



## **IPI's Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Series Presents:**

### **The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Transition to Stabilization**

**Featuring Roger Meece**  
*Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo*

**When:**

Friday, June 10, 2011, 1 – 2:45pm

**Where:**

International Peace Institute  
Trygve Lie Center for Peace, Security & Development  
777 United Nations Plaza, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(Corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 44<sup>th</sup> Street)

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*Transcript edited by IPI*

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### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Speaker: **Roger Meece**, *Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)*

Chair: **Warren Hoge**, *Vice President for External Relations, International Peace Institute*

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**Warren Hoge:** Good afternoon. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's Vice President for External Relations and I'm happy to greet you here on behalf of Terje Rod-Larsen, IPI's President, who is supposed to be today's moderator but learned only yesterday that he had to be elsewhere at this hour.

So I welcome you to the International Peace Institute and to this SRSG series event on stabilization efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our guest today is Roger Meece, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the UN organization stabilization mission in the DRC known as MONUSCO.

IPI started this SRSG series in 2006, and it's one of my favorite things at IPI because it brings senior mission managers with real on the ground experiences in places far from UN headquarters into direct contact with the diplomatic and policy community here in New York.

This year we've been fortunate to showcase many SRSG's from different field missions across the world. In March, we had Ibrahim Gambari speak on the challenges in Darfur. He actually was here again yesterday, but that was a closed session. In April, we had Ad Melkert, the SRSG for Iraq, come to talk about the UN mission in his conflicted area, and at the end of this month we will host Edmond Mulet. Edmond as you know has just been reappointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to his old position as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations after having served as the Emergency SRSG in Haiti in the aftermath of last year's devastating earthquake. He will speak to us on June 29th about his 16 months there and his work leading the UN's contribution to the countries recovery.

Today we're turning our attention to Africa and to the role of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our speaker, as I said, is Roger Meece, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the DRC. I mentioned to Roger as he came in that this is one of the very first times or maybe the only time since I came to IPI from *The New York Times* three years ago, that I am up here on stage with a fellow American.

Now I usually stress how very international we are here at IPI and in keeping with that, this fellow American is one with more than three decades of rich international experience both in the US Foreign Service and the Peace Corp. His full biography is in your program, but let me note that he was the US Ambassador to the DRC from 2004 to 2007. And that he's been the SRSG there now for a year.

The UN mission in the DRC, known as MONUC, was established in February 2000 under chapter seven of the UN charter. In May 2010, a little bit more than a year ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1925, renaming the mission MONUSCO to reflect the need for continued peace consolidation and stabilization efforts.

Today the mission is the largest UN peace operation, with a total of about 20 thousand uniformed personnel and it has an annual budget of \$1.4 billion. The current mandate expires at the end of this month on June 30th and the Security Council is expected to renew it the day before on June 29th.

Now the most recent SG's report on the DRC released on May 12th emphasized many challenges to reaching a durable stability, among them the continued presence of armed groups, particularly in eastern DRC in the north and south Kivu provinces. Then there are the persistent violence and human rights violations against civilians, including rape and other forms of sexual violence. We were all shocked by the stark numbers in last month's study by the *American Journal of Public Health* that noted that as many as 1.8 million Congolese women have been raped, with some 434,000 raped in the one year period preceding the study, which means a rape a minute.

And finally deepening problems preparing for the presidential and national assembly elections scheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>, to be followed by local and provincial elections in 2012 with evidence of politically motivated violence and increased terrorism and disquieting suggestions for delaying the vote. The SG's report concludes by recommending that MONUSCO's mandate should be extended by a further 12 months with the mission's military troop and police unit strength maintained at current authorized levels.

So as you begin your second year in the post, Roger, you do so with a very full agenda of challenges, and I'm delighted that we have you here today at IPI to talk to us about the successes you've seen until now and the objectives for the future. The floor is yours.

**Roger Meece:**

Thank you very much for that kind introduction, and it is a great pleasure to be with you here today. I am in New York, as many of you may know, primarily to deliver an update on a briefing to the Security Council which was done yesterday. And of course this is done as you mentioned it in the introduction and the context of not only the regular updates that the Security Council wants to have regarding the situation, but consideration of the forthcoming resolution--perspective resolution for the renewal of our mandate. So it's a great pleasure to be with you here today. I'm heading back to Kinshasa tomorrow. This is as scheduled, however, and has nothing to do with the unseeingly heat that has taken over Manhattan.

So I had spoken in advance of talking about transition to stabilization, and I confess there is a deliberate amount of ambiguity in that phrase. Because the word "transition" for those of you who follow Congo could be applied to a lot of different kinds of situations. And I think it might be useful if I might just to start out by reviewing a bit of the past and the context, because, in my opinion, it is difficult to get to an accurate assessment of where we are, much less where we're going, without at least being grounded in a bit of where we have come from in terms of the past of the Congo.

Without going into great detail--and certainly I think as most of you are probably aware--there's a good deal of literature available regarding history dating back to the Colonial period of Congo. But it's fair to say that Congo has had a particularly tragic history dating back to a particularly brutal Colonial period, a great deal of violence and uncertainty accompanying the independence period, and indeed, one of the early interventions of the United Nations in something that was then ONUC, the mission, the peacekeeping mission, accompanying this very turbulent period of independence in the Congo. And of course, the death of the then Secretary-General in an aircraft accident of uncertain causes during that period.

This quickly worked into a manifestation of Cold War politics, very quickly, and the establishment of what turned out to be a three-decades-plus long dictatorship, Mobutu Sese Seko, that itself was crumbling for many reasons, in my opinion, and in the post-Cold War period, met an end in the form rather abruptly of the onset of active conflict and active war invasion by neighboring states.

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the establishment of huge camps of displaced primarily Hutus from Rwanda in the aftermath of that genocide, and eventually the invasion of 1996, with a number of people, I think, in the region enthusiastically joining in to see the end of Mobutu and resulting in the establishment of the Laurent Kabila government of 1997.

This then led in its own way to the capital "T" transition as a result of agreements reached in Sun City to resolve the rather chaotic state of affairs, to put an end to formal conflict and establish a process that ultimately led to elections in 2006 establishing at least the basis, the groundwork for legitimacy of a government and the beginning of this post-transition period that we are in now. All of which, of course, represents a considerable transition, a particularly bad history, and one that is characterized by violence, by conflict, and of course over a decade now of large scale death associated with the ongoing violence of the war, of the period,

and a set of institutions that at best are weak, if not in the past during this period, largely irrelevant.

I would note that throughout all of these periods, for whatever reason, there seems to have been a fondness, in my opinion, by many analysts and observers of the Congo and central Africa for predicting that doom is imminent if not already upon us. I recall reading a report a number of years ago that summarized Zaire, as it was then referred to, as a country of vast potential and no possibilities. I'm not sure I would have disagreed with that assessment at that point. I would submit the difference, in that and the existing situation, is there are now possibilities, and it is important to capitalize those and continue what has been done. But there still seems to be a continuing fondness by many for concluding that the Congo is too big, the problems too complex, the issues too difficult, and, in essence, concluding they cannot be solved. It should come as a surprise to nobody here that I reject and have always rejected that kind of analysis. I think it is wrong and I think it has been demonstrated to be wrong. And beyond all of that I think we have collectively a major responsibility to do all that we can to ensure that it is wrong and that we achieve the kind of progress that is essential not only for roughly 70 million Congolese, but indeed a significant part of the continent that goes well beyond Congo's borders. So we have a considerable history that you can characterize as transition at various points and various ways.

Indeed, I might note that before we started, I was very kindly shown some of the sites from this wonderful balcony behind me of the view. But for those of you who knew Congo, I was a bit concerned that seeing me going out to the balcony would encourage some people to think I was getting ready to jump. But I want to assure you that was not the case. We can also speak of transition even for the mission. As was mentioned in the introduction, MONUC was first established quite a number of years ago in a very different form than what it is now. I, as then a US diplomat, was involved in some of the discussions that ultimately led to the establishment of MONUC.

And I think it is fair to say that the idea at the time in most people's minds was simply to try to get to some sort of end to the formal period of conflict, somehow put an end to this chaotic state, with all of these various seven different national armies, in addition to the Congolese army, operating in the territory of the Congo - large numbers of Congolese militia, the rather chaotic state. That evolved eventually with the success of those efforts into again the formal transition period, the Capital "T" transition, following the Sun City accords. And I think probably in many people's minds at that point the objective was, including for the mission, "Let's get through the transition. Let's hold elections, set the basis for future developments." And certainly many then, I know, were thinking of the elections represent the exit strategy for MONUC. And at that point, we and the international community can pack the bags in terms of a formal peacekeeping mission.

I did not agree with that assessment at the time. The elections, in my view, were an absolutely critical step in terms of moving forward. But they were a step. And clearly there was a great deal to be done to ensure the kinds of long-term stability that we need. And that, in my opinion, leads us to where we are now, with the addition of the word stabilization to our mission MONUC now MONUSCO, the increased emphasis on how to achieve the conditions for long-term stability, long-term stabilization, which I would say is indeed the correct emphasis in addition to, of course, resolving the ongoing security issues, particularly in the east and I'll return to that in a moment. So you can talk about transition to an effort focusing on stabilization in lots of different perspectives.

And I think with that, which is a grossly oversimplified quick review of a lot of history that at least sets the stage a little bit for where we are today.

And let me try to review some of the key challenges and problems that we're facing today as I reviewed with the Security Council yesterday and just mentioning them. This starts with security and in the vocabulary of MONUSCO and the resolution and our mandate, the language of the protection of civilians is our highest priority by mandate and what we try to do.

But as I noted to the Council yesterday, I think to talk meaningfully about the security issues focused on the eastern part of the countries where you have continuing operations of armed groups. You have to do this now on a more localized basis. The situation in the Kivu is a very different one from the situation in Ituri district, which is a very different one from the northeastern part of the country, Haut-Uélé water districts, where you will find operations of the Lord's Resistance Army. You cannot, in my opinion, meaningfully speak of security in the east as a whole in an accurate form. I suppose you could say this in and of itself represents an improvement from what the situation five or ten years ago, but certainly there's a remaining challenge. And I tried to review that yesterday with the Council in an abbreviated form, and let me just again in very brief, I shouldn't try to go through that.

If I progress geographically from the northeast, the Lord's Resistance Army operates in limited numbers, very difficult to estimate accurately because the numbers are quite limited and they operate over a vast territory larger than the state of California, largely no infrastructure, much of it heavily forested and that not very densely populated. You can fly over it, as I have, areas for hours and essentially see nobody. And some of it is officially heavily forested that you can be flying over a significant group of people and not know it. The military challenges this poses in terms of protection of civilians, in terms of getting at the elements of the LRA that are still there, the Lord's Resistance Army, obviously underscores the difficulty of the problem. Adding to it, as I'm sure everyone here knows, is the cross-border nature of the LRA. They move freely as they see fit between the Central African Republic, Sudan and Congo. They're difficult to control, highly isolated areas, particularly from a Congolese standpoint, extremely challenging to try to get at them.

I said to the Council yesterday of what we are doing and what we are focused on, to the maximum extent we can, is a protection of civilian issue, trying to protect civilians against attacks by the LRA, and they're especially brutal tactics. But a lot of it is guesswork, frankly. Where are they going to attack? They're unpredictable, small, isolated groups. And even if you're very successful, it doesn't necessarily do much to degrade the overall capability of the LRA as an organization, as a threat to the region and population, in whatever country or whatever area they're operating. And to do that, in my opinion, requires a strategy that particularly focuses on the LRA leadership, particular Joseph Kony and his immediate senior commanders. That, as I stated yesterday, is something that goes beyond our capacity and mandate in the Congo, but we're very interested in trying to support that effort to the maximum extent that we can. But that requires a broader regional and international effort, and I can only encourage all interested parties to do all that is possible to address that issue so that we are not indefinitely facing a continuing ongoing threat from admittedly limited numbers, but very brutal combatants of the LRA in terms of the way that they operate.

The only bit of good news out of all of this is that the area that the LRA operates

is so isolated and so remote, there is no active interaction between the LRA and other armed groups in the Congo as there is in other regions, which tends to complicate that, the security environment in those areas where that operates. And if I can use that as a segue, moving a little further south, Ituri district in Orientale Province. I'm sorry there's no map. I always feel a bit lost without a map to point to. But there is still some residual militia activity. It is nothing at all on the order of what it was a few years ago, and I'm certain, in my own memory, know of a time that you could not safely set foot anywhere in Ituri district. But it's important of course to put an end to that.

The most encouraging thing I have seen of late, in that regard, is some militia leaders who have attempted to recruit a new militia or add to the existing militias. All signs are that they are meeting with no success whatsoever. And this is a very hopeful thing. We have to put an end to the militia activity, but the security environment in the Ituri district is, at this point, a dramatic improvement over what it was just a few years ago, and of course the job needs to be completed so people can live in a peaceful condition.

And then we come to the Kivus, North and South Kivu provinces. These are smaller areas, although let us not underestimate the size. North Kivu alone is about twice the size of Rwanda, for example. A very unhealthy and complicated relationship there exists with an interaction between foreign and Congolese armed groups, notably the FDLR, the remnants of the Hutu extremists that fled Rwanda in the aftermath of the genocide. They are now considerably reduced from what they were a few years ago in terms of their numbers, their capacity, but they still retain, in my view, the single greatest military capacity of any of the groups in the Congo. They are still a threat, but they are in a substantially weakened condition. And we see lots of signs of this in terms of various information and reports that we get in terms of the numbers and the rank of those who are voluntarily submitting themselves for repatriation to Rwanda, reflecting internal weaknesses in terms of general operational problems that we know that they are having inside the Congo. The trick of course is to capitalize on this weakness, to exploit it, to further reduce their capability.

And for that I would say the combination of military operations in the country, the actions that have been taken at an international level, and I'm referring here to actions specifically in Germany to arrest some senior FDLR leaders who were residents there, now being tried. Now, the arrests recently, or more recently, in France, of a particularly prominent visible leader, Callixte Mbarushimana, and his transfer to the international criminal court, very positive step forward with a clear demoralizing impact inside the country, which we've been able to see. Just a couple of weeks ago the arrest by Congolese authorities of a prominent person alleged to have been involved in the genocide in '94 and his transfer to the international tribunal in Arusha, another positive step. We need to pursue the opportunities to continue this to reduce that FDLR capacity.

Second to that in the Kivus, in my view, is a problem involving the CNDP. The CNDP is basically a legacy of the old RCD army at the time of the war, a certain group of CNDP leaders. This is headed by a fellow by the name of Bosco Ntaganda, who himself is under indictment by the ICC. And they are ostensibly integrated into the Congolese army, but in fact, are not. Some CNDP are, but a significant segment does not acknowledge central command authority; they operate as an autonomous power unto themselves and again contribute significantly to the security issues inside the Kivus. And it is a more difficult issue in terms of how to get at them to resolve the issue. The interaction between these two groups, in particular, and some of the Congolese militia and other

groups, greatly complicates the problem. But if you can somehow resolve those, in my view, issue with dealing with the others becomes vastly simpler. Most of these Congolese militia groups at this point frankly do not amount to organized military groups. They're much more criminal gangs who are interested more in money. There is also a Ugandan group the ADF-NALU that operates in the northern part of North Kivu, an issue, but without the same kind of capacity of the other groups. There's also one in South Kivu, Burundian FNL, that may be reestablishing a presence as well. But this is a broad overview of where we're at in security conditions. There has been substantial improvement in many ways, and I can go into that in more detail if you like, from the situation that existed but quite a few years ago, but quite clearly more to be done and we're very much focused with the Congolese on doing that. Within all of this, a reference was made earlier to the appalling levels of sexual based violence, particularly rape, that exists in the region.

And I would just note that in my view there are three components to this, each of which requires somewhat different answers. There is rape as practiced by the armed groups as a sort of tactic, as a weapon of war. This was dramatically and tragically illustrated last year in terms of mass rapes that occurred in the North Kivu Walikale area attracted considerable attention. It was clearly designed. It wasn't a matter of troops running amok. And conceptually the answer to that part of the problem is putting the armed groups out of business. How you do that, of course is the question, but that's the, if you will, the executive summary of the answer in terms of the threat from the armed groups.

There is a second component that consists of rape as practiced by members of the security forces, and this brings me back to the CNDP, because we have now seen for at least quite some time that a disproportionate, indeed, a majority of the serious cases of abuse is represented by the FARDC, the Congolese army in the Kivus, in fact involve quote "ex-CNDP personnel" which returns to the problem of the CNDP. And you have to start to get into an analysis of who and what and what faction to get at an accurate understanding.

A part of the answer here is the problem with the CNDP. Part of the answer is strength in justice systems. And indeed we've seen increased levels of arrest and prosecution to the extent possible of a number of officers and others. That's an encouraging sign that we are trying to get at. A third part of the general problem, in my view, is one that does not involve armed groups or security personnel, but is a broader societal problem, and it is not just in eastern Congo. But you'll find elevated levels of rape across the country. Elevated from historical patterns, elevated from, I think, what anybody would consider to be acceptable. This, in my view, is something that merits a great deal more attention and study than is being devoted to it. I don't think it is unique to the Congo. I think it is a broader issue and I think it needs further study and out of that, obviously, some further ideas in terms of how you can address this.

Is it simply in a society that has been affected by violence, upheaval, chaotic conditions for so long that the moral compass has become a bit unhinged and how to reset that? I don't present myself as the expert, but it is a broader problem that requires attention and action as well. Beyond all of this, the other key part, of course, of what has been happening during, especially since the formal transition, is capacity building by the government - the ability of the government to exercise the basic functions that any government needs to exercise to ensure an ordered and successful society. This is a key problem. It is a significant issue. It is one that we've been heavily engaged along with UN agencies, the external partners and many Congolese. And it is central to what needs to be done, and

again, starting from a low base. I would submit that when I first started working in the Congo in 1995, government at that point was essentially irrelevant. It delivered no services. Its only contact with the population, for the most part, was one as a source of harassment and problems. And there were no functioning government institutions that were worth speaking of. So you're starting from virtually nothing, and in some ways arguably worse than nothing, in terms of having traditions and practices that are bad and breaking that and moving to something. There has been a great deal done since then, but trying to figure out how to do capacity building, institution building, there is no magic answer, certainly one that I have not found. And it is one that we are continuing. This includes a particular central focus to MONUSCO and our mandate police, army, military and civilian justice systems, corrections, but it goes beyond that in terms of a central function of the government, everything from healthcare to education to other key elements that are needed for a successful stable society. And this is going to be an effort that is going to need to continue for a long time into the future.

I would mention, in my view, most observers and analysts have greatly underestimated the impact of the 2006 elections. The 2006 elections have changed the nature of governments in the Congo in several fundamental ways. Prior to that, it was almost exclusively a question of directions from the top, Mobutu during all his years, through the various channels and key people and that was pretty much it. This is still very much a young and new work in progress, but you have begun to establish competing centers of political influence. You see some of that in the National Assembly. A good recent example is the adoption of new electoral legislation that rejected all of the more controversial elements that were proposed by the government. You see it in the provincial assemblies, which are still very weak and underfunded. But virtually every governor in the country has been having problems with their respective provincial assemblies. And this is in part because the provincial assemblies are doing exactly what was foreseen, and that is exercising interests and views that are different necessarily from the executive authorities. This is still, as I say, very much a new work in progress and the elections that are scheduled this year are a continuation and a very important continuation of that process. And again I'll perhaps mention that a bit more in a few minutes.

And finally I would just mention in relation to government capacity, but certainly critical, are regional relations. Relations particularly in the east with the neighbors Rwanda, Uganda in particular, Burundi to a lesser extent, have undergone a dramatic change. There are regular and ongoing contacts between Kinshasa and Kampala, Kinshasa and Kigali. These are critical. These are not relationships that are based on warm fraternal cross-border friendships. There is very little trust. It is based on a recognition of common interests that the countries have. Yet it is important, it is critical to maintaining adequate security conditions, not only in eastern Congo, but for the region. But it is a critical part of what needs to happen. And of course you need governments in their respective countries that are capable of conducting those relations and having some authority to move forward.

Conversely, I would just note that the relations between Kinshasa and Angola in particular in the west have deteriorated and are fairly tense. But the regional relations are a critical element of the general situation overall. Finally, in terms of challenges, I would note the economy is obviously critical and very much relates to all of these, all the questions as well. You're again operating from a context of literally decades of consistent GDP shrinkage, of a general deterioration in all respects of the economy, of infrastructure, a quite astonishing reduction,



disappearance of foreign investment, of legitimate economic operators, to a point that it is quite minimal in terms of the number of investors and companies operating now, and a general deterioration in the situation. This is starting to reverse. Macroeconomic performance over the last few years in fact has been pretty decent, particularly given the world environment. There was a general stabilization of the currency, and again I can speak more about this if you like. But it is still new. Much more needs to be done. And its effects have not yet been translated to something that most people see in terms of an improvement in general living conditions, employment or other factors. But this too is critical in building the kind of base for the economy, for the functioning of government, for the well being of the population, that is quite critical. And I would just mention, by the way, that there are two very important and crucial players on the stage in these times as well, and that being China and India, both of whom are becoming quite active and important in terms of economic operations in the Congo.

All of this leads me, finally, to stabilization. And what I would submit to you in my working definition of stabilization, as I see it for the Congo, is a self-sustaining capacity to achieve adequate conditions in three key areas. And those are the ones I have just reviewed: security; governance--governance here defined as a capacity of the government to deliver essential services and adequate conditions for the function of society--and economic opportunity, or economic development, or however you would like to phrase that. Our own role in MONUSCO is of course not in the lead in all of those three areas. Security we clearly have a major role. Capacity building we have what I would consider to be an important role. In economic development, it's more limited, and there the UN agencies and other partners are far more critical, but all of these are absolutely essential parts of what I would consider to be an integrated strategy to get to long-term stability for the country. And so when we talk about stabilization, it is in these terms that I would define it. And it is in accordance with what I was already speaking about in terms of these areas. It obviously has not yet been achieved. It will be achieved, I think, imperfectly and at varying paces in the three different areas and the three interrelate to each other. But it is critical in terms of the future success and a durable stability for the country in the region.

I would also submit to you that a continued and sustained engagement of the international community in these areas is critical. That's not easy to do. It is certainly not easy, and if I can speak for a moment as a retired US diplomat, I think it's often particularly difficult for United States to define foreign policy in terms of a sustained pattern over many years. But that's what's needed. I am appreciative very much of a number of key countries that have sustained that engagement over a number of years. But I would submit that that engagement is going to have to continue. I can speak more about components of this. There is a STAREC program in the east that sets out a framework for development and infrastructure and general stabilization related activities. There has been very good progress in the other parts of the country toward formal adoption of something called 'the peace consolidation,' a program that will set out the same kind of framework from the west. I hope that will mobilize further resources.

But I would also note that none of these are short-term efforts. And I would refer you as well to what I consider to be a really interesting report put out this year. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the annual report put out by the World Bank, the World Development Report, which this year focused in particular on relationships between violence, post-conflict societies, the establishment of institutions, institution building in governance; and I think underscores some very important lessons for us all to be aware of in terms of the difficulty length of time in various other aspects of this effort.

Finally, let me just note that in terms of our immediate prospects, reference was made to the renewal of the mandate. I won't sit here and try to predict what the Security Council may pass, but I believe that there is not a great amount of controversy or debate, particularly contrasted with this time last year toward a renewal resolution. I have certainly expressed my view that the priorities for our mandates set out in resolution 1925 of last year are good. We do not want, and are not seeking, additional mandated tasks. We have quite enough to keep us busy, thank you, without the addition of others. And I would be hopeful that a renewal resolution could be achieved that basically maintains the general framework with an additional notation of the very important component of elections.

And on elections let me just very briefly note, I've already said I consider these to be an integral and critical part for the continued development. Not just political consolidation, but the overall stabilization and future success of the Congo. I am well aware from 2006 of the challenges that are accompanying the organization of elections in a country as large and as complicated with a lack of infrastructure of the Congo. Just to illustrate, there were about 25 million registered voters in '06. There were 50 thousand polling stations, many of which could not be reached by surface because of the lack of infrastructure, enormous organizational challenges. The target for this year, the projected total by the end of an election commission, is about 31 million voters, a target of about 60 thousand polling stations. It is a huge effort. We are very much committed in MONUSCO to supplying the logistical support that has been asked for and is needed in providing technical advice with UNDP, and working very closely with the Election Commission in doing a variety of other things to try to facilitate and achieve a peaceful and favorable election process. It is not guaranteed, it is not easy, but it is certainly doable. Many in '06 said the elections would fail. I would submit that probably of the 33 presidential candidates in '06, 20 to 25 of them did not expect to have elections. They were instead buying a place at what they thought would be the eventual negotiating table to divvy up positions and, to their great surprise, that's not what happened. And I certainly hope and feel that it is possible and doable to achieve successful elections in this next cycle and it's important to do so. Therein lies the signpost leading to future stabilization. Stabilization is not going to be achieved in six months or one year, but it is achievable.

And as I started out by saying, it is very important for all of us collectively, the UN, the international community more broadly, obviously the Congolese themselves, the region, to continue the engagement to build on what already has been done and to continue to move forward. And it is certainly doable. If I didn't believe that, I would not have left what was frankly an enjoyable retirement to go back to Kinshasa. I am not aware that I harbor any masochistic tendencies. I think this is an achievable project and it's the reason I and many, many colleagues in the UN and MONUSCO are specifically are working very hard to achieve those goals. I think I've probably abused my time factor...

**Hoge:** Not at all, that was wonderfully lucid and thorough, and I've got two or three questions of my own and then I want to go to the audience. There are people here, Roger, who know the DRC, have worked there and are concerned about it.

**Meece:** That's dangerous. They ask good questions.

**Hoge:** And I want to ask you just one small question about security. When you began by talking about the Lord's Resistance Army and said that they just simply must be

shut down - I think three of their leaders are under indictment...

**Meece:** Correct.

**Hoge:** ...by the ICC. Is that the way to shut them down, to go capture those three guys and deliver them to a judge? Or is that impossible, given the forested, remote area you described?

**Meece:** Yes I think it's possible. In my prepared remarks yesterday in Open Session I noted that any strategy to eliminate the LRA as an entity, as an ongoing threat to the region, in my opinion, must focus on the leadership. And that's specifically Joseph Kony and his immediate group. Kony and two of the more senior lieutenants are under ICC indictment. There were five indictments issued. One of them was his former deputy who he killed, largely because of the peace process that the deputy was showing signs of, I think, being willing to sign and Kony was not a few years ago. Another has been killed, so there are three remaining. The trick there though is to first of all be able to track them. And then second, successfully launch an operation to go after them. Capturing is obviously desirable, but to speak frankly, they have to be neutralized one way or the other. And that again goes beyond our scope. It's doable, but it needs a commitment and an engagement from others that goes beyond me to be able to do that.

**Hoge:** And from the examples you gave us of the arrests of militia leaders, talking about the FDLR, it has an effect, yes?

**Meece:** Yes. I think the LRA has a particular effective leadership because in my view Joseph Kony has this quasi-mystical status that is the glue that holds the LRA together. In other words, if you could remove him from the picture it doesn't automatically mean all of the other LRA combatants disappear. But in my opinion we would likely be on a pretty good declining curve of threat from the remaining LRA if somehow you can remove Joseph Kony and, better yet, his key lieutenants from the picture.

**Hoge:** And finally I wanted to ask you some more about the elections. As you know there are 17 elections this year on the African continent. So we're spending a good deal of attention this year at IPI on a number of them. A couple of things you said I wanted to follow up on. One was I know the second set of elections in 2012 are local and provincial and from what you said a moment ago, some of the provincial politics are getting a little robust and presumably that means those elections could be really important, I mean the local and provincial ones.

**Meece:** I think that's absolutely correct. A couple of notes: First of all just in terms of timetable. What has been set out in the timetable is for presidential and national assembly elections in late November, provincial assembly elections in March, if I'm recalling my dates correctly in 2012, and then local elections beyond that. The local elections were supposed to have the initial round, but conducted in the aftermath of the 2006 elections. The political class of Congo seemed to collectively go 'Woof' after the 2006 elections and promptly forgot about the local elections. It's important in my view not to do that this time.

**Hoge:** And they won't this time.

**Meece:** I hope. I cannot say that with certainty. But are the elections quite - politics at the local as well as the nation level - robust? Yes. Is there an inner relationship? Yes. And I have been strongly encouraging people. I understand logically, understandably why attention in the Congo, and outside the Congo particularly,

focuses on the presidential elections, but I think the national assembly elections and the provincial assembly elections are quite important. They should not be overlooked and they can have a very significant impact on the way that the government will function and politics in general in the Congo in future years. So I think they deserve attention as well.

**Hoge:** As you know, in the national elections the Constitution was altered to get rid of the runoffs so that it would be one election with winner takes all, which runs the risk of producing a president without a majority vote. Is that potentially a problem?

**Meece:** I will resist a passing thought in my mind to do any comparisons with the US. But I don't think it necessarily is a problem in and of itself. It does not create, by itself, a model that is invalid democratically, but it obviously creates a different kind of political environment. Clearly the calculation of whether the primary opposition candidates, which at this point would appear to be at the presidential level Etienne Tshisekedi and Vital Kamerhe, will be unable to unify and rally as a part of the picture. I'm not going to try to predict whether the opposition will or will not do that and what the presidential majority may do relative to that, but it's part of the politics of the country. But I would not submit that the change of a two to one round by itself inherently either invalidates or creates a major problem in terms of going forward over the next term.

**Hoge:** Roger, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, as you very well know there was a crash, airplane crash in Kinshasa. A number of UN people died. Some of them I think were electoral assistants, people who would be working on the election. We followed it particularly closely here frankly because one of our colleagues was in Goma at that point, and when we got the initial reports we first feared that he might be on the plane. He was not; he is in the room right now, though he is a friend of some of the people who died on that crash. I bring it up just through the idea ... let's acknowledge the loss of those people as we sit here in front of the United Nations building; we have seen that flag flying at half-staff all too frequently in recent years... but also to ask about MONUSCO and the elections. What you're expected to do, what you can do, and whether there's a match there between those two things?

**Meece:** Yes. Thank you. I would note that obviously the April 4th accident was the first in MONUSCO's history as a fatal error accident. It came as an emotional shock certainly to everybody in the mission and many beyond. And we're still dealing with that on many levels. But as you note there was a disproportionate impact on our elections support unit. The director of the deputy number two and other colleagues were onboard that plane. And it has created clearly an additional burden on us in terms of fulfilling our duties and doing things that we need to do in support of the election process.

I would note that one of the things I have been doing here, with a great deal of support from colleagues at the UN here, is arranging for some expedited mechanisms to replenish our capacity in the elections support unit faster than the --I will try to think of a charitable word--sometimes unresponsive personnel systems are normally capable of doing. That's as kind a description as I can come up with, but we are very strongly committed. We have an excellent relationship with the electoral commission, both the technical and the leadership level. Our people--and by "our" I mean MONUSCO and UNDP--are basically an integrated unit and election support. They're colocated with the electoral commission. We're involved at a variety of levels, so very closely--as was the case with MONUC in 2006 in terms of the organization, in terms of the support, in

terms of various aspects including security, and that is a relationship that we intend to maintain. And the people who have been in the election support unit, let me commend them in these past few weeks, in not only dealing with the trauma of having lost colleagues, but taking on all the additional workload in keeping things going forward as well during those periods.

**Hoge:**

One last comment on IPI and the DRC and then we'll go to questions. The first is that we have Dr. Denis Mukwege, the extraordinary doctor from Bukavu, coming here on June 29th. You heard me say June 29th for Edmond Mulet. I was correct in both cases. Denis Mukwege will be here in the morning for a breakfast session, and Edmond Mulet will be here at lunch time for a lunch session. And the other thing is we had here last month, Roger, Jason Stearns to talk about his rather extraordinary book on the Congo, basically since 1996 until now. Anyway, are there questions in the audience? If there are, please raise your hand, and just wait for the microphone and if you would identify yourself please.

**Monique Clesca:**

Yes. My name is Monique Clesca. I am the desk advisor for Africa for UNFPA. I wanted to ask you to address in particular the issue of rape. And you mentioned the statistics and I think recently, a few months ago, three months ago perhaps, *The New York Times* had had an article also about the fact that rape is not only now being done on women and girls, but also men, and the issues that is raising also. Now how do you see, in the whole capacity building, the whole institution building and social cohesion, and all these fancy words that we use, how do you see the society that is women, men, girls who are living this trauma every day and all the consequences that we know that they are living with?, How do you see that going forward, in terms of healing - a healed society? Just wanted to know your thoughts on that. Thank you.

**Meece:**

Thank you for the question. Perhaps two notes. In reference to the study which I think you referenced in the introduction as well that was put out fairly recently, it has generated some controversy in terms of the numbers that were being cited, and I'm not going to try to present myself here as sufficiently expert in the area to weigh in to the debate about the methodology. And from my standpoint, I tend not to try to get into debates about specific numbers because whatever the exact numbers are, it is clearly elevated, unacceptable, and so our task becomes and what we are focused on is how can we put an end to this as quickly as possible in an acceptable form. So I do not generally try to get into this specific discussion of exact numbers or the methodology of that or any other study.

But as I did mention earlier, it seems to be there are three different areas, each of which requires a somewhat different study. And I won't repeat the solutions. I won't repeat what I said earlier, but rape is used as a weapon of war by various armed groups and individuals, which I think all civilized people would agree is simply unacceptable. Put the armed groups out of business, apprehend all those that you can to bring them to justice, but ending this practice is self-obvious; that has to be done. The abuse that is practiced by members of security services or people in authority, much of that is inadequate enforcement capabilities. It gets into the capacity of Congolese police, justice systems, all of which are still weak, all of which we are continuing to support and with some progress, but there is clearly a long ways to go.

And then the third, as I mentioned, and it relates very much, I think, to the question you were asking regarding society as a whole. How do you address these questions not only in terms of whatever it is, the conditions that are producing highly elevated levels of rape in the society, generally, what is it that brings people to do that? And how do you reset a foundation? This is not a

historical pattern that has been true forever in Congo. It is not something that is culturally characteristic of the region. It is something that I have to intuitively believe is an effect of a society that has been shredded by violence and disorder and chaotic conditions for a very long period of time. How do you fix that? And in my intuitive view, without again presenting myself as an expert, related very much to that is how do you start to deal with healing? Healing on an individual basis, and I won't even begin to present myself as an expert on how you deal with individuals who have been traumatized by that level of violation, by rape or other similar kinds of violence practiced on people. How do you deal with society and communities? The victims of rape in Congo, as elsewhere, but in Congo are often double victims. They are victims of the crime itself, women certainly are often rejected by communities or even their families because of the stigma that is attached. How does one go about fixing that? I don't have those answers. There are people who are working in this field, I have great admiration for a great deal of the work they're doing.

You mentioned the Panzi Hospital; I could not be a successful worker there. I don't think I could deal with the kind of emotional trauma on a daily basis with which one is confronted. But I am looking for answers as well, to help guide us as an organization and what we can do to try to address some of these things. And as I mentioned earlier, I think there are a number of aspects here that they're not necessarily Congo unique, but perhaps related more to high-conflict societies and post-conflict Liberia being another example. And I would be greatly appreciative of answers or at least signposts that give us a better sense of what we might be able to do as well to, to contribute. So...

**Hoge:**

In the back. Yes. The gentleman there in the blue shirt.

**Matthew Lee:**

How are you doing? I'm Matthew Lee from Inner City Press. I just wanted to ask I guess two questions. One factual and one sort of response to the criticism. Just factually, what could you say on this issue of helicopters for MONUSCO? This was one of the things that at least some of the Council members were discussing at the end of the meeting yesterday. Is it true; when did the Indian copters leave? Has South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine - are these countries - this was a range of countries, what's the UN doing to get copters there?

And also Mr. Hoge had mentioned Jason Stearns. I'm sure you've seen his kind of critique where he says that MONUSCO has gotten too close to Kabila in trying to ingratiate itself to the government, that it may have bartered away moral authority, that it's not reporting enough detail on rights violations from the elections. I just wonder if you've seen that and what do you think of that and are you considering setting up an electoral abuse center or sort of responding to that or do you think he's just wrong? Thanks.

**Meece:**

Regarding helicopters, I'm not going to go into a great deal of detail here, but certainly the shortage of military helicopters that we have is a significant problem. I've discussed it with the Council previously. I discussed it again yesterday. It is not unique to MONUSCO, but from my interest it is one that is affecting and has an impact on our military operations. The military helicopters, utility transport helicopters, are essential for many of our military operations in high threat areas. We have lost, as you point out, a number of helicopters from the - lost in the sense that they have been retaken by the contributing country India and two tranches actually, the first tranche last year, the second tranche earlier this year. The office here that is responsible for such things, force recruitment, has been very actively pursuing this along with lots of others, from the Secretary-General down in terms of trying to get supplementary additional sources of helicopters.

The other category, if you will, are combat helicopters, which attack helicopters, which obviously have a unique capability, also essential. And we have only a few remaining attack helicopters that are also scheduled to be withdrawn in coming weeks. And it is critical that those be replaced. As I mentioned yesterday, I know that there are ongoing discussions with a number of member states in terms of seeking to obtain supplementary resources, helicopters. The South African government has already committed to increasing its contribution by at least one additional utility helicopter. We need others, and a great deal of effort is underway to do that. Certainly nobody gets out of my office, with any potential contribution or thing to bring, without me mentioning helicopters and bringing it up. And I'm prepared to lock the door to prevent their departure if necessary to do that. I did see I think the entry that you are referring to by Jason Stearns. He is, of course, somebody that is very well informed and you mentioned he was here not long ago.

In terms of a presentation I think I would take issue a bit with your characterization. I believe you used the word "ingratiating" ourselves with President Kabila. I don't believe that's a word he used in his article or blog. I would submit to you that what we have achieved with the Congolese government is an ongoing dialogue that is critical and important in terms of being able to achieve progress in various areas, including all of those I just spoke about. For example, the improvement or the augmentation of prosecution of offenders of various abuses including sexual violence, the increase in those prosecutions, effectiveness of military operations as a component of the overall strategy, and protection of civilians and I can go on. And I believe he acknowledged that as well in his blog.

I would certainly argue that we are not in any way, shape or form ignoring abuses or problems as they occur, whether they are election related or other. We have a very active integrated human rights division--integrated in the sense meaning the human rights commission in MONUSCO, in our own organization. We have various components of the mission that does tracking and reporting. We have joint protection teams and evaluation units that look into, or that are formed to look into, any allegations and these are routinely subjects of our discussion with Congolese authorities. Having a specialized unit for problems associated with elections, at this point in time, I don't see that that necessarily brings any value added to the capabilities that we're already exercising and routinely discuss and have as an object of our ongoing discussions, ourselves with partners and with the Congolese government and certainly election preparations. Again, I've only spoken briefly here, but I can go into more detail if you like in terms of a number of things that we are doing, both in terms of actions to date as well as, if you will, preemptive kinds of actions to try to achieve the most favorable and peaceful conditions possible for the election process.

**Hoge:**

I happen to have the blog that you're referring to, Matthew. Let me just read it to you. This is Jason Stearns' blog. "Meece wants to preserve MONUSCO's 'good offices' in order to better manage election disputes between the various contenders. This is in line with his overall objective of re-establishing good relations with the Congolese government after..." and I'm going to stop at that point because he goes on to slam Roger's predecessor who also was here by the way as a guest of IPI a year and a half ago. Basically Jason's point is that the UN has a better relationship with the Congolese government now than they did when the predecessor was there. Then it goes on to say, "Meece has argued quite reasonably," this is Jason Stearns, "Meece has argued quite reasonably that as long as the Congolese see them as antagonists or rivals, they will accomplish

little in the country." So that's the fair rendering of what he said.

**Lee:** I didn't mean to say "ingratiate", but I think, like, staying in the good books. Anyway, that's what I was referring to.

**Warren Hoge:** There was another question. Yes. Here on the aisle.

**Ted Leggett:** It's Ted Leggett from the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Police Division. I have two questions. One is, you mentioned how much better things are in Ituri now. So what went right in Ituri and what can we learn from that experience that can benefit the Kivus? And secondly, you mentioned how these groups are becoming basically, they're acting like criminal gangs, which is something the [PH]? President is also suggested. And you mentioned some of the problems with the integration of the CNDP, so I'm wondering whether or not we as the United Nations have made the transition from looking at this problem as a conflict situation, to looking at it as more of a criminal or lawlessness type situation? Shouldn't we maybe adjust our response, start responding to this more by building a capacity of the Congolese government to respond in the criminal justice system rather than looking at this as a military matter? Thanks.

**Meece:** I am tempted to answer yes to all of the above. And let me just expand on that to the latter point. There are elements of all of this involved. There is a matter of criminal activity that needs to be dealt with in a certain way. There are still military aspects though to the situation in the east. I had tried to go through a bit of analysis without taking too much time earlier, but you really have to get into, in my opinion, get into a more localized analysis of exactly the situation you're confronting in terms of formulating the correct responses. The FDLR, for example, is very much a military organization, operates as such, and must be dealt with in a certain way. Certain groups are frankly little more than relatively poorly organized groups of thugs and criminals that require, or can be dealt with, with a different kind of response. And you have these co-existing in a number of areas that makes it more complicated. So I don't think there's a one-size-fits-all and I don't think there's a definitive answer... that you have to start getting into the different situations. And I would submit that we indeed are doing that internally and in partnership with the Congolese institutions, police, military and otherwise. So you have in the east, establishment of new police stations, deployment of new police personnel, some of which we are training, some of which we are contributing to, some of which is being done by other partners alongside or in parallel with military operations that are directed separately. So that's my all of the above answer to that part of the question.

In Ituri, the first question-- I could spend a long time talking about that. In my personal view, I think there were a combination of elements. Part of it, if you go back far enough, was a European Union operation under the name of Operation Artemis, and I'm afraid I cannot remember the exact year offhand, but some time ago, that contributed. Part of it, I think, were very effective mono-tactics pursued relative to the militias in Ituri who unwisely chose to resist and lost. Part of it has been effective follow-up to that in terms of Congolese agencies, in terms of MONUC, now MONUSCO, in terms of the various other things I mentioned before. So it's a combination of elements that have gone into producing that success. Can one draw lessons and hopefully use that to go forward? Absolutely. But can the model be necessarily transposed someplace else? Probably not, because of the peculiarities of local circumstances and things that you have to adapt from one place to another. Somewhat oversimplified answer but I hope that...



**Hoge:** I thought I saw another hand. Yes, please in the back row there and then in the front here. Actually we'll take two together and you can answer them both, first the gentleman in the back.

**Tomas Wiklund:** Thank you. My name is Tomas Wiklund. I'm from the Swedish Mission to the UN. I just want to return on the issue of elections. I noted that you stressed in the Security Council yesterday, and today as well actually, that you would like to see basically the mandate renewal being on the same basis as previously and not much changes, and that when it comes to elections you will continue your technical and logistical support.

I just wondered, of course, you mentioned there are challenges of course that had with elections, but that there are hopes that, you know, you shouldn't be alarmist about it, but even so, let's say that the elections do go out of hand. I mean, we all know it's difficult to predict elections in difficult political circumstances. I mean, wouldn't there be a problem for the UN then when it comes to its credibility if we have been seen as supporting elections without actually having more of an influential role in supporting it as heavily as we do of course?

**Meece:** I'm sorry, I didn't get - without having...I'm --

**Wiklund:** Sort of more of a political engagement when it comes to the elections. The risk being that if elections go out of hand, they're not seen as being credible, then the argument might be that the UN supported elections with the funds technically, logistically without trying to influence actually the outcome or I mean the process. So just taking that into consideration. Would it not be useful to have maybe a - include a stronger political role in the mandate for MONUSCO?

**Hoge:** By the way I'd like to add one element to that question too that I mentioned in the introduction but never got back to. Is it possible that the date will be delayed and, if it were delayed, is there a new electoral calendar that might emerge that would sort of keep it, you know, within the possibility of happening in time enough? That's the voting question. And then the lady here on side, if you please.

**Kirsten Hagon:** Sure. Kirsten Hagon with Oxfam. And thank you very much for your presentation. Two quick questions, first of all my understanding is that MONUSCO is one of the first missions, or MONUC at the time, to have a protection of civilians strategy and I think that was well over a year ago now. And given the C-34 committee here at the UN has just endorsed the new protection of civilians strategic framework, I'm wondering what opportunities you're seeing with this framework in terms of implementation and potentially reviewing the protection of civilians strategy in light of those developments.

The second question responds to some of the comments you made about how some areas in the east are getting better and others are still problematic. And I'm wondering, given you're seeing some improvements, whether you feel that might be freeing up some of your troops to move into the LRA affected areas, given I believe approximately 20% of the persons displaced in the east are in the LRA affected areas, but only around 5% of the troops. And in relation to that, one of the things in the strategic framework on the protection of civilians that I thought was quite interesting was this discussion of joint prioritization between the mission and the humanitarian community in terms of identifying protection of civilians threats. And so I think this is quite applicable in the LRA region, and it does make me wonder also about the usefulness of the current matrix process and whether that could be used in all of the conflict affected areas. Thank you

very much.

**Meece:**

First of all, regarding elections. I'm not sure I fully understood the question, but in terms of speaking of a more political role, if I understood the question, you asked for MONUSCO or the UN and the election process. Obviously, I think there is a great risk of any external force or external organization becoming too political in the sense of what is by necessity or should be a reflection of the political will of the people of the country. Perhaps I've misunderstood the premise of the question a bit. But my general view though is that there is no reason at this point, at least, that MONUSCO and the UN more generally should or needs to be playing any role qualitatively different than that that was played by MONUC in the 2006 exercise. Clearly the independent election commission is the authority; the Congolese authority is charged with the overall conduct for the elections.

There are mechanisms that are parallel to those in 2006. Something that used to be called the Steering Committee, its name has now been changed to a partnership committee that is chaired by the Election Commission, involves Congolese ministers and involves a number of the international partners that are engaged in elections support to go over, discuss elections issues, developments, budget, organizationally, politically in terms of the process and so forth is quite appropriate. There are various mechanisms that exist relative to election security and coordination with which we participate and that we have been conducting, and I hope the Council would continue to authorize us to conduct a variety of other facilitative operations.

For example, in April we co-sponsored with the Election Commission. A colloquium involving all political parties, civil society and others in terms of how to conduct peaceful and favorable election processes. There's a variety of other activities that are either have been conducted, underway, or planned at national and provincial levels in those respects. So there's a lot of things addressing the different aspects of elections, but without seeking to assume control, if you will, of the election process which rests with the Congolese and the Election Commission. The other part of it is in terms of monitoring. I do feel, and I said to the Council yesterday, that a significant and strong observer force, both in terms of international observers and national observers, is quite important. I think it was quite important in 2006. I think it will be important for this year as well. I have noted and welcome expressions of interest and intent from the European Union and the Carter Center already to field observer missions. I'm assuming and hope that there will be an interest and willingness as well by the African Union, SADC and others. Training and fielding as significant a force as possible of national observers, I think, is also a very critical part of this. And that too, I think, is very important - having these observers who can offer independent assessments and evaluations of the process and what is going on, both during and post-election process. And so this is all not dissimilar or very similar to the kind of models and practices that were being done in 2006, and I would not see a reason to change that. So I hope I'm responding to the question, but I'm not sure I fully got it.

**Hoge:**

And do you have a position on timing? Does the UN want to go forward on the schedule?

**Meece:**

Well we are committed. The Election Commission is responsible for the time schedule. We are committed to doing everything that we can to ensure the successful completion of that time schedule. But it's a very ambitious one. There is a lot that has to be done. And so we're cognizant of that, as is the Election Commission. And we are committed to doing everything possible to support that effort and to ensure a successful completion according to what the Election

Commission sets out.

**Hoge:**

Sure. And finally the two questions there and then we'll be at the end.

**Meece:**

Protection of civilians is, as I mentioned earlier, obviously our highest priority. I would like to submit, or at least like to believe, that we in fact in MONUC, now MONUSCO, have pioneered many new ways of approaching the protection of civilians and we continue to do so. And this, in my opinion, involves something that requires, to the maximum extent possible, a combination or an integrated approach involving both the military and civilian components of the mission. In the wake of the Walikale attacks in early August of last year, that occurred shortly after I came onboard, I told the Council and others that of course this necessitated a broad review of the way that we were approaching civilian protection - which we certainly did. And we've launched a number of initiatives since then and are continuing to do so.

But I also told the Council, and I reiterated it yesterday, that this review is not a onetime exercise. It is an ongoing thing that we are constantly looking at what we've got, what we're doing, how we are doing, how can we do it better? I try to reiterate to people, we need to keep expectations realistic. If we do everything perfectly, have adequate helicopters and so forth, we will still never be able to ensure full protection for all civilians across this vast area. The east, what is generally referred to as the east where the armed groups operate, if you add in the surface area of all that area it comes up to something bigger than Afghanistan. We're never going to reach that point. But it is incumbent upon us to be as effective as possible and to do as much as possible within that context.

Having said all of that, in terms of our own innovations and what we're doing, we certainly do not have a monopoly on wisdom. And in so far as there are ideas coming from other missions, coming from here, coming from NGOs or other bodies looking at this that can be incorporated or utilized to be effective. Clearly that is something that is always a part of our discussions within the mission, the various components in terms of how we're operating and what we can do. So I hope that responds to that part. In terms of redeployments, clearly what we want is success. Meaning in security terms, having security conditions that no longer requires a presence, or at least as big a presence, in terms of MONUSCO military as is currently the case. I don't believe we have reached the point in the Kivus, for example, where we can safely reduce the number of military forces without creating undo risks to the existing security situation. But I would hope, and certainly it is our interest with the Congolese, to get to a point where that is possible. And again we, our military force, others in the mission, are always looking at what we can do, where are the redeployments, what's possible.

If you are really a serious student of all of the internal arcane elements of what we're doing, you will know that we have a network of bases that are generally referred to as COB's and TOB's, Company Operating Bases, Temporary Operating Bases; there's over 90 of them. And at any given time, there can be closure or opening of these bases within our capabilities, and obviously responding to the tactical environment and what we can and should be doing. And all of this has to be coordinated to the maximum extent possible with the Congolese and in the Ueles where the UPDF, which operates there, obviously, in terms of trying to achieve the maximum impact in a coordinated fashion. So, this too is something that we are constantly looking at, and I would like nothing more than to have a common assessment, including by ourselves, that we have sufficient improvement in security conditions that we aren't needed. That's the ideal so that we can work ourselves out of a job or in the interim, redeploy to

address someplace, or whatever, but get to those kinds of security conditions. Something we're looking at constantly in terms of as effective as possible utilization of our resources within what we have to work with.

**Hoge:**

Perfect timing. It is 2:45. Speaking of timing, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Denis Mukwege will be here in the morning and then Mulet will be here at the lunch time. Sometime that day the Security Council will renew the mandate of MONUSCO. I assume at that point Roger Meece will be back in Kinshasa. And I want to say good luck on the next year. And thank you so much for having come to tell us today about the first year.

**Meece:**

Thank you very much. Thank you.