



Transcription of Question and Answer at the press conference of RSG Karin Landgren, 22.01.2010

***Shirish Pradhan (Press Trust of India):** I just wanted to draw your attention to a news report in today's Kantipur daily that there are plenty of paramilitary organisations, or YCL of the Maoists, are actively operating within the valley, creating serious threat to the security. What is your opinion?*

RSG: Thank you. I have not seen that report from today. The Secretary-General's report has called attention to the existence of continued security and other threats to the peace process. The question of the activities of the YCL is particularly important to the future of those disqualified as minors. The monitoring that will take place, the spot-checking that will take place, is looking at, for example, that they should not be re-recruited into the Maoist army and that they should not join related groups that advocate or practice violence.

***Mahesh Acharya (Kantipur Radio):** Security Council approved the request of the Government of Nepal and extended the mandate of UNMIN by four months. Basically, there were practices of extending the mandate one year or six months. Does UNMIN have reservation in the latest decision of Security Council or request of the Government of Nepal to extend UNMIN's mandate by four months only?*

RSG: As you know, UNMIN has been encouraging all the parties to create the conditions that bring the need for our presence to a close, and I understand the Government has used the deadline for the drafting of the constitution, for promulgation of the constitution, as a kind of natural deadline before which they wish to see the integration and rehabilitation activities completed. We are here at the invitation of the Government and parties, and they have set themselves this task of completing the integration and rehabilitation by the 15th of May. We are asked to report back to the Security Council by the 1st of May and the fact is this a very tight deadline. The parties will have to begin implementation quite rapidly to be able to meet the challenging task. We have seen in the discharge of the disqualified, for example, that implementation was able to begin very quickly once political agreement was reached. We certainly hope the parties will be able to meet their commitment to undertake this really very large task in the next four months.

***Cross-question by reporter:** So, no dissatisfaction?*

RSG: We are absolutely committed to help the parties meet the deadlines and any action plan they have agreed on.

***Kiran Chapagain (Republica):** In respect with the fact that 40 per cent of the disqualified have already left their cantonments without attending the formal ceremony. Will this affect the removal of UCPN (Maoist) from the list of the Secretary-General... as the parties using children in armed conflict?. Thank You.*

RSG: As you know the disqualified personnel were all supposed to leave immediately after the verification process. So this is a delayed discharge by any standard. It is not a requirement that they go through this ceremony, but some of the disqualified who went through the verification in one cantonment have come to another cantonment to go through the exercise. Whether they go through it or not, they will all be regarded as the formally discharged by the UCPN-M, and UCPN-M has confirmed this to us. But removal from the Secretary-General's list is not an immediate thing. It will take, according to SRSR Radhika Coomaraswamy, perhaps a year of assessment to determine that the UCPN-M can now be removed if the conditions are all complied with. To answer your question, the

fact that some individuals have not appeared in a cantonment for discharge ceremony should not make a difference to that.

Prerana Marasini (The Hindu): *I have a similar question about the 40 per cent of PLA who left the cantonments earlier. What must be the reason for them to leave the cantonments early on? Were they not satisfied with their life style? What could be the reason?*

RSG: This 40 per cent is an estimate based on the discharge exercises that have taken place so far. So it is not necessary a conclusive figure, but that is our observation so far. I can't say personally why they have left. We have heard from senior Maoist army personnel that some were disappointed by the outcome of the verification and left very quickly; some were frustrated. I really cannot say.

Shirish Ballav Pradhan (Press Trust of India): *Just a supplement. How many of them have been formally discharged?*

RSG: So far, in the three cantonments? I have to look it up. and to do themaths. Looks like about 802 have gone through the exercise so far [later confirmed as 820]. Let us come back to you with an exact number. As you know there is another discharge exercise taking place this Monday in Ilam and they should all have concluded by the 8th of February. So this is really a compressed, concentrated exercise.

HH Upadhyaya (Kantipur TV) – *So far we talked about the disqualified. What about the qualified? Are there all 19,000 qualified combatants still inside the cantonments?*

Manesh Shrestha/ CNN: *Can I add to that? There have been reports in the past that some of these qualified had joined Matrika Yadav's group. What about that? I've been looking for that as well. And, what is the exact number? The Maoists say 19,604 because there was a miscalculation or something. So...that's why your official figure is 19,602, I think. What is the exact number?*

RSG: As you know an important aspect of the monitoring arrangements that were agreed between the parties was that the Maoist army remained under its own command. It was not managed by UNMIN, and UNMIN does not manage the cantonments, either. So the last counting exercise that took place with international support was the verification exercise itself. The number, the formal number has only been modified in so far as we have been informed of deaths or departures or other long absence from the cantonments. My assumption is that the next formal counting would take place when the integration and rehabilitation exercise gets off the ground. Some of the Maoist army commanders have spoken of people leaving the cantonments, but UNMIN does not have a number at this point. That is information you should seek from the Maoist leadership.

Mahesh Acharya/Kantipur Radio: *There is a political controversy now running in the politics of Nepal. Defence Minister recently said that there were no agreements on integration of Maoist combatants into Army. At large that means in security forces. As UNMIN as a signatory party to AAMAA whose article 4:1:3 clearly states about the possible integration into the security forces. So, in short, the Defence Minister's comment is against that agreement. Would you like to comment on that?*

RSG: I think the Prime Minister has come out very clearly reconfirming the Government's commitments to all the peace agreements including AMMAA, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Interim Constitution and has also quoted the provisions that you referred to. For the rest this is an internal matter, for within the Government to sort out.

Shankar Dahal/ German Radio: *What will be UNMIN's position after May, if the said deadlines for integration and formulation of the new constitution are not met?*

RSG: I am going to try to avoid speculating beyond May; the hope is that a plan can be agreed and put in place by the 15th of May in a way that allows UNMIN to wind up. It is particularly challenging because the tasks ahead in integration and rehabilitation are major tasks, and it is not clear whether some of the critical political decisions have yet been taken. Clearly though, the parties are extremely focused on the need to take these decisions quickly. In addition to the Special Committee, there is the High Level Political Mechanism, also with a view to reaching consensus on some of the thornier questions around the peace process. As we have seen in this recent controversy, involving the Defence Minister, these are thorny questions and they are difficult. But once they are agreed, I hope that the implementation can proceed fairly smoothly because as we are also seeing, discussion is taking place among the key actors. There is full engagement to arrive at an agreed plan and see it implemented.

Shirish Ballav Pradhan/ Press Trust of India: *Do you think that the integration and rehabilitation will be complete by the time of the formulation of the new constitution?*

RSG: I have an answer to your previous question, which is 820 disqualified personnel have so far been discharged. My understanding is that the action plan is not yet fully final. So, we have to wait to see what is in the plan to understand how that will be sequenced relative to the promulgation of the constitution.

Kiran Chapagain/ Republica: *What happens if the peace process does not complete by May 15? Can the Security Council extend another term of UNMIN if the peace process is not complete within the new timeframe?*

RSG: The messages the Security Council has sent are both that they are extremely supportive of the peace process, and also that they are quite impatient to see it completed and to see UNMIN wind up its work. So, for the answer to that question, I think we're going to have to wait a couple of months. The Security Council is expecting a report back some time in the month of April, so, within roughly three months. Then we have to hear from them how they will react in case the process has not moved forward as smoothly as currently foreseen.

HH Upadhyay/ Kantipur TV: *You said that about 40 per cent of the disqualified have already left the cantonments. Is there any chance that they might have joined YCL or not? How are you going to monitor those disqualified who have left informally?*

RSG: The action plan signed between the Government, UCPN-M and the United Nations was, as you know, signed by the UN resident coordinator on behalf of the UN Country Team. UNMIN was a witness but was not a signatory to this plan. I mention this because the follow-up monitoring that will be conducted for the disqualified, is to be conducted by a monitoring mechanism staffed by the United Nations, not by UNMIN. So, this is a function that is with the UN Country Team, not with the UN Mission in Nepal. What they will be looking to do is what I would describe as spot-checks, which is follow up of those disqualified as minors who have left, whether they left before or in the discharge ceremonies, To verify the commitment made by the parties. To check two things essentially – one is that they know they have access to support packages if they want them and second, that UCPN-M has not engaged them in activities that would be incompatible with the agreement that has been reached. If they are engaged in military or para-military type activities, violent activities, through UCPN-M, then that would not enable UCPN-M to be removed from the Secretary-General's list. I wanted to say a word about monitoring because the whole sense of monitoring has not always been well-understood including the monitoring UNMIN does in the cantonments. In this case, the numbers of disqualified are quite large, so there will be periodic checks from time to time and there will be of course be those

who can not be traced. I know that the monitoring mechanism will take very seriously any allegations if any of the disqualified former minors have joined UCPN-M military or related groups and engaged in those activities. So, that will certainly be the particular focus of the monitoring.

HH Upadhyay/ Kantipur TV: *You don't have the record of the 40 per cent who have already left?*

RSG: Because this process is just starting now, the monitoring mechanism will begin its work outside cantonments after the end of the last discharge exercise on 8 February. To what extent the UN team has data of those who have already left, I think they are trying to put that together now. They are putting together now their own guidelines on how the monitoring will be carried out.

Utpal Parashar / Hindustan Times: *The agreement says the Maoists will be integrated in the security forces. But the big debate now is their mass integration into the Nepal Army. Do you think this issue is going to create problems in meeting the deadline in the coming months and what do you see UNMIN's role in this?*

RSG: The question of how many are to be integrated, into which forces, according to which standards, and this "bulk" question that has been brought up is, you're absolutely right, the most serious questions apparently still to be agreed in the integration and rehabilitation plan. I hope the discussions have progressed far enough that it will be agreed smoothly. UNMIN will offer whatever assistance the parties might require and we have been in close contact with the technical committee to look at how integration into security forces has been handled in other countries around the world that have gone through similar exercises. As UNMIN, we don't have a view on how the integration should take place. This is entirely a decision for the parties, and everyone recognizes that whatever has been done in other parts of the world, Nepal is going to come up with its own unique model of integration that perhaps other countries in future will come here to study and learn lessons from.

Utpal: *But you agree that mass integration into the Nepal Army could be one of the major problems in meeting the deadlines of integration?*

RSG: I'm not talking about problems in meeting the deadline, but the question of how integration will take place and of how many appears to be one of the issues still to be resolved.