a matter -- you know, a new ethos, where we have to be really proactive, as I said, and in a position to respond decisively to the threats as they emerge at various levels.

Now achieving this demands the ability to respond quickly when we are unable to cover large geographic areas. Mobility, agility means that we have to go for new types of capabilities, new equipment, new technology. We need constantly critical force multipliers, enabling capacities. And the example that comes to mind immediately is helicopters. We lack, right now, 20 helicopters, and we'll need more as we develop our presence in Central African Republic. And we turn everywhere, but it's not an easy resource to get by.

But it's also not only about equipment; it's also about the mindset -- the mindset among those member states who participate in peacekeeping. For this proactive protection to work, the member states must be of the same mind on the support of the activities. They must be of the same mind on the financial regime. They must be of the same mind on the need, the importance of adopting a robust posture in executing those tasks.

We have made progress, I think, in developing guidance, training materials, operational concepts. But every time that the lives of civilians are at risk, it is our legitimacy that is at risk. And our performance in the area continues to be a measure of our success.

In line with the principal charter, human dignity, sovereignty, human rights, you have seen that the Secretary General adopted recently what we call the Rights up Front Agenda. I think it highlights how critical it is that under our watch, we cannot accept that massive violations of human rights actually are taking place, and we must always respond humanely to individual suffering, disenfranchisement, and marginalization.

More materially, we are also working on implementing reforms to the reimbursement regime for the troop cost for peacekeeping. We want something that will

be more equitable, more predictable, and we're working, also, on the equipment.

These, I think, are opportunities to improve on the system for deploying and compensating people and capabilities that can make a real difference to peacekeeping as we know it.

All those who are involved must come to the conclusion that the system is transparent, that it is cost-effective. And we on the Secretariat side have to be responsive and pragmatic.

At the same time, we need to recognize that there are limits to the capability for protection. And let me say again: It is the search for political solutions. It is a support to the extension of the state authority that will provide, eventually, more protection, which is the responsibility, first and foremost, of the government.

And, of course, when you look at the Central African Republic, where all institutions have failed, basically, it's a matter of picking up what remains of the pieces, and trying to bring back a degree of state authority, where, so far, there is none anymore -- if there has ever been over the decades.

Every peacekeeping operation is unique. It is built upon sometimes slightly different coalitions of engaged member states, but it is, above all, essential to reinforce the process of peacekeeping. We need a solid Security Council standing as a group behind the operations it has authorized -- not only the respective priorities of these or those member states. Without that, we lose a lot in terms of effectiveness.

We need to reinforce the system and the standards that shape our activities, so that the types of innovation we have worked to pilot in recent years can now become standard practice. After all, we have to take the conflicts of today with the tools of today, not those of a century ago.

And we must continue to demonstrate in the context of financial rigor all

over the world that we demonstrate strong and effective stewardship of the resources that are entrusted to us. We enhance efficiencies. We innovate. We just created, a few weeks ago, a high-level panel on technology and innovation that will make propositions so that we can really benefit fully from all these modern technologies, be more effective, be more efficient -- including, by the way, more environment-friendly.

I have worked to put in place a process of periodic reviews of omissions, so that we very regularly -- at least once every two years -- evaluate the conditions on the ground, to ensure that the resources are located most effectively, that our staffing is adequate, is aligned to the mandate.

So, let me finish by enumerating six critical priorities that we need to strengthen peacekeeping.

First, we have to expand the base of major contributors, while deepening the engagement of current contributors. As Mr. Piccone said, we had 120 contributors right now, but we are trying to get more, because that is, I think, desirable to preserve the character of peacekeeping, and to draw upon the full areas of capabilities across all our partners. Otherwise, we'll have a gap between the capabilities required and those that are provided.

In Mali, we see now a return to peacekeeping of several Western countries. In the DRC, we see some static countries who stepped forward with very effective, well-equipped, well-trained units.

The U.N., at the end of the day, is only as capable as the member states that provide us with our people, and our police, and our equipment. So, while thanking all these countries for their contributions, it is clear that we cannot reach our full potential if those who have the most significant capabilities do not choose to participate. When a broad cross-section of the U.N. membership puts boots on the ground, it also sends a

critical political signal to the parties in conflict of the resolve of the international community and the decision to see peace maintained.

Second factor is cooperation with regional actors. Both in peacekeeping and in peace-building today, the playing field is getting more crowded with regional actors, parallel missions, who all want to play an active role in crisis response. And the common thread amongst all these is that we are one amongst multiple actors, missions, and envoys.

And, of course, this calls for an effort to establish coherence and interoperability. And, of course, if we can achieve strong collective partnerships, then I think the impact is magnified.

So, I'm dedicating a large amount of my time to do that exactly with African Union and its sub region organizations, the European Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, NATO, and others -- because many of them have the potential either to respond rapidly and globally, or to provide us with niche capabilities. The thing is to build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, and translate them into actual results.

The third priority is achieving more rapid deployment. When a crisis comes up, it's a race against time, and it begins when we endeavor to deploy, to stabilize a country before the situation spirals into further cycles of violence -- especially when we are mandated to deploy in situations where conflict are ongoing, in which each day we are not on the ground is another day of violence, another day of destruction, of suffering.

This is going to be the case in Central African Republic. We are deploying, by the mandate of the Security Council, on the 15th of September, and we must be able by then to show that we are making a difference. And that's going to be a major, major challenge. So, this is something that is terribly important -- that we be able

to deploy peacekeepers in a timely manner.

Solution is collective. It cuts across force generation, planning for logistics, military planning, local negotiations, strategic airlift, and the global supply chain, of course. We need constantly -- let me say again -- engineering, air, ground transports, medical support. These are the most essential chokepoints. We're trying to shorten this as much as possible, but one limitation, let's face it, is the willingness of member states to prepare troops for peacekeeping missions ahead of the resolution, and to ensure that they can meet our standards.

Today, regional organizations are playing a vital role in doing this bridging, but we need to build more predictable standby arrangements. That, I think, remains the key.

Fourth, we must modernize the capabilities of our peacekeepers. For these new environments, we need to ensure appropriate duty of care and enhance the capabilities of our military and police to confront new threats. There are requirements for robust, highly mobile capabilities, the need for reserve capabilities to enable the adjustments of posture that are called for -- and in particular, in environments where we face asymmetric threats.

So, we need training. We need detection capabilities. We need equipment -- and, of course, much better access to information and improved contingency planning.

The fifth cluster of issues has to do with performance. We are being held to increasingly high standards in this area, and we will be expected to demonstrate consistent success to all the people around the world. Let's face it: Even in my time, there has been failures that were disgraceful, that were unacceptable, and we have investigated on all this, and we continue, and we take measures.

But I think, also, the prevention is a good thing, and this is why we have created a few months ago what we call, in U.N. speak, the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership -- OOF -- but, in fact, it is the inspector general to my mind, because this is really the institution, which is now fully operational, that will look at identifying gaps, at addressing systemic issues, and the first mission this institution has done to Darfur came up with a whole batch of recommendations that we are implementing, and that I am sure will make a difference.

And, of course, let me say that we continue, also, in this idea of addressing failures. We continue to implement the policy of zero-tolerance on misconduct, on sexual abuse, and we try to refine all the systems that have been put in place over the five years to address them.

The sixth is helping to extend state authority so that countries can build and sustain the peace themselves. It needs integrated planning. It needs appropriate financing arrangements. It needs major reconfigurations, and this, as I said earlier, is what we have to do, up to a point, in the Central African Republic. We will not rebuild the whole state -- but at least the essential functions of the state: police, justice, territorial administration. These are the indications to the people that a state is back -- or is there at all. And then we can build the rest, but that comes later.

We need flexibility and full accountability to adjust to this. We need, also, coherence between all the international actors, including even the international financial institutions so that this can happen -- because, ultimately, lasting peace in any country requires state institutions that are functioning, that have legitimacy, that can do the duty in protecting their citizens and providing them with basic services. And that, by the way, once its achieved, is what will allow us to transition and to draw down -- because our missions have to go through those cycles.

Lastly, the protection of civilians -- which is probably our most challenging mandate. We are deployed in vast areas, often without the necessary mobility to look for the people, and, clearly, as long as there is no viable peace, we will never be able to protect everyone in a single country. But, still, it behooves us to do our utmost to protect civilians. We must analyze the threats, prioritize the resources, and use everything available to protect the most vulnerable.

It is risky. It requires the support of the Security Council, the commitment of our troop contributors, and it requires determined leadership on the ground. And this is not the smallest issue, but we do work a lot on that.

Politically, U.N. peacekeeping, at the end of the day, rests, as I said, on this global partnership between the Security Council, the troop and the police-contributing countries, and the membership of the U.N., which finances it collectively -- so a very diverse set of stakeholders.

And in that context, systemic change is a challenge. I have worked to assure member states that through those periodic reviews I mentioned, through difficult choices, we do try our best to allocate resources efficiently and effectively. I have traveled to missions with officials from our troop and police-contributing countries to look at the actual demands on the ground and to look at the best ways to respond.

And, I believe, that over the last three years, we have demonstrated the value there is in specific innovations. And there are some shifts in viewpoints and accumulated experience of our membership. But the demands on the ground clearly do not heed the pace of multilateral institutions.

And, sadly, I would simply mention that, for the sixth year in a row last year, over 100 peacekeepers paid the ultimate price by serving in war torn countries. But the scale of human suffering that we confront remains immense. So, the sacrifices of our

people -- I think what is called from all of us is a collective response.

When United Nations can speak with one voice, the result will be a strengthened, a renewed instrument for the advancement of international peace and security, and, let's face it, at the end of the day, what's better -- recompense -- I don't know what the English words are -- reward -- that the smile of children, who after years or sometimes decades of suffering, are recovering some hope in the future? That is what peacekeeping is about.

I thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Mr. Undersecretary General, thank you very much for those inspiring remarks, and for all that you and the troops working with you -- and the civilians -- do around the world.

I wanted to begin with a big, broad question, if I could, and then we'll ultimately go through a couple of the cases that you mentioned, perhaps, and then look to the audience for some additional questions.

And I think I know the answer to this, but I'd just like to ask you to lay it out for us. You talk on the one hand about the U.N.'s doing so much, how the missions are so numerous, the losses have been so great, the cost is high -- at least by comparison with previous years in the U.N. system -- and yet you also say that the world's conflicts are fewer in number and haven't been all that numerous.

How do we understand those two facts together? Is the U.N. doing too much? Is it deployed in places where it doesn't need to be -- or are you actually making progress? Are you actually now seeing a world that's starting to become a little more peaceful, and you're able to get a little bit more ahead of the game -- as you say, deploying earlier, making more of a difference in a more positive way earlier? There's still a lot of conflicts, a lot of problems, but maybe we're seeing some positive momentum

towards reducing the overall scale of tragedy in the world.

How do I put these different facts together? More missions than ever, and yet supposedly fewer conflicts in the world?

MR. LADSOUS: Well, thank you for that question, Mr. O'Hanlon.

I think it is a reality that, overall, there are less conflict in the world but more intractable. There are newer ones -- and, indeed, two years ago, we were given a mandate for a short while to supervise a ceasefire or a truce in Syria that never happened. So, after a few short months, we expected to call it a year -- last year, Mali; this year, Central Africa, plus the new situation in South Sudan.

But let's not forget that, at the same time, there are crises that have gone past the worst of the cycle, and that those processes are now heading in the right direction.

Three examples: Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti. I think these illustrate the fact that, while there is still a degree of work to do in those three countries, nevertheless, much has been achieved. Compare Côte d'Ivoire now to three years ago; still need to work about the DDR. We need to have successful presidential elections in October 2015. But I think the situation does not compare.

Liberia -- one can say that they have not done enough toward establishing their own security institutions. They still rely too much on the U.N., but, I mean, there is no major threat against the country; certainly no external threat, as there is no external threat against Haiti.

So, we have to recognize this, you know, and as things go -- taking, of course, always the care to be prudent -- because we don't want to squander or jeopardize the investment we'll be making over years in these missions -- but yet tell the government that it's going to be their show now, it's not going to be open-ended, and that

they have to assume the responsibilities, and that we'll be handing them those responsibilities over a period of time, which has to be put out very clearly.

This is what we have to be doing. I would hope that other missions in the near future we can also right-size in view of lesser challenges, better results in building the state or the political process -- whatever it is in this specific case -- but these are living organisms, you know, compared to the old-styled peacekeeping operations, which have been presiding for, sometimes, decades over frozen situations, and that we cannot probably afford to pull out. I'm thinking of the Golan Heights or things like that.

These multidimensional, multidisciplinary, political missions have to go through a clear cycle. And when we plan them now, we already have a vision of what the exit strategy will have to be.

MR. O'HANLON: That's great. So, help me -- just to make sure I'm getting a geographic and mental map, because you're painting a nice picture. I want to just make sure I'm pulling it together correctly.

If I listened to you today, you're saying things are going, on balance, a little bit better in much of West Africa. Obviously, there are exceptions and other issues. I think, historically, they're better in Southern Africa. You mentioned some successes there. Even though there's a lot of illicit economies and violence of a different sort in Central America, there are fewer civil wars. And in Southeast Asia, that's probably also true, if I'm not mistaken.

So, am I correct in thinking that most of the world's problems, in general, and most of your activity that you're most worried about is in sort of the central swath of Africa, around the Sahel and just below, and then in much of the Middle East -- and those are the zones that we're most worried about today?

MR. LADSOUS: I completely agree. The Middle East, of course, is the

historical legacy. And the first mission, created in 1948, for the surveillance of the troops after the first Israeli-Arab conflict, and then what came to be later -- Lebanon, the Golan Heights. You can assimilate Cyprus, in a way, you know, that's very specific. So, that's one cluster.

But, basically now, yes, there were the cycles in Southeast Asia, with Cambodia first, and later Timor-Leste. There was a cycle in Central America, with that very specific situation in the Caribbean and Haiti. The fact is that most of that now are remnants from the past.

The crux of the matter, really, is Africa, across what I described as this very wide arc of crisis, ranging from the Atlantic shores of the Sahel region, right off to Somalia. And look at it: There's precious little country that is not affected to a degree or another by all these concatenation of issues, you know -- failing state or weak state, religious and ethnic division, jihadists and extremism, drug trafficking and transnational crime, not to mention economic underdevelopment -- very drastic -- humanitarian issues, undernourishment, environment -- related, in some cases -- crisis, public health issues.

You name it, you've got it to a degree in all these countries. And I should add, also, economic misbehavior -- a number of actors -- people who are simply pillaging the natural resources. Look at the diamonds, the gold in the DRC. In the CAR, resources, also, are affected.

So, you've got it all. And then, of course, it's the specific mix that you face in each situation, and that's why each mission has to address those along its own merits.

MR. O'HANLON: So, if we could bear down a little more on this arc of crisis that you described -- obviously, there are many sources of conflict. There are issues where political actors just don't want to make the peace, where there's too much

conflict. Other things that you mentioned get in the way.

But I want to focus in on the U.N. -- all the things that you'd like to be able to do better, get more support with. In which conflicts -- if you could give us a short list of the conflicts where the lack of adequate U.N. capacity is maybe a big part of the problem today -- because, obviously, your overall remarks are framing a need for more help, more cooperation with regional organizations, more help from the North -- some of the industrialized countries -- more help with enablers -- hospitals, logistics.

But I realize that in some countries, those kinds of capabilities would make a big difference; in other countries, the conflict may not be at a point where you could really do much more, even if you had additional capacity -- or at least I want to put that question to you.

Could you give me a short list of countries where, you know, if you could wave your wand, another 10, or 20, or 30 percent, or 50 percent of U.N. capacity could make a big difference?

MR. LADSOUS: First, let me say the issue is not so much one of numbers of the people on the ground. Of course, we could do more in South Sudan with double the number of soldiers, but that would not really address the issue. The issue is, first and foremost, one of never enough equipment, enablers, the capacity for mobility.

South Sudan, as you know, had 80 kilometers of paved roads three years ago. Now maybe they have doubled the figure. And in the rainy season, it means you cannot move around if you don't have the aircraft -- in particular, the helicopters. And we miss these sorely.

It can be, also -- and it is going to be a problem in Central African Republic -- that those brave African troops that are deployed under what we call MISCA, the African Union and will become Blue Helmets in mid-September -- these people simply

don't have the equipment.

I went to a place north of Bungui called Kaga-Bandoro. There, the situation, tactically, is very simple: 550 Selekas, the rebel group -- it's very slick, uniform, equipment, moving around with ease -- and in front of them, 57 young soldiers from Gabon and Cameroon, with just two pickup trucks -- not armed and enough gasoline to patrol 10 kilometers a day. What do you do in a country as large as that one? It's one of the largest of the countries.

These issues have to be addressed. And when these people are re-hatted under a Blue Helmet, their issues will become our issues.

So, if I had a magic wand, I would wave it and ask countries like the United States, like others, to please come and help these countries to be able to do the job, to have everything that is necessary for them.

It is also about having the adequate tools -- and there, we are innovating. I mentioned the UAVs that we have in the DCR, but, clearly, we need UAVs in Mali. We need UAVs in South Sudan. I asked the President of South Sedan once I saw him last winter. He said, "No, I don't want you spying over my army."

But imagine the difference it would make in a country like South Sudan to be able to know what's happening -- who's fighting where, who's pushing groups of civilians onto the -- I wouldn't say the roads; they don't have roads -- but pushing them out of the villages, you know, and putting them to hardship. We will need that in Central African Republic, also.

I think we need, also, in specific theaters, more intelligence. This is what we are doing in Mali, where, clearly, in an asymmetric war where we're attacked by small groups of spoilers, getting a much better situational awareness of what's happening on the ground using various sources will be critical. And we're doing just that for the first

time on that scale in a peacekeeping operation.

So, I could go on, but this is the spirit, you see.

MR. O'HANLON: No, it's very good. And one last question from me, and then we'll soon go to you folks in the crowd.

Could you give a couple of examples of where current missions are actually starting to turn the corner in a positive direction? You mentioned historical successes in your speech. You mentioned a moment ago Liberia, and Ivory Coast, and Haiti, where things are generally going at a better direction. Are there other cases where you see the momentum at least turning in the right direction?

It may be very, very preliminary, but just so we get, again, a full map in our heads of the missions that you think are doing pretty well, and maybe those where we're still fundamentally, you know, at loggerheads.

MR. LADSOUS: One mission that comes to mind, clearly, is the MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And I say this with great caution, but I think the year 2013 saw very significant progress.

You might remember on the 23rd of November, 2012, the fall of Goma to this rebel group -- called themselves the M23. It was horrible. It was uncalled for. There were good military reasons for that -- in particular, the fact that M23, by a sort of miracle, got night-vision equipment simply overnight, which we did not have. So, they were able to overturn our positions, attack us from the back, and the fall of Goma was then an unavoidable fact.

And then what followed -- massive violations -- the rapes in Minova -- 223 women raped, plus -- so that was horrendous.

And a year later, we had M23 cornered and surrendering -- and, at the same time, accepting to sign a sort of agreement that was a game-changer in the region -

- because, in the meantime, we had put together a political approach bringing together the commitments of the government of the DRC, to do everything that was needed from their point of view to address the root cause of the conflict, address the DDR, the security sector reform, a number of regional reforms -- and commitments by the countries of the region.

And the first commitment was to respect the sovereignty of its neighbors. And doing that, you know, meant that there was less support for their own groups. At the same time, we had been authorized to establish the intervention brigade within MONUSCO, with that very robust mandate to neutralize the armed groups.

So, it happened. Now the challenge for 2014 is to continue making that happen with other groups. We are dealing with various rebels in the north of North Kivu, further south. They're called IDF. They're called FDLR. This is a very complex thing. We have to take care of the political sensitivity in the region.

But I do hope that one of our basic concepts on the ground -- which is the minute we liberate part of the territory, even a small one, we make it an island of stability. We make it so that the Congolese state comes back -- with its police, with its army, with its préfet, sous-préfet, and we try to consolidate all these islands of stability -- to connect them, one with the other, and enlarge the patches of regions that have been freed from those terrible people -- or be freed from the trafficking that's taking place -- and that's the thrust of what we're doing.

So, very cautiously but I would say we have embarked last year on a positive trend, and I hope we can continue that.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. That's a very encouraging story.

Actually, one small follow-up, and then we will turn to the audience: On Congo, do you start to see progress in the Congolese armed forces themselves?

Because, clearly, people talk about the need for someday transitioning to the state itself being able to control its own territory.

I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Congo 30 years ago. We obviously didn't do great in giving it a lot of capacity. You've done amazing work, even to get things to where they are at this point. But, of course, one wants to think -- at least notionally -- about a long-term exit strategy. Do you see the beginnings of hope that the Congolese army can begin to hold some of this progress that you've been able to make?

MR. LADSOUS: It is an act of faith, given the record of the past, I would say. But I think -- again, last year has been a cause for encouragement. They have behaved much more professionally, more robustly. Indeed, collaboration with MONUSCO has been better.

Now this has limits -- in particular, we know that they're not very strong on human rights. They're not very strong on respect for women or for children, and they're not very strong on not giving themselves sometimes to trafficking.

So, it's a matter of being very cautious, you know -- not extending credit without appropriate monitoring. We do have policies, you know -- the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. We have vetting processes, and we apply that relentlessly. And when there are shortcomings, to say the least, when there are violations, then we have to be without pity.

It's not easy after the rapes in Minova in November 2012. I personally -- and all my colleagues -- we pushed on the government of Kinshasa to make it happen -- that there be a real court case, not what you could call a monkey --

MR. O'HANLON: Kangaroo.

MR. LADSOUS: Yeah. The result was sort of mixed, I have to say -- unfortunately -- and that is not acceptable to me, because the perpetrators would really

have to be sanctioned -- and really sanctioned.

But, okay, let's try and make it that it doesn't happen any further yet.

MR. O'HANLON: Very good. By the way, I should've mentioned that the Twitter handle is #UNPeacekeeping, for anybody looking to follow there.

Do you want to take a couple of questions at a time --

MR. LADSOUS: Yeah, sure.

MR. O'HANLON: -- or do you want to just do them individually?

So, we'll do two at a time -- and let me start in the very back, just to your left. Yes -- and then right behind the gentleman after.

MR. ROTHCHILD: Okay. Hi. My name is Kenneth Rothchild.

The question is, to what degree do the larger state players -- those in the Security Council and so forth -- get in your way? I mean, many of the problems have been created to extract resources from different parts of the world. A lot of the boundaries have been drawn. And there seems to be a resistance for large places to want to give up their sovereignty in the world, and, therefore, it's very hard to really operate.

Would you speak some about that, please?

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks. And we can take one more -- just behind you -- if that's okay. There was a hand.

MR. MEYER: Thank you. Ken Meyer. Why does the U.N. refuse to take responsibility for the cholera introduced into Haiti by U.N. peacekeepers?

MR. O'HANLON: Do you want to take those two, and then we'll do another one?

MR. LADSOUS: Yes, gladly. On the first question, I think you would first

notice that most Security Council resolutions -- especially on the African issues -- have been voted unanimously. And that, I think, is a fact of contemporary politics. You know, you don't have agendas, you know, which collide frontally, as they would have had, possibly, at the time of the Cold War. I think there is genuine and shared concern for the plight of all these African countries.

Needless to say, there are, of course, specific concerns -- and sometimes for the better. I mean, forget I'm French, but I think if France had not shown the lead on Mali in January 2013, I'm not sure what would have happened. And the same can be said about the common engagement of the United States and France on Central Africa. I think there was leadership shown, and I think nobody found any reason to disagree with this.

So, I think it's a positive trend. Of course, then, you can have this percentage or this element of national interest that creeps in, that can take the form of an amendment and a resolution. That happens. That's a fact of life. But it's nothing that compromises the overall threat.

Now about the cholera in Haiti -- first, let me say that the cholera is, in itself, something terrible, and I know the amount of suffering that it caused in the country.

I would not go into the legal aspects of that, because this is being looked at by courts, and, as you know, while this is the case, we do not discuss the substance.

But what I would say -- and I was in Haiti just a week ago -- is that a tremendous effort has been launched with the engagement of the Secretariat, of the Secretary General, to address one of the real root elements, which is the issue of water and sanitation, you know, that really has made the Haitians so vulnerable.

So, there is what is called the Hispaniola Initiative to eradicate cholera from both Santo Domingo and Haiti -- and support that with, I think, more than $2 billion

worth of projects over the next several years to really take care of it, and make it so that people do not suffer further.

And I must say, the medical data, helped in part by a vaccination campaign that we have supported -- involving the most fragile groups of the population -- is showing results.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, let's take two more. Why don't we -- by the way, there was, in the very last row, a woman sitting down behind Mr. Rothchild -- I think was looking to get in earlier. I guess I'm wrong. Okay, she's -- so, okay, it's over here. We'll start with my friend on the left in the white shirt, and then just in front of her.

MS. GIFFEN: Hi. I'm Alison Giffen, with the Stimson Center's Future of Peace Operations Program.

You mentioned a lot about troops and military enablers, but I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit to what reforms are happening to try and increase the capabilities of the civilian personnel that are so important for the extension of state authority and protection of civilians.

It's obviously, one, an issue of roster and trying to get the right people, but there are always problems with the U.N.'s actual ability to hire, and process, and deploy. So, if you could speak a little bit to that.

MR. O'HANLON: And then we'll take one more here. There's two rows in front.

MS. YOUNG: Hello. I'm Miriam Young, with the U.S. Council on Sri Lanka.

And my question has to do -- you mentioned one of your priorities being the performance of the U.N. peacekeeping troops themselves, and the fact that there is a zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence. I know that peacekeeping was on the panel of

the global summit last week in London on ending sexual violence in conflict.

So, my question is particularly related to the Sri Lankan forces that are serving as U.N. peacekeepers. I think there are some thousand of them. But there are documented reports of widespread rape and torture by the Sri Lankan security forces.

One of these reports came out just a month ago, and one of the recommendations here says, "Call upon the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations to immediately suspend Sri Lankan police and military involvement from U.N. peacekeeping missions pending an independent international inquiry." And it notes it's not sufficient to screen individual officers when there is a large body of credible evidence of a pattern of widespread, systematic sexual abuse of detainees by members of the security forces and collusion amongst multiple branches of the forces at high levels within the government of Sri Lanka.

So, my question is, what would you do in relation to this particular recommendation -- and, also, to note that it's very troubling that you actually have a Sri Lankan general on the Peacekeeping Special Advisory Council who has been accused of war crimes that are being investigated right now by the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

Thank you.

MR. LADSOUS: On the question of civilian capacities, it is, indeed, a reality that we have now about 14,000 or 15,000 civilian employees in our missions. And that has become very sizable and very necessary over the years. And it was a major effort, you know. We had this initiative inside of Secretariat called precisely Civilian Capacity -- CivCap -- which was devised to identify all the gaps, all the needs that we experience in various sectors, ranging from anything -- human rights to rule of law -- but the whole gamut.

And, indeed, we have worked a lot to establish rosters. I have to say,

you know, that until I joined the United Nations in 2011, I thought the French administration was a very frail old lady that you couldn't push very much. But I have discovered that the U.N. administration is yet another older lady, and you can even less push forward. So, that's a reality. That's also a consequence of layers upon layers of policies piled upon her by member states -- but really trying to accelerate.

And this is illustrated right now by what we're experiencing in Central African Republic. We transitioned from a political mission, which was BINUCA, which was about 50 people, to the beginnings of a peacekeeping operation. We are allowed by the parliamentary organs to deploy 474 civilian employees before the 31st of December -- and we're going to make it happen -- even we have to force it through, you know. But I think it is a necessity.

Now on the issue of performance and tolerance -- or non-tolerance -- the policies, Madame, stand. And that is very clear.

But, at the same time, it is true that we had had specifically some Sri Lankan peacekeepers in some of our missions for quite a while, and it is true that we face some needs.

Now what do you do when you are faced with the immediate need for a field hospital in South Sudan, given the amount of suffering that the people are experiencing there? And that one country -- specifically, Sri Lanka -- comes to you and says, “I'm ready to supply you with a field hospital."

I think the issue of medical personnel -- I would hope -- does not arise. These people have sworn the oath of Hippocrates, you say in English -- and I suppose I think we have to accept that they are true to their word. So, we just make it happen.

But it doesn't say that we do not do very specific vetting, you know, on officers. That we do, and we work very closely with the Office of the High Commissioner

for Human Rights. And I can tell you that we discussed this several times, and we are in agreement.

MR. O'HANLON: Take two more -- so we'll go to the gentleman in the green shirt here, and then over to the third row.

MR. BROOKS: Hi. Doug Brooks -- I'm a consultant these days.

In the past, the U.N. has worked fairly closely with contractors, including using helicopters in Sierra Leone. And when they took over the mission in Darfur, the A.U. had some 20 contracted helicopters working for them, and then the U.N. decided they couldn't use contracted helicopters for some reason.

In other places, specialized personnel and experts have been available from the private sector, but the U.N. has chosen to wait until they're offered by contributing countries.

Can't there be a happy compromise here where the contractors could be used to a greater extent and fill a lot of the gaps -- on everything from just static security up to medical, basically as you just described?

MR. O'HANLON: We'll take one more here, on the end.

MS. SALAHI: Hi. My name's Reem Salahi.

I had a question following up on Syria. You had mentioned that, two years ago, the U.N. had attempted to send a peacekeeping mission, and that did not work so well. Is there any updates? Is there any work being done to send more peacekeeping missions or any sort of peacekeeping thoughts on Syria, particularly given how devastating the conflict is?

MR. LADSOUS: Thank you. Let me take that question first. I think the sad answer, Madame, is no. Whereas a year ago, we had been hinted, you know, that while some political process still retained some hope, you know, we might be called upon

to stage a peacekeeping operation or something. So, we did some contingency planning through the end of 2012 and part of 2013.

But I'm very sorry to say that, unfortunately, nothing is coming out, you know. There is no sign that things are winding down. There is no sign that the killings, the suffering, the humanitarian disaster is winding down. And there is no possibility, even conceptually, to imagine that there could be a peacekeeping operation in such an environment as Syria, with all the fighting that goes on.

I did say that we sometimes operate in environments where there is no peace to keep. But on the scale of what has been happening in Syria, I think all we can do is continue doing the relatively small-scale operation we have on the Golan Heights between Syria and Israel. We have 1,250 people there -- and, by the way, operating under very difficult circumstances, because there's a lot of fighting going on in the vicinity.

But on the large-scale, Syria-wide operation, I think we simply have to hope that better times will come, and that will be more conducive to a possible involvement. That would be, of course, for the Security Council to consider, ultimately.

About contractors -- I think we are being pragmatic. We do contract for helicopters with some -- or we deal with member states, you know. It's a matter simply of the procurement process, you know. Sometimes, it's faster to go for a letter of assistance from a member state, you know, that can provide us with either the equipment or the people.

One thing, though, you did mention static security -- and there, we had a policy that we do not go except when it's really incontrovertible to private contractors, you know. We either do our own, or we ask a member state to contribute a guard unit. This is what we are deploying right now in Somalia.

MR. O'HANLON: I should give this side of the room a chance. So, why

don't we take the gentleman in the tie right there, and then come up here in the second row after that?

MR. SCHAEFER: Hello. I'm Brett Schaefer, with the Heritage Foundation.

I'm curious if you would have a response to the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services' report from March?

MR. LADSOUS: Sorry -- the --

MR. SCHAEFER: The OIOS report from March --

MR. LADSOUS: Oh, yeah.

MR. SCHAEFER: -- which took a look at eight of the nine U.N. peacekeeping operations with the mandate to protect civilians.

And that report concluded that the U.N. peacekeepers responded to incidents involving civilians only 20 percent of the time, and only -- or almost never -- used force in responding to those incidents.

MR. O'HANLON: And then here, in the second row, please.

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Maria, and my question concerns security sector reform.

So, I wanted to know, like, even if we increase the number of civilian employees, and better equipment, better capabilities, how do we make sure that we develop a relationship of real trust and respect for the civilian population, in terms of the civilian police being fully aware that their main role is to protect civilians and their property?

Also, how to make sure that they understand the local populations they're working with, their culture, their needs, and what they mean by security -- and, also, in terms of young people that may have never experienced this system before.

How do we make sure that they know what to expect from the civilian police?

MR. LADSOUS: On the reports by the Office of Oversight, let me tell you that, of course, Darfur has always been a very difficult theater of operations -- one of those precisely where no real peace has really ever existed. So, it's a very violent environment. It comes in cycles. Just since the beginning of this year, we had 400,000 more displaced persons and a spate of attacks in the first few months, which was quite shocking.

So, it's been a difficult environment -- one in which there have been clearly shortcomings. And I think we have experienced that over the last several years. I remember when, two years ago, company under attack simply put down their weapons, surrendered -- and, by the way, the officer was shot and died for that -- terrible. And that was unacceptable. And we did investigate every time there was such an occurrence, because it is not acceptable.

Again, we investigated last year when there was a convoy escorted by Blue Helmets that was attacked, and the people they were escorting were absconded -- unacceptable.

So, it's not an issue, you know, that comes up out of the blue. This is why I mentioned earlier, the first mission I gave to the Inspector General was precisely to go to Darfur and address all these issues of a systemic, or organizational, or technical nature. And we are implementing those now. And that, I think, remains our goal.

Now, of course, OIOS says very limited cases of years of violence -- but that does not recognize the fact that protection of civilians is actually a process, a political process in which the use of force is really an extremist solution. You use force when there is no other solution, but when you have exhausted all the other tools that you have at your disposition -- good officers, mediation, negotiations.

Okay, but, you know, use of force is not the goal, is not the preferred tool of protection of civilians. And that, I think OIOS colleagues did not really recognize.

So, that is the reality. And let's face it: This is what we are doing every day. In Darfur, every day, we have hundreds, thousands of people who go about their businesses, being escorted without incident, without problems. So, this has to be reflected, I think.

On the issue of SSR and the need to reflect the desires and expectations of the population, yes, this is something absolutely crucial. We do it for our own police. You know, we are deploying in several theaters, actually, women units that are devised, tailored precisely to take care of the specific concerns of women in Liberia, in the Congo, Haiti. It's happening in a very common way.

We don't have specialized unit for young people yet, but that may come today. But I think it is very important that, as the state builds up again and retakes credibility -- one element of that credibility is the perception by the people that, yes, their concerns are taken care of -- that there is a bond of confidence, of trust, again, after sometimes years or decades of neglect, of breach of faith, of predation by police authorities. All that has to be addressed.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, we'll do one more round of questions here, as we wrap up for the day.

Great. Thanks. You're amazing. You covered so much ground, and we're making you work, despite your rough condition with your throat. So, thank you.

Okay, so why don't we -- let's see -- why don't we come up here in the front row, and then the gentleman here in the black shirt -- and we'll wrap up there.

QUESTIONER: Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity. I really appreciate your comprehensive presentation, and you spoke to so many points that

we would think of talking about it in this kind of panel.

My question is specifically to Darfur. We totally understand the challenges that may face a peacekeeping mission in anywhere in the world -- and in places like Darfur.

But there are clearly shortcomings that are relevant to the performance of the mission, and, also, to its leadership. There are allegations of complicity, or lack of transparency, or lack of reporting within the mission in Darfur. There are cases of clear lack of action or failure of leadership -- to put the troop in position to protect themselves or to address the problem and the issue of reporting sexual and gender-based violence that is going on daily basis.

So, whenever we raise the question, they say there is no peace to keep. We do understand that there's no peace to keep, but is it an ideal situation for the U.N. to have a defect or a failed mission? Also, is there any accountable measures for individual leaders within the mission? Like, do the U.N. monitor and hold this individual accountable, or just let them do it on their own?

But the situation in Darfur is one of the most example of the failure of the individual leaders within the mission -- and, also, the mission has no mechanism to protect not only the civilians, but its own troops.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: And then here. Thank you.

MR. GROSS: Ben Gross, Global Solutions Network.

My quick question is, we've seen, like, the recent kind of violence and escalation in Iraq, and we were wondering, would there be any kind of potential for a peacekeeping mission in Iraq? And if so, how successful do you think it could possibly be?

MR. LADSOUS: On Darfur, I think I have explained earlier, Madame, that we -- and certainly I -- have taken these issues very seriously. Every single failure has been investigated -- and I quoted two incidents. I don't think it is fair, if I may say so, to say that it is a failed mission. It is a mission that has been fraught with problems, but fraught, first and foremost, with a terrible situation -- and let's face it -- in a context where cooperation of the government of the Sudan has not been exemplary, to say the least.

This is why we launched this strategic review early this year, and we give ourselves until the end of the year to see whether there are improvements -- improvements in the military performance, improvements in the cooperation by the government of Khartoum, an improvement in the general working of the U.N. family in the country.

And if this is not satisfactorily convincing, then the Security Council shall consider how to best handle this situation.

This being said, I would add that perhaps, in a way, as a result of this mission by the Inspector General in the early part of this year, we have seen a change in the pattern in which things happen on the ground.

Recent weeks, we have had attacks which were reacted to in a robust way by the troops -- in part because we have changed some of the troops, you know. The less combative, the less well-equipped -- we told them to pack and go home, and thank you -- and bring in new people who are better-equipped, better-trained, more combative -- makes a difference.

Only last week, there was a group of attackers, who fell onto one of our columns, we had one guy killed; they had six. Do you know that the following day, the attackers were coming to apologize? Actually, also asking for blood money, which is something different. But they did apologize, and that's something that we hadn't seen for

quite a while.

So, we are waiting until we have better patterns, you know, of what is happening on the ground. And if the trends do confirm, then we will communicate, because I think there is something happening there.

About Iraq -- I'm sorry that I cannot really comment, you know. It is something that would be for the Security Council to decide upon.

What I can tell you is that given the gravity, the complexity, and the scale of what it is that has been happening in recent weeks in Iraq -- and let's not forget, also, with some of the neighbors -- it is something that would be far beyond the scope for the United Nations to be able to handle.

So, this, I think, is where we stand -- of course, with great sadness at all the suffering that is taking place yet there also -- and the severity of the stakes -- what is at stake there. And there, I speak more as a citizen, as a person, but it is great, great, great concern.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, thank you very much for all you've taught us today, and we appreciate very much you being here at Brookings.

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