**UN says still trying to get peacekeeping right**

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UNITED NATIONS — Ten years ago, veteran diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi oversaw a landmark report chronicling the U.N. peacekeeping's failures to prevent 1990s atrocities in Rwanda and Srebrenica.

On Tuesday, the former foreign minister of Algeria was back in the spotlight, taking another hard-nosed look at a system that has mushroomed to 124,000 personnel on four continents — nine times the peacekeepers in 1999.

Some things have improved, he said, since his 2000 report urged the United Nations to create something like a defense ministry to quickly deploy troops, but others have not.

"There is no substitute for getting the right people into the right jobs, at the right time, and only for the time that is necessary," he said of the challenge of picking qualified foreign staff for an operation.

"Many peacekeeping veterans told us that the civilian personnel system was failing the missions, as well as the personnel themselves," he recalled. "If there was only one problem to fix, they said, it would be this one. Ten years later, I fear many of them might say the same thing. ... This question deserves serious attention and debate."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called peacekeeping "a unique and uniquely successful experiment" but said the U.N. "has much to be proud of and still much things to do."

He and other U.N. officials emphasized that nations must provide adequate numbers of troops, gear and other resources for peacekeeping operations to succeed.

"Numerous studies have shown that while long-term peace is difficult to achieve, it is more likely when a peacekeeping mission is part of the picture," Ban said.

In 2000, Brahimi's report grappled with how the U.N. ignored advance warnings of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and failed to save thousands of Bosnian Muslims from a Serb massacre in Srebrenica. The report said U.N. peacekeeping's credibility suffered most from its "reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor."

Short of a U.N. army, the report said, peacekeeping operations could form several brigade-size forces of 5,000 troops each that could deploy in 30 to 90 days. That didn't happen.

Peacekeeping missions have helped bring stability in some of the most wartorn, impoverished areas of the world. U.N. figures show the 10 biggest troop-contributing nations to U.N.-mandated operations are the U.S., Pakistan, Bangladesh, Britain, India, Italy, Germany, France, Nigeria and Nepal.

But in recent years there also have been controversies over the blue helmets' failures to protect civilians in places like eastern Congo and sexual abuses committed by some of the peacekeeping soldiers.

And more nations such as Eritrea, Chad and Congo have been pushing the U.N. to withdraw forces.

Against those pressures, U.N. General Assembly President Ali Treki said the daylong debate was meant to stoke nations' commitment to peacekeeping.

"The record of the U.N. and the international community is mixed and we are all struggling over how to get it right," he said. "We must uphold the principle of 'do no harm.'"