

Remarks at the 2025 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin, Germany

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UNITED STATES BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS
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Let me first say thank you to Germany for hosting this year's ministerial. Thank you also to Undersecretary-General Pollard, for moderating this panel. And thank you to the esteemed panelists I have next to me for your comments on strengthening and reforming UN peacekeeping.

Let me begin by noting that President Trump is steadfast in his goal of restoring peace across the world. And President Trump also has made clear that the UN needs to focus on its core mandate and ensure that it is capable of achieving that mandate. For the Security Council, that means maintaining and restoring international peace and security. Peacekeeping missions should aim to work themselves out of a job.

From the United Nations' very earliest days, the United States has been a proven leader in UN peacekeeping. And it is time for us all to reflect on what has been working and where challenges to peacekeeping must be made part and parcel of the Secretary General's broader UN 80 initiative focused on increasing efficiency, eliminating duplication, and consolidating the organization of the UN.

With this in mind, the United States calls for increased accountability, adaptability, and transparency in peacekeeping. We must focus on holding the UN, Member States, and the peacekeepers in the field to account for everything a UN peacekeeping Mission does or fails to do. And we must ensure that missions can adapt to changes when necessary.

Given the amount of resources, human and financial, all of us collectively contribute to the peacekeeping enterprise, I believe this is a priority for all of us, and I can safely say that it is an imperative for the United States.

In support of greater accountability and transparency, the UN must engage in integrated planning, both in missions and in UN headquarters. Peacekeeping missions must also have actionable end states to work towards, clear metrics to demonstrate that they are engaging with the goal of working themselves out of a job, and a streamlined support structure that fosters innovation and responsibly allocates shared resources.

Every conflict and mission is different, so the ways we measure success must be tailored to individual contexts, mandates, and environments. We recognize that some peacekeeping interventions deliver more tangible results, such as a signed peace agreement, a national dialogue, or a ceasefire. Other measures of success include tasks like demining specific geographic areas, deterring attacks from armed groups, demobilization of armed group members, or standing up mobile courts.

Then there are other indicators of success that are still more difficult to measure, including in missions where the primary tasks include building trust between parties to a conflict, defusing tensions, or advancing a national reform agenda. All of these are important markers of progress. The key now is to use evidence-based indicators to showcase how a peacekeeping mission is having an impact, or why it is not having an impact.

These efforts and others are necessary, so member states, including the United States, can see a concrete, measurable return on our investment by advancing towards a defined end state characterized by a restoration of international peace and security. Finally, the UN Security Council must adapt or in some cases, end missions when conditions change or when hostility or obstruction is so great that it significantly undermines mission success.

Time and again, the United States has demonstrated its commitment to peacekeeping. Now is the time for peacekeeping to demonstrate its commitment to delivering on its potential, by making the changes required to ensure effective and efficient missions are held to account by all of us gathered here this week. None of us should expect anything less. Thank you.

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